

Collaborative Consultation and Program Evaluation

Melissa B. Lusky and Richard L. Hayes

The article describes how consultants, working with school personnel, can use an action research approach to implement a program of value-driven needs assessment. The presentation is focused on a collaborative consultation model of program evaluation. A case example illustrates the collaborative development of instruments for assessing the effectiveness of a school guidance and counseling program.

Rapid social change is challenging American education to undertake systemic reform. In responding to calls for reform, educators must engage in a reconceptualization of the entire educational enterprise, including guidance services in the schools. Such reform requires a movement from a crisis-oriented delivery of guidance services to comprehensive, developmental counseling programs that are equal partners with instructional programs.

During this era of widespread school reform (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Glickman, 1998; Murphy & Hallinger, 1993; Tom, 1997), professional counselors, like other "support staff" in the school, are being asked to justify their programs as meeting stated needs. Despite the importance attached to program evaluation, school counselors rarely take it upon themselves to evaluate their programs systematically (Schmidt, 1996). This under-involvement may be due to their lack of training in research methods appropriate for evaluating school programs (Lewis, 1983; Paisley & Hayes, 1997), time constraints on the school counselor, or concerns that the outcome of any evaluation will be negative (Lewis, 1983; Lombana, 1985). In our experience, school counselors may also be reluctant to conduct program evaluations due to concerns that evaluation may be politically motivated, and, therefore, the results of any evaluation will not be favorable. Whatever the reasons, if school counselors are to maintain funding for school counseling programs, they will need to demonstrate that the services they provide are effective in achieving desired outcomes (Bruckner & Thompson, 1987; Gibson, Mitchell, & Higgins, 1983; Jackson et al., 1993).

EVALUATING SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS

A primary reason for evaluating school guidance and counseling programs has been to review intended outcomes and make suggestions for improving practice (Drozdz &

Goldfried, 1996; Eisen & Dickey, 1996; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Lambert & Cattani-Thompson, 1996; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). In addition, program evaluations are often conducted to provide accountability to state legislatures, departments of education (Allen, 1992; Fairchild, 1993; Schmidt, 1996), and to the recipients of counseling and guidance services (Beutler, Kim, Davison, Karno, & Fisher, 1996; Vacc, Rhyne-Winkler, & Poidevant, 1993; Whiston, 1996). Accountability is achieved by sharing information about program effectiveness with parents, community members, and government officials to assure them that their resources are being put to good use.

Participation in program evaluation has also helped counselors to establish their worth and promote their commitment to continued quality assurance (Keene & Stewart, 1989). Concrete evidence that counselors' contributions to the school's overall mission are both substantial and worthwhile can be extremely helpful in establishing credibility. In addition, counselors who are committed to ongoing program evaluation will be more likely to revise their practices to ensure that they are meeting the constantly changing needs of students in today's multicultural, technologically sophisticated, and rapidly changing society (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 1994; Cuban, 1990; Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 1997; T. Robinson & Ginter, 1999). The results of a comprehensive program evaluation can also be instrumental in advancing the viability of school counseling as a profession (Aubrey, 1982; Knapper, 1978).

A widely used method of evaluation, the *experimental approach*, involves using pre- and posttesting of experimental and control groups for assessing the impact of specific counseling interventions (Borders & Drury, 1992; Lewis, 1983). By controlling experimental variables, the use of this approach can help increase program evaluators' confidence in the specific statements they make concerning the particular counseling and guidance services they investigate.

Melissa B. Lusky is a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology, and Richard L. Hayes is a professor, both in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services at The University of Georgia, Athens. Correspondence regarding this article should be sent to Richard L. Hayes at 402 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 (e-mail: rlhayes@arches.uga.edu).

(Schmidt, 1993). Experimental approaches can be especially useful for pinpointing behavioral changes across a group of students due to participation in counseling services (Myrick & Dixon, 1985).

Although tightly controlled studies are ideal in experimental settings, some researchers have questioned their applicability to school settings (Goldman, 1989; Hayes & Horne, 1994; Pine, 1981). Specific concerns associated with doing experimental studies in school settings include the following: (a) Such studies create the need to base decisions about the delivery of counseling services on how well these services lend themselves to the research design instead of how well they address the needs of the individuals seeking services; (b) study results are only obtained after an intervention has been completed, making it impossible to use the results to decide about ways to improve an intervention while it is in progress; and (c) controlled studies often look at a narrow range of issues, which makes it unlikely for them to have much impact on multifaceted counseling and guidance programs that serve students functioning in an ever-changing environment (Pine, 1981).

As an alternative to conducting experiments, descriptive statistics have often been used to demonstrate the effectiveness of counseling and guidance services over time. Some of these approaches include the use of standard scores and tallies of both the frequency with which counseling and guidance services are provided and information regarding the number of individuals seeking services (Lewis, 1983). Standardized evaluation instruments have also been used to collect data regarding the provision of counseling and guidance services (Murray, Levitov, Castenell, & Joubert, 1987). Although the use of a prepackaged assessment can be useful for collecting data on the artifacts of selected school practices, the results are too often inadequate for answering questions relevant to a particular school or a particular counseling and guidance program. Even the most rigorous methodology can prove useless if the data generated are not relevant to identifying the needs of a particular school.

