# A Model of School Counseling Supervision: The Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems Model

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The authors outline the Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems Model (GFRS), a school counseling–specific model for supervising school counselors-in-training (SCITs). The GFRS was created as a guide for assisting in supervising and preparing SCITs for the multifaceted tasks they will undertake in their internships and careers. The components of this model are described within the context of the systems influencing supervision of SCITs. The GFRS is detailed to illustrate how it meets the specific needs of school counseling supervision. Examples are included of the GFRS when applied in supervision.

The ever-increasing, specialized expectations demanded of school counselors make modification of the supervision of school counselors-in-training (SCITs) essential (Nelson & Johnson, 1999). Today's SCITs will be expected to perform numerous and varied duties. Therefore, these students require a supervision model that is clear, concise, and practical, and one that provides concrete preparation regarding their professional knowledge and roles (Akos & Scarborough, 2004; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997). School counseling–specific supervision remains a neglected issue in counselor training despite empirical evidence that supervision results in school counselors' increased effectiveness and accountability, improved counseling skills and understanding of expectations, enhanced professional development, and improved job performance, confidence, and comfort (Agnew, Vaught, Getz, & Fortune, 2000; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Herlihy, Gray, & McCollum, 2002).

To reflect competent, judicious, holistic, and ethical training and preparation of school counselors, school counseling–specific clinical supervision is crucial (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Studer, 2005). Furthermore, the paucity of school counseling–specific supervision models supports the need to create supervision experiences that directly reflect the roles that SCITs will be expected to fulfill. Current models and theories of counsel-

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ing supervision do not fully reflect the needs of SCITs as they prepare for the future roles they will perform (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Herlihy et al., 2002; Studer, 2005).

## Current Supervision Models

Several worthy models of counseling supervision have been proposed over the past 3 decades (e.g., Bernard, 1979; Bordin, 1983; Bradley & Ladany, 2001; Holloway, 1995; Littrell, Lee-Borden, & Lorenz, 1979; Loganbill, Hardy & Delworth, 1982; Stoltenberg, 1981). Social role models (e.g., the Discrimination Model; Bernard, 1979) emphasize specific roles and functions of counseling supervisors. Developmental models of supervision (e.g., Stoltenberg, 1981; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987) focus on how SCITs change throughout their training and supervised experience. The Systems Approach to Supervision Model (SAS; Holloway, 1995) focuses on seven empirically derived dimensions that interact in a concentric process affecting the core factors of supervision relationships, tasks, and functions.

Clinical/mental health models of supervision, however, are inadequate for the supervision of SCITs. For example, some clinical models focus a great deal of supervision time on helping SCITs to integrate several counseling theories into consistent practice (Leddick, 1994); however, because traditional counseling theories are not directly related to all of the tasks required of school counselors, such as leadership and advocacy (American School Counselors Association [ASCA], 2003), this approach seems to be limited as a model of supervision for SCITs. Other models of supervision are designed to focus on clinical case conferences (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998); a clinical knowledge of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (see Bernard & Goodyear, 1998); marriage, family systems, and couples counseling approaches (Holloway, 1995); and counselor training for noneducational settings (Bernard, 1979). Although a few clinical supervision models contain valuable components for all counselors-in-training (i.e., Bernard, 1979; Holloway, 1995; Littrell et al., 1979), current clinical supervision models lack the school counseling–specific supervision and training elements that SCITs need. For instance, existing models do not include supervision that focuses on the diverse roles and tasks required of school counselors such as academic planning, comprehensive school counseling program implementation and evaluation, parent–teacher conferences, classroom teaching for guidance curriculum delivery, and school counseling advocacy.

Moreover, current supervision models fail to specifically address the multiple systems that have an impact on supervision in the school counseling setting. Carns and Carns (1997) suggested that schools are essentially "supra" or "mega" systems comprising many smaller subsystems. Supervision related to school counseling involves several more systems of individuals (i.e., parents, teachers, and school administrators) that must be considered during supervision. The

unique interactional systems in schools that have an influence on supervision warrant a model that incorporates the distinctive features of school counseling supervision and preparation for working in a K-12 school setting, such as the necessary consultation interactions between school counselors and various individuals in the systems just mentioned.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) released school counseling standards in 2001 that called for SCITs to be trained and prepared to design, function within, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs. However, no recent supervision model has emerged that incorporates the mission and national movement of the school counseling profession as proposed by the ASCA National Model for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2003) and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI; Education Trust, 2002), which include promoting active involvement in leadership, advocacy, educational reform, systemic change, and collaboration with community members as well as school personnel.

