



Georgia School Counselor Association

Connecting School Counselors...Supporting Students

Volume 26, 2018



GSCA Executive Office
1827 Powers Ferry Road
Building 14, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30339
Ph: 770-971-6002

info@gaschoolcounselor.com



From Your GSCA President

Leslie Hamilton

Greetings School Counselors!

I am so excited to present the GSCA Journal 2018 to you. We are fortunate in Georgia to offer a professional journal to our school counselors. In this issue you will find research-based articles on issues relevant to school counseling. Also included in the Journal are conceptual articles and book reviews.

The topics covered in this publication cover a wide range of topics including ideas for new counselors, ways to improve attendance, and a model for making ethical decisions, as well as other topics. I highly encourage you to take the time to read these articles authored by other school counselors in our state. Not all school counseling associations are lucky enough to have access to a professional journal written and edited by their peers.

I know that there are many school counselors throughout Georgia who are involved in research projects on topics that would be of great interest to others in our profession. Please make sure to review the GSCA submission guidelines at the end of The Journal and seriously consider submitting an article for next year's Journal.

Lastly, I want to thank Karen Rowland for her work over the past six years as the GSCA Journal. She has worked tirelessly to produce a Journal that is both professional and practical. We appreciate your time and expertise.

Leslie Hamilton
GSCA President 2018-2019

From Your GSCA Journal Editor

Dr. Karen Rowland, PhD, NCC, LPC



It is with mix emotions that I write my final remarks from the editor for this year's GSCA Journal. I have had been afforded the privilege and definitely, the pleasure of serving as your Journal editor for the past six years under GSCA six presidents! Thank you so much to Past Presidents Julie Spires, Julie Hartline, Brent Henderson, Torri Jackson, Immediate Past President, Dr. Tinisha Parker, and President Leslie Hamilton for trusting me with such an awesome task! Additionally, I would like to thank the many school counselors and school counselor educators who have served as well as those who are currently serving as members of the editorial review board. Your assistance in reading the manuscripts were valuable to the success of each GSCA Journal publication. It was truly my honor to have served such a well-known and respected professional organization in this great state of Georgia.

During my tenure as the editor I have read many great writings produced by professional school counselors, school counselor educators, and school counselors-in-training and can attest to the tremendous amount of work that is being done in this state to ensure that every child in the Georgia P-12 schools succeed academically, in their career aspirations, and also achieve growth in their social/emotional/personal development. The articles in this year's Journal has continued this trend.

It is my honor and pleasure to share with you the work that your colleagues are doing and to encourage you to continue or begin to write and share what you are doing as you continue to be a leader, advocate, change agent and voice for every student in your school.

In This Issue

Click on the article title to go directly to the article

From Your GSCA President by Leslie Hamilton
From Your GSCA Journal Editor by Dr. Karen D. Rowland

Journal Editorial Reviewers

FEATURED ARTICLES

Six Keys for Novice School Counselors
Kimberly Nelson, Ph.D. 6

Improving 5th Grade Attendance and Achievement through Student Success Skills Program
Kendra Bettis, Ed.S. 15

CONCEPTUAL ARTICLES

Supporting First-Generation Students
Kathia Anastal, Sarah Owen, Clarissa Pavcik, Glorhea Sherman, E.d.S. Candidates, & Christy Land, PhD., LPC. 21

Research and Reflections on Dual Relationships in Counselor Supervision
Kristian L. Woodward, M.Ed., & Lee Edmondson Grimes, PhD, LPC. 34

Using a Contextual Model in Ethical Decision-making
Thomas M. Jarvis, Ph.D., Jerry A. Mobley, Ph.D., & Jeri L. Ellis, Ph.D. 42

Resource Review

By Dr. Karen D. Rowland, GSCA Journal Editor

Elementary School Level Books Review 54

Middle School Level Book Review 55

High School Level Book Review 57

GSCA SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

GSCA Journal Editorial Review Members



DeeAnn Clarington
School Counselor at Mt. Zion Elementary (Clayton County Public Schools)
deeann.clarington@clayton.k12.ga.us



Dr. Lee Edmondson Grimes
Counselor Educator at Valdosta State University
legrimes@valdosta.edu

Return to
Table of Content

Six Keys for Novice School Counselors

Kimberly A. Nelson, PhD.
Fort Valley State University

Abstract

What should newly graduating school counselors do? The research is clear that six key behaviors will develop and maintain who they are. The professional identity of school counselors is important because of the impact school counselors have on students and the school environment. When school counselors understand their roles, engage in continuous learning after training, gain support from administration, strengthen their advocacy, seek out mentorship and join professional organizations, current research indicates that they are better able to broaden their scope of resources to help and advocate on behalf of the students they serve. This manuscript is intended to inform novice school counselors in particular of six keys to help develop and maintain one's professional identity after graduate training.
Keywords: professional identity, new school counselors, transitions

Six Keys to Strengthening the Professional Identity of a Novice School Counselor
Upon graduating as a school counselor, the newly minted counselors have been heard to say that they have completed their train-

ing—but have they? Indications are that graduate training is an admission ticket to a life of personal and professional development that must include six elements to be effective: 1) experiential learning, 2) exposure, 3) administrative support, 4) professional development 5) mentoring and 6) advocacy (Nelson, 2018).

History

Over the past three decades the debate within the profession of what separates counselors from other helping professionals has been ongoing (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010; Hanna & Bemak, 1997; Kaplan & Gladding, 2011; Mellin, Hunt, & Nichols, 2011; Nelson, 2018). The field itself has seen an identity crisis with the transition from guidance counselor to school counselor. This transition has been slow according to Lambie and Williamson (2004) due to the lack of support from school principals in understanding the role of school counselors and school counselors being better advocates for the profession.

School counseling training programs have implemented and formulated courses to teach trainees of the importance of having

a strong professional identity. Especially programs that are accredited by Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), school counselors are inundated by experiential activities and are exposed to courses that are geared to strengthen the professional identity of a trainee (i.e., particularly introduction to school counseling, comprehensive school counseling, and internship). In 2005, a committee of 30 leaders from the American Counseling Association (ACA) developed a strategic plan for the growth and sustainability of the counseling profession (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011); this committee was called the 20/20 Task Force.

The task force concluded its collaboration by developing a definition for counseling and listing as one of its principles the profession having a shared professional identity (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011). Through this intuitive many school counseling programs found it necessary to prepare their trainees to not only understand the role of a school counselor but to also develop and strengthen their professional identities as school counselors.

The intent of this manuscript is to provide newly graduated school counselors with six helpful elements on how to develop and maintain a professional identity after training. The resources discussed throughout the manuscript will allow novice school counselors to understand what a professional identity is and how to gain longevity in the field by developing and maintaining a professional identity. The manuscript will also provide school counseling supervisors who work with trainees and novice school counselors' practical considerations to help develop professional identities.

Literature Review

Moss, Gibson, and Dollarhide (2010) demonstrated within their study that a counselor's professional identity provides a framework for professional practice. The authors found it appropriate to conduct a grounded theory approach in order for counselor education programs and counselors to have something to use as a framework. The framework suggested six themes that were influential to counselors' professional development: 1) adjustment to expectations, 2) confidence and freedom, 3) separation vs integration, 4) experienced guide, 5) continuous learning and 6) work with clients. It is imperative that school counselors should also have a professional framework to help practice in the field.

According to Brott and Myers (1999), it was assumed that although there may be similar themes that arise in comparison to a counselors' professional identity, there are differences that could benefit the school counseling field. Therefore, a grounded theory method was used to demonstrate factors such as: 1) accounts, 2) advocates, 3) defines, 4) intertwines, 5) manages, 6) rates, 7) responds, and 8) sustains. It was concluded that professional identity of school counselors does contribute to the defining roles they serve. It is important to note that school counselors at times are required to take on roles that do not reflect their training due to budgeting concerns, lack of resources, and misconceptions of the roles of school counselors (Nelson, 2018). However, there are elements that help strengthen the professional identity of school counselors, and in turn school counselors strengthening the identity of the profession.

The identity of the counselor is at the core of the model to help trainees and supervi-

sors understand the development of their professional identity. Ockerman, Mason and Chen-Hayes (2013) discussed the benefits of Change Agent for Equity (CAFÉ model) in supervising school counselors and how this could help foster growth not only in school counselors but close the gap in student outcomes. The authors addressed in detail the CAFÉ model and suggest that school counselors-in-training must have trained and consistent supervisors who understand the reality of the job. The authors suggested that supervision should not only entail knowledge and skill-based training but incorporate professional identity and helping to strengthen those characteristics in trainees. It is the duty of the supervisor to help school counseling supervisees not only find resources in the field but to also determine new sources, remove barriers to sources, and address issues of equity.

Six Keys for School Counselors

Six keys that school counselors should consider in developing and maintaining their professional identities are offered (Nelson, 2018) (refer to Figure 1). These six keys will not only build counselors professional identities after training but will foster growth in the profession and set a precedence within the school about the role and duties of a school counselor.

Key 1: Experiential Learning

School counselors are encouraged to continue learning by attending workshops, participating in professional developments, and attending professional conferences. Experiential learning has been identified as one of the factors that helps school counselor trainees to be successful during training programs (Nelson & Jackson, 2003; Nelson, 2018); however, school counselors can develop and maintain their professional

identity through continuous experiential learning even outside of a training program. It is during these professional events that novice school counselors can engage in experiential learning and gain exposure to new resources, and techniques to build upon their skill sets (Nelson, 2018). Auxier, Hughes and Kline (2003) stated that overtime “experiential learning” became more important than conceptual learning to counselors. This is due to the hands-on experiences counselors gain by doing activities firsthand rather than just reading about it. Experiential learning is deemed as one basis in which novice school counselors can strengthen and maintain their professional identities.

Key 2: Exposure

According to Burkholder (2012), counselors are able to conceptualize, contextualize, and express their professional identities through various applications, discovery, teaching, and integration. Counselors-in-training (CIT) were able to conceptualize based on their particular experiences, contextualize the meaning of what they do and express in action what they have learned. It is through exposure to various situations whether from practicum, internship, or on-the-job exposure that school counselors are able to develop their professional identities (Nelson, 2018). Therefore, it is recommended that newly employed school counselors gain exposure through being involved in various activities conducted by other school counselors on a regular basis. Such activities include but are not limited to: facilitating individual and group counseling sessions, conducting large group lessons, planning and executing individual courses of study, and scheduling. Many school counselors are instructed to do partial school counseling activities based on the need of the school

and the school counselor to student ratio; however, to develop a school counselor whose professional identity is strong and well-rounded, a novice school counselor must engage in all areas on what it means to be an exemplary school counselor (Nelson, 2018).

Exposure to the field as a new school counselor also helps put into perspective the reality of the field and how different it is from training. At times the connection between what textbooks say to the reality of the field is hard to make during practicum and internship. Once employed and with much exposure and experience over time, new school counselors begin to understand their roles and internalize what the field is more plainly than during graduate training. It is through the process of exposure that new school counselors gain experience and strengthen their professional identities.

Key Three: Administrative Support

Lambie and Williamson (2004) discussed the challenge the school counseling profession is having in transition from the guidance counselor perspective to the professional school counselor and the historical implications behind the transition. However, the authors spend some time discussing four steps in which school counselors can use and advance their professional identity. The first is to educate principals, because a principal's support is essential to the school counseling profession; 2) abolish teaching requirements [for counselors]; 3) provide [professional] supervision in schools; and 4) re-assign inappropriate duties [like lunch room and bus duty]. From these steps, it is imperative that not only school counselors be engaged in relationship development with their administrators but also have meaningful conversations to cultivate their understanding in these areas (Lambie &

Williamson, 2004).

Due to novice school counselors transitioning from training to employment, they have a perspective of the field that is relevant to the changes of the field, but they lack understanding in the organization to effect large changes. School counselors are thoroughly trained in the ASCA model and are able to understand the benefits of the model in a school setting. However, school counselors would benefit from gaining experience and exposure to building relationships with administration in order to get them on on the same page (Nelson, 2018). Such a relationship would be a long-term, multi-year process that is necessary in order to help the student body but to also help strengthen the professional identity of novice school counselors.

Administration must take more initiative to understand the ASCA Model as well as the comprehensive school counseling program and its effectiveness when utilized well. It is the duty of administration to observe the roles of school counselors, foster a working relationship, and understand how school counselors can be used in the school setting to help the school culture. Moreover, school counselors can over time improve administrators' understanding of these aspects of counselors' role. Supervisors can start the conversation with administration to model for trainees and novice school counselor's effective communication skills. Novice school counselors must consider ways to bring about change, and apply the lessons learned to strengthening and maintaining their professional identities in order to create a new way of looking at the school counseling profession.

Payne (2011) found that counselors exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction in

school counseling programs that “a) have administrative support, and “b) facilitate communication between faculty and staff members” (p. 91). Administrative support helps school counselors to be more satisfied with their jobs. If novice school counselors are satisfied with their jobs due to the support from administration, then this will help to strengthen and maintain their professional identities.

Key 4: Professional Development

Being engaged with other professionals in the field and developing social networks helps novice school counselors to expand their frame of thinking and gain knowledge beyond their training programs. Professional development includes being a part of professional organizations, attending or presenting at conferences, attending workshops/webinars, and participating in district wide workshops (Nelson, 2018). Brott, (2006) expressed that professional development is a necessary part of the professional identity of counselors and serves as an opportunity for new counselors to develop and evolve into effective practitioners. Previous research (Brott & Myers, 1999; Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010; Reissetter et. al., 2004; Perusee & Goodnough, 2005) defines joining and participating in professional organizations as a part of professional identity development. It is imperative for novice school counselors to be engaged in professional development in order to strengthen and maintain their professional identities (Nelson, 2018). By participating in such activities, novice school counselors will learn skills and techniques and gain resources that will build upon their training program framework. Being engaged with other professionals in the field and developing social networks help novice school counselors to expand their frame of thinking and gain knowledge

beyond their training programs. Consultation skills are broadened when novice school counselors network and meet professionals who have a wealth of information about issues that concern school counselors. It is recommended that novice school counselors take advantage of such resources and be present in these activities in order for their professional identities to be strengthened.

Key 5: Mentorship

The next key novice school counselors must be aware of is mentorship. Mentorship denotes the counselors’ awareness to either seeking out or being open to mentorship by someone that has years of experience in the field or a good understanding of the what the field entails. Murdock, Stipanovic and Lucas (2013) conducted a qualitative study to explore how counselors-in-training developed their professional identities through a co-mentoring program between master’s level and doctoral level students. The results of the study showed an increase in professional identity due to the co-mentoring relationships. The study opened the door to not only mentorship being utilized in a training program, but continuing to allow mentorship opportunities while employed to help novice school counselors strengthen their professionalism in the school setting. There are some states (South Carolina, North Carolina, Connecticut, and Indiana) that have found mentorship necessary for newly employed teachers and school counselors. Mentee’s have stated that having such a relationship not only helps their confidence on the job but also provides them with a person to consult with on difficult cases as well as strengthen their professional identities (Nelson, 2018).

