GSCA Georgia School Counselors Association

Journal

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Editorial Review Board

Special thanks to Dr. Fran Mullis, Georgia State University 2006 Editor for all of her assistance and especially for her patience with my many questions.

Contents

From your GSCA President

The GSCA *Journal*, now in its 14th edition, has become a vital communication link for our association and its members. It provides opportunities for members to share with each other the effective practices and procedures that enhance their school counseling programs, and that promote student success. In addition, it serves as a bridge between theory and practice, exemplifying how data driven counseling intervention strategies inform and enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of school counseling programs.

The *Journal* also serves the association as a public relations tool. Placed in the hands of State legislators, school administrators, and community leaders, the *Journal* serves to advocate for the profession by showcasing the achievements of school counselors and school counseling programs across the state. In line with the 2007-2008 association's theme "It is better to build children than to repair adults?" the *Journal* demonstrates to our various publics" that school counselors are focused upon not only meeting the needs of students facing problems, but on empowering all students to achieve to their full potential.

Having served as the *Journal* editor for 3 years and on the editorial review board for 6 years, I am personally very proud of the excellent publication our association's *Journal* has become. I appreciate all the work the editorial review board members have done throughout these 14 years, especially that of the editors themselves. Dr. Susan Boes and her editorial board are to be commended for the publication of this, another excellent edition of the GSCA *Journal*.

Please join me in complimenting Susan and the editorial review board members on their achievement. Extend your congratulations as well to the authors of the articles in this edition of the *Journal*. They have made a significant contribution to our association and the profession. In addition, on behalf of GSCA I would like to express our appreciation to retiring editorial review board members, Judy Carpenter, Carol Lane, and Ginny McCarty for their many years of service.

Semper Pro,

Jim Bergin

Dr. Jim Bergin
GSCA President, 2007-2008

From the *Journal* Editor

As the newest person to be invited to be the GSCA *Journal* editor I am honored to join such a prestigious group. Because of the efforts of the many loyal editorial review board members as well as those folks new to the board this year, it is with great pleasure that I present the 2007 edition. On behalf of the editorial review board, I thank all of the authors who submitted articles for the 2007 GSCA *Journal*. In today's world school counselors are held accountable to many stakeholders. They perform many tasks that are different from those duties first taught to them in training programs so it is especially important that we in the school counseling field keep abreast of the trends and issues in the field. It is with much appreciation that I present the work of these dedicated practitioners and educators, who took the time to write, submit and revise their manuscripts. It is not always easy to put one's work on the line by submitting it to the review of others but the authors did an exceptional job of developing their ideas while aligning their manuscripts to the suggestions of the reviewers. These reviews are meant to strengthen the articles so that the best work of the authors is presented. The editorial review board members and I believe you will find many useful ideas in this edition of the *Journal*.

There are two timely articles connected to accountability as they are about action research. The first article by Mason and Uwah explains a simple plan to follow to complete an action research study while Munro's article takes you through the process she experienced as she completed her research study. McWhorter describes a successful plan for transitioning at-risk students. Another timely piece is the manuscript discussing self-injury which unfortunately more school counselors are dealing with on an almost daily basis. Chibbaro's suggestions for treating individuals with self-injury issues can be helpful. DeLambo and his coauthors provide helpful information for school counselors to utilize when they are working with students with disabilities. The article by Schulz describes a practitioner's conceptualization for the supervision of school counselors-in-training. Since school counselors often receive little supervision once they leave their training program, this article may prove enlightening to those who are asked to supervise a school counselor candidate. The manuscript by Giddings-Jackson and Wray describing how to keep ourselves healthy is worth reading. We all need to relax more and stay healthy. Finally, strategies for developing an ideal relationship with administrators are the focus of the article written by Edwards.

This year's issue introduces a "special features" column entitled Networking Notebook which contains brief anecdotes about successful programs or strategies used by members of our organization. Games school counselors have used that were successful with building a trusting relationship are briefly described by Klias and the second feature in this column describes Dugan's successful transition program for freshmen to high school. Our feature editor Leann Logsdon enjoys working with authors who have success stories to share. We would love to see more entries next year.

This year President Jim Begin revamped the review board members' terms so that each serves for a term of 3 years. It was my pleasure to work with several new reviewers this year: Jim Klein, Kerry Sebera, and Brenda Cannington. I also was grateful to draw on the vast experience of other reviewers. These reviewers included Ginny McCarty, Judy Carpenter, Carol Lane, Roger Lotson, and Lynn Hunnicutt. I am pleased that Leann Logsdon, Lisa Schulz, and Rhonda Bryant joined the review board in July, 2007. But most of all I was fortunate to have the help of Hope Munro, an EdS student in the school counseling program at the University of West Georgia (UWG) who worked with me all summer as my editorial assistant. Hope, while learning the responsibilities of an editor, assisted me by setting up a filing system, reading manuscripts carefully for typos and other APA errors, and preparing letters to send to authors and reviewers. Her help was invaluable and I am much appreciative. I, especially, thank Dr. Fran Mullis, your previous GSCA *Journal* Editor. I could not have done the job without her guidance and support. She was patient with my countless questions and I appreciate her direction. Finally, I thank Dr. Brent Snow, my department chair, for his help in making this issue possible. During the transition period for the Leadership Team, he allowed me the use of our departmental materials. He was also supportive of the time commitment to learn the management perspective of the *Journal*.

I know you will enjoy reading this issue and expect that you will find many useful ideas to incorporate into your school counseling program. Please seriously consider submitting a manuscript for next year's *Journal* (check out the revamped guidelines for submissions). The official deadline is May 1, 2008 but I gladly accept manuscripts all year. It may be a better plan for some of you to write the manuscript during winter break because spring schedules for school counselors are so busy. Best intentions can get bypassed by other duties, so if you have an idea please put pen to paper now and send it in. Additionally, if anyone is interested in joining the editorial review board now or sometime in the future, please let me know by using my UWG email: sboes@westga.edu.

Susan R. Boes, PhD
Editor

An Eight-Step Action Research Model for School Counselors

E.C.M. Mason
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ABSTRACT

This article presents an eight-step model for the school counselor implementing action research at the local school. The article reviews the current literature on the need for school counseling research at the practitioner level. Action research and outcome research practices are discussed as they pertain to the field of school counseling.

School counseling has struggled over the years to firmly establish a professional identity (Schmidt, 1999). Paisley and Borders (1995) described school counseling as an "evolving specialty" in which changes in the social, political, and educational climates often result in a shift in focus. School Counseling history demonstrates a change from individual and vocational guidance to a comprehensive and developmental model (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Paisley & Borders; The Education Trust, 2002). Some authors have noted a shift in school counseling from a service delivery model towards more of an emphasis on outcomes (Borders & Drury, 1992; Gysbers & Henderson).

This shift has been prompted by state and federal policies that have necessitated an increase in the accountability measures of school counseling practice. One such policy is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) Act, federal legislation focused on measured accountability for achievement. As a result, a new identity emphasizing leadership, collaboration, and the academic success of all students is being established (The Education Trust, 2002; House & Hayes, 2002). Because of this new identity, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has called for an increase in the use of data to address programmatic improvement (American School Counselor Association, 2003). The importance of data collection has also been emphasized as a means to assess programmatic needs and effectiveness (Dahir & Stone, 2003; Myrick, 2003).

In the current climate of accountability, professional school counselors are challenged to demonstrate how counseling services impact achievement (Kaffenberger & Young, 2007). The importance of empirical research to the school counseling field has received considerable attention in the professional literature (Greising, 1967; Isaacs, 2003; Myrick, 1990; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Otwell and Mullis (1997) discussed counselor accountability and the importance of measuring academic results of counseling interventions. School counseling research has been stressed as a way to support assumptions (Cramer, Herr, Morris, & Franz, 1970), assess needs, and plan for future programs (Fall & VanZandt, 1997). Moreover, Paisley and McMahon asserted that counselors might be better able to justify and market their programs if they demonstrate that research has indicated their effectiveness. Despite such urgings, school counselors have generally been resistant to conducting research.

Counselor Resistance

Research, according to Campbell (1986, p. 2), is the "backbone of guidance and counseling theory and practice." Yet, school

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counselors generally have been hesitant to initiate research. The idea of conducting research often "evokes such emotional reactions of fear, anxiety, and even disdain" (Fall & VanZandt, 1997, p. 2). Many reasons have been cited for this apparent lack of interest or even contempt: little or no formal training in research design or strategies (Fairchild, 1993); lack of confidence about research methods and processes; and lack of counselors' ability to utilize and apply data to their practices in a meaningful way (Astramovich, Coker, Hoskins, 2005). Other factors that may be preventing school counselors from conducting research and undertaking program evaluation include concerns that research is too cumbersome and time consuming (Lusky & Hayes, 2001).

School counselors are currently being charged to find the balance between practice and research (Bauman, 2004; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Otwell & Mullis, 1997; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). While most school counselors see the value of research to their practices (Bauman), most cite a lack of time as a significant barrier. Moreover, it has been suggested that multiple demands limit the research practicing school counselors can reasonably assume (Astramovich et al., 2005; Bauman et al., 2002). The multiple, and often times competing, demands placed on school counselors can be time and energy consuming. Therefore, counseling evaluation methods must be efficient and must generate meaningful data (Astramovich et al.).

Research that is "do-able": Action Research

School counselors might ask themselves, *"Does this small group experience help decrease absenteeism?"* or *"Are there less incidents of bullying when students complete coping skills training?"* These and other questions are related to outcome and action research. Outcome research is a focus within counseling research that attempts to document the impact of an intervention (Heppner, Kivlighan & Wampold, 1999). One of the latest trends within education and psychology is research oriented towards an applied focus, or action research (Hadley & Mitchell, 1995; Mertler & Charles, 2005). There are many ways school counselors can employ outcome or action research to demonstrate the efficacy of their interventions. For example, counselors can make use of quantitative methods, as well as interviews following individual, group or classroom guidance activities.

Rowell (2005) contends that action research, focused on counseling outcomes, has significant implications for the future of school counseling as a profession. Action research has been described as a link between practice and research (Rowell; Whiston, 1996). Many school counselors have expressed a need to find practical assessment methods to provide documentation of their effectiveness with students (Astramovich et al., 2005). Therefore, in an attempt to address such a request a practical model for integrating basic research strategies into school counseling practices is presented. This model, developed by a practicing school counselor, delineates an eight-step approach for conducting outcome research in the schools.

An Eight Step Action Research Model

Following is a "how-to" outline written by a practicing school counselor with the intention of giving other practitioners a concrete list of steps to follow and pitfalls to avoid. The outline is discussed in further detail.

Step 1: Identify Data Sources.

Practicing school counselors find that the most obvious place for data collection is the local school. Data is readily available and is the most meaningful to the counselor. A few examples of local school data include attendance and discipline records, test scores, report card grades, standardized testing reports, and graduation and retention rates. The mandates of No Child Left Behind (2001) indicate that data sources about achievement (i.e., test scores, report card grades, and graduation rates) are the most powerful data sources for securing the funding and ensuring the future of counselor positions. The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI; The Education Trust, 2002) material specifically advises school counselors to examine "achievement gaps" between or within groups of learners. School counselors can access local or state websites for school data or consult the school improvement plan. Other data may be

available from administrators or school staff members. Side benefits of gathering this data include building relationships, and establishing credibility with others. Additionally, school counselors demonstrate to administration and faculty a desire to be part of the larger educational goals of the school.

Step 2: Decide What To Study.

Looking at the data, school counselors should consider three points: (a) *"What data peeks my curiosity?"* (b) *"What kind of study aligns with the school's plan for improvement?"* (c) *"Which data fit well with an intervention that is already in place or that there are plans to implement?"* In examining the data, these questions will help the school counselor formulate a project that is interesting to him or her, relevant to the school, and practical to design and complete.

Step 3: Formulate The Research Question.

A research question is the sine qua non of action research. If a colleague, administrator or stakeholder asks the reason for a particular intervention, the practitioner should rephrase the research questions as a statement. For example, if someone inquires about the purpose of a guidance lesson on test taking strategies, the school counselor can respond by saying "I am investigating whether or not there is a difference in students' classroom test scores after receiving information about test taking strategies." With regard to research questions, the simpler, the better. A single variable can be enough given the busy nature of school counseling. Examples of research questions are as follows: *"Is there a relationship between my small group counseling intervention for absenteeism and the participants' school attendance?"* or *"Is there a relationship between report card grades of students at risk of failure and large group guidance sessions on study skills?"*

Step 4: Select Or Design Your Intervention.

Based on the data selected and the research question(s) created, counselors can choose an intervention that is already in place, or plan a new intervention. Evaluating interventions that are already in place is a data driven practice itself that can provide valuable information about the scope and effectiveness of a program.

When planning a new intervention, consider the following questions: (a) *How can the intervention be simple and focused?* Multiple components (i.e., individual counseling, group counseling, parent consultation) can make an intervention time-consuming to implement, difficult to track, and the resulting data difficult to analyze; (b) *What will be the unit of measurement?* (i.e., grades, test scores, demonstration of particular skills); (c) *How much time is needed to implement the intervention?* Projects may take longer than planned and it is wise practice to build in extra time in case there are obstacles. A solid intervention needs a planning stage, an implementation stage and an evaluation stage; (d) *What resources are needed?* (i.e., other staff, funding, materials). Collaborating with others to conduct action research is beneficial. Not only does working with others allow for dividing up the tasks but it also provides the leverage needed to advocate for other programs in the future; (e) *Who needs to know about, or who will support the intervention?* (i.e., administration, teachers, parents, community business partners); (f) *Are there research-based interventions that have already been done to address the research question?* School counselors can search the World Wide Web for relevant studies or ask colleagues about successful programs implemented at other schools.

Step 5: Choose A Population Sample.