An additional factor to consider in evaluating school programs is the general failure of a century of empiricist research in education and psychology to provide workable solutions to real-world problems (Goldman, 1989; Hayes, 1994; Koch, 1981; D. N. Robinson, 1993). Counselor educators, in particular, are challenged to recognize the ineffectiveness of counseling research in demonstrating effective practices and, where such practices exist, the improbability of any results changing existing practices (Howard, 1986; Torbert, 1981). It is our opinion that research on school counseling has too often been focused on fabricated analogues that have sought experimental "control" at the expense of pragmatic validity.

Further complicating the picture is the observation that school counselors do not conduct research on their own practices. Paisley and Hayes (1997) have suggested that school counselors are not actively involved in research because (a) counselor educators tend to teach empirical research methods, which are often difficult to apply to school settings; (b) school counselors tend not to see a clear

connection between research and practice; and (c) current research models lack generalizability for different schools and situations. Models for counseling research must be developed that can account for the inherent interdependence of client and context in the generation and solution of counseling-related problems (Hoshmand & Polkinghorne, 1992; Howard, 1986; Lieberman, 1992). As Hayes (1994) has argued, "such *real world research* arises from the lived experience of the participants, who share in the definition of questions for study, help to formulate alternatives, and are fully engaged in the analysis and interpretation of any findings" (p. 10). Such an approach to research is also inherently democratic because those persons who experience the reality of the problem on a daily basis are directly involved in the process (Hall, 1981). Recognizing the importance of solving problems collaboratively with those affected most directly by them (Hayes & Lunsford, 1994; Lieberman, 1992; Newmann, 1993), counselor educators who conduct research in schools will be engaged in collaborative action research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lewin, 1946; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Reason & Rowan, 1981; Torbert, 1981). Working with counselor educators in this way, practicing school counselors can learn to do more responsive action research as part of their own practice.

A CALL FOR NEW EVALUATION MODELS

The search for democratic models is not confined to research but is an expression of a larger reform movement that is effecting change worldwide in major institutions, including government, religion, and economics. In education, especially, communities throughout the United States are attempting to reclaim authority for their schools (Gluckman, 1993, 1998; Hayes, 1993a; Hess, 1993). Central to this movement is a call for local control and empowering school personnel by placing the authority for decisions closest to those responsible for making them (Hayes, 1993b; Lightfoot, 1986; Maeroff, 1988). In response, new models for preparing school personnel and delivering needed services are being developed that account for the unique relationships to be found in today's diverse public schools (Goodlad, 1990; Hayes, Dagley, & Horne, 1996; Murphy & Hallinger, 1993).

Current school reform efforts, along with a lack of appreciation for the contributions of school counselors, increased competition to secure the postsecondary education of choice, decreased fiscal resources, and an increased emphasis on multiculturalism make it imperative for counselors and counselor educators to devise program evaluation models that stress consumer input. Obtaining consumer input in the development of program evaluation instruments, especially those intended to identify and assess the needs of the whole school community, will ensure that counselors and counselor educators account for the larger context within which the school functions. Understanding this context will require approaches to program evaluation that recognize competing needs and the larger set of political forces that drive them.

In formulating new models for school counseling research, we believe that a primary consideration is that it be useful, that any knowledge generated be tested against its viability for the individual (Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997; Howard, 1986). For research to be useful, however, it must be based in the real world of practice. Only through the productive interaction of theory and practice in a primarily practice-based approach to inquiry can we understand fully what we regard as the knowledge of practice. Accepting that researchers and their participants are inseparable aspects of any research design, we believe that the researcher must consider the perspective of the user of the generalization—seeking epistemological harmony with the reader's experience—as a natural basis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have called this concept "naturalistic generalizations."

We accept the assumption that research and action are inextricably intertwined in practice such that knowledge is always gained in action and for action. Thus the "subject" and researcher are both involved as *participants* in the mutual definition of research in which problems are identified, alternatives considered, plans developed, programs implemented, and outcomes evaluated *by* rather than *for* the participants. In such a model, the role of the researcher is as expert-collaborator in stimulating the process of self-reflection on professional practice.

Achieving these goals requires a new approach to program evaluation that concentrates on developing instruments that are sensitive to local issues and changing practices. Program evaluators will need to focus more on assessing needs through a process of instrument development that lets the values of the participants determine the data to be collected instead of instrumentation prescribing the data and determining the values. Creating a needs assessment instrument that responds to the specific concerns of a particular school community requires community-wide values clarification in anticipation of, rather than in response to, any assessment.

A MODEL FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

We visualize the change process that leads to a model for a comprehensive guidance and counseling program as having five major phases: planning, analyzing, designing, implementing, and evaluating. Each phase contains specific tasks to be completed.