## The Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems Model (GFRS) for Supervising SCITs

This article presents the GFRS for supervising SCITs. The GFRS was created as a means to supervise and prepare SCITs for the multifaceted responsibilities they are expected to fulfill in their internships and careers. We describe the components of this innovative model within the contexts of school counseling–specific duties and supervision needs. The GFRS is presented in a pragmatic fashion to illustrate how it can be used to guide school counseling supervision and delineate the interaction of individuals and systems in the supervision process. Finally, we give examples of applying the GFRS to the supervision of SCITs. To understand and implement the GFRS, it is helpful to understand its theoretical foundation, suppositions, and components (i.e., goals, functions, roles, and systems).

### Theoretical Foundation

The GFRS of school counseling supervision draws on the theoretical suppositions of several empirically validated clinical models of supervision. The goals component of the GFRS draws on the Working Alliance Model of Supervision (Bordin, 1983), which proposed that successful supervision is contingent on mutual agreements between the supervisor and the supervisee (i.e., SCIT) on goals and tasks. The Discrimination Model (Bernard, 1979), with its emphasis on roles enacted by the supervisor, also influenced the conceptualization of the GFRS. Most influential perhaps is the SAS Model (Holloway, 1995). The SAS Model incorporates seven empirically derived dimensions that interact as part of a complex process involving the core factors of the supervision relationship; the tasks and functions of supervision; and contextual factors such as client, supervisee, supervisor, and institution (Holloway, 1995).

This systems approach to clinical counseling supervision provided a theoretical grounding for the development of the GFRS, which takes into account the systems that influence the supervision of SCITs.

### GFRS Suppositions

All efficacious models of supervision are built on some set of core theoretical assumptions. The GFRS maintains the following suppositions:

1. Supervision is a constructivist process whereby the goals and subsequent functions of supervision are determined within the context of the multiple, dynamic systems involved in school counselor training.
2. There is a symbiotic link between the goals of supervision, the experiential activities during school counselor training in internships, and the functions of supervision.
3. Shared agreement about the activities, expectations, and optimum outcomes that are negotiated between the university supervisor, site supervisor (school counselor), and school counselor-in-training (SCIT) is key to the successful supervision experience.
4. Successful supervision is contingent on SCITs' ability to recognize and work both within and between the multiple systems in the school counseling profession.

### GFRS Conceptualization

According to systems theory, individuals influence and are influenced by the systems to which they belong (Minuchin, 1974). The concept of *homeostasis*, whereby systems strive to remain in balance by keeping interactional patterns consistent, is also central to systems theory. Moreover, ongoing problems are the result of patterns of interaction rather than merely isolated/independent incidents. Supervision in school counseling involves multiple systems, thereby requiring supervisors to be aware of such systems and the major concepts of systems theory.

Central to understanding the GFRS is awareness of the specialized systems in school counseling settings that can influence supervision goals and interactions. Figure 1 illustrates some of the systems affecting the supervision of SCITs. As mentioned previously, these interactional, dynamic systems are realities that make supervision of SCITs unique in comparison to other forms of counseling supervision. The university (counselor education program), the school counselor (site supervisor), and the multiple school systems all have an influence on SCITs' supervision.

Moreover, within each of these systems, there are additional systems that interact and influence the supervisory experiences of SCITs. In Figure 1, some of the systems within the school counseling site (internship placement) are identified to exemplify the presence of operating systems within the larger system. The systems of students,
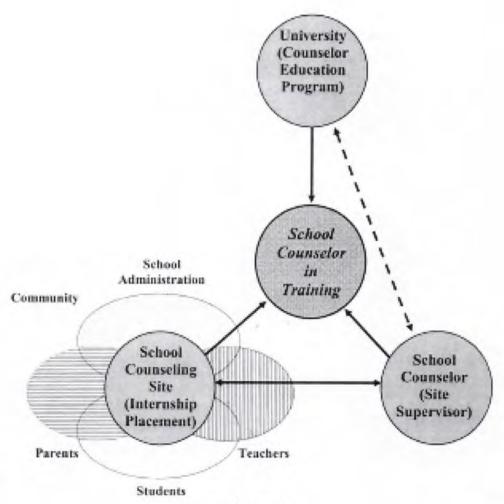
**FIGURE 1**

