

**Career and Guidance Counsellors Working in  
Secondary Schools in Ontario:  
An Inventory of Current Tasks and Perceived  
Competence**

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# 1. The North American Context



According to research done in USA and  
Canada (Ontario and Québec).



School and guidance counsellors report struggling  
with many issues.





# 1. The North American Context

Research from the USA suggest that:

- Guidance counsellor training may not reflect the needs of their students
- There is difficulty in defining their roles and work practices
- Other individuals (ie school principals) sometime dictate their roles in schools
- Tasked with administrative rather than traditional guidance or career counsellor roles

Research from Quebec suggest that

- Tension between :
- what GC's were educated to do,
- what they are asked to do,
- and what they are able to do given available resources.





# 1. The North American Context (Ontario)

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OECD, report  
about Ontario

2002 report:

Training of career and guidance counsellors in Canada was insufficient.

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Career and guidance counselling is weakly professionalized.

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2004 report:

The training competencies required to fulfill the role of career or guidance counsellors in Anglophone provinces, including Ontario, were imprecise and variable.

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# 1. The North American Context (Ontario)

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A qualitative study explore how teachers perceive and describe the process of becoming guidance counsellors in Ontario:

Participants reported basing their practice on intuition and copying the behavior of more experienced colleagues.

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It highlights the superficiality of their training and their lack of scientifically based knowledge in career counselling and testing.

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Nadon, D., Samson, A., Gazzola, N. et Theriault, A. (2016). Ontario Guidance Counsellors' Perspective of the Impact of Formal Training on their Professional Development. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, (16) 3, 363-377

Some participants were even unaware of their limited knowledge.

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## 2. Study Objectives

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Given the lack of clinical supervision and formal training currently provided to career and guidance counsellors in Ontario,

it was deemed important to examine how they identify, conceptualize, and describe the tasks they perform.

Objectives:

To identify and describe the different tasks accomplished by career and guidance counsellors

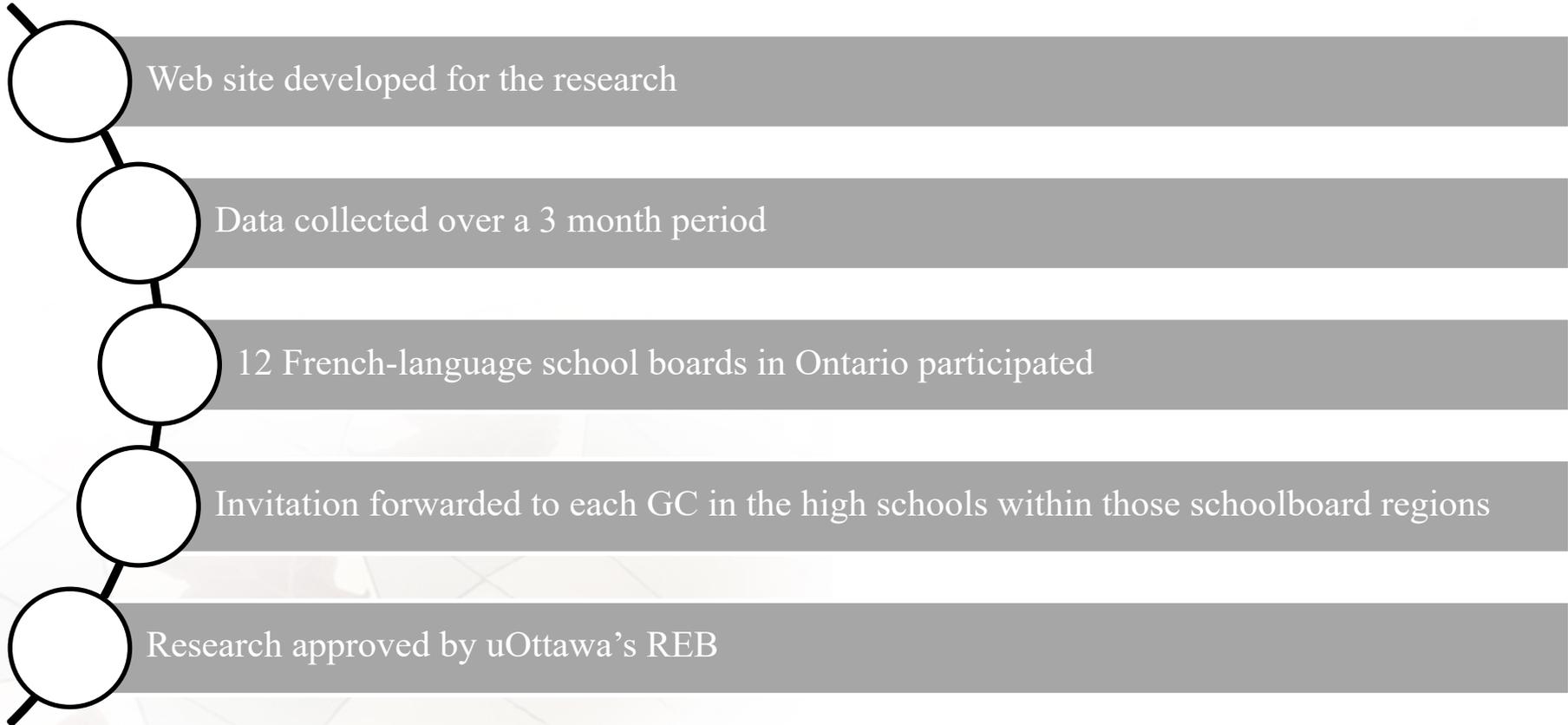
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To assess how Ontario career and guidance counsellors perceive their level of competency in relation to the international standards.

