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***“Sometimes I Really Need the School Counselling Service”*: Some Aspects of School Counsellor–Teacher Collaboration**

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Abstract. The school counselling service in Slovenia is part of every school. Collaboration among all participants in the school community is particularly important for the quality of the work. The aim of this paper is to gain insight into the collaboration between school counsellors and teachers in Slovenian primary and secondary schools. The frequency with which teachers take the initiative to cooperate with school counsellors in different areas of work will be presented, as well as the specific issues of classwork and teaching in which they believe they would most benefit from cooperation with school counsellors. A quantitative research design was used, and questionnaires were designed for school counsellors and teachers. These were sent to all school counsellors, of whom 315 (32.6%) responded. The questionnaires for teachers were sent to randomly selected schools; 501 teachers responded. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The results show that - according to both teachers and counsellors - teachers most often take the initiative to support individual students who need help. On the other hand, according to teachers' open-ended responses and the perception of the counsellors themselves, teachers also need support and collaboration in their work with the classroom community. However, if the focus of school counselling is solely on remedial and service tasks, it is difficult to speak of quality collaboration. This paper reveals the importance of strengthening mutual collaboration in co-creating supportive and inclusive learning environments and classroom communities. In the future, it would be useful to examine the obstacles to such collaboration.

Keywords: collaboration; counselling services; school counsellors; teachers; teachers' needs

1. Introduction

A review of the international arrangements of school counselling services and school counselling reveals that the concepts of school counselling services in Europe and around the world differ with reference to their formal set-up, the

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experts who work there, school counselling programmes, etc. (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2022; Carey et al., 2017; Harris, 2013; Popov & Spasenović, 2018). In Slovenia, the school counselling service is one of the subsystems of each primary and secondary school (National Education Institute Slovenia [NEIS], 2008a, b). Various experts (e.g. pedagogues, psychologists, social workers, social pedagogues, special pedagogues) work in the school counselling service. The work of the counselling service is interdisciplinary, consisting of the complex interconnection of pedagogical, psychological and social issues, which is why it is important for counsellors with different professional profiles to work together as a team (NEIS, 2008a, b). Collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches also refer to cooperation with other educators in the educational institution. School counsellors should always attempt to define their contribution to this collaboration as clearly as possible and in accordance with their professional competence. Collaboration should be based on mutual support, establishing, and maintaining professional diversity and specificity, rather than excluding or blurring the boundaries between different professional fields (NEIS, 2008a, b).

This paper examines some of the characteristics of collaboration between school counsellors and teachers, which is particularly important because supporting individual students without appropriate action and intervention in the classroom and learning community has no real impact (Pekljaj & Pečjak, 2020). The literature review briefly outlines the role of the school counsellors and the teachers in the school setting, focusing on aspects of their mutual collaboration. The starting point is the assumption that school counsellors play an important role as bridge builders between all those involved in school life (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022) and contribute to the holistic development of individual students as well as the professional development of teachers and the school as a whole (Slijepčević & Zuković, 2021).

The findings discussed in this paper are part of the research study conducted to gain a comprehensive insight into the work of the school counselling service in Slovenian primary and secondary schools (Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022). Here, the interaction between school counsellors and teachers is examined and the following research questions are answered:

1. How often do teachers take the initiative to work with school counsellors in different areas of work, according to their own perceptions and those of the counsellors?
2. Do the counsellors and teachers differ in their assessments of the frequency of collaboration initiatives taken by teachers?
3. On which issues of working with the class and teaching would teachers benefit most from collaboration and consultation with school counsellors at their own discretion?

An analysis of teachers' open-ended responses to the latter question, designed to shed more light on teachers' expectations of their collaboration with school counsellors, is presented for the first time in this paper. The paper provides insight

into teachers' collaboration needs, by identifying the areas of their work in which they most need the support and collaboration of school counsellors.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Role and Tasks of the School Counsellors and Teachers

In Slovenia, school counsellors participate in resolving pedagogical, psychological and social issues at schools by means of three central activities: assistance; development and prevention; and planning and evaluation (NEIS, 2008a, b). In undertaking these three main types of activities, the school counselling service aims to help everybody at the educational institution – students, teachers, the management and parents – through collaborating with them.

School counselling, as conceptualised in Slovenia, has never been limited to assisting students in their personal development and learning (Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022; NEIS, 2008a, b). Instead, it not only provides student counselling and directly assists students with their learning and developmental needs, but more importantly, it assists in planning, implementing, and evaluating the day-to-day educational work in schools, as well as planning, creating, and maintaining favourable conditions for a safe and encouraging educational environment that allows students to make optimal progress. The counsellor's support of the students under their care remains incomplete if his/her activities do not include working in classrooms and consultation with teachers, school management, parents, and the external environment, since most protective factors are found in everyday activities and the general culture of coexistence in the school (Mikuš Kos et al., 2017). Similarly, Sink (2011) stresses the need to reconceptualise the comprehensive school counselling programme ASCA “so that collaboration and systemic interventions become the norm, not the exception, and school counsellors are no longer viewed as the major provider of circumscribed responsive services” (p. iv).

For the student, one of the most important contexts in an educational institution is the classroom community, where the daily educational work and processes take place; therefore, it is particularly important for the school counsellor to have a good quality of collaboration with teachers (Gregorčič Mrvar & Resman, 2019; NEIS, 2008a, b; Slijepčević & Zuković, 2021).

The primary responsibility of teachers is to ensure high-quality instruction and create learning environments that provide students with holistic learning experiences and personally meaningful learning (Marentič Požarnik et al., 2019). De Corte (2010) emphasises the importance of creating learning environments that facilitate constructive, self-regulated, contextual and collaborative learning for students. In addition, creating and maintaining a positive classroom climate is essential to the quality of educational work (manifested in the promotion of optimal student development, high student achievement, and good interpersonal relationships), as numerous research studies have shown (Dernowska, 2017). Teachers are therefore constantly confronted with a number of challenges in their classroom work: they have to help create a positive classroom climate, keep

abreast of developments in their field, introduce new didactic approaches and ICT, adapt their teaching to the needs of different learners, etc. To provide high-quality instruction, engage students, and introduce modern approaches, teachers must have a positive attitude towards change (Čepić et al., 2019; Makovec, 2018; Makovec Radovan, 2022; Welsh et al., 2021) and be willing to collaborate and learn along with other educators (Čepić et al., 2019; Stoll & Kools, 2017). Collaboration between school counsellors and teachers is the focus of the following literature review.

2.2. Collaboration Between School Counsellors and Teachers

School counsellors and teachers share responsibility and concern for the optimum development of all students at the school and for their best academic performance, which are the fundamental reasons for their collaboration (ASCA, 2022; Erford, 2015; Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Sink, 2008). Educators need to understand the work of the school as a whole and work towards change in the classroom or school for the benefit of the entire student population (ASCA, 2022; Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022). Through collaboration and consultation, they enable change at the levels of the individual, the class and the entire school (Erford, 2015; Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022). Consultation refers to working with a 'third party' – parents, teachers, the school management and others who have a concern for and influence on students, their work and development (Brigman et al., 2005).

In particular, counsellors work with teachers to manage classes and teacher-student interactions, to create supportive learning environments and a positive classroom climate, to take into account students' individual characteristics and to adapt schoolwork for students in all their diversity (Dinkmeyer et al., 2015; Sink, 2008), while engaging and involving parents (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Šteh et al., 2018).