**Systems Influencing Supervision of School Counselors-in-Training**

parents/guardians, teachers, and even principal/school administration have a bearing on the functions of coconstructed supervision for SCITs and the conceptualization and accomplishment of supervision goals. Although each system may be more or less salient at different times during supervision, the GFRS maintains that a supervisor should be continually aware of these systems and their internal patterns of interactions while formulating goals, performing functions, and enacting roles in supervision.

*Elements of the GFRS*

The GFRS comprises four interrelated elements: (a) goals, (b) functions, (c) roles, and (d) systems. The established goals are supported by the coconstructed functions in supervision, which require the supervisor to enact specific roles. The processes of developing goals, discerning functions, and enacting subsequent roles are continually influenced by the various systems inherent in the supervision of SCITs.

*Goals.* Establishing goals is an essential element of successful supervision of SCITs. This process is constructivist in nature, allowing for the input of SCITs yet guided by the expertise of the supervising school counselor and the university instructor/counselor educator.

Bordin (1983) proposed eight crucial goals for counseling supervision. He included among these goals, mastery of specific skills and enlarging one's understanding of clients, which are embedded within the ASCA National Model and the TSCI principles. In addition to these eight goals (see Bordin, 1983), we suggest the following school counseling–specific supervision goals drawn from the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) and the TSCI principles (Education Trust, 2002). These additional proposed goals integrate some of the unique learning experiences required for the training and development of successful school counselors.

1.  Enact a *leadership* role within the school whereby the school counselor advances the school's educational improvement efforts and substantially contributes to the overall mission of the school.
2.  Develop *advocacy* skills that will assist educationally vulnerable and underserved students and their families.
3.  Successfully *team* and *collaborate* with teachers, administrators, and the community to help students and their families.
4.  Engage in *assessment* and *use of data* to determine the academic, personal/social, and career development needs of students to design, successfully, educational interventions that will provide the most tailored assistance to students and the school as a whole.
5.  Optimize the role of the school counselor in *system support*, learning to use the skills of the school counselor in activities that are necessary for the functioning of the school.
6.  Design and execute *individual planning* activities for students. This goal incorporates Bordin's (1983) goals of (a) mastery of specific skills, (b) enlarging one's understanding of clients, (c) deepening one's understanding of concepts and theory, and (d) maintaining standards of service.
7.  Develop and deliver a *guidance curriculum* that is based on national standards, prioritizes student/school needs, and supports the academic success of all students.
8.  Master brief counseling skills and crisis management within a K-12 school setting as a part of *responsive services,* including Bordin's (1983) goals (a) mastery of specific skills, (b) enlarging one's understanding of clients, (c) enlarging one's awareness of process issues, (d) deepening one's understanding of concepts and theory, and (e) maintaining standards of service.

These goals might be better conceptualized as general goal "areas," because each goal should be reconstructed to require specific and

individualized behavioral outcomes for each SCIT. Moreover, it is possible that a given supervisee's performance might combine multiple goal areas. For example, Goal Area 4 might call for an SCIT to conduct a school and community needs assessment. In a faculty meeting, the school counselor might then present the results of the needs assessment along with disaggregated achievement data that identify educationally vulnerable students. This activity essentially combines the goal areas of leadership, assessment and use of data, advocacy, and system support. If the faculty meeting presentation is followed up with classroom guidance lessons that are designed to take into account the achievement data, needs assessment, and national standards for school counseling programs, then this addresses the guidance curriculum goal area as well.

*Functions.* The functions of supervisors during supervision evolve from what is required to assist SCITs with the accomplishment of individualized, established, and coconstructed goals. Holloway (1995) proposed five functions for supervision: (a) monitoring/evaluating, (b) instructing and advising, (c) modeling, (d) consulting, and (e) supporting and sharing. These functions can be used by school counselors and university supervisors who are supervising SCITs, yet this would substantially differ from their use in clinical counseling supervision. For the purpose of explaining how these functions can be applied in a school setting, it is helpful to separate the functions of instructing and advising into the following separate and distinct functions.

