



Enhancing counseling teachers' creativity through Deep Counseling-based Training

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to enhance the creativity of guidance and counseling teachers through deep counseling-based training. The training was conducted on July 10, 2025, involving 49 guidance and counseling teachers from junior and senior high schools. Using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, the program included pre-test, panel discussion on deep counseling, innovation showcase, practical sessions, and post-test. Results showed a positive impact on teachers' creativity, with participants in the "balanced creativity" category increasing from 85.7 percent in the pre-test to 91.8 percent in the post-test. This improvement demonstrates that the training effectively enhanced teachers' ability to balance creative exploration with professional consistency in delivering counseling services. The integration of creative media into deep counseling encouraged teachers to design innovative, contextual, and student-centered services. This activity contributed to strengthening guidance and counseling teachers' competence to provide more effective, engaging, and sustainable counseling services that respond to students' psychosocial needs. The program also serves as a model for continuous professional development that can be replicated in other regions, focusing on the integration of digital technology, diversification of counseling media, and enhancement of competencies in addressing the complexity of contemporary student issues.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently undergoing a demographic bonus characterized by a population dominated by productive age groups, particularly the millennial generation (born 1980–2000), Generation Z (born 1997–2012), and Generation Alpha (born 2011–2025). Data from the National Population and Family Planning Agency indicate that this demographic advantage will persist between 2020 and 2035, during which the population dependency ratio is projected to reach its historical minimum (BKKBN, 2020). High school students born between 2008 and 2012 belong to Generations Z and Alpha, groups widely recognized as digital natives due to their close familiarity with technology. According to the Badan Pusat Statistik (Central Statistics Agency), approximately 97 percent of individuals aged 15–24 in West Java possess information and communication technology (ICT) skills (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). Distinct from earlier cohorts, digital natives are characterized by independence, assertiveness, emotional and

intellectual expressiveness, and a critical attitude toward established norms (William & Page, 2011). Moreover, Wibowo et al. (2023) highlight that this generation tends to be innovative, inquisitive, and oriented toward lifelong learning.

The unique characteristics of the digital native generation require educators, particularly guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, to develop innovative learning and counseling services that utilize digital media and address students' psychosocial needs in the digital era. In practice, however, GC teachers, who serve as the frontline facilitators of student development, continue to face challenges related to creativity and service innovation. According to data from the Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Association (*Musyawarah Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling/MGBK*) of Garut Regency, there are approximately 351 GC teachers across various educational levels, consisting of 124 teachers in junior high schools, 111 in senior high schools, 29 in Islamic senior high schools (*Madrasah Aliyah*), and 87 in vocational schools. All of these teachers are registered as official MGBK members in the *Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan* (SIM PKB) for vocational education. This data indicates that Garut Regency has considerable professional potential in the field of guidance and counseling, yet it still faces challenges related to equitable access to competency development.

Discussions with the MGBK of Garut identified several fundamental problems experienced by GC teachers in the region. The first problem concerns the limited implementation of modern counseling approaches. Many GC teachers reported that they have not yet fully optimized the application of deep counseling, an approach that focuses on a comprehensive understanding of students' psychological conditions and facilitates positive personal transformation. The second problem relates to limited access to professional development opportunities. The lack of structured training and continuous professional learning programs constrains GC teachers in developing creative competencies that are relevant to the digital era.

The third issue identified concerns the dominance of conventional methods in guidance and counseling (GC) services. GC practices in Garut Regency remain largely traditional, focusing primarily on addressing problems after they occur (reactive approach) rather than emphasizing prevention and the development of students' potential (proactive approach). The fourth issue involves a lack of creativity in counseling media. GC teachers have not yet maximized the integration of creative media and digital technology in counseling services to attract interest and enhance participation among digital native students. The final issue relates to the heavy administrative workload, which often hinders GC teachers from concentrating on developing more creative, adaptive, and impactful services that directly contribute to students' well-being.