Along those lines, it is also necessary for

school counselors to have mentor relationships in order to help with the transition of the field from the guidance counselor perspective to the school counselor perspective. Lambie and Williamson (2004) discussed four steps to transition from the guidance counselor perspective to the school counselor perspective. Step three is: supervision in the schools, where school counselors can continue to sharpen their skill sets. A supervisory relationship is a form of mentorship that is very familiar to novice school counselors. Continuing in this manner will help novice school counselors become comfortable in approaching a school counseling colleague with concerns, build a basis to firmly help with the transition in terminology, and expand upon counseling skill sets needed to be effective. Having such an opportunity for novice school counselors is needed for the growth and maturity of professional identity.

Key 6: Advocacy

As is clear from the earlier discussions, novice school counselors are engaged in communication about the school counseling program and about issues that impact students and the school. Novice school counselors must understand that by advocating on behalf of students, their professional identities will be strengthened. Brott and Myers (1999) suggest that much of the literature on counselors looks at the experiences or impact professional identity has on counselors while in graduate programs but not beyond that scope. The study developed a grounded theory with eight theoretical categories emerging; moreover, one of the categories that emerged was advocacy. Advocacy starts with building a relationship with administration to not only help students, but to build a more modern framework on what school counselors do and the role they play in the

school system. By building a relationship with administration, novice school counselors will be able to properly communicate duties that are not appropriate for school counselors, educate administration on the ASCA model if unknown, and foster a better relationship between administration and the school counseling department.

Nelson (2018) also found advocacy apparent in the development of professional identity in novice high school counselors. The study showed that novice high school counselors were confident in advocacy with the support of administration and found it a necessary part of their work as school counselors to advocate on behalf of their students. With experience, novice school counselors will develop the skill to advocate efficiently for their students; however, it is imperative that novice school counselors are aware of the benefits of advocacy when it comes to strengthening and maintaining their professional identities.

Pairing and Networking

Two practical processes that can accomplish much of what is suggested in these six keys are: pairing and networking. By administration building these components into the job activities of novice school counselors or with the efforts of the school counselors themselves to seek these opportunities, professional development in all six areas can occur.

Novice school counselors can be paired with a proficient colleague in the district to learn and strengthen their professional identity. Supervisors can pair novice school counselors with experienced school counselors in shadowing opportunities, observations, and project development. By being paired with an exemplary school counselor, novice school counselors may

find comfort in the relationship to ask questions, seek out resources, and learn new skills that may have not been taught during training. By pairing through supervision or with a proficient colleague, novice school counselors will have experiential learning, gain exposure, develop communication skills with administration, attend and build networking opportunities through professional development, seek mentorship and become better advocates. Through these six keys novice school counselors will see their professional identities strengthened and gain longevity in the field (Nelson, 2018).

The mentee-mentor relationship can also foster expansion of their frame of thinking and open up a perspective to the field that may not be seen in their current school settings; for example, career counseling across the grade levels or resources used to schedule students for courses. It is through the mentee-mentor relationship that novice school counselors will be able to learn innovative ways to help their students by establishing networking opportunities. Networking can take place and is encouraged at professional conferences, workshops, and trainings where novice school counselors can meet a variety of professionals. It is at these venues, many school counselors have reported learning to be better advocates for their students and the profession as a whole (Nelson, 2018). Not only are novice school counselors learning about and adapting various resources to utilize in their particular settings, but they may learn about policies and legislation that may impact their students, jobs, and the education system.

Conclusion

When graduating from a counselor education program, the temptation is great to

feel, "I have arrived." Research suggests, "I have begun." Novice school counselors must understand the importance of having a strong professional identity in order to achieve longevity in the field. Through experiential learning, time exposed to actually doing counseling, administration support, professional development, mentoring, and advocacy, novice school counselors can strengthen and maintain a professional identity (Nelson, 2018). In the manuscript, a review of literature provided a better understanding on the importance of strengthen professional identity and detailed the significance of the six keys if applied in a school setting. The importance of a professional identity does not only benefit the school counselor but also helps to strengthen the field of school counseling and help with the transition from guidance counselor to school counselor. Understanding the role of a school counselor is dependent on school counselors also understanding their roles and developing a strong professional identity. As accrediting institutions are realizing the basis of having a strong professional identity, so should mentors, supervisors and administration in school systems when working with novice school counselors.

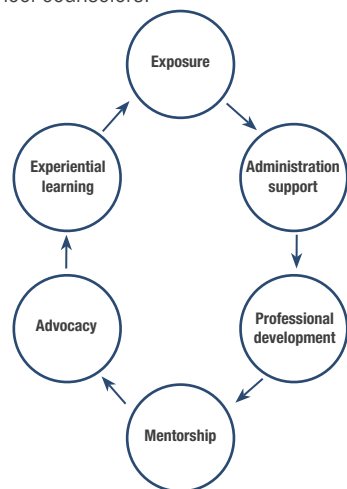


Figure 1. Shows a circular relationship of the six themes identified to help strengthen and maintain a novice school counselors' professional identity. Adapted from "Exploring the professional identity of exemplar novice high school counselors." Nelson, 2018, *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, 79, University of South Carolina.

References

- Auxier, C. R., Hughes, F. R., & Kline, W. B. (2003). Identity development in counselors-in-training. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 43(1), 25-39.
- Brott, P. E., & Myers, J. E. (1999). Development of professional school counselor identity: A grounded theory. *Professional School Counseling*, 2 (5), 339-348.
- Pamelia E., B. (2006). Counselor education accountability: Training the effective professional school counselor. *Professional School Counseling*, 2, 179-188.
- Burkholder, D. (2012). A model of professional identity expression for mental health counselors. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 34(4), 295-307.
- Hanna, F. J., & Bemak, F. (1997). The quest for identity in the counseling profession. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 36(3), 194-207.
- Kaplan, D. M., & Gladding, S. T. (2011). A Vision for the Future of Counseling: The 20/20 Principles for Unifying and Strengthening the Profession. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 89(3), 367-372.
- Lambie, G. W., & Williamson, L. L. (2004). The challenge to change from guidance counseling to professional school counseling: A historical proposition. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(2), 124-131.
- Mellin, E. A., Hunt, B., & Nichols, L. M. (2011). Counselor professional identity: Findings and implications for counseling and interprofessional collaboration. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 89(2), 140-147.
- Moss, J. M., Gibson, D. M., & Dollarhide, C. T. (2014). Professional identity development: A grounded theory of transformational tasks of counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(1), 3-12.
- Murdock, J. L., Stipanovic, N., & Lucas, K. (2013). Fostering connections between graduate students and strengthening professional identity through co-mentoring. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 41(5), 487-503. doi:10.1080/03069885.2012.756972
- Nelson, K. W., & Jackson, S. A. (2003). Professional Counselor Identity Development: A Qualitative Study of Hispanic Student Interns. *Counselor Education And Supervision*, 43(1), 2-14. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6978.2003.tb01825.x
- Nelson, K. A. (2018). Exploring the professional identity of exemplar novice high school counselors. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, 79. University of South Carolina
- Nugent, F. A. & Jones, K. D. (2009). *Introduction to the profession of counseling* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Ockerman, M. S., Mason, E. M., & Chen-Hayes, S. F. (2013). School counseling supervision in challenging times: The CAFE supervisor model. *Journal of Counselor Preparation & Supervision*, 5(2), 44-57.

Perusse, R., & Goodnough, G. E. (2005). Elementary and secondary school counselors' perceptions of graduate preparation programs: A national study. *Counselor Education And Supervision*, 45(2), 109-118.

Reisetter, M., Korcuska, J. S., Yexley, M., Bonds, D., Nikels, H., & McHenry, W. (2004). Counselor educators and qualitative research: Affirming a research identity. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 44(1), 2-16.

Improving 5th Grade Attendance and Achievement through Student Success Skills Program

Kendra Bettis, Ed.S.
The University of Georgia

Abstract

The researcher incorporated an evidence-based Student Success Skills program, to see the impact it made on attendance and achievement rates for a 5th grade classroom, in a suburban elementary school in the Atlanta, GA area. The results show that the Student Success Skills program made no impact on the students when examining absences and standardized testing scores. A thorough discussion explains the limitations that influenced the results from the study.

Keywords: Student Success Skills, achievement, attendance, elementary school

Research shows that rates of student's daily attendance is highly correlated with their performance on mathematics and reading achievement tests (Steven, 2007). Fifth grade students at a suburban elementary school in the Atlanta area, had the highest amount of school absences among the whole elementary school in their 4th grade, 2016-2017 school year (School Data, 2017). Consequently, in the same year, 77 percent scored less than proficient

in English/Language Arts and 74 percent scored less than proficient in Math on their 2017 Georgia Milestones (a comprehensive summative assessment that measures the knowledge and skills that students have been taught and expected to master by the end of the school year) (School Data, 2017). Sarah Peek (2009) explains the necessity of building a solid foundation for students during their elementary years of education. She explains how if a child misses school regularly, their education foundation will likely not be stable. Peek (2009) identified a statistic that, "A correlation between test scores and attendance was taken, and findings deducted that students who attend class 95% of the time were twice as likely to pass state competency tests as students attending class only 85% of the time."

For this research study, the elementary school demographics included 93% Hispanic, 3% African-American, 1% Asian, 1% White and <1% of multi-cultured students (School Data, 2017). The Hispanic population is the fastest growing minority group

in the United States; however, research shows that Hispanics, students from Spanish-speaking countries and who identify as Hispanic on the school demographic report, tend to score the lowest on standardized testing and have the lowest graduation rates (Vela, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to incorporate an evidence-based intervention program called Student Success Skills (Webb & Brigman, 2016) with the 2017-2018 5th graders to see the impact on attendance and milestone scores at the end of the 2018 school year. The program advocates to “helping students develop the academic, social and self-management skills they need to succeed (Webb & Brigman, 2016).”

The questions that the researcher had for the research design were: 1. What was the impact of the Student Success Skills evidence-based intervention classroom program on attendance rates for one pre-selected 5th grade classroom comparing the absences from the previous year? 2. What was the impact of the Student Success Skills evidence-based intervention classroom program on achievement for one pre-selected 5th grade classroom? 3. Did the achievement factors and attendance rates correlate? 4. Compared to similar students in the control group, did the students in the treatment group have higher attendance rates and higher achievement gains?

In this study, there was an examination of yearly attendance and achievement (2016-2017 compared to 2017-2018) to see if this program raised achievement scores and higher attendance rates. After looking at data, talking with administration and teachers, and looking at the demographics of the school, there was a need for an

intervention. Finding a counselor-led intervention that could help students develop the academic, social and self-management skills that they need to succeed was important. Not only could this intervention help the students during the current school year, but these skills were valuable for all future grade levels.

The researcher took a quantitative approach for this research study. She wanted to know if students were having a higher number of absences because they were struggling in school or were they struggling in school because they were missing higher number of absences? Attendance factors in secondary schools have been researched for many years; however, policy makers and educational leaders are starting to see how chronic absenteeism in elementary schools have negative long-term effects (Sugrue, 2016). Across the United States there have been initiatives put into place to help with attendance and increase academic achievement such as the No Child Left Behind Act which requires student to attend a minimum number of school days. Schools will commonly put into effect an initiative to help with local attendance (Bickelhaupt, 2011). Multiple factors have been discovered for chronic absences in the elementary schools. Sugrue, Zuel, and LaLiberte (2016) identify some of these factors as: living with a single parent, family mobility, lack of parental understanding of school policies and procedures, and family poverty. There is a greater importance put on these issues than on school (Sugrue, 2016). Being sensitive and aware of these factors is important when working with families whose child has chronic absences.

After researching different interventions, Student Success Skills Program seemed to be the best fit because research shows

that it impacts academics and achievement (Webb & Brigman, 2016). Student Success Skills Program is an evidence-based intervention, proven to impact learning skills and academic achievement for K-12 students. This counselor-led intervention is provided to the students, through a classroom lesson which is conducted for 5 weeks, each lesson one week apart (Webb & Brigman, 2016). These lessons focused on looking good/feeling good, goal reporting, and performing under pressure (Webb & Brigman, 2016). With the hypothesis that attendance and achievement correlate, the researcher believed that with improving achievement, attendance rates would increase as well. Finding an intervention that is strength and evidence based was important because it showed that the program was beneficial and could impact the students.

For this research study, only one general education 5th grade classroom received the 5 weeks of classroom guidance lessons and were considered the treatment group. Students who needed additional support from the classroom were invited to attend the SSS small group, where strategies and main ideas were reviewed. In the spring time, before Georgia Milestone testing, the selected classroom received booster lessons to help prepare them for their testing (Webb & Brigman, 2016) Attendance and milestone scores for the 2017-2018 school year were compared to the previous year attendance and scores, as well as comparing to other students in the grade level who didn't receive the intervention, known as the control group.

Methods

The classroom guidance lessons occurred mid-October and lasted for 45 minutes/once a week for six weeks long. The design of the curriculum was for five weeks, but

with the great amount of detail that was in each lesson, it took the researcher an extra week to complete. The small group sessions begin in January, meeting once a week for five weeks, which was an expansion on the classroom lessons and covered the same strategies. The researcher and homeroom teacher chose eight students to be a part of the small group, based on performance and participation in the classroom lessons. Three Booster lessons occurred in March for all 5th grade students who received the original five classroom guidance lessons.

The Student Success Skills program provided a CD with PowerPoint slides for each lesson. It also provided a manual with scripted instructions with ideas to get students involved. The manual and scripted instructions for each lesson, caused for it to take longer than 45 minutes with the classroom that the researcher was working with. To show true fidelity to the program, the researcher stuck to the script. However, there were some modifications needed such as: extended time on assignments, further instructions and examples given for explanations, and working one-on-one with some students in the classroom. This program focuses on three key skills for student success: academics, social skills, and self-management skills (Webb & Brigman, 2016). While incorporating these skills throughout the lessons, students are learning to create a community support for each other (Webb & Brigman, 2016). The Life Skills sheet, which was used each week, where students would rate the five keys: nutrition, fun, exercise, social support, and rest and how each of them has affected the students' energy and mood. (Webb & Brigman, 2016). Webb & Brigman (2016) believe that if students can improve these five keys, that it will

help each student look good and feel good. Going over each of these life skills were a consistent conversation each week. Other key strategies and skills used throughout the six-week program were: goal setting, progress monitoring, and success sharing, creating a caring, supportive and encouraging classroom community, memory skills, performing under pressure: managing test anxiety, and healthy optimism (Webb & Brigman, 2016).

The researcher conducted a Quantitative research design. The hypothesis for this research study was that after completing the Student Success Skills Program, students would have significant improvements in their Georgia Milestones, compared to 2017 scores and compared to peers in control group. Another hypothesis focusing on the attendance component is that after completing the Student Success Skills Program, students who had chronic absences in the 2016-2017 school year, would have fewer absences in the 2017-2018 school year.

