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March 6, 1973

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF COUNSELING EFFECTIVENESS AMONG
SELECTED STUDENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF
BOZEMAN, MONTANA

by

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A professional paper submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

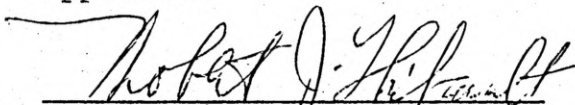
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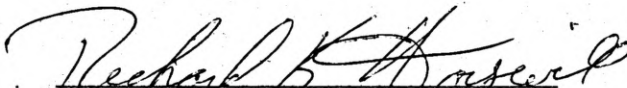
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to direct special attention to the importance of counselors at the elementary school level. The problem of this paper was to determine the relationship which exists between counseling received in an elementary school and improved:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

The method that is used to show this relationship is a descriptive survey which reports the results of a selected number of counseling cases in the Bozeman public elementary schools.

Five cases of children who have received counseling for a period of at least five months, were selected by the Bozeman elementary school counselor from her files. These cases are representative of the counseling that is generally carried out through her office. Due to the organization of the Bozeman elementary school system, only grades Kindergarten through Fourth are represented in this study. Three questionnaires were devised by the researcher for the purpose of interviewing the counselor, respective teachers, parents and children involved. Results of the interviews and ensuing conversations were then compiled and presented in case study form in Chapter 4 of this paper. A brief comment on each case study was made by the researcher and included in each of the five individual summaries.

The results of the interviews showed that in each child studied, some degree of improvement was made in each of the areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment. All persons interviewed were pleased with the improvements shown and were confident that the "new behavior" was being internalized into part of the child's developing personality.

From these positive results, it can be concluded that counseling at the elementary school level is beneficial. Involving teachers and parents in the counseling process and keeping them informed of progress made is essential. The united efforts of the counselor-teacher-parent team can more effectively service the needs of the whole child.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Education is of fundamental importance to everyone, since the type and extent of education received has a direct effect upon vocational and avocational choices. In addition, it increases one's ability to perceive and to perpetuate the best life possible for himself. Mastery of the "Three R's", Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, is not enough. One must also master himself, and learning to do that begins at a very early age. Confusion, tension, anxiety and other stumbling blocks must be dealt with when they first appear and in a manner that promotes healthy development of each individual.

A boon to primary education is the emergence of elementary school counselors. They are trained and hired specifically to assist in building competent personal development. If people can receive, at an early age, the necessary help needed to attain this goal of mental health, their lives will be fuller, richer and happier. Children are free spirits, they are easily impressed and are eager to enjoy life as each moment passes- tomorrow is a long way off. By helping these creative minds and souls build

a better self we will in turn be helping the next generation get off to a better start in life.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the relationship which exists between counseling received in an elementary school and improved:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

Purpose of the Study

Education is developing along with rapid changes in our society. No longer can we sit back comfortably and allow things to be done in education as they have been done in the past. Teachers are having to copy with overcrowded classrooms. Parents are faced with a society that pushes and demands to the extent that it is often difficult to find all the time necessary to help children who fall behind. Elementary school counselors have recently emerged on the scene to aid frustrated teachers and parents. Counselors are paid to take the time to sit down with those who are referred or who ask for help and assist them in working

out their problems. The child who feels the weight of the world on his shoulders is fortunate when he can seek a counselor who is specially trained and genuinely concerned. Together they can talk through what bothers him, better understand the situation, and see alternatives. The student can then realize the decisions that are best for him, follow them through, and alleviate or at least get on top of the problem for the present. When one is helped to realize his innermost feelings and pursue what he sees as best for himself, then he is freed from confusion, tension, and anxiety. With this freedom comes the ability to think clearly and act accordingly. School work can be completed to the best of one's ability, friends and one's self can be enjoyed more, behavior becomes honest and spontaneous.

When more school districts realize the importance of school counselors, when they can see them as necessary to the personal development of the pupils instead of as an additional budgetary expense, then everyone will profit. Hopefully, the information contained within this paper will encourage more educators to include the elementary school counselor on their staffs.

Question to be Answered

This study attempted to answer the following question: Does a relationship exist between counseling received at the elementary school level and improved:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

General Procedure

The investigation of the relationship between counseling received at the elementary school level and improved behavior, academic work, self-concept, personal and social adjustment will be presented in the following manner:

1. A review of literature concerning educational methods that promote freedom to learn and to develop as a whole, competent individual.
2. A review of literature concerning the counselor's role in promoting the above mentioned freedoms.
3. A questionnaire and survey of parents, teachers, an elementary school counselor and counseled students to show what improvements, if any, have been made by those students because of counseling received.

Limitations

Due to the type of study done there are two limitations which are as follows:

1. Elementary school counselors are a relatively "new breed" in education and there is not a wealth of literature concerning their effectiveness available here at the Montana State University Library.

2. The survey conducted was also limited in scope to five cases here in Bozeman, which does not give a total view of the entire population of students who have received counseling.

Definitions

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study. Other terms will be defined as they appear throughout this paper.

1. Self-Concept

A person's self is the sum total of all he can call his. The self includes, among other things, a system of ideas, attitudes, values and commitments. The self is a person's total subjective environment; it is the distinctive center of experience and significance (Hamachek, 1971:8).

2. Counselor

A counselor is any person specifically employed by a school system to provide counseling services to

elementary school students. The counselors must meet the educational requirements designated by the Montana Board of Education.

3. Counseling

The act of counseling is defined as,

a definitely structured, permissive relationship which allows the client to gain an understanding of himself to a degree which enables him to take positive steps in the light of his new orientation (Rogers, 1942:18).

Summary

The purpose of this paper was to direct special attention to the importance of a counselor in an elementary school. The method used to gather information was a survey of parents, teachers, an elementary school counselor, and students who received help from that counselor. With a better understanding of the relationship between counseling received in an elementary school and improved:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

counselors and educators may be better able to provide for the needs of those students who seek special help.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will begin by examining the development of the self and its relationship to behavior and change of self image. With this background it will go on to discuss recent innovations in education which are most conducive to one's optimal intellectual and emotional development. In conclusion, the school counselor's work in counseling and in consulting will be summarized.

Self-Concept

The theory of self-concept has been defined in many ways but a general summary is the way one perceives himself. Eric Berne in Games People Play takes the view of self as that

which influences all of the individuals' transactions; in the long run it determines his destiny and often that of his descendants as well (Berne, 1964:45).

Thomas A. Harris, in his book I'm OK--You're OK, categorizes self image into four life positions, which are:

1. I'm Not OK--You're OK
2. I'm Not OK--You're Not OK
3. I'm OK--You're Not OK
4. I'm OK--You're OK (Harris, 1969:43)

As small children we all start out in the first position, I'm Not OK--You're OK, which is referred to by Harris as the universal position of childhood. However, as a child matures physically, emotionally and socially, he comes to realize his or her own strengths and moves through the various four positions and hopefully adopts I'm OK--You're OK as his self-concept.

Sidney M. Jourard also developed a theory of self. He said that self-structure

refer to beliefs, perceptions, ideals, expectations, and demands a person has come to formulate with respect to his own behavior and experience (Jourard, 1963:156).