During the implementation of this community service program, a total of 70 GC teachers participated in person. Some teachers were assigned to attend this training activity, while others participated in a different training session held concurrently by the same organizing institution, namely the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (FIP UPI), in collaboration with the MGBK of Garut Regency. This arrangement did not create any obstacles to the smooth execution of the program, as coordination between the organizers and partners had been structured and managed in parallel.

A preliminary study conducted by the authors involving 49 GC teachers in Garut Regency regarding creativity in counseling services revealed that 85.7 percent demonstrated a balanced level of creativity, while 14.3 percent were at a moderately balanced level. These findings suggest that most GC teachers in Garut Regency possess a degree of creativity. Nevertheless, further training is required to enable the effective implementation of creativity within guidance and counseling services.

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This community service program aimed to enhance the creativity competencies of school counselors in Garut Regency by strengthening their knowledge, skills, and practical application of creativity within the framework of deep counseling. The program also sought to provide both conceptual and practical understanding of the deep counseling approach, which emphasizes in-depth exploration of emotional awareness, the meaning of life experiences, and the holistic development of individual potential. Another goal was to facilitate school counselors in designing and implementing innovative, contextual, and student-centered counseling media, while also reinforcing their ability to balance creative idea exploration, reflective practice, and professional consistency in delivering effective and sustainable counseling services.

The deep counseling approach is a counseling method that focuses on a comprehensive exploration of clients' emotional awareness, understanding of life experiences, and holistic development of personal potential. This approach is considered relevant for strengthening school counselors' creative capacity, enabling them to become more adaptive to the complex challenges faced by students in the digital era. Electronic Group Counseling (EGC) highlights the professional demand for counselors and school counselors to develop innovative and technology-supported services (Wibowo et al., 2023). The use of media in school counseling is a crucial aspect of counselors' creativity, particularly in responding to the characteristics of digital native students who are highly familiar with information technology. Research has shown that professional training for school counselors can enhance their ability to deliver effective and targeted support services in schools (Rachmawati et al., 2024).

This program was implemented by the Guidance and Counseling Study Program as part of the 2025 Community Service Program of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (FIP UPI), in collaboration with the Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Association (*Musyawahar Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling/MGBK*) of Garut Regency as an implementation partner. The team organized a Deep Counseling-Based Creativity Training Program for School Counselors, involving participants from various educational levels, including junior high schools, senior high schools, and vocational schools. The training was designed as a comprehensive series of activities comprising a pre-test, training sessions and practice, a counseling media exhibition, and a post-test. In addition to conceptual presentations, the training integrated hands-on practice in the use of creative counseling media. The implementation of counseling media was simulated through collaborative practice sessions followed by reflection and critical discussion. This process encouraged school counselors not only to understand the theoretical foundation of deep counseling but also to develop practical skills in designing more participatory, innovative, and contextually relevant counseling services. By integrating creativity and deep counseling in the development of counseling media, the training was expected to produce school counselors who are more competent in providing comprehensive, engaging, and effective services for students in Garut Regency.

2. METHODS

The Deep Counseling-Based Creativity Training Program for school counselors in Garut Regency was conducted as part of a community service initiative on Thursday, July 10, 2025, at SMAN 1 Garut. The activity was attended by 49 school counselors in an offline setting. The primary objective of this program was to enhance creativity and strengthen the professional competencies of school counselors in Garut Regency. By achieving these goals, school counselors are expected to better assist students in preventing and addressing psychological and social dilemmas through the provision of more effective and efficient counseling services.

The community service activity employed the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, an approach that emphasizes active participant engagement through interaction and reflection. The PAR approach was chosen because it allows participants not only to receive material from facilitators but also to share experiences, engage in discussions, and produce creative works collaboratively.

The training involved lecturers and students from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia as facilitators, while school counselors from Garut Regency participated as trainees. The stages of the creativity training program, designed by the community service team comprising lecturers and students from the Guidance and Counseling Department, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, are illustrated in Figure 1.

