

**Integrating School Counseling Core Curriculum Into Academic Curriculum**

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### **Abstract**

Research indicates that the social and emotional well being of students impacts academic outcomes; however, due to a limited amount of class time, the counseling core curriculum that addresses these needs often takes a back seat to academic learning. This article proposes a paradigm shift where teachers and school counselors collaborate to integrate the counseling core curriculum into daily academic lessons. This results in meeting ASCA's academic, personal/social, and career student standards within the context of academic content. Implications are discussed, such as school counselors being seen as collaborators in increasing the academic outcomes for all students, and closing the achievement gap.

*Keywords:* school counseling core curriculum, academics, collaboration

## **Integrating School Counseling Core Curriculum Into Academic Curriculum**

Teachers across the nation work rigorously within a finite amount of time to complete the scope and sequence of academic curriculum and to meet mandated high stakes testing outcomes. While a school's primary focus is equitable education for all students, there are also school-wide personal/social, college, and career readiness concerns that include such issues as bullying (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), suicide (Underwood & Kalafat, 2009), school violence (Algozzien & McGee, 2011; Staff & Kreager, 2008), and dating violence (Close, 2005). It is generally understood that these issues need to be addressed on a school wide basis, but with a limited amount of time in the day, interventions and counseling curriculum often take a back seat to academic learning (Au, 2007; Brown & Clift, 2010; Foster, Young & Hermann, 2005; Van Velsor, 2009; Vogler & Virtue, 2007).

What is often overlooked in the push for academic achievement is the impact of student's personal/social development on academic outcomes. Personal/social development is defined as "maximizing each student's individual growth and social maturity in the areas of personal management and social interactions" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 142). In addition, there is no mention in the literature about how to meet both academic and personal/social needs in tandem. This article proposes a paradigm shift from having to choose to use classroom time for either academic curriculum or counseling curriculum to the idea of teachers and school counselors creating single, integrated lessons that simultaneously address both academic and personal/social development as well as the career needs of all students.

## **Academic Curriculum or Counseling Curriculum**

Academic failure is a result of complex and interconnected factors.

Psychological, educational, and sociological research about this phenomenon has identified multiple student, classroom, teacher, school, family, community, and cultural factors all of which are related to academic outcomes (Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001; Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001). Both academic and personal/social development are central components needed for students to achieve academic success (Rumberger, 2004). As such, preparing students to increase distal variables such as test scores or course grades requires a collaborative effort from all staff members, including school counselors (Brown & Trusty, 2005).

Yet with high-stakes testing focusing on academic content and outcomes, teachers are forced to narrow curriculum, limiting their ability to meet the sociocultural needs of their students (Au, 2007; Brown & Clift, 2010; Nichols & Berliner, 2008). While teachers have little time to cover personal/social development, let alone career standards, in their academic curriculum, school counselors are trained to address these developmental needs of all students (Au, 2007; Vogler & Virtue, 2007).

One way to address the personal/social well being and career needs of all students is through the implementation of the school counseling core curriculum in a classroom setting (ASCA, 2012a). Implementation of the school counseling core curriculum in a classroom requires teachers to give up some academic content time. However, teachers do not feel they have enough time to cover even the basics of the tested content (Au, 2007; Vogler & Virtue, 2007). The finite amount of class time severely limits or impedes the school counselor's ability to address the much needed

classroom lessons on personal/social development, let alone the college and career readiness needs of all students (Barnar & Brott, 2011). Addressing academic curriculum or counseling curriculum does not need to be seen as mutually exclusive. A paradigm shift that redesigns classroom academic lessons to incorporate the counseling core curriculum can create rigorous and relevant learning opportunities for all students. Research shows that both academic success and personal/social well being are closely linked (Parker et al., 2004; Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004).