Jourard also categorized self-structure in five ways:

1. Pride and Conscience - Direction
2. Authority - Direction
3. Other - Direction
4. Impulse - Direction
5. Real-Self-Being (Jourard, 1963:157)

Because a person's self-structure is formed by the way he thinks he should act, how he thinks others want him to act, or how he really feels, people will react according to one of these five categories. A person who fits in the first area acts according to how he thinks he should act. Some one who views himself as unreliable acts strictly according to an inflexible moral code established by some segment of society. Authority-Directed people use as their own

behavior guide the rules of others who appear to be superior. Other-Directed people are easily influenced by their peers. Impulse-Directed people ignore their own conscience, welfare, and the welfare of others and act only on impulse to obtain present need satisfactions at the moment. However, the person exhibiting real-self being

lets others know what he genuinely thinks and feels, and when he answers their questions about him truthfully and without reserve, he is said to be engaged in real-self being (Jourard, 1963:160, 161).

Self-Concept and Change

Much effort is put into building and establishing one's self-concept. Each part of the self-concept is interrelated and any proposed change creates a threat to the individual, regardless of whether the change is positive or negative. Carl R. Rogers has stated that in order for change to take place in the self-concept it is necessary for a person to come to the realization that he is the controlling agent over his feelings and environment, and not a puppet that can be pliantly molded by the environment of others. If a person is unable to feel that he is in control, then anxiety and tension will occur.

Jourard terms this anxiety and tension as defense mechanisms, and defines them as

automatic, involuntary ways in which a person reacts to threatening perceptions so that his self-structure will remain unchallenged and unchanged (Jourard, 1963:195).

Consequently, we can see that everything that goes on around us has an effect upon us and our self-concept. Significant events of the past, such as having trouble adjusting to a new third grade teacher, are just as important as significant events of the present, such as having trouble adjusting to a new work foreman. Kurt Lewin and Egon Brunswik also did extensive research in defining the relationship between a person's self-concept and the environment. Lewin believed that behavior was the result of personality and environment operating in a dynamic field or life space. Brunswik held that all aspects of one's geographic, historic, and physical environment were potentially relevant in shaping behavior.

Roger G. Barker concluded that some aspects of behavior can be predicted more adequately from knowing the behavior characteristics of the setting more than the behavior characteristics of the person. For example, in a library people act one way, in a bedroom they act another.

Innovations in Education

In light of this research on the interrelatedness of the development of self-concept and environmental influence, it can be seen that former methods of education no longer satisfy the needs of our youth in school today. Unlimited opportunities for change and advancement are being offered. Only by helping and encouraging all we possibly can will we succeed in developing a youth capable of handling today's and tomorrow's stresses in a manner which is beneficial to both them as individuals and to society as a whole.

In relation to Harris's four life positions, children start out their lives by being very dependent upon adults for most all of their needs. Slowly they grow and mature, breaking away from the parents and home, hopefully maturing as independent adults who are capable of successfully handling their own lives and in turn helping to shape those of their children.

In grade school the treacherous period starts when the child starts to find himself and wishes to test and assert himself on his surroundings. Parents and educators alike are needed to guide and encourage each individual according to that person's own needs and capabilities.

Carl Jung identifies the transition from childhood to adolescence as a shift in which the individual becomes a problem to himself after having been exclusively a problem to others (Jung, 1960:403). The individual must come to "Know Thyself" but cannot do it entirely on his own. He needs the help of friends, family, educators, and others. In educational settings the opportunities for assistance abound. The entire staff, from custodians to administrators to teachers, are available to help. However, with more subjects being taught and more students per teacher, it has become increasingly difficult for teachers and others to give the extra amount of personal time that some students require. School counselors are now being hired to work specifically with those children who are somehow floundering in their movement from dependency to autonomy. More time can now be given to those who seek help without taking away from instruction time.

People of all ages need to be treated as important worthy persons, instead of as objects of no worth. The experience of learning to be oneself should not be denied, in fact, it is doubtful if one would ever deny himself the opportunity to develop his own uniqueness as a person, given the opportunity to do so. Learning environments that

fail to provide suitable conditions for self-actualization are simply settings which hold and prohibit natural growth.

In J. R. R. Tolkien's famous fantasy trilogy The Lord of the Rings the Troll King states, "Men have a common saying, 'Man to thyself be true!' But 'mongst Trolls, 'Troll to thyself be enough!' it runs" (Tolkien, 1965:305). So it is with our education. Those schools truly interested in education urge their students to master and surpass themselves, the others simply ask the students to deny their own best interests.

Education has often been justified essentially by its ability to help people make a living and to fit into our sociopolitical system. Discipline has been thought of as "orderly conduct," "control gained by obedience," and also as "punishment." However, it also means "training that perfects." No education exists without discipline, but only discipline that "perfects" can succeed in developing the student's power to express himself and relate himself to life in a productive manner.

What kind of discipline is needed for man to live in this technological society, and how can this discipline be taught to children? Michael Maccoby suggests that three basic C's be placed alongside the three R's of

Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. The C's would be Concentration, a Critical attitude, and Communication. While the three R's can be seen as the discipline necessary for adapting to an industrial society, the three C's may be considered as the discipline necessary for growing and perhaps for surviving emotionally in this age of automation and the computer (Maccoby, 1971:230).

A brief review of these three C's follows.

Concentration No sustained creative work is possible without it. Children, Maria Montessori pointed out, have no trouble concentrating when they are interested. However, the older one gets, the more frequently lack of concentration becomes a problem, even in areas considered interesting. Three reasons for this exist.

1. We live in a society where programmed distractions such as advertising make concentration especially difficult. The ability to concentrate must be strengthened in childhood if the individual is to be more than a consumer.

2. When we do lose the ability to concentrate well we become passive consumers, needing great excitement and effort to awaken us from our doldrums.

3. Difficult scientific and creative work inevitably presents problems that require exceptional concentration if one is to make sense out of them. Proper education can significantly increase the ability needed for this type of concentration.

In order to rid oneself of the passive consumer tendencies it is necessary to be "with oneself" before he can be "with" anything else. If one is unconscious of his impulses and feelings he is cut off from himself and avoids real emotions, thoughts, drives, and desires. To encourage a child to be more aware of self, awake and able to concentrate actively, a counselor can help him take seriously his feelings and perceptions, develop an interest in knowing and in self expression. Raja Yoga discipline, as described by Yogi Ramacharaka, offers courses in a series of concentration exercises, starting with small objects and then going on to concentrating on sensations in the body.

Do not let the apparently trivial nature of the inquiry discourage you, for the simplest form of mental training is useful, and will help to develop your will and concentration. It is akin to the process of developing a physical muscle by some simple exercise, and in both cases one loses sight of the unimportance of the exercise itself, in view of the end to be gained (Ramacharaka, 1934:88-89).

Criticism Without a critical attitude we interpret what we "see" in terms of the consensus, and we tend to let "authorities" determine our experiences for us. A critical attitude, however, demands that we look between the lines and work out conclusions for ourselves. To teach a critical attitude adults must themselves be critical of what they say and do, and open themselves to questions from children. Adults must also teach children to be sensitive to the ways in which ideas and feelings can be manipulated. Remember that a critical attitude is not the same as destructive negativism. Criticism, condemnation and rejection are often confused. Criticism demands an interest in another's development, helping that person produce according to his capabilities.

Communication Although we usually think of communication as mechanically transmitting orders, the term is used here referring to the expression and quality of human relationships, such as communicating ideas, emotions and perceptions. Touching, penetrating another's "center," as well as the ability to receive communications from others is also very important. One must listen and be able to "hear."