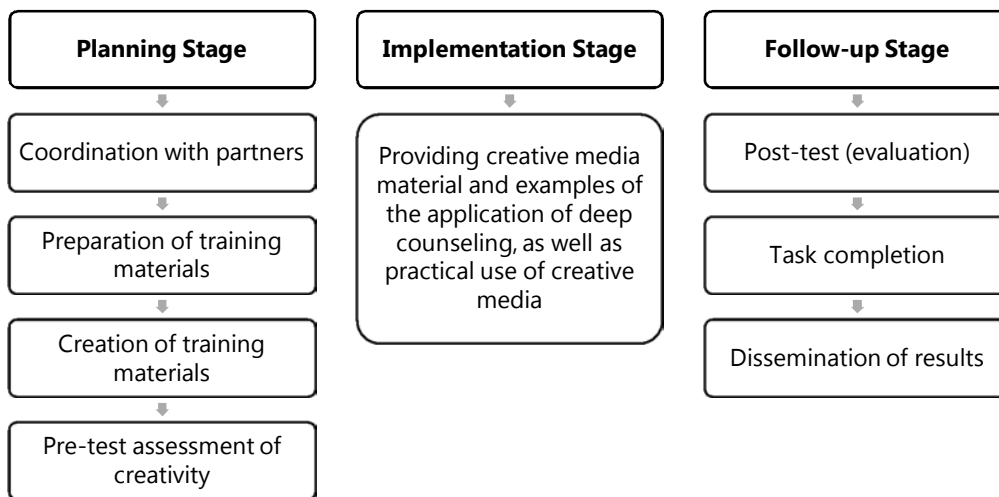


Figure 1. Steps for implementing creativity training activities

The training was conducted over a single day, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (WIB), at SMAN 1 Garut. Prior to the session, participants completed an initial assessment questionnaire on July 3, 2025, which served as a pre-test to evaluate their baseline understanding and creativity levels as school counselors in Garut Regency. The training commenced with an opening ceremony, followed by a panel discussion titled *“The Deep Learning Approach in Guidance and Counseling”* delivered by a lecturer from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). Subsequently, a session on innovative practice was held, featuring creative products developed by UPI students. Participants were also invited to visit the student innovation exhibition at SMAN 1 Garut, which displayed examples of creative product development relevant to the field of guidance and counseling. The program concluded with a post-test designed to assess participants’ understanding and creativity levels after the training.

The creativity assessment instrument used in this study was a standardized psychometric scale presented in the form of a questionnaire. The instrument was developed based on Csikszentmihalyi’s (2013) theory of creativity and was designed to measure several core dimensions of creative capacity, as summarized in Table 1.

The follow-up stage of the creativity training program involved evaluating both the process and outcomes of the training activities, including the analysis of pre-test and post-test data to measure participants’ improvement in understanding and creativity. The evaluation employed a one-group pre-test–post-test design, in which the data were analyzed by comparing participants’ pre-test and post-test scores to determine whether there was a significant difference in the creativity levels of school counselors

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before and after the training. The creativity instrument consisted of 40 items using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The creativity levels were categorized into four classifications: unbalanced, less balanced, moderately balanced, and balanced.

Table 1. Aspects and indicators of creative personality

Aspects	Indicators
Energy vs. Self-control	- High enthusiasm for work (Energy) - Controlled even under pressure (Self-Control)
Convergent thinking vs. Divergent thinking	- Selecting a logical main idea (Convergent) - Seeing many possible ideas from different perspectives (Divergent)
Play vs. Discipline	- Experimenting with unconventional approaches to work (Playful) - Disciplined in managing tasks (Disciplined)
Imaginative vs. Realistic	- Full of creative ideas (Imaginative) - Reality-based in decision-making (Realistic)
Extroversion vs. Introversion	- Comfortable working in a team (Extroversion) - Comfortable working alone (Introversion)
Humility/Pride	- Open to criticism (Humble) - Confident in one's own abilities (Self-Confidence)
Psychological Masculinity/ Femininity	- Firm in decision-making (Masculine) - Sensitive (Feminine)
Passionate/Objective	- Enthusiastic in work (Passionate) - Evaluating ideas based on logic (Objective)
Traditional Conservative/ Revolutionary	- Respecting existing values (Conservative) - Courageous in introducing new, different approaches (Revolutionary)
Suffering/Pleasure	- Learning from difficult experiences (Suffering) - Being able to enjoy simple things (Pleasure)