### **Social and Emotional Links to Academic Performance**

There exists a positive correlation between students' academic achievement and personal/social development (Parker et al., 2004). Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to identify, assess and control emotions, appears to link cognitive ability and academic performance. Students with emotional intelligence have the behavioral temperament and self-awareness to recognize, process, and utilize emotionally charged information. Emotional intelligence has a positive impact on students' academic achievement and can be gauged by overall grade point average (Parker et al., 2004).

Contrasting the correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement is the link between problem behaviors such as aggression (Williams & McGee, 1994), anxiety (Stevens & Pihl, 1987), hyperactivity (Saudino & Plomin, 2007), and inattention (Barriga et al., 2002) and a decrease in academic achievement. Not only do student behaviors impact learning, relationships with peers also shape academic performance. According to Dimmit (2003), "Students who have poor peer relationships and who lack the social skills to develop friendships at the elementary level are at a high risk for academic difficulties, and their trajectory doesn't improve over time" (p. 341). In

light of the connection between personal/social development and academic outcomes, it is ironic that “in the atmosphere of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which requires academic accountability through student test scores, academic performance becomes the focal point while social and emotional development, takes a back seat” (Van Velsor, 2009, p. 52).

It has also been found that negative environmental conditions also have a negative impact on academic performance. Kids who witness violence at home are at risk of suffering from emotional and behavioral issues resulting in poor academic performance, truancy, absenteeism, and difficulty concentrating (Peled, Jaffe, & Edleson, 1995). School environmental factors such as disruptions by students, fighting, and lack of school safety also point to poor academic performance. One study concluded that, compared to white students, minority students in particular are more likely to be reported as creating and academically suffering from environmental disruptions (Trusty, Mellin, & Hervert, 2008). Social aspects of students' lives also have a negative impact on academic achievement including family stressors such as poverty, homelessness, illness, family transitions, sexual and physical abuse, addiction, violence, and death (Luster & McAdoo, 1996; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

It is not just academic outcomes that necessitate addressing the social and emotional development of students in schools. With the yearly occurrences of school shootings across the country, the rise in bullying incidents (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), youth suicide rates (Fineran, 2012; Underwood & Kalafat, 2009), rising rates of depression in youth (Auger, 2005; Kaffenberger & Seligman, 2007) and other school safety issues (Algozzien & McGee, 2011; Staff & Kreager, 2008), national

attention has been drawn to the mental health and safety needs of school age students. Yet research shows that the social and emotional needs of students often go unaddressed (Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Van Velsor, 2009). Despite school counselors' specialized training in mental health needs, they continue to be utilized to complete administrative and clerical services; consequently neglecting their unique ability on school campuses to address personal/social needs as well as college and career readiness (Amatea & Clark, 2005; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008).

In a survey conducted by Foster, Young, and Herman (2005), school counselors reported that addressing student's personal/social developmental needs rated from *moderately* to *very important* in their jobs. However, the frequency of performing these activities ranged from rarely to infrequently. Areas such as evaluating violence prevention, substance abuse prevention programs and college readiness appeared to be work activities that are rarely performed. Teaching students about personal safety, physical contact, and personal boundaries were also rarely performed work activities for school counselors. In contrast to this, the American School Counseling Association recommends that 80 percent of a school counselor's time be spent in direct and indirect services that address students' career, academic, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2012a).

### **Adequate Yearly Progress**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) created standards to measure the progress of learning, with the expectation that increasing percentages of students make adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Brown & Clift, 2010). The purpose of NCLB is stated in its introduction: "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant

opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and State academic assessments” (NCLB, 2001, § 1001). Yet one in every three public schools does not meet AYP as required by NCLB (*No Child Left*, 2010).