School counselors assist all students. However, practitioners may choose to measure programs with selected students. When deciding to study the impact of an intervention that is already in place, such as a previously planned classroom guidance series, mentoring program or parenting course, the participants may already be selected; this is called a convenience sample. When starting a new intervention, choose participants with whom to expect some degree of success. Project manageability is critical. It is not necessary to measure every program, a whole grade level, team or a full caseload of students; a study with only 10 participants can provide valuable information about an intervention.

Step 6: Implement The Intervention And Collect Data.

Follow the original research question(s) and intervention plan; refer to these often to ensure that what is being measured is consistent with the original goals. If it is necessary to make changes along the way, document them and reflect on how the changes alter the research question(s).

Programs such as Microsoft Excel are useful tools for tallying and sorting data. If the school counselor is unfamiliar with spreadsheets, there are likely other staff members in the school who are skilled enough to help input totals for the purposes of creating a basic table or graph. Action research provides ideal opportunities to hone or practice computer skills so that the end product is easy to read and share with others.

Step 7: Analyze The Data.

It is critical to remember that results do not always mean causality. There are many factors that have bearing on participants, and it is sometimes impossible to isolate an intervention as the sole source of impact. Action research is about finding support for your intervention, not necessarily about proving causality or achieving statistical significance. Analyze the research question(s) and determine whether or not the outcome data support the intervention. For example, the data might indicate that 85% of the students who participated in a truancy group improved their attendance, or 60% of the students placed in advanced classes passed those classes. Whether or not the results support the intervention, something can be learned about how to implement the intervention the next time. A chart or table with a short paragraph can condense the findings down to the most important points.

Step 8: Share Your Data.

Once the data is translated into a visual product, share the results through the school's website or newsletter, or at staff, PTA or school board meetings. Putting the results into a PowerPoint presentation is a meaningful way to share outcome with colleagues at local, state or national conferences. Sharing the findings is just as critical for advocating for the school counselor's position itself as it is for advocating for the students.

Implications

The shortage of school counselor studies at a time of high stakes testing and accountability demonstrates that the value of school counseling is called into question. Due to the increase of accountability measures, shaping and solidifying the identity of our profession requires the intentional evaluation, analysis, and sharing of our work with stakeholders who support what we do and those who question the impact of our services.

More action research studies on school counseling are needed. By assessing need, developing research questions, and designing and evaluating interventions, school counselors will be well on their way to effectively demonstrating their contribution to achievement and overall student well-being. This article presented a practical eight-step model specifically designed for school counselors in hopes that it will demystify and illuminate the undertaking of action research.

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The Implications of Teacher Perceptions of Career Guidance Programs and the Impact on Student Career Decisions

Hope Munro

ABSTRACT

This action research study (ARS) describes teacher perceptions of various career guidance instruments in one high school and their impact on high school students in career decision-making. The paper also discusses the teacher ranking of the career guidance methods and ways in which counselors and teachers can work together to assist students to make more realistic career choices.

Every young adult will eventually need a job or a career. Some young adults will begin work as soon as they graduate from high school; others will postpone entering the job market while they obtain further education or training. Unfortunately, many of these students will leave high school with little if any knowledge of the vast array of jobs available. Perhaps even more unfortunate is the fact that some will possess little knowledge of their interests, abilities, and values and how these impact their enjoyment and sense of fulfillment in their work.

It was the concern of this researcher that students, parents and some teachers did not fully appreciate the need for a career plan for all high school students. Because of this concern this action research study (ARS) sought to determine teacher perceptions of career guidance programs and their impact on student career decisions. Results are useful in planning a more comprehensive career guidance program. The research questions considered in preparing the survey dealt with teacher perceptions of career exploration activities in helping students, the importance of a career plan in a student's decision to stay in school and teacher willingness to assist students in class with career exploration. Therefore, the outcome of this ARS was a starting point for career guidance planning and initiating dialogue between counselors and teachers. The ARS was conducted in a North Georgia middle class urban high school of approximately 1550 students and 113 teachers.

Importance of Career Education

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2005) outlines standards for student competencies in academic, career and personal-social development. National standards call for students to develop an awareness of their skills and abilities and learn how to set goals. Ultimately, with standards in place, students will learn strategies to help them achieve career goals and understand the relationship between education, planning, and career success.

According to McIntosh (2000), one's life work should not be left to chance. Increasingly in America life work is closely related to personal identity. For this reason it is important that youth be provided with meaningful career planning information while in high school. While career planning is a lengthy process involving the evaluation

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"*I would like to thank Dr. Susan R. Boes, professor, University of West Georgia, Counseling and Educational Psychology for her editorial and writing support, and encouragement with this action research study.*"

of interests, values, abilities and aptitude, it prepares students to pursue more suitable and satisfying careers.

Each 9th grade student should be given an interest inventory to determine a tentative career plan since students need help early in their high school experience to determine which career to pursue (Cassel, 1998). If students do not have a realistic career goal they will not know the courses to take or understand the effort needed to reach an attainable goal.

Factors Influencing Students' Decision to Stay in School

Participation in career education programs increases the likelihood of high school graduation. In fact, students who participated in career mentoring and on-the-job internships had the lowest dropout rates (Visher, 2004). These students do not wonder if what they are studying is relevant to the real world of work; they see it firsthand everyday. Some students are not inspired to try harder and are at-risk of not completing their education. Visher refers to these students as being unmotivated and disengaged. They need a career plan that helps them understand their abilities and the kind of work that is available for them.

Student Misconceptions Regarding College

In a survey of 222 ninth graders, Gibbons (2006) identified 215 who specified a definite career interest. Not surprisingly, most of the careers they selected required a 4-year college degree or beyond. However, the majority of these students had not talked to a counselor, had not taken any classes in their chosen field, had no work or volunteer experience in that field, nor had they taken a career interest inventory. Most of the students (65%) had never visited a college and almost 51% had not even looked at a college website. When students were asked to rate who or what had been most helpful with their career plans, they cited parents and family. There was a significant discrepancy between what students actually plan and what they do. Although many students indicate that they plan to attend a 4-year college after graduation, only half of high school graduates actually enroll in a college directly after high school. According to the United States Census Bureau (2005), only 82.8% of Georgia residents are high school graduates and 28.1% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

McIntosh (2000) found a lack of personal understanding of aptitude and interests plus misconceptions about various training programs cause some young people to devalue both 2-year degrees and technical careers. Although most students benefit from training past high school, a 4-year college education will not be needed by most. Students need assistance to appreciate the valuable contribution technical careers make to the overall economy.

Marginal students who plan to attend college but have less than average high school grades often lose time and money in college classes they cannot complete and become discouraged. Less than 20% of students with poor grades are able to complete a 4-year college degree. The high college drop out rate and the number of students requiring remedial college courses emphasizes the necessity of career guidance for all students (Krie & Rosenbaum, 2001).

Family Influences on Career Development

It is difficult to determine exactly how much influence the family (specifically parents) has on a student's career choice. In low income families there may be financial pressure to begin work directly after graduation. Valadez (1998) found that minority students and those from lower socio-economic families did not receive assistance from their parents with career planning. These same students, unfortunately, may not seek help from school counselors regarding their career plans.

Drier (2000) discusses the importance of family and community working collaboratively with the high school counselor in designing an effective career guidance program that benefits all students. Parents who are aware of career decisions facing students today can assist them in understanding the relationship of courses to careers as well as the post-secondary training required in order to be successful.

Teacher-Counselor Collaboration

Any school improvement plan, whether focused on dropout prevention or enhanced career

planning, begins in the classroom. As administrative duties for counselors have increased, fewer opportunities exist for them to know students individually. In some schools counselors may be responsible for 500 or more students. With this many students, it is not possible for a counselor alone to carry out a school-wide program of career guidance. Highland (1998) stated, "All faculty should help manage their students' career plans" (p. 70). Teachers and counselors must work together to help students who are uncertain about their future. Beesley (2004) suggests career guidance be integrated into academic instruction with teachers and counselors working as a team.

Students need to be introduced early to career information and decision-making to prevent unrealistic plans based on little knowledge of careers. For teachers and counselors to be able to provide this information to students they first must receive adequate training. Interestingly, Krie and Rosenbaum (2001) found 69% of counselors needed more information about specific job requirements. Counselors are expected to know current college admissions requirements rather than the skills and training necessary, and the employment opportunities available, for skilled trade careers.

Many schools have a teacher advisement program where teachers build a relationship with their advisees to help them understand course relevance to particular careers. Ideally school counselors collaborate with the teacher advisors as a resource to help plan programs that incorporate both academics and career development (Lozada, 1999). Understandably, teachers are not always eager to assume more classroom responsibilities. High student-teacher ratios, additional administrative record keeping, and increased numbers of students who struggle academically or are at-risk of dropping out exhaust teachers. Chen (2005) suggests collaboration will only be successful when both teachers and counselors see the necessity of such cooperation. He promotes collaboration that is voluntary, with equal voice for both parties as they share responsibility in the decision-making process.

As early as 1965 and again in l986, studies by Gibson (1990) found more than 85 % of high school teachers felt classroom teachers should provide career information. They also stated that school counseling contributed positively to the overall school program. When asked if teachers should assist pupils in educational planning 88.8% agreed that they should. As recently as 2002, the importance of teacher involvement in the career decision making process was cited by Gordon & Elovitz. They suggested counselor-teacher collaboration as a means to ensure that career activities and information are infused into subject areas.

Teachers and counselors must work together to develop better ways to provide career guidance to all students. Students planning to attend college need to know which courses to complete and target grades to attain to improve their chances of getting in and staying in college. Students who want only 2 years of college or a certificate program also need career guidance (Krie & Rosenbaum, 2001).

Methodology

Action Research allows educators to study their own practices in order to bring about effective change (Hendricks, 2006). Three research questions were considered in preparing the survey.

- What are teachers' perceptions of various career exploration activities in helping students make good career decisions?
- Do teachers understand the importance of a career plan in a student's decision to stay in school?
- Are teachers willing to assist students in class with career exploration?

A 14-item *Career Need Assessment Survey* was developed asking teachers to rate the importance of career exploration activities. A 5-point Likert scale rated the perceived importance of each influence or activity (see Appendix). The first 9 items pertained to specific career resources such as GaCollege411, Georgia Career Information System (GCIS) and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Item number 10 asked teachers to rank an activity they considered important. The last 4 items asked to what extent they agreed with statements about the overall importance of students exploring career options in high school.

Surveys were hand delivered to all certified teachers. Prior to handing out the surveys an email was sent to all faculty notifying them of the survey.

Teachers were asked to complete the survey honestly and return it to their department chair by the end of the week as the results would be used to plan career guidance programs. Surveys were returned to the researcher with no names or identifying information in order to preserve anonymity.

In this ARS, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Descriptive statistics from teacher surveys were computed to determine what influences or instruments teachers perceived to have the most impact in student career decision-making. Qualitative data obtained from interviews with teachers were coded into themes. The purpose of the interviews was to explore teacher understanding of the results and their recommendations. Data from the interviews were compared to survey results and field notes for triangulation.

Results

A total of 113 surveys were given to certified teachers at the high school. Eighty surveys (70%) were completed and returned. Results were entered into Excel and the mean and standard deviation (SD) determined for each of the 14 items. The total responses for items 1-9 were placed in rank order from highest to lowest. Item number 10 was reconsidered as only 12 teachers offered suggestions. Since no one else had an opportunity to rate these ideas they could not be statistically analyzed.

As shown in Table 1, parental/family influences were ranked number 1 by the teachers with a mean of 4.5 and a SD of 0.7. Only one respondent rated this with a "2" on a 5-point Likert Scale, and 5 respondents rated this question with a 3; all others rated this 4 or a 5. The relatively small standard deviation of 0.7 suggests that survey respondents generally agree with the relative importance of family influences over the other options provided in the survey.

Teachers ranked GaCollege411 as the second most important activity in high school career exploration. The remaining seven in order of importance were Career Fairs, GCIS, Job Shadowing, Counselor-led groups, ASVAB, teacher presentations and discussion in class, and career films and classroom discussions. There was a high agreement on all 4 items asking teachers to what extent they agreed with the overall importance of students exploring career options in high school. Means of these 4 items varied from 4.09 to 4.32.

Discussion

Family Influences

Teachers agreed that parental/family influences were most important to students as they make career choices. The high school is composed of a large Hispanic population (56%). The remainder of the students is 30% Caucasian, 7% African American, and 7% other. Many of the Hispanic families moved to this area over the last 10 years to work in industries where little education is required. Some parents do not speak English, are not U.S. citizens, and may work under illegally-purchased identification. Without citizenship or eligible non-citizen status these students are not eligible for the HOPE scholarship. If they pay to attend college and obtain a degree they may not be able to qualify for better jobs without legal documentation. In interviews teachers shared that it is difficult to motivate students to aspire to better careers when the family does not encourage the student to obtain post-secondary education. This lack of assistance from minority parents with career planning was also found by Valadez (1998).

GAcollege411, GCIS, and ASVAB

GAcollege411 is a comprehensive college planning website introduced by the Georgia Governor's office in 2005. Large billboards are displayed on Georgia interstate highways, representatives provide training for teachers in schools, and colleges encourage applications through the website. At 9th grade orientation students set up an account on the website. The site provides limited career interest exploration. However, given the intensity and variety of exposure it is not surprising that teachers would rank GAcollege411 second in importance.

In contrast, GCIS and ASVAB (ranked 4 and 7, respectively) are excellent sources of career interests, values and aptitude. GCIS is a joint venture between Georgia State University and the Georgia Department of Labor. The site is continually updated with information about the

fastest growing jobs in Georgia, training required and average salary. The ASVAB is administered by military personnel each fall under the supervision of a counselor. When aptitude results are returned students are given an interest inventory and helped to see the relationships between the two assessments. Based on the survey results it appears that counselors have made assumptions about the information teachers possess regarding the benefits of these career programs. A sharing of information, between counselors and teachers, will help to close this gap.