The effectiveness of the creativity training was determined through comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. The training was considered effective if participants' creativity scores showed a significant increase of at least 5 percent between the pre-test and post-test results. In addition to quantitative evaluation, follow-up activities included the compilation of training outputs and documentation, such as implementation reports, scientific articles, news releases, photographs, and video recordings of the training sessions. The final stage involved disseminating the results through publication in academic journals to extend the impact and benefits of the community service project to a broader educational audience. Through this deep counseling-based creativity training, the program is expected to contribute to enhancing the creativity of school counselors, particularly in improving the quality of guidance and counseling services provided to students in educational institutions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the evaluation of the pre-test and post-test results, the deep counseling-based creativity training demonstrated a positive impact on enhancing the creativity of school counselors. During the initial assessment (pre-test), the majority of participants were categorized as having balanced creativity,

accounting for 85.7 percent (42 participants), while 14.3 percent (7 participants) were classified as moderately balanced. No participants were categorized as less balanced or unbalanced.

Following the training, the post-test results indicated a significant improvement. The proportion of school counselors categorized as having balanced creativity increased to 91.8 percent (45 participants), while the moderately balanced category decreased to 8.2 percent (4 participants). Consistent with the pre-test results, no participants were classified as less balanced or unbalanced in the post-test. Table 2 presents a summary of the distribution of school counselors' creativity levels in the pre-test and post-test assessments.

Table 2. Distribution of guidance and counseling teacher creativity categories in pre-test and post-test

Creativity Categories	Total Pre-Test	Pre-Test (%)	Total Post-Test	Post-Test (%)
Balanced	42	85.7	45	91.8
Quite Balanced	7	14.3	4	8.2
Less Balanced	0	0	0	0
Not Balanced	0	0	0	0
Total	49	100	49	100

The data presented in Table 1 indicate a 6.1 percent increase in the proportion of school counselors categorized as having balanced creativity after participating in the training. Although this increase appears moderate, it nonetheless demonstrates the effectiveness of the training program in consolidating and strengthening the creative capacities already possessed by school counselors. The improvement in creativity can be analyzed through three fundamental dimensions integrated within the deep counseling training.

First, the enhancement of self-awareness through the deep counseling approach enables school counselors to recognize their internal potential and identify psychological barriers that may hinder creative expression. This approach facilitates deep exploration of intrinsic motivation, professional values, and self-development aspirations, all of which form the foundation of sustained creativity. In this context, participants showed enthusiasm as they observed their colleagues' creative works during the exhibition, reflected on the meaning behind each idea, and connected these insights with their personal experiences and professional values as educational counselors. As noted by [Renzulli \(2005\)](#), creativity is not solely associated with cognitive abilities but also involves profound affective and motivational dimensions.

Second, the implementation of reflective and collaborative practices fosters a shared learning environment in which school counselors can exchange experiences, innovative ideas, and creative solutions. The counselors demonstrated various creative ideas centered on self-development, learning motivation, and students' career guidance. Some initiatives, such as Dynamic Emotion through reflective journaling, encouraged students' self-reflection and emotional honesty. Other ideas included the creation of engaging learning media to enhance student motivation, early career introduction, and the use of Suggestion Boxes and the Career Solution game to help students cope with social issues, bullying, and career confusion. Within this collaborative atmosphere, school counselors actively explored creative media exhibited during the session, such as interactive games and simple counseling tools, as a means of directly experimenting with their potential application in school counseling services. This process not only enriched individual perspectives but also nurtured a community of practice that supports creative experimentation while maintaining relevance to professional contexts. This aligns with [Wenger-Trayner's \(2008\)](#) concept of learning as social participation within professional communities of practice. In the

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counseling context, such collaboration among counselors has been shown to enhance service quality and promote innovation in practice (Borders & Brown, 2022).