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# 3. Procedure





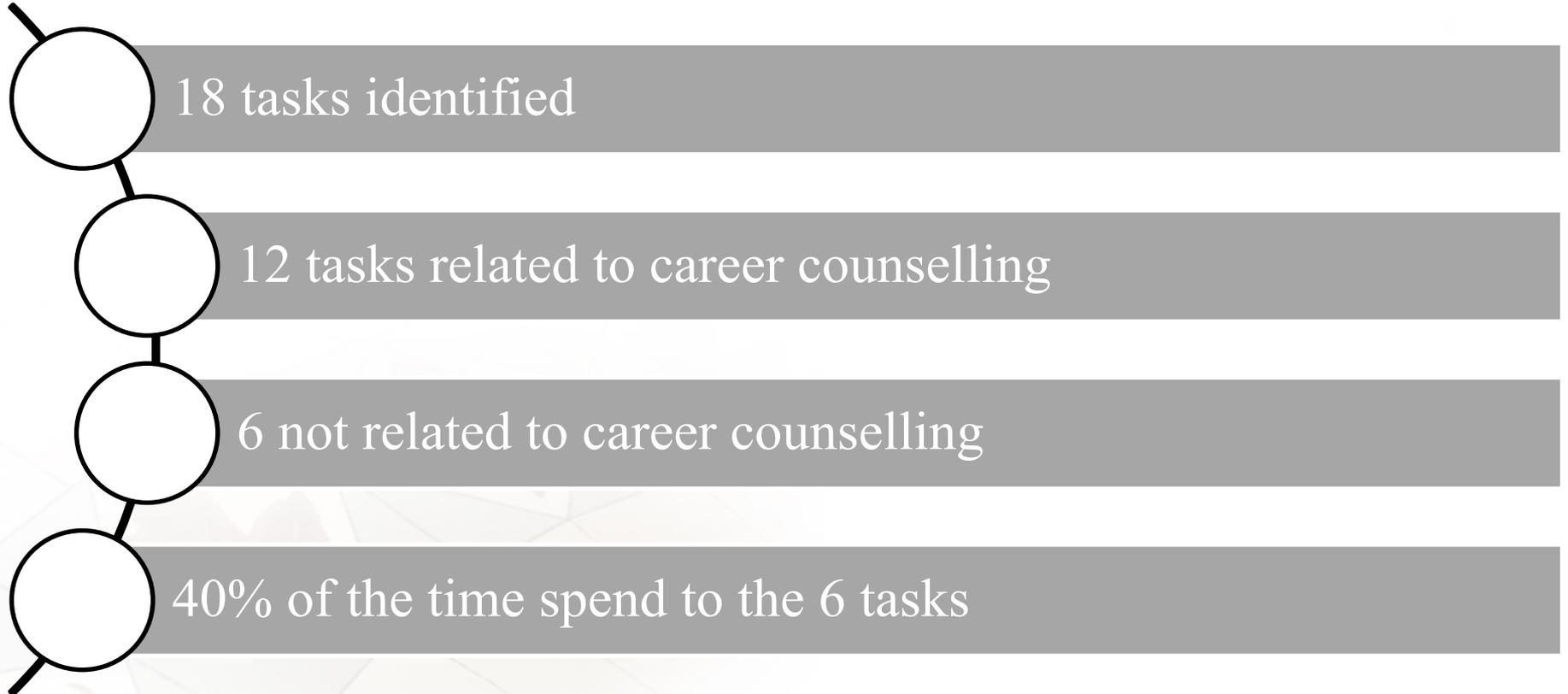
# 3. Procedure

*Descriptions of the tasks undertaken by Career and Guidance Counsellors Working in French Language Secondary Schools*

Tasks	Descriptions
Informing students (one on one)	Regarding postsecondary education programs, careers, and job market trends
Organizing academic and professional information relating to students	Reading information, filing documents, planning career fairs, contacting postsecondary institutions, etc.
Providing information to students	Regarding bursaries and financial aid
Managing students' academic progress	For instance, regarding: enrolment, course selection, student scheduling
Participating in the school's promotional and public relations activities	Organizing school tours for new students, visiting feeder schools, information kiosks for the school
Providing consultation	To teachers as well as other professionals in the school and to the members of the administration
Providing individual career counselling	To students so as to promote the development of their self-awareness
Testing through the use of psychometric tools	For example, to assist students with their career choices using recognized and standardized tests such as: Strong, Jackson, GROU, etc.
Providing personal (and individual) counselling	Crisis situations, anxiety, emotional problems, etc
Providing classroom instruction	For example, within the scope of the GLC20 course
Completing various tasks	Completing tasks assigned by the school principal
Collaborating within multidisciplinary teams	Collaborate on interventions to promote student success and learning
Guiding students using career-related software	For instance, with tools that help students make career or academic choices : "Career Cruising"
Assisting with job searches and co-op placements	Assisting students who are writing a curriculum vitae (cv)
Managing other activities	Such as the graduation ceremonies or sport teams
Paperwork	Managing student files
Planning interventions and activities	Specifically geared towards helping grade 11 and 12 students choose career paths and postsecondary school programs



### 3. Procedure



# 3. Methods: Sample



N = 73 participants working for the 12 French-language school boards that exist in Ontario.