Planning

Successful change demands committed leadership and a supportive environment. Identifying existing human resources and assessing levels of support from the school board, superintendent, school administrators, staff, students, parents, and the community are a necessary first step. Affirming the school's mission, philosophy, and direction and clarifying the role of the guidance program are essential to reconceptualizing this program as part of realizing the school's mission. Creating a shared vision for the guidance program, selecting a curriculum model for the desired pro-

gram, establishing goals, and determining desired student outcomes demands the building of a collaborative team. Once these goals are achieved, the development of a program philosophy that is consistent with that of the larger school community can be undertaken through a survey of school climate.

Analyzing

Any problem, including changing a school's guidance program, can be understood as the difference between *what is* and *what could be*. Such understanding includes the perceptions of all program participants, data about related outcomes, and a vision for the future of the program. Sources that provide data to begin designing the program include a comparison of the current and desired programs, a survey determining current "customer" satisfaction, and prioritization of program elements.

Implementing

Although all steps to this point in the process have been directed toward implementing a renewed guidance program, activity is redirected to focus on the specific tasks associated with administering assessments for outcome evaluation, installing and testing program components, and modifying procedures based on process evaluation.

Evaluating

As the activities for the previous phase suggest, evaluating the program is an ongoing process. The formulating questions for evaluation, selecting an evaluation design and measurement instruments, and developing data collection procedures need to be considered at each step in the renewal process. Nonetheless, performance data need to be periodically and routinely analyzed and reported as the "first" step in the next round of renewal activities.

Assessing Client Needs

If faced with a lack of time or necessary training, or constrained by institutional barriers that prevent school counselors from assessing their clients' needs, schools may prefer to hire consultants to help with the process (Brown, 1989; Schmidt, 1996). Brown identified two key roles for consultants. The first is as an expert who "diagnoses" the program's problems and "prescribes" solutions. An alternative, and the role being advocated here, is one of collaboration, in which the consultant works with school staff to identify needs and develop plans to meet those needs. Counselor educators, who are trained in assessment and research design and are most likely accustomed to being viewed as the "expert," can find a new consultative role for themselves as research collaborators (Hayes & Horne, 1994). In such a collaborative relationship, the focus is on multiple "experts," wherein consultant, counselor, teacher, student, administrator, agency personnel, and family members come together as equal participants in problem solving a specific

ssue (Dettmer, Dyck, & Thurston, 1996; Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; Keys, Bemak, Carpenter, & King-Sears, 1998). As illustrated in the following case study, different constituencies may expect the consultant to play both roles simultaneously a position that ultimately proves untenable.

The first steps in program evaluation involve "gathering information" and "establishing rapport" (Baharoglu, 1989). Building rapport promotes the development of a mutually respectful relationship between the consultant and school staff. Once rapport is established, school staff will be more likely to trust the consultant, increasing the likelihood that recommended changes will take place.

To establish rapport, the consultant meets with school staff and program stakeholders and others with interests in the program to understand more fully their expectations for any proposed program evaluation. At this juncture, the differences between an expert and a collaborative role become apparent. During the initial meetings, the expert consultant explains the purpose of a needs assessment and related activities in the program evaluation process. Alternatively, the collaborative consultant attempts to understand the client's intended purposes for program evaluation and to engage school personnel in elaborating categories of evidence for an effective program. Keys et al. (1998) pointed out that "ultimately, in a collaborative consultation model, it is the sharing and transferring of knowledge and information among all team members that enables the group to determine and carry out a more comprehensive plan" (p. 127).

In the next steps, which begin the data-gathering phase, the collaborative consultant meets with different groups. Meetings with counselors, teachers, students, administrators, school officials, parents, and community leaders, as well as other stakeholders, provide a variety of perspectives and clarify the role of members of each group in the evaluation process (Brown, 1989; Keys et al., 1998). Unlike the expert, who seeks cooperation from program stakeholders in adhering to the proposed evaluation process, the collaborative consultant seeks input from program stakeholders to create a shared vision of the program evaluation process.

Information from consultation sessions is then used to identify the more functional, and often implicit, program goals (Friend & Cook, 1996; Russo & Kassera, 1989), which in our experience are not necessarily the same as the explicit goals presented in published materials. Once program goals have been identified, questions can be created for use in a survey of clients' needs (Rimmer & Burt, 1980).

Previous instruments for assessing needs have included questions about counselor helpfulness and the most and least important services provided by the school counseling and guidance program (Schmidt, 1996). Other instruments have comprised questions about interpersonal functioning, parent-child relations, and school adjustment (Stiltner, 1978). After the questions have been developed, the survey is piloted to obtain input from teachers, students, and parents about whether items on the survey adequately reflect program goals (Rimmer & Burt, 1980). On completion, the survey

is administered to all program stakeholders, including parents, students, and teachers (Rimmer & Burt, 1980).