*Monitoring/evaluating*—A supervisor of an SCIT must monitor the professional growth of the SCIT as well as his or her on-site professional practice. Evaluation means providing ongoing feedback on performance and final assessments of the SCIT's readiness to enter the profession. In this function, the supervisor maintains the power, and communication is unidirectional (delivered by the supervisor).

*Instructing*—This function requires the supervisor to provide direct information, often through didactic means. Most certainly a supervisor uses this function when giving information about the school system, policies, proven interventions, and so forth. Again, in this function, the supervisor holds the power and communication is unidirectional.

*Advising*—Sometimes it is necessary for a school counselor to give guidance when there is no clear-cut answer. This situation calls for the advising function wherein the supervisor provides suggested strategies. Some power is shared with the SCIT, but the communication is primarily unidirectional.

*Modeling*—In this function, the supervisor directly demonstrates good practice and optimal professional behavior. The power in supervision during this function is, for the most part, shared power, and communication is largely bidirectional because there is generally negotiation on what is to be modeled (e.g., role plays, guidance lessons).

*Consulting*—Supervisors often help through dialogue and by sharing their experience and knowledge, while soliciting perspective and ideas from the SCIT as both parties engage in collective problem solving. This function is known as consulting. During consultation, power is shared between the supervisor and the SCIT, and communication is bidirectional.

*Supporting and sharing*—Sometimes SCITs need caring and encouragement. This is similar to Bordin's (1983) concept of a "bond" in the working alliance/supervisory working alliance. In working alliance theory, *bond* refers to the extent to which the counselor and client (or supervisor and supervisee) trust, respect, care about, and feel cared about (Horvath & Greenberg, 1994). This is the core of the supporting function in supervision.

Sharing can be a way of supporting SCITs as well. "Supervisors often support trainees at a deep interpersonal level by sharing their own perceptions of trainees' actions, emotions, and attitudes" (Holloway, 1995, p. 37). This may involve challenging the attitudes of SCITs or engaging in constructive confrontation on specific training or even personal issues. Working alliance theory suggests that this can even be an indicator of positive change (Bordin, 1983).

The functions of supervision are accomplished when supervisor roles are put into action. Although the roles support the functions, the roles are not dictated by the functions alone. The roles should be chosen intentionally by the supervisor to take into account the functions and systems involved.

### Role

School counselor and university supervisor roles should (a) focus on facilitating the accomplishment of coconstructed supervision goals, (b) be selected to support the functions, and (c) sustain the goals and functions of supervision in response to the multiple systems. The GFRS proposes five primary roles for the school counseling supervisor: evaluator, adviser, coordinator, teacher, and mentor.

*Evaluator.* Giving constructive feedback to SCITs on their performance contributes to their professional development. To accomplish this task, a supervisor must successfully function in the role of evaluator. In school counseling supervision, there are various individuals enacting this role at different times (university professor, individual supervisor, group supervisor, site supervisor, and occasionally the internship site administrators). The school counselor who is supervising SCITs must have a clear sense of this role.

*Adviser.* The adviser role can be conceptualized as that of an expert *consultant*. In this role, the supervisor provides guidance in decision making; for example, the supervisor might assist an SCIT with a menu of potential intervention options for a given student problem.

*Coordinator.* This role is unique to supervision in school counseling. Because school counseling responds to such a wide range of demands within a school and requires such a variety of profes-

sional activities, the supervisor may often need to be a coordinator of internship experiences for the SCIT.

*Teacher.* Sometimes a supervisor is called on to give instruction or to disseminate information necessary for becoming an effective school counselor. This requires the supervisor to be a "teacher," directing an SCIT with the appropriate how-to information when necessary. In the teacher role, a supervisor might be called on, for example, to train the SCIT in the school's crisis intervention procedures.

*Mentor.* In the mentor role, the supervisor helps foster the professional development of the SCIT. This could include assisting in professional networking with fellow school counselors and assisting with the job search process. In this role, the supervisor might even help an SCIT learn to balance the demands of professional life.