In addition to measuring a school’s academic progress, funding is also tied to its AYP outcomes. As such, schools must continue to work vigorously and rigorously to comply with the prescribed minimum standards (Au, 2007; McEntire, 2010; Burris, Wiley & Murphy, 2008). With research indicating a link between academic success and personal/social well-being (Barriga et al., 2002; Dimmitt, 2003; Parker et. al, 2004; Peled, Jaffe, & Edleson, 1995; Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004; Saudino & Plomin, 2007; Stevens & Pihl, 1987; Williams & McGee, 1994), it seems logical that the social and emotional needs of students should be more closely considered. With research also indicating negative academic outcomes due to a lack of addressing the personal/social development of students (Barna & Brott, 2011; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Lambie & Shari, 2009; Lieberman, 2004; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Van Velsor, 2009; Zalaquett, 2005), it seems an opportunity for teachers and school counselors to work collaboratively to effect academic improvement, as well as personal/social development, is being missed. This author suggests that one way teachers and school counselors can collaborate is to integrate the school counseling core curriculum into the daily academic lessons.

### **Collaboration**

It has long been understood that when an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration is fostered, teachers are more effective and students are more successful



(Hilty, 1998). The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) calls for educators, including school counselors, to be involved in efforts to close the achievement gap through increased accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Yet school faculty perceive that school counseling programs are not viable resources for supporting academic achievement (Lambie & Shari, 2009; Lieberman, 2004; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Zalaquett, 2005). Shaping student academic achievement is still seen as the primary goal of the classroom teacher, leaving school counselors underrepresented in important conversations regarding education reform (Barna & Brott, 2011). However, empirical evidence shows that school counselors make contributions to the academic achievement agenda by supporting the positive personal/social development of students (Barna & Brott, 2011; Bauman, 2008; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Mason & McMahon, 2009; Tobias & Myrick, 1999; Mason & McMahon, 2009). More specifically, it has been found that lower-SES and racial-ethnic minority students benefit most when elementary schools focus on their psychosocial adjustment and academic engagement within the school environment (Borman & Overman, 2004).

This author suggests that academic success and personal/social goals need not be mutually exclusive, but rather be seen as an inclusive integration of both into single relevant and rigorous classroom based lessons. This collaboration between school counselors and faculty has been shown to be a key element in interventions addressing both academic progress and personal/social well-being (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Lee, 1993; Mason & McMahon, 2009; Sink, 2005). The ASCA national model “emphasizes the value of partnerships as a way to share accountability for student progress” (Sink, 2005, p. 11). School counselors should utilize the comprehensive

counseling program to guide the implementation of various approaches that enhance the growth of all students as well as work to improve overall classroom and school climate (ASCA, 2012a; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Sink, 2003).

### **School Counseling Core Curriculum**

“The school counseling core curriculum consists of a planned, written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventative in nature, and developmental in design” (ASCA, 2012a, p. 85). It consists of, “structured developmental lessons designed to assist students in attaining the competencies from the ASCA Student Standards (ASCA, 2012a, p. 141). The ASCA Student Standards serve as the foundation for the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs. The student standards consist of three student domains: academic, career and personal/social. The three standards are broken down into competencies and the competencies are further broken down into indicators.

The academic domain contains three competencies and 35 academic indicators. Examples of academic indicators are: critical thinking (ASCA, 2012b, A:B1.2), and communication skills (ASCA, 2012b, A:A2.3). The career development domain includes three standards and 43 indicators. Examples of the career development indicators are: maintain a career-planning portfolio (ASCA, 2012b, C:B2.5), and develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests and motivations (ASCA, 2012b, C:A1.3). Finally there are three personal/social standards and 43 indicators. Examples of the personal/social indicators include: Know how to set long term and short term goals (ASCA, 2012b, PS:B1.6), and know how to apply conflict resolution skills (ASCA, 2012b, PS:B1.9). A complete list of the ASCA student standards can be located by

registering a purchased copy of ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs at [www.ASCANationalModel.org](http://www.ASCANationalModel.org) (ASCA, 2012b).

