Book Review of *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program*

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Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program (3rd ed.) by Norman C. Gysbers & Patricia Henderson (2000). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association. 422 pages (\$51.95, paper). ISBN 1-55620-217-2.

"With all the paperwork and scheduling, I am not even sure I want to be a school counselor anymore. It just isn't what I thought the job would be like." This is a quote from my one of my supervisees, a 1st-year practicum student in a school counseling program. She continued to tell me how the school counselor she is working with complains all the time to her about the fact that she does not have time to do any developmental work, but, according to the student, nothing is ever done in the school to change things. One school counselor I recently visited even suggested that we spend less time preparing students' counseling skills and more time on administrative duties and database management. "We may not like it," she stated, "but the fact is that those are the skills that are most important in the real world of a school counselor."

Although striking examples such as these are certainly not the norm in our schools, it is a pattern I have heard echoed too often from school counselors. What happened to developmental guidance and counseling, the hallmark of our field? In a time when the question "How could we have prevented this?" is being asked much too frequently in U.S. schools, the one answer that comes screaming back time and again is more prevention. School counseling programs that operate from a developmental approach can be one means of effectively implementing prevention programs. Yet, many counselors continue to complain about being so overburdened with administrative responsibilities that there is no time for anything other than dealing with the occasional crisis situations.

Norman Gysbers and Patricia Henderson have responded to this need with *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program*,

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a book that outlines the processes involved in developing and implementing a K-12 school counseling program that is based on theories of human growth and development. Incorporating almost 20 years of information obtained since the publication of their first edition, *Improving Guidance Models* (1981), the current edition guides counselors through the entire process of planning, designing, and implementing a developmental school counseling program. With the addition of innovative updates to each chapter since the last edition, *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program* also boasts a section that is devoted entirely to evaluating current practice.

Chapter 1 begins by describing the history and development of school counseling and outlining crucial legislation and changes that have affected the school counselor's role. Explicit is the idea that in understanding the history of our profession, we will better understand how to chart a course for the future. The authors are quick to note that developmental programs do leave room for crisis counseling, but the key component is in providing all students with regular experiences that are designed to help them grow and develop. After presenting a thorough examination of the history and concepts of developmental guidance, Gysbers and Henderson focus, in chapter 2, on practical guidelines for beginning the planning phase of a developmental guidance program. This includes tips on accomplishing the complicated task of determining appropriate changes. They make suggestions on how counselors can work collaboratively with each other and with teachers and school administrators, an effort that, the authors note throughout the book, is crucial in successfully effecting change.

In chapter 3, where the authors continue their discussion of planning, they attempt to assist counselors in establishing a theoretical framework for their model guidance program. The central principle of "life career development" is defined: developing the whole person rather than focusing on one particular area. Organized around the three structural components of content (student competencies), organizational framework, and resources available, this chapter succinctly describes all of the elements necessary for conceptualizing the comprehensive guidance program.

Gysbers and Henderson complete the planning section in chapter 4, where they detail how counselors can assess the counseling environments at their schools. They provide useful quantitative and qualitative methods for assessing a school's resources and current program; clarifying the mission of the program; determining who the clients are; and gathering perspectives from other school personnel, community members, parents, and the students themselves. Gysbers and Henderson conclude the chapter by discussing ways of synthesizing the information into a cohesive,

powerful report that can be used to educate administrators, school board members, or others who may be critical in the change process.

In great detail, the authors then outline the designing phase of the program development. Whereas chapter 5 focuses on initial program design, chapter 6 addresses what might be considered the more difficult task of transitioning to a developmental model. Here, they have thoughtfully included tips on avoiding problems by including the needs of all guidance staff, school personnel, and parents, as well as the needs of the students themselves in the program design.

In the next section, Gysbers and Henderson examine the issues involved in the implementation of the new program. They begin chapter 7 with a detailed description of practical ways of using available resources to make the ideal program become a reality. Staffing concerns and the allocation of financial and political resources are considered in this chapter. Practical suggestions for including districtwide leadership in the change process are given as well as ways of maintaining the program once it is implemented.

Expanding on the ideas presented in chapter 7, the authors detail, in chapter 8, a well-crafted process of displacing some of the administrative tasks assigned to counselors to give them more time to implement developmental programs. This is accomplished through the use of an enhanced job description, which will carefully detail counselor responsibilities and overall program planning. Finally, in chapter 9, they present excellent ideas for inducting new counselors into the system and for ensuring the successful performance of individuals who are already school counselors. Also presented is an effective supervision model for counselors, which is an element that is widely recognized as crucial in counselors' professional development but one that is often ignored once school counselors are on the job.

To ensure that the new program continues to flourish in the school, evaluation techniques are wisely presented and examined in detail in chapter 10. Here, attention is given to the procedures for evaluating all aspects of the program, including personnel, student outcomes, and overall program evaluation. Using a real-life example in chapter 11, the authors discuss how this information can be used to effectively enhance and update the program to meet the changing demands of the environment.

Numerous sample forms, letters, and surveys provide support and guidance to individuals who are interested in improving their systems as well as a realistic timeline for assessing progress. Throughout the book, the authors' expertise in developmental guidance and counseling is evident. Perhaps most evident, however, is their real-world experience in effecting change. Examples of pitfalls to avoid and strategies for success are interwoven into every section.

Introducing this book to students early in their school counseling course work will enable them not only to understand what a program should include but also to begin thinking about how to make necessary changes in existing programs. Principles from the book could then be implemented by students once they begin their practicum/internship experiences, allowing for real-world learning that goes beyond the walls of the classroom. Many counseling programs and site supervisors encourage practicum and internship students to assist in some aspects of program development, evaluation, and research while at their sites. Undertaking such tasks as they simultaneously learn to navigate the social and political environment of the school can be a daunting task for some neophytes. This is one area that Gysbers and Henderson fail to address in detail. Including the issues of management and development specific to practicum and internship students would not only enhance students' learning but would also encourage counselor educators to include this type of real-world experience and processing to students' on-site experiences.

Although there are several books that outline what a comprehensive K-12 guidance program should look like, few are able to present the information with the coherent theoretical backing outlined by Gysbers and Henderson. They also discuss how to make this kind of program a reality, which is what makes this book so valuable to counselor educators and school counselors. Too often, school counselors seem to believe that they are helpless recipients of an administrative agenda that has been handed down to them. Educating the next generation of counselors in developmental approaches is vital. However, as indicated in the example given earlier in this review, education does not assure that ample time or consideration will be allotted for developmental work once new counselors begin their first jobs. Counselor educators need to train students in the more difficult task of implementing these developmental approaches, which, as Gysbers and Henderson skillfully describe, includes many activities that are designed to work with and educate parents, faculty, school board members, and administrators. Emphasizing the issues presented in this book throughout the graduate training process is one way to encourage students to become proactive change agents in their schools and communities and, thus, ensure that the art of developmental counseling is not lost amidst administrative duties and crisis interventions.