

Integration of Traditional Japanese Educational Guidance With School Counseling: A Collaborative Approach for the Challenges of Program Implementation

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Emerging cultural and organizational variations of the recent merger between the traditional Japanese educational guidance approach and school counseling practices and principles, offers educators, administrators, and school counselors distinct challenges for the implementation of a comprehensive guidance program. Through a brief historical review, this article presents the evolutionary process and identifies unique program applications that constitute the current guidance approach being applied within the Japanese educational system. The program fundamentals consist of stakeholder' expectations, information exchange, program goals and policies, and data analysis. These are recognized as influential factors embedded within challenges pertaining to the program implementation process. The application of a collaborative approach piloted by a supportive administration is encouraged to ensure thorough stakeholder investment which will establish a culturally modified comprehensive program that links appropriate services and resources to the needs of the student population.

Similar to the Asian and Western counterparts, Japanese educators recognize the bilateral contributions of academic and personal/social domains toward the overall academic success of a student. In addition, educators also understand the advantages of a Western comprehensive school counseling program toward instituting a collaborative approach which will meet the academic and personal/social needs of the student population. A comprehensive school counseling program seeks to endorse the students' academic and social achievements by improving skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential in areas of academic, career, and personal/social development (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2003). Educators agree that both the Western school counseling practices and principles and the Japanese organizational structure of education need modification to establish a cultural climate that will accommodate a comprehensive collaborative guidance program. Diversities in culture, language, economics, social structure, and religion are manifest factors in application when considering educational philosophies from an international perspective (Feller, Russell, & Whichard, 2005; Watkins, 2001).

The necessity for cultural consideration can be appreciated within the Japanese language where there are several styles of communication that could hinder the application of counseling techniques and program implementation. For example, there is a Japanese form of speaking known as *Sonkeigo* that is applied when speaking with adults or with an unfamiliar individual. This form of speaking is used to convey a social ranking order by establishing one individual as superior and the other as inferior. This could cause hindrance to applying counseling techniques or teacher/parent consultations because a non-assertive or indirect style of communication is disadvantageous to establishing rapport.

Japanese norms and beliefs that govern social order and group dynamics vary from the Western beliefs that idealize individualism and

autonomy. Ideologies that promote egalitarian participation and a sense of organizational collectiveness or collective identity are social values that are instilled and reinforced throughout the Japanese educational process (LeTendre, 1999). To separate oneself from the group because of strengths or weaknesses is generally perceived as audacious or shameful. As a result, due to the possible exposure or establishment of autonomy that could emerge through counseling services, there is a prevailing negative image associated with school counseling services and personnel. The perplexity of the recently introduced Western practices and principles of self-awareness and personal development that encourages individuality has generated apprehension from family members and students, thus creating difficulty in receiving the social acceptance or commitment required for counseling participation. In order to eliminate the negative images of counseling, recent efforts have focused on establishing a psycho-educational environment that indirectly facilitates help-seeking behavior of students and family members through education (Takano & Uruta, 2002).

The Japanese teaching culture differs from the Western counterpart in that Japanese teachers are responsible not only for transmitting cognitive knowledge, but also for socializing the students into adulthood by instilling desirable social norms, values, and morals of the Japanese society (LeTendre, 1999; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). In comparison to the Western teachers' role of maintaining a formal pedagogical model, Japanese teachers are required to become extensively involved with the students' social, emotional, and physical development. While novice teachers in the West are often warned of not becoming friends of their students, Japanese teachers are encouraged to adopt the role of an older sibling (Beauchamp, 1998; Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). To cultivate this relationship, it is not uncommon for Japanese teachers to investigate what extracurricular activities their students participate by actually checking up on students at local coffee shops, shopping malls, or

hangout spots, and by supervising club activities after school for considerable periods of time and participating in home visitations (Beauchamp, 1998; LeTendre, 1999). Although this teacher-student relationship is considered ideal in the Japanese teaching culture, with regard to implementing Western school counseling practices and principles and achieving acceptance of a school counselor, the enmeshed relationship can prove to be a deterrent because of disallowing for an objective third-party member as well as infringing on confidentiality.

Japan is at a unique advantage in that the traditional Japanese guidance approach that currently exists can be highly instrumental and indispensable in achieving a comprehensive approach that accommodates the Japanese cultural and social climate. While Western school counseling program fundamentals are recognized as beneficial within the Japanese educational community, the definitions and boundaries of program fundamentals, which are widely established in a variety of Western cultures, require structural modification to enter the Eastern borders and merge with the Japanese educational system. Japanese educators are proactively employing a collaborative approach to address the implementation challenges involving the integration of the traditional Japanese guidance approach with the Western school counseling practices and principles.

Historical Considerations

To support educators in the effort for increased concentration toward personal and social development of the students, in 1995, Japan's Ministry of Education, now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), in partnership with the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist, initiated the first Japanese school counseling program into the educational system (Murayama, 2001). Although this was considered a landmark with regard to enhancing support services within the schools, this effort has

actually been generated much earlier since the 1970s and continued into the 1980s. During this period, students were given assistance through an approach of educational guidance, which utilized in-house resources by assigning guidance responsibilities to faculty members.

The early 1970s signifies the initial attempt of implementing personal and social guidance within the school system, which was generally based upon Carl Roger's theoretical framework. In the latter half of the 1970s, a surge of in-school violence ignited increasing concerns among educators, resulting in the attempt of replacing any recognized theoretical framework of counseling or guidance with strict disciplinary tactics. A common notion among educators was that school counseling or guidance from external resources was unnecessary and that the problem of violence could be solved from within the teaching profession. This belief persisted for approximately ten years. In the mid-1980s, the increase of other two problems, namely bullying and non-attendance, gave rise to the reevaluation of the need of school counseling services. In 1988, the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist was established. Two years later, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Board set in motion the preparation for the first school counseling program (Kurihara, 2005).

Japanese Educational Guidance Framework

Philosophy

The Japanese educational guidance philosophy is developmental and preventive in nature, continually seeking to gain a better understanding of relevant issues confronting the student population and school environment (Shimazaki, 2002). By establishing a supportive non-judgmental role of guidance, the aim is to enhance a student's personal insight and interests while cultivating the academic, career, and social skills necessary to achieve individual goals (Kurihara, 2005;

MEXT, 2005b; K. Ukai, 1996). Educational guidance differs from school counseling, in that, in addition to nurturing students' individual development, a supplementary goal of the former is to socialize and assimilate students into adulthood by cultivating values and behaviors that are considered favorable and culturally significant in the Japanese society. The educational guidance approach operates within the confines of institutional, societal, and cultural realms, but the school counseling approach is more autonomous, focusing on a student's psychological development with minimal cultural or social influences by applying a therapeutic approach that will assist the student in achieving the counseling goal.

Guidance Application

Educational guidance is applied through both explicit informative/educational classroom guidance and individual guidance from the homeroom teacher or a relevant faculty member. Topics addressed mainly focus on behavioral, moral, and social developmental concerns (Shimazaki, 1998). Guidance policies and guidelines generated by MEXT and the local board of education are incorporated into the school organizational structure through a department commonly referred to as the *seito shido bukai* (i.e., student guidance group).

Seito Shido Bukai

While the *seito shido bukai* is comparative to the Western school counseling program, there are variations in the fundamentals of program design and delivery. Whereas the Western model asserts that a comprehensive school counseling program encompasses academic, career, and personal/social domains which are centrally maintained through the school counseling department (ASCA, 2003), the *seito shido bukai*, being composed of teacher representatives of educational guidance from each grade level, seeks less centralization by establishing

an organizational cooperative effort through departmental contributions of resources. To expedite organizational efficiency, the *seito shido bukai* constructs detailed policies pertaining to divisions of roles and responsibilities, interdepartmental collaboration procedures, and managerial structure. The goal composition of the *seito shido bukai* is annually revised with consideration to aspects relating to student services, student and guardian needs, administrative policies, educational goals, and program outcome evaluation results (Shimazaki, 1998).

One of the primary concerns of the *seito shido bukai* is to develop an environment that promotes service awareness and accessibility to all stakeholders. To encourage a counseling mentality throughout the school organization, a recent catchphrase “*kaunseringu maindo*” (i.e., counseling mind) is commonly used. This catchphrase symbolizes the three concepts of acceptance, sympathy, and sincerity that all faculty members are encouraged to apply when interacting with students (Kurihara, 2005). To increase awareness, sensitivity, and to enhance student guidance skills among the faculty members and guardians, the *seito shido bukai* provides in-service training and PTA (Parent Teacher Association) lectures. While the contents of training and lectures are dependent upon the need of the educational community, topics generally include current student problems, moral development, basic counseling techniques, problem identification, and current research or survey data (Shimazaki, 1998). *Seito shido bukai* services are available the entire day to students, guardians, and faculty members in an advisory room that is referred to as a *kokoro no heya* (i.e., heart room). Heart room implies that issues confronting the students weigh heavy on the heart.

There is a distinction of the service approach from the Western school counseling approach: the academic and career domains are not considered under the realm of the *seito shido bukai*. Although these two

domains are regarded as guidance topics, a separate department is responsible for establishing guidance procedures and monitoring service providers of the domains. This creates a degree of ambiguousness because the terms “guidance” and “counseling” are often used interchangeably and considered as originating from the same resource. Yet service applications differ in accordance with the service provider and the domain of focus.

For example, within the Japanese educational profession the current format of educational guidance regards the personal/social domains separate from the academic and career domains (Ishikuma, 2000; Shimazaki, 1998). Issues concerning personal/social domains are developmental in nature, and therefore are addressed through the educational guidance format or through direct counseling from the school counselor. However, academic and career domains are instructional issues, which are addressed from an informative guidance approach from the academic and career guidance department. The confusion is that the *seito shido bukai*, in collaboration with the school counselor, seeks to enhance the students’ overall development in issues that are considered to be interrelated and require complementary support, yet the guidance and counseling procedures vary and are applied from separate resources.

Although the design and delivery approach of the Japanese educational guidance program varies from that of the Western school counseling program, both maintain similar targeted domains. The Western school counseling program allocates roles and job responsibilities to one organizational division of the school counseling department, whereas the Japanese educational guidance program takes a broader approach by dispersing roles and job responsibilities to various departments throughout the school organization. The unique Japanese organizational characteristic that generates a commitment from all

stakeholders through a group consensus is illustrated in the *seito shido bukai* weekly guidance procedure.

Seito Shido Bukai Weekly Guidance

With reference to Zaffuto (2004), the following is a summary of an exploratory case study of the educational guidance program in a Japanese junior high school. The field study consisted of recorded interviews with teachers, administrators, and the school counselor, in addition to participation observation in the *seito shido bukai* meetings, departmental administrative meetings, school administrative and school counselor consultation sessions, school counseling activities, and educational trips of community awareness for students. The case study was performed over a two-week period and included program documentation and literature review in both English and Japanese.

The *seito shido bukai* weekly guidance process at this particular school took three days to administer, with each implementation stage requiring one day for completion. The guidance process begins at the initial meeting with teacher representatives of educational guidance from each grade level, then advancing through various levels of the administration for final distribution of results to all faculty members. Educational guidance is introduced when a student is referred or voluntarily elects to receive services. Each teacher representative will create a student case file that enters into the weekly *seito shido bukai* process. There is a written format that is utilized throughout all levels of the process. It consists of the name and the current condition of the identified student, the action plan, and the recommendations from both the school counselor and school principal. During the initial weekly *seito shido bukai* meeting, the teacher representative from each grade level delivers a brief synopsis of each identified student, whereupon group discussion is applied to generate a provisional written format of recommendation.

The next stage is a presentation of the provisional written format by the *seito shido bukai* representative at a departmental administrative meeting. The purpose of the presentation is to initiate organizational collaboration and to receive an additional perception by utilizing the resources and expertise of other impartial administrative groups. During this meeting, the written format will be modified based on the suggestions from other departmental representatives. Also, the guidance roles and responsibilities will be allocated to the appropriate stakeholders within the school organization.

In the final stage, the school counselor will review all documentation generated from both the *seito shido bukai* and the departmental administrative meetings to make additional comments and suggestions. The principal will then evaluate the written format revised by the school counselor and decide to either approve the revised format or partake in discussion with the school counselor for further revision. After the recommendations from both the school counselor and the principal are incorporated into the final draft, the written format is distributed to all faculty members.

Organizational Characteristic of Ringi

A foremost concern is the considerable amount of time and documentation required to complete the *seito shido bukai* weekly guidance process. This lengthy practice is a characteristic of the traditional Japanese industrial organizational consensus procedure known as *ringi*. The *ringi* procedure requires a stamp of approval from every department head before a new policy or procedure is implemented. It is instrumental in providing an environment that encourages collaboration and allows all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the achievement of the organizational goal. However, with regard to a guidance program, the utilization of time has critical impact toward thoroughly addressing all the components within the program

structure (ASCA, 2003; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). In fact, immediate attention is required in the response services provided by the *seito shido bukai*, but these services are potentially delayed through the unbalanced allocation of time resulting from the application of a *ringi* style program management approach.

Education/Certification for Educational Guidance Representatives

The Japanese educational guidance approach assigns the role and responsibility of teacher representatives of educational guidance on an annual basis and provides in-service training from within the educational profession. To ensure a level of competence among school counselors, a certification system is administered by the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist, which mandates educational and supervision requirements. However, substantiating a level of counseling competence for the teacher representatives through an external professional organization is not mandatory.

The teacher representatives of educational guidance occupy a position that is required to deliver support services and consult with faculty members and guardians about appropriate guidance or counseling techniques. However, often training does not equip service providers with the necessary clinical skills to address the recent fluctuation of psychological, developmental, or anti-social behavioral problems (Kurihara, 2005). The school counselor has acted as a catalyst in creating awareness in current social and developmental issues while providing further insight of counseling techniques throughout the organizational structure. Recognizing the need for clinical assistance in complex issues such as psychological, developmental, and anti-social behavioral problems was an influential factor in employing the specialized external resources of a school counselor.

Initial Implementation of the School Counselor Measure

During the initial implementation phase of the school counselor measure, stakeholders experienced confusion about the role of a school counselor. Prevalent questions and concerns from teachers and administrators were: “A school counselor is not really useful. What can only one person do? What can one do with such a short amount of time? The school counselor doesn’t interact well with other staff members. Does the treatment really work? There is too much protection of privacy” (Matsubara, 1999, p. 24). Because traditionally teachers have assumed the roles of both a knowledge transmitter and a support provider, many faculty members mistakenly interpreted the introduction of a school counselor as a representation of inefficient job performance. The lack of knowledge and experience with school counseling services and the conflicts in ethical and legal practices created the potential of misdirected utilization of services, thus hindering school counselors’ ability to maintain a neutral or objective position and forcing them to comply with administrative demands or program goals.

To increase the opportunity of success of the school counselor measure, leadership support was provided to ensure a thorough recognition of the functions of school counselors and to further the acceptance of school counselors within the community (Fujioka, 1996). Additionally, the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist provided a basic school counselor implementation format that endorsed school counselors to address social issues such as violence, bullying, non-attendance, and dropout rate. To concentrate on these social issues, the Board cooperated with the Ministry of Education to put emphasis on the importance of prevention and the establishment of a collaborative relationship with the traditional educational guidance system (Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist, 2005).

The overall impact for the implementation of the school counselor measure has been acknowledged by the positive outcome for school policy reform, faculty development, student development, guardian responsiveness, and the establishment of local community relationships (Murayama, 1998). Annual surveys conducted by MEXT indicate a positive trend in the reduction of social issues of violence, bullying, non-attendance, and dropout rate. It was agreed that the school counselor has been proactive in initiating change, developing insight, and establishing commitment from all stakeholders. In addition, the school counseling program has had an unexpected beneficial influence on the field of psychology by increasing the standards of curriculum and training from universities as well as generating public awareness, which has created a wider job market (Murayama, 2001).

The Role of a School Counselor

In Japan, a universal framework that school counselors can apply has not been established yet. The recommended approach resembles the Western school counseling approach, consisting of the following: individual and group counseling, consultation, in-service training, educational lectures, referral services, and distribution of information (MEXT, 2005a; Murayama, 1998). In contrast to the Western school counseling approach which encompasses both academic, career, and personal/social domains, the Japanese school counselor is typically perceived as a clinical specialist who applies the above-mentioned approach to concentrate exclusively on psychological, developmental, or anti-social behavioral problems.

The acquisition of school counseling services is controlled by the regional board of education and supplied by the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist. The school counselor is employed on a yearly contract, and provides eight hours of services a week per school.

From 1995 until 2003, the Ministry of Education (now MEXT) was the sole financial provider for services. In 2003, the school counseling budget underwent reform, with both MEXT and the regional board of education as joint financial providers.

Whether it is an advantage or disadvantage of Japan's school counseling system has yet to be determined, but unlike the Western counterpart, the fact that Japan has fewer certified mental health professions decreases the variation in legal or ethical practices, therefore minimizing the conflicts between academic and professional associations (Ishikuma, 2000). However, as a separate entity from the school organization, school counselors must adhere to guidelines from both the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist and MEXT. Conflicting policy and regulation guidelines from separate governing bodies limit the role of school counselors and their ability to perform duties which are encompassed in a Western comprehensive guidance program. This leads to the delay in establishing a universal model.

School Counselor Certification

While school counseling services are encouraged, attainment of services is not always guaranteed. A preliminary problem at the early stages of implementing school counseling program was the lack of certified school counselors. In 1996, in order to recruit new school counseling professionals and to ensure solid school counseling training programs, the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist established the first university regulatory committee. There has been a nation-wide increase of certified professionals from a total of 5,037 in 1995 to 11,533 in 2004. In addition, as of 2004, there are 114 approved certified university programs (Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist, 2005).

The requirements for school counselor certification of the Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist vary, depending on the professional experience of a candidate. A topic of controversy with regard to certification is that there is only one general testing format of the current testing process for all areas of psychology. It is commonly believed that while the current testing format of certification is designed to evaluate a candidate's clinical psychological abilities, this format does not evaluate the individual's knowledge or ability to address the distinct challenges involved in the school counseling profession. Professional background and training are determinants of eligibility for certification, required amount of time of supervision, and the grade of salary. However, it is not required by law to obtain employment as a school counselor for certification. Certification allows an individual to practice as a school counselor as well as a clinical psychologist in various clinical setting such as hospitals, treatment centers, and private clinics. Professionals that are eligible for certification are medical doctors, university professors in related fields of psychology, and graduate students of clinical psychology programs from approved Japanese or foreign universities (Japanese Certification Board for Clinical Psychologist, 2005).

Implementation Challenges of the School Counseling Program

Since the introduction of the school counselor position into the traditional Japanese educational guidance program, research has identified various implementation challenges, such as recognition of the stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, privacy, professional knowledge, professional boundaries, time restraint, indirect and direct services, and acknowledgment of program goals (Ito, 1996; Ito & Nakamura, 1998; Nakashima et al., 1997; Seto & Ishikuma, 2002; Tanaka & Inoue, 2001). Program fundamentals that can be influential in addressing these implementation challenges are clarification of stakeholders'

expectations, information exchange, program goals and policies, and data analysis. The implementation challenges can be viewed as operational activities impacted by the program fundamentals that are considered as interrelated administrative concerns to be addressed simultaneously.

Program Fundamentals

Clarification of Expectations

The impact and influence on implementation vary, depending on the position of the stakeholder. This is illustrated by Ito (1996) in a study of teachers' expectations of the school counselors' roles and responsibilities. Results indicate that elementary and junior high school teachers preferred that school counselors address issues of education by assisting students with learning difficulties, whereas high school teachers expected school counselors to address psychological, social, and developmental issues. The results of another study (Higashi, Takeuchi, & Yamamoto, 1998) illustrate that both junior high and high school teachers maintained similar expectations of school counselors, but quantitative results pertaining to the roles of school counselors in the problem areas of psychological, social, and educational development varied with the positions of administrators or teachers. This is also similar to Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, and Jones (2004) where research results pertaining to the acceptance of national standards varied with the educational level of elementary or secondary schools. These results suggest that stakeholders' positions and educational levels should be viewed distinctively when considering their expectations of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors, indirect and direct services, and program goals.

Information Exchange

Information exchange is a primary issue which permeates all levels of stakeholders and is essential in creating awareness of program goals. In addition, information exchange can address the challenges of role and responsibility allocation to effectively provide indirect and direct services. Often counterproductive results in the relationship between school counselor and student have emerged because of inefficient information regarding the school counselors' roles and responsibilities (Wakashima, 2005). In a case study by Zaffuto (2004), interview results report that even though detailed guidance goals and plans were established in weekly educational guidance meetings, services were not provided due to a failure in communication among stakeholders. Distribution of relevant information can ensure proper utilization of program resources by allowing stakeholders to contribute appropriate assistance and resources that effectively deliver indirect and direct services to achieve program goals (Sabella & Booker, 2003).

Program Goals and Policies

Both teachers and school administrators emphasize the significant impact of information exchange together with the recognition of both school and school counseling program goals and policies on the smooth implementation of a school counseling program (Ponec & Brock, 2000; Tamura, 2003). Although program goals and policies were considered vague during the initial implementation of the Japanese school counselor measure, the Ministry of Education and numerous researchers advocated the application of program characteristics that would generate an effective team approach. The importance of mutual respect between the educational guidance teachers and school counselors while recognizing both the educational and psychological aspects within the school setting is fundamental to the administration of program implementation (Takahashi, 2001; Y. Ukai, 1996).

Data Analysis

Systematic data analysis is instrumental in substantiating program efficiency which impacts the goals and directions of both the school and guidance programs. Data analysis results identify institutional and environmental barriers, establishing a baseline that will influence the stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in future collaborative efforts (Bemak, 2000; Dahir & Stone, 2003) The analysis results are provided to the decision makers of the district and national level, and they will have considerable influence upon the development of the guidance program goals and policies. Therefore, it is imperative that the school administrators work collaboratively with the school counselor to align the guidance program goals and policies with the goals and policies of the school board (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Gysbers, Hughey, Starr, & Lapan, 1992; Gysbers, Lapan, & Jones, 2000).

Collaboration: The Solution to the Implementation Challenges

In response to the implementation challenges that have surfaced with the introduction of the school counselor position, there has emerged a need for collaboration of all stakeholders to institute a systematic comprehensive program (Iechika & Ishikuma, 2003; Ito, 2002; Kurihara, 2005; Takahashi, 2001). Nakada and Kobayashi (1999) emphasize the importance of expanding the human resource base to swiftly develop an understanding of the student's strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Although accessing various human resource expertises to establish a comprehensive program is a complex task, managing and maintaining a collaborative network proves to be even a greater challenge. To create an effective collaborative network that provides a systematic comprehensive program, research results support further investigation into the school administrator's influence of program implementation through considering administrative areas such as school counseling program management, program coordination, leadership and

organizational program implementation, and program delivery (Iechika & Ishikuma, 2003; Seto, 2000; Seto & Ishikuma, 2002).

Program Delivery and Management

Program delivery and management are fundamental concepts of a collaborative framework of school counseling programs. They consist of methods and activities that can have significant contribution in addressing the current implementation challenges. The delivery and management concepts are derived from *The ASCA National Model* (ASCA, 2003), which regards these concepts to be essential in providing a systematic level of guidance. These two concepts are interrelated. Whereas the program delivery component establishes the actual implementation process by addressing “how” the operational resources will be instituted, the program management component concentrates on planning and policies by addressing the “when,” “why,” “by whom,” and “on what authority” operational resources are implemented. The program delivery and management concepts are recognized within the educational profession to be the recommended approach. However, these fundamentals are based on a Western guidance format requiring an institutional modification effort led by Japanese school administrators to establish a collaborative environment.

Organizational and Cultural Considerations

Although both Japan and Western countries have established guidance formats widely recognized within their respective educational communities, the organizational structure of the stakeholders’ position and the roles and responsibilities embedded within each format varies. In the Japanese educational guidance format, the program delivery and management fundamentals are designated to separate departments. For instance, although ASCA (2003), Gysbers and Henderson (2001), Gysbers, Hughey, et al. (1992) and Gysbers, Lapan, et al. (2000)

advocate and emphasize the importance of school counselors' collaborative participation in system and managerial concerns such as program budgeting, policies and procedures, time distribution scheduling, and the format design of school counselor activities, these program elements are controlled by the school business administration, various departmental heads, and the local board of education. Although school counselors' suggestions and influence are highly regarded among all stakeholders, considerations are limited in relation to providing program responsive services. This isolated departmental program implementation approach has influenced program quality and created the gaps illustrated in the current implementation challenges.

In the Western school counseling approach, an essential ingredient for establishing a collaborative relationship is to define a support service provider as a school counseling program rather than a school counselor position (ASCA, 2003; Bemak, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Gysbers, Lapan, et al., 2000). The school counselor occupies a leadership position within the program model and acts as a change agent beyond providing direct services in order to interact on a systematic level with both operational and administrative stakeholders (ASCA, 2003; Keys, Bemak, Carpenter, & King-Sears, 1998). While this organizational construct is a primary characteristic for the Western approach, it proves difficult to apply in a Japanese educational program because there is already an established systematic educational guidance approach that utilizes a vast amount of resources and views the school counselor as playing a subsidized role.

As previously presented, cultural variations in the Japanese society, such as language, professional terminology, teaching and student developmental ideologies, as well as norms and values that instill egalitarian participation and a sense of organizational collectiveness, all generate barriers for an interdisciplinary collaborative relationship with

the Western practices and principles of school counseling. This is demonstrated in an interview of a case study (Zaffuto, 2004) where a school principal expressed his objections pertaining to the Western school counseling approach applied for non-attending students by stating: “I don’t know why, but Japan has accepted the U.S. approach to gently encouraging students back into schools, but we should be more demanding and push them harder.” Addition frustration or objections are presented in interview comments from several teachers who disagreed with the usefulness or necessity of the counseling room (i.e., *kokoro no heya*) and felt that students often abused the freedom of the counseling room to avoid classes and responsibilities. Japanese school counselors are confronted with the dual challenges of receiving acceptance as a program leader as opposed to a quick fix solution for problem behaviors as well as introducing the Western school counseling practices and principles that will undoubtedly present cultural differences and opposition.

The present conditions of the organizational structure and the cultural barriers leading to the current implementation challenges can be recognized in Bemak’s (2000) description of institutional and personal interdisciplinary collaborative resistance. Institutional resistance is understood as a failure to provide adequate support for departmental collaboration through the lack of funding, centralized administrative policies that discourages systematic collaboration, poor communication channels, and the absent of universal terminology. Personal resistance, which could be considered cultural resistance with regard to the Japanese educational guidance approach, is an individual’s resistance to a collaborative effort due to differences in norms, rules, regulations, and performance standards. Often individuals have established a comfort level with the current job practices and hesitate to confront the current operational system for fear of possibly threatening their position within the organization.

The Role of School Administrators

Restructuring the organizational format of the current educational guidance is vital in establishing a school climate that is willing to apply program delivery and management fundamentals. A program under the leadership of a supportive administration can prove to be instrumental in addressing the issues of resistance that hinder a collaborative relationship and create the current implementation challenges. By acting as an advocate, the school administrator can prove vital in helping the school counselor achieve a level of acceptance as a program leader within the school infrastructure. ASCA (2003) endorses administrator support as a necessary contributor for effective program collaboration. Both the Western and Japanese educational professions recognize that a solid administrative leadership is a means to establish a compliant and supportive environment from all stakeholders and that it is also imperative for the implementation and maintenance of a systematic comprehensive program (Bemak, 2000; Dimmitt, 2003; Iechika & Ishikuma, 2003; Ponc & Brock, 2000; Seto, 2000).

Conclusion

It goes without saying that immediate program investment from all stakeholders is not so easily achieved. To disperse crucial roles and responsibilities to supplementary resources has produced and will continue to generate a sense of apprehension and perplexity among educators from any nation. Educational programs as well as any organizational establishment are a cultural microcosm containing specific operational components and administrative structures that mandate the application of resources and the allotment of professional roles and responsibility within that particular institution. Educators face a multi-complex challenge of integrating the traditional cultural elements unique to both the Japanese society and Japanese educational programs with the foreign components of a school counseling program.

Theoretical concepts pertaining to a Japanese educational guidance team or a collaborative approach are ample and useful in establishing a framework for the roles and occupational functions of all stakeholders (Iechika & Ishikuma, 2003; Seto & Ishikuma, 2002; Tamura, 2003; Tamura & Ishikuma, 2003), but there has been a lack of research that addresses the school administrator's involvement and influence upon program implementation. In addition, while current research has generated a thorough conceptual awareness of an ideal collaborative approach, the relevance and application of stakeholders' activities embedded within the theoretical concepts, as seen in Ito (1999), can vary in response to the unique characteristics of each school. The lack of empirical verification pertaining to the school administrator's role fails to provide research that can identify significant results for universal application. Further study is needed to empirically verify the significance of the influence that the leadership role of school principals has upon establishing an interdisciplinary collaborative guidance program which impacts the outcome of school counseling activities.

Similar to Western students, Japanese students face interrelated developmental issues pertaining to academic, career, and personal/social development, leading Japanese educators to go beyond the confines of the educational community to seek assistance from additional resources and personnel. While program flexibility and evolution is encouraged to meet the ever-changing needs of the students, this does not imply an abandonment of traditional assets. Rather, the integration of the school counseling component is viewed as a means to generate positive challenges which can derive growth opportunities for all stakeholders. Although initially program implementation is influenced by cultural and social factors, the effectiveness of a comprehensive collaborative guidance approach remains universal. To accommodate the cultural and social environment of Japan, educators are actively exploring and recognizing the significant influence of a collaborative approach on

the implementation of a comprehensive guidance program, which is composed of both the Western school counseling practices and principles and the traditional Japanese educational guidance approach.

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傳統日本教育輔導與學校諮商的整合：
應付實施困難的協作模式

近年傳統日本教育輔導模式與西方學校諮商實踐原則的整合，突顯了文化與組織的差異，令教育工作者、教育行政人員和學校諮商師在實施全面輔導計劃時要面對獨特的挑戰。本文透過對日本教育輔導的簡短歷史回顧，說明在日本教育制度下現行輔導模式的發展過程和特點。全面輔導計劃的基礎包括持分者的期望、信息的交流、計劃目標與政策，以及數據分析。這些都是計劃實施過程中會遇上甚麼挑戰的影響因素。若行政人員能給予支持，應用協作模式將可保障持分者的投資，從而建立配合文化環境的全面輔導計劃，俾能為學生的需要給予適當的服務和資源。