Developing this intricate form of communication requires strict discipline and practice. The accomplished painter, pianist, writer, scientist, can communicate because he has mastered a means of expressing his thoughts and feelings. The more technique becomes a part of him, the more spontaneous his expression will be.

If one really wishes to be master of an art, technical knowledge is not enough. One has to transcend technique, so that the art becomes an artless art, growing out of the Unconscious (Herrigel, 1967:135).

Trained counselors have mastered this art of communication and extend it also to be communication by listening (sensing, feeling, experiencing the other person). Listening involves both concentration and use of a critical attitude. By "listening" to one's own feelings a person can "fully listen" to another by experiencing his feelings. Counselors use this technique consistently, thus enabling them to "feel" almost exactly what the client feels and is trying to say. With proper use of this process, confidence and appreciation in the client can be developed. The client is helped through his problems by example and learns to incorporate the process for his own use.

It is seen that the purpose of the three C's - Concentration, a Critical attitude, and Communication - is both therapeutic and educational. Through discipline they develop a student's powers rather than teaching him material. A well qualified and competent model is needed to do the job well. Here is yet another way the school counselor becomes an essential part of the education system.

Another innovation in education is that of adult-child contracts. In every human interaction emerges some pattern of behavior, with responsibilities assumed by each party. For example, during a conversation each party agrees to listen to the other and to respond with appropriate signs of interest and concern. Each party fulfills his part of a behavioral contract.

In the classroom contracts abound. If with any consistency they are broken between teacher and student, or between students themselves, the disruptive party, hopefully, is referred to the school counselor. It is the responsibility then of the counselor to help reinstate the child's good faith in others and in contracts with others. During the counseling sessions more contracts are engaged in, some broken, amended, renewed. Each experience helps

to build confidence in handling future contracts. Success builds success.

Some common contracts are:

1. Freedoms will be granted with demonstrations of reciprocal willingness to assume responsibilities.

2. Achievements will be rewarded with emotional, intellectual and material support.

3. Loyalty and commitment will be given to the extent that the other person(s) involved in the contract gives the same considerations.

4. Fairness and cooperation are reciprocated.

5. Respect will be given according to the level of competency demonstrated.

6. Warmth and affection are exchanged.

Contract theory is just one of many new theories that give adults and children new ways of looking at their relationships. It offers a new direction for handling interpersonal difficulties in that no party involved gets stuck with the blame of an unfortunate situation. Thus, defensive and educationally non-productive attitudes and behaviors are generally avoided. It is easier and more beneficial to emphasize the positive rewards of achievement,

responsibility, and cooperation than to punish children for their misbehavior.

School Counselors and Change

The broad aim of counseling is change, as modest as it may be, change in both attitudes and behavior of the client. J. D. Krumboltz sees the three behavioral goals of counseling as altering maladaptive behavior, learning the decision making process, and preventing problems (Krumboltz, 1966:154). D. H. Blocher refers to behavioral changes as those new coping behaviors relating to commitment, competence, consistence, and control (Blocher, 1966:232). G. A. Holland simply says,

The ultimate reason for seeking psychotherapeutic assistance is an unfavorable balance between unpleasant feelings. . . . It becomes the responsibility of the psychotherapist to recognize, interpret, and attempt to change the nature of emotional experience (Holland, 1965:202).

Much of behavior is the product of conditioning, and perhaps the mark of the self-actualized man is the degree to which he has changed his behavior which has irrational tendencies due to society's conditioning. The more one is conditioned, the less basic and human is his response, and in this sense, the more irrational is his response. For example, a smile should be a spontaneous

reflection of the inner being of the person, but often becomes a purely artificial response. It is the role of the counselor to assist the client in making his desired changes. One function may then be that of counterconditioning, in that the counselor attempts to help the individual to become more independent of society, including the counselor, and more dependent upon himself. As a model, the counselor is not one to be imitated, but rather one from whom the client should be able to take what he wants for his own particular development.

Not every counselor can work successfully with every client, however. Because we are all unique individuals we relate more effectively with some individuals than with others, no matter what one's level and kind of professional education. It stands to reason, then, that the type and amount of change that occurs in a counseling situation depends on the personalities of both the client and the counselor.

In an effective counseling relationship Carl Rogers stressed that the counselor must show unconditional positive regard, be congruent, and be empathic toward the client in order for the client to internalize the changes he wishes to make. In his book, On Becoming a Person,

Carl Rogers asked a series of questions which counselors can use to examine the extent to which they are congruent, show unconditional positive regard, and are empathic toward their clients. A few of those questions are discussed here.

The first question Rogers posed was, "Can I be in some way which will be perceived by the other person as trustworthy, as dependable or consistent is some deep sense?" (Rogers, 1961:50) The counselor needs to be aware and accepting of all that he is experiencing at that moment, whether his feelings and attitudes be positive or negative. In this way, the counselor's experiencing is available to the client if and when the counselor needs to convey it.

"Can I let myself experience positive attitudes toward this other person - attitudes of warmth, caring, liking, interest, respect?" (Rogers, 1961:52) The counselor must not let his professional distance prevent him from being perceived as human in the eyes of the client. He must be willing to be deeply involved with that client on a "gut-level" basis. The transparency of the counselor in revealing his own shortcomings to the client often times encourages the client to strip himself of any defenses and admit some of his own shortcomings.

"Am I secure enough within myself to permit him his separateness?" (Rogers, 1961:52-53) The strength the counselor finds in himself and in his identity allows him to delegate to the client the right to be that client's own person. This delegation involves the right of the client to make his own choices even when they conflict with what the counselor feels is best. The counselor recognizes the client's worth and ability to be responsible for himself and his actions and does not reject the client when the client dares to contradict the counselor.

"Can I let myself enter fully into the world of his feelings and personal meanings and see these as he does?" (Rogers, 1961:53) This attitude removes a counselor from the role of a problem solver and involves him in taking a willing leap into the client's world to try to understand just what the client is going through at that very moment. Although the exploration is risky and often times frightening, the counselor is willing to "feel" his way through with the client, revealing all the ugliness and goodness that was never before permitted awareness. The counselor utilizes all of his senses to empathically describe what this client's world is really like.

"Still another issue is whether I can be acceptant of each facet of this person which he presents to me. Can I receive him as he is?" (Rogers, 1961:54) The counselor must realize that his nonacceptant attitude toward a client in any way will prevent any personal growth for that client. By creating an accepting atmosphere, free of judgment or rejection, the counselor allows the client to search himself without the need for any defenses. The counselor's acceptance of this client does not have to mean approval. The counselor is merely receptive of what the client actually is.

"Can I meet this other individual as a person who is in the process of becoming, or will I be bound by his past and by my past?" (Rogers, 1961:55) The counselor and the client must deal with their experiencing in the present. Hopefully, the counselor will convey the idea that the client, because he is in a process of becoming, has the right to change, to make choices for himself and to be responsible for those choices. The counselor's confidence in the client's potential ability to be himself can partially give the client the courage to change.

The counselor must work in a positive direction toward fulfilling the necessary qualifications of an

effective helping relationship. The higher the degree to which the counselor is perceived by the client as being congruent, showing positive regard, and being empathic, the higher the degree of growth resulting from the relationship. This growth enables the client to achieve his desired changes, to better unite his real self and his ideal self.

Counseling and Consultation

Through counseling with individuals and groups of students, and through consulting with parents, teachers and administrators, counselors can be dynamic in promoting desired changes in students. This section of Chapter II will review several cases which will hopefully give a broader view of the importance of the elementary school counselor.