74% working full-time as a career and guidance counsellor

26% working part-time as a career and guidance counsellor

Average of 17 years of experience as a teacher and 8 years of experience as a career and guidance counsellor.

Training:



3% didn't complete any AQ courses

22% completed 1/3 courses

12% completed 2/3 courses

63% completed 3/3 courses



# 3. Methods



## Career and Guidance Counselling-related Knowledge and Skills.



- 13 essential competencies associated with the practice of career and guidance counselling
- Rated on a 5-point Likert scale (*not at all mastered – very well mastered*)





## 4. Results

*Level of Mastery Perceived by Participants for the Core Skills and Specific Knowledge Related to Career and Guidance Counselling*

	Descriptive statistics		Correlations with tasks clusters			
	M	SD	ICA	GCA	ACA	TCA
Theories of vocational development	2.15	1.00	.03	-.08	-.07	.24*
Mastery and use of a specific theoretical approach in counselling	2.32	.96	.06	.14	-.20	.01
Knowledge of tests and measurement	1.60	.92	.05	-.13	-.09	.31**
Providing professional and academic information	2.95	.33	.26*	.14	-.50**	.11
Group facilitation	2.89	.46	-.06	.26*	-.15	-.03
Job search strategies	2.37	.94	.18	-.02	-.26*	.13
Psychology of human development and personality	2.43	.91	.08	.09	-.16	-.06
Knowledge of psychopathology and mental health	1.82	.99	-.13	.05	.04	.18
Learning support	2.89	.46	-.03	.01	.05	-.03
Working with multicultural and diverse populations	2.32	.96	-.12	.10	.03	.07
Ethics and standards of practice	2.75	.66	.00	.07	-.04	-.04
Use of career models to facilitate decision-making	2.59	.81	.02	.09	-.15	.11
Use of self-exploration and planning programs in careers	2.64	.77	.08	.05	-.28*	.29*

*Note.* ICA = Individual-oriented career activities, GCA = Group-oriented career activities, ACA = Administrative-oriented career activities, TCA = Technical-oriented career activities. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .





## 4. Results

### *Tasks Associated with a Perceived Need for Continuing Education*

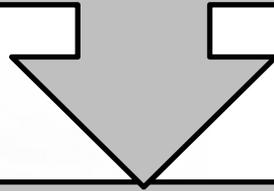
Task	Percentage of Career and Guidance Counsellors who Endorsed this Task
Counselling theories	24.7 %
Testing through the use of psychometric tools	17.8 %
Ethics	15.1 %
Psychopathology and mental health	6.8 %
Group work	5.5 %
Counselling skills associated with specific populations: mental health, immigrants, sexual orientation, etc.	5.5 %



# Discussion



Results suggest a correlation between the perceived importance of tasks performed by career and guidance counsellors, and their perceived feelings of competence.



Results suggest that career and guidance counsellors in Ontario do not perceive themselves as competent in the core practice of career and guidance counselling including:



# DISCUSSION



Various questions arise:



- How do career and guidance counsellors in Ontario meet the various needs of students in Ontario schools?
  
- Do the current practices of career and guidance counsellors in Ontario meet ethical standards knowing that they did not receive the necessary clinical or formal training?



# DISCUSSION



The current study provides another argument to support the need:



- For additional training for career and guidance counsellors in Ontario to better support students 's needs
- To increase career and guidance counsellors' awareness of the essential tasks associated with career and guidance counselling and to increase their feelings of competence.



# DISCUSSION



A second important implication that can be derived from this study's findings includes the fact that it might be important:

To revise and further specify what tasks should be accomplished by career and guidance counsellors.

So as to provide a more consistent service for students and schools in general throughout the province of Ontario.





- **Samson, A.**, Sovet, L., DiMillo, J., Cournoyer, L., Viviers, S. et Nadon, D. (2018). Career and guidance counsellors working in French language secondary schools in Ontario: an inventory of current tasks and perceived competence. *Canadian Journal of Career Development*, (17) 2, 59-70.
- **Samson, A.** Bastien, M.P. (2018). L'orientation scolaire dans les écoles secondaires de langue française de l'Ontario : un état des lieux. *Revue d'éducation de la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa*, (6) 1, printemps 2018.
- Nadon, D., **Samson, A.**, Gazzola, N. et Theriault, A. (2016). Ontario Guidance Counsellors' Perspective of the Impact of Formal Training on their Professional Development. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, (16) 3, 363-377.



# Questions?

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