In addition to the benefits and advantages that their joint work and reflection can have on the development of their students and the school, a quality relationship and collaboration is also enriching and beneficial for the counsellors and teachers themselves; for example, strong relationships improve role understanding, prevent burnout, help to support each other in their work, etc. (Atici, 2014; Molina et al., 2022; Sink, 2008; Wingfield et al., 2010). Collaboration, discussions and agreements between counsellors and teachers go beyond the partial view of one or the other (Resman, 2018). Together, they can develop high-quality solutions to current challenges that they would not be able to do alone; also, they can learn and grow, both professionally and personally (Šteh et al., 2021). Researchers have suggested that a strong, high-quality relationship between school counsellors, headteachers and teachers helps headteachers and teachers to better understand the role of the school counsellor, which can lead to a greater alignment of work plans/programmes and visions, and to higher quality educational work for all involved, resulting in better student achievement (Dahir et al., 2011, as cited in Duslak & Geier, 2016; Edwards et al., 2014; Fullan & Edwards, 2022; Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022; Resman, 2018; Sink, 2008). However, it is important that those involved continually find meaning in their collaboration (Welsh et al., 2021), share

goals, develop trusting relationships, explore together, and find the best solutions to the challenges of daily practice (Lieberman, 2012). It has already been shown that school counsellors and teachers do not always have the same expectations of each other and see their roles differently or do not have good insight into each other's work (Reiner et al., 2009).

With regard to the frequency of collaboration and consultation, some studies in the USA show that counsellors report often consulting teachers (e.g. Goodman-Scott, 2015; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). In a national study of school counsellors – members of the ASCA (n = 1,052) – Goodman-Scott (2015) found that participants rated consultation with school staff concerning student behaviour as their most frequent job activity in running a comprehensive school counselling programme. Perera-Diltz et al. (2011), for example, found that 79% of school counsellors (n = 998) (also members of the ASCA) reported using consultation in their work, with the majority (78.8%) indicating that they often or always consulted teachers. Having interviewed nine school counsellors who worked at various schools in Turkey, Atici (2014) found, in her qualitative study, that school counsellors spent most of their time on individual counselling, followed by classroom guidance activities and group guidance activities, consultations, crisis counselling and, finally, referrals to external agencies. There are few studies on teachers' perceptions of consultation with school counsellors. Beesley (2004) found that 71% (n = 188) of classroom teachers (from elementary to high school) across the Southwest (USA) rated school counsellor consultation as ranging from somewhat adequate to extremely adequate, and half of the participants listed consultation as one of their school counselling programme's strengths. Other studies from different parts of the world also typically report that teachers are open to such collaboration or that the collaboration is good (e.g. Atici, 2014; Slijepčević & Zuković, 2021). For example, a study of teachers in Slovenian schools (n = 1436) found that almost three-quarters of teachers (73.1%) rated their collaboration with school counselling as very good or good (Valenčič Zuljan et al., 2011).

Studies of collaboration have shown that it is important to establish a safe environment and a trusting relationship so that teachers can share with counsellors the concerns, problems and dilemmas they are facing in their classroom work or work with individual students and parents without feeling threatened (Fullan & Edwards, 2022; Korthagen, 2017; Rodgers, 2002). The situation during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, when direct contact between students and educators in educational institutions was suspended and moved to the virtual space, highlighted the importance of personal contact, cooperation and collaboration – and presented educators at schools with new challenges. Fullan and Edwards (2022) assert that strong collaborative organisations are better equipped to confront crises and indeed thrive on them. Similarly, Slovenian primary and secondary school headteachers found that they adapted more quickly and better to the new pandemic situation and the implementation of remote teaching if their school was characterised by a collaborative and supportive atmosphere (Skubic Ermenc et al., 2021). It is important to emphasise that collaboration is organic and requires continued sustenance of deliberation, reflection, and perseverance to flourish (Fullan &

Edwards, 2022). The purpose of this paper is to highlight some aspects of the existing collaboration between counsellors and teachers in Slovenian primary and secondary schools, to identify areas of work in which teachers see a particular need for increased collaboration, and to suggest ways to improve and expand this collaboration.

3. Research Methodology

A quantitative research design was used for the study, and descriptive and causal non-experimental methods were employed to describe the phenomena studied and to investigate the causal relationships between them (Bryman, 2008; Clark et al., 2016; Sagadin, 2004). In January 2018, a link to the questionnaire for school counsellors was sent to all primary (N = 454) and secondary (N = 182) schools in Slovenia via email. According to the latest available data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia [SURSTAT] 966 school counsellors were employed in Slovenian primary and secondary schools in 2016. A non-random sample of 315 counsellors responded to the questionnaire (the return rate was 32.6 % of the population N = 966), the majority of whom worked in primary schools (77%) and a minority in secondary schools (23%), which is in line with the proportions of primary and secondary schools. Their average age was 44.9 years (SD = 9.7), and their average length of service in education was 16.6 years (SD = 10.6). In terms of professional profiles, the majority were pedagogues (42.4%) and just over a quarter were psychologists (28.3%), with other profiles in smaller proportions (social workers - 14.6%, social pedagogues - 10.5%, special pedagogues - 2.5% and others - 1.6%).

We randomly selected 45 primary schools (9.9 % of N = 454) and 20 secondary schools (11 % of N = 182) to form our teacher sample. In this way, we obtained a random sample in the first stage. The selected schools were provided with a link to the online questionnaire for teachers and counsellors were asked to distribute the questionnaire to all teachers at the school. 501 teachers responded. More than half of the teachers who answered the question about where they taught came from primary schools (251 - 50.3%) and slightly less than half of them taught in secondary schools (248 - 49.7%). On average, the surveyed teachers were 46 years old (SD = 9.3) and had been teaching for an average of 20 years (SD = 10.1). Just under two-thirds of the teacher sample (63.2%) were class teachers, with an average of 16 years as class teachers. In the sample, 88% of the teachers surveyed had experience of being class teachers.

3.1. Data collection

Data collection took place from January 2018 to mid-April 2018. The counsellors in all primary and secondary schools and the teachers in the randomly selected primary and secondary schools received a request to participate in the study and a link to the online questionnaire (Appendixes 1 and 2). The recipients of the email were given access via a link to an anonymous questionnaire which they completed and submitted online. Both the questionnaire for counsellors and the questionnaire for teachers contained a set of demographic questions, a Likert scale, single and multiple response questions and open-ended questions. For the purposes of this article, we present data on the frequency of collaboration

initiatives in specific areas of work, as assessed by the perspectives of the responding counsellors and teachers. In order to gain a deeper insight into these aspects of collaboration, we also asked teachers an open-ended question about other areas in which they felt they would benefit from working with school counsellors.

3.2. Data analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS 25 software package and are presented in tables. For the testing of hypotheses of relationships between categorical variables, the χ^2 -test was used. The reliability of the scales was checked with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which reached a satisfactory level of reliability ($0.7 \leq \alpha \leq 0.8$). The construct validity of each scale was verified by factor analysis. Since the first factor explains more than the assumed lower limit of 20% of the variance in all cases, we estimate that the part of the instrument represented by the scales is valid.