Career Fairs and Job Shadowing

Career Fairs and Job Shadowing were ranked 3 and 5, respectively, on the survey. In focused interviews teachers expressed concerns that job shadowing merely provided a day off from school while noting there has not been a career fair in some time. Both can be ways for students to learn about jobs they might not have considered previously. A student's possible interest in a specific career is clarified as they learn more about the job and begin to see themselves in that particular profession. Fostering opportunities for job shadowing and career fairs are two areas that may positively impact students' future (Kolodinsky, Schroder, Montopoli, & McLean, 2006).

Teacher Presentations

The two activities ranked lowest (8 and 9) were teacher career presentations (mean =3.4) and career films (mean =2.9). There may be several explanations for these lower rankings. First, teachers may not feel qualified or informed about other careers to effectively discuss them. Second, teachers may feel their job is to cover academic subjects; career information is the job of the school counselor. In focused interviews, teachers indicated feeling overwhelmed with state standards that must be covered in class and do not want the responsibility of exploring careers with students.

Survey results indicated teachers agree with counselors that students need to explore career options and that having a career goal positively impacts the decision to stay in school. There was high agreement on the 4 items asking teachers to what extent they agreed with the overall importance of student exploration of career options. Means varied from 4.09 to 4.32 and only 10 responses were rated less than a 3. The standard deviation for these items ranged from .82 – 1.04, suggesting a general consensus of their relative importance.

Interviews with Teachers

The immediate goal of dialogue with teachers began with the focused interviews from which three themes emerged. Teachers felt parents should be involved early and often in student career planning. Ideas included postings on the school's website in both English and Spanish, inserts in report cards, and parent signatures on schedule forms indicating students' career plans. A brochure for parents and students was developed in response to the survey results encouraging parent involvement in career planning. Second, teachers wanted to be more informed about resources and the overall career guidance plan for each grade. A brief information sheet was prepared for teachers explaining benefits of three career guidance programs. The counseling staff plans to develop a career guidance plan to share with teachers. Finally, teachers viewed advisement as the vehicle through which they would be involved in career guidance. Lozada (1999) noted this teacher-counselor collaboration to incorporate career development with academics.

Limitations of the Action Research Study

Since the surveys were unnumbered and without names it was impossible to know which teachers did not return their surveys. This is a challenge when the researcher wants to collect as much data from as many teachers as possible. Surveys were hand delivered and explained to each teacher to elicit maximum participation. The tradeoff in preserving survey respondent anonymity was to collect data that was accurate and truthful. Seventy percent of the surveys were completed and returned by the teachers.

Conclusions

The purpose of this ARS was to learn what the teachers at one high school perceived as important to high school students in their career decision-making efforts. Clearly, teachers who took

the survey did not understand career exploration activities to the extent that counselors do. As a result they were not able to assist students in utilizing the results gained from exploring career options. Counselors in the high school could better communicate the benefits of the career assessments used so teachers would be aware of their value in helping students. Overall, teachers understand and agree with the importance of encouraging each student to design a career plan. Teachers felt the school should try to get parents more involved in the student career guidance; therefore, a brochure for parents was developed to be mailed with report cards. The immediate goal to begin a dialogue with the teachers was accomplished while ongoing collaborative work between counselors and teachers to help students with career guidance will continue.

Future Recommendations

ASCA (2005) publishes career development standards that encourage student understanding of the relationship between education and work while acquiring the skills and strategies to investigate careers and achieve goals. Students, teachers and counselors could all benefit from the development of a career guidance plan. Counselors should not take for granted that teachers understand the available career resources. This plan could be shared with parents, students and teachers in the parent handbook so all would know when the students would participate in successive components of a comprehensive career guidance curriculum. As students develop better decision-making skills and learn about various careers, they will be more successful in setting and achieving their career goals.

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Table 1
Mean Order Ranked by Teachers

Order Ranked	Mean	Standard Deviation
Parental/family influences	4.5	0.7
GaCollege411	4.2	0.8
Career Fair	4.1	0.8
GCIS	3.9	0.9
Job Shadowing	3.8	1.1
Counselor led Groups	3.6	0.9
ASVAB	3.6	1.0
Teacher Presentations	3.4	1.1
Films in Class	2.9	1.0

APPENDIX

Career Needs Assessment

You are being asked to participate in a Career Needs Assessment for High School. The results will also be used in a Research Project as part of the requirements of an Ed S. program. Participation is voluntary and all individual survey responses are anonymous and confidential. Your name and /or position are not required. Total responses will be tallied and used at DHS in evaluating and planning career exploration activities. How important do you consider the following high school career exploration activities? Please use the scale below to indicate the importance of each activity. Circle the response that best answers each question.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all important	**A little important**	**Somewhat important**	**Very important**	**Extremely important**

1. Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) - aptitude and interest assessment (administered to 11th and 12th grades)
   1 2 3 4 5
2. GAcollege411 – helps student find and apply to colleges, some interest assessment
   1 2 3 4 5
3. Georgia Career Information Center (GCIC) – interest inventory, occupation sort and research of specific careers (sponsored by Ga Dept of Labor and Ga State University)
   1 2 3 4 5
4. Teacher career presentations and discussions in classroom
   1 2 3 4 5
5. Counselor led career exploration groups
   1 2 3 4 5
6. Job shadowing experiences
   1 2 3 4 5
7. Career Fair with outside speakers representing various careers
   1 2 3 4 5
8. Career films and discussions in class
   1 2 3 4 5
9. Parental/family influence (getting parental involvement)
   1 2 3 4 5
10. Other (please state activity and assign importance)_____
    1 2 3 4 5

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

1. It is very important for 9th grade students to begin exploring career options.
   1 2 3 4 5
2. Selecting a career or occupation impacts a student's decision to stay in school.
   1 2 3 4 5
3. When a student has no career goals or plans he feels that he has little reason to stay in school.
   1 2 3 4 5
4. Career exploration or connection of the subject to the real world of work should be a part of every curriculum.
   1 2 3 4 5

Comments_____

_____

At-Risk Students Plan for Successful Transitions

Sharon McWhorter, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

Research indicates that schools do not always provide students with the skills they need for successful transitions to postsecondary education and work. A transition gap is particularly prevalent for "at-risk" students who have difficulty relating learning to future education and career aspirations. A high school counselor, language arts teacher, and technical college assessment coordinator created Plan for Success, an intervention program designed to facilitate more successful transitions for "at-risk" students. Creation and implementation of Plan for Success interventions are discussed as well as resulting improvement in student transition outcomes.

Are high schools preparing students to transition successfully to postsecondary education and work? The research is not promising. Educators and researchers lament a lack of emphasis on the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required for students to transition successfully to career and educational opportunities afforded them after high school (Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Jensen & Madison, 2004; Schneider & Stevenson, 1999; Wakefield, 2004; Zunker, 1998). Even high school graduates themselves report feeling unprepared for postsecondary education and careers (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 2005). One study reports that at least half of the participants could not identify anyone in school who advised them about the transition process (Ferris State University, 2002). The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2005) underscores the importance of the process—for students to be successful in education and careers beyond high school, an increased focus on student transition is not just desirable, it is required. Helping students acquire transition planning skills is critical to their success.

School counselors are uniquely qualified to help students become more successful planners for transitioning beyond high school. School improvement and school counseling research repeatedly indicates that enhanced comprehensive counseling programs are needed to address the transition challenge (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2005; Anderson, 2004; Dahir, 2004; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004; SREB, 2005; Wakefield, 2004). Transition programs are often informally (rather than systematically) provided (Jensen & Madison, 2004). Recruiting students for dual enrollment programs, communicating market and labor information, assisting with applications, promoting goal-setting, and identifying personalized strategies for attaining goals are often provided only for a few students who know the right questions to ask or who are in the right place at the right time to receive these services. Most students need systematic support to convert aspirations into concrete, coherent plans consistent with future goals (Dahir, 2004; Jensen & Madison). Needed are transitional programs with intentional, focused activities and personalized assistance, resulting in a student's plan to succeed in postsecondary education and careers (ASCA, 2005; ASCA, 2004; National Career Development Guidelines [NCDA], 1989; SREB).

A concrete action plan is especially imperative for "at-risk" students—individuals classified as unmotivated, unfocused, and unsuccessful in school; minority;

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disabled; and/or poor (Anderson, 2004; Comer, 1988; Conger, Conger, & Elder, 1997; Hines & Wakefield, 2004; McLoyd, 1998; Wakefield, 2004). It is increasingly important for school counselors to proactively identify and respond to complex academic, social, and personal issues that differentiate education and career futures for this group of students (Dahir, 2004; Dahir & Stone, 2003). Targeted interventions to close a transition gap are needed for disengaged, unfocused, and unsuccessful students who are unprepared for the challenges of entering and remaining in postsecondary education/training programs.

Plan for Success Intervention

With specific focus on improving transition outcomes for at-risk students, a school counselor and senior language arts teacher at a large suburban high school in the Southeast examined disaggregated data of previous high school graduates (Class of 2005) in a senior technical-diploma language arts class. This review revealed several critical at-risk elements of the group. Students in this class had a mean of 12 discipline referrals and 26.6 days absent. They had also been unsuccessful in higher level academic courses and had chosen the career-technical diploma track, which requires no foreign language and three units of mathematics (instead of the four required for the college preparatory diploma). Of the 28 students enrolled in the class, 17 students were male, 19 held minority status, and 12 had been enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program. Almost a fourth of the students had received a certificate of high school attendance rather than a diploma because they had not passed state-mandated graduation tests. Of this group, only 3 students had applied to postsecondary schools and requested final transcripts be forwarded—indicating few concrete plans for essential postsecondary education/training so necessary to maximize career attainment.

To improve transition planning skills for the next senior technical language arts class (Class of 2006), the school counselor, language arts teacher, and assessment coordinator of the local technical college collaboratively created Plan for Success. Components of *Plan for Success* interventions were based upon the framework of Jensen and Madison's (2004) Alpha Model. A comprehensive approach, this framework was chosen because it proposes shared responsibility—counselors, educators, parents, and community—for preparing students to transition successfully to postsecondary education and careers. The model's strength is its unique inclusion of a conferencing phase, an experience in which both a mentor and student participate in authentic dialogue during which the student takes the lead. The model consists of six instructional phases, which are not linearly sequenced. In four phases of the model (introspection, exploration, evaluation, and planning), Plan for Success activities deviated little from traditional exploratory and planning activities. In the fifth and sixth phases (preparation and conferencing), the value added was student development of portfolios, called Plan for Success, including student-led conferences.

The purpose of the *Plan for Success* program was improvement of student education/career transition skills and improvement in academic writing performance on career-related tasks. Student-created *Plan for Success* portfolios (including a personal action plan) directed job shadowing experiences within the building and served as the basis for student-led conferences. Faculty members in the high school were members of the transition intervention team in their roles as job shadow mentors and conference partners. The program was a culminating project for senior technical-diploma language arts students and was implemented in the fall and spring semesters, 2005-2006.

Specifically, program objectives targeted improvement in skills necessary for successful education/career transitions (ASCA, 2004; NCDA, 1989; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, and Saunders, 1996a):

- Identification of personal interests and skills as they relate to desired education majors and career paths;
- Utilization of various types of resources for information about and requirements for desired postsecondary education/career paths;
- Creation of a resume;
- Identification of personal academic strengths and weaknesses as they relate to desired education/career paths;
- Identification of negative thoughts that may erect barriers to attainment of desired education/career paths;
- Identification of necessary steps for choosing and attaining a desired career and/or education path;
- Identification of an education major and postsecondary school/training program to prepare for a desired career path;
- Creation of a step-by-step personalized action plan for attaining a desired education/career path;
- Development of reflective writing skills in the career planning and management process, including improvement in focus and development, organization, fluency, and conventional usage/mechanics.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of *Plan for Success* interventions to improve education and career transition skills for a group of at-risk high school seniors. The study answered the following five questions derived from program objectives: Did students believe that skills in education and career planning improved as a result of *Plan for Success*? Did faculty mentors agree with students that improved skills were acquired? Did student reflective writing performance improve as a result of *Plan for Success*? Did student transition behavior improve (i.e., was there an increase in the number of student applications to postsecondary institutions and requests to forward final transcripts)? Did students perceive *Plan for Success* as valuable?

Method

Participants

After several meetings in which the school counselor and the language arts teacher developed a profile of seniors (Class of 2006) in the technical language arts class, the second block class was chosen as a sample of convenience because it was the only senior technical language arts class offered that term. Members of the class possessed many of the same "at-risk" characteristics as the previous class (Class of 2005). Twenty three students began the project with 4 students unable to complete the project for two primary reasons: 3 students withdrew from school, and 1 student was suspended for a serious disciplinary infraction. The total number of participants was 19.

The class profile of *Plan for Success* participants revealed students at-risk for transitioning successfully to postsecondary education and careers because of past unsuccessful school experiences, credit recovery problems, attendance/discipline records, and other issues such as special education placement and socioeconomic and/or minority status. Writing achievement data also indicated low performance for this class of technical/career students. Several students still needed to complete portions of the state-mandated Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT), including 7 who needed to pass the writing portion of the tests. In addition, over half of the class (52%) had scores in the 24th percentile or below on writing components of their most recent PSAT test administration.

Table 1 describes participants in the *Plan for Success* program. Examination of data for outliers describing the mean for discipline referrals, days absent, and grade point average revealed that only the mean for discipline referrals was affected by extreme scores. One student had received 54 discipline referrals. Data for days absent and grade point average clustered about the mean. Thus, the median is reported only for number of discipline referrals.

Table 1

***Plan for Success* Participants (N=19)**

Gender	
Male	13
Female	6
Enrollment in Free or Reduced-Lunch Program	
Yes	9
No	10
Ethnicity	
White	6
Black	5
Hispanic	4
Asian	3
Multiracial	1
Special Education Placement	
Yes	4
No	15
Mean Number Discipline Referrals	14.21
Median Number of Discipline Referrals	9
Mean Days Absent	28.16
Mean Grade Point Average	1.903

Interventions

Based upon Jensen and Madison's (2004) Alpha model of a career intervention system that utilizes shared responsibility, *Plan for Success* interventions consisted of activities appropriate to each of six phases—introspection, exploration, evaluation, planning, preparation, and conferencing. The school counselor and language arts teacher delivered learning activities to support all phases and coordinated involvement of faculty mentors and the technical college assessment director.