Figure 2. Creative works exhibition
Figure 3. Creative work media demonstration

Third, the development of creative courage was emphasized through encouraging counselors to experiment while maintaining practical and realistic considerations. The training motivated school counselors to explore new ideas in designing counseling media and service strategies, ensuring that these innovations could be effectively implemented within the school setting. This approach integrates the principle of Creative Risk-Taking with professional accountability, as highlighted by Beghetto (2016) in his concept of creative courage within educational contexts.



Figure 4. Participants in the guidance and counseling teacher creativity enhancement training

Thus, it can be concluded that this training effectively increased the proportion of guidance and counseling teachers with balanced creativity and strengthened their ability to balance innovation with professional stability. These findings are relevant to the need for guidance and counseling teachers to continually adapt to the dynamics of student problems while maintaining the effectiveness of counseling services in schools.

Discussion

These findings align with the Systems Theory of Creativity proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (2013), which posits that creativity emerges from the dynamic interaction between the individual, the domain of knowledge, and the surrounding professional field. Within the context of this training, guidance and

counseling teachers (individuals) engaged with the concept of deep counseling (domain) in a supportive learning environment (field), resulting in measurable enhancement of their creative capacity.

The “balanced” category of creativity reflects counselors’ ability to integrate essential paradoxical dimensions within professional counseling practice, balancing spontaneity with structure, flexibility with consistency, and innovation with service stability. The increase in the proportion of teachers within this category indicates that the training effectively strengthened their adaptive capacity in addressing the complex challenges faced by students in the digital era. As noted by [Kaufman & Beghetto \(2009\)](#), balanced creativity represents a critical competency for professional helpers in integrating innovative approaches with ethical and professional standards.

Substantively, these findings indicate that most guidance and counseling teachers already possess a sufficient foundation of personal creative capacity. Therefore, the Deep Counseling-Based Creativity Training in this study primarily functioned as a consolidation intervention. This aligns with the meta-analysis by [Kraft et al. \(2018\)](#), which found that coaching programs for teachers have a significant and positive effect size on professional practice within counseling services. In other words, such interventions serve to strengthen and refine existing competencies. Similarly, [Darling-Hammond et al. \(2017\)](#) emphasize that effective teacher professional development does not always produce radical change but often enhances and consolidates established practices. Within the counselor competency framework, creativity is categorized as part of professional dispositions, supporting the interpretation that the outcomes of this study reflect a reinforcement process rather than the creation of entirely new capacities.

The deep counseling-based creativity training for guidance and counseling teachers represents an effective approach to fostering creativity in the use of counseling media. It emphasizes deep self-awareness, enabling teachers to recognize their potential, biases, and internal barriers that may affect service delivery. This process is further strengthened through reflective and collaborative exercises within knowledge communities that promote the exchange of ideas and contextual experimentation with counseling media ([Kelley & Curtis, 2023](#)). Consequently, guidance and counseling teachers can design and implement diverse, innovative media, digital, game-based, or printed, while maintaining professional integrity and service stability.

The findings of [Anggara & Suherman \(2024\)](#) indicate that teacher creativity plays a crucial role in optimizing school facilities and resources to make guidance and counseling (GC) services more engaging and to enhance student participation. Consistent with this, [Harahap et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize that creativity in counseling services helps make sessions more dynamic and prevents monotony. Guidance and counseling teachers who deliver materials creatively are better able to improve students’ understanding of counseling content ([Dalimunthe et al., 2025](#); [Sabrini et al., 2025](#); [Sapputra et al., 2022](#)).

The integration of the deep counseling approach with creative development has proven effective in transforming GC teachers’ practices from surface-level interventions into more comprehensive and profound approaches. This approach highlights the systematic exploration of students’ complex psychological dimensions rather than focusing solely on observable symptoms or issues. Teachers participating in the training reported a significant improvement in their ability to design counseling services that are more personalized, contextual, and responsive to the specific and unique needs of each student.

The use of creative media within the deep counseling framework further encourages GC teachers to explore various multisensory and multidimensional modalities of communication and intervention. These include interactive digital media, serious games that combine educational and therapeutic components, expressive art-based techniques that facilitate emotional catharsis, and narrative approaches that help

students reconstruct the meaning of their experiences. Such media enable students to explore and express their internal experiences in a safe, structured, and meaningful manner.