The teachers' responses to the open-ended question (on the benefits teachers can gain from collaboration with school counsellors) were categorised according to the various tasks specified in the programme guidelines for school counsellors: support, consultation and collaboration with teachers in the areas of 1) working with students with diverse difficulties, educational, and personal needs; 2) improving the classroom climate and working with the classroom community; 3) improving learning and teaching; 4) student career development and educational guidance; 5) working and collaborating with students' parents; and 6) supporting teachers in their professional development. In designing the final categories, we were guided primarily by the needs expressed by the teachers themselves. If the teachers expressed the need for support and help with different challenges in their work, their answer was classified into different categories. For each dilemma that arose in categorising the teachers' responses, the researchers consulted and reached consensus on the categorization of the response.

4. Results

4.1. Frequency of teachers' initiatives for collaboration with school counsellors

First, we were interested in the frequency with which teachers took the initiative to work with school counsellors because of specific groups of students, according to both their own perspectives and those of the counsellors. They could choose between the following frequencies: never; less than once a month; from once to several times a month; from once to several times a week; or every day.

Table 1: Differences in the frequency of teacher collaboration initiatives for each student group, as assessed by school counsellors and teachers

Teachers take initiatives to work with counsellors concerning:			Never	Less than once a month	From once to several times a month	From once to several times a week	Every day	Total	χ^2 p
Gifted students	School counsellors	f	48	153	69	11	1	282	16.399 .003
		f%	17.0	54.3	24.5	3.9	0.4	100.0	
	Teachers	f	124	281	75	10	3	493	
		f%	25.2	57.0	15.2	2.0	0.6	100.0	
Students with learning difficulties	School counsellors	f	0	17	79	144	44	284	178.841 .000
		f%	0.0	6.0	27.8	50.7	15.5	100.0	
	Teachers	f	18	130	241	84	13	486	
		f%	3.7	26.7	49.6	17.3	2.7	100.0	
Students with special educational needs	School counsellors	f	2	21	83	129	49	284	125.494 .000
		f%	0.7	7.4	29.2	45.4	17.3	100.0	
	Teachers	f	24	133	201	107	16	481	
		f%	5.0	27.7	41.8	22.2	3.3	100.0	
Students with educational and disciplinary problems	School counsellors	f	0	14	69	143	56	282	226.479 .000
		f%	0.0	5.0	24.5	50.7	19.9	100.0	
	Teachers	f	18	184	181	92	7	482	
		f%	3.7	38.2	37.6	19.1	1.5	100.0	
Students with physical, personal and/or social development problems	School counsellors	f	1	61	132	72	18	284	114.914 .000
		f%	0.4	21.5	46.5	25.4	6.3	100.0	
	Teachers	f	33	247	146	48	4	478	
		f%	6.9	51.7	30.5	10.0	0.8	100.0	
Immigrant and refugee students	School counsellors	f	70	93	76	37	8	284	23.207 .000
		f%	24.6	32.7	26.8	13.0	2.8	100.0	
	Teachers	f	161	183	86	38	3	471	
		f%	34.2	38.9	18.3	8.1	0.6	100.0	
Roma students	School counsellors	f	197	34	20	14	15	280	18.816 .001
		f%	70.4	12.1	7.1	5.0	5.4	100.0	

	Teachers	f	337	62	44	15	3	461	
		f%	73.1	13.4	9.5	3.3	0.7	100.0	
Students who are exposed in any way to risk factors and negative experiences (e.g. violence, abuse, poverty)	School counsellors	f	17	133	87	40	5	282	45.403 .000
		f%	6.0	47.2	30.9	14.2	1.8	100.0	
	Teachers	f	87	265	84	36	3	475	
		f%	18.3	55.8	17.7	7.6	0.6	100.0	

The results, illustrated in Table 1, reveal that the teachers reported that the most frequent initiatives for collaboration with school counsellors (from once to several times a week or from once to several times a month) were with reference to students with learning difficulties (17.3% and 49.6%), students with special educational needs (22.2% and 41.8%), students with educational and disciplinary problems (19.1% and 37.6%) and students with physical, personal and social development problems (10.0% and 30.5%). However, even in these cases, they rarely stated that they contacted the counselling service on a daily basis; when they did so, it was with requests for the counsellors to work with students with special educational needs (e.g. blind and visually impaired students, deaf and hard-of-hearing students, students with physical disabilities, students with specific learning disorders, students with long-term illnesses, students with autistic spectrum disorders, and students with emotional and behavioural disorders) (3.3%) who have recognised additional special support and adjustments, and other students with general learning difficulties (2.7%). These are the two groups of students for whom teachers most often seek collaboration.

Less often (less than once a month or never), they initiated collaboration with the counselling service because of gifted students (57% and 25.2%), immigrant and refugee students (38.9% and 34.2%), students who are exposed to risk factors and negative experiences (e.g. violence, abuse, poverty) (55.8% and 18.3%), and Roma students (13.4% and 73.1%).

When we look in Table 1 at the counsellors' responses regarding the teachers' initiatives for collaboration, the picture is somewhat different. There were statistically significant differences between the teachers' and the counsellors' responses for all the statements. The counsellors estimated that teachers were slightly more likely to initiate collaboration, with the categories "every day", "from once to several times a week" and/or "from once to several times a month" being more frequently represented. The counsellors perceived these initiatives as occurring more frequently than the teachers did. In a way, this makes sense, since the counsellors were assessing how often all the teachers at a school took such initiatives, and the teachers were assessing it from their own perspectives; that is to say, how often they themselves took the initiative to collaborate with counsellors regarding particular groups of students. The counsellors estimated that the most frequent (daily or from once to several times a week) contact

initiated by teachers was related to students with educational and disciplinary problems (70.6%), students with learning difficulties (66.2%), and students with special educational needs (62.7%).

We also inquired into how often the teachers, according to their own assessment as well as that of the counsellors, took the initiative to work together to improve their teaching and classroom practice, the classroom climate, students' career development and cooperation with parents, and to work on their own professional development. The work areas were defined according to the programme guidelines for school counsellors in Slovenia.

Table 2: Differences in the frequency of teacher collaboration initiatives in specific areas of work, as assessed by school counsellors and teachers

Teachers take collaboration initiatives to:			Never	Less than once a month	From once to several times a month	From once to several times a week	Every day	Total	χ^2 p
Improve their teaching and classroom practice	School counsellors	f	56	142	66	19	1	284	7.972 .093
		f%	19.7	50.0	23.2	6.7	0.4	100.0	
	Teachers	f	124	219	115	16	2	476	
		f%	26.1	46.0	24.2	3.4	0.4	100.0	
Improve the classroom climate and work with the classroom community	School counsellors	f	7	65	151	56	5	284	110.467 .000
		f%	2.5	22.9	53.2	19.7	1.8	100.0	
	Teachers	f	73	229	132	39	2	475	
		f%	15.4	48.2	27.8	8.2	0.4	100.0	
Help with students' career development	School counsellors	f	39	106	91	45	1	282	72.015 .000
		f%	13.8	37.6	32.3	16.0	0.4	100.0	
	Teachers	f	153	214	87	18	2	474	
		f%	32.3	45.1	18.4	3.8	0.4	100.0	
Cooperate with students' parents	School counsellors	f	5	64	140	62	10	281	141.592 .000
		f%	1.8	22.8	49.8	22.1	3.6	100.0	
	Teachers	f	62	254	126	28	2	472	
		f%	13.1	53.8	26.7	5.9	0.4	100.0	
Work on their own professional development (consulting professional literature, organising and running seminars, etc.)	School counsellors	f	65	169	38	4	0	276	28.350 .000
		f%	23.6	61.2	13.8	1.4	0.0	100.0	
	Teachers	f	191	213	48	16	1	469	
		f%	40.7	45.4	10.2	3.4	0.2	100.0	

Table 2 shows that the majority of the teachers (46.0%) reported that they rarely – less than once a month – took the initiative to work with the counselling service to improve their teaching and classroom practice. 26.1% of the teachers said they never took the initiative to collaborate to improve their teaching. Only 24.2% of the teachers stated that they took the initiative more often – mostly from once to several times a month. There were no statistically significant differences between the perceptions of the teachers and the counsellors on this statement. Both the counsellors and the teachers felt that the latter rarely took initiatives to collaborate in order to improve teaching and classroom practice.