If program renewal is to occur, several additional steps must be performed after the needs assessment is completed (Baharoglu, 1989; Rye & Sparks, 1991). The first step involves tallying responses to determine the needs of those surveyed (Rimmer & Burt, 1980; Russo & Kassera, 1989). Once the needs have been identified, the corresponding goals and objectives are prioritized based on the percentage of respondents who endorsed specific items (Rimmer & Burt, 1980; Russo & Kassera, 1989). Once the goals and objectives have been prioritized, they can be used to develop a plan for program renewal (Baharoglu, 1989; Rye & Sparks, 1991). Specifically, these goals and objectives can be used to (a) help determine how resources should be distributed, (b) direct efforts to promote communication among stakeholders, and (c) develop a plan that allows for optimal use of counselors' time and expertise (Rye & Sparks, 1991).

After the program renewal plan has been designed and implemented, program evaluations are done to assess the success and progress of the new program (Aubrey, 1982; Baharoglu, 1989). Program goals and objectives identified during the needs assessment are used to measure program effectiveness and to determine whether revisions or changes are needed (Rye & Sparks, 1991). These types of evaluations can help with accountability efforts by providing documentation of the contributions made by the program (Borders & Drury, 1992).

A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

A primary goal of the collaborative consultant is to help school personnel find workable approaches to problems that will enable them to develop a more responsive guidance plan. Rather than using a detached objective evaluation, the problems are framed, analyzed, and solved within a context. This context can be realized by using a democratic and collaborative process to identify the issues pertinent to the program stakeholders (Dettmer et al., 1996; Hall, 1981; Idol et al., 1994). Once the issues are identified, they can be used to guide the development of an instrument that is grounded in the practices and language of the program stakeholders. This approach expands the notion of the instrument from a simple survey to actual entry into the field (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In other words, the survey becomes the means through which program evaluators collaborate with program stakeholders to develop an instrument that is framed within the larger context of the school community. The result is an instrument that is derived from the values of the stakeholders rather than by the need to present the data in a particular form.

Gaining entry into the field requires an interactive relationship between the consultant and the stakeholders in the school community. The consultant can gain entry and establish credibility by making an effort to understand the school community. Meeting with the superintendent and school administration to get an idea of their vision for the

school renewal project and to establish the guidelines of the collaborative relationship is a primary part of this process (Keys et al., 1998). Developing effective working relationships with people in the school community and trying to understand difficulties they encounter during the process also helps the consultant establish credibility. In addition, it is important that the consultant help school personnel to understand how the process works and build a team that can carry out program renewal efforts. In the case example to follow, helping school personnel realize the need to understand the system before collecting any data was a central challenge to the success of the project.

Traditionally, intervention and needs assessment have been viewed as separate but related processes. In our approach to needs assessment, we view the process as a set of interventions. For example, stakeholder participation in the development of the needs assessment is viewed as an intervention because it gives program participants a feeling of empowerment. The feeling of empowerment occurs because stakeholders are given the message that their contributions are important and that there is a willingness to take their advice and collaborate with them. Because of their participation, they also develop a sense of ownership, which increases the likelihood of a schoolwide commitment to the program renewal efforts (Glickman, Hayes, & Hensley, 1992).

The act of talking with the superintendent and school board members can also be viewed as an intervention because it requires a reexamination of the school's current practices and future goals. Furthermore, school personnel may need to learn concrete methods for developing collaborative relationships with people inside and outside the school if the program renewal is to be successful. In the case example to follow, each of these components of the process—issue identification, instrument development, stakeholder participation, survey administration, and data evaluation—is presented to illustrate the dynamic nature of the collaborative process involved when evaluating programs with an action research model.

A CASE EXAMPLE

I (second author) was contacted initially as one of several persons who were recommended to the district superintendent by colleagues as capable of conducting an evaluation of the high school's guidance program. As the superintendent explained at the time, the school board had directed him to implement a comprehensive study of the guidance program, its goals, and the quality of its services. Such a study was to include administering a professionally developed needs assessment; soliciting input from parents, staff, students, and administration, and providing collaborative decision-making activities that would identify methods for improving current programs to meet specific needs. After several telephone conversations with the superintendent and one of the school board members, I was asked, in my role as consultant, to prepare a preliminary proposal for evaluating the program. This proposal, once created and submitted,

outlined the model for change process previously presented, including the five phases (planning, analyzing, designing, implementing, and evaluating) of the model, objectives and related tasks for each phase, a timetable for completing each phase, descriptions of the approaches to be used, a budget page with options for each phase of the project, and a brief description of my qualifications to complete the project.

On review by the superintendent and the school board and some clarification of details by me, the superintendent, and a member of the school board, it was agreed to undertake the first stage of the proposed project (planning phase and analysis phase). During these initial contacts, I worked to establish rapport by making an effort to understand the sometimes differing views of the superintendent, individual school board members, and selected stakeholders in the process, especially the school counselors and influential parents, regarding the need for program renewal. Critical to all parties to varying degrees was the necessity to include a needs survey. Two guiding principles for the evaluation were established: The process would be collaborative, and guidance was considered to be a schoolwide function.