Introspection

The introspection phase asks students to explore interests, skills, values, and needs through self-assessment instruments and activities designed to help students set education and career goals (Jensen & Madison, 2004). During several sessions in school computer labs in addition to the traditional classroom setting, the language arts teacher and counselor shared instructional responsibilities utilizing the Georgia Career Information System (GCIC, 2005), reflective writing assignments, and organization of assessments and assignments into student portfolios.

An additional activity in the introspection phase was student completion of the *Career Thoughts Inventory* (CTI, Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996a) to identify self-defeating thoughts that could erect self-imposed barriers for future learning and planning. After determining levels of intensity of self-defeating career thoughts, students participated in group cognitive restructuring activities to challenge and re-direct negative thoughts to maximize their ability to overcome obstacles and make appropriate education and career decisions (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996b).

Exploration

The exploration phase asks students to identify and investigate career options by relating interests, ambitions, high school courses and activities, postsecondary majors, and other information to a desired list of career options (Jensen & Madison, 2004). In other words, students relate personal characteristics to the world of work. Throughout the self-assessments, students explored specific postsecondary colleges and training programs, education majors, and careers that matched criteria entered by students. Other exploration activities included a visit of student ambassadors from local technical and 2-year colleges to discuss admission criteria, program offerings, and personal anecdotes describing the college experience.

Evaluation

The evaluation phase is characterized by students' prioritizing career options and examining how well these options "satisfy or frustrate" (Jensen & Madison, 2004, p. 79). Students begin to see themselves as learners and workers by examining how well the career environment is a reflection of who they are and what they want to be. During this phase students narrowed their education and career focus by selecting a desirable career—the ideal job—to describe and reflect on appropriateness to interests, skills, and academic strengths and weaknesses. Students also designed a personal logo in which they presented visual symbols of themselves and their education/career future. This logo served as the title page for the *Plan for Success* portfolio.

Planning

The planning phase encompassed development of a resume (GCIC, 2005) and personalized action plan that specified steps and strategies to attain the ideal job. The *Plan for Success* Personal Action Plan was adapted from Sampson et al.'s (1996b) Individual Action Plan, which includes future activities to be completed, a ranking or prioritizing of these activities, a list of resources (people or information) needed to complete activities, a deadline for each activity, and a completion status check. Students were encouraged to continue to identify and re-direct negative career thoughts as they developed their

Plan for Success

Preparation

The next two phases, preparation and conferencing, are typically delivered informally in career guidance programs. Students are generally left on their own to engage in activities outlined by the Personal Action Plan. The nature of the at-risk student, however, makes it imperative for the collaborative team to design concrete preparation and conferencing interventions that provide authentic, "put-into-action" experiences. The preparation phase is the point at which students personally engage in implementing their plans by registering for appropriate courses, developing portfolios, and applying to colleges or training programs (Jensen & Madison, 2004).

The *Plan for Success* project included four activities to prepare students in authentic, real-world ways:

- directed guidance in applying to a postsecondary school of choice;
- provision of a postsecondary entrance/placement examination—the COMPASS (ACT, 2006);
- immediate scoring of COMPASS results and advisement on technical college program admission;
- completion of a written *Plan for Success* portfolio to showcase acquisition of real-world skills, development of self-assessment abilities, enhancement of reflective writing skills, and evaluation of student progress toward goals (Juniewicz, 2003; Luescher & Sinn, 2003; Whitsed, 2006) ;
- participation in job shadowing experiences adapted from Groundhog Shadow Day activities (Job Shadow Coalition, 2006) and mentored by faculty within the school building.

Research indicates that job shadowing improves the transition process from high school to college, connects learning in school to work, provides "access for students who have not had access" (Gehring, 2001, p. 2), and serves to expose students to careers they may not otherwise have considered (Dervarics, 2006; Luecking & Gramlich, 2003; Lewis, 2005). Job shadowing components of *Plan for Success* were implemented within the school building and enabled students to connect with caring, professional faculty and staff who volunteered as job shadowing mentors and later as conferencing partners.

Conferencing

During the conferencing phase students met with mentors to discuss job shadowing experiences and *Plan for Success* portfolios. The dialogue between mentors and students is key to the success of the conferencing phase (Jensen & Madison, 2004). The first part of the conference was led by job shadowing mentors, who facilitated student reflections about lessons learned and attitudes formed about the job shadowing experience.

The second, and most important, part of the conference was student-led. The impact of student-led conferences cannot be overemphasized. Because adults traditionally control learning in schools, students seldom have the opportunity to take charge of their own learning (Goodlad, 1984; Juniewicz, 2003). Research suggests that use of portfolios in student-led conferences genuinely engages students in their own learning (Luescher & Sinn, 2003, p. 0).

During student-led conferences students used *Plan for Success* portfolios as a guide for discussion of education and career goals—logos, interests and skills, resumes, ideal career, desired postsecondary school/program of study, Personal Action Plan, self-defeating negative thoughts, and reflective writing samples. During the dialogue mentors supported students' education /career goals and helped to refine action plans, if appropriate.

Instruments

To determine whether students benefited from *Plan for Success* interventions, the counselor and language arts teacher utilized several instruments and types of evaluation in addition to student behavior data. Counselor and teacher concurred that different types of data would be useful—students' perceptions, mentors' perceptions, congruence between students' and mentors' perceptions, student reflective writing samples, student portfolios, and student behavior patterns.

Student perception data were gathered through use of a counselor-designed instrument (Appendix A) developed from the ASCA Career Development Competencies and Standards Checklist (ASCA, 2004). After development of the *Plan for Success* portfolio (but before student-led conferences), students indicated their perception of improvement (or not) in career development skills from pre- to post-project. Ratings were based on a Likert Scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is "I have no knowledge of the skill and do not know how to use it at all" to 4, "Even though I know I can improve, I have acquired the skill." Skills were descriptive of project objectives.

After student-led conferences during which students discussed their future plans, job shadowing mentors used a similar instrument to evaluate perceptions of their students' attainment of equivalent skills. Item content for the mentor instrument was the same as the student instrument, but an additional rating of 5 was added to the Likert Scale—"I have no basis for rating the skill." In addition, instructions for participating in student-led conferences were added as changes in voice—from "I have" (student scale) to "the student has" (mentor scale).

Both instruments were designed by the counselor with no reliability or validity data to report. However, instrument items were formulated from the ASCA Model Sample Competencies and Standards Checklist (ASCA, 2004), a national model and workbook utilized by professional school counselors and serving as a basis for model school counseling programs.

In addition to perception data, student academic performance and behavior data were also collected. A pre-project reflective writing assignment designed by the counselor and language arts teacher asked students to reflect on future education and career goals as they related to personal characteristics, experiences, interests, skills, and executable plans. The identical reflective writing assignment was given at the end of the project. The identical assignment was utilized because it reflected project objectives and asked students to construct their own responses. Both the counselor and language arts teacher felt that if students could articulate effectively the points contained in the writing assignment, students would demonstrate skills listed in project objectives.

The rubric used to evaluate both assignments was the *Gwinnett County Literary Rubric, 9-12*, used for writing-across-the-curriculum at the high school. The rubric consists of six levels of four writing domains—focus and development (content), organization, fluency, and conventions (usage and mechanics). For purposes of this project, each writing level equated to a numerical

value (level 6 = 90 and above; level 5 = 80-89; level 4 = 74-79; level 3 = 70-73; level 2 = 65-69; and level 1 = 64 and below). The language arts teacher evaluated both reflective writing assignments utilizing this rubric. The teacher also evaluated *Plan for Success* portfolios via a teacher-designed checklist that included artifacts in all six phases of the transition process—introspection, exploration, evaluation, planning, preparation, and conferencing.

Student behavior change was evaluated by determining the number of students who applied and requested submission of a final transcript to a postsecondary school/training program. The test of any transition intervention is whether or not students actually execute their plans to enroll in postsecondary programs. The counselor and language arts teacher believed that student intent to enroll though completion of the application process and request for final transcript would be another valid way to assess acquisition of transition planning skills.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS Base 9.0. Two paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare means of student pre- and post-intervention perceptions of career management skills and to compare means of pre- and post-intervention reflective writing performance. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare means of post-intervention perceptions of each student and his/her mentor. The t-test is appropriate when samples are small (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) and when one set of scores " 'goes with' one and only one" other set of scores (Huck & Cormier, 1996, p. 268). Variation in student grades on *Plan for Success* portfolios and frequency of post-secondary applications and final transcript requests were also evaluated to determine impact of interventions.

Results

Data analysis revealed that *Plan for Success* interventions targeted for at-risk high school seniors enhanced their education/career transition skills and behaviors. A paired sample t-test of student perceptions before and after the program indicated that student perceptions improved significantly for all targeted transition skills after the interventions (Table 2).

Table 2

Student Perception of Acquisition of Transition Planning Skills (N = 19)

	Mean	SD	t	Sig.	Effect
Pre-Intervention	20.1053	6.59878			
Post-Intervention	38.2105	1.39758			
Paired Pre & Post	-18.10526	6.52257	-12.099	.000	3.926

Researchers believe that data analysis indicating no significant difference in mentors' and students' perceptions of transition planning skills was also important to note (Table 3). Even though non-significant results are not normally reported, few differences in mentor and student ratings indicate that both parties evaluated skill acquisition in a similar manner. In other words, perceptions of students and professional adults were essentially congruent, revealing that both faculty and students felt confident that students had successfully acquired the targeted education and career transition skills.

Participant reflective writing performance was also analyzed. Utilizing the *Gwinnett County Literacy Rubric, 9-12*, researchers compared student scores for the pre- and post-intervention writing assignment. The result of the paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two means ($p = .000$) with improved student writing performance demonstrated on the post-intervention reflective assignment. Another way of describing the improved results for this group of students is that approximately 79% of participants improved their writing performance on the second assignment. Participants improved their focus and development (content), organization, fluency, and usage/mechanics on a reflective, career-related writing task.

Table 3

Comparison of Mentors' and Students' Perceptions of Transition Planning Skills (N=19)

	Mean	SD	t	Sig.	Effect
Student	38.2105	1.39758			
Mentor	38.6842	1.88717			
Student-Mentor	-.47368	2.03766	-1.013	.324	-.327

Table 4
Comparison of Pre- and Post Intervention Writing Performance (N=19)

	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Pre-Intervention	68.2105	8.7406		
Post-Intervention	79.8421	12.0197		
Paired Pre & Post	-11.6316	11.4659	-4.422	.000

In addition to analysis of the reflective writing assignment, the language arts teacher evaluated students' *Plan for Success* portfolios using the teacher-created checklist. The mean average of *Plan for Success* portfolios was 97.63 (out of 100 points), a high level of student completion and performance particularly noteworthy for a group of students characterized as at-risk.

Analysis of student transition behaviors indicated that of the 19 participants who completed the *Plan for Success* program, 9 applied either to a postsecondary 2-year or technical college, 1 withdrew from school, 1 received permanent suspension for disciplinary infractions, 4 received high school certificates because of failure on one or more sections of the GHSGT, and 3 did not complete course requirements for graduation. Only one student who graduated did not apply or request a final transcript. Student applications and transcript requests increased threefold from the previous class. It is also important to note that all 7 students who had not passed the state-mandated writing test at the beginning of the school year did pass the GHSWT after the interventions.

Discussion

Results of the *Plan for Success* program demonstrate that interventions resulted in improvements in participants' skills in education and career transition planning. Students not only believed they possessed effective planning skills, they demonstrated these skills to professional adults, an impressive result for any student, but especially for at risk students. They improved their ability to relate personal interests and skills to career pathways, identify resources for career information, develop resumes, understand academic strengths and weaknesses as relevant to career goals, identify personal barriers to success, develop strategies for meeting goals, identify potential postsecondary colleges and training programs, understand admission requirements, and communicate plans with mentors.

Data also indicate that participants believed that *Plan for Success* was effective and valuable to them. Participant comments included the following: "I always thought I could never go to college….not true;" "Once I started writing, I couldn't stop;" "I love animals but didn't know I could get a job doing what I like;" "I'm not going to end up like my father….on the streets." When considered in light of the at-risk profile of participants, the writer believes that positive perceptions have the potential for promoting further skill enhancement. Research has indicated that feelings of efficacy lead to behavior-engagement rather than behavior-avoidance and are important variables in student performance, particularly as related to task persistence (Bandura, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987; Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991).

Student reflective writing performance also significantly improved after *Plan for Success* interventions. Writing intervention activities were designed intentionally for students to have authentic experiences in "real-world" preparation for education and career transitions (making applications, taking entrance tests, job shadowing) as well as participation in traditional exploration and planning activities. These experiences served as "pre-writing"—or planning for writing—to give students the communication tools necessary for describing themselves as learners and planners.

Students also demonstrated through portfolios that they had successfully engaged in *Plan for Success* tasks appropriate for maximizing personal development, one of the benefits of portfolio creation (Whitsed, 2006). The high value of the mean for evaluation of student portfolios verified that students successfully completed a process by which they could make future education and career decisions. Much has been written about the importance of using authentic assessment that focuses on "real-world" situations (Juniewicz, 2003). For this group of students, using *Plan for Success* portfolios in student-led conferences provided significant value for personalizing the planning process for real-world transitioning and equipping participants with life-long career management skills.