### Systems

Each of the aforementioned components allows for the inherent emphasis on systems throughout the GFRS. The major elements of the systems perspective can be used to avoid developing problematic patterns of interaction that can thwart the effectiveness and success of supervision. The previously mentioned systems involved in school counseling are critical factors in the development of school counseling–specific supervision goals. K-12 schools have patterns of problematic interactions as do parents/guardians, administrators, and school counselors. SCITs are now joining these systems, undoubtedly influencing the coconstruction of goal setting in supervision. For example, if the school counselor site supervisor and the school principal have a maladaptive pattern of interaction, this dynamic will likely have an effect on the articulation of goals and subsequent performance objectives for interning SCITs. Similarly, these same systems operate during the actual functions of supervision relationships. For instance, a counselor education program that labels a counselor-in-training as a "problem student" can place a supervisor in a high-maintenance monitor/evaluator function, inhibiting other functions.

The roles required for supervising SCITs are enacted within the context of these systems (similar to family members enacting roles within the family system). Therefore, supervisors need to be aware of how systems are influencing roles within supervision. For example, an overly enmeshed university (counselor education program) may not allow a school counselor (site supervisor) to enact roles such as teacher or adviser for fear of losing the primary influence on the SCIT. Or a school system that maintains an outdated vision of school counselors may inhibit a site supervisor in performing a teacher role and modeling school counselor activities, such as delivering guidance lessons. Site supervisors and the university (counselor education program) must be continually aware of the influence of systems on the supervisory process.

Table 1 illustrates the GFRS as applied to the aforementioned goal areas. When applied more specifically articulated goals can be coconstructed between the school counselor (site supervisor), the SCIT, and the university (counselor education program). The table illustrates the relationship between school counseling supervision goal areas and the subsequent functions, roles, and systems according to the GFRS.

In Table 1, each goal area is listed along with the corresponding supervision functions that relate to the activity listed under each goal area. The supervisor roles relevant to each supervision function are listed in the next column across from each respective function. The systems that have an impact on the supervisor roles, supervision functions, and the articulation and operationalization of the goals are given in the system column. All six supervision functions and five supervision roles are listed in Table 1, as well as every system illustrated in Figure 1. For the first five goal areas listed in Table 1, a single internship activity—a school counselor's involvement on a Student Assistance Team (a multidisciplinary group that coordinates assistance for referred students)—is used to exemplify the operationalization of the multiple goal areas in the GFRS.

The goal area of guidance curriculum is common to school counseling field experiences and substantively different from clinical counseling internships. Activities under this goal area generally include designing and delivering guidance curriculum in the school setting. In support of the goal of guidance curriculum, for example, the function of modeling occurs when the SCIT has an opportunity to review the guidance curriculum being used by the school counselor and watch the delivery of the guidance lesson. For this function, the site supervisor is in the teacher role. The supervisor must be sure that optimal functioning of this role is not impaired by problematic patterns of interaction among or between any of the systems, such as teachers' resistance to time spent conducting the guidance curriculum.

Regarding the goal of delivering a guidance lesson, the supervisor gives support and sharing prior to the guidance lesson (in the role of adviser) and the function of monitoring/evaluating occurs as the supervisor assesses the SCIT's performance and gives constructive feedback. The supervisor's roles also include coordinator, because he or she sets up the class or large group for the lesson; teacher, because he or she is instructing the SCIT on designing the guidance lesson; and evaluator, because he or she observes the delivery of the guidance lesson.

## Applications of the GFRS Model of School Counseling Supervision

The following dialogue between a supervisor and SCIT demonstrates the application of the GFRS in a supervision session. The goals,

TABLE 1

## The Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems Model: Relationships of Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems in Supervision

| Goal | Function | Role | System |
|------|----------|------|--------|
| **Leadership** | | | |
| Faculty in-service on purpose and procedure for SAT | Modeling, instructing, advising, consulting, supporting, and sharing | Teacher, adviser, mentor | School, school administration, teachers, students, school counselor, university/counselor education program, SCITs |
| Shaping school policy and procedures through SAT (and other teams/committees such as School Leadership Committee/ Site based management) | | | |
| **Advocacy** | | | |
| Lobbying on behalf of a parent or student for a beneficial educational placement for the student | Modeling, supporting, and sharing | Teacher, mentor | School, parents, school administration, teachers, school counselor, SCITs |
| Using disaggregated data to identify specific student groups in need of specialized interventions | Instructing, consulting | Teacher, adviser | School, school administration, teachers, parents, community |
| **Teaching and collaboration** | | | |
| Working with teachers, administrators, and community resources to design intervention for student referred to SAT | Modeling, instructing | Teacher | School, school administration, teachers, parents, community |
| **Assessment and use of data** | | | |
| Presenting SAT with individual and group data on achievement, attendance, discipline, etc. | Modeling, consulting, advising | Teacher, adviser | School, school administration, teachers, community |
| Disaggregating data to identify educationally vulnerable groups within school | Instructing | Teacher | |

