Student, Administrator, Counselor, and Teacher

CCBG Successes in Arizona Schools

John W. Bloom

Overview
Since 1986, over 100 Arizona school districts have implemented Comprehensive Competency-Based Guidance (CCBG) programs. However, there have been few studies to document the effectiveness of CCBG (Bloom, 1994).

Design
This study was undertaken in the summer of 1994 at the fifth annual Arizona Counselor’s Academy. The Arizona Department of Education stages these academies to provide counselors the opportunity to learn the CCBG model and to develop a local plan for CCBG implementation.

Subjects
Approximately 130 school counselors attended the fifth annual Arizona Counselor’s Academy in Prescott, Arizona. Approximately 70 were Track One or first-time attendees, 35 were Track Two or second-time attendees, and 25 were either Track Three or were attending for at least the third time. Nineteen Track-Three participants heard a presentation on the importance of reporting research findings and were then given one hour to write open-ended responses to five research questions.

Findings
This section transcribes some of the responses. Counselors were asked to describe examples of CCBG student, administrator, counselor, parent, and teacher successes.

CCBG Student Successes

- “More students understand the financial aid/scholarship process because I offer on-going ‘Financial Aid Orientations.’ As a result, more students come in with specific questions about financial aid than in the past. And, where they were once dependent upon me to provide information, now they know when and where to apply for scholarships and financial aid for themselves.” Diane Laskey, Sunnyside HS, Tucson (Urban)

- “In the Personal Social Domain, I do a ‘True Colors’ presentation. Many students have an enlightening experience concerning their own personalities. One, who had been almost reclusive, found out that being ‘Green’ was OK. No longer did others in the class look at him as being weird or strange.” Kenny Smith, Thatcher HS (Rural)

- “Elementary students have walked across the school campus to my high school counseling office. They wouldn’t have done so before the implementation of CCBG.” Roger Smith, Pima HS (Rural)

- “As a result of CCBG, a Career Center was developed to help address the career domain competencies. Thus each student receives a personality, interest, values, and ability assessment. Each parent and freshman is invited to go over the results and to view the student’s Four-Year Plan and career/vocational educational goals.” David Christensen, Lake Havasu HS (Rural)

CCBG Administrator Successes

- “After writing competencies in three domains we began writing counselor position descriptions in each area. Our principal saw such value in the counselor positions that he included the entire department in the hiring process and used the descriptions we wrote!” Cheri Mabbitt, Mountain Pointe HS, Tempe (Suburban)

- “We presented our principal a counselor agreement and master schedule to describe our plan for the year that included monthly classroom presentations for all 7th, 8th, & 9th graders. He was worried we wouldn’t be available to handle crises cases. After one year of presenting our program he is our biggest advocate.” Faye Olderog, Shepherd JHS, Mesa (Suburban)

- “After presenting our CCBG program each of the last two years, our principal has decided to hire an additional counselor.” John Pavlich, Blue Ridge HS (Rural)

- “I kept track of how I spent my time using the CCBG form. I showed the forms to my principal and suggested that I was involved with too many non-counseling tasks. He asked for copies. I am under the impression that he included the entire department in the hiring process and used the descriptions we wrote!” Sarah Greenfield, Chinle JHS (Navajo Reservation)

CCBG Counselor Successes

- “When I first heard about the program I was very skeptical, but it has helped our department focus on planning, organization, and philosophy. We are excited by the aim (all kids) and focus (educational, social and career) of CCBG.” Michael DiBiase, Sunnyside HS, Tucson (Urban)

- “We have found that counselors are now feeling more empowered and are enjoying their work more! We are gradually getting rid of more and more non-guidance duties, i.e., clerical work. Our registration clerk is now doing more schedule changes and this has definitely helped us. I don’t feel as ‘dumped on’ as I did previously.” Lynn Seeley, Gilbert HS (Suburban)

- “Eighth-grade orientation has continued to expanded. As a result, this year we had very successful parent/child interviews and one-on-one, four-year planning sessions with each parent in May.” Jessié Slade, Round Valley HS (Rural)

CCBG Parent Successes

- “Mesa’s Parent-To-Parent program has empowered Mesa parents to take an active role in their child’s education. Coordinated by elementary counselor, Kathy Buntin, the program continues to grow.” Fran Carney, Mesa Schools (Suburban)
• “A presentation was given to a parent group (SPICE). The comment was made by a parent that she wished counselors had given her a 9th-grade orientation that included a Tech Prep component when she was in school. She said that with such an orientation she might have made different choices when she was in school and that with this info she could now help her children make better career choices.” Richard Montano, Sunnyside HS, Tucson (Urban)

• “Parents can usually see what we have covered with their students.” Ken Sanford, Chinele HS (Navajo Reservation)

CCBG Teacher Successes

• The teacher in whose class we presented decision-making was impressed with how well the lesson aligned with her health curriculum, how professional the presentation was, and the impact it had on her freshmen (They were attentive and participated).” Mary Christ, Sunnyside HS, Tucson (Urban)

• “This past spring the three Introduction to Business teachers came to another counselor and myself and requested that we go into the classroom on a semi-monthly or monthly basis for the 94-95 school year to present academic and career information to their classes (mostly freshmen). This came about as a result of their observing our working outside the guidance office!” Ellen Norton, Mountain Pointe HS, Tempe (Suburban)

• “I was invited into a classroom by a teacher to address three freshman and two sophomore classes (English). Within two days, the other freshman and sophomore English teachers approached me to request that I come into their classes also.” Pam Schmidt, Rincon HS, Tucson (Urban)

• “Through the vocational aids and vocational teachers we now have increased career/educational planning activities and the use of the Career Center Information.” Barry Williams, Round Valley HS (Rural)

Summary

Counselors who have implemented CCBG programs report that students are learning new life skills, such as conflict resolution and decision making, have concrete and informed academic and career plans for the future, and are learning more about their personalities and the personality of others. Counselors are excited about being able to address the needs of all students on a proactive basis instead of the needs of only a few.

In terms of administrator successes, counselors indicate that administrators are more supportive of their work, are more knowledgeable about what counselors do, and are hiring additional counselors and support staff to further empower counselors. When school counselors take the time to explain CCBG program goals, they find administrators are supportive of CCBG and of counselors who implement CCBG programs.

There have been significant counselor successes with CCBG. Counselors feel more organized, more focused, and less scattered. They feel better about themselves and their jobs when their expectations are clearly defined and when they have had input into the role definition process. Counselors, and their administrators, are frequently praised by parents, students, and teachers for counseling efforts on the behalf of all students.

Parent successes come not only in the form of positive comments; in many cases, parents are becoming actively involved in the CCBG process. Parents are communicating more with their children about their child’s goals and objectives and parents are also volunteering their time to work as aids in the classroom and in the schools’ career centers.

The teacher successes emanating from CCBG relate to counselors discovering that many teachers eagerly provide counselors access to students for classroom presentations. In one case, math teachers said they “felt like they’ve died and gone to heaven” because counselors are so active in classrooms and so involved with students.

References


John W. Bloom is Professor of Educational Psychology, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.