Specific competencies and indicators that are addressed by the counseling program should be selected based on the school counseling program's vision and ultimately to the overall schools goals (Dahir & Stone, 2003). To select competencies and standards school counselors should meet with principals to review relevant, critical campus data, particularly indicators that are listed on AYP. This critical data can include, but is not limited to, areas such as standardized test scores, grades, drop out rates, attendance, and behavior trends (Dahir & Stone, 2003).

Once the counseling curriculum competencies and indicators are selected, they should be delivered to all students in a developmentally appropriate manner. In order to reach all students school counselors it is suggested that school counselors provide "direct instruction, team teach or assist in teaching the school counseling core curriculum... in classrooms or other school facilities" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 85). It is through a collaborative effort between teachers and school counselors that the selected student competencies and indicators can be taught to all students.

### **Integration of Academics and School Counseling Core Curriculum**

Implementation of counseling core curriculum lessons happens when teachers agree to the interruption of the academic curriculum so school counselors can come into the classroom to present their counseling lesson. Academic lessons cease, while a lesson from the counseling curriculum is interjected. The day following the counseling lesson, academic lessons proceed again. The interruption of the academic lessons occurs whether school counselors personally designing specific core curriculum lessons

or they use one of many mass marketed programs to address topics such as bullying (Wintle, 2008), resiliency (Carter, 2007) career development (Lapan, 2008), or suicide prevention education (Underwood & Kalafat, 2009).

In this proposed new integrated curriculum paradigm, the collaborative efforts of professional teachers and school counselors create rigorous and relevant lessons that integrate counseling lessons into the flow of the academic curriculum's scope and sequence. Academics are not suspended; rather they are enhanced by school counselors' specialized skills and the incorporation of personal/social and career topics into classroom academic lessons. A school counselor's training in relationship building and asking questions that elicit personal reflection, insight, awareness, and emotions can connect academic material to student experiences in relevant ways. While adding relevance to a teacher's rigorous academic lessons, school counselors can simultaneously incorporate counseling curriculum.

One example of integrating academic curriculum and the counseling curriculum is the incorporation of a counseling lesson on bullying into various academic areas such as English or Social Studies and even in math. An example of this integration is in English class. English teachers and counselors first identify novels, stories, or even poetry that include tales of bullying behaviors. The academic scope and sequence for these readings are logical places to connect counseling curriculum to academic curriculum. Teachers address the English curriculum lessons while school counselors draw out and build upon the personal/social indicators embedded in the academic content. In this case bullying lessons are built on literature content. The reading content becomes the starting point for the counseling lesson, which naturally incorporates

student's personal knowledge and experiences with bullying into the topic. School counselors also incorporate school anti-bullying policies and interventions. Relating academic content to the immediate experiences of students infuses relevance into the daily academic lesson.

Another example of how to incorporate a bullying lesson into academics is with a math lesson. Integration into a math lesson will require some prior data collection on bullying by the school counselor. Prior to the counseling lesson, the school counselor conducts a school wide bullying survey using an online survey program. The survey can address questions such as if students have been bullied or have been the bully, where bullying occurs, who they tell, resulting actions, reasons for not telling, and so forth. Once the bullying data is collected and compiled the results are shared in math classes. Students can use the raw data to calculate the mathematical mean, median, mode, range and estimation. In addition, the data can also be used to teach students statistical concepts such as outliers, normal curve, skew, correlational relationships and so forth. Using the bullying data collected from the student body personally connects each student to the lesson and infuses relevance into a rigorous math lesson.

In addition to the math concepts, students also learn counseling curriculum lessons on bullying. School counselors interweave the counseling lessons into the math lesson by discussing student's personal stories, roles and personal relationship to the collected data. Furthermore, an overview of the schools bullying issues can also be examined. This leads to discussions of interventions and general anti-bullying behaviors bringing to life the reality of bullying on campus. Finally students can take the lesson to

a higher level by discussing how a change in their behaviors can predict changes in the data.