Results

The researcher completed the intervention in April 2018. The 2018 Georgia Milestones and 2017-2018 attendance report were collected for comparison with previous year scores and attendance. When looking at Milestones data from this school year, 80% of all 5th graders scored less than proficient (level 1 or 2, out of 4) on their Math Milestones for the 2017-2018 school year. 95% of the classroom who received the intervention scored less than proficient on Math Milestones, with only 1 student scoring proficient. When looking at the English Language Arts Milestones data, 85% of all 5th graders scored less than proficient on the English Language Arts Georgia Milestones for the 2017-2018 school year. 90% of the classroom who

received the intervention, scored less than proficient on the English Language Arts Milestones, with only 2 students having proficient scores (School Data, 2018). When looking directly at this classroom, no students improved their scores from the previous year. All students had the same numerical score (1, 2, or 3) or lower (School Data, 2018). When looking at attendance in this classroom, 87% of students had same or less number of absences as in the 2016-2017 school year. 47% of students had less number of absences than in the 2016-2017 school year (School Data, 2018).

Discussion

Student Success Skills is an intervention program designed for grades 4-12. When the researcher received the materials, the materials were not specifically grade focused. With completing this intervention with 5th graders, the material was difficult to understand at times and the amount of material to present in 45 minutes was hard to complete. Many of the students who were in the classroom were academically below grade level. 90% of the students spoke English as their secondary language. Two students in the classroom were newcomers to America and spoke very little English. For these two students, a classmate would have to help translate all assignments because he/she had a tough time understanding the researcher teaching in English. Another limitation for this intervention was the classroom environment. This was the classroom teacher's first year of teaching at this school, and the classroom management was a struggle for her the entire year. Behavioral concerns were addressed all throughout the school year. The researcher spent a lot of time having to manage the classroom, which made it hard for students

to grasp the concept of the lessons with all the distractions. Distractions also came up because this lesson was given at the end of the school day, after the students returned from their Specials (including Art, PE, Music, Spanish, or Media Center). The students seemed un-motivated and walked into the classroom un-focused. With this being the homeroom teacher's first year at this school, the researcher was unable to compare test scores to previous students in this teacher's classroom. Furthermore, this intervention program did not seem developmentally appropriate for the students completing the research study. The principal had chosen this classroom to complete the research study. Not knowing ahead of time, the students who would be completing this program, made it difficult to assess if this program would be appropriate and potentially effective ahead of time. For future, being familiar with the teacher, classroom environment, and students receiving the intervention ahead of time, would help decipher the effectiveness of the program before beginning the first lesson.

In conclusion, this intervention research study concluded no change, in results to attendance and achievement for the 2017-2018 school year. When looking back at the Student Success Skills programs that are available, there is a Spanish Cultural Translation manual (Webb & Brigman, 2007) that would be more beneficial for the demographics of students in this research study, with 90% of the students speaking Spanish as their home language. There were many limitations and factors discussed that resulted in the outcome, as well as what changes could be made when looking to do this research study in the future.

References

- Bickelhaupt, D. L. (2011). Here! But What about Those Who Are Not? Reinforcement among Chronically Absent Elementary Students, Its Effectiveness, and the Why behind the Absences. *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal*, 18(1), 54-61.
- Lake Forest Elementary School. (2017). School Data. *Georgia Department of Education*.
- Lake Forest Elementary School. (2018). School Data. *Georgia Department of Education*.
- Lemberger, M., Selig, J., Bowers, H., & Rogers, J. (2015). Effects of the Student Success Skills Program on Executive Functioning Skills, Feelings of Connectedness, and Academic Achievement in a Predominantly Hispanic, Low-Income Middle School District. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 93(1), 25-37.
- Peek, S. D. (2009). Integrating Effective and Beneficial Interventions to Increase Student Attendance in an Elementary School Setting. *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal*, 16(1), 9-20.
- Steven B., S. (2007). Improving Student Attendance with School, Family, and Community Partnerships. *The Journal of Educational Research*, (5), 267.
- Sugrue, E. P., Zuel, T., & LaLiberte, T. (2016). The Ecological Context of Chronic School Absenteeism in the Elementary Grades. *Children & Schools*, 38(3), 137-145.
- Sugrue, J. C., Flamez, B., Sparrow, G. S., & Lerma, E. (2016). Understanding Support from School Counselors as Predictors of Mexican American Adolescents' Col-

lege-Going Beliefs. *Journal of School Counseling*, 14(7).

Webb, L.D., & Brigman, A. (2016) Student Success Skills: Classroom Manual. *Atlantic Education Consultants*.

Supporting First-Generation Students

Kathia Anastal
Professional Counseling Ed.S. Candidate
University of West Georgia
1625 Roswell Rd. Apt917
Marietta, GA 30062
305-457-8314
kanasta1@my.westga.edu

Sarah Owen
Professional Counseling Ed.S. Candidate
University of West Georgia
118 Hidden Lake Dr.
Hull, GA 30646
706-255-4491
sowen3@my.westga.edu

Clarissa Pavcik
Professional Counseling Ed.S. Candidate
University of West Georgia
120 N. Stone Close
Milton, GA 30004
678-472-3487
cpavcik1@my.westga.edu

Glorhea Sherman
Professional Counseling Ed.S. Candidate
University of West Georgia
5850 Hillandale Dr. Apt1523
Lithonia, GA 30058
404-790-2276
gsherma4@my.westga.edu

Christy Land, PhD, LPC
Assistant Professor, University of West Georgia
1601 Maple St.
Carrollton, GA 30118
678-839-6567
cland@westga.edu

Abstract

First-generation college students represent a significant portion of individuals seeking higher education in the United States; yet this population does not perform as well academically as continuing generation peers. Significant research exists exploring barriers preventing college attainment for this population; however, there is limited research recommending targeted interventions in formative years to prepare first-generation students for college life. School counselors play a critical role in helping to bridge this gap by focusing on social-emotional learning.

Introduction

Over the past three decades, in response to the increasingly demanding economy, employers require applicants to obtain postsecondary education and/or complete formal training programs. For example, employers in the technology field are directing their employees to expand their knowledge and skill base aligning with the improvements and advancements in the field (Dockery & McKelvey, 2013). These progressions will only continue in the future, requiring more students to obtain higher education after high school. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts jobs requiring at least some postsecondary education will grow by 80% in the next

four years (Richards & Terkianian, 2013). Furthermore, more high school students are understanding the benefits of earning a postsecondary education. Benefits including greater career opportunities, higher socioeconomic status and various health benefits (Schafer, Wilkinson, & Ferraro, 2013). Social benefits include lower mental health concerns and an overall greater sense of control (Schafer, Wilkinson, & Ferraro, 2013). Unfortunately, accessing higher education may not be equally distributed among people in the United States' population.

To take case in point, students identifying as low socioeconomic status, students of color, and first-generation college students are underrepresented in bachelor degree programs at colleges and universities (Dockery & McKelvey, 2013). In the present article, the authors use Stebleton and Soria's (2012) definition of first-generation college students "...as neither parent having earned a bachelor's degree; the same definition is used by federal TRIO programs and other organizations" (p.7). A clear education gap between first-generation students and students whose parent(s) attended college exists (Engle, Bermeo, & O'Brien, 2006). Specifically, 47% of students whose parent(s) did not attend college did not enroll in any postsecondary institution after graduating high school (Engle et al., 2006). Conversely, 85% of students whose parent(s) earned a college degree did attend college after high school graduation (Engle et al., 2006). This disparaging gap between first-generation students and their peers suggest first generation students face specific barriers obstructing college attainment.

First-generation college students face barriers beyond their peers stemming from

academic challenges presented early on in their educational career (Stebleton & Soria, 2012). First-generation students commonly identify as low socioeconomic status, minorities and overall have an absence of home support. First-generation students lack their parent(s)'s first-hand knowledge and experience as compared to their peers with college going parent(s). First-generation students are not taught how to identify appropriate colleges, apply to post-secondary programs, financially pay for tuition/find financial aid, keep up with academic rigor and navigate the social norms at a collegiate level (Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016). Moreover, barriers for first-generation students persist despite first-generation students enrolling in post-secondary education programs. Therefore, early interventions beginning in elementary school targeting first-generation students' specific barriers are necessary to support first generation students' post-secondary achievement.

School counselors are equipped to support college access and promote success for first-generation college students. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) requires school counselors to provide college awareness beginning in elementary school (Dockery & McKelvey, 2013). During these formative years, school counselors may cultivate a college and career-ready culture within their school, promoting college-going attitudes and beliefs through intentional programming (Dockery & McKelvey, 2013). Much of the current research focuses on the academic advising aspect of college and career readiness. However, there is little research concerning social and emotional guidance and support for first-generation college students. Social and emotional learning (SEL) promotes engagement in learning,

positivity, mental health, and academic performance in a K-12 setting and beyond. (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). In fact, Hawkins, Kosterman, Catalano, Hill, & Abbott, (2008) suggest social and emotional learning increases graduation rates, readiness for postsecondary life, positive relationships, and overall success in future careers.

The following article will review literature related to barriers first-generation college students face, social emotional learning, and programs and interventions to address social emotional learning for first-generation college students. The authors propose specific interventions targeting first-generation college students' social emotional learning, self-efficacy and resiliency skills including individual counseling, small groups, school-wide initiatives, and collaboration with stakeholders. Parents, an integral stakeholder group, also need support and guidance related to the higher education process for their child. The proposed interventions provide first-generation students with a wrap-around, holistic approach to college and career readiness. School counselors, leaders and advocates, are called to increase efforts for first-generation students by providing social and emotional support through concrete interventions.

Literature Review Who are First-Generation College Students?

Defining the term first-generation college students continues to cause debate among scholars and in current literature. This controversy over definition of first-generation college students greatly impacts the percentages of students categorized in this group, in turn affecting college-going

and college-attainment rates (Toutkoushian, Stollberg & Slaton, 2015). Toutkoushian et al. (2015) uses eight different measures to identify first-generation college students: "(1) parent(s) have at most a high school degree; (2) parent(s) have at most started (but not completed) an associate's degree; (3) parent(s) have at most completed an associate's degree; (4) parent(s) have at most started (but not completed) a bachelor's degree" (p. 12). Each of the four measures had two variables depending on whether both or only one parent needed to meet the education criteria (Toutkoushian et. al, 2015). When the researchers broke apart the definition of first-generation college students, the rate of inclusion varied from 22% at the most restrictive definition to 77%, when information for at least one parent was used (Toutkoushian et al. (2015). Alternatively, The United State Department of Education interprets first-generation status in at least three different ways: the legislative definition (no parent in the household has a bachelor's degree) and the two used for research: no education after high school; no degree after high school (Sharpe, 2017). The inconsistency with definitions across different fields leads to an incomplete depiction of the unique challenges this population faces. Specifically, the varying definitions, makes designing effective programs and interventions more difficult. Additionally, first-generation college students often belong to other at-risk groups such as low socioeconomic homes; and a greater percentage of Black and Hispanic students comprise the first-generation college student profile than their counterparts (Redford & Hoyer, 2017).

Barriers to Success

Redford and Hoyer (2017) report, based on data collected from the National Center

for Education Statistics, approximately 24% of college enrollees are first-generation students: where neither parent participated in post-secondary education. Furthermore, on GPA comparisons alone, only 33% of first-generation students have a GPA of 3.0 or better compared to 56% of their continuing generation peers (Redford & Hoyer, 2017). Data indicates first-generation students are less likely to obtain a degree. Forty-seven percent of first-generation college students enrolling in post-secondary institutions do not complete a certificate program or higher, compared to 30% of continuing generation peers. Additionally, only 33% of first-generation students completing an associate's or bachelor's degree program when compared to 50% of continuing generation peers (Redford & Hoyer, 2017). The disparity between first-generation and continuing generation students is cause for concern. The "American Dream" is lauded as an achievable standard in the United States for anyone regardless of race, ethnicity or family socioeconomic status, if an individual is willing to work hard. However, the existing inequalities between students belonging to different minorities or subgroups creates multiple barriers for these groups. Therefore, additional support and interventions must be done to assist students in overcoming obstacles.

The transition from high school to post-secondary institutions may be very stressful for all students (Parker, Hogan, Eastabrook, Oke & Wood, 2006). DeAngelo and Franke (2016) found college retention after the first year varied depending on college readiness, defined as "having a B+ or better high school GPA" and having completed: four years of English, three years of math, two years of a foreign language, three years of science including a biology and physical

science and one year of history/government and one year of arts (as cited in Redford & Hoyer, 2017). Cataldi, Bennett, and Chen (2018), report first-generation college students are less than half as likely as their peers to enroll in an academically focused curriculum in high school or Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes. This lack of more challenging classes indicates first-generation college students are not as "college-ready" and are more likely to withdraw after the first year. There is a great emphasis on high school grade-point average, test scores and academic performance as a predictor of college success. The importance of social emotional learning (SEL) on academic achievement is well documented, however, SEL remains a relatively new concept. The association between social and emotional learning impacting first-generation college students' success in postsecondary education is not well researched.

Social Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning, conceptualized in its current form in 1994 by Daniel Goleman and collaborators of the research organization Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (Maughan, 2018). The mission of CASEL is "to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning an integral part of education from preschool through high school" (www.casel.org). CASEL identifies five core competencies of social and emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Research indicates for students exposed to SEL programs their academic achievement was higher and sustained for approximately 3.5 years beyond participation in the SEL program (Maughan, 2018). Parker et al. (2004)

also found emotional intelligence as a significant predictor of academic success. Alvarado, Spatariu and Woodbury (2017) found first-generation college students had lower levels of emotional intelligence, but higher levels of resilience than continuing generation students. Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan and Majeski (2004) report when high school GPA, age and course load were controlled, the first-generation students scoring significantly higher than their peers on emotional intelligence scales at the beginning of the academic term were more academically successful. The five components of social and emotional learning correlate to various behaviors necessary for success in college life. For example, relationship skills like resisting inappropriate social pressure or seeking help, may be of value to first-generation students adapting to college culture lacking seasoned and knowledgeable advice of trusted adults and parents (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013).

Hsiao (1992) states one of the major social obstacles impeding first-generation students is assimilating into the college culture while maintaining original relationships existing outside of this community. First-generation students may benefit from finding balance between their familiar world and the college going world. A balance often complicated by first-generation student's inability to truly immerse themselves in college life (Phinney, Dennis & Osorio, 2006). More first-generation students enroll as part-time students than their counterparts (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). As detailed by the National Center for Education Statistics 48% of first-generation students enrolled part-time (2014). Part-time students, often working jobs, own familial responsibilities and are less able to access campus

resources such as career centers, tutoring centers and extracurricular activities through student centers (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). This lack of socialization with like-minded peers perpetuates the isolation experienced by first-generation students and inhibits their ability to make necessary personal connections with peers from different backgrounds. However, effective social and emotional programming throughout the formative school years, particularly as students reach high school and begin the transition to college life could prove particularly helpful.