1. Elementary School Counseling and Consultation: Their Effects on Teachers' Perceptions

Third grade students, matched for socioeconomic status and geographical location in the community, were selected for counseling. Using an Achievement-Oriented Behavior Scale the teachers estimated each pupil's development of work attitudes and skills associated with school achievement. The students were divided up into five

groups, each receiving different amounts of counseling. After the 12 week experimental period, teachers were again asked to rate the counseled students.

Results showed that in all five groups teachers perceived improvement in total adjustment, especially the group that was the subject of consultation between a guidance worker and teacher or parent for one hour per week for a period of 12 weeks.

2. Group Counseling With Primary School-Age Children

Three first grade students were selected for this study. One boy was referred because of his inattentiveness and disruptive influence in the classroom. The other two children were chosen because it seemed that they could benefit from such an experience, not because of any major problems.

The group met once a day, five days in a row. A systematic observation in the classroom as well as anecdotal records provided additional data. The children were given the opportunity to learn about feelings and behaviors, their own and others'. The counselor was allowed to respond more fully to each child and to facilitate self-awareness through the group process.

Behavior of the boy who had been especially disruptive and inattentive improved greatly, coming from an average of 48% of his time spent attending to lesson-oriented activities to 77%. The other two children also greatly enjoyed the counseling sessions. The other boy exhibited noticeable improvements in self-assurance while the girl exhibited no noticeable changes.

3. Art Counseling in an Educational Setting: Self-Concept Change Among Pre-Adolescent Boys

Two groups of fifteen boys each who had just finished sixth grade were given a pre-test and then met with the counselor every day for a period of eight weeks. One group received intensive non-directive counseling and the other received art centered counseling. The primary technique of the art approach was to use art as a means of providing conditions in which pre-adolescents feel free to verbalize their feelings and to think about themselves in the presence of adults. A difference in their growth of positive self-concept was then determined by the pre and post tests, observations and follow-up studies conducted 14 months later.

The outcomes of the study indicated that the art counseling approach was more effective in bringing about

self-concept changes among pre-adolescent boys than was the traditional non-directive counseling program. The changes in self concept seemed to remain remarkably stable over a 14 month period which bridged the transition into adolescence.

4. Task Oriented Counseling Experiences for Slow Learning Third Graders

For a period of six weeks 48 counselors worked with teachers to help those children in reading who were slow learners. Specific objectives were set up to:

- a. Create an atmosphere of acceptance and belonging
- b. Create successful learning patterns through program experience
- c. Respond to spontaneous expressions of each student, whether the expressions be positive, negative, neutral
- d. Create a sense of responsibility for learning in each student

Through daily instruction in a counseling atmosphere the counselors helped the students, on an average, to considerably raise their achievement levels in reading. Other

favorable effects such as improved behavior and adjustment were noted but were not highly significant.

5. An Action Approach to Group Counseling

A group of low achieving fifth grade boys were counseled to determine if an improvement, due to the counseling and its results, could be seen in the areas of academic work, personality, attitude, and self-assurance. Pre and post arithmetic achievement tests were administered, homework assignments and grades were recorded, self-assurance and attitudes towards others were noted by means of tests and anecdotal records. Great improvement in completing and returning homework assignments was noticed, attitudes towards others improved, but no difference was noticed in the children's attitudes towards themselves.

6. Pupil Behavior Change Through Group Counseling and Teacher Consultation

A second grade classroom with several disruptive students was chosen for this study. Pre and post tests were administered and audio-visual tapes were used to record the action of the pupils. The counselors involved worked in groups with the children and consulted with the teachers as well, thus involving everyone in the study.

A few children showed great improvement in their behavior, while most of the students showed promising behavior change. All students showed some significant amount of improved behavior change.

7. Investigation of Short Term Counseling With White Pre-Adolescents Rated Low on Social Status by Their Peers

One hundred forty-four sixth grade boys and girls were given a series of sociometric questionnaires. The children who were consistently in the bottom third of the students tested, were counseled daily for a period of three weeks. At the end of the three week session all 144 students took the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, California Test of Personality, and a check list of behavior. Sociometric questionnaires were given again to see if the counseling did indeed aid those initially low rated students. The results of the tests showed that those students had improved their self-concept and were adjusting better socially to the other students. The counseling had helped them become more self-assured, thus helping to enable them to improve both their personal and social status.

Summary

Counseling with students and consulting with parents and teachers has been shown to be very beneficial to elementary school students. Studies have indicated that often the results of the counseling are surprising in that the counseling process does not focus directly on improving basic academic skills but rather on the difficulties the child has in meeting the demands of the educative process. Yet often the child's classroom performance improves greatly due to the improvements made in personal expression.

Studies with elementary students are informative and interesting. Results may not always be statistically significant or even consistent. Yet they tell us that the counseling process is important and should be extensively developed at the elementary level.

The joint efforts of parents, teachers, administrators, counselors and even the students themselves are necessary in order to develop the "whole" child, thus enabling them to live "whole" lives.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

As stated previously, the problem of this paper was to determine what relationship exists between counseling received in an elementary school, and improved:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

To establish this relationship a questionnaire was used to survey parents, teachers, the counselor, and elementary school students who have previously been involved in counseling. The findings will be presented in Chapter 4 of this paper in case study form.

Population Description - Sampling Procedure

The population for this survey consists of five elementary school children who presently attend grade schools in the Bozeman School District. Because of the organization of the different grade levels in the Bozeman School System, only the grades between Kindergarten and Fourth are represented here. The children who were

chosen for this survey will have received counseling from the district's Elementary School Counselor for a period of at least five months.

Methods of Collecting Data

The Elementary School Counselor went through her files and selected the names of children who had received counseling from her for at least five months. From this list of names she selected those families who she thought would be a representative sample for this study. After these people were chosen they were contacted by the school counselor and asked if they wished to be involved. The consenting population was then narrowed down to five families. In addition, the counselor talked with the teachers of these students. The researcher also contacted the parents, teachers, children and counselor and individually interviewed them personally in their homes at a time most convenient for both them and the researcher. Appropriate questionnaires for students, parents, teachers, and counselor were administered at that time.

Method of Organizing Data

Results obtained from the five interviews were then compiled from the questionnaires and ensuing

conversations. These results were written up in case study form. The relationship between counseling and improved behavior, academic work, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment was then determined, in-so-far as they related to these people interviewed.

Summary

Five families whose elementary school aged children have received help from a school counselor were chosen to participate in this study. The results obtained from the interviews and questionnaires administered helped to determine whether this counseling did indeed assist the child in the areas of improved behavior, academic work, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment. No effort was made to infer or generalize these findings to other similar populations. This study is merely a description of the various people involved and their reactions to the counseling that has taken place.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Counselor and Teachers

Counselor

1. In your opinion, what were the reasons that _____ (child's name) was referred for counseling?

Teacher

1. Why did you refer _____ (child's name) for counseling by the school counselor? List specific reasons.

2. Do you feel that _____ (child's name) has benefited by this counseling? List specific reasons.

3. Have you noticed any improvement in these areas:

- a. behavior
- b. academic work
- c. self-concept
- d. personal and social adjustment

4. Does this improvement seem to be more noticed in the classroom, on the playground, or equally noticed in most circumstances?