The bringing together of both academic and counseling curriculum into single lessons eliminates the need to choose how to use class time. These new lessons eliminate the disjointed interruption of academic lessons in order to address personal/social or career standards and utilize the unique skills of school counselors to help address academic outcomes. In addition, the collaborative efforts of school counselors and teachers result in rigorous and relevant lessons for all students.

### **Integration Process**

Blending counseling lessons into academic content begins with school counselors being familiar with state academic standards, scope and sequence and in particular the specific lessons that are being covered in daily lessons. State academic standards are defined in each state's educational codes, and are accessible online from each state's department of education. School counselors should couple their understanding of academic standards with their knowledge of the 3 domains, 9 competencies and 121 indicators outlined in ASCA's (2012b) student standards. A general review of various academic and counseling standards will reveal that many academic standards are often very similar to ASCA's student standards.

After becoming familiar with state academic standards, scope and sequence and daily lessons, school counselors should consider where the counseling curriculum logically connects to the specific academic lesson, such as the aforementioned idea of connecting bullying lessons to academics. School counselors should consider where academic lessons naturally match up with the counseling curriculum. It can helpful to

educate teachers about the school counseling core curriculum and the student standards because it may be the teacher who discovers a logical place to collaborate. The curriculum alignment is easiest to find when school counselors engage in conversations with teachers about specific classroom lessons. Finding a connection between the counseling curriculum and academic curriculum is a creative process. It can be helpful for the teacher to walk the school counselor through some of the in class lessons while the school counselor listens for language that connects personal/social, academic and career standards.

All academic areas should be considered including health, art and even foreign language classes. More specifically, any daily academic lesson has the potential to connect to the counseling curriculum. An innumerable number of content areas such as Civil Rights, Civil War, World Wars, Women's Suffrage, Abolition, Romeo and Juliet, The Odyssey, number lines, ordering, Venn diagrams, compare and contrast, problem solving, time periods, mathematical concepts. The integration of curriculum can even include science concepts such as reflection or Newton's Laws and so forth can all connect to personal/social, academic and career development of all students. Adam (1995) shares a specific example of infusing the skills need for various careers into a high school Social Studies class lesson.

A form to help guide the conversation between teachers and school counselors when creating integrated lessons is presented in the Appendix. Discussion between teachers and school counselors should include noting specific standards and content from both academic and counseling curriculums. Once this is established, the academic content is reviewed and examined for a logical, yet creative connection to counseling

standards. A synopsis that explains how the academic content is enhanced by counseling content is clearly explained and noted. For example, a History course that covers wars, such as WWII, might connect the counseling standard of conflict resolution (PS:B1.6). War is about large-scale conflict between nations, which can be related to conflict on campuses between various social groups or even between individuals.

Teachers address the reasons behind the war being learned about, the result of non-peaceful resolution and any other academic content. School counselors relate conflict to local issues, campus issues and even personal interactions. School counselors include discussions about how bias and stereotypes can lead to conflicts on campus and mimic actions similar to those that lead to wars. Conflict resolution skills are addressed by school counselors and discussions can take place about how outcomes in wars may have been different had a peaceful resolution been found.

Another example of counseling curriculum standard that relates to war is students are to acquire interpersonal skills (ASCA, 2012b, PS:A2). This standard could be addressed when students study the prejudice exhibited by Hitler. School counselors have students examine how and where these biased, stereotypical and even racial behavior still exists today in communities, schools and their own lives. These concepts can even lead to an examination of peer abuse and bullying behaviors.

This integration process can also be done in reverse by starting with the counseling curriculum and working in or toward the academic content. Many, if not all, counseling curriculum competencies can logically be linked to academic content. Regardless of whether the integration grows out of academic content or counseling content, the collaboration between teachers and school counselors benefits all involved.