*(Continued on next page)*

## TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

### The Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems Model: Relationships of Goals, Functions, Roles, and Systems in Supervision

| Goal | Function | Role | System |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conducting needs assessment | Instructing | Teacher | |
| System support | | | |
| Organizing SAT | Modeling, coordinating, advising | Teacher, adviser | School, school administration, teachers, community |
| Individual planning | | | |
| Assisting students in developing individual educational/ occupational plans | Instructing, modeling | Teacher | School, school administration, teachers, school counselor, students |
| Guidance curriculum | | | |
| Designing guidance lessons Delivering guidance lessons | Instructing, modeling, supporting and sharing, advising, monitoring/ evaluating | Coordinator, teacher, adviser, evaluator | School, school administration, teachers, students, school counselor, university/counselor education program, SCITs |

*Note.* SAT = student assistance team; SCITs = school counselors-in-training.

functions, and roles are listed in parentheses to illustrate the model components in the discussion.

> *Supervisor* (adviser role): "Here are some possible goals [supervisor presents list of possible goals]—let's explore how we might make these specific to your needs. We can add any goals you might want."
>
> *SCIT:* "Great, they all seem like things I'd like to learn. Take the first one, mastery of skills. I'd like to run a group, I mean I helped run one for my fellow students during class, but I've never run a group for kids."
>
> *Supervisor* (teacher role): "Yes, even screening group members in middle school can be different with teens (function: supporting and sharing) and our school has some specific requirements for parent permission (systems: school and principal). Let me show you how I've done it for the groups I'm running (function: modeling), then we can look at some of our school data and the needs assessment results (function: advising; goal: assessment and use of data) to identify some specific needs in order to determine the best group to run. How does that sound? (function: consulting)"
>
> *SCIT:* "That sounds great."

In the preceding example, the school counselor supervisor helps to specify and operationalize some of the goals. The supervisor also suggests several of the functions that could be used to accomplish goals as well as some of the systems related to the process.

The model also can be applied to address problems that occur during supervision. Problems are often the result of conducting

the wrong function at the wrong time or performing the wrong role in support of the function. Consider the following discussion in supervision.

> *SCIT:* "I know we identified teaching study skills and tutoring strategies to parents as something I could do in response to the data we examined. But I'm really lost on how to prepare the content for the workshop. I don't even know where to start."
>
> *Supervisor* (now in teacher role): "That's okay, we'll work it out so you're entirely prepared for the workshops (function: supporting). I know that you have a real need to be very prepared, although sometimes we need to be flexible in school counseling so you'll need to learn to work in that way too (function: sharing). Why don't we coordinate with your graduate program and make sure we're using the best educational intervention (function: instructing; systems, university [counselor education]). After we develop the content, I can do the first workshop (function: modeling), and you can run the second with me assisting and giving you feedback (functions: consulting, monitoring/evaluating)."

In the preceding example, the supervisor initially did not adequately enact the teacher role, leaving the SCIT at a loss. The supervisor was able to remedy the situation through the teacher role and the functions of instructing and modeling.

## Conclusion

It should be noted that the proposed GFRS, although based on other empirically derived models, is primarily theoretical in nature. Future research is needed to determine if these are, in fact, functions and roles of supervision in school counseling. Similarly, research could potentially identify problematic systems or patterns that impair successful supervision in school counseling settings. Most important, future research could determine what roles and functions contribute to outcomes such as better prepared school counseling practitioners.

Clearly, the discussion of school counseling–specific supervision models is in its early stages, and the GFRS only begins to answer some of the relevant questions. At the very least, however, the model provides some attention and direction to the neglected area of specialized school counseling supervision.

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