5. Are you pleased with the results you see?

6. Does _____ (child's name) seem comfortable with the changes he might have adopted?

7. What does _____ (child's name) seem to think of the counseling sessions?

QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents

1. In your opinion, what were the reasons your child was referred for counseling? List specific reasons.

2. Do you feel that _____ (child's name) has benefited by this counseling? List specific reasons.

3. Have you noticed any improvement in these areas:

- a. behavior
- b. academic work
- c. self-concept
- d. personal and social adjustment

4. Does this adjustment seem to be more noticeable at home with the family (parents, siblings), playing with friends, or equally noticed in most circumstances?

5. Are you pleased with the results you see?

6. Does _____ (child's name) seem comfortable with the changes he might have adopted?

7. What does _____ (child's name) seem to think of the counseling sessions?

QUESTIONNAIRE

Students

1. A. Why do you think your teacher asked you to meet with the school counselor?

B. Do you think that those situations have changed since you first saw the counselor? Please explain your answers. Note improvements mentioned in areas of:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

2. What do you think about the counseling sessions you have had? Note what is liked most, least.

3. Do you feel better after talking to the counselor?

4. Does it bother you to miss class time when you go to be with the counselor?

5. Is it hard to make up the work you miss?

6. Do you like school?

7. Has talking with the counselor helped you to like school more now than you used to?

8. Has talking with the counselor helped you get along better at home and when playing with your friends?

9. Do you think that everyone in your school should have the chance to visit with the counselor like you do?

10. Are you happy being who you are?

Chapter 4

REVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

The role of the elementary school counselor has been extensively discussed in the previous three chapters but can be briefly summarized here as that of a facilitator of change. Through counseling the client comes to see himself as he is and also as he wishes to be. With patient guidance the counselor assists the client in adapting new behaviors and philosophies that coincide with his ideal self, thus slowly "becoming" the person he wishes to be. This change is often slow and difficult to discern, especially if the client has been troubled for a long time. For this very reason, elementary school counselors are vital. They can help children at an early age while they are still spontaneous, eager and open, to work through their problems and adjust accordingly.

Several studies have been done describing counselors and their work, with more material being made available all the time. The case studies presented in Chapter 2 of this paper represent work done in other parts of our country. This chapter will present five case studies compiled in Bozeman, Montana. Because the

population of this study is not representative of the entire city of Bozeman, no inferences or generalizations can be made. However, much is to be learned from descriptive case study contents.

Each question is stated, followed by the responses of the counselor, teacher, parent, and child. The answers given are abbreviated from the original answers, but the authenticity of the responses has not been lost. No names were used here to protect the individual's right to privacy.

Case Study I

1. Why was this boy referred for counseling?

Counselor: ". . . I feel the reasons he was referred were due in part to the fact that he is the only black child in his school. He has, apparently, been the target of alot of teasing and ridicule, for which in turn he would lash out against the children in unacceptable means of behavior. For example he would spit, hit, kick, and trip the other children in the school when they would tease or threaten him. He became hard to handle within the classroom. He also appeared to be quite unhappy much of the time. . ."

Teacher: ". . .He had academic problems, in that he would not make the effort to do his work. His social adjustment is also not what is expected of a child his age. . ."

Parents: ". . . Our boy has had a very stormy background and feels frightfully insecure. This is displayed in most everything he does. . ."

Child: ". . . Because I have troubles sometimes, and I act wrong, even wild sometimes 'cause I get so upset. . ."

2. Do you feel that this child has benefited from the counseling?

Counselor: ". . . Yes, I feel that he has benefited from our counseling relationship. He seems to have more confidence in himself and is able to handle many situations better. He does not seem so quick to become angry with the other children in the school and appears to be more adept at handling uncomfortable situations in a more acceptable manner. . ."

Teacher: ". . . I cannot see that the changes that he has made can be attributed to counseling. He is eight years old and was adopted only two years ago. He needs security and the family will make most of the improvements, I believe, not the school counselor. . ."

Parents: ". . . He needs all the love and attention he can get. He craves security and being helped at school as well as at home has benefited him a great deal. . ."

Child: ". . . Yea, she has helped me settle down some, relax more. . ."

3. Have you noticed any improvement in the areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, personal and social adjustment?

Counselor: ". . . As stated above, I feel that he has improved behaviorally and I also think that he feels a little more confident about himself. This confidence shows up especially in coping with situations that before would have triggered off a fight or explosion among him and his peers. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Yes I see some improvement in each of those areas but it is a slight improvement. . ."

Parents: ". . . Yes there is growing improvement, but he still has so very far to go. . ."

Child: ". . .Yea. Sometimes we just play games, though, and don't talk much. . ."

4. Does this improvement seem to be more noticeable in the classroom, on the playground, or equally noticed in most situations?

Counselor: ". . .I feel the improvement shown by this boy is readily observed both in the classroom and on the playground. He displays much more control over various situations than he used to. . ."

Teacher: ". . . The boy is making some progress in his adjustment and it shows in most all that he does. . ."

Parents: ". . . The adjustment is over-all. Slowly but surely we can see that he is living in the present, instead of in the past. . ."

Child: ". . .Most of the time. Sometimes I don't like some of the kids, though. They still tease me sometimes and I feel bad. . ."

5. Are you pleased with the results that you see?

Counselor: ". . . Yes, definitely. I only hope that he will become more confident and self-assured as our counseling relationship becomes stronger. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Yes, He is a delightful boy and with the proper encouragement which he seems to be getting now, he will be alright. . ."

Parents: ". . . Oh yes, we are grateful for the help he has been given. Every little bit of assistance is welcomed, if it is offered in the proper manner. . ."

Child: ". . . I need to be better more, but I am happier now than I was before, I was real lonely before. . ."

6. Does the child seem comfortable with the changes he might have adopted?

Counselor: ". . . I feel he has grown alot in the past school year and may not be aware of all the changes which have taken place within him. These changes have been gradual and often times such gradual changes are not noticeable to the child. I'm not certain, either, that he understands what our counseling relationship entails, although he has experienced what it feels like to share with another person and have someone also understand what it is like to be the person he is. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Yes he does. He is a good boy and tries very hard to do the right thing. . ."

Parents: ". . . We have had only a few minor incidents lately. He seems to be doing better all the time. . ."

Child: ". . . Sometimes. I don't get so mad so easy any more. . ."

7. What does he seem to think of the counseling sessions?

Counselor: ". . . I feel that he has positive feelings about the therapy sessions and I know from his descriptions that he enjoys the time we spend together. However, as I mentioned above, I do not feel that he thoroughly understands what our counseling relationship entails. . ."

Teacher: ". . . He loves to attend his sessions with the counselor. He does not really understand why she sees him, though, for he calls her the "Speech Lady." He returns from each session bursting with news of their time together. . ."

Parents: ". . .He comes home all excited after he has had a counseling session. We hear the full report each week and are nearly as tickled as he is about his being counseled. . ."

Child: ". . . I really like to go. We do fun things together, like eat swiss cheese!"

Researcher's Summary

This boy's parents and teacher were reluctant to give much credit to counseling, as yet, for the improved behavior. They felt that the most important reason for the child's settling down is that now he realizes he is secure in a solid family relationship. The improvements have hopefully just begun for this boy.

Case Study II

1. Why was this boy referred for counseling?

Counselor: ". . .I feel that this boy was referred for counseling because of his lack of self confidence and his inability to handle himself in social situations. He also had an extremely difficult time making a decision, which I feel indicated his feelings of low self-sufficiency. . ."