Limitations

Delivering the *Plan for Success* program to only one class of students who served as a convenience sample prevents any collective generalizations. The study was neither an experimental design, nor were instruments formally analyzed for validity and reliability. *Plan for Success* was an intervention program developed by practicing counselors, faculty, and administrators addressing local student needs. Given these limitations, participants possessed characteristics inherent in the literature describing students at-risk for failure to

graduate and for an inability to transition successfully to postsecondary education and training. Instrument items were consistent with standards and competencies addressed by the ASCA model (2005), and data were analyzed utilizing a variety of evaluation methods. *Plan for Success* developers believe that the results suggest several implications for high school counselors in developing future interventions.

Implications

Only 10 of 19 students in this class were actually qualified to apply to a postsecondary school, underscoring the issue that transition planning is only one type of assistance needed by this group of at-risk students. Academic failure and other complex social/emotional factors impact at-risk student decision-making and transitioning. Seven students either received a high school certificate (rather than a diploma) or did not graduate, resulting in scheduled retests to complete assessment requirements or a return to high school to complete graduation course requirements. In addition, discipline and attendance problems plagued two additional students, resulting in their inability to complete the school year. Thus, it goes without saying that transition planning cannot occur in isolation. Future transition interventions for at-risk students should be tied to academic performance and behavior issues. These interventions should include mentors who provide academic support focused on student success in more rigorous academic courses, strategies alleviating attendance and behavior problems, and continued real-world application for academic learning. Students need support in developing self-management and academic skills to move successfully to the next level.

Such complex, interrelating issues require a "collective response" (DuFour et al., 2004, p. 64). The implication is that school counselors cannot work in isolation from faculty, administrators, parents, and the community to implement research-supported programs that address improved learning and successful transitions for all students. Future interventions can include parents as volunteers in the school community, even if they are not parents of the at-risk students themselves. Business and industry can provide venues for job shadowing experiences as well as incentives for students participating in future *Plan for Success* programs. Shared responsibility can lead to student change.

Implications center on a central factor—successful transition outcomes are enhanced by programs that provide systematic exposure to an array of real-world experiences (Luecking & Gramlich, 2003). Students who have been unsuccessful in school for social, emotional, and academic reasons need formal, intentional systems of interventions to close achievement and transition gaps. As counselors participate in a "pyramid of interventions" (DuFour et al., 2004, p. 60) to support students who experience difficulty, counselors demonstrate a commitment to school improvement efforts and become a force that fosters access and opportunity for every student.

The challenge of structuring comprehensive systems, however, is difficult as high school counselors move from providing a preponderance of individual services to becoming managers of education and career advising processes (Jensen & Madison, 2004). It is not an easy transition. For example, not all teachers volunteered for *Plan for Success* to serve as job shadow mentors and caring adults for student-led conferences. Matching the right student to the right job and mentor was not always simple. Several students had a "history" of attendance, discipline, and/or academic issues with several of the faculty volunteers. Even preparation for administration of the COMPASS on the high school campus encountered obstacles in the form of technological difficulties (both obtaining appropriate permission and complying with technology specifications) in addition to scheduling difficulties. Finding time to collaborate with team members presented its own challenges.

Despite the coordinating, managing, and consulting difficulties, however, shouldering the entire responsibility for intervention programs is not an option for professional school counselors who serve as leaders and team members. School counselors must collaborate with other stakeholders to create a culture of learning for the entire school community by helping to raise student aspirations and aligning them with successful transitions beyond high school.

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APPENDIX A

Career Management Perception Survey (Student)

Using the scale below, rate how well you think you have acquired the career management skills below. These skills measure your ability to investigate the world of work according to how well you know yourself and your ability to make informed career decisions.

1. I have no knowledge of the skill and do not know how to use it at all.
2. I have a little knowledge of the skill but cannot use it very well.
3 I have knowledge about the skill and can use it somewhat.
4. Even though I know I can improve, I have acquired the skill.

Rate your perception of your skill before the *Plan for Success* unit compared to your perception of the skill after the unit.

Before	After	
_____	_____	1. I have completed a career-interest survey and candiscuss at least one of my interests as it relates to my career pathway.
_____	_____	2. I can identify two places to find information about mycareer pathway.
_____	_____	3. I can identify two skills related to my career pathway.
_____	_____	4. I have a resume of my interests, skills, experience, and accomplishments.
_____	_____	5. I know my academic strengths and weaknesses related to my broad career path.
_____	_____	6. I can identify negative thoughts that may hinder me from reaching my full potential.
_____	_____	7. I have identified some necessary steps for meeting my career goal.
_____	_____	8. I have tentatively chosen a program of study and a postsecondary school/training program that will help me prepare for my career path.
_____	_____	9. I know at least two requirements for entering the postsecondary school/training program of my choice.
_____	_____	10. I have discussed information about a specific career path with my parents and/or school staff.

Helping Parents Cope with Adolescents Who Self-Injure: Strategies for School Counselors

Julia S. Chibbaro

ABSTRACT

Professional school counselors experience unique challenges as they struggle to provide information to parents about self-injurious behaviors and methods to cope with adolescents who self-injure. This paper explores self-injurious behaviors, discusses some of the reasons why adolescents practice self-injury and recommends six strategies that professional school counselors could use with parents whose adolescents self-injure.

I self-injure because it grounds me and it makes me feel whole. When I injure myself I feel a sense of relief and calmness. Sometimes I do it to punish myself. [Female, age 18, (began self-injurious behavior 10 years ago)] *–Martinson, D. (1998)*

Self-injury is used by approximately 1% to 4% of the United States general population as a way of dealing with overwhelming feelings while an estimated 13% of adolescents reported engaging in self-injurious behavior (Ross & Heath, 2002). Professional school counselors (PSCs) often become aware of self-injurious behaviors before parents, family members, and persons outside of the school setting (White Kress, Gibson, & Reynolds, 2004). School counselors may be the first professional seen by students who self-injure and actions taken by school counselors may determine if and when students receive additional professional help (Froeschle & Moyer, 2004). As self-injurious behaviors become more visible in the school setting, many PSCs need to know how best to help both students and parents (White Kress, Drouhard, & Costin, 2006). Adolescents who self-injure typically begin the behaviors in middle school and will often continue into their late twenties (Austin & Kortum, 2004; Ross & Heath).

I like the thought that it is ME causing the pain for once, not someone else. [Female, 14, 9th grade]
–Martinson, D. (1998)

Self-Injury Defined

Self-injury has been defined as an act of attempting to alter a mood state by inflicting physical harm serious enough to cause tissue damage to one's body without leading to a result of death. The forms of self-injury vary and can include scratching, branding, cutting, self-hitting and burning (Patterson & Kahan, 1983). Of the various forms of self-injury, cutting is the most prevalent method used (Gallop, 2002; Ross & Heath, 2002). Self-injury is usually performed on the arms, wrists and legs, but the breasts, thighs, stomach, and genitals may also serve as self-injurious sites (Conterio, Lader, & Bloom, 1998). In regard to gender, females are more likely to self-injure than males (Ross & Heath).

I am full of anger and hurt. I feel like nobody cares. I do it because it is easier for me to hurt myself and deal with my pain then it is to tell someone and hurt their feelings. I would rather be the one hurting. I never want to make someone feel the way people make me feel, so I don't say anything. I keep everything to myself and then it builds up. I explode and then start cutting. [Female, age 17, HS senior (began self-injurious behaviors 7 years ago)]
–Martinson, D. (1998)

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Reasons for Self-Injury

Those who self-injure have identified several reasons for the behavior including the following: (a) avoiding overwhelming emotions by focusing on physical pain; (b) reducing numbness and providing a sense of being real; (c) keeping traumatic memories out of the present; (d) releasing the emotions of anger, anxiety, despair; (e) receiving care and support from others; (f) gaining control of one's life; (g) enhancing self-esteem (Austin & Kortum, 2004, White Kress, et al., 2004). Adolescents who self-injure may feel a sense of relief following the act of self-injury, but also may feel hurt, anger, fear and hate. Most people who self-injure will hide their injuries by wearing long sleeves or pants, even on warm days and adolescents who self-injure usually go to great lengths to hide their wounds and scars due to a feeling of shame and fear of the consequences if discovered (Gallop, 2002).

I get depressed, I don't know why. If anything goes wrong, at school or at home, if I forget my homework and a teacher shouts at me, if someone doesn't ring me when they said they would, silly stuff really. But after I self-injure I feel disgusted at myself, I feel as if, no matter how hard I try, I can't do anything right. I first cut when I was 14 after being raped by my geography teacher. [Female, age 15]
–Martinson, D. (1998)

Several life experiences correlate with self-injurious behaviors in adolescents including parental loss, violence in the family, childhood illness, childhood sexual abuse or rape, and familial self-injury (Conterio et al., 1998; Deiter, Nicholls, & Pearlman, 2000; White Kress et al., 2006). Of these, the two best predictors of self-injurious behaviors are histories of sexual abuse and family violence (Deiter, et al.). Variables which are most commonly identified as triggers for self-injury among adolescents include recent loss or death, peer conflict, intimacy problems, impulse control disorder and alienation from others or a feeling of disconnection (Kehrberg, 1997). Self -injurious behaviors should not be considered suicidal. Adolescents who self-injure are striving to feel better and their wounds are typically not life threatening (Lieberman, 2004; Stone & Sias, 2003).

School Counselors Work with Self-Injurious Adolescents

Professional school counselors are ethically obligated to keep student reported information confidential unless disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to the student or others (American School Counseling Association, 2004). Although self-injurious behaviors are not considered suicidal, professional school counselors should consider the potential for serious consequences and liability issues that may occur as a result of withholding this information from parents. PSCs should consult with other PSCs either in their own school or schools other than their own with regard to ethical decision making. Also, consultation with both school administration and district's attorneys should be considered (White Kress et al., 2006). In addition, professional school counselors should conduct a thorough self-injury assessment to determine the onset of the injury, whether or not the student has made changes in self-injurious behaviors over time, any medical complications (stitches, infections etc.), current life stressors, recent life experiences, and whether or not the student's family is aware of the self-injurious behaviors (Kress, 2003; White Kress et al., 2004). Determining if the student's home environment is safe is imperative and if issues of abuse are part of the student's report, the PSC should follow school protocol in reporting suspected abuse. Intervention efforts made on the part of PSCs are essential to helping adolescents understand and recover from self-injurious behaviors.

Professional school counselors should also provide faculty and staff with signs and symptoms of self-injurious behaviors as well as what to do if they suspect or know someone practicing self-injurious behaviors (Cornell Research Program, n. d.). Advocating for students and educating school personnel regarding self-injury will facilitate awareness and the identification and monitoring of student self-injurious behaviors (White Kress et al., 2004).

School Counselor Interventions

Intervention endeavors by professional school counselors with students who self-injure begin with the creation of a safe environment. Since many students who self-injure have a history of physical and sexual abuse, developing trust in adults is extremely difficult (White Kress et al., 2006; Zila & Kiselica, 2001). PSCs should make sure that students realize it is alright to discuss self-injury. PSCs should work with students to develop a safety plan emphasizing students' responsibility for self-injurious behavior which includes the identification of self-injury triggers (White Kress et al., 2004; Walsh, 2006). In addition, PSCs should teach students how to identify and verbalize emotions (Nichols, 2000). Creating a feeling vocabulary list and helping students to find words by prompting them with such questions as "If your wounds could speak to you, what would they be saying?" are helpful (Alderman, 1997; Favazza, 1996; Levenkron, 1998). PSCs should work with students to explore and develop alternative, healthy coping

behaviors. Teaching students cognitive problem solving skills such as defining a problem, considering solutions, making a choice, forming a plan of action to solve the problem and following through with the plan can be very helpful to students. To facilitate student safety, PSCs should assess issues such as depression, suicidal ideation, and familial history of suicide, social supports and any recent events which may have been stressful (White Kress et al., 2004). If appropriate, and the student's home environment is determined to be safe, parents should be called to school and provided information about self-injurious behaviors, referral information, support, and possible coping skills.

Working with Parents and Caregivers

Professional school counselors should be prepared for negative reactions from parents and caregivers, resistance to the information and a possible increase in family crisis (Trepal, Wester, & MacDonald, 2006). As parents and caregivers struggle to accept negative information, professional school counselors should help them to understand differences between self-injury and suicide while attempting to minimize problematic communication and conflict (Yip, 2005). PSCs should also be aware of cultural implications, though there has not been a stereotypical reaction based upon race observed (Trepal, et al.). Factors such as recent immigration, beliefs about health care, spirituality, and the level of community involvement may have an effect on parent and caregiver responses (Sen, 2004; Turell & Armsworth, 2000).

Following notification of parents and caregivers, the professional school counselor should provide a list of referrals in the community for treatment. PSCs can make either a partial or complete referral (Baker, 2001). A complete referral would involve disassociation from the student's case, while a partial referral would involve continued involvement while the student works with mental health professionals outside of the school (Kress, et al., 2004). In addition, a referral for inpatient or outpatient treatment may be appropriate. Professional school counselors should know which facilities specifically address self-injury. If the student is placed in an inpatient treatment center, the PSC should provide educational information to the facility and continue to monitor the student's educational progress. Upon returning to school, the PSC would help the student transition back into the regular school environment by providing services to the student as dictated by both the student and parents.

Strategies to Help Parents and Caregivers

Once parents and caregivers are aware of the self-injurious behaviors and have been provided referral information, they may benefit from additional information and assistance from professional school counselors (Pehrson & Boylan, 2004). Parents and caregivers may respond with this information as in any crisis situation and PSCs should provide emotional support and seek to instill hope (Campbell, Cataldie, McIntosh, & Miller, 2004). Based upon these assumptions and a synthesis of the current literature, strategies professional school counselors could use to help parents and caregivers are discussed. The strategies are not sequential and are provided as recommendations when dealing with parents whose children practice self-injury. The six strategies are as follows:

1. Educating parents and caregivers about self-injury
2. Dispelling myths surrounding self-injury
3. Approaching the situation as "no fault"
4. Knowing and understanding limitations in regard to self-injury
5. Trying to remain patient with those who self-injure
6. Creating a safety plan to prevent future occurrences and assist in emergencies.