Furthermore, the data in Table 2 show that there is a statistically significant difference between the counsellors and the teachers in terms of their assessments of the frequency of taking initiatives to collaborate in all other areas of work. Three-quarters of the counsellors said that teachers took initiatives linked to improving the classroom climate and working with the classroom community frequently, several times a month, and even weekly or daily, while this figure among the teachers was much lower (36.4%). However, almost two-thirds of the teachers stated that they only rarely or never took such initiatives. Thus, while the counsellors often felt approached by teachers to help them work with the classroom community and improve the climate, this was contradicted by the perception of the teachers.

The teachers were statistically significantly more likely than the counsellors to say that they never (32.3% : 13.8%) or less than once a month (45.1% : 37.6%) took the initiative to collaborate on students' career development. However, the counsellors were statistically significantly more likely than the teachers to report that teachers initiated collaboration with the parents of individual students or all parents. Accordingly, 22.1% of the counsellors stated that teachers took this kind of initiative once or a few times a week and half of the counsellors estimated that teachers took this kind of initiative once or a few times a month. While over half of the teachers said that they took such an initiative less than once a month, 13.1% of the teachers said that they never did so.

According to the counsellors, teachers were also slightly more likely to take the initiative to collaborate on teachers' professional development (to consult literature, organise and run seminars, lectures, training, etc.) at a statistically significant level. Three-quarters of the counsellors said that teachers rarely took this initiative – less than once a month or a couple of times a month – while a good half of the teachers did so (55.6%). 40.7% of the teachers said they never took such an initiative, compared with just under a quarter of the counsellors (23.6%).

4.2. Teachers' needs for collaboration and consultation with counsellors

The open-ended question was intended to provide a deeper insight into the specific issues of teacher's classroom work and in teaching that called for further collaboration and consultation with counsellors. 273 (54.5%) teachers answered this open-ended question. Some gave very brief responses, highlighting one or two topics, while others provided extensively detailed answers. The categories

into which we classified the teachers' responses with their frequencies are shown in Table 3. When categorising the responses, we took into account each topic, so that each teacher's response could be placed in different categories.

Table 3: The issues of classroom work and in teaching in which teachers would most benefit from collaboration and consultation with school counsellors

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Teachers do not know, or they solve problems themselves		
- Teachers say they do not know where they would benefit from collaboration.	5	1.8
- Teachers currently do not need any additional support or are solving problems themselves.	9	3.3
Assessment of collaboration (from good collaboration to poor performance of the counselling service)		
- There is already a good collaboration: counsellors work competently and provide support when teachers need it.	15	5.5
- More concrete advice, solutions and help, team meetings and joint planning, action when needed would be welcome.	14	5.1
- More information for teachers on the individual characteristics of students would be helpful to better understand their needs, growing up and their parents.	8	2.9
The need for help, consultation and collaboration when working with individual students:	129	47.3
- students with educational, behavioural and disciplinary problems;	58	21.3
- students with special educational needs and students receiving additional support;	35	12.8
- students with learning difficulties;	17	6.2
- students with mental health problems, addressing their personal and social difficulties;	26	9.5
- foreigners, immigrants.	8	2.9
The need for help and collaboration in working with the class:	84	30.8
- when creating a supportive environment and classroom climate, managing interpersonal relationships, accepting others and developing mutual tolerance, communication skills and conflict resolution;	42	15.4
- in educational work with the class (on basic moral issues, the challenges of growing up, death, divorce, the dangers of social media);	22	8.1
- when working with the class to tackle violent behaviour and disciplinary problems;	12	4.4
- when developing learning habits and learning strategies;	15	5.5
- when developing and promoting students' independence and responsibility.	7	2.6
The need for help and collaboration in teaching:	24	8.8
- when introducing new approaches to teaching and methods to improve the learning process;	5	1.8
- in organising lessons, using different strategies when there are students with special educational needs in the class;	11	4.0

- in teaching when there are violent students and students with behavioural and disciplinary problems in the class.	8	2.9
Other areas of work in which teachers require support and collaboration		
- when developing students' motivation to learn and work;	20	7.3
- in vocational/career development and further education guidance for students;	12	4.4
- when working, communicating and cooperating with various parents (overprotective, violent, etc.).	10	3.7

It is encouraging to observe (see Table 3) that only a small proportion of the teachers did not know on which issues related to their work with the class and teaching they could collaborate or consult with counsellors (1.8%). Few teachers also said that they did not need any additional support at the time or that they solved problems on their own (3.3%). It is worth noting that a few teachers wrote that they would like to see more concrete advice, solutions and joint problem-solving (5.1%), and that they would like to be informed about the specificities of the students in their class and to be made aware of their needs and those of their parents (2.9%). 5.5% of the teachers emphasised that the collaboration was already well established, and that counsellors worked competently and gave the teachers all the support they needed.

We wanted to find out whether teachers' responses indicating the challenges they would need to work on in collaboration or in consultation with counsellors mainly concerned 1) working with individual students; 2) working with classes; or 3) teaching in terms of introducing new methods, strategies, and approaches. Matching our expectations, we found that the teachers would most benefit from collaboration when working with individual students (47.3%), followed by working with the whole class (30.8%), and least often they see possibilities for support, help and collaboration in teaching (8.8%). This is consistent with previous findings, as support with quality teaching is an area of work in which both teachers and counsellors state that teachers only rarely take the initiative to collaborate. It is certainly a challenge for counsellors to find time for this kind of collaboration and to convince teachers of the value of considering such issues as quality teaching and new strategies together.

When working with individual students, the most prominent issues are educational, behavioural, disciplinary and absenteeism problems (21.3%), followed by working with students with special educational needs (12.8%). In addition, the teachers often needed help, consultation and collaboration when working with students with mental and personal problems and in dealing with their personal and social difficulties (9.5%), as well as when working with students with learning difficulties and poor academic performance (6.2%). The teachers were less likely to report that they needed help with immigrant and foreign students (2.9%), which is likely to be a major challenge in the current situation and the war in Ukraine.

Interestingly, in the open-ended responses, the teachers most often indicated that they needed assistance, consultation and collaboration in working with students with behavioural and disciplinary problems, which turned out to be the most frequent initiative for collaboration taken by teachers, according to the counsellors. In addition, the teachers themselves highlighted in the open-ended questions that they did not find it easy to work with students with special educational needs, or students with mental and personal difficulties. However, in the close-ended question, both the teachers and the counsellors were more likely to report that they took the initiative to work with students with learning difficulties of any kind.