Planning Phase

Individual, in-depth interviews and focus groups with program stakeholders, including professionals directly associated with the guidance program (i.e., school counselors, administrators), associated professionals (e.g., the school psychologist, the school social worker, special educators, teachers, students, parents, and representatives from community agencies) were used to collect information regarding the program's current strengths and weaknesses. This information was used to pinpoint organizational trends and information about how individual dynamics affect program effectiveness. The interviews also provided data about the knowledge and skills of the counselors.

I analyzed the compatibility of the school's mission, philosophy, and goals with those of the guidance program through a review of successful examples of correspondence between the two and identified areas for improvement. The information gained from this analysis was included in discussions with program stakeholders. These discussions focused on issues related to knowledge gained through experience and steps for further action regarding synchronizing the school's mission, philosophy, and goals with those of the guidance program.

Because organizational characteristics can affect the ability of members to be part of an effective team, a team effectiveness profile was developed. The school counselors, the superintendent, and other administrators completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) and the Kormanski-Mozenter Team Effectiveness Inventory (Kormanski & Mozenter, 1987). Data from these inventories were used to assess leadership styles, personality preferences, levels of interpersonal trust, and decision-making patterns that might have an impact on their abilities to function effectively as a team. Results were used to determine

how individual school personnel approach various tasks. Composite profiles containing information about collective strengths were also generated. This information was used during discussions with program stakeholders about using individual work styles to promote team development.

A central challenge facing school systems undergoing restructuring is how to respond to the organizational changes that arise from changing roles and responsibilities. In this case, the current superintendent was only in his second year in that position, having replaced a superintendent who had previously served more than 30 years in the role with quite a different leadership style and administrative structure. Part of the planning process involved team members articulating their formal roles and responsibilities and providing feedback to one another about how they perceive the others' roles. Discussions of roles and responsibilities focused on the impact of differences in perception and the presence of informal roles and responsibilities on organizational functioning. Issues of resolving differing expectations and establishing more integrated roles and responsibilities to promote optimal success were also discussed.

During each phase of the planning process, members used a problem-solving approach that involved identifying the problem, obtaining data about individual perceptions of the problem, considering alternative solutions, and forming a consensus about how to proceed. This process was used because it promoted collaborative and democratic problem solving. Furthermore, I anticipated that school personnel would be able to use this approach on an ongoing basis, thereby increasing the likelihood of success in attempts to collaborate when implementing and revising the counseling and guidance program.

Personnel completed a climate survey (Gelatt & Quinn, 1992) of attitudes toward restructuring the guidance program to assess the school culture in relation to efforts to implement a comprehensive study of the guidance program. The counselors, department chairpersons, special educators, and heterogeneous groups of students, teachers, and parents who completed the survey were selected deliberately to represent all subgroups within the school. This survey required respondents to provide information about their personal beliefs about the attitudes of selected reference groups toward the current guidance program and toward restructuring the program. In addition to questions about the guidance program, questions designed to assess views about all student support services provided by the school were also included in the survey.

Analysis Phase

As noted, a critical component of the proposed program evaluation was creating and administering a "professionally developed" needs survey. Indeed, it was just this caveat that prompted the superintendent to seek an outside consultant. Recognizing the potential for generating unreliable results using a survey of their own design, school personnel sought an expert who would identify an existing instrument that could be used to collect needed data. In discus-

sions with stakeholders, especially the superintendent, the school board, and the school counselors, the importance of developing a school-specific survey was stressed repeatedly if they were to have useful results. Instead of pulling a ready-made instrument "off the shelf," a more integrative approach was undertaken to combine the best of what the research literature had to offer with the results of the data collected during the planning phase.

I reviewed the pertinent literature on conducting needs assessments of counseling and guidance programs (Collison, 1982; Rimmer & Burt, 1980; Russo & Kassera, 1989; Rye & Sparks, 1991; Schmidt, 1996). Relevant instruments with substantial questions and formats appropriate for a program evaluation consistent with the structures and assumptions of this particular school were reviewed. Relevant portions were adapted for use (Gibson, 1990; Hutchinson & Bottorff, 1986; Schmidt, 1996). Information gained from the interviews conducted during the planning phase was used to identify significant areas of concern and to formulate hypotheses about how to produce results that would be useful and consistent with the stakeholders' assumptions about the guidance program and the larger school and community. Similarly, data obtained from the climate survey were used to determine the readiness of program stakeholders for change and to identify the issues to consider in building a survey responsive to community needs.

Conducting a needs survey that would capture the unique characteristics of the guidance program and, more specifically, the guidance department, program participants, and the school's culture (e.g., policies, social climate, history and reputation, community values) demanded the development of an instrument couched in the terms, phrases, and organizational shorthand of the school. Using the endemic language of the school meant that the survey was designed to include the terminology used by the members of the school community to designate specific services (e.g., special education services, peer helpers' program, school orientation, or knowing the important distinction between the school's guidance "program" and its guidance "department").

