Data Driven School Counseling from Training to Practice: A Panel Discussion

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Lindsey Nichols, Ph.D., University of Montana, Associate Professor of Counselor Education
Lee Starck, M.Ed., Stevensville Elementary School
Alli Bristow, M.A., Florence Middle School
Brittany Wilson-Thompson, M.A., Big Sky High School (MSO)
Agenda

- Introductions
- Level-Specific Data-Use Presentations
- Questions & Discussion
Megan LaPalm, MA, EdS
Licensed School Counselor
Academic Advisor at the University of Montana
1. Data-driven Profession

School Counselors are implored to use data to inform decisions in all domains. Ethical mandate to remain accountable and effectively manage programs.

➔ Reporting Intervention Results
➔ Promoting Systemic Change
➔ Understanding Current Needs
➔ Determining Future Program Goals
➔ Assessing Areas of Strength and Growth

Lindsey Nichols, Ph.D., NCC, LCPC

Associate Professor of Counselor Education at the University of Montana

Former Middle School Counselor in eastern North Carolina

Class 6 Licensed Montana School Counselor

Current Counselor Education Representative to the Montana School Counseling Association Board of Directors
2. Data Use in Graduate Training

Students using data in small and comprehensive assignments to understand needs and next steps:

➔ **Interviews**
   Interviewing local school counselors and school staff - issues common in school, needs raised by teachers, observations.

➔ **Data Sets**
   Using local and nation data to guide answers, fill in gaps to create evidence-based and practice-based decisionmaking.
Student learning objectives focus our attention on data

CACREP

N. use of accountability data to inform decision making
O. use of data to advocate for programs and students

MT School Counseling Programs (MSCA)

“Driven by Data” (p. 6) as upheld by national standards (ASCA)

Specifically
How data and assessment through process, perception, and outcome data is used throughout program from introduction course to internship objectives.
Lee Starck, M.Ed.

K-5 School Counselor
at Stevensville Schools since 2012

Current Elementary Vice President for the Montana School Counselor Association
Data Use in an Elementary SC Program

Today: Focus on two components of SC Programs where data plays a critical role in elementary programs

➔ Direct Student Services (Delivery System)

➔ Assessment (Management and Accountability System)
Delivery System

These are the Direct and Indirect Services provided and available to all students. As school counselors, we spend ~80% of our time in this domain.

- School Counseling Core Curriculum
- Individual Student Planning
- Responsive Services
  - Individual and Small Group Counseling
  - Crisis Response

Data-based decision making within the Delivery System

- Needs Assessments
  - Staff, Students, and/or Family
- School Climate Surveys
- Schoolwide Data (attendance, grades, discipline referrals, etc.)
- Behavioral Screeners
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support 
Decision Rules

MTSS is an umbrella framework that includes Response to Intervention and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (MBI) Frameworks.

Examples of decision rules in elementary school counseling:

- 3-5 minor discipline referrals / 2-3 major discipline referrals in one quarter
  - Tier II referral
- Chronic absenteeism (>15 days absent in previous school year)
  - Tier II referral
- Identified as *at risk* on universal behavior screener in 1-2 domains
  - Tier II referral
Big Jackets - Little Jackets Mentoring Program

Referred via: SSBD Screener (internalizing, staff/family referral, attendance data).

Monitor attendance, grades, and ODR’s, but also focus on staff’s perception of the influence of the mentoring relationship:

“The program has helped my students develop self-esteem, and a more positive sense of self, and they look forward to seeing their Big.”

“I think it has had a very positive impact for both of my students, and for one it is the highlight of her week. The added companionship has helped boost his confidence as well!”

Outcome

Attendance SMART Goal:

Data shows in the 2016-17 school year X amount of K-5 students were absent for +15 days of school (Z% of K-5 students). Therefore:

By the end of the 17-18 school year, the percentage of students who have >15 absences a year will decrease from Z% to less than Y%.

How:
- Two Counseling Core Curriculum Lessons targeted on student success and the critical role simply being at school plays
- School Success Small Groups (six sessions) for students in that Z%.
- Family education night on the importance of regular attendance
Meet Alli Bristow, MC, NCC

Current Middle school counselor at Florence-Carlton School District and Oula instructor

Former Mobile Crisis Therapist with EMPACT- Suicide Prevention Center, Tempe, AZ
Former Non-emergent Team Petition Therapist
Former Special Education Teacher
4. SC Data Use in Middle School

➔ Monitor growth and success for student, parents and school staff to ensure interventions are effective.

➔ Helping students, parents and staff understand and “buy” the benefits

➔ Matching the specific intervention to each target goal (could be multiple and dare I say...even fun?)

➔ Data helps drive schools to explore new interventions that are evidence-based.
Types of data frequently reviewed (weekly, monthly, per quarter or yearly):

→ Attendance (Schoolmaster, AIM)
→ Grades (Schoolmaster)
→ Behavior Incidents (SWIS, CICO, Olweus)
→ Student self-report risk taking behaviors (YRBS)
→ Rates of suicide ideations and attempts (YRBS)
→ Academic Progress (MAPS or NWEA)
→ Teacher observation

Matching to School interventions (examples):

• CICO rewards
• After school tutoring
• RTI Job holders (meaningful work)
• Olweus school wide interventions
• Suicide prevention programs (Look Listen Link)
• Child Assistance Meeting (CAT)
• Behavior plans
• Homework Organization & Planning (HOPS)
• Mentoring
• Counseling individual or small group (friendship/social skills)
• Math labs
• Title help
• Depression/anxiety screening
• Risk assessments
• OULA
How do we use the data? Is there a system in place or need to create one?

- RTI teams at building levels
- Olweus teams
- MBI teams
- Child assistance teams
- Counselor and admin teams
- Community teams (ex. Homework Help)
- Health and wellness (Look, Listen Link)
- Mental Health and CSCT
- You

Depends on how your school system is set up on how to use the data effectively to meet the needs of the school as a whole.
Brittany Wilson-Thompson

School Counselor

Big Sky High School

Missoula, MT

ASCA Data Specialist
5. Data Use in High School

➔ Letting our students guide intervention. What are the needs of the student population at our school specifically?

➔ Needs Assessment
Annual Survey of Student Perception

➔ Appointments/Referrals
In what areas are students seeking support?
Where is the Need?

Student Needs Assessment

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Your answers are anonymous, so no one will know how you answered. Your participation will help school counselors make sure to plan activities that are most relevant to you and your needs.

* Required

Select your grade *
Choose

Select your gender *
Choose

Select Your Sexual Orientation
Choose

Select your ethnicity
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
I use time-management, organizational and study skills.

495 responses

- Agree: 38.6%
- Sometimes: 52.1%
- Disagree: 9.3%
Referral to Mrs. Wilson-Thompson

To make a referral or request an appointment with a counselor, please fill out the information below. If this is an emergency (suicidal thoughts or actions, fear of harm by self/others, etc.) please go to the counselor or other trusted adult immediately. If this is an emergency outside of school hours, call 911.

* Required

I am *

- [ ] A Student Referring Myself
- [ ] A Student Referring Someone Else
- [ ] A Parent/Guardian
- [ ] A Teacher/Staff Member
- [ ] Other
Questions for the panel:

- What data do you use most in a typical day?
- Share a time data helped you to communicate something to an important stakeholder.
- How have you refined your use of data during your tenure as a school counselor?
Questions from the Audience.

What questions or comments do you have for school counselors about data use?
Thank you for attending!

Please be in touch!

You can reach us via our contact information on the following page.
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