Furthermore, the results in Table 3 also reveal that just under a third of the teachers (30.8%) who answered this question expressed a desire for help and collaboration when working with the classroom community, which (judging by the findings presented above) is an issue of which the counsellors are well aware. In this respect, the areas most frequently mentioned by teachers were working together to create a supportive environment, managing relationships and resolving conflicts, developing communication and cooperation skills, accepting others and developing a culture of tolerance (15.4%). Some respondents particularly emphasised the help and collaboration in working with the whole class to solve problems with students' violent behaviour and disciplinary problems (4.4 %).

Additionally, the teachers surveyed also highlighted support and collaboration in educational work with the whole class on topical issues, and some highlighted specific topics that should be addressed (basic moral issues, topics such as death, divorce, challenges of growing up and the dangers of social media) (8.1%). Other important areas of work with the classroom community in which teachers wanted to collaborate more with counsellors in the form of student workshops, for example, include developing study habits and learning strategies (5.5 %), and developing and promoting student independence and responsibility (2.6 %).

However, a smaller proportion (8.8%) of teachers said that they would need help and collaboration in organising lessons, using different strategies when there are students with special educational needs or behavioural and disciplinary problems in the class, and generally in introducing new teaching approaches and methods to improve the learning process. This may be because they felt that this was an area of work that they were required to master or were more competent at than counsellors.

Other areas of work in which the teachers reported still needing support and collaboration with counsellors were developing motivation to learn and work (7.3%), career guidance and guidance for students' further education (4.4%), and working, communicating and collaborating with various parents (overprotective, violent, etc.) (3.7%). We specifically highlight learning motivation because it was not always clear from the responses whether the teachers wanted advice on how to develop students' motivation in lessons, or whether they would prefer to see counsellors taking on this task by organising workshops and lessons for students.

5. Discussion

The aim of the part of the study presented here was to identify the areas of educational work in which teachers take the initiative to collaborate with school counsellors as well as those issues of classroom work and teaching in which teachers would most benefit from collaboration and consultation with school counsellors. The findings indicate that – according to their own and counsellors’ assessments – teachers most often take the initiative to deal with individual students in need of any kind of assistance, most often students with special educational needs and learning difficulties, students with educational and disciplinary problems and students with physical, personal and social development problems. Less frequently, they take the initiative to participate in the classroom community and teaching. Similarly, the teachers’ answers to the open-ended question on areas of collaboration often highlighted that they “needed help”, for instance, in working with certain groups of students, especially with students with educational, behavioural and disciplinary problems, indicating a remedial and service-oriented approach in their cooperation. This is expected because, according to previous research on the functioning of the school counselling service in Slovenia (Vogrinc & Krek, 2012), collaboration between counsellors and teachers is often related to solving current problems in the class or with individual students, and the emphasis is on assistance, individual and remedial counselling. Goodman-Scott (2015) also found in a national study in the USA that counselling school staff on student behaviour is the most common activity of school counsellors.

School counsellors, understandably, cannot avoid helping individual students, as this is one of their core activities (NEIS, 2008a, b). Yet such an approach, if it prevails in counsellors’ work, puts them in a “fire-fighting” position. This situation does not align with the Slovenian and international concepts of school counselling (e.g. ASCA, 2022; Carey et al., 2017; Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022; Harris, 2013; Popov & Spasenović, 2018) and, crucially, it does not produce the results we would like to see in counsellors’ work with students. This is because students’ behaviour cannot be fully understood without regard to the influences of the environments to which they are exposed (Köse, 2017; Peklaj & Pečjak, 2020). The causes of students’ behaviour, as well as the possibilities for changing it, lie not only within the students themselves, but also outside them. Therefore, counsellors’ work requires interventions in students’ everyday environments and changes to the conditions in them (Köse, 2017; Peklaj & Pečjak, 2020). The most powerful influence on students’ education and performance is certainly exerted by what happens in the classroom on a daily basis (Gibbson, Dimabra & Buchman, 2010, as cited in Slijepčević & Zuković, 2021). The focus of counselling support should therefore shift from mere support for individual students or selected groups to a developmental and preventative orientation (see Gregorčič Mrvar & Resman, 2019; Köse, 2017). This is in tune with contemporary educational trends, which emphasise the principles of inclusion, interculturalism, student participation, etc. (Bain, 2012; Carey et al., 2017; Gregorčič Mrvar & Resman, 2019; Köse, 2017). The role of the school counsellor is assumed to be that of a collaborator to teachers and the school management, focusing on broader

processes at schools, such as organisational change, vision, group dynamics, communication, school culture and climate.

Therefore, based on our findings, we would argue that counsellors' work should be strengthened in two areas in particular: *collaboration with teachers in the classroom community* and *in the teaching process*. Collaboration in the classroom community refers to school rules, disciplinary offences, educational interventions, etc. It includes issues of improving the classroom climate, working with the classroom community and cooperation with parents. These are the areas of work in which teachers rarely take the initiative to collaborate with counsellors, although, according to the teachers' open-ended answers and the perception of the counsellors themselves, teachers do need support and collaboration in their work with the classroom community.

Counsellors and teachers can collaborate to develop different approaches and strategies to create a supportive environment and develop a positive, inclusive classroom climate, to manage interpersonal relationships and to resolve conflicts. Also, they can work together to design and run relevant workshops for students, as it is important to work with the whole class, not just individual students, when dealing with inappropriate and violent behaviour, conflict resolution, community involvement, etc. It is important to develop both teachers' and counsellors' awareness that quality collaboration is one of the central areas of their work.

Another area that needs to be strengthened is the *collaboration in teaching/learning processes*, which requires counsellors' and teachers' greater involvement and reflection on their collaboration. In our view, counsellors' work remains unfinished if their activities do not include, among other things, direct participation in the educational process. Developing students' motivation to learn is clearly one of the more difficult challenges teachers face and they need counsellors' support to achieve this. We argue that this is linked to quality teaching, which is based on engaging students as actively as possible in the learning process, whereby they acquire their knowledge and make meaning of their learning. This goes hand in hand with developing diverse learning strategies and self-regulated learning (Ben-Eliyahu & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013; Boekaerts, 2010; De Corte, 2010). Consultation between teachers and counsellors in creating effective learning environments is certainly one of the areas of collaboration between teachers and counsellors that has been neglected and should be given more attention, as this paper shows. Counsellors can use their expertise to help teachers understand how learners' motivational beliefs, self-beliefs and emotional experiences can affect their readiness to learn and their effectiveness in learning.

Strengthening these two areas of collaboration means in fact strengthening and co-creating supportive and inclusive learning environments and classroom communities. This was brought to everyone's attention during the Covid-19 epidemic, when active community integration was threatened by the closure of schools. Consequently, the awareness of the importance of community was increased considerably (Kroflič, 2022; Skubic Ermenc et al., 2021). We have learned that the disappearance of the community triggers a variety of existential

hardships for children, adolescents and adults, while at the same time bringing major difficulties in maintaining knowledge levels (Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022). Furthermore, a number of analyses of the effects of “distance education” have shown that there has been a marked increase in the awareness of the importance of education in the school community among both theorists and school practitioners, as well as parents and students (Kroflič, 2022). Thus, the findings of the study suggest that the awareness of the importance of good classroom and school communities and climates will need to be significantly strengthened, and that, while taking care of children’s academic progress, attention will need to be paid in particular to the relationships among students, between students and teachers or other educators, and between educators and parents.