Once connections that bring together the counseling curriculum and the academic lesson have been established, responsibilities and co-teaching efforts should be defined. The following questions can be addressed: What will the academic teacher cover in a class period and what will the school counselor present? Will the lesson begin with an academic lesson and end with a connection to the student standards? The discussion should include consideration of needed materials, and when during the school year the lesson will take place. Other details need to be worked out such as, will there be handouts or homework associated with the lesson? Will students be required to journal or self reflect on their behaviors? Will group projects grow from the integrated lesson? It is also helpful to include a way to measure the success of these lessons to address the accountability element of the ASCA national model (ASCA, 2012a).

A limited number of studies investigating the outcomes of teacher and school counselor collaboration in classroom lessons have been done (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Lee, 1993). Results of these studies indicate positive outcomes in academics and in behavior. An elementary school study using treatment and control groups found that classroom guidance lessons addressing skills for succeeding in school had a positive impact on the mathematics grades of fourth- to sixth-grade students (Lee, 1993). Brigman and Campbell (2003) included fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth grade students who were performing below average and frequently did not receive services. This study utilized both small group counseling and classroom guidance lessons to address academic achievement. The group counseling and guidance lessons focused on students cognitive, social, and self-management skills. Results suggested that both the

guidance lessons and the small group counseling had positive impacts on student achievement and student behaviors.

Despite the positive academic and behavior outcomes associated with implementation of counseling lessons, research indicates that typical, stand alone counseling lessons are rarely to infrequently implemented (Barnar & Brott, 2011). One way to address the lack of counseling lessons being taught in schools is to integrate these lessons into academic lessons, as explained above. This collaborative process benefits teachers, school counselors and most of all students.

### **Limitations**

There are some limitations to consider when integrating the school counseling core curriculum into academic curriculum. The first limitation to consider is: the teacher and school counselor must commit to the time it takes to develop new integrated lessons. While planning requires time from both teachers and school counselors, it will require no more than the time required to develop an academic lesson plan. Another limitation is that it can be difficult to have multiple teachers participate in the integration lesson process. It can be equally challenging to have multiple classrooms in which to implement the integrated lessons. It is suggested that one willing teacher and one integrated lesson is a good start. Once the lesson has been implemented with one teacher, additional teachers can be enlisted. In addition once the lesson has been created it can be repeated and enhanced year after year. It is important to keep in mind resistance to trying something new. Again, starting with one willing teacher will help overcome this resistance.

A final limitation to consider is that if the school counselor is going to team teach or present the lesson with every teacher in every class they teach, it can be very taxing on a school counselor's time. An alternative is to create the integrated lessons and team-teach them until the teacher feels competent enough to do the lesson on his or her own. While there are several limitations to implementing integrated counseling and academic lessons, there are also many benefits for teachers, school counselors and students.

### **Implications**

Working collaboratively with teachers to create classroom lessons that address academic standards as well personal/social and career standards has several implications. These integrated lessons can dispel the misperception that counseling programs are not viable components of the school system and are incapable of addressing academic outcomes. They offer a way for school counselors to be invested in their school's efforts to close the achievement gap and write the counseling program into the campus AYP plan. This brings school counselors and counseling programs into discussions about academic reform.

In addition, these lessons create a sense of collaboration as opposed to a feeling of separation between school counselors and teachers. This practice of collaboration is one way school counselors can be seen as relevant contributors to academic success. Finally, implementing integrated academic and counseling core curriculum into classroom lessons can be used as a way to counteract the use of school counselor's time and training in administrative and clerical duties.