I developed the instrument by creating a preliminary survey and sending it to program stakeholders for review and feedback to confirm the goodness of fit. Program stakeholders revised the survey on several occasions by providing information about needed clarification and suggestions for additions and deletions. This process ensured that the survey did not contain incomprehensible educational or counseling jargon, that it was easy to complete, and that it responded to demographic constraints (e.g., an extremely high proportion of college-bound students, virtually no students eligible for free or reduced lunch), political issues (e.g., economic practices that favored residents of some parts of the community over others), and parental concerns (e.g., that students be adequately informed of opportunities to enhance the prospects for their admission to the postsecondary option of their choice).

The revisions addressed issues ranging from major conceptual questions about the purposes of the survey to minor

issues such as whether students would find it easier to indicate their answers by checking off boxes or marking on a line. These modifications also helped to ensure that the survey incorporated the terminology used by the school to designate specific services and programs. One of the primary assumptions guiding this process was that if people were responding to an instrument that did not correspond with the reality of the school, they would not be as motivated to respond honestly.

A fifth round of revisions produced few significant suggestions for change and the instrument was deemed ready for a trial distribution. A test sample of teachers ($n = 10$), parents ($n = 12$), administrators ($n = 3$), and students ($n = 28$) was drawn from the larger population by selecting respondents at random from within role categories and balancing representation by sex, race, years in the school, and so forth. The resulting sample completed the survey and made comments about its content and any difficulties they experienced in understanding and responding to the survey. The school board also reviewed the instrument. This test administration resulted in a final set of revisions based on the comments of all respondents.

Throughout the survey development process an effort was made to address issues related to generalizability and sampling. Sampling was not an issue with the final needs assessment instrument because it was administered to the entire student body ($n = 1,200$), all parent households ($n = 850$), counselors ($n = 8$), teachers ($n = 100$), and administrators ($n = 4$). Often when performing this type of program evaluation, it is necessary to generalize to the larger school based on responses from a randomized sample of the population. In this particular instance, however, the entire population was surveyed thereby making generalization unnecessary. In addition, it can be concluded with greater certainty that the results accurately depict the views of the entire school community.

After administering the survey, a statistical analysis of the results was completed and a report of significant findings was sent to the school. The analysis was written in plain English (i.e., devoid of educational or statistical jargon; e.g., "nearly all students who responded to the survey know their counselor [99.7%] and have met with him or her individually this year [94.8%]") and put in a form that was intended to be easily adapted for use by school personnel in subsequent planning. This goal was achieved by including a letter that provided instructions for interpreting the data and directions for reading the various analyses.

Program (Re-)Design Phase

A successful program requires a well-developed plan that integrates content, methods, resources, services, marketing, and evaluation. The aim of the design phase is to create a plan for the renewed program. This plan can be achieved by assessing current program resources including staff competencies, developing program objectives, selecting content and methods, providing staff development, marketing the

future program, developing evaluation procedures, and creating a timetable for implementation.

At this high school, discrepancies between the current program and the desired program were assessed by surveying all program participants regarding their satisfaction with and use of various counseling and guidance services. In all, nine forms were used to survey the different constituencies, including a "General Survey" (see Appendix) completed by everyone, and separate demographic information surveys and questionnaires specific to students, alumni, teachers, and parents/guardians (all available from Richard L. Hayes). The data gained from these surveys were used to compare the current program to the school's vision for the program in the future and to prioritize program goals and objectives. In addition, a self-audit of counselor skills and knowledge (Sortland, Snyder, McFarland, & Webster, 1986) helped to identify current program strengths and limitations that may be overcome through peer supervision and in-service education.

Several implications for redesigning the existing guidance program arose after considering the data obtained from the interviews; the analysis of the degree of correspondence between the school's mission, philosophy, and goals with those of the guidance program; the team effectiveness profile; the school climate survey, and the needs assessment. One central issue involved the importance of developing a clearly articulated mission, vision, and set of related goals for the guidance department and the school. Using a team focus that would capitalize on existing personal strengths and transcend interpersonal difficulties was identified as an important consideration for designing the renewed counseling and guidance program. School personnel were encouraged to develop a mission, vision, and goals for a schoolwide guidance program that would respond to the identified needs of program stakeholders. Such a program should draw on the skills of the current school counselors and be supported by the mission and vision of the school's guidance department as part of a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program.

Other suggestions involved enhancing existing support services by focusing more on programs emphasizing group work, student advisement, extramural referrals, school-based clinics, and collaboration with universities and community mental health agencies. Experimenting with new schedules, interactive video, distance education, and integrating technology into the curriculum were also recommended to prepare students to work in an increasingly diverse society. Overall, school personnel were encouraged to take a schoolwide approach to guidance while supporting counselors as professionals.