The Role of the School Counselor

School counselors are tasked with providing academic, career and personal/social development of students (ASCA, 2012). A continued push for counselors is a way to incorporate student standards into content curriculum and the classrooms where students spend most of their time. Social and emotional learning, proven effective in increasing academic achievement, should comprehensively and proactively aim to support all students. Aligning with the ASCA National Model, SEL programs are not reactively designed (Van Velsor, 2009). Elias et al. (1997) describes three components of effective social and emotional learning: (1.) formal and informal training throughout the school years, (2.) school climate promoting safe social and emotional development, (3.) and stakeholders actively involved in supporting social emotional learning (educators, parents and community leaders). The field of education aligns high academic achievement with success; however, counselors, advocates and leaders, need to highlight the benefits of social emotional learning. SEL promotes and impacts increasing academic achievement and prosocial behaviors contributing to the psychological health of

individual students, the school and society (Van Velsor, 2009; Durlak et al. 2011). Elias, Zins, Graczyk and Weissberg (2003) warns against schools primarily focusing on standardized test scores and academic achievement. The researchers ascertain social emotional learning effectively support gains in academic achievement, in addition to increasing emotional intelligence. Further, SEL programs intend to impact prosocial behaviors, better decision making, and taking responsibility for one's self (Durlak et al. 2011). Ample research highlights the overall benefits of social and emotional learning. However, curricula in schools, including higher education, is lacking. Moreover, little research exists specifically focusing on advantages of teaching social emotional skills to high school students and their parents, in preparation for college and/or career success beyond high school. Durlak et al. (2011) found social emotional programs effectively address all levels of education, elementary through high school; however, minimal research exists on high schools. Teaching social and emotional skills, not as a short-term intervention/program, but rather conceptualized longitudinally supports the development of skills beginning in early elementary years and continually growing, building upon teachings and expectations from year to year. The specific strategies and skills students are expected to learn should be age appropriate ensuring when students graduate, they are equipped with the social and emotional skills necessary to be successful in college life and not hindered by their non-generational status. Research by Demetriou, Meece, Eeaker-Rich and Powell (2017) focused on the characteristics of successful first-generation college students, in turn allowing for a clearer depiction of necessary skills this population needs to obtain when in college

to affect retention rates and successful degree completion. A limitation of this research is the small sample size and the backgrounds of each participant was not analyzed to indicate a representative sample of their own group, these findings illustrate campus initiatives positively impacting first-generation students (Demetriou et al. 2017).

Pike and Kuh (2005) found first-generation students were less engaged, hypothesizing these students know less about the importance of engagement and lack skills in this area. Of significance, Yang and Bear (2018) report the teacher-student relationship at the student level has the strongest main effect on emotional engagement and is stronger in middle and high school. This supports the findings from Demetriou et al. (2017) on the impact of more experiences peer, faculty mentor or other adult in the lives of successful first-generation college students. The ability of first-generation students to make new relationships, particularly in an environment where they already feel out of place is tantamount to their ability to be successful, highlighting the important work of social and emotional learning with regards to relationships.

Elias et al. (2003) states that "a professional with a new kind of preparation will be needed to foster implementation and scaling up of sustainable innovations to promote academic and social-emotional learning" (p. 316). Though at the time Elias et al (2003) dismisses counselors citing a lack of training in prevention and program implementation, the currently defined role of school counselors and changes in preparation programs lends itself to this naturally in today's world. Edelman (2017) discusses the need for more

counselors in schools and college advisors in districts where students have need of a knowledgeable adult to guide them through this process. Schools providing dedicated college counselors to disadvantaged kids can move the needle on what should be the most urgent priority in American higher education: getting more low-income, first-generation, and minority students into college (Edelman, 2017).

Call to the Field

Today there is a consistent expectation of schools to play a large part in encouraging the development of children and adolescents by preparing them for their future roles in society. Increasing attention to fulfill the role of supporting the whole child as best as a possible, schools should not limit their focus to strictly academic based programs (Greenberg et al., 2003). According to Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004), teaching and learning in schools should have strong social, emotional, and academic components. Unfortunately, due to the ever evolving culturally diverse population of students with varied abilities and motivation levels in the array of schools many students lack social-emotional competencies. As a result, students become less connected to school as they progress from elementary to middle to high school, and this lack of connection negatively affects their academic performance, behavior, and health (Blum & Libbey, 2004).

Benson (2006), states in a national sample of 148,189 sixth to twelfth graders, only 29%–45% of surveyed students reported they had social competencies such as empathy, decision making, and conflict resolution skills, and only 29% indicated their school provided a caring, encouraging environment. According to Klem and

Connell (2004), by high school as many as 40%–60% of students become chronically disengaged from school, and approximately 30% of high school students engage in a variety high-risk behavior interfering with school performance, jeopardizing their potential for success. Disengagement within schools, of concern in the high school setting, influences attendance, graduation, college going, and college retention rates. It is becoming a more prominent notion that by providing students with comprehensive social and emotional learning (SEL) programming within schools which is characterized by safe, caring, and well-managed learning environments and instruction in SEL skills, many of these learning barriers and associated risk factors can be addressed (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013).

According to CASEL, social and emotional learning can be described as the process in which individuals ranging from children to adults obtain and appropriately apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (2013). Within the concept of social emotional learning, there five key components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making which come together to aide and encourage students to regulate their emotions, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, avoid engaging in risky behaviors, and make ethical and safe choices (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013).

To provide a concise description of the role each component plays in the overarching

realm of social emotional learning, each component is detailed. Self-awareness considers one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations. Self-management pertains to managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals. Social awareness includes understanding and empathizing for others, relationship skills is based on forming positive relationships, working in teams, and dealing directly with conflict. Lastly responsible decision-making entails making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013).

The five core components SEL can help students further develop other academic and essential lifetime learning skills, including but not limited to critical thinking skills, academic success, employability skills, and life skills. For instance, according to Schaps, Battistich, and Solomon (2004), these SEL competencies can help students become better communicators, cooperative members of a team, effective leaders, resilient individuals, and caring productive members their communities. Collectively these attainable skills have been increasingly acknowledged by today's employers and educators as important characteristics for achievement in their respective work environment and postsecondary settings.

Recommendations and Implications

School counselors play a critical role in the process of students being aware of steps to applying to college and are significantly involved in the process once students begin their applications and other postsecondary options. Thus, inevitably, school counselors are essential to the social support system of first-generation students. Since the impact of social support correlates with such

positive outcomes for students and those they directly engage with, it is essential for school counselors to be proactive in implementing methods and interventions targeting increased social support for first-generation college students. First-generation students benefit from social support through formal programs and informal relationship building. As a result of social support systems and SEL, short term and long-term benefits are evident when effective social support is put into place.

In the short term, when school counselors or other involved school leaders implement programs such as CASEL, students have more support and social skills to do well in college and beyond in the long run. Specifically, the short-term potential outcomes for CASEL include improved positive social behavior, reduced problem behavior, reduced emotional distress and improved academic performance. To learn more about the delivery of the CASEL program and how to access other social support guides and best practices, school counselors should engage in professional learning opportunities to increase knowledge and resources on social supports for first-generation college students. The contact school counselors have with seniors has great potential to focus on academic and postsecondary planning. However, school counselors are encouraged to facilitate more classroom lessons focusing on social and emotional wellness with seniors as a method to reach all seniors including first-generation college students. Social and emotional learning can also be implemented through small groups in order to target first-generation students more effectively and directly. Small groups facilitated by counselors, embed peer support into the network of social support aimed to assist first-generation

college students. Peer support along with professional support is valuable to social and emotional positive influences and skill building. By forming friendships with other peers who are also first-generation students, further increases their emotional support interactions, widening their social support system (Gist-Mackey, Wiley, & Erba, 2018 2017). Friendship building and maintaining healthy relationships are essential to social success in college and careers. Administrators, principals and other school leaders must buy in to school counselors spending more time focusing on the social/emotional domain of the school counseling curriculum.

According to the literature, students receiving higher levels of social support from close friends and relatives increase their likelihood to achieve satisfaction in college and better social and academic acclimation and transitions (Gist-Mackey, et al., 2018). Therefore, in the absence of or as a substitute for any lacking familial support, in addition to implementing formal programs, school counselors are encouraged to initiate informal social supports developing relationships with their students to create a supportive environment allowing students to feel safe and comfortable e sharing their concerns about college and transition. Further, social support involves supportive communication language; both verbal and nonverbal (Gist-Mackey, et al., 2018). Positively reinforcing and acknowledging student's efforts offers praise, encouraging young people to continue with their drive, increasing motivation and to follow through with the postsecondary planning process and transition to college. As a result of students forming trustworthy relationships with school counselors in high school, they may be more likely to

reach out to and rely on school personnel and college advisors, supporting success in college. Further leading to forming relationships with supervisors to be successful in the workplace environment (Gist-Mackey, et al., 2018).

Current literature and best practice recommendations emphasize five key competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making) of social and emotional learning. These competencies provide direct and indirect and short term and long-term benefits for the student and others. First-generation college students, grasping these fundamentals, have an increased likelihood to find success in their postsecondary pursuits and completion their endeavors. Moreover, companies, organizations and other stakeholders benefit from these early social and emotional interventions, in turn gaining employees possessing developed and enhanced employability skills. First-generation students with social support to develop better stress coping skills and resiliency--skills essential to success in the work environment (Gist-Mackey, et al., 2018). As presented in the introduction, employers are requiring college degrees more in their employees. Therefore, it is also to their benefit to buy in to these social support endeavors to reach a population of individuals with great employability potential and close barriers preventing them from accessing and attaining advantageous postsecondary opportunities.

Although much research has been composed on first-generation college students, a more in-depth analysis to determine other factors playing a role in the success of first-generation collected students to determine if varying types of

social support are beneficial. Variables like environmental factors, financial status, access to resources, school location, etc. should be considered, instead of generalizing the recommendations found in the existing literature to all first-generation students. This information would be useful to the school counselor or school leader already addressing social and emotional learning, with limited success. This may require a closer examination of first-generation students at their school and employing more specific and targeted social interventions. Additional research is needed to examine first-generation students lacking support from parents or guardians. For some students, they may have an abundance of emotional support from their parents, however, the information they need to move forward with the postsecondary planning process shifts to focus more on internal motivation and self-efficacy may be necessary.

Further, research on peer support versus professional support may assist stakeholders to effectively maximize support for first-generation students. To take case in point, students who have parental emotional support, but lack the support of same age peers may benefit more from peer social support versus the support from school counselors or other school leaders. However, more research is needed to determine the significant differences between these two levels of social and emotional support.

Overall, research undoubtedly encourages a call for social support to further close the gap and diminish barriers for first-generation students to achieving postsecondary success. The implementation of social support initiatives has a positive impact on the individual student and others

(i.e. family members and community). Well supported first-generation students have potential to be involved citizens in our society who may eventually give back and assist other first-generation students in the future.

Conclusion

It is important to note social support is not the only factor promoting postsecondary success for first-generation college students. However, the intent of the present manuscript emphasizes the need for social support as a primary factor to foster motivation and confidence for first-generation students pursuing higher education opportunities. School counselors tend to work less in the social domain of the school counseling curriculum with high school aged students and more so in the academic and career domains, especially with senior students. The authors make the call to action supporting and advocating for promoting a social/emotional learning focus for first-generation college students. This call to the field positively impacts first-generation students' self-esteem, self-efficacy and coping skills.

The literature existing for social support and the impact on first-generation college students is consistently discussed in the literature. First-generation students accessing social support matriculate as effective college students and efficient, valuable assets as employees in their careers as they gain several employability skills. School counselors play an imperative role in preparing students for life after high school. Furthermore, teachers, administrators and other school personnel also greatly influence students and their postsecondary plans, assisting them with the process. Therefore, all individuals impacting students are encouraged to

engage in a wrap-around, holistic approach to social support, supportive communication and other behaviors assisting in the development of healthy social skills fostering the five key competencies of social and emotional learning. Lastly, this approach promotes resiliency, collaboration, perseverance and other qualities serving students in their postsecondary success and closing disparaging gaps and barriers between first-generation students and their peers.

References

- Alvarado, A., Spatariu, A. & Woodbury, C. (2017). Resilience & emotional intelligence between first generation college students and non-first generation college students. *Focus on Colleges, Universities and Schools*, 11(1).
- American School Counselor Association (2012). *ASCA National Standards for Students*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from: http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/asca_national_standards_for_students.pdf
- Benson, P. L. (2006). *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents* (2nd ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Blum, R. W., & Libbey, H. P. (2004). School connectedness—Strengthening health and education outcomes for teenagers. *Journal of School Health*, 74, 229–299.
- Cataldi, E. F., Bennett, C. T., & Chen, X. (2018). First-generation students: College access, persistence, and post bachelor's outcomes. Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018421.pdf>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (n.d.). 2013 CASEL guide. Retrieved from <http://casel.org/guide/>
- Demetriou, C., Meece, J., Eaker-Rich, D., Powell, C. (2017). The activities, roles, and relationships of successful first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(1), 19-36.
- Dockery, D.J. & McKelvey, S. (2013). Underrepresented college students' experiences with school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling*, 11(3), 1-30. Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1012298.pdf>
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.
- Dymnicki, A., Sambolt, M. & Kidron, Y. (2013). Improving college and career readiness by incorporating social and emotional learning. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555695.pdf>
- Edelman, G. (2017). A college advisor in every school. *Washington Monthly*. 62-66. Retrieved from: <http://articles.westga.edu:2081/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=09c084fd-e14-4614-b612-99d01c82ff03%40sessionmgr4010>
- Elias, M. J. (1997). Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Graczyk, P. A., Weissber, R. P. (2003). Implementation,

sustainability, and scaling up of social-emotional and academic innovations in public schools. *School Psychology*, 32(3), 303-319.

Engle, J., Bermeo, A., & O'Brien, C. (2006). Straight from the source: What works for first-generation college students. Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED501693.pdf>

Gist-Mackey, A.N., Wiley, M. L., & Erba, J. (2018). "You're doing great. Keep doing what you're doing": Socially supportive communication during first-generation college students' socialization. *Communication Education*, 67(1), 52-72.

Greenberg, T., Weissberg, R. P., Utne O'Brien, M., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist*, 58, 466-474.

Hawkins, J.D., Kosterman, R., Catalano, R.F., Hill, K.G., & Abbott, R.D. (2008). Effects of social development intervention in childhood 15 years later. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 162(12), 1133-1141.

Hsaio, K. P. (1992). First-generation college students. ERIC database. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED351079.pdf>

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 74, 262-273

Maughan, S. (2018). The power of social

and emotional learning: Educators and librarians help students cope with crisis. *Publishers Weekly*. 26-34.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *Profile of undergraduate students*. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015167.pdf>

Nunez, A. M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998). *First-generation students: Undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education*. (Report No. NCES 98-082). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98082.pdf>

Parker, J. D. A., Crique Sr., R. E., Barnhart, D. L., Harris, J. I., Majeski, S. A., Wood, L. M., Bond, B. J. & Hogan, M. J. (2004). Academic achievement in high school: Does emotional intelligence matter? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 37, 1321-1330.

Parker, J. D. A., Hogan, M. J., Eastabrook, J. M., Oke, A. & Wood, L. M. (2006). Emotional intelligence and student retention: Predicting the successful transition from high school to university. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41, 1329-1336.