Teacher: ". . .This boy was very sensitive at the first of the year, in fact he was so easily upset that he would cry quite often. He did not do his school work on time, gave up too easily, and sought too much extra attention from the teacher.

Even in the gym he would withdraw and stand alongside the wall and not join in any of the games. Outside at recess he seldom played with the other children, preferring to walk with the teacher and hold her hand. At times he was obstinate, at others he was terribly shy. . ."

Parents: ". . .Our boy is a very sensitive child. He gets upset easily and apparently he was having trouble in school. There were many mornings when he did not want to go to school, and yet he would not really open up and tell us what was bothering him. . ."

Child: ". . . I cried too much and did not want to do my work. I didn't like school that much. . ."

2. Do you feel that this child has benefited from the counseling?

Counselor: ". . .I feel that he has greatly benefited from the counseling relationship. He has been able to handle situations a lot better and appears to have built up confidence in himself with the understanding and affection shared in the counseling situation. . ."

Teacher: ". . .Yes, definitely! He now enjoys school most of the time, sticks to his work and only asks questions when he is really confused. He has made many new friends and is active with the other children at recess and during the gym periods. He seems to have forgotten about faking illnesses to get out of work. He looks forward to participating in class. . ."

Parents: ". . .He is more cooperative than before the counseling sessions started and really seems to enjoy going to school now. . ."

Child: ". . . I like going and playing all those fun games. . ."

3. Have you noticed any improvement in the areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, personal and social adjustment?

Counselor: ". . . He is now able to complete his school assignments with fewer distractions and less inattention. . ."

Teacher: ". . . There are many small improvements in the boy. The main improvements lie in the area of self-concept. Once he realized who he was and that he is an important person, his outlook changed and he showed improvement in many areas. . ."

Parents: ". . . His attitude towards school changed drastically and we were very happy to be able to encourage and help develop this change. . ."

Child: ". . . School seems easier now. I like to play with my new friends. . ."

4. Does this improvement seem to be more noticeable in the classroom, on the playground, or equally noticed in most situations?

Counselor: ". . . I feel the changes in this boy's behavior are equally noticeable both in the classroom and on the playground. In general he seems to feel more confident in himself and more adept at coping with situations in which he comes in contact. . ."

Teacher: ". . . I can see the improvements in both the schoolroom and on the playground. . ."

Parents: ". . . He seems to get along better with us and with his brother and sisters. Maybe it is because he is more at peace with himself. . ."

Child: ". . . I like school because I get along better with the kids, most of the time. . ."

5. Are you pleased with the results that you see?

Counselor: ". . . I am definitely pleased with the results I have seen in him since the beginning of our counseling relationship at the start of the school year. He appears to be more able to cope with difficult situations and appears to be able to make a decision with confidence. . ."

Teacher: ". . . He is really a joy to have in the room now; he used to agitate me considerably. . ."

Parents: ". . . We are happy that he has done so well. I [the mother] have even considered working fewer hours so that I would have more time at home with the children. Perhaps that would help even more. . ."

Child: ". . . I like being the person I am. . ."

6. Does the child seem comfortable with the changes he might have adopted?

Counselor: ". . . Yes, he seems to be pleased with the changes he has adopted. I am not sure, however, that he is totally cognizant of the alterations in his behavior and self-concept. He gets along better now with his classmates and does not seem to have the uncomfortable feelings he exhibited in the beginning of the year when he first engaged in group activities. . ."

Teacher: ". . . There is a noticeable positive change in the boy. He enjoys being well mannered. He realizes how beneficial this new behavior can be for him. . ."

Parents: ". . . He seems to be much happier. . ."

7. What does he seem to think of the counseling sessions?

All of the adults, and the child included, realize that the boy loves to go with the counselor. He eagerly awaits each future visit.

Researcher's Summary

This boy started the counseling sessions with very little self-pride and self-trust. Through the encouraging companionship and guidance of the counselor, he began to develop his own personal worth and liked what he saw. Now he eagerly awaits each counseling session and is proud of his new self. He enjoys working towards improving his friendships and his academic achievement.

Case Study III

1. Why was this child referred for counseling?

Counselor: ". . . I feel the reasons this girl was referred for counseling were centered around her inability to get along well with other children, especially on the playground before and after school and at recess time. She seemed to be aware of her own personal difficulties but somehow seemed unable to do anything about them. . ."

Teacher: ". . . She was definitely a behavior problem outside the school as well as in the classroom. She seemed to burst out of control at the drop of a hat and would take out her aggressions on any child around her. . ."

Parents: ". . . At times at home she will display a strong temper, sometimes flaring out of control for no reason at all. This happens relatively seldom, however, and we were surprised to learn that she had so much trouble at school. . ."

Child: ". . . Sometimes I get so mad. Guess people should just stay away from me when I get like that. . ."

2. Do you feel that she has benefited from this counseling?

Counselor: "Yes. I feel that much growth has taken place from the counseling relationship. She seems much more willing to cooperate in group situations and appears to be more controlled in her angry outbursts. This girl is also expressing herself verbally more now than before and seems happier with herself. . ."

Teacher: ". . . There is a noticeable difference in her behavior, however she still manages to really "let fly" when she is quite upset about something. She must learn to modify her behavior and be more consistent with her actions. . ."

Parents: ". . . There is a change in our daughter's behavior and we are very glad to see it. If she would be able to internalize this new behavior, certainly everyone would be alot happier!"

Child: ". . . I can see now that I do not always need to get so angry, and yet sometimes it is hard to not get mad. Sometimes people really bug me. . ."

3. Have you noticed any improvement in the areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, personal and social adjustment?

Counselor: ". . .I feel that she has improved especially in the areas of behavior, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment. She seems to be able to express herself more freely and does not burst out as she did before. I feel also that she is happier with herself. Although she at times has difficulties in the area of interpersonal relationships,

I feel she is aware of this fact and is more able to cope with this situation than she was before the establishment of our counseling relationship. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Because she has learned to control herself more these last few weeks, her school work and her social status have both been improved. . ."

Parents: ". . . Learning to control her temper has done alot for her. Old friends are coming to visit her more often and she is making new friends. This has done wonders in reinforcing her new behavior and in building her ego. . ."

Child: ". . .I think I get along better now that I don't get so mad so easy. . ."

4. Does this improvement seem to be more noticeable in the classroom, on the playground, or equally noticed in most situations?

Counselor: ". . .I feel that the changes observed are noticeable in all situations. . ."

Teacher: ". . . She is learning to control herself much better than she used to but "forgets" every now and then, regardless of where she is at the time. . ."

Parents: ". . . She tries very hard to control herself but now and then has to blow off some steam and does not always use her best judgment concerning where she gets angry. . ."

5. Are you pleased with the results you see?

Counselor: ". . . Yes, I am pleased. . . "

Teacher: ". . . Yes. I hope the good work keeps up . . . "

Parents: ". . . Yes. Her new behavior is a welcome change. Hopefully it will become second nature to her . . ."

Child: ". . . I like being good. Everyone is so nice to me. But it is hard to always be good. Giggle!"

6. Does this girl seem comfortable with the changes she might have adopted?

Counselor: ". . . At times it is so obvious that she is trying very hard to be good. One can almost feel the tension build within her just by watching her face. She is very proud when she does control her temper. We all are proud of her. . ."

Teacher: ". . . I feel that she definitely is put on the spot to control herself at times but she can do a good job and make situations around her alot more pleasant for everyone. . ."