Implementation Phase

The next phase in the process ordinarily involves installing and testing program components. Things to be done during this phase of the process include (a) implementing a master plan; (b) developing program component guides;

(c) reviewing and recommending changes in existing facilities; (d) updating policies and procedures; (e) streamlining noncounseling activities; (f) retraining present staff, (g) focusing on special projects; (h) monitoring planned change; (i) implementing the marketing plan; and (j) making program adjustments based on evaluative feedback. In the present case, however, the contract with the consultants was to bring the process to the point of reporting on the results of the needs survey and making informed recommendations for change. As Keys et al. (1998) reminded would-be consultants, carrying such a process through to conclusion "can be difficult to accomplish and maintain because conditions necessary to effectively and collaboratively implement [the process] may not currently exist" (p. 131). In this case, continued implementation was constrained by an informal culture within the system that espoused but did not structurally support collaboration a centralized organizational structure that lacked coordinated communications across units, a counseling staff that remained divided in their level of enthusiasm for further change, and shifting school board priorities with the election of new members.

Evaluation Phase

The purpose of this phase is to assess program effectiveness in relation to stated program objectives. Although it is necessarily performed after actions have been taken, successful evaluation practices are best set in motion as an ongoing consideration in the planning process. In the case example, these activities involved selecting and developing evaluation instruments; scheduling data collection and collecting program and student outcome data; analyzing and reporting data; and revising the existing program based on this data. As can be seen in the present example, preparing the school to be in a position to conduct ongoing evaluation of stated outcomes was an implicit goal of the consultants and is consistent with the intention of collaborative consultation to empower its participants (Glickman et al., 1992). From the outset, ongoing evaluation meant, in part, framing intended outcomes in measurable terms. In addition, as has been noted, operationalizing outcomes had to be done within the endemic language of the school to provide ready interpretation by multiple stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

Several things were confirmed as a result of our participation in this project. (Hayes acted as consultant and Lusky participated in the literature review, survey development, data analysis, and reporting of results.) One lesson to be learned and relearned is that change is a gradual process involving a complex set of tasks. Despite the pressure from some stakeholders to choose a standardized measure to permit comparison with other schools, the consultants and other more influential stakeholders were successful in focusing efforts on tailoring the evaluation process to reflect the uniqueness of the school, its guidance program, its coun-

seling department, and the school community. To create such an instrument, energies were directed instead to establishing a collaborative relationship between consultants and school personnel, assessing team effectiveness, school climate, and readiness for change.

Establishing a collaborative relationship is an involved process that requires time and effort. How the consultant is identified and selected and gains entry into the school will have a major impact on establishing a collaborative relationship. Developing a collaborative relationship can be difficult enough without the consultant imposing a research agenda on the school. The consultant also needs to work to achieve an understanding of the school community by meeting with key school personnel to discuss their vision for the school renewal project. Developing rapport with people in the school community and trying to understand difficulties they encounter during the process is also crucial.

This approach to program evaluation views intervention and needs assessment as reciprocal processes. The particular case example just cited served as both an assessment and an intervention in several ways. As indicated previously, stakeholder participation in the development of the needs assessment was seen as an intervention because it was empowering to program participants. Stakeholder participation also encouraged a sense of ownership, which increased the likelihood of a schoolwide commitment to the program renewal efforts. Discussions with the superintendent and school board members also served to promote a reexamination of the school's current practices and future goals. In addition, participation in the process enabled school personnel to learn concrete methods for developing collaborative relationships with people inside and outside the school for the purpose of program renewal.

Viewing program evaluation as a gradual process involving a set of phases, in which progress at one phase depends on the success of the prior phase, has important implications for counselors and consultants who are considering conducting a needs assessment as part of a larger program evaluation. Too often, program evaluation becomes focused solely on collecting data as a means to assess client needs. Although a survey of client needs can be helpful in providing information about a program and recommended improvements, these approaches do little to encourage creating an atmosphere conducive to such change. The current approach incorporates team-building efforts to support the assumption that even the best program will not be implemented if the program participants are not ready for the change.

In addition, it is crucial for consultants to recognize that regardless of their approach to the process, school officials may discontinue the process at any time. Such a decision may occur for several reasons, including (a) the realization by school administrators that their personal wishes for the program may not be supported, (b) reappropriation of necessary funding, (c) a change in strategic priorities, and (d) lack of sustainable support by program stakeholders. Approaching the process of program evaluation with multiple interventions in addition to a survey of needs increases

the likelihood that program participants will benefit even if the process is not completed as originally envisioned.

Conducting a collaborative program evaluation of a school's guidance program is complex and sometimes unpredictable. The process requires that the consultant and the school be open to developing a collaborative relationship and to being equal partners in the process. The school needs to be willing to support the consultant's work and the consultant needs to seek input from stakeholders and be open to feedback from school personnel. Whatever the outcome, the process has the potential to be a growth experience for the school and the consultant wherein each informs the other's practice and ability to work in a collaborative manner. Although this particular approach to conducting a needs assessment may be more involved than most, consideration of the alternative reminds us of the oil company advertisement that intones, "You can pay me now or pay me later." Unlike the self-serving garage mechanic in the ad who claims it does not matter to him, we would prefer to get the process right from the outset. Helping school personnel to develop a model for continuing program evaluation that rests on a mutual and collaborative relationship seems a better long-term investment in the health of the school than assessing existing needs using standardized measures that have little relevance for continuing program development.