Based on the data collected and analysed, it is difficult to assess whether school counsellors and teachers make sufficient effort to establish quality collaboration, or whether they remain at the prevailing and long-established remedial modes of collaboration. The latter is suggested in this study and this is aligned with previous research on collaboration between counsellors and teachers (Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022; Vogrinc & Krek, 2012). We are aware of the obstacles to collaboration often cited by counsellors and teachers (e.g. a lot of administrative work, lack of time, attitudes towards each other) (Gregorčič Mrvar et al., 2022). Therefore, it would be necessary to analyse their workloads, attitudes, etc. and consider how they could make more time for better quality collaboration. Established ways of working together can become a matter of routine, lacking personal commitment and creativity. This routine does not allow educators to see the possible shortcomings of the collaboration and to identify any dissatisfaction that may arise on the part of everyone involved.

6. Conclusion

The present study showed that collaboration between counsellors and teachers most often concerns individual students, and there is still room to strengthen collaboration in developing quality teaching and working with the classroom community. It is important for counsellors to make collaboration with teachers one of their key tasks and carefully plan it each year. However, if the school counselling service’s focus remains solely on remedial and service tasks, it is difficult to address quality collaboration.

In the future, support ought to be given to practices whereby the school counselling service redirects the “service” ways of working with teachers into ways of co-creating supportive and inclusive learning environments and classroom communities. Above all, both counsellors and teachers should be aware of the benefits of collaboration. It is important that teachers and counsellors recognise that the positive experiences and the different skills, knowledge and competences that each of them brings to the diverse challenges of work and life at the school can lead to better quality solutions that can be implemented more successfully, enhancing professional growth and a sense of satisfaction for both, as well as positive consequences for students, classroom and school communities.

7. Recommendation

Finally, it is important to note the limitation of the study, in which a quantitative method was used. We would like to emphasise that more in-depth qualitative research is needed to gain better insight and understanding of how the counselling service collaborates with teachers, particularly with regard to the barriers to working well with the classroom community and developing quality teaching. This would enable further exploration of the complexity of relationships and collaboration between educators, students and parents, providing a better understanding of an area that is often neglected in research, at least in Slovenia.

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Appendix 1

Ljubljana, January 3th 2018

Dear colleague!

We would like to ask you to participate in a study on the work of school counselling services, conducted by colleagues from the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

We believe that the school situation in our country has changed so much in recent years that it is worth seriously examining the role and tasks of counselling services in this changed situation. As more and more responsibility for the development and quality of school work is being transferred to the schools themselves, school counsellors are also faced with a variety of new tasks. This survey aims to analyse your work to date and to identify the needs for counselling support as reflected in school practice.

The main purpose of the survey is to chart the way forward for the content and organisation of school counselling work, which cannot be done at a theoretical level alone, but requires the participation of those of you who face the challenges of school counselling practice on a daily basis. These are issues that are too important to be tackled without you.

Through empirical research, we want to get a picture of the work of the school counselling service and of the individual professional profiles in primary and secondary schools. We want to find out from you which professional and content issues you face in your advisory work and what your suggestions are for the further development of school advisory work.

We also want to find out how the counselling support provided by individual counsellors is experienced by pupils and what the views and expectations of head teachers, teachers and parents are. To this end, we have designed questionnaires for all these stakeholders.

In the present study, we have focused on the work of the counselling service in schools, as the counselling work in kindergartens has recently been thoroughly analysed by the Institute of Education.

The questionnaire will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is anonymous.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and warmly welcome you.

Research Team:

Members of the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Arts University of Ljubljana

8. How much of the working time does the employment for school counselling work consist of?

- a) Full time employment.
- b) Part-time employment. Please specify the percentage: _____

9. What type of educational work do you do at school?

Multiple answers are possible

- a) I do school counselling work.
- b) I provide additional professional teaching assistance.
- c) I teach the subject.
- d) I also do other work: _____

10. Who else provides school counselling at your school?

- a) I am the only counsellor in the school.
- b) Counselling is also provided by (Multiple answers are possible *in in case of more profiles, please enter the number*):
 - 1. pedagogue _____,
 - 2. psychologist _____,
 - 3. social worker _____,
 - 4. social pedagogue _____,
 - 5. special pedagogue _____,
 - 6. inclusive pedagogue _____,
 - 7. other: _____.

11. The school I work at is:

- a) Primary school.
- b) Primary school with branch/branches.
- c) Primary school with branch(es) and kindergarten.
- d) Primary school with kindergarten.
- e) Secondary school, specifically (*indicate the programmes where you provide school counselling*):
 - lower vocational education (2-year courses),
 - vocational education (3-year courses),
 - vocational and technical education (4-year courses),
 - general education (gymnasium - general, classical, professional, etc.).
 - Other: _____
- f) Other (*specify*): _____

12. The region where your school is located is:

- a) pomurska,
- b) podravska,
- c) koroška,
- d) savinjska,
- e) zasavska,
- f) spodnjeposavska,
- g) jugovzhodna Slovenija,
- h) osrednjeslovenska,
- i) gorenjska,
- j) notranjsko-kraška,
- k) goriška,
- l) obalno-kraška.

13. The number of pupils/students at your school is: _____.

II. THE TASKS OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICE

14. Which of the following activities of the school counselling service (SCS) do you do most of your work in?

Please rank them from 1 to 3, where 1 means the most tasks to 3 the least tasks.

Most of my work is done in:	RANK
SUPPORT ACTIVITIES for any of the participants in the educational work, e.g. pupils, parents, etc.	
DEVELOPMENTAL AND PREVENTIVE ACTIVITIES, e.g. developmental-analytical work; planning changes and improvements in educational process, leading or coordinating developmental, innovative and preventive projects in the school; developmental and preventive work with groups - departments, vulnerable groups, the gifted, etc.	
PLANNING ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION of your work and of the school's functioning.	

15. Which of the following areas of work and school life do you do most of your work in?

Please rank them from 1 to 6, where 1 means the most tasks to 6 the least tasks.

Most of my work is in the field of:	RANK
LEARNING, e.g. work on improving the quality of learning, developing learning habits, learning support, etc.	
TEACHING, e.g. consultation with teachers to improve teaching effectiveness, workshops for colleagues, organisation of in-house training, etc.	

SCHOOL CULTURE, EDUCATION, SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SCHOOL ORDER, e.g. curriculum, school rules, departmental climate, handling of disciplinary offences, educational interventions, etc.	
PHYSICAL, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.	
SCHOOLING AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE (CAREER GUIDANCE).	
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES, e.g. social subsidies, social assistance, representation, multidisciplinary teams, etc.	

16. What is the most common starting point for the development of the annual work plan of the school counselling service in your school?

You can choose to choose up to THREE statements or add your own.

- a) The school's annual work plan (AWP).
- b) Report on the implementation of the school's AWP.
- c) Annual school self-evaluation report.
- d) Programme guidelines for school counselling.
- e) Teachers' suggestions, which I collect at the end of the school year or at the beginning of a new one.
- f) Suggestions and needs of pupils/students collected by me at the end of the school year or at the beginning of the new school year.
- g) Suggestions and wishes of the head teacher.
- h) My own observations of what is happening in the school.
- i) I give priority in my planning to the ongoing, day-to-day needs that arise in the school.
- j) Suggestions, views and consultations with colleagues from neighbouring schools or insights from study groups (we exchange ideas and work programmes with fellow consultants).
- k) Other (*specify*): _____

17. What is your greatest support in achieving your planned work and tasks?

You can choose to choose up to THREE statements or add your own.

