

A SURVEY STUDY OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE
OF
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

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ABSTRACT

The requirements for school counselor certification have changed since 2000 in Missouri. Most notably, the requirement of previous teaching experience has been removed. Since the position of counselor developed out of teaching, many studies have examined teaching experience or lack of it as variables. Yet none has examined school counselors' perceptions of the importance of professional development areas related to the MoStep School Counseling Competencies. This research study surveyed school counselors to determine if there was a relationship between teaching experience or lack of it and counselors' perceived importance of 18 professional development areas derived from the MoStep School Counseling Competencies. The study also examined demographic variables, self-efficacy and stress, and their possible relationships to counselors' perceptions of the importance of professional development for those with teaching experience and those who lack teaching experience. Findings suggest that teaching experience has no relationship to counselors' perceptions of the importance of professional development areas. An unanticipated finding was that counselors' perceptions of the importance of professional development areas was related to counselors' years of experience as a counselor. Since the early years of counselor experience are important to success in the profession, issues such as early-career mentoring and administrative understanding of the role of the school counselor may prove useful.