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Appendix begins on the following page.

APPENDIX

Example of Surveys Developed

GENERAL SURVEY

Listed below are counseling and guidance services that are often provided by guidance programs like the one at [Name of] High School. Please rate each of these services in two ways: On the LEFT side, indicate how important it is to you that each service be provided at [Name of] High School. On the RIGHT side, indicate how well each service was provided for you. For each service place only one check mark to the left and only one to the right.

I. Provides timely information about the following:

HOW IMPORTANT				HOW WELL PROVIDED			
very important	somewhat important	un- important		(E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory and P = Poor)			Didn't Use
				E	S	P	
☐	☐	☐	1. School orientation for new students	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	2. Available guidance resource materials	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	3. Counseling and guidance services available in the school	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	4. Course content and selections	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	5. Graduation requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	6. College admissions process	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	7. Financial aid for college	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	8. Standardized test dates and registration procedures	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	9. How to prepare for standardized tests	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	10. How to interpret standardized tests	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	11. Visits by college counselors	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	12. Career options and job opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	13. Referral to other services available in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐

II. Provides the following guidance services to students:

HOW IMPORTANT				HOW WELL PROVIDED			
very important	somewhat important	un- important		(E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory and P = Poor)			Didn't Use
				E	S	P	
☐	☐	☐	1. Group guidance	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	2. Academic planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	3. College planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	4. Career planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	5. Study skills instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	6. Decision making skills training	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	7. Stress management skills training	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	8. Communication skills instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	9. Conflict resolution training	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	10. Peer helpers program	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	11. Psychological test interpretation	☐	☐	☐	☐

III. Provides general counseling interventions including the following:

HOW IMPORTANT				HOW WELL PROVIDED			
very important	somewhat important	un- important		(E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory and P = Poor)			Didn't Use
				E	S	P	
☐	☐	☐	1. Individual counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	2. Group counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	3. Career counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	4. Family counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	5. Rehabilitation counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	6. Crisis counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐

IV. Provides specific counseling interventions regarding:**HOW IMPORTANT**

very somewhat un-
important important important

HOW WELL PROVIDED
(E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory and P = Poor) Didn't

E S P Use

☐	☐	☐	1. Academic problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	2. Attendance problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	3. Interpersonal relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	4. Behavior problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	5. Eating disorders	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	6. Pregnancy	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	7. Substance abuse	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	8. Child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional)	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	9. Grief and loss	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	10. Physical illness	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	11. Anxiety and stress	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	12. Anger management	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	13. Sexual harassment	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	14. Depression	☐	☐	☐	☐

V. Consults with each of the following about student progress:**HOW IMPORTANT**

very somewhat un-
important important important

HOW WELL PROVIDED
(E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory and P = Poor) Didn't

E S P Use

☐	☐	☐	1. Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	2. Parents/Legal guardians	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	3. School administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	4. Community agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	5. College representatives	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	6. Coaches and/or sponsors	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	7. Private mental health providers	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	8. Family physicians	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	9. Clergy	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	10. Officers of the court	☐	☐	☐	☐

VI. Other services not listed: In the space provided on the back of this page, please describe any other services that were not identified here that you would like to see provided by the Guidance Department of [Name of] High School.

VII. Services sought elsewhere:

Which, if any, of the following services have you sought from sources outside the school while you or a member of your family were enrolled as a student at [Name of] High School and why?

On the **LEFT** side, indicate if you **did** or **did not** seek this service elsewhere, even if you received these same services from the school.

On the **RIGHT** side, please check as many items as apply to the reasons for which you sought these services using the following key:

Referred = Referred by counselor

Unavailable = Service unavailable from school

Privacy = Sought service elsewhere to maintain privacy

Work = Sought service elsewhere to accommodate work schedule

Quality = Sought service elsewhere to improve quality of services

Other = Service sought for reasons not identified

SERVICE SOUGHT ELSEWHERE			REASON					
Did	Did Not		Referred	Unavail- able	Privacy	Work	Quality	Other
☐	☐	1. College admissions information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	2. Financial aid information for college	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	3. Psychological testing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	4. Information/Coaching on standardized tests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	5. Career planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	6. Rehabilitation services related to disability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
		7. Professional counseling for:						
☐	☐	a. academic problems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	b. interpersonal relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	c. behavior problems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	d. eating disorders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	e. pregnancy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	f. substance abuse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	g. physical, emotional, sexual abuse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	h. grief and loss	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	i. chronic physical illness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	j. anger management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	k. sexual harassment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	l. anxiety and stress management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