## **NCLB and Academic Outcomes**

One implication of integrating counseling curriculum lessons into academic course work is that it allows school counselors to be a part of efforts to improve academic outcomes. As mentioned, this integration can help to dispel the misperception that counseling programs are not viable components of the school system and are incapable of addressing academic outcomes. In addition, this paradigm shift addresses the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that calls for educators, including school counselors, to be involved in efforts to close the achievement gap through increased accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Through integrated counseling and academic lessons, school counselors take an active role in addressing the achievement gap by working collaboratively with teachers. Because school counselor's training and skills specifically address student personal/social development, as well as career needs, they bring an important and needed perspective to the discussion about strategies to address closing the achievement gap. This discussion includes how the positive personal/social development of students addressed in the counseling core curriculum has been linked to increased academic success (Barriga et al., 2002; Dimmitt, 2003; Parker et. al, 2004; Peled, Jaffe, & Edleson, 1995; Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, 2004; Saudino & Plomin, 2007; Stevens & Pihl, 1987; Williams & McGee, 1994).

## **AYP and Accountability**

School counselors should be present at conversations on individual campuses, district, state, and national levels regarding educational reform (Barna & Brott, 2011). One implication of integrating counseling core curriculum into academic curriculum is

these lessons offer an opportunity for school counselors to uniquely address a gap in the conversation regarding academic reform. A school counselor's unique focus on personal/social development brings a distinct perspective concerning how to meet AYP and value added measures. School counselors should be fully invested in their own school's accountability plan and have the counseling program and counseling core curriculum written into AYP plans. One way to do this is through integrated counseling and academic lessons.

Integrated guidance lessons can be written into AYP as a strategy to not only address academics, but also as a way to address school culture and the personal/social well being of all students. Specific integrated counseling and academic lessons that address issues such as bullying, career readiness, drug education, and suicide prevention can be included as strategies to meet state and national mandates. An implication of these integrated lessons being written into AYP is that school counselors become an important part of academic systems and viable partners in addressing AYP. In addition, staff members come to view school counselors as relevant to the mission of the school.

As school counselors are seen as relevant to the mission of the school, they are also seen as sharing in the overall accountability for student progress on campus. The integration of counseling curriculum and academic curriculum addresses the misperception that counseling programs and counseling curriculum are ancillary aspects of the school culture. These lessons highlight to other educators how counseling services address the school climate as well as academic outcomes. In short, integrated lessons make the connection between counseling programs and academic

outcomes transparent to other educational professionals, many of who may not fully understand how the counseling program aligns with students' learning and achievement outcomes.

### **Collaboration and Implementation of Counseling Curriculum**

The new paradigm of academic-counseling integrated lessons changes the way school counselors and teachers discuss the use of class time for either academics or for counseling lessons. Implementing these integrated lessons changes the conversation from choosing to cover either academics or counseling curriculum in classrooms, to how to create one lesson that addresses both curricula. As a result, teachers and school counselors work collaboratively to meet both academic and counseling standards through rigorous and relevant integrated lessons for all students. Integrating lessons also fosters a sense of collaboration, as opposed to a feeling of separation, between school counselors and teachers meeting ASCA's call for collaboration and consultation (ASCA, 2012a).

Currently, the counseling core curriculum takes a back seat to academic content. Research indicates the curriculum is rarely implemented on campuses (Au, 2007; Brown & Clift, 2010; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Van Velsor, 2009; Vogler & Virtue, 2007). The integration of counseling core curriculum with academic curriculum is one way to counteract these practices. As a result of this new practice there is time, as well as a place within the school day for the counseling core curriculum. An implication of implementing the counseling core curriculum school wide is the ability to address topics such as bullying, suicide, school shootings, dating violence, drug education and

so forth. Addressing these topics as well as ASCA's student standards could positively effect not only academic outcomes but overall school climate as well.

### **Use of School Counselor's Time and Advocacy**

Finally, the integration of counseling and academic curriculum has implications about how a school counselor's skills are utilized on campus. Current research shows that school counselors are often used for administrative and duties, as opposed to being fully engaged in addressing the personal/social and career needs of students (Amatea & Clark, 2005; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008). Instead of being assigned non-counseling duties, the practice of integrating academic and counseling curricula is one way to better utilize a school counselor's unique training for developmental purposes. In addition, spending time collaborating on lesson plans and presenting integrated lessons leaves less time to take on non-counseling duties. A school counselor's time could then be spent engaged in more appropriate duties such as implementing school counseling core curriculum that addresses personal/social, academic and career needs of all students (ASCA, 2012a).