- a) Adequate distribution of work tasks among the school's professional staff.
- b) Good team conditions; I have professional support from teachers or other professionals.
- c) Adequate working conditions and sufficient and appropriate resources.
- d) Sufficient hours to carry out certain activities in the school.
- e) Interest in participation from pupils/students.
- f) Parental interest in participation.
- g) Appropriate school legislation.
- h) I have the appropriate knowledge, skills and competences.
- i) Other (*specify*): _____

18. How do you estimate the time spent on each of the following forms of work in relation to the main purposes of school counselling?

For each statement, choose only ONE of the following options: 1 - not enough time, 2 - just the right amount of time, 3 - too much time, x - can't estimate.

Form of work:	I have not enough time	I spend just the right amount of time	I spend too much time	I can't estimate
individual work with students,	1	2	3	x
group work with students,	1	2	3	x
work in classes,	1	2	3	x
consultation with teachers,	1	2	3	x
consultation with the head teacher/school management,	1	2	3	x
consultation with fellow counsellors (psychologist, social worker, pedagogue),	1	2	3	x
consultation with parents,	1	2	3	x
consultation with external institutions and experts,	1	2	3	x
study of professional literature,	1	2	3	x
participation in seminars, courses, and other forms of training,	1	2	3	x
study and research work at the school,	1	2	3	x
writing articles, publishing their findings,	1	2	3	x
participation in professional associations (professional associations, professional societies, etc.).	1	2	3	x
Other (<i>specify</i>):	1	2	3	x

19. Have you noticed any changes in the work of the school counselling service over the past ten years?

You can only choose ONE statement.

- a) I don't know, I can't say, because I've only been doing school counselling for the last couple of years.
- b) No, there are no significant changes in my work in the last decade.
- c) Yes, there have been changes in my work over the last decade, namely (please explain what you see as changes): _____

III. COOPERATION OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICE WITH TEACHERS

20. Overall, how do you perceive your cooperation with teachers in your school?

You can only choose ONE statement.

- a) Very good.
- a) Good.
- b) Neither good nor bad.
- c) Poor.
- d) Very poor.

21. Where do the initiatives for your collaboration with teachers come from?

For each statement, indicate only ONE rating from 1 to 5, where 1 means never, 2 means rarely, 3 means sometimes, 4 means often, 5 means always.

Initiatives	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
The initiative is on my side. I inform them in advance of the work and offer the possibility of consultation, and they take it or leave it.	1	2	3	4	5
When I see a teacher expressing an interest in participating, I come to him or her.	1	2	3	4	5
I leave it to the teachers to take the initiative. I consult them when they come to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that teachers are embarrassed to come to me for consultation.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that teachers do not appreciate my efforts to cooperate professionally.	1	2	3	4	5
Other (<i>specify</i>):	1	2	3	4	5

22. How do teachers in general perceive your efforts to cooperate and consult with you?

You can only choose ONE statement.

- a) Most often, they accept professional cooperation and joint efforts to resolve the situation.
- b) Most often they do not care.
- c) Most often they react in a way that makes me feel like I am imposing something on them.
- d) Other (*specify*): _____

23. How often do teachers take the initiative to work with you on the following areas of work?

Choose only ONE of the following options for each statement: 5 - every day, 4 - once to a few times a week, 3 - once to a few times a month, 2 - less than once a month, 1 - never.

Teachers take the initiative due to:	never	less than once a month	once to a few times a month	once to a few times a week	every day
gifted students,	1	2	3	4	5
students with learning difficulties,	1	2	3	4	5
students with special educational needs	1	2	3	4	5
students with educational and disciplinary problems,	1	2	3	4	5
students with physical, personal and/or social development problems,	1	2	3	4	5
immigrant and refugee students	1	2	3	4	5
Roma students,	1	2	3	4	5
students who are exposed in any way to risk factors and negative experiences (e.g. violence, abuse, poverty, etc.),	1	2	3	4	5
the career development of students,	1	2	3	4	5
improving the classroom climate; working with the classroom community,	1	2	3	4	5
parents of individual students or all parents,	1	2	3	4	5
to improve teaching and classroom practice (help with planning, tracking, organising different forms of work, level teaching, differentiation of teaching, learning to learn, innovation, etc.),	1	2	3	4	5
teacher professional development (consulting professional literature, organisation and delivery of seminars, lectures, training courses, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Other (<i>specify</i>):	1	2	3	4	5

24. How often do you and teachers work together when there is a need to help a student or a group of students in the classroom?

For each statement, choose only ONE of the following options: 1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 - sometimes, 4 - often, 5 - always.

Form of cooperation	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
Teachers inform me about students' problems and refer them to me so that I can try to help them out of their difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers themselves deal with student problems in the classroom. Teachers only come to me for further information about the students and advice on how to work with them.	1	2	3	4	5
We work together with the teachers to find out what is going on with the students, make a support plan together and decide how we will help them in our own way.	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers are completely on their own when it comes to solving students' problems in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
Other (<i>specify</i>):	1	2	3	4	5

25. In the process of mutual cooperation, those involved may face various obstacles. To what extent do the factors listed below hinder your cooperation with teachers?

For each statement, choose only ONE of the following options: 1 - not a barrier, 2 - a little bit of a barrier, 3 - a barrier, 4 - a major barrier, x - can't rate.

Barrier(s) to cooperation:	not a barrier	a little bit of a barrier	a barrier	a major barrier	can't rate
lack of knowledge about each other's work and tasks,	1	2	3	4	x
work overload on both sides,	1	2	3	4	x
poor communication,	1	2	3	4	x
poor experience of working together,	1	2	3	4	x
different expectations of each other's cooperation,	1	2	3	4	x
Differences in professional views on classroom work and working with pupils/students.	1	2	3	4	x
Other (<i>specify</i>):	1	2	3	4	x

26. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your work and the role of the school counselling service in your school?

Please, specify:

Thank you very much for your time, effort and cooperation.

Appendix 2

Ljubljana, January 3th 2018

Dear teachers!

We would like to ask you to participate in a study on the work of school counselling services, conducted by colleagues from the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

The main purpose of the research is to map out the way forward for the content and organisation of school counselling, which cannot be done at a theoretical level alone, but requires the participation of all of you who face the challenges of school counselling practice every day. These are issues that are too important to be tackled without you. But such a task also requires an empirical approach. We will gather the opinions and suggestions of school counsellors themselves, the needs of pupils/students and the views and expectations of you, head teachers and parents.

To this end, we are asking you to complete an online questionnaire in which you will provide us with your opinions and experiences with the School Counselling Service. Your opinion will help us to plan the role and tasks of the counselling service in the future.

You will need about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire is anonymous.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and warmly welcome you.

Research Team:

Members of the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Arts University of Ljubljana

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICE: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES

Terms in the questionnaire that are written in the grammatical form of the masculine gender are used as neutral and apply equally to both genders.

I. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WORK

Please provide us with some basic information about your school and your work.