Parker, J. D. A., Summerfeldt, L. M., Hogan, M. J., & Majeski, S. A. (2004). Emotional intelligence and academic success: Examining the transition from high school to university. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36, 163-172.

Phinney, J. S., Dennis, J., & Osorio, S. (2006). Reasons to attend college among ethnically diverse college students. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 12, 347-366.

Pike, G. R., & Kuh, G. D. (2005). First- and second-generation college students: A comparison of their engagement and intellectual development. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(3), 276-300.

Redford, J., & Hoyer, K. M. (2017). First-generation and continuing-generation college students: A comparison of high school and postsecondary experiences. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018009.pdf>

Richards, E. & Terkanian, D. (2013). Occupational employment projections to 2022. Monthly Labor Review, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. doi:10.21916/mlf.2013.41

Schafer, M. H., Wilkinson, L.R. & Ferraro, K. F. (2013). Childhood (mis)fortune, educational attainment, and adult health: Contingent benefits of a college degree? *Social Force*, 91(3), 1007-1034. doi: 10.2307/23361129

Schaps, E., Battistich, V., & Solomon, D. (2004). *Community in school as key to student growth: Findings from the Child Development Project*. In J. Zins, R. Weissberg, M. Wang, & H. Walberg (Eds.), *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Sharpe, R. (2017, November 3). Are you first gen? Depends on who's asking. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/03/education/edlife/first-generation-college-admissions.html>

Stebbleton, M. J. & Soria, K. M. (2012). Breaking down barriers: Academic obstacles of first-generation students

at research universities. , 17(2), 7-20. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1002281.pdf>

Toutkoushian, R. K., Stollberg, R. S., & Slaton, K. A. (2015). Talking 'bout my generation: Defining 'First-Generation Students' in higher education research. *Association for the Study of Higher Education*. Retrieved from: https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Talking%20Bout%20M%20generation%20Fall%202015%20ASHE.pdf

Van Velsor, P. (2009). School counselors as social-emotional learning consultants: Where do we begin? *Professional School Counseling*, 13(1), 50-58.

Wilbur, T. G. & Roscigno, V. J. (2016). First-generation disadvantage and college enrollment/completion. *SAGE Journals* 2, 1-11. doi: 10.1177/2378023116664351

Yang, C. & Bear, G. G. (2018). Multilevel associations between school-wide social-emotional learning approach and student engagement across elementary, middle, and high schools. *School Psychology Review*, 47(1), 45-61.

Zins, J., Weissbert, R., Wang, M., & Walberg, H. (2004). *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Research and Reflections on Dual Relationships in Counselor Supervision

Kristian L. Woodward, M.Ed.,
Professional School Counselor

Lee Edmondson Grimes, PhD, LPC,
Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy
Valdosta State University

Research and Reflections on Dual Relationships in Counselor Supervision

The concept of a dual relationship in counseling has been defined by many researchers in a variety of ways (Baca, 2011; Borders & Brown, 2005; Deng et al., 2016; Jackson, 2007; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005; Syme, 2006). The fundamental characteristic of a dual relationship is that one person assumes two or more roles in a connection with another person (Jackson, 2007; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005; Syme, 2006). Dual relationships vary and are commonplace in non-Western cultures and in many professions such as with beauticians and physicians (Syme, 2006). In counseling, dual relationships may exist between a counselor and a client, a counselor and a counselor-in-training (CIT), or two counselors participating in peer supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Mills & Swift, 2015). Of note, researchers and professionals are beginning to use boundary issues, nonprofessional relationships, and inappropriate relationships to refer to dual relationships (Cottone, 2010; Goodrich, 2008; Jackson, 2007). However, for the purposes of this paper, the term dual relationship will be used throughout. To better understand dual relationships in counseling supervision, this following discourse seeks to define the

topic, investigate it in terms of sexual and non-sexual relations, explicate available guidelines and best-practices, identify areas for future research, and pose reflections on dual relationships confronted through the author's experience with peer supervision.

Defining Dual Relationship

According to Barnett and Molzon (2014), a dual relationship exists when a person has a primary professional relationship and a secondary relationship with another person. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) further explain that a dual relationship is a relationship between two people in which two or more social roles exist. Dual relationships may include social, business, financial, or family relationships (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005). Moleski and Kiselica (2005) also report that dual relationships may be sexual or nonsexual in nature, include current or former clients, may be intentional or accidental, and may help or harm the counseling or supervisory relationship. Baca (2011) further explains that characteristics of dual relationships may include giving or accepting gifts, verbal and/or physical abuse, neglect, or romantic or sexual relationships. One feature of a dual relationship in counseling that most people are unaware of is that the dyad may

occur while the counseling or supervisory relationship is active, or it may be a promise to have a non-counseling or non-supervisory relationship in the future (Deng et al., 2016; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005). Sexual Dual Relationships in Counseling Supervision

Sexual dual relationships between

a supervisor and a supervisee are considered to be exploitative, unethical, and sometimes abusive (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Even though some supervisees feel that they enter into consensual sexual relationships with their supervisors, this is essentially impossible as supervisors hold overt and covert power over their supervisees that cannot be negated (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Jackson, 2007; Kozlowski, Pruitt, DeWalt, & Knox, 2014). Sexual dual relationships may include overt sexual contact such as kissing, fondling, or sexual intercourse, or covert sexual contact such as sexual gazes (Moleski & Kiselica, 2005). Research has shown that sexual dual relationships correlate with negative consequences for supervisees including guilt, low self-esteem, fearfulness, depression, increased risk of suicide, and confusion (Jackson, 2007; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005; Syme, 2006). In addition to the harm that a supervisee may incur, a sexual relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee often leads to subjectivity from the supervisor and damage to the program's reputation (Jackson, 2007). Most counselors, researchers, and counseling associations agree that sexual dual relationships are always problematic and must be avoided (Deng et al., 2016; Jackson, 2007; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005; Syme, 2006).

Non-Sexual Dual Relationships in Counseling Supervision

Aside from a sexual dual relationship between supervisors and supervisees, Borders and Brown (2005) espouse that there are two additional types of relationships that may exist: 1) social and/or 2) therapeutic.

Social dual relationships in counseling supervision.

Borders and Brown (2005) claim that social dual relationships in counseling supervision are practically unavoidable. For instance, a supervisor may serve as a supervisee's teacher, advisor, employer, role model, mentor, co-author, research partner, or friend (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2005; Jackson, 2007). According to Barnett and Molzon (2014), supervisors and supervisees frequently attend conferences or professional meetings together and work on projects together including research and presentations. Additionally, supervisees in a study conducted by Kozlowski et al. (2014) reported having the following social interactions with their supervisors: having a meal or alcoholic drink together, visiting the supervisor's home, receiving a gift from the supervisor, and listening to a supervisor complain about a client. Other examples of social dual relationships between supervisors and supervisees include attending one's celebration, such as a graduation or wedding, or meeting one's family members (Kozlowski et al., 2014).

Many researchers believe that social dual relationships can be beneficial to supervisees (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Kreider, 2014). The reported benefits include convenience, increased opportunities for the supervisee, and better oversight throughout the

supervisory relationship (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Kreider, 2014). This benefit is promising as some dual relationships are unavoidable, especially in small or rural communities, small counselor education programs, and the military (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Deng et al., 2016; Gonyea, Wright, & Earl-Kulkosky, 2014; Kozlowski et al., 2014; Moleski & Kiselica, 2005; Paulson, Casile, & Jones, 2015). Yet, while social dual relationships may be beneficial, any dual relationship must be evaluated for its potential impact regardless of whether the relationship is by choice or by chance (Moleski & Kiselica, 2005). According to Bernard and Goodyear (2014), dual relationships are problematic when the power difference between two people puts the person with less power (the supervisee) at a disadvantage or at risk for harm, or when the person with more power (the supervisor) is unable to remain objective.

Therapeutic dual relationships in counseling supervision. Sometimes, supervisors transition from supervising their supervisees to counseling their supervisees (Barnett & Molzon, 2014). This issue of a therapeutic dual relationship is rather common and understandably so as supervisees disclose personal and professional issues during supervision (Borders & Brown, 2005). Both Barnett and Molzon (2014) and Borders and Brown (2005) agree that supervisors who find themselves entering into a therapeutic dual relationship with a supervisee must refer that supervisee to another professional for therapeutic assistance as it is inappropriate for supervisors to counsel their supervisee because this dynamic may blur the lines of objectivity in the relationship.

Dual Relationships in Group Training Supervision

Dual relationships may exist between a supervisor and supervisee in group training, as this is often part of counseling supervision (Goodrich, 2008). An example of a dual relationship in group training is when the group's facilitator also serves as a professor for at least one member of the group (Goodrich, 2008). This becomes problematic as group members may be weary of disclosing personal information in front of their professor (Goodrich, 2008). As Goodrich (2008) explains, group training allows students to better understand group norms and processes as well as the role of the group facilitator. While dual relationships in group training are problematic, they do not eliminate the need for group training. It is important to discuss these issues and identify solutions so that group training can successfully occur. For instance, one potential solution to calm students' fears pertaining to self-disclosure in front of their professor is to allow students to complete role plays instead (Goodrich, 2008). It is also important for professors to receive training regarding this dual relationship so that they do not abuse their ability to evaluate students in this situation (Goodrich, 2008).

Dual Relationships in Peer Supervision

According to Mills and Swift (2015), peer supervision is a practical way to address the supervision that most counselors desire yet do not receive. Peer supervision helps counselors develop or expand skills, facilitates a means to share with colleagues, and enables counselors to feel supported by and provide support to colleagues (Mills & Swift, 2015). Specific skills that can be developed through peer supervision include consultation skills,

critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, ethical decision-making skills, and reflective skills (Mills & Swift, 2015). Dual relationships in peer supervision become problematic when one counselor fears breach of confidentiality or senses a power differential outside of peer supervision, or when counselors who are not participating in peer supervision feel left out (Mills & Swift, 2015). By nature of peer supervision, a dual relationship is nearly unavoidable as those participating in the relationship almost always know each other in another setting. Notably, the existence of a dual relationship in peer supervision does not automatically damage the effectiveness of peer supervision. As Mills and Swift (2015) suggest, it is important for those participating in peer supervision to discuss potential dual relationship conflicts at the onset of the supervisory relationship and throughout the experience.

Boundaries

According to Syme (2006), some people feel that bans on dual relationships are outdated and culturally insensitive. However, Baca (2011) explains that professional boundaries, including those pertaining to dual relationships, protect professionals, clients, and counselors-in-training. It is important for each counseling participant to be aware of the potential impact of dual relationships because the most egregious infractions usually begin innocently but escalate to a point of destruction (Baca, 2011).

Bleiberg and Baron (2004) and Kozlowski et al. (2014) explain that boundaries exist in supervisory relationships just as they do in nearly all relationships. Supervisory boundaries define what is and is not appropriate in a supervisory relationship (Kozlowski et al., 2014). When a boundary

crossing occurs, the incident may or may not present an unethical infraction (Kozlowski et al., 2014). For instance, a supervisor who accepts a gift from his or her supervisee because of a cultural norm has participated in a boundary crossing. This boundary crossing is not necessarily harmful to the client and may have actually strengthened the rapport between the supervisor and supervisee (Kozlowski et al., 2014). However, if a boundary crossing occurs and results in exploitation, harm, loss of objectivity, or damage to the supervisory relationship, then it would be considered to be a boundary violation (Kozlowski et al., 2014). As Bleiberg and Baron (2004) explain, a boundary crossing does not always cause harm, but a boundary violation does. In dual relationships, the participants operate on a slippery slope where boundary crossings may accidentally or intentionally lead to boundary violations (Bleiberg & Baron, 2004). Thus, it is critical to remain vigilant in dual relationships.

Most researchers agree that the ideal standard is for dual relationships to be avoided in counseling supervision, yet this ideal is unattainable (Cobia & Boes, 2000). Based on the available research, it seems that there are three fundamental problems with dual relationships in counseling supervision. First, there are usually competing goals amongst competing relationships (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Cobia & Boes, 2000). Second, supervisors have more power in the supervisory relationship than do their supervisees, which could lead to supervisees being exploited (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Jackson, 2007; Kozlowski et al., 2014). Third, supervisors are at risk of losing their objectivity when they partake in dual relationships with their supervisees (Barnett

& Molzon, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2005).

Guidelines for Dual Relationships

According to Borders and Brown (2005), a supervisor must avoid any situation that may skew his or her objectivity towards a supervisee. Moleski and Kiselica (2005) further established the following guidelines for dual relationships: (1) establish healthy boundaries at the beginning of the relationship; (2) secure informed consent and discuss risks and benefits; (3) openly communicate about problems as they arise; (4) consult with other professionals to clarify issues; (5) seek supervision for problematic dual relationships; (6) document dual relationships; (7) identify personal motivations in dual relationships; and (8) refer clients to other professionals if necessary. Additionally, Bleiberg and Baron (2004) identified the following five principles to honor when facing a dual relationship: (1) address change quickly; (2) explore countertransference; (3) control the anxiety related to the dual relationship; (4) check your competing values; and (5) abide by your limits. Borders and Brown (2005) summarize it well in stating that while dual relationships may be unavoidable or even necessary, it is important to maintain open communication regarding the multiple relationships, and it is imperative for supervisors to remain vigilant about potentially losing objectivity.

Counseling Association Guidelines

In addition to researchers and professionals addressing dual relationships, the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) address dual relationships in their ethical standards. The ACA (2014) outright prohibits sexual relationships

between supervisors and supervisees. The ACA (2014) requires that supervisors remain ethical in their relationships with supervisees, including dual relationships. Specifically, the ACA (2014) states that supervisors should maintain sound judgement and ensure that harm does not occur throughout a dual relationship. The APA (2017) prohibits psychologists from engaging in a dual relationship, including a supervisory dual relationship, if the psychologist would be unable to remain objective or if the relationship would result in exploitation. The ASCA (2016) addresses school counselors who serve as supervisors for interns in its code of ethics. In the code, school counselors are instructed to refrain from supervisory relationships if they are unable to maintain objectivity (ASCA, 2016).

Future Research

After examining the research that is available regarding dual relationships in counseling supervision, it is clear that several areas need to be explored further. First, several questions remain unanswered regarding dual relationships in group training. As Goodrich (2008) explicates, there is a lack of understanding regarding the differences between group trainings that are supervised by professors and those that are supervised by an outsider who is hired to be the facilitator. Goodrich (2008) also notes that there is limited information about the attitudes of counselors-in-training toward dual relationships in group training. Second, Jackson (2007) reports that most sexual misconduct in academic realms occurs between a male supervisor and a female supervisee. Third, it was difficult to find information about dual relationships in peer supervision. While this may be due to the low occurrence of peer supervision, it is still

a needed area for research. Fourth, there is a need for additional research regarding dual relationships that are seemingly unavoidable, such as in rural communities. As Gonyea et al. (2014) explained, these complex relationships exist throughout the world, but thorough guidelines pertaining to them do not.