A final implication of integrated lessons is how they can help to advocate for the appropriate use of a school counselor's skills and time. When the counseling core curriculum is written into AYP plans, it becomes an example of how to correctly use school counselor's skills to address academic outcomes, as well as school climate and students' personal/social developmental needs. School counselors join with principals concerning critical data elements and how school counselors can use their training to impact the data. These collaborative conversations about data advocate for the

appropriate use of school counselor's time. Finally, if a school counselor's time is spent meeting AYP objectives then other clerical duties would need to be reevaluated.

### **Conclusion**

With so much discussion around NCLB, AYP and value added in schools, school counselors, with their unique training, can no longer afford to be excluded from the conversation (Barna & Brott, 2011; Lambie & Shari, 2009; Lieberman, 2004; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Zalaquett, 2005). Both academic and personal/social development are central components needed for students to achieve academic success (Rumberger, 2004). As such, preparing students to increase distal variables such as test scores or course grades requires a collaborative effort from all staff members, including professional school counselors (Brown & Trusty, 2005). To address the personal/social, career, and academic outcomes, a school counselor's expertise can be coupled with a teacher's expertise to create integrated classroom lessons.

Collaborative efforts between teachers and school counselors to integrate academic and counseling curricula results in rigorous and relevant lessons that address both academic outcomes and ASCA's student standards. Creating rigorous and relevant integrated classroom lessons has implications for school counselors that include being contributors to school climate, students' academic, personal/social, and career development, as well as AYP outcomes. Furthermore, if a school counseling curriculum is written into AYP plans, school counselors may have to reduce or eliminate the amount of time spent on clerical and administrative tasks.



### **Future Research**

Brown and Trusty (2005) assert that the “focus of research dealing with school counseling should be on establishing causal links between school counselors’ interventions and outcomes” (p.13). To this end, empirical research needs to be conducted to determine the efficacy of integrated academic-counseling lessons to address academic and personal/social outcomes. Further research should also be conducted investigating how integrated lessons address overall school climate as well as the personal/social needs of students. Additionally research should be done to understand the impact of these lessons on academic measures such as grades and high stakes test scores. Research should be conducted that investigates the outcomes of teacher and school counselor collaboration in classroom lessons. Finally, the barriers to implementation of integrated lessons, and how to overcome these barriers should be investigated.

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## ***Appendix***

### Integrated Lesson Planning Form

Time required (45 minutes, 2 class periods etc.):

Materials and or technology needed (powerpoint, smartboard, elmo, glue, paper, etc.):

Set-up or preparation needed:

Format presented in (power point, lecture, small group activity, combination, etc.):

Academic topic / lesson:

State academic standard(s) addressed:

Academic (subject) knowledge needed by counselor (understanding of Newton's third law, have read a novel, history etc.):

Campus critical data elements indicating personal/social, academic or career (campus safety, state requirements, discipline referrals, tardies, drop out, conflict, etc.):

Counseling core curriculum standard(s), competency/(ies) & indicators being addressed (A:A1.1, A:A2.1):

Counseling lesson / topic, if applicable (bullies, career etc.):

Synopsis of how guidance and academic lesson are related and integrated:

Similar student experiences to connect to the content / topic (relevance):

Procedure (include teacher and counselor role in the lesson):

Attach a copy of lesson, any handouts, power points or additional materials:

### **Biographical Statement**

Dr. Kelly Kozlowski is an assistant professor in the mental health and school counseling program at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Prior to this she was a public school teacher for three years and a professional school counselor in public schools for seven years. She is the recipient of ACA's Ross Trust award and was a state middle school counselor of the year in a Southern state. Her research interests include best practices in school counselor training and school counselor identity development.