1. The school I work at is:

- a) Primary school.
- b) Primary school with branch/branches.
- c) Primary school with branch(es) and kindergarten.
- d) Primary school with kindergarten.
- e) Secondary school, specifically (*indicate the programmes where you provide school counselling*):
 - lower vocational education (2-year courses),
 - vocational education (3-year courses),
 - vocational and technical education (4-year courses),
 - general education (gymnasium - general, classical, professional, etc.).
 - Other: _____
- Other (*specify*): _____

2. Education level: _____.

3. Age: _____ .

4. How many years have you been teaching? _____ years.

5. Are you a class teacher?

- a) Yes. (*How many years?*): _____ years (**continue with question Nr. 7**)
- b) No.

6. Have you been a class teacher in the past?

- a) Yes. (*How many years?*): _____ years
- b) No.

7. Which of the counsellors listed below do you have at your school and how many (please write on the line)?

1. pedagogue _____,
2. psychologist _____,
3. social worker _____,
4. social pedagogue _____,
5. special pedagogue _____,
6. inclusive pedagogue _____,
7. other: _____.

II. OPINION ON THE WORK AND TASKS OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICE

8. Which of the following activities of the school counselling service (SCS) do school counsellors do most of their work in?

Please rank them from 1 to 3, where 1 means the most tasks to 3 the least tasks.

The school counselling service carries out most of the tasks in:	RANK
SUPPORT ACTIVITIES for any of the participants in the educational work, e.g. students, parents, etc.	
DEVELOPMENTAL AND PREVENTIVE ACTIVITIES, e.g. developmental-analytical work; planning changes and improvements in educational process, leading or coordinating developmental, innovative and preventive projects in the school; developmental and preventive work with groups - departments, vulnerable groups, the gifted, etc.	
PLANNING ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION of their work and of the school's functioning.	

9. Which of the following areas of work and school life do school counsellors most of their work in?

Please rank them from 1 to 6, where 1 means the most tasks to 6 the least tasks.

Most of their work is in the field of:	RANK
LEARNING, e.g. work on improving the quality of learning, developing learning habits, learning support, etc.	
TEACHING, e.g. consultation with teachers to improve teaching effectiveness, workshops for colleagues, organisation of in-house training, etc.	
SCHOOL CULTURE, EDUCATION, SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SCHOOL ORDER, e.g. curriculum, school rules, departmental climate, handling of disciplinary offences, educational interventions, etc.	
PHYSICAL, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.	
SCHOOLING AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE (CAREER GUIDANCE).	
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES, e.g. social subsidies, social assistance, representation, multidisciplinary teams, etc.	

III. COOPERATION WITH THE SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICE

10. Overall, how do you perceive your cooperation with school counsellors in your school?

You can only choose ONE statement.

- a) Very good.
- a) Good.
- b) Neither good nor bad.
- c) Poor.
- d) Very poor.

11. As a teacher, how often do you take the initiative to cooperate with the school counselling service regarding the following areas of work?

For each statement, indicate only ONE rating from 1 to 5, where 1 means never, 2 means rarely, 3 means sometimes, 4 means often, 5 means always.

I give the counselling service the initiative to cooperate due to:	never	less than once a month	once to a few times a month	once to a few times a week	every day
gifted students,	1	2	3	4	5
students with learning difficulties,	1	2	3	4	5
students with special educational needs	1	2	3	4	5
students with educational and disciplinary problems,	1	2	3	4	5
students with physical, personal and/or social development problems,	1	2	3	4	5
immigrant and refugee students	1	2	3	4	5
Roma students,	1	2	3	4	5
students who are exposed in any way to risk factors and negative experiences (e.g. violence, abuse, poverty, etc.),	1	2	3	4	5
the career development of students,	1	2	3	4	5
improving the classroom climate; working with the classroom community,	1	2	3	4	5
parents of individual students or all parents,	1	2	3	4	5
to improve teaching and classroom practice (help with planning, tracking, organising different forms of work, level teaching, differentiation of teaching, learning to learn, innovation, etc.),	1	2	3	4	5
teacher professional development (consulting professional literature, organisation and delivery of seminars, lectures, training courses, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Other (<i>specify</i>):					

12. How would you rate the following statements concerning the characteristics of your cooperation with school counsellors?

For each statement, choose only ONE of the following options: 1 - not at all true, 2 - not true, 3 - neither true nor false, 4 - true, 5 - very true.

Characteristics of cooperation with the school counselling service	not at all true	not true	neither true nor false	true	very true
I agree with the school counsellor at the beginning of the school year what kind of cooperation I would like to have with regard to the work of the students in my class(es).	1	2	3	4	5
In recent years, the school counsellor has worked with individual students in the class(es) I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
In recent years, the school counsellor has had group work with the students in the class(es) I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
I leave it to the school counsellor to decide how to carry out counselling work with individual students or with the whole class.	1	2	3	4	5
The school counsellor keeps me informed of what is being discussed with individual pupils/students or parents.	1	2	3	4	5
Other (specify):	1	2	3	4	5

13. To what extent do you agree with the statements below concerning your assessment of your cooperation with school counsellors and their work?

For each statement, please choose only ONE of the following options: 1 – strongly disagree all, 2 - disagree, 3 - neither agree nor disagree, 4 - agree, 5 - strongly agree.

Evaluation of cooperation with the school counselling service and their work	strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
I am satisfied with the cooperation with the school counsellors.	1	2	3	4	5
The school counsellors impose extra work on me and are often not supportive.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that the school counsellors are too involved in things that are not part of their job.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't go to school counsellors because I don't think they can support me in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
If you consult school counsellors, in a sense you are proving that you are not in control of the subject and the situation in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
School counsellors are generally successful in their work with pupils/students at school.	1	2	3	4	5
Other (specify):	1	2	3	4	5

14. How often do individual forms of cooperation occur between you and the school counsellor(s) when there is a question of helping a student or a group of students in the classroom?

For each statement, choose only ONE of the following options: 1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 - sometimes, 4 - often, 5 - always.

Form of cooperation	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
I inform the school counsellor about students' problems and refer them to him or her so that he or she can try to help them out of their difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
I deal with student problems in the classroom myself. I only come to school counsellor for further information about the students and advice on how to work with them.	1	2	3	4	5
We work together with the school counsellor to find out what is going on with the students, make a support plan together and decide how we will help them in our own way.	1	2	3	4	5
I am completely on my own when it comes to solving students' problems in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
Other (<i>specify</i>):					

15. Today, schools and teachers are undoubtedly facing new times, with new tasks, new challenges and new needs. Which issues do you think the school counselling service should be particularly concerned with in the functioning of the school as a whole?

Please write and explain your answer.

16. Which issues in your work with your class and in the classroom would you most benefit from working with and consulting your school counsellor about?

Please write and explain your answer.

17. In the process of mutual collaboration, those involved may face various obstacles. To what extent do the factors listed below hinder your cooperation with school counsellors?

For each statement, choose only ONE of the following options: 1 - not a barrier, 2 - a little bit of a barrier, 3 - a barrier, 4 - a major barrier, x - can't rate.

Barrier(s) to collaboration:	not a barrier	a little bit of a barrier	a barrier	a major barrier	can't rate
lack of knowledge about each other's work and tasks,	1	2	3	4	x
work overload on both sides,	1	2	3	4	x
poor communication,	1	2	3	4	x
poor experience of working together,	1	2	3	4	x
different expectations of each other's collaboration,	1	2	3	4	x
differences in professional views on classroom work and working with students.	1	2	3	4	x
Other (specify):	1	2	3	4	x

18. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the cooperation between you and the school counselling service?

Please, specify:

Thank you very much for your time, effort and cooperation.