Personal Reflections

Through my work, I have discovered that some dual relationships are unavoidable. Nonetheless, I believe that any dual relationship, whether it can or cannot be prevented, should be thoroughly explored at the onset and throughout its duration. For instance, a supervisor and supervisee should discuss the dynamics of their dual relationships such as the supervisor also being the supervisee's professor and advisor. Furthermore, sexual dual relationships should be avoided at all times. The power differential between supervisors and supervisees in a dual sexual relationship cannot be ignored.

I recently gained firsthand insight into navigating a dual relationship when I participated in peer-to-peer supervision with a colleague. During our first meeting, we discussed that our peer supervisory relationship would be impacted by our professional relationship since we were both serving as school counselors and colleagues. We created a contract that acknowledged our dual relationship and outlined steps to prioritize our peer supervisory work. We did not encounter any major issues concerning our dual relationship during our peer supervision, but I believe that was mainly due to our commitment to authentically communicate with each other. I fully acknowledge that a five-month experience in peer-to-peer supervision does not enable me to

espouse expertise regarding navigating dual relationships in peer supervision. However, the foundations my colleague and I set might provide the same foundations for success for others: develop a contract, acknowledge dual relationships at the onset, consult the ethical codes, communicate openly throughout, address concerns as they arise, and be willing to consult with other professionals as needed.

The concept of dual relationships in counseling supervision is not new, yet it is not well understood because it has not been adequately represented in research until recently (Syme, 2006). Accordingly, additional research is needed to protect professionals, clients, and counselors in training, as well as to create relevant training to better educate and prepare potential participants in dual relationships, including the much-needed school counselor peer-to-peer supervision.

References

- American Counseling Association (2014). ACA code of ethics. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American Psychological Association (2017). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. Washington, DC: Author.
- American School Counselor Association (2016). *ASCA ethical standards for school counselors*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Baca, M. (2011). Professional boundaries and dual relationships in clinical practice. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 7(3), 195-200. doi:10/1016/j.nurpra.2010.10.003
- Barnett, J. E., & Molzon, C. H. (2014). Clinical supervision of psychotherapy: Essential ethics issues for supervisors and supervisees. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*,

70(11), 1051-1061. doi:10.1002/jclp.22126

Bernard, J. M., & Goodyear, R. K. (2014). *Fundamentals of clinical supervision* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Bleiberg, J. R., & Baron, J. (2004). Entanglement in dual relationships in a university counseling center. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 19(1), 21-34. doi:10.1300/J035v19n01_05

Borders, L. D., & Brown, L. L. (2005). *The new handbook of counseling supervision* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Lahaska Press.

Cobia, D. C., & Boes, S. R. (2000). Professional disclosure statements and formal plans for supervision: Two strategies for minimizing the risk of ethical conflicts in post-master's supervision. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78, 293-296.

Cottone, R. R. (2010). Roles and relationships with clients in rehabilitation counseling: Beyond the concept of dual relationships. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 53(4), 226-231. doi:10.1177/0034355210368565

Deng, J., Qian, M., Gan, Y., Hu, S., Gao, J., Huang, Z., & Zhang, L. (2016). Emerging practices of counseling and psychotherapy in China: *Ethical dilemmas in dual relationships*. *Ethics & Behavior*, 26(1), 63-86. doi:10.1080/10508422.2014.978978

Gonyea, J. L. J., Wright, D. W., & Earl-Kulkosky, T. (2014). Navigating dual relationships in rural communities. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 40(1), 125-136. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2012.00335.x

Goodrich, K. M. (2008). Dual relationships in group training. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 33(3), 221-235. doi:10.1080/01933920802204981

Jackson, J. L. (2007). Faculty-student dual relationships: Implications for counselor educators. *The Alabama Counseling Association Journal*, 33(1), 1-10.

Kozlowski, J. M., Pruitt, N. T., DeWalt, T. A., & Knox, S. (2014). Can boundary crossings in clinical supervision be beneficial? *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 27(2), 109-126. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2013.870123>

Kreider, H. D. (2014). Administrative and clinical supervision: The impact of dual roles on supervisee disclosure in counseling supervision. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 33, 256-268. doi:10.1080/07325223.2014.992292

Mills, F., & Swift, S. J. (2015). What can be gained through peer supervision? *Educational & Child Psychology*, 32(3), 105-118.

Moleski, S. M., & Kiselica, M. S. (2005). Dual relationships: A continuum ranging from the destructive to the therapeutic. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 83, 3-11.

Paulson, L. R., Casile, W. J., & Jones, D. (2015). Tech it out: Implementing an online peer consultation network for rural mental health professionals. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*, 39(3-4), 125-136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rmh0000034>

Syme, G. (2006). Fetters or freedom: Dual relationships in counselling. *International Journal for the Advancement*

of Counselling, 28(1), 57-69. doi:10.1007/s10447-005-8499-7

Using a Contextual Model in Ethical Decision-making

Thomas M. Jarvis-Primary Author
Assistant Professor
Fort Valley State University
1005 State University Drive
Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-6636
Jarvist@fvsu.edu

Jerry A. Mobley
Professor
Fort Valley State University
1005 State University Drive
Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-6391
Mobleyj1@fvsu.edu

Jeri L. Ellis
Assistant Professor
Capella University
School of Counseling and Human Services
Capella University
Minneapolis, MN 55402
478-747-1407
Jeri.ellis@Capella.edu

Abstract

School counselors work in a unique environment in which there are many contextual variables to consider when making ethical decisions. This article offers a heuristic structure that can give counselors an enhanced perspective in reflecting on context during an ethical review. It also elaborates the differences between modern and post-modern assumptions that are significant contextual influences on ethical decision making. Application examples for counseling professionals, including school counselors, are included.

KEY WORDS: ethics, ecology, model, education, confidentiality, mandated reporting, privileged communication

Using a Contextual Model in Ethical Decision-making

All counseling occurs in a larger context of culture, politics, beliefs, and ideas that can have an impact on the decision-making process. To better understand what is occurring and the matters that are impinging on the decisions that are being made during an ethical review, ecological tools to examine and clarify the milieu could be useful. This article explores one such tool and applies it to a variety of established ethical decisions and lesser known provocative ones. There are implications for counselors practicing in a variety of settings and for school counselors, in particular.

This article is not attempting to create an entirely new ethical decision-making model but is rather trying to enlarge the perspective of counselors to consider possible influences on the already complicated ethical issues under

consideration. Proposed is a heuristic structure with four worldviews by which larger contextual issues can be examined; included are reflections on modernism and post-modernism.

The Context

Whereas a surgeon deconstructs and repairs a problem often inside a small opening that allows for total focus on the incision, the stitch, or the relevant single issue that is to be addressed, counseling people and students with problems is just not that simple. In counseling, as rapport is built and central issues are defined, counselors begin to consider other contextual connections in successive circles of interaction and influence (Conyne & Cook, 2004). Similarly, ethical behavior must be brought into the larger context. Counselors must consider the concepts that are at the heart of ethical examination while understanding the environment within which the counseling occurs. It is also important to consider the interaction of one's perceptions of self, others, and the world, and others' perceptions of those issues at the same time (Betan, 1997). Additionally, promoting student and client welfare as an ethical responsibility often involves emotional responses to social issues and boundary questions (Neukrug & Milliken, 2011).

For school counselors, the environment in which ethical decisions are made can be even more complicated; there can be conflicts between legal and school policies, and interventions often involve collaborations with administrators and teachers (Stone, 2013; Hicks, Noble, Berry, Talbert, Crews, Li, & Castillo, 2014). Sullivan and Moyer (2008), in surveying school counselors, identified a whole range of contextual factors including

consequences for the family, family history, parental attitudes, mental health issues, input from administrators, school liability, and support systems outside the school.

Other contextual elements in counseling relationships include culture and community beliefs which may govern people's behaviors. An example of a core principle in ethics that naturally includes personal beliefs and values, is autonomy, both of the counselor and the client (Brennan, 2013). Another principle that envelops the relationship is beneficence, where the client's best interest is always a priority. Fidelity and justice also create the attitudes and ideas by which the counselor provides a safe environment for the prevention of discrimination of any form, but what that looks like in practice will depend on the definitions of the client, counselor, and culture. Creating a context of honesty and fairness in order to achieve non-maleficence, or preventing harm to the client (Brennan, 2013), is more than conforming to appropriate behaviors identified by the profession. Often neglected are the external influences in society such as politics, laws of the state or local area, and even religious rules and mores. In defining the ethical context of any situation, even time presses on the client and the counselor (Conyne & Cook, 2004).

Further Contextual Considerations

In the discussion of ethics, the context is particularly dynamic. Bronfenbrenner (1977) introduced the complexity of ecology in human interactions much like conceptualizing the web of influences in nature (Conyne & Cook, 2004; Cook, 2012). Ecological counseling purports that no individual is isolated, but rather is a part of an interconnected and complex system within multiple systems, all of which add

to the conceptualization of any behavior or moment in time. Beginning with the individual as the center point of reference, the next contextual level of influence involves the most important personal relationships to the individual as proximal contexts. Each relationship ties the individual to a group, like extended families and close neighbors and co-workers. There are multiple structured social systems that are less proximal, that include school or church. Geography may limit the extent of some more distal relationships but impact the individual through social policy, laws, media, and economic factors. Time, or the chronosystem, is an ecological principle wrapping all the other specific elements within a framework of understanding (Cook, 2012). Counselors do well to consider these layers of influence on the individual and how the interaction of levels impacts choices of behavior.

Thinking about Thinking about Issues

In counseling, counselors often step back and examine not only what is being said but consider the process; they become “mindful” (Siegel, 2000) of what is occurring and go “meta-” to the interaction and contemplate it as an outsider to gain perspective (Bateson, 1971). The facts of the discussion are one issue, but the understanding of the facts and the placement of those facts into some larger field of understanding can make considerable difference to the outcome of a counseling interaction. The differences in how people make meaning of their world and what happens in it makes each of them unique in how they do problem solving. How raw data is taken in from the world and transformed into meaningful information is likely “the most important tool that humans possess” (Cook, 2012,

p. 102).

For example, clients can offer a narrative about sleeplessness and later have surges of creativity, which the counselor would do well to summarize and attribute affect to. Now the counselor can take that information, the clients’ process of making and attending the appointment, their appearance at the appointment, the counselor’s personal reactions to clients, and a host of information and experience about humans, health, and pathology, and attribute meaning to the context. It could be that clients have finally found a career or activity that works for them, and they are confused by the power of such a revelation. It might be that they are slipping into bi-polar cycling and are excited by all of their imaginings. With some people the issues can be simple and straight-forward but often are not. The craftsmanship of counseling involves engaging all of these various contextual issues to establish meaning about what is occurring and what could be useful in counseling.

The authors attempt to perform a similar activity with ethical conversations and decisions that impact the profession. The desire is to analyze and better understand the ethical discussions that are occurring; what is occurring is more complicated than those clinical sounding words would indicate. Associating the behaviors that were documented with specific people in a specific situation, which is then embedded in layers of other cultural, legal, religious, and social systems, and defining appropriate ethical behavior is at least complicated.

Ethical Decision-making Models

Ethical decision-making models have been formulated to guide counselors

and school counselors in working with clients according to standards of the profession. Most ethical decision-making models attempt to organize analysis into a reasonable manageable process. Professional organizations create and maintain ethical codes to standardize practice and hold their members to competency in practice and legal behaviors that provide for safety of their constituents. Welfel’s (2006) model stands out as one that begins with developing a sensitivity for ethics, whereas others begin with problem identification. Some discussions dissect ethical discussions by organizing legal and ethical standards of care including avoiding “violating criminal or civil law” (Hill, 2004), following professional ethical standards (Forrester-Miller & Davis, 1996), or aspiring to still a higher level of conduct based on “moral principles” (Wong, 1998, p. 4). Forrester-Miller and Davis (1996) presented a seven-step model that includes use of the American Counseling Association (ACA) ethical code. Stone (2013) designed the STEPS model specifically for school counselors; this model, which is cited in the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) Ethical Code for School Counselors provides school counselors with an enumerated approach which is clear and concise. Kitchener (1984) developed a model including intuitive elements that are additive to the knowledge base of the professional, offering personal moral beliefs and wisdom to the situation. Following the initial level of analysis, Kitchener then progressed to a more critical level of analysis to consider the five core ethical principles.

While Kitchener’s (1984) model is linear, Cottone’s (2001) model is described as relational. Betan (1997) and Cottone

have a sensitivity to the context, which is closer to the ideas in this article. Cottone diverged from the logical linear models with more focus on interpersonal and relational concepts rooted in systems theory. Highly ecological in its attention to the interaction of people with their environment, Cottone’s model emphasizes the reality that is beyond the individual’s reality, or the combined perception within the unique context of the situation (Cottone & Tarvydas, 2016). Forrester-Miller and Davis (1996) purported the use of a professional code in making ethical decisions; whereas, Cottone created a question about how a consensus of professional thought, like a fixed code of ethical rules, informs the decision in the immediacy of the situation.

This elaboration of what is involved in ethical decision making is the purpose of this article. In addition to the laws and ethical principles of the profession, many attitudes and values are also present as Welfel (2006) noted; other related issues are involved as Betan (1997) offered; other relationships impinge on an ethical decision as Cottone (2001) suggested; and we suggest still other conceptualizations and offer examples.

Four “Bins” of Ethical Practice

Another example of a model which incorporates the importance of context in ethical decision-making is the Four Bins of Ethical Practice put forth by Behnke (2014), a trained professional with degrees in law, theology, and psychology. He was tasked for years by the American Psychological Association to oversee ethical issues and balance ethical issues with three other aspects or “bins” of human services including contiguous considerations along with ethical ones: legal issues, clinical best-practice, and risk-management.

When an event occurs in counseling, all of these competing perspectives need to be acknowledged. They can be at odds with each other and particularly with ethics. Although a counselor might do well to focus on one person who is struggling in a relationship and justify narrowing of focus from a risk-management or even clinical perspective, that individual's work may actually sabotage the relationship—the very issue that the client may have wanted to address. The ethical principles of beneficence and integrity could have been marginalized while not breaking the law or otherwise doing anything wrong. In other situations, ethics may have been supported, but risk-management was threatened or the law violated such as occurs when rigorous confidentiality is maintained when a sexually transmitted disease (STD) is involved. Others may be harmed in the process. Supporting one of the bins often creates a problem for one or more of the other bins. Any combination of potential tensions among these components could create difficulty in ethical considerations.

A Heuristic Model to Enhance Perspective

A model which further aids ethical decision-making for clients and students is Mobley's (2019) four-quadrant heuristic model which draws from millennia of philosophic thought about the human condition and the nature of the experienced world. Mobley's model incorporates thinking about patterns and choices in determining perspectives and allows for reflections on post-modernism and modernism. In general terms the world can be considered to either have reoccurring patterns (e.g., seasons, tides, cause-effect events) or not (e.g., any seemingly reoccurring pattern is an attempt by

humans to put structure where there is none and minimizes the details of what is occurring), and humans thought of as having the power to choose their fortunes (e.g., where to go or what to do) or not (e.g., circumstances limit choices to the point that no choice is actually occurring) (Mobley, Hall, & Crowell, 2008). The four quadrants that emerge from these intersecting assumptions about people and the world are 1) a no-choice no-pattern outlook, 2) a no-choice pattern perspective, 3) choice no-pattern view, and 4) choice pattern perspective. For simplicity, the odd quadrants that are colored grey can be associated with post-modern thinking while the even quadrants that are colored white (for black-and-white thinking) could be associated with modern thinking. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Four worldviews based on two opposing assumptions about the human condition and about the world (Mobley, 2009).