Educating Parents and Caregivers about Self-Injury

Prior to educating parents and caregivers with information, professional school counselors could ask parents and caregivers what they already know about self-injury. Depending upon the response, PSCs should guide their discussions and information. Parents and caregivers should understand that self-injurious behaviors typically begin around age 14 (females more prevalent than males) and that the behavior is used as a coping mechanism to relieve unwanted emotions (Gallop, 2002: Ross & Heath, 2002). One way to help parents understand how self-injury serves adolescents in relieving emotional pain is to imagine a child who is riding a bicycle following a disagreement with a sibling and falls off of the bike skinning a knee. The focus is now on the skinned knee and the emotional anger felt previously has disappeared (Austin & Kortum, 2004). Parents and caregivers should be made aware that the forms of self-injury vary and may include biting, scratching, branding, cutting, self-hitting, and burning (Patterson & Kahan, 1983). However, of the various forms of self-injury, cutting is the most prevalent method used (Gallop, 2002; Ross & Heath).

Dispelling myths surrounding self-injury. There are several myths surrounding those who self-injure and parents should be aware of some of the myths in order to further heighten their awareness. One of the myths is that students who self-injure are trying to manipulate others. Self-injurers go to great lengths to hide their scars and prefer to present themselves as normal adolescents (Froeschle & Moyer, 2004; McLane, 1996). A second myth is that self-injurious behavior is synonymous with suicide. Self-injurious behaviors are performed for various reasons, but are usually not suicidal in nature (Zila & Kiselica, 2001). Another myth surrounding self-injurers is that students who self-injure are dangerous and will hurt others. In fact, the opposite is true. Self-injurious behavior is not violent toward others as it is performed to release emotional pain (McLane, 1996). A final myth surrounding those who self-injure is that self-injurers want attention and perform their injurious behaviors for the purpose of gaining attention (Levenkron, 1998). Parents and caregivers need to know that there is not any truth in the myths surrounding self-injurious behaviors. They can use this information to help others outside of their own family as they continue to become knowledgeable about self-injury.

Approaching the situation as "no fault." Parents and caregivers need to know that self-injurious behaviors are not designed to make others feel guilty or shameful. Professional school counselors should emphasize to parents that there is no reason to feel any blame. Some parents may feel guilty not knowing sooner about the self-injurious behaviors (Trepal et al., 2006). PSCs should work with parents and caregivers to externalize the self-injurious behaviors and relieve themselves of any thoughts they might have caused self-injurious behaviors and any feelings of guilt (LeGrange, Lock, & Dymek, 2003).

Knowing and understanding limitations in regard to self-injury. It is important for parents and caregivers to know that a self-injurer cannot be forced to stop hurting him or herself. Ultimatums do not work with self-injurers and can cause more damage to the self-injurer if self-injurious behaviors are suppressed (Austin & Kortum, 2004). Any type of punishment a parent or caregiver chooses to use is not likely to help stop the self-injurious behaviors. Professional school counselors can share information and resources available at the website http://crystalpalace.net. This website contains helpful information and additional links to information about self-injury.

Trying to remain patient with those who self-injure. Adolescents who self-injure tend to have a defensive barrier separating themselves from others. Self-injurers use this to protect their privacy. One of the best ways to help diffuse this barrier is to express compassion and understanding (Austin & Kortum, 2004). Parents and caregivers can recognize the pain and suffering the self-injurer is experiencing and let them know of their understanding (Levenkron, 1998). Professional school counselors can offer support to parents and caregivers and encourage patience. Reminding parents and caregivers that a self-injurer has to develop ways of expressing his or her emotions in a healthy manner and this may take a long time is useful.

*Creating a safety plan to prevent future occurrences and assist in emergencies.*Parents and caregivers should help the self-injurer develop a detailed safety plan. The self-injurer should first accept responsibility for his or her behaviors and for making future decisions as safe as possible. The plan should include identifying self-injury triggers, physical cues the self-injurer may perceive as well as any reducers to self-injury. The plan should also detail specific safe places and people to go to if wanting to self-injure and deliberate avoidance of objects which may be used to self-injure (White Kress et al., 2004). In addition, parents and caregivers should have a detailed plan to follow in case of any emergency situations. Family members and others who are likely to be in the presence of the self-injurer should also be advised of emergency procedures. Encouraging the self-injurer to be with others when wanting to self-injure is extremely important as self-injury is rarely done when others are near (Dallam, 1997).

Discussion

Cessation of Self-Injurious Behaviors

Cessation of self-injurious behaviors may be related to two important factors. The first factor that leads to cessation is the ability to identify and express feelings verbally and the second factor is learning to use appropriate behavioral alternatives to self-injury (Dallam, 1997). As PSCs focus on cessation and provide opportunities for students to learn both verbalization of emotions and healthy behavioral alternatives, the number of self-injurious behaviors among adolescents should decrease.

Advocating for Adolescents who Self-Injure

Professional school counselors can serve as advocates for those who self-injure and face challenges in intervention and prevention of adolescent self-injurious behaviors (White Kress et al., 2004). Providing

education to teachers, parents and students as to signs and symptoms of self-injurious behaviors as well as what to do if they suspect or know someone practicing self-injurious behaviors is imperative (Cornell Research Program, n.d.). Advocating for students and educating school personnel regarding self-injury will facilitate awareness and the identification and monitoring of student self-injurious behaviors (White Kress et al., 2004). Once parents and caregivers are aware of the self-injurious behaviors and have been provided referral information, they may benefit from additional information and assistance from the PSC (Pehrson & Boylan, 2004).

Summary

This paper explores self-injurious behaviors, discusses some of the reason why adolescents practice self-injury and recommends six strategies that professional school counselors could use with parents whose adolescents self-injure. It is the hope of the author that information provided in this paper will be helpful to professional school counselors as they face various challenges involved with adolescents who self-injure.

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Adolescent Attitudes Toward Disabilities: What Every School Counselor Needs to Know

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ABSTRACT

This study examined high school attitudes toward persons with physical and mental disabilities using a social distance scale. Results indicated that physical disabilities (e.g., ulcer, stomach disorder, heart disease, visual impairment, hearing impairment, spinal cord injure) were rated as most accepted (excluding HIV/AIDS) and mental disabilities (e.g., chemical dependency, schizophrenia, depression, alcoholism, behavior disorder, mental retardation) were the least accepted. That is, more social distance was placed between the participant and the disability group. These findings were similar to other studies. As diversity awareness continues to drive the counseling arena, it seems vital that attitudes toward disabilities be addressed. Implications of these results as well as techniques to modify student attitudes toward disability are reviewed.

Negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities have been prevalent throughout history. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was implemented to decrease discriminatory practices; however, negative attitudes toward persons with disabilities (PWD) continue to exist (Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Lerner & Belts, 2005; Noe, 1997). Certain types of disabilities such as mental illness are frequently viewed in a negative manner based on unfounded stereotypical attitudes (e.g., that all persons with mental illness are dangerous) (Noble & Collington, 1987). In fact, individuals with physical disabilities (e.g., ulcer, stomach disorder, kidney disorder, cancer, spinal cord injury, etc.) receive less stigma and discrimination as compared to those (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, substance abuse) with mental disabilities (Chandras, DeLambo & Chandras, 2007; Noe, Mayville, Wachelka, & Gipson, 1997). Fortunately, an array of techniques are available to modify these attitudes toward PWD (Barrett & Pullo, 1993; McReynolds & Garske, 2003; Beck, Deitrich, Matschinger, & Angermeyer, 2003). The current study explored high school senior's attitudes toward PWD as well as techniques to modify their attitudes. Since diversity training is an utmost concern in both the business as well as academic world, it is imperative to address students' attitudes toward disabilities as early as possible in their career development.

Attitudes are difficult to measure because they are not directly observable but are descriptive concepts inferred from observations or behavior. Attitudes are believed to influence behavior (Antonak & Livneh, 1988) and there are a number of appropriate instruments to measure this construct (Antonak, & Livneh, 2000). A frequently used method for measuring attitudes is a social distance scale. Social distance has been defined as "the degree of sympathetic understanding between persons or between a person and a group" (Bogardus, 1933, p. 268). Social distance is directly related with attitudes toward disabilities; persons tend to distance themselves (i.e., degree of social contact) from negatively perceived disabilities (e.g., alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, Schizophrenia).

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Tringo (1970) devised a 21-item Disability Social Distance Scale (DSDS) from Bogardus's (1925) Social Distance Scale. The DSDS used handicapping language (e.g., schizophrenic, hunchback, dwarf, etc.). Disabilities were rated on a 9-point Likert scale measuring the degree of closeness one would be willing to have with a person with a particular disability. The Likert categories in regard to a PWD were: (1) Would marry; (2) Would accept as close kin by marriage; (3) Would have as a next door neighbor; (4) Would accept as a casual friend; (5) Would accept as a casual employee; (6) Would keep away from; (7) Would keep in institution; (8) Would send out of my country, and, lastly, (9) Would put to death (The current authors removed this category from the scale based on its negative view toward persons with disabilities). When using the DSDS, Noe, et al. (1997) found that both high school and college students rated physical disabilities as more acceptable than mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse. Likewise, Corrigan, River, Lundin, Wasowski, Campion, Mathisen et al. (2000) found that students rated the individuals with cocaine addiction, psychosis, and other psychiatric disabilities in a much less favorable light than individuals with physical disabilities. Arokiasamy, Rubin, and Roessler (2001) as well as Chandras, DeLambo & Chandras (2007), found a similar preference hierarchy.

The purpose of this study was to explore high-school student's attitudes toward disabilities and then explore techniques that can be used in the high school environment to modify these attitudes. The 1970 Tringo DSDS was adopted in order to address this study's purpose.

Methods

Participants

One hundred and twenty-five 18 year-old high school seniors (67 females and 58 males) volunteered to participate. The participants were selected from 6 classrooms at three high schools from a Midwestern rural area.

Construction of the Person-First Disability Scale (PFDS)

Antonak and Livneh (1988) suggested that the DSDS be modified to include standardized terminology, deletion of uncommon disabilities and the inclusion of common disabilities. The current authors adopted the DSDS and made the following modifications: (a) the addition of new disabilities (i.e., acquired immune deficiency syndrome and human immunodeficiency virus) nonexistent three decades ago; (b) the addition of current disabilities (e.g., multiple sclerosis, HIV/AIDS); (c) the deletion of uncommon disabilities (e.g., poliomyelitis); (d) the removal Likert scale category 9 "Would Put to Death," and, (e) the utilization "person-first" disability language (e.g., refer to client as "a person with schizophrenia" instead of "a schizophrenic client"). Fifty-eight disability types were submitted for content validation (Falvo, 1999).

Content Validation of PFDS

Nine rehabilitation professionals examined the modified instrument and reported if each item should be either included, excluded, or modified. Suggestions were made for inclusion of disorders not listed. As suggested by Allen and Yen (1979) 80% agreement was used for retention of an item. Items not reaching 80% agreement were deleted or modified. An 8-point Likert scale was used. The final questionnaire consisted of 40 items (see appendix for PFDS questionnaire).

Procedure

The instrument was dispersed to each of the six classrooms. The directions were provided to each group of students. Names were not used and confidentiality was assured, reducing validity threats associated with reactivity. Students were instructed to place their completed survey in a large manila envelope.

Results

There was a hierarchy of preference toward disability type (see Table 1). Lower scores indicate less social distance and higher scores demonstrate more social distance. In general, physical disabilities were viewed more favorably than mental disabilities (e.g., schizophrenia). The entire sample of physical disabilities (excluding HIV/AIDS) ranked lower than mental illness, alcoholism, chemical dependency, tuberculosis; these mental disabilities were all rated in a less than favorable manner (see Table 1).

Discussion

The finding that attitudes of high school students did not differ significantly from other college students in terms of social distance ratings was not unexpected (Chandras et al., 2007). These participants may not have had contact with persons with disabilities; consequently, as contact with individuals with disabilities increases, positive attitudes often times become evident (Alexander, & Link, 2003). Another reason for the students' social distance may be feelings of existential and aesthetic anxiety among the participants in this study (Rubin & Roessler, 2001). Both types of anxiety occur when the person without a disability becomes

anxious when coming in close proximity to a person with a disability. From an existential anxiety standpoint, one may realize how fragile the human body is and avoid contact with a person with a disability (e.g., individual who has a mental illness). Since mental illness affects 25% of American families (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 1988), students may not want to acknowledge the fact that they could develop a mental disability. Moreover, current societal trends emphasizing youth and beauty may contribute to aesthetic anxiety (Gatens-Robinson & Rubin, 1995). Aesthetic anxiety occurs when persons without disabilities avoid those with disabilities due to an uneasy feeling associated with being in contact with a person with a disability. For example, students may not view a person with Cerebral Palsy (CP) as having physical beauty and therefore display anxiety when in contact with such an individual.

Tringo (1970) claimed that societal attitudes vary depending on the disability. It could be that alcoholism, chemical dependency, AIDS/HIV are viewed differently because of a belief in the perceived cause of the disability. Rubin and Roessler (2001) purported that negative societal attitudes may be influenced by factors such as the perceived cause of the disability. For example, persons with mental illness, and persons with alcohol or chemical dependency may be seen as responsible for creating their disability which may lead to them being viewed in a more negative manner.

Most importantly, Tringo (1970) claimed that discrimination against persons with disabilities may impede employment opportunities. Many of the high school students in this study may become employers, may become employed as direct service providers, or may become co-workers of persons with disabilities. Therefore, negative attitudes toward persons with disabilities, or specific disability groups, may hinder employment opportunities or vocational success.

HIV/AIDS ranked low in regard to acceptance among these students. As the number of persons who have HIV and AIDS continues to rise, attitudes toward these individuals should be assessed. Falvo (1999) reported that discrimination, fear, and prejudice are serious impediments to employment for persons with HIV and AIDS. The fact that HIV and AIDS ranked high (more social distance) within the hierarchy suggests that much training is needed in the area of social acceptance. Students can be trained with knowledge that discredits certain myths surrounding these disabilities.