This aligns with the professional demands of counseling in the digital era, which require counselors to provide services that are not only technologically innovative but also psychologically adaptive and culturally relevant (Wibowo et al., 2023). Furthermore, the integration of deep counseling and creativity enables guidance and counseling (GC) teachers to develop a more authentic and powerful therapeutic presence in facilitating students' processes of change and growth.

These findings demonstrate consistency with various teacher professional development programs in education and counseling at both national and international levels. However, compared to similar community service programs, such as teacher psychological literacy training or digital media workshops for GC services, this program offers a distinctive approach by emphasizing the integration of deep counseling and creativity as a means of enhancing professional self-awareness. This comparison highlights that the training extends beyond technical skill development toward fostering the personal transformation of GC teachers as agents of change within the school environment.

Therefore, creativity training based on deep counseling not only results in quantitative improvements in creativity scores but also fosters qualitative transformation in counseling practice, toward a more holistic, humanistic, and effective approach to addressing the complex challenges faced by students in contemporary contexts. Moreover, this training provides tangible social benefits for partner institutions, particularly in enhancing the psychological well-being and professional growth of GC teachers. Through collaborative and reflective activities, teachers gain opportunities to share experiences, expand professional networks, and cultivate a sustainable culture of collective learning. This enhancement of creative competence is expected to strengthen teachers' capacity to deliver more empathetic and contextually responsive counseling services for students, while simultaneously fostering ongoing collaboration among teachers in developing innovative counseling practices in schools.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The community service program in the form of creativity training based on deep counseling successfully achieved its primary objective of enhancing the creativity of guidance and counseling (GC) teachers in developing innovative and adaptive counseling services. The target of engaging GC teachers across different educational levels was fully met, with participants demonstrating active involvement throughout all stages of the program, including the pre-test, panel discussion, innovation exhibition, collaborative practice, and post-test sessions. The implementation of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach proved effective in creating a conducive learning environment, where participants did not merely receive passive knowledge transfer but actively engaged in reflective processes, interactive discussions, and the exploration of innovative practices relevant to their professional context. The program's success made a tangible contribution to strengthening the professional competencies of GC teachers in delivering counseling services that are more effective, innovative, and sustainable, aligned with the psychosocial needs of students in the digital era. The productive collaboration between the Faculty of Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), and the Garut Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Association (*Musyawarah Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling/MGBK*) demonstrated the importance of synergy between higher education institutions and professional organizations in enhancing the capacity of GC teachers. This program may serve as a replicable model for continuous professional development initiatives in other regions, focusing on the integration of digital technology, diversification of counseling media, and the enhancement of competencies for addressing the complex challenges faced by contemporary students.

Despite its success, the creativity training based on deep counseling also presented several limitations that warrant consideration for future programs. First, the limited training duration constrained the depth of practice-oriented creative counseling sessions that could be implemented by participants. Second, the participant scope remained restricted to a portion of GC teachers within Garut Regency, limiting the potential for cross-level collaboration. Third, post-training follow-up in the form of mentoring for service innovation implementation was not conducted systematically due to resource and scheduling constraints of the organizing institutions. Based on the outcomes of this program, it is recommended that similar initiatives be conducted periodically as part of a continuous professional development framework for GC teachers, ensuring that creativity nurtured through training can be sustained and adapted to evolving student issues. This could be achieved through creativity-based microcounseling workshops, providing opportunities for participants to directly practice deep counseling methods under the supervision of university lecturers and MGBK facilitators. Strengthening materials related to digital technology utilization such as e-counseling, online assessment tools, and interactive media should be a primary focus to enhance GC teachers' adaptability to digital-era counseling demands. Furthermore, expanding multi-stakeholder collaborations among higher education institutions, professional associations, and local governments is essential to broaden the program's impact and reinforce professional networking. Post-training mentoring and supervision programs should also be implemented to ensure the effective application of service innovations in schools, supported by ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Finally, longitudinal research on the long-term impact of this training on counseling service quality and student well-being is recommended, as the findings may inform future policy development and nationwide professional training programs for GC teachers.

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