Parents: ". . . Yes, she seems comfortable most of the time. . ."

Child: "It is better this new way, but I don't always act just right. . ."

7. What does this child seem to think of the counseling sessions?

Counselor: ". . . She enjoys the therapy sessions we have each week and looks forward to being with me . . ."

Teacher: ". . . Each visit she returns eagerly to inform the class of what went on in the session. Making up the class assignments does not bother her. She really enjoys the counselor. . ."

Parents: ". . . She enjoys the counseling sessions and talks about them to us and even to her neighborhood friends. . ."

Child: ". . . I really like the counselor. That is my best part of school. . ."

Researcher's Summary

This young girl has improved her behavior considerably. Her inability to get along well with other children, especially on the playground, also impaired her ability to get along well in the classroom. She would become easily upset and disrupt the activities with her angry outbursts. After receiving counseling for a period of five months she gained much control over her temper and is now doing well, realizing the importance of proper behavior.

Case Study IV

1. Why was this child referred for counseling?

Counselor: ". . . I feel the reason this boy was referred for counseling was due to his disruptive nature within the classroom. His teacher felt he was demanding an extraneous amount of attention which she was not able to give to him. It was her feeling that possibly he was acting out and disturbing the class because he was not getting enough attention either at home or at school. . ."

Teacher: ". . . This boy demanded so very much extra attention that soon he began to deeply irritate me and cause resentments within the classroom. I needed extra help with him and he was eager to receive the special attention. . ."

Parents: ". . . Robbie has always sought extra attention. I guess we have adjusted to his behavior at home and no longer worry about it. . ."

Child: ". . . My teacher lets me talk to the counselor because she doesn't always have time to talk."

2. Do you feel that this boy has benefited from this counseling?

Counselor: ". . . I feel that he certainly has benefited from the counseling relationship. He seems able to go back into the classroom after his therapy sessions and control his behavior in order to facilitate his own learning and that of his peers. At first he was as apt to become bothersome and a discipline problem after his therapy sessions as he was before the counseling relationship was established. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Now that he is seeing the counselor and has his own special friend to talk with, he no longer demands my undivided attention. He seems satisfied and the classroom routine runs more smoothly, allowing each student to receive his share of my attention. . ."

Parents: ". . . My son talks more now about his time spent with the counselor than he did before he started to see the counselor. He seems to really enjoy the sessions and I feel that he is benefiting from the help. . ."

Child: ". . . I like the counselor and feel good every time I talk with her. . ."

3. Have you noticed any improvement in the areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, personal and social adjustment?

Counselor: ". . . As stated previously, I feel that this boy has improved in the areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment. Over all, I feel he has been able to enhance his self image through the counseling relationship and therefore see himself as others see him, a willing and able student and peer. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Time once spent trying to get my attention is now spent in completing his assignments and participating in classroom activities. Therefore I have noticed improvements in all areas mentioned. . ."

Parents: ". . . He seems to be doing better in school, and has more interesting things to talk about with his friends. The counseling has apparently helped him. . ."

Child: ". . . I am doing better in school. I don't spend so much time talking when I should be working.

4. Does this improvement seem to be more noticeable in the classroom, on the playground, or equally noticed in most situations?

Counselor: ". . . The changes noticeable in this boy are equally observed in both the classroom and on the playground. . ."

Teacher: ". . . His adjustment is basically over-all. . ."

Parents: ". . . He seems happier because he now has a very special friend, but he gets along as he always has here at home. . ."

Child: ". . . Things are about the same for me."

5. Are you pleased with the results you see?

Counselor: ". . . I am pleased with the results in him and in our counseling relationship because of the improvements I feel have taken place. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Definitely. He is a much better student now. . ."

Parents: ". . . Yes we are happy with the results of the counseling. . ."

Child: ". . . I know I do not bother my teacher and friends so much now. It's better this way. . ."

6. Does the child seem comfortable with the changes he might have adopted?

Counselor: ". . . He appears to be satisfied with the changes and alterations which he has experienced in his personality and had readjusted quite well to these changes. . ."

Teacher: ". . . He seems to be at ease. His actions are relaxed and natural. The changes in his behavior have been internalized. He is not seemingly threatened by any changes. . ."

Parents: ". . . There do not seem to be any problems with our son concerning the counseling and the changes he has made. . ."

7. What does the boy seem to think of the counseling sessions?

Counselor: ". . . I feel that he surely looked forward to the therapy sessions we share together. He appeared to want to come together with me and spend the time in therapy. . ."

Teacher: ". . . He was always ready before the counselor would come to the room to pick him up. He seemed to love the time spent with the counselor. . ."

Parents: ". . . We always hear what went on in the sessions. He truly enjoys the counselor's company and we appreciate all that has been done for our boy."

Child: ". . . I love to go with the counselor. We always have alot of fun together and I hate it when our time is up. . ."

Researcher's Summary

This boy was referred because of his disruptive behavior in the classroom. He also demanded so much of the teacher's time that she became resentful of even a single question from the boy. After he received counseling for over seven months the teacher and counselor were delighted to report tremendous improvements in almost every area of the boy's development. The boy's parents did not agree that such a tremendous change had taken place but did agree that his behavior had improved to some degree and that it was beneficial to the boy.

Case Study V

1. Why was the child referred for counseling?

Counselor: ". . . This girl was referred for counseling because of her obvious need for affection. She had a hard time relating to her peers both within the classroom and on the playground prior to the establishment of our counseling relationship. . ."

Teacher: ". . . She was a disruptive child on the playground as well as in the classroom. Her behavior was very rough and overbearing, an aggressive tomboy. Because of her actions her work was often not completed, or turned in late. . ."

Parent: ". . . Last year my daughter and her teacher had a personality conflict which resulted in poor communication and little accomplished academically and socially for our daughter. This year she has a very good teacher but counseling is still being continued to help the girl as much as possible in her

development. I do not really know what her problem is this year. . ."

Child: ". . . I know I see the counselor because I get too rough and do not play fair. I am pretty strong. . ."

2. Do you feel that the child has benefited by this counseling?

Counselor: ". . . I feel that she has positively benefited from our counseling relationship in that she is now able to express herself verbally when she is angry or upset rather than physically reacting as she used to do. Also, within the school setting she seems more relaxed and confident that she will be able to handle a situation successfully. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Her behavior has been modified to the point that I sometimes think that the wild tomboy, sometimes bully, moved away and that an active, fairly aggressive young girl has transferred into our class. She is not nearly so obnoxious so often. . ."

Parents: ". . . Definitely, she has benefited from the counseling. . ."

Child: ". . . I know that I get along better with people when I'm not so rough. I'm glad that I could see the counselor. . ."

3. Have you noticed any improvement in the areas of improved behavior, academic work, self-concept, personal and social adjustment?

Counselor: ". . . I feel that she has improved in the areas of behavior, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment since the establishment of our counseling relationship. She appears to be more relaxed within the school setting and more sure of herself in social situations. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Because of her improvement in personal adjustment and self-concept, her relationships with her peers and her academic work have improved immensely. . ."

Parents: ". . . We see improvements all the way around. She likes school much better than she did before, her grades have improved, she takes more of an interest in her self, such as in her dress and styling her hair. Hopefully the counselor will continue to see her for the rest of the year and next year too. . ."

Child: ". . . I like school better now and do my work when I am supposed to, that makes things alot easier. . ."