Attitudinal Changes

Education and Attitudes

Attitudes are difficult to change; however, Barrett and Pullo (1993) were able to change students' attitudes towards persons with disabilities within a structured activity called "The Handicapping Experience". The teachers emphasized areas such as psychosocial aspects of disability, stigma associated with disability, accessibility, ethics, myths associated with disability, stress, defense and coping, adjusting to the disability, and disability rights. In addition, students had various assignments such as completing an assessment of a building for physical accessibility, a computerized simulation of using a wheelchair, and an interview with a person with a disability. Using the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale, Barrett and Pullo assessed students' attitudes before and after the activity. Significant differences were found from pretest to posttest in that both male and female students had positive attitude changes toward persons with disabilities after completion of the activity.

Education has been shown to promote positive attitudes toward PWD. For example disability education is key in positively impacting respondents' attitude related to benevolence and social restrictiveness of persons with mental illness (Holmes, Corrigan, Williams, Canar, & Kubiak, 1999; Corrigan, 2006). Likewise, McReynolds and Garske (2003) reported on training programs that could incorporate topics of psychiatric disability within different courses. For example, a high-school class might discuss the issue of psychiatric disability within a general psychology or a social studies course. In addition, assignments pertaining to disability would certainly fit within this model. For example, a project addressing the psychological and social implications of HIV/AIDS is likely to increase awareness for students at different levels, such as a high school English term-paper pertaining to vital topics (e.g., as mental illness and violence).

Guest Presentations by Community Members

Two of the authors continue to have guest speakers from the community address their courses as well as implement course-specific assignments (site visit to hospital) related to this topic. For example, previous speakers include persons with disabilities, members from National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), psychiatrists, and family members of persons with disabilities. Students are very responsive toward these techniques. A person with a disability addressing these courses typically produces rich discussions between the speaker and the audience. A discussion on the impact of

blindness, for example, on daily life activities typically gets the audience's attention. A school counseling program curriculum could integrate this type of activity within the classroom. Local branches of NAMI can be contacted for speakers and other relevant training ideas or materials in order to assist with changing attitudes toward disabilities. NAMI is the largest organization in our nation dedicated to improving the lives of individuals impacted by serious mental illness. This group is a self-help, education, support, and advocacy organization. (NAMI, 2006).

Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

Mental health advocates and family members of persons with mental illness have a grave concern that the media perpetuate negative stigma toward mental illness (Gerbner, 1980; Wahl, 1980; 1992). Fortunately, groups such as NAMI through its "Mental Illness-Stigma Busters" program have helped battle bias and discrimination toward the portrayal of persons with mental illness in the media, as have Hollywood actors with mental illnesses, who have publicized their disabilities through "coming out" presentations (Simmons, 2001a). Corrigan (2006) reported that NAMI's advocacy through its Stigma Busters campaign, played a key role in ABC's decision to cancel "Wonderland"; a primetime show that depicted persons with mental illness as dangerous and unpredictable. Furthermore, key governmental figures such as the previous U.S. Surgeon General, David Satcher continue to address mental illness discrimination and stigma (Simmons, 2001b). These examples illustrate how students, through guidance lessons, can be trained to selectively determine media biases and either debunk these myths or merely realize the inaccuracies of these programs. School counselors can play a vital role in this process.

Media and Attitudes Toward Disabilities

Newspaper articles and other media presentations can negatively impact attitudes toward disability. School counseling program curriculum can benefit from this knowledge. For example, Thornton and Wahl (1996) found that attitudes toward persons with mental illness were negative following exposure to articles where a murder committed by a person with mental illness is portrayed and elements believed to perpetuate stigma are included. The following elements were presented: a) a horrific murder of an innocent human being by a "psychiatric deviant" type; b) a graphic description using emotionally charged terminology; c) attention grabbing headline such as "Boy, Dismembered at Park: Escaped Mental Patient At-large"; lastly, d) a description of the person with mental illness as bizarre, and no social ties/identity. Respondents were strongly attracted to sensational headlines (e.g., Mental Patient Murders Child with Ax) and were likely to read the article if found in a newspaper. Thornton and Wahl also provided a group of readers with articles that addressed misconceptions about mental illness and provided facts (e.g., violence and mental illness are rare) and made the point that the media inaccurately portrays persons with mental illnesses. Those that read the prophylactic-type articles tended to have a more favorable attitude toward mental illness. In fact, by reading this material first, the original biased article, was viewed as flawed by the respondents. These results suggest that school counselors and teachers, through education, can assist with debunking myths and bias that students either hold or arm them to address media bias.

Attribution and Disability

In regard to coworkers' acceptance of PWD, Bordieri and Drehmer (1987) found that when applicants were perceived to have caused their disability (e.g., spinal cord injury from driving while intoxicated), respondents deemed these individuals to have difficulties getting along with and being accepted by coworkers. Since attribution influences attitudes toward disabilities, school counselors and teachers can address attributional processes within a training program. For example, a guidance lesson can discuss the issue of morality as compared to the disease model. Students then may view the accident as resulting from a disease verses a moral failure. For example, a spinal cord injury due to substance abuse (e.g., driving while intoxicated) could be viewed as symptom of the disease (i.e., substance abuse), not a flaw in character (Rubin & Roesslor, 2001; Roesslor & Rubin, 2006).

Despite the fact that the ADA is responsible for lifting barriers for persons with disabilities, there is still much work to be done in changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities. This study suggested that attitudes have not changed since Tringo completed his study in 1970. For example, attitudes toward mental illness and substance abuse disorders continued to be viewed in a negative manner. In fact, Thomas (2000) found in a follow-up study that a similar preference toward disability continues to exist when utilizing the original scale developed by Tringo. Thus, it is imperative that students receive some type of training in regard to acceptance of persons with disabilities. In regard to alcoholism, Beck et al. (2003) reported that health campaigns that increase awareness by explaining it is not a personal failure, but a disease with severe health and social implications, could positively impact acceptance and in turn, decrease structural discrimination (e.g.,

governmental or insurance monies toward substance abuse). In fact, when persons were believed to be responsible for their disability, the public was less apt to donate money to reputable fundraising efforts (Corrigan, Watson, Warpinski, & Garcia, 2004). Information such as this can be used as a major underpinning of a high school attitude modification program.

School counseling program curriculum can play an instrumental role in the modification of attitudes toward disabilities. If proper training and education occurs, students will have the necessary skills and knowledge to identify biases within the media. Also, they may avoid harboring misperceptions of persons with disabilities. Armed with knowledge concerning disabilities, these young students, who will be our future co-workers and employers, will be less likely to harbor stigmatized attitudes. Consequently, they will avoid discriminating against PWD, either in the workplace or society in general. By providing education to change negative attitudes and stereotypes, both high schools and universities can play an active role in creating a society that is more accepting of persons with disabilities.

Limitations

The authors did not utilize equal numbers from each classroom nor did they do random sampling (i.e., in-tact classes were utilized). Furthermore, previous respondent contact with disabilities was not assessed (e.g., family members, friends, or coworkers, or consumers). In addition, the original Tringo scale was modified from its format for this study. However, results were similar to other studies that indicated similar preferences toward disability.

Future Research

Researchers could categorize the different disability types. For example, the Person-First Disability Scale could be expanded to include specific categories within chemical dependency such as heroin, LSD, methamphetamine, cocaine, crack, marijuana, alcohol, and solvents, and assess for a hierarchy of preference within these categories. Also, future research could gather data about the respondents' prior contact with substance abuse as well as social/familial contact or educational experiences. Cocaine users may have a different view on cocaine users than other respondents. If this is the case, training modules can be used to address this. Likewise, areas such as ex-offenders can be categorized (e.g., white collar crime, rape, incest, specific murder types, etc.) and addressed. Hence, with a thorough understanding of the respondents' background, relationships can be assessed between these and preference toward disabilities. With more specific types of information, training modules can be developed accordingly.

Table 1

Disability Hierarchy Means of Total Sample (N=125) Utilizing 8-point Likert scale

Rank	Disability	Mean
1.	Person who has an ulcer	2.00
2.	Person who uses crutches	2.15
3.	Person who has a stomach disorder	2.20
4.	Person who has heart disease	2.23
5.	Person who has a visual impairment or is blind	2.25
6.	Person who is short statured	2.26
7.	Person who has a kidney disorder	2.31
8.	Person who is deaf or hard of hearing	2.32
9.	Person who has had a stroke	2.33
10.	Person who has an amputation	2.35
11.	Person who has cancer	2.35
12.	Person who uses a wheelchair	2.35
13.	Person who has a respiratory condition	2.35
14.	Person who has spinal curvature	2.41
15.	Person who has a learning disorder	2.46
16.	Person who has spinal cord injury	2.56
17.	Person who has a skin disorder	2.58
18.	Person who is over 65 years of age	2.59
19.	Person who has chronic pain	2.60
20.	Person who has a musculoskeletal disorder	2.62
21.	Person who has epilepsy	2.65
22.	Person who has Parkinson's disease	2.66
23.	Person who has a seizure disorder	2.70
24.	Person who has multiple sclerosis	2.73
25.	Person who has depression	2.76
26.	Person who has cerebral palsy	2.80
27.	Person who has muscular dystrophy	2.84
28.	Person who has Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome)	2.91
29.	Person who has autism	2.92
30.	Person who has mental retardation	3.00
31.	Person who has traumatic brain injury (TBI)	3.01
32.	Person who has depression and mania	3.21
33.	Person who has a behavior disorder	3.28
34.	Person who is identified as having alcoholism	3.44
35.	Person who has human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	3.47
36.	Person who has tuberculosis	3.49
37.	Person who has acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)	3.54
38.	Person who is identified as having other chemical dependency	3.88
39.	Person who has schizophrenia	3.95
40.	Person who is an ex-offender	4.55

Note: A higher mean indicates greater social distance

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Appendix

Person-First Disability Language Scale (PFDS)

Participation in this survey is voluntary. You may elect not to participate or drop out at any time with no penalties. The results of your survey will remain anonymous. Thank you for your participation.

Age _____ Gender M____ F____

INSTRUCTIONS: There are many degrees of understanding that may exist between persons. Some of these relationships are listed below in order of closeness, with *number 1 describing the closest relationship and number 8 the most distant relationship.*

Which item on the scale below best describes the closest relationship you feel toward each disability group listed below? Next to each disability, circle the number of the item on the scale that describes the closest relationship you would be willing to have with persons with a disability.

1 Would Marry	**2** Would accept as a close kin by marriage	**3** Would have as a next door neighbor	**4** Would accept as a casual friend	**5** Would accept as a fellow employee	**6** Would keep away from	**7** Would keep in an institution	**8** Would send out of my country

Circle one:

1.	Person who is identified as having alcoholism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.	Person who is identified as having other chemical dependency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	Person who is over 65 years of age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.	Person who is an ex-offender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5.	Person who has tuberculosis	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Person who is hard of hearing or deaf	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7.	Person who has spinal cord injury	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8.	Person who has cancer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9.	Person who has spinal curvature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

	1 Would Marry	**2** Would accept as a close kin by marriage	**3** Would have as a next door neighbor	**4** Would accept as a casual friend	**5** Would accept as a fellow employee	**6** Would keep away from	**7** Would keep in an institution	**8** Would send out of my country

Circle one:

10.	Person who has an amputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11.	Person who is short statured	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12.	Person who has a visual impairment or is blind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	Person who has heart disease	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14.	Person who has an ulcer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15.	Person who has acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16.	Person who has human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17.	Person who has a seizure disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18.	Person who has schizophrenia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19.	Person who has muscular dystrophy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20.	Person who has multiple sclerosis	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
21.	Person who has depression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
22.	Person who has depression and mania (bipolar disorder)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
23.	Person who has chronic pain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
24.	Person who uses a wheelchair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
25.	Person who uses crutches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
26.	Person who has a behavior disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
27.	Person who has a learning disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
28.	Person who has a respiratory condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
29.	Person who has a kidney disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

	1 Would Marry	**2** Would accept as a close kin by marriage	**3** Would have as a next door neighbor	**4** Would accept as a casual friend	**5** Would accept as a fellow employee	**6** Would keep away from	**7** Would keep in an institution	**8** Would send out of my country

Circle one:

30.	Person who has a stomach disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
31.	Person who has a skin disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
32.	Person who has a musculoskeletal disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
33.	Person who has Parkinson's disease	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
34.	Person who has had a stroke	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
35.	Person who has autism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
36.	Person who has mental retardation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
37.	Person who has epilepsy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
38.	Person who has Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
39.	Person who has cerebral palsy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
40.	Person who has traumatic brain injury (TBI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Site Supervision of Professional School Counselors-In-Training: A Practitioner's Conceptualization

Lisa L. Schulz

ABSTRACT

This article presents a conceptualization of site supervision for school counselors-in-training (SCIT). This conceptualization is based on the premise that SCIT receive an experientially based internship rather than one premised solely on supervision theory. It is intended to be a tool from which counselor educators, site supervisors, and SCIT can cooperatively design and implement an internship experience which produces capable, confident, and knowledgeable professional school counselors.

The culminating preparatory experience for school counselors-in-training (SCIT) is the internship experience in which the SCIT is expected to synthesize all of the clinical training and academic course work and "become a counselor," ready and able to perform all the functions and tasks of the job. The supervised school counseling internship is arguably one of the most essential and rewarding components of the SCIT preparation (Nelson & Johnson, 1999) making the supervision relationship one of the most important. Supervision entails a unique professional relationship between a university supervisor, a practicing school counselor, and the SCIT. It is a relationship that evolves and revolves around and from the beliefs, values, attitudes, skills, and motivation of each person involved in the encounter. The energy given to the development of effective supervision in the school counseling field is burgeoning as evidenced by the recent advent of related work (e.g., Miller & Dollarhide, 2006; Murphy & Kaffenberger, 2007; Paisley, Bailey, Ziomek-Daigle, & Getch, 2007; Studer, 2005; Studer & Oberman, 2006). Counselor educators have recognized the need and desire of the practicing school counselor to receive guidance in providing supervision to the SCIT and have stepped up to provide options with which to supervise, train, and guide.

