Literature Review:

Who Sees the School Counselor for College Information?

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Summary

In their article “Who Sees the School Counselor for College Information,” the authors used a national survey, the 2002 Educational Longitudinal Study database, to answer the question of which high school students were seeing their counselors for college information. They used many variables to measure their data including race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), school setting, number of school counselors, parent involvement with the school, and counselor postsecondary aspirations for students, among others. The study revealed several findings that are relevant for school counselors working in urban schools, particularly for our binder project high school, MERVO. The results first “indicated that African Americans and female students were more likely to contact the school counselor for college information” (Bryan, et al., 2009). While the female component can be explained with the “growing rates of White and Hispanic female college attendance,” the tendency of African American students to be seeking college information is not as easily explained given the “low numbers of African American students entering college” (Bryan, et al., 2009). Secondly, the study found that “students in larger schools with higher levels of poverty were less likely to see the counselor about college” (Bryan, et al., 2009). The research also found that students’ who perceived the counselor as neutral about their prospects for college were less likely to contact the counselor about college. Lastly, the study showed that the parent-counselor relationship was very important in getting students to seek college guidance.

MERVO High School Application

Our binder project focuses on creating a college-going culture at MERVO High School, which is particularly relevant given that it’s a vocational school. The information in this article concretizes some of ideas and interventions we’ve already created for our project and gives new
information for areas that we should turn our attention. Perhaps the most illuminating information that we haven’t yet considered in our project thoroughly is the role of our beliefs, more importantly the students’ perceptions of our beliefs, about their future. This study showed that if a student perceives a counselor’s postsecondary aspirations for them as negative that they are less likely to come to counseling to receive college information. This, of course, then leads to students who are not receiving all of the support they might need to complete the college application process and enroll after graduating high school. As one of our goals is to increase postsecondary education enrollment at MERVO, it’s important to be conscious of students’ perceptions as well as our own biases that might be coming into play.

In addition, this article stresses parental involvement and how the counselor-parent relationship can be a vital connection to our students. This information guides us to not only host events for parents, but also to form a trusting relationship with those parents. This is particularly important given our goal of creating a college-going culture in an urban environment because many of the parents at our school have not gone to college themselves.

**Data, Implications, and Conclusions**

The author’s use of data and their connections to implications and recommendations for school counselors are very clear. They used a national survey and focused on many different factors to draw conclusions about who is actually seeing school counselors for college information. It was also important for them to look at not only personal factors, like race/ethnicity or gender, but also school environment and parent involvement. This attention shows the authors’ acknowledgement of larger systems and factors at play in any one student’s academic success.

**Promotion of Social Justice**
Creating a college-going culture, particularly at schools serving underrepresented populations in higher education, is absolutely a matter of social justice. By measuring the students that are currently getting guidance from school counselors about college and understanding some of the factors that might be hindering that interaction, this research contributes to closing achievement gaps and promoting students’ knowledge about college.
References