4. Does this improvement seem to be more noticeable in the classroom, on the playground, or equally noticed in most situations?

Counselor: ". . . I feel that the improvement noted in her seems to be noticeable in both the classroom and on the playground in equal proportions. Her overall self-image as I see it, seems to be a brighter and happier one than it was prior to the establishment of our counseling. . ."

Teacher: ". . . On the playground she still tends to be wild as a March hare at times. Perhaps it would be safe to say that in the classroom she has shown the most improvement. . ."

Parents: ". . . It is hard to say because we do not keep that close a track on her school work. We notice the biggest change in the way she thinks about herself and in how she gets along when she is playing with her friends. . ."

Child: ". . . I don't know. Both places I guess."

5. Are you pleased with the results you see?

Counselor: ". . . I am definitely pleased with the results I have seen this far. She appears to be a much happier child and seems more willing and able to cope with situations now than she would have been prior to the establishment of our counseling relationship. . ."

Teacher: ". . . Yes I am pleased, for this change has been long overdue. . ."

Parents: ". . . We are glad to see the changes for she is doing better in school, takes better care of herself, and is not so pushy, so much of a bullish tomboy. . ."

Child: ". . . Kids seem to like me better when I am nicer. . ."

6. Does this girl seem comfortable with the changes she might have adopted?

Counselor: ". . . She does appear to me to be comfortable with the changes she had adopted. The changes do not apparently interfere, but rather enhance her interpersonal relationships among her peers and siblings. . ."

Teacher: ". . . At times she forces her behavior patterns so that she will conform better to the people she is with and the activities that are engaged in. Yet I do not feel that the forced actions are hurting her. She wants to change and is trying the best way she knows how. . ."

Parents: ". . . She looks and seems to feel better because of the counseling and the changes it has brought. She is relatively happy now, not so mean, thinks more of her self and is trying to improve her self-image. . ."

Child: ". . . It is hard to change but I want to do it. . ."

7. What does she seem to think of the counseling sessions?

Counselor: ". . . She definitely looks forward to our therapy sessions together. She seems to enjoy the relationship and I feel she is benefiting from the counseling. . ."

Teacher: ". . . The twice-weekly sessions with the counselor are eagerly looked forward to. She does not mind missing class and makes up the work she misses. . ."

Parents: ". . . She is proud to have the unique friendship with the counselor. None of her friends have this type of an association with an adult in the school. We always hear about what goes on in the counseling sessions, and yet we never hear about what goes on in the classroom. She idolizes the counselor. She will be heart broken next year in Willson School if she can no longer meet with the counselor. . ."

Child: ". . . I really like being with the counselor. I like it best when we go places together, like to get an ice cream cone. She is my best big friend. When I grow up I want to be either a vet or a counselor. . ."

Researcher's Summary

This girl has incorporated the most change of all five case study children within her self and her actions, due to the counseling sessions. Once she received the special adult attention that she craved, she realized the worthiness of her self and of her being. Practically her entire outlook changed for the positive.

Summary

Five case studies of elementary school children who have received help from Bozeman's Elementary School Counselor for a period of at least five months were presented here. The results of this descriptive study were compiled from answers given to the questionnaire and ensuing conversations. It can be easily seen from these results that the children did benefit from the counseling they received in the four areas of behavior, academic work, self-concept, and personal and social adjustment.

Counseling received at the elementary school level is most beneficial in that a majority of the work is preventative in nature. When a child is still open, spontaneous, and "fresh," therapy is usually more successful, for the child has not yet acquired so many inhibitions caused by social pressures.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of literature concerning counseling in an elementary school was presented in Chapter 2 of this paper. In Chapter 4 a review of five case studies of elementary students who have received help from a counselor was presented. The summary, conclusions and recommendations resulting from this work will be presented in this chapter.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to direct special attention to the importance of counselors at the elementary school level. The problem of this paper was to determine the relationship which exists between counseling received in an elementary school and improved:

1. behavior
2. academic work
3. self-concept
4. personal and social adjustment

In order to determinethis relationship, five students who have received counseling from the elementary school counselor for a period of at least five months were selected from the files of the counselor. Due to the

organization of the Bozeman elementary school system, only grades Kindergarten through Fourth were represented in this study. The school counselor, respective teachers, parents, and children involved in this study were then interviewed in their homes by the researcher. Results of the interviews obtained by use of the three questionnaires and ensuing conversations were then compiled and presented in Chapter 4 of this paper. A brief comment on each case study was made by the researcher and included as part of an individual summary of each case study.

The results of the interviews showed that in each child studied, some degree of improvement was made in each of the areas of self-growth, represented by the categories of behavior, academic work, self-concept and personal and social adjustment. All persons interviewed were pleased with the improvements shown and were confident that the "new behavior" was being internalized into part of the child's developing personality.

These results cannot be generalized to other populations because they are merely drawn from a very few selected number of Bozeman elementary students who have received counseling. There is considerable merit, however, in the positive findings of this descriptive

study. Hopefully this will encourage other researchers to determine additional results and their findings can be used to help promote the hiring of elementary school counselors.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from this descriptive study of five case studies of Bozeman elementary students who have received counseling. A few are listed below:

1. Through counseling, these students were able to make constructive changes in themselves that helped to promote positive self-growth.
2. Teachers were helped to become more aware of students who received counseling, thus enabling them to work with the counselor in assisting the students in their personal development.
3. Parents were also helped to become "more aware" of their children so they too could be an integral part of the child's changes.
4. Teachers also became more aware of other students in their classes and could then better attend to their needs. Special attention given the counseled

students soon was extended to special attention given all students. Possible future counselor referrals were then reduced, since the teacher was able to offer some preventative help to the students herself.

Recommendations

On the basis of the results of this study, the researcher wishes to make several recommendations.

1. Properly united, counselors, teachers, and parents can work together to reinforce the efforts of the child in respect to the changes he is trying to make.

2. The teacher, parent, counselor team can be achieved through good communication and resulting consultation. Each person should be involved in the planning, initiation, and results of one another's work.

3. The procedures and goals of counseling should be made known to school personnel and to the general public. Too often counseling is not thoroughly understood, causing alienations and resentments. A few of the means through which the counselor and his work can be better understood by the public are:

- a. P. T. A. meetings
- b. bulletins sent home by the children

- c. inservice training
- d. counselor involvement in school-community activities
- e. public news media announcements

4. Teachers should be trained in basic counseling theories and practices. The greatest number of counselor-child contacts can be made by the teacher since she is in direct contact with such a large number of students every day.

5. More elementary school counselors should be hired so that the counselor-student ratio can be lowered, thus providing a more effective counseling program.

6. Children should be encouraged to visit the counselor on their own if they wish to do so. Self-referrals are as important as teacher-referrals.

7. At the elementary level more counseling should be attempted through the varied approaches offered through art, music, physical activities, and home economic skills, to list a few.

8. When a child is referred for counseling by the parents, teachers, or whomever, the child should be informed of the reasons for his referral. This way he will have a more concrete reason to promote self growth and attain favorable goals.

9. Teachers and parents should be given more information concerning the child-rearing process as it relates to the child's self-concept.

10. More elementary school counselors should be included as part of the essential educational staff. Counselors should be looked at as necessary factors in the personal development of the students, not as an extra budgetary expense.

11. More research should be done concerning the results of counseling at an elementary school level. The findings, if consistently positive, can be used to promote the hiring of counselors at the elementary school level.

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