Supervision, which has emerged as a distinct specialty area, is the most heavily used tool in the helping profession (Haynes, Corey, & Moulton, 2003). Traditionally, a supervisor's clinical experience sufficed as preparation for the tasks of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004), and the lack of formal training for supervisors was characterized as the "dirty little secret" (Hoffman, 1994, p. 25) in the mental health profession and deemed an unethical practice. School counselor education programs affiliating themselves with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) require programs to provide training for their site supervisors (CACREP, 2001). Given the limitations of time and resources, the question of how best to train and offer support still looms large. As a former school counselor who identifies more as practitioner than theorist, the process of providing supervision to the SCIT is one which guides the individual through a series of experiences which intersect to form a comprehensive program. By creating a mentor-mentee relationship with the SCIT, the site supervisor can work collaboratively with both the SCIT and the university supervisor to create a meaningful and intentional experience. It is the purpose of this article to offer an experiential approach to site supervision in schools which defines the essence of what professional school counselors do daily in terms of their experiences

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and how these experiences simultaneously form cohesive, comprehensive, and effective school counseling programs.

Essential Considerations of Supervision

At some point in their training, all SCIT will be supervised, and many of them will in turn become supervisors. For this simple reason, supervision has evolved into a separate and distinct field of study; one that is self-regulating and encourages a lifelong involvement and a commitment to quality. School counseling supervision may be defined as a process in which an experienced and competent counselor observes, provides guidance, and evaluates the professional development of a counselor-in-training as he or she participates in an internship experience. Supervision is "teaching that occurs in the context of practice and provides a bridge between campus and clinic" (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004, p. 2). There is indeed a teaching component to the supervision process, but there is much more. The supervision process comprises a dual function: 1) to facilitate the professional development of both practicing school counselors and counselors-in-training, and 2) to monitor the welfare of the client. This task requires a balancing of interests on the part of the supervisor whose primary aim is to facilitate the availability of varied experiences required by the SCIT to become a fully functioning professional school counselor (Haynes et al., 2003). It is not an equal relationship; typically, it is hierarchical and contains an evaluative component. The success of supervision relies primarily on the supervisor style and SCIT motivation rather than the progress of the client (Ladany, Marotta & Muse-Burke, 2001).

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) identifies supervisor competencies used in counselor education programs in the *Standards for Counseling Supervisors* (ACES, 1990). The standards describe the knowledge competencies and personal traits that characterize effective supervisors. Borders, Bernard, Dye, Fong, Henderson, and Nance (1991) characterized seven distinct competency areas: models of supervision; counselor development; supervision methods and techniques; supervisory relationship; ethical and legal issues; evaluation; and executive skills. Personal experience indicates the area of greatest concern for site supervisors is their competency related to methods and techniques. The key to an effective supervisory experience, and thus perceived supervisor competence, is believed to be a combination of the approach the supervisor takes and his or her distinctive manner of responding to the intern (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Friedlander & Ward, 1984; Holloway, 1995; Ladany et al., 2001; Ladany, Walker, & Melincoff, 2001).

Borders and Brown (2005) identify seven factors which influence a site supervisor's choice of intervention. These choices are based on 1) the supervisor's preferences, 2) the SCIT's experience and developmental level, 3) the SCIT's learning style, 4) the SCIT's learning goals, 5) the supervisor's goals for the SCIT, 6) the supervisor's personal learning goals for the supervisory experience, and 7) contextual factors (e.g., physical setting, available technology, etc.). Giving additional consideration to exploring the issue of supervisor preferences, Borders and Brown note the importance the influence a supervisor's worldview and theoretical orientation has on intervention choices. In order to help supervisors further explore their preferences and orientation, they offer two objective measures, the Supervisor Emphasis Rating Form – Revised (SERF-R, Lanning & Freemen, 1994) and the Supervisory Styles Inventory (SSI, Friedlander & Ward, 1984). The exploration and discussion of worldviews, preferences, and beliefs provide both the supervisor and SCIT a foundation from which to operationalize the internship experience. The remaining factors which influence choice of intervention are more readily discussed and integrated allowing focus on specific techniques deemed beneficial to the process (Borders & Brown).

Though the focus is different, supervision uses many of the same attending skills used in counseling such as the six stages of empathy, active listening, respect, and challenging (Haynes et al., 2003). Verbal exchange and direct observation are the most commonly used techniques (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Haynes et al.). While direct observation is not always possible, it is quite valuable to view a counseling session on videotape or even listen to an audiotape; the ability to see nonverbal communication provides insight into the motives of all parties (Borders & Brown, 2005). Borders and Brown also include discussion on microtraining, self-report, Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR), and role-playing.

Verbal exchange allows great liberty in helping SCIT comprehend their own actions and reactions as the supervisor makes observations or asks a few well-timed questions designed to stimulate and challenge. Creating a bit of cognitive dissonance for the SCIT may initiate the discovery of a new perspective on a student's behavior or of the SCIT themselves. Borders (2001) explains the intervention by stating: "Questions, sometimes paired with interpretations, seem to provide the critical challenges in supervision, especially when balanced by supportive reflective statements" (p. 426).

Of extreme importance in supervision is the function of modeling. Borders' (2001) words continue to inspire as they remind all professionals that even though supervisors deliberately model skills and techniques, all actions on the part of the supervisor become professional examples. Borders clarifies that modeling includes large actions such as supervisor's attitudes about clients and their situations, and smaller actions such as being on time and being prepared. SCIT learn the language and methods of school counseling from their supervisors and may in turn carry them into counseling sessions and consultations. Words are powerful, actions perhaps even more so.

Feedback seems a highly underrated supervisory technique that is used most commonly, yet has received little attention concerning its value and use (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Larson, Day, Springer, Clark, & Vogel, 2003). Cited as the central activity of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear), feedback provided by the supervisor needs to be intentional and directly related to the SCIT behavior, cognition, or affect. Larson et al. indicates there is some evidence that negative and positive feedback affects counseling self-efficacy. Intuition concurs with the idea that how supervisors speak to and with SCIT is highly influential in how SCIT in turn communicate with their students. SCIT need to hear supportive comments about their work as well as constructive feedback regarding their application of skills and technique (Borders & Brown, 2005).

Application of a Developmental Supervision Strategy

Considerable work has been done in an attempt to define what supervision is and the different forms it may take. Along with acknowledging the complexity of human behavior comes the recognition that no one model of supervision can explain the learning process more accurately or adequately than any other (Ladany, Ellis, & Friedlander, 1999). No one theory can fully anticipate and resolve each and every issue in a supervisory situation, and in all probability, most supervisors tend to work from more than just one model, just as they tend to draw on different approaches (Borders & Brown, 2005; Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982). Interestingly, Holloway (1992, 1987) posited that common factors in supervision models such as working alliance and supervisory style played a more significant role in effective supervision outcomes than the reliance on any specific approach or technique, but allowed that most supervisors resonated with and worked from one particular supervision theory. Considering the population in schools and the empirical support of developmental supervision models (Holloway 1992; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Crethar, 1994; Watkins, 1995), utilizing a developmental strategy with the SCIT can translate into greater capability and cohesion.

Developmental models of supervision contend that the goal of supervision is to enable supervisees to proceed through a progression of developmental levels as they establish their own counselor identity and a more internal locus of control regarding the process (Loganbill et al., 1982; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987). Of the developmental models, the one that seems the most complimentary to an experiential approach is the integrated developmental model (IDM) (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Based on 10 years of research, this model describes three levels of supervisee development and the corresponding role of the supervisor for each level. As with the human development stages, the supervisee doesn't move directly from one level to the next, but may be strong in some areas and attain the characteristics of levels two or three, yet remain at a level one in other ways. Generally, level one supervisees are entry-level counselors, lacking confidence and skill and who require more structure and direction from the supervisor. Level two supervisees begin to feel more confident and start relying on their own abilities, requiring the supervisor to focus more on process and personal issues. In level three, supervisees provide most of the structure in supervision, while the supervisor becomes more collegial and acts more as a consultant. Stoltenberg et al. identify eight specific domains of supervision practice in which to assess the developmental level of the supervisee: intervention skill competencies, assessment techniques, interpersonal assessment, client conceptualization, individual differences, theoretical orientation, treatment plans and goals, and professional ethics.

Accompanying the three developmental levels and the eight domains are three structures which function to trace the progress of the supervisee through the levels of each domain (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). The three structures are: 1) the supervisee's awareness of self and others, 2) motivation toward the development process, and 3) the amount of dependency or autonomy displayed by the supervisee. These structures help measure the competence of the supervisee and inform the supervisor of how much or how little to instruct, provide structure, or consult with the supervisee (Stoltenberg et al., 1998).

Development-in-Context

Development occurs in an evolving, devolving and revolving manner. It is not a linear path from inexpe-

rienced to master counselor or supervisor. The development of a supervisee (and a supervisor) must be taken in context with the environment in which the supervision takes place, the worldview, and personal attributes of those involved in the process including the client (Ibrahim, 1991), along with the myriad of external forces such as the governing bodies and licensing agencies that influence all of the above (Haynes et al., 2003). Supervision is a shared creation and a shared responsibility.

A supervisor must be accountable for the influences of his or her experiences, past and present, that impact the supervisory experience. Personal identity, belief systems, and eventually, a life course are created through the interaction of the physical, social, political, and economic environments (Herr, 2004). The social, ecological, and political environment in which we live, train, and work impacts the direction and flow of SCIT progress toward efficacy (Conyne & Bemak, 2004). Therefore, if "behavior is a function of a person's interacting with environments" (Wilson, 2004, ¶ 1), then an intentional and ongoing ecological assessment (a review of all of the influences in a person's life) is vital for both supervisors and the SCIT. Concurrently, the supervisors and the SCIT must be clear regarding their knowledge and comfort level in being or becoming multiculturally competent as well as in their roles as advocates and promoters of social justice.

Applying a developmental supervision strategy which incorporates the ecological and multicultural contexts of the supervisor, SCIT, and the students encourages a big picture perspective of what is taking place as supervision progresses (Brown & Landrum-Brown, 1995). Counselor educators and site supervisors are the gatekeepers to the profession and must, therefore, be aware of and be able to address issues of race, gender, ableness, socioeconomic status, and other contextual factors that impact beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The concerns for continuing cultural competence and cross-cultural considerations should be ever present in the supervisory process from the initial exchanges to the final evaluation (Brown & Landrum-Brown).

A Practitioner's Conceptualization of Site Supervision

In my role as both a site supervisor and then faculty supervisor, I have struggled in terms of how to muster the time, energy, and strategy that would meet the needs of the SCIT, the students, and the goals of internship. The trainings I attended identified applicable models of supervision, however, these models felt disconnected from the realities of the school environment and the daily expectations of the school counselor's role in that environment. They lacked the context which defines so much of what professional school counselors do and how they do it. From this perspective evolved a conceptualization of how to work with SCIT which includes the variety of daily interactions with parents, administrators, teachers, and students, incorporates a basic vision for what professional school counselors do, and fosters an aptitude and appreciation for building a comprehensive developmental program.

Four Areas of Experience

To support the need for a well designed and implemented field based experience, the site supervisor can collaborate with the SCIT to create opportunities to gain experience in these four overarching areas: 1) building comprehensive programs, 2) constructing relationships, 3) cultivating resources, and 4) incorporating cultural competence and advocacy. These areas of experience as visualized in Figure 1 represent the basic areas of competence in which SCIT must gain experience and confidence. Figure 1 is also representative of the interrelatedness of all the tasks school counselors perform; when one area is neglected, the other areas simply cannot function as effectively. Each area breaks down into components of knowledge and direction which must be made part of the SCIT experience in order to offer a realistic representation of what professional school counselors must be prepared to do. Table 1 demonstrates how each area of experience is broken down into integral components. Table 2 offers ideas of specific activities on which site supervisors and SCIT may choose to collaborate.

Comprehensive programs. This area of experience focuses on providing the SCIT with a grounding in the "how to" of designing and implementing a developmental guidance curriculum as outlined in the ASCA National Model. Divided into two competency components, the domain areas of student competency and the components of the ASCA National Model, this area encompasses the experiences necessary to create a developmental comprehensive program based on student, school, and community needs. For example, by helping SCIT to administer a needs assessment, then create and implement programming based on those identified needs (or other disaggregated data such as attendance or low scores in freshman science), the SCIT gains valuable experience applying the skills and aptitude to determine essential and effectual program elements. These types of collaboration also create a win-win scenario for the SCIT, the site supervisor, and the

university supervisor. The data which is generated from these experiences can be used to convey the potential effectiveness of the program to the stakeholders. As for the SCIT, the experience of implementing a new program component is critical in terms of learning to manage relevant curricula and evaluate its potential effectiveness. Ideally, the SCIT needs to experience curriculum development in each of the domain areas of the national standards. Ultimately, the essence of this experience is to focus the SCIT attention on the components which comprise a developmental comprehensive program and guide their efforts to evaluate and modify it appropriately given the needs of the school and its community. Therefore, specific knowledge of the ASCA National Model, its vision and mission, is essential.

Constructing relationships. A large part of what professional school counselors do every day is to form relationships between themselves and others (also known as the stakeholders) as well as facilitate effective communication between the stakeholders themselves such as student to parent, teacher to student, and teacher to parent. The components of consultation and collaboration are identified within this area of experience and are essential to effective school counseling. SCIT, with guidance and support from their site supervisor, must initiate opportunities to spend time learning about the school climate and its impact on students, teachers, and administrators. In order to help facilