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Developing Counselor Self-Efficacy while Supporting At-Risk Youth: Partnership between UMass Boston, TechBoston Academy, and Urban Science Academy

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Developing Counselor Self-Efficacy while Supporting At-Risk Youth: Partnership between UMass Boston, TechBoston Academy, and Urban Science Academy

Summary

Targeted supervision was used to develop counseling trainees' self-efficacy when working with urban youth. Interview findings suggested that intentional strategies to develop urban self-efficacy were effective. While inferential statistics identified that urban fieldwork contributed to counselors' self-efficacy, intentional strategies were not necessarily beneficial. This study yields implications for counselor educators who are incorporating field work into their graduate programs.

Goals and Objectives

To support Boston Public School (BPS) youth in college and career preparedness through individual and group work with UMass Boston graduate students

To develop UMass Boston school counseling graduate students' self-efficacy as urban counselors through a targeted supervisory curriculum

Partnership Information

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Approaches and Methods

- 100-hour school counseling practicum experience at 2 BPS schools
- UMass Boston students were divided into 4 groups (2 controls; 2 experimental)
- All UMass Boston students provided college and career mentoring to BPS students in individual and group settings
- Experimental groups received targeted supervision addressing multicultural counseling skills and self-efficacy
- Qualitative and Quantitative data were obtained to explore counseling trainees' self-efficacy as urban school counselors

Results/Findings

Participants in the experimental group indicated developing urban counseling self-efficacy through:

(1) collaborating with others on-site through weekly reflections and designing and implementing an SAT preparation class for disadvantaged students.

(2) Mere exposure to the urban school setting, coupled with the supervision they received on-site to help them reflect on problems

Participants in the control and experimental group indicated developing urban counseling self-efficacy through conducting data-driven research on-site

Outcomes/Conclusions

Outcomes:

- Practicum students provided college/career counseling to juniors and seniors and provide academic coaching to at risk students.
- BPS students at partner schools have shown improvement in coursework completion and grades.
- Practicum students have organized college fairs for juniors that have attracted approximately 30 different colleges and post-secondary programs.

Conclusions:

- Thematic analysis suggested that the targeted supervisory curriculum increased counseling trainees' self-efficacy as urban counselors
- Counselor educators can consider incorporating targeted supervisory sessions focused on developing multicultural skills and self-efficacy into their programs' field-based experiences to best serve University and PK-12 students

References and Resources

Wilczenski, F. L., & Schumacher, R. A. (2008). Service learning integrated into urban school counselor preparation. *Journal of School Counseling, 6*(12).