		Assumptions about the WORLD	
		No Patterns (Post-modernity)	Patterns (Modernity)
P E O P L E	No Choice	Quadrant 1 Chaos	Quadrant 2 Cycles
	Choice	Quadrant 3 Chance/ Luck	Quadrant 4 Consequences

Modern Ethics. Modernity seeks to replace superstitions and un-verified guesses with reason, and ultimately the scientific process attempts to address the behavioral sciences like the physical sciences and establishes best-practices, which is reflected in principles (Quadrant 4) and precedents (Quadrant 3). Believing

that people can make meaningful choices and that stimulate cause-effect patterns (Consequences) pairing choices with outcomes, ethics in Quadrant 4 is about the quality of those decisions and places responsibility on individuals for their choices. Quadrant 4 optimistically makes a ruling about what occurred, based on the principles involved in the situation. Situations are considered based on the evidence, and their context is minimized.

An example that might be used here is the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan by John Hinckley on March 30, 1981. The facts are clear cut. Hinckley committed a crime and through due process was found guilty. The behavior was established, and the laws were clear. This application is modernism at its best.

Quadrant 2 begins to place limits on the human condition and people's ability to make choices. Some events that impact people's lives are outside their responsibility and power. People cannot alter the coming and going of seasons or cataclysmic events; people, in large part, do not have the capacity to impact processes such as economics or politics. In Quadrant 2, the environment is less clear than in Quadrant 4. The application to ethics would most often rely on precedent to make any determination of right-ness or wrong-ness of behaviors. What has always been done is probably what should be done; a best-practice pattern should be established. If a principle (Quadrant 4) is not readily available to explain what needs to occur, a best-practice pattern should be established. The individual might choose to follow the precedent or not, but in Quadrant 2 humans are subservient to reoccurring patterns or cycles. It could be called the Cycle Quadrant.

As the Hinkley example illustrates, in spite of their disagreement on the role individuals play in the process, the contextual issues suggested by Quadrant 4's desire to establish rather unmovable rules and Quadrant 2's interest in finding suitable models on which to base its findings are discernable and reflect modernistic thinking. Patterns can be found and used as guidelines; this ecology, this perspective seemed to be involved in the initial Hinkley decisions.

Post-modern Ethics. Since Quadrant 1 says humans do not have the power of choice, and the world has no discernable organization to its events, it might be called the Chaos Quadrant. Nuances, complexities, and a multitude of options may abound here. Stuff happens, and people lack the capacity, power, or control to overcome a significant proportion of those events. In ethics, this perspective would drive the people involved to seek more details to attempt to understand the convolutions and minimize oversimplifications that are inherent in Quadrant 2 and 4 considerations of the ethics involved in a specific situation.

Quadrant 1 can also be illustrated by using John Hinckley's assassination attempt of President Reagan; the legal evidence for the crime was clear (Quadrant 4). However, when examined in light of Hinckley's mental disorder diagnosis, it can be concluded that he did not have the power of choice and that his view of the world was indeed chaotic. Going further than just saying he should be sentenced including mental health considerations (Quadrant 2), it was recently (Justia, 2014) determined that he should be essentially declared "Not Guilty" and released into the public when his mental

illness was managed. His mental illness was determined to have perpetrated the crime and was treated. The larger context changed significantly, and the resulting legal/ethical decision changed with it.

Finally, Quadrant 3 examines the perspective of someone who has the power to make choices, but the circumstances around those choices are like a roulette wheel and could give them great success or great failure or anything in between. People can do their part and choose a color and number, but winning may or may not happen. It is all about luck; this is the Chance Quadrant. Some people are lucky and have more colors and numbers--they are more likely to win. The opposite can also be true. Regardless of the facts and principles (Quadrant 4), the precedents (Quadrant 2) that could be brought to bear, or even the intricate details of the consideration (Quadrant 1), an ethical decision coming from this quadrant might be used to create a more-equal situation for those involved.

One more examination of the Hinckley case might clarify another aspect of the decision to release him. Under the lens of Quadrant 3, Hinckley would be viewed as having a choice, although limited by his mental disorder, of whether to carry out a specific socially unacceptable deed. It may well be that part of the context for discussion would be about past abuses and disservices extended to a variety of handicapped people who were imprisoned for a range of crimes that were actually committed against laws that were on the books (Quadrant 4). The precedents (Quadrant 2) may have been limited or poorly established—or just badly followed. In order to make a change, establish a new precedent, or possibly just do something

better, a more socially just decision might be made that thrusts these issues to a higher level of importance in the larger context than the specifics of the case. By itself, a Quadrant 3 righting the social status for mentally disabled people could be sufficient reason for Hinckley's release but in combination with the details of his illness (Quadrant 1), post-modern thinking overrides modern thinking (Quadrant 2 and 4).

Comments. The differences between modern and post-modern thinking are significant, but the battleground of their differences is clear in this heuristic model. Looking at the model, consider the diagonals. The strain across the diagonals is intense: Quadrant 1 keeps researching to understand all of the nuances of the situation while Quadrant 4 tries to offer clear directives and specifics in if-then propositions. Quadrant 4 addresses the high-relief of generalizations while Quadrant 1 thrives on details: all of the inequities, past conflicts, violations, and decisions.

Quadrant 2 is trying to maintain the status quo and re-invent the past while Quadrant 3 is working just as hard to alter the future and make a more perfect union. Quadrant 3 would be interested in having Quadrant 1 keep researching as long as the research pointed to inequities, past conflicts, violations, and decisions that would probably be affirmed by Quadrant 2. Quadrant 2 would like Quadrant 4 to make stronger guidelines that it could apply to make more and better precedents in order to speak to the barrage of issues raised by Quadrant 3. The world of ideas that is swirling around a specific ethical consideration seems to be considerable, but the application of this tool allows them to become more recognizable and

facilitates their incorporation into ethical decision making.

Difficult Decisions

By locating a counseling ethical issue in a particular quadrant, the contextual difficulties can be clarified. In the next discussion, each quadrant considers an ethical decision. The sequence moves from modernity (Quadrants 4 then 2) to post-modernity

(Quadrants 1 then 3) perspectives. Quadrant 4 (Consequences)

Example: Child abuse reporting. Appropriate and inappropriate child welfare responses are clear and based on years of law and practice; professionals are trained and re-trained to make sure they avoid legal issues by reporting suspected child abuse. Even though the guidelines and laws are clear for mandated reporters, in deciding whether making a report is justified, professionals must weigh many factors: is there enough evidence, what will happen to relationship with client? Without exploring far from the basics of what is required in this modernistic structure, challenges can occur, but the issues seem to be clearer in this quadrant than the other three.

Quadrant 2 (Cycles)

Example: Use of Qualified Privilege.

In the school setting, counselors may convey information to teachers or other school personnel if the purpose is to assist and enhance the education of students (Stone, 2013). This behavior is standard practice in schools because it is believed that teachers need to know what is going on with students in order to serve them more effectively--there is an established pattern. By offering direction to faculty and administration about possible appropriate

interventions about the client, the school counselor might make a case for using the privileged information rather than disclosing it to others. The reason(s) for the suggested intervention might not be offered to avoid exposing confidential information. Precedents offer guidelines that counselors can follow in order to be ethical in their helping students even in this compromising environment. The context of the school can offer some interesting limitations to privilege in order to do what is best for the student.

Quadrant 1 (Chaos)

Example: Confidentiality Is Not an Absolute Right.

Application of the well-known Tarasoff ruling to protect potential, identifiable persons from HIV/AIDS (Cleveland & Hook, 1999) has been examined. In situations in which counselors have referenced the Tarasoff ruling in deciding whether to breach confidentiality, actually breaking confidentiality was the fourth most frequently occurring action employed to protect others. Counselors have the choice of whether to break confidentiality and warn possible victims, which gives them much power. However, there is a randomness here in patterns of reporting: 1) state laws vary in whether clinicians have a duty to warn; 2) there is variation in ethical codes (ACA, APA) in defining "high risk" and "identifiable" persons; 3) in some states counselors could be held liable for disclosing information, whereas in other states, counselors could be held liable for failing to disclose information. Thus, protecting clients and getting into trouble for disclosure are up to chance, depending on what state you are in and what ethical codes you are responsible to. The larger context can become quite significant.

Quadrant 3 (Chance/luck)

Example: Providing Services to Clients.

A suicidal “undocumented immigrant who had been physically abused by her former partner” was seeking counseling. But citing the current budget crisis, “the state’s governor recently issued an executive order prohibiting state-funded agencies from providing health and social services to undocumented immigrants” (Reamer, 2008, para. 2-3). The counselor can take a chance in this situation and render services and get caught or not, or not see the client because he is bound by the agency from providing services and possibly be censured for an ethical lapse. Chance abounds. Random events influence the provision of services: the person being in the country, the events that caused the immigrant to seek counseling, her showing up at the agency in that state, the state’s money issues, and the governor’s response. The context can be powerful. One more case illustrates the situation and the quadrants profoundly.

May v. Georgia. Another example helps to illustrate how using the lens of the proposed contextual model might help in examining an ethical dilemma. While this case involves a teacher (Justia, 2014) rather than a counselor, it is an example of a collision between more traditional interpretations and postmodern views. In *May v. Georgia*, the Georgia Supreme Court heard a case involving a teacher, Kristin May, who was charged with not following Georgia’s mandated child abuse reporting guidelines. A student who had transferred from the teacher’s school, confided to her after transferring about sexual involvement with a male teacher at the school. She was charged with not reporting this information.

Traditionally, most professionals would

probably look at this dilemma in terms of Quadrant 4, involving no choice and patterns, in that laws and guidelines are in place for mandated reporters who receive training on such, or Quadrant 2, involving patterns or precedents. Professionals can decide whether they abide by the legal and ethical demands of reporting, both by weighing whether there is enough credible evidence to report and by choosing whether or not to report, but the seemingly established response is clear. Thus, these modern views to this possible ethical dilemma would lead to a fairly clear-cut decision.

Ms. May appealed her charge to the Georgia Supreme Court on the grounds that she was not required to report due to not having an existing relationship with the student at the time of the report and because she believed the authorities must prove she had an evil purpose in not reporting—based on Georgia laws’ assertion that the law is violated if the reporter knowingly and willfully did not report. These details go beyond a typical application of the law (Quadrant 4) and precedents (Quadrant 2) and propel the discussion into Quadrant 1, the myriad of details. Georgia having this “evil purpose” clause inserts a state variation that can create chaos among professionals about the mandated reporter role. These details changed the entire outcome, and the failure to report decision was reversed by the Georgia Supreme Court.

In this case it was later learned that some incredible coincidences (Quadrant 3) were occurring: the teacher, who was a mandated reporter, was also having an affair with the alleged perpetrator. Her failure to report may have had other motivations associated with it. This point

is a reminder that many ethical decisions might be influenced by school and local politics, donors and other significant people in the school and community, or still other outside influences.

Ultimately, the Georgia Supreme Court (Justia, 2014) threw, or added, a wrench into the decision-making process by rendering a decision based on a more postmodern view—that of Quadrant 3 in which choice is involved, yet the patterns are unclear. The court wrote, “In our search for the meaning of a particular statutory provision, we look not only to the words of that provision, we consider its legal context as well” (p. 6). The pattern of reporting all suspected cases of child abuse was challenged because the court ruled that in order for the teacher to have been required to report she would have had to have a current professional relationship with the student and an evil intent by not reporting.

Others may view this scenario from the Quadrant 1 lens of chaos. Seemingly, the mandated reporters had no choice but to report alleged abuse, but the dynamics of this case were much less clear than some. The context here, which resulted in more postmodern interpretations being thrown into the mix, yields a less rigid and less clear approach. The laws, ethical guidelines, and best-practices need to be followed, but the specific application of those rules, guidelines, and attitudes can be strongly informed by events and considerations occurring in the context around the ethical consideration.

Conclusion

As the world has changed from a modern perspective, where clear guidelines and definable directives are available, to a post-modern environment, with an emphasis

on individual perception and situational nuances, counseling ethical discussions can be as concerned with the context in which they occur as the principles and precedents that are involved. Behavior that is adaptive in one setting may not work elsewhere or in other situations or even in the same setting at another time. Contexts are proximal, salient, and embedded in human and nonhuman features within the interactions of humans with their environments. People experience attempts to understand human behavior with what is called an “uneasy reconciliation between individual motivations and social imperatives” (Cook, 2012, p. 3). Natural laws govern our daily lives within each ecosystem. What makes people different from the metaphor of ecology in physical science is humans’ ability to think and act upon their lives. Complexity reigns. Making sense out of this complexity is a worthwhile undertaking.

References

- Bateson, G. (2000). Steps to an ecology of mind: *Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago.
- Behnke, S. (2014). Keeping a clinical focus. *APA Monitor on Psychology*, 45(8), 66-67.
- Betan, E. J. (1997). Toward a hermeneutic model of ethical decision making in clinical practice. *Ethics & Behavior*, 7, 347-365.
- Brennan, C. (2013). Ensuring ethical practice: Guidelines for mental health

counselors in private practice. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 35(3), 245-261.

Cleveland, M. K., & Hook, J. L. (1999). To tell or not to tell: Breaching confidentiality with clients with HIV and AIDS. *Ethics and Behavior*, 9(4), 365 – 381.

Conyne, R. K., & Cook, E. P. (Eds.) (2004). *Ecological counseling: An innovative approach to conceptualizing person-environment interaction*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Cook, E. P. (Ed.) (2012). *Understanding people in context: The ecological perspective in counseling*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Cottone, R. R. (2001). A social constructivism model of ethical decision-making in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 79, 39-45.

Cottone, R. R., & Claus, R. E. (2000). Ethical decision making models: A review of the literature. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78(3), 275-283.

Cottone, R. C., & Tarvydas, V. (2016). *Ethics and decision making in counseling and psychotherapy* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Springer.

Forester-Miller, H., & Davis, T. E. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to ethical decision making*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Hicks, J., Noble, N., Berry, S., Talbert, S., Crews, C., Li, J., & Castillo, Y. (2014). An ethics challenge for school counselors: Part 2. *Journal of School Counseling*, 12(1). Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1034758>.

Hill, A. L. (2004). Ethical analysis in counseling: A case for narrative ethics, moral visions, and virtue ethics. *Counseling and Values*, 48(2), 131- 148.

Kitchener, K. S. (1984). Intuition, critical evaluation, and ethical principles: The foundation for ethical decisions in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 12, 43-55.

May v. Georgia. (2014). Retrieved from <http://law.justia.com/cases/georgia/supreme-court/2014/s14a0309.html>

Mobley, J. (2009). 'Crash': Postmodernism meets modernism. *Vistas 2009*. Washington, DC: ACA.

Mobley, J., Hall, K., & Ellis, J. (2008, fall). Toward a pedagogy of counselor education. *ACES Spectrum*, 69, 16-23.

Neukrug, E. S., & Milliken, T. (2011). Counselors' perceptions of ethical behaviors. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 89, 206–216. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00079.x

Rothstein, M. A. (2014). Tarasoff duties after Newtown. *Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics*, 42(1), 104-109.

Siegel, D. (2007). *The mindful brain: Reflection and attunement in the cultivation of well-being*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton Company.

Stone, C. (2013). *School Counseling Principles: Ethics and law*. Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

Sullivan, J., & Moyer, M. (2008). Factors influencing the decision to break confidentiality with adolescent students:

A survey of school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling*, 6(24). Retrieved from <https://eric.gov/?id=EJ894795>.

Professional School Counseling Literature (Book) Reviews

The following books have been reviewed by Dr. Karen Rowland and her students who were school counselors-in-training at Mercer University for a course assignment.

Elementary School Level

The Anti-Test Anxiety Society by Julia Cooks is a book that follow Bertha Billingsworth, (BB), on her journey through school, and her struggles with test anxiety. BB discusses how awful tests are for her,



and how she feels every single time she has to take a test. Her face turns red, her hair sticks up, she sweats, her stomach starts to hurt, and she cannot seem to control her feet. No matter how hard

she studies, and how well she knows the material, when she hears the word “test” she always does terrible on it. Her teacher tells BB about the Anti-Test Anxiety Society and believes she should join this club. The club is for kids who believe they CAN prepare the right way for a test, so they CAN do their best when taking one. BB learns to use the “Get To” part of her brain that allows her brain to fill up whenever she tries. More importantly, BB learns about the dynamic dozen which are 12 simple things she can do to lessen her test anxiety.

Tell yourself you CAN do well, that TEST stands for “Think Each Situation Through;” don’t cram, instead, spread out your studying time over a few days or weeks; when you study, draw a picture of what you are learning inside your head; exercise every day, it will make you feel great; get

a good night’s sleep the night before your test so your brain and body aren’t tired and worn out; stay relaxed, if you start to stress out right before your test, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and go on a mini-mental vacation to your happiest place; read the directions slowly and carefully; skim through the test so you know how long it is; write down the important stuff that you need to memorize at the top or on the side of your test paper, so they don’t clog up your brain and you don’t forget to use them; and finally, do the easy questions first to build up your confidence then you will have more time to work on the harder ones.

After learning about the dynamic dozen, BB decides to give it a try and learns how to control her test anxiety. TEST no longer stands for “Terrible Every Single Time” but it now means “Terrific Every Single Time.”

A Core Curriculum Classroom Guidance Lesson Using The Anti-Test Anxiety Society

This book could be used in the school counseling program core curriculum as a classroom guidance given to students in 3rd through 5th grades in preparation for a state test such as the Georgia Milestones. The school counselor will read the book, The Anti-Test Anxiety Society, to the class and will follow up with a discussion of what test anxiety is with the students and how it makes them feel. The counselor will ask students about BB and how she was able to overcome her test anxiety. Discussion

questions will also include, what is the dynamic dozen and how can it help us?

The school counselor will also write the dynamic dozen on the board as the students call them out, and will discuss each one to make sure the students understand exactly how to use these strategies when it comes to testing or academic anxiety. After discussing the dynamic dozen with the students, the school counselor will ask the class to think of any other strategies that would be helpful when taking a test. Each strategy will be discussed. The school counselor will hand out a sheet of paper for student to draw a big shield on his or her paper. The school counselor will explain that the students will create their own worry shield to protect them when they start to worry or feel anxious about tests or even their school and/or homework. Students will be instructed to draw, write, and color strategies (discussed in the lesson), on their shield that will help to protect them when they feel anxious. These shields may be kept inside the students’ desks for them to pull out and look at if they start to feel anxious or worried.

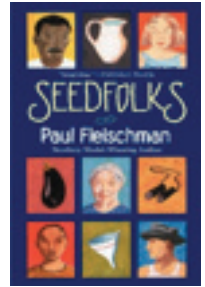
Reference

Cook, J. (2014). *The Anti-Test Anxiety Society*. National Center for Youth Issues. Chattanooga, TN: Starkey Printing.

Middle School Level

Seedfolks by Paul Fieschman with illustrations by Judy Pederson was published by Harper Collins in 2002. This book works well for middle school students and in some cases, possibly upper elementary school students as well. Its division into chapters and short chapter length allows it to be useful in the school counseling program’s core

curriculum in the classroom setting, small group counseling, and/or even brief individual sessions. Its paperback version makes it accessible for the school to purchase multiple copies for the counseling program use. The book consists of thirteen chapters, each narrated by a different character with a central theme of diversity awareness. The story centers around a vacant lot in Cleveland in which the narrators plant a community garden. As students read each narrator’s story, they learn not only about the happenings in the community garden but also about the diverse experiences, culture, race, and past of each narrator.



The story starts with Kim, a nine-year-old Vietnamese girl who plants lima beans in the vacant lot next to her building in order to connect with her father, who is dead but was a farmer in Vietnam. Next Ana, a nosy elderly Romanian woman, who investigates and then observes Kim. Wendell, an older white gentleman who has experienced loss, puts his knowledge of farming to use in the garden. Gonzalo, a teenager from Guatemala, helps his uncle Tio Juan add to the garden, Leona, an African American woman, is committed to cleaning up the vacant lot, and Sam, an elderly Jewish man, helps build the community relationships surrounding the garden. Virgil, who is just a fifth grader, helps his dad grow lettuce in the garden, and Sae Young faces her fears as she joins in. Curtis learns how to be sensitive and not just a body builder, by caring for the plants, while Nora helps Mr. Myles, who is disabled,

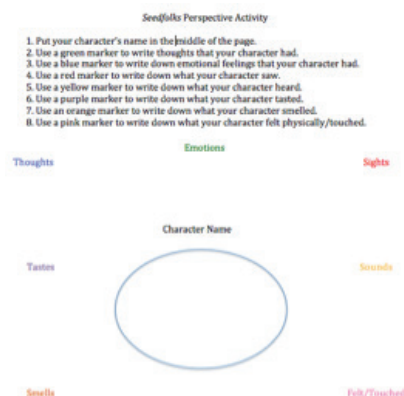
participate in the community garden. Maricela, a pregnant adolescent, finds support and community there, Amir, who is Indian, wants to develop relationships as he grows his vegetables and even protects the community from a mugger, and finally, there's Florence, another protector of the garden. As students read the story from each character's perspective, they come to see how without each of these characters, the garden could not be what it is.

Though this book could certainly be used in individual sessions, the community emphasis of the book lends itself to a group or classroom guidance unit rather than just for individual use. Comparing and contrasting the characters' experiences and discussing the different perspectives, as well as comparing the characters to their own experiences and discussion of this comparison, will provide for a richer experience for students that could be an important part of a multicultural curriculum. Leading these kinds of discussions with students will also help prevent issues resulting from misunderstanding, especially when it comes to culture and race.

A Core Curriculum Classroom Guidance Lesson Using Seedfolks

A 45 minutes classroom guidance lesson drawing on Seedfolks would include a 3 - 5 minutes introduction of the book and the idea of different perspectives, followed by a 25 minutes examination of one or two chapters from the book. The school counselor would split students into groups of 3 to 4 and distribute the book assigning one of 2 stories from Seedfolks, chosen to each group. The school counselor would then explain that each group should read the story they have been given quietly then complete the Seedfolks Perspective sheet (see Figure 1) by putting the character of

the story they read in the center of their worksheet. The group is instructed to identify the character's thoughts, emotions, what is seen, heard, tasted, smelled, and physically felt in the character's experience. Some categories may have to be left blank. Figure 1



For the last fifteen minutes of class, students would present their Perspective sheets. As more students present, students will start to see the differing experiences of each character and how the characters come together to build a garden. Throughout the group presentations, asks the class to discuss similarities and differences between characters. Collect all of the Perspective sheets. End the class asking students to think about their own experiences and how they might fit into the story.

This lesson could be extended into an examination of individual cultural groups and the differences within these groups as well. For example, a school counselor could help students understand the variety and vast cultural differences within the Asian American population by having students complete a venn diagram looking at the similarities and differences between

Kim, Sae Young, Amir, and themselves. The school counselor could project the Perspective sheets for Kim, Sae Young, and Amir on the board to help students remember the stories. The school counselor could follow this activity with a discussion of the venn diagram as a class. The class would then discuss common characteristics of Asian cultures but discuss how each Asian group may differ. The class would also discuss students' thoughts in looking at the similarities and differences, especially when comparing themselves to the characters in the story. This activity may also be replicated with other character groupings, such as the Caribbean and African American characters.

Reference

Flieschman, P. (1997). New York, NY: Harper Collins.

High School Level

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely takes on the challenging topics of police brutality, racial tension, and tolerance from the alternating perspectives of two students at Springfield Central High School, Rashad Butler and Quinn Collins. The story begins with Rashad, a 16-year-old African American student and a member of his school's R.O.T.C., being falsely accused of shoplifting after accidentally causing a raucous in a convenience store. When confronted by Officer Galluzzo about the situation, Rashad attempts to explain himself but winds up looking as if he is resisting arrest, resulting



in Officer Galluzzo forcing him down onto the ground and handcuffing him. Quinn Collins, an 18-year-old white student and member of the school's basketball team, who has been under the care of Officer Galluzzo since his father died in active duty, witnesses the entire incident. Officer Galluzzo's behavior and actions in the store are called into question and he is accused of police brutality and racial discrimination. Eventually news of the incident spreads, opinions form, tensions rise, and a divide develops throughout the school and the town.

As a result of the incident, Rashad ends up in the hospital, missing multiple days of school. When Rashad misses yet another day of school, an unknown person graffiti's "Rashad is absent again today" on the school sidewalk for everyone to see as a way to make a statement about an innocent, hard-working student who is still suffering as a result of the actions of an aggressive police officer. Outraged, students spring into action and protest the wrongdoing that their fellow classmate has recently faced. Still in the hospital, Rashad hears word of the protests and is encouraged, but remains powerless by the negative images of him portrayed on the news. On the other hand, Quinn wrestles with figuring out the "right thing" to do. The longer Rashad is absent from school, the more Quinn sees that Office Galluzzo's actions might not have been warranted. Quinn eventually decides that coming forward and telling the truth about what happened the day is the best decision because he would only be making the problem worse by staying quiet.

Recommended Use

With such a high prevalence of racial remarks and discrimination occurring in

schools across the United States there remains a need for interventions centered on diversity, tolerance, and understanding. For some students, schools are often the only place they truly feel safe and comfortable and when negative slurs are thrown around and students are being discriminated against based on the color of their skin, that one place is ruined. A primary responsibility of the school counselor is to ensure that students feel comfortable and welcome in school. By opening up the conversation and educating students on racism, discrimination, the value of diversity, and acceptance, school counselors are taking the necessary steps in making students feel safe, accepted, and welcome again.

A Core Curriculum Classroom Guidance Lesson Using All American Boys

Utilizing All American Boys in the classroom guidance setting would provide school counselors with a helpful framework by which to base these challenging, but necessary lessons on. In a time with so much prejudice, brutality, and inequality, stories like Reynolds and Kiely's All American Boys must be told.

As a popular book across middle school summer reading lists, All American Boys would serve as a transition piece from summer reading into a classroom guidance lesson. To begin the lesson, the school counselor would conduct a brief discussion about racial prejudice, inequality, and tolerance. The school counselor would also read a concise current events articles about the previously mentioned topics to further the discussion, as well as relate it back to All American Boys. Next, the school counselor would conduct an activity called Cross the Line. Prior to the lesson,

the school counselor would set up the classroom with all of the desks lining the walls so there is open space in the middle where students can walk from one side to the other and then place a long piece of masking tape down the center of the room. The school counselor would then provide the directions and expectations of the activity, as well as relay to the students that they do not have to cross the line when their "group" is called if they do not feel comfortable doing so. To begin the activity the school counselor would read aloud an experience and students who have had that experience that will cross over the line on the floor. Example experiences can include: cross the line if you've ever felt unwelcome, teased, or judged because of the color of your skin, if someone's ever been mean to you or your friend and you were too afraid to say something about it, or if you've ever been told you couldn't do something because you are a boy or a girl. The school counselor would then ask the students who have crossed over the line to turn around and face the students who have not had that experience. The school counselor would then ask the students to reflect on how it feels to cross the line and see their fellow students cross the line as well. The school counselor would then ask the students to return to their original spots on the other side of the tape, rejoining the group (Operation Respect, 2018). The school counselor would repeat these steps with each experience. Following the activity, the school counselor would process what the students felt during the activity. Although this activity is commonly used in diversity training, it is very applicable in the high school setting to allow students to begin the conversation on race relations, awareness, understanding, tolerance, acceptance and/or respect.

Reference

Reynolds, J., & Kiely, B. (2017). All American boys. NY, NY: Atheneum, Simon & Schuster Childrens Publishing Division.

Author Submission Guidelines

- Visit gaschoolcounselor.com for more information on guidelines.

Practicing school counselors at all school levels, their supervisors, school counselor educators, graduate students, and related professionals are encouraged to submit original works.

Manuscripts that reflect creativity and critical thinking, as well as speak to timely issues, will be given the highest publication consideration.

All manuscripts should conform to the guidelines for publication listed in the latest Edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual.

Manuscripts which are currently under publication consideration by another publisher, or previously published work should not be submitted. Only original material will be reviewed.

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word attachment to the GSCA Journal Editor at journal@gaschoolcounselors.com.

Manuscripts will be accepted throughout the year. The journal will be published once per year in November.

Manuscripts longer than 20 pages will not be reviewed. Keep titles and headings concise.

Manuscripts should include:

- Cover page with: article title, name, title, institution, address, phone number, e-mail address for each author. Primary authors should be designated as the contact person on manuscripts with multiple authors; and author identification should not appear on any page other than the title page in order that the Editorial Review Board may conduct a blind review of the manuscript.
- Abstract of the article should not be more than 75 words.
- Cover letter in which the merits of the manuscript are briefly described, and a statement indicating that the manuscript is an original work not under review consideration or previously published elsewhere is included.

Author(s) bear full responsibility for the accuracy of their submission.

Each manuscript will be reviewed by a minimum of two editors. All authors will be notified of initial receipt of manuscripts, as well as a final determination regarding the manuscript.

Approximately sixty (60) days after the "Acknowledgment of Receipt of Manuscript" email is sent to the Author(s), the GSCA journal will provide an electronic Notice to the Author(s) concerning a determination regarding the manuscript. Specifically, the Notice will indicate whether the manuscript is:

- Accepted for publication.
- Under Consideration and Requires Resubmission.
- Rejected and will not be published in the GSCA journal.



GSCA Executive Office
1827 Powers Ferry Road
Building 14, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30339
Ph: 770-971-6002
info@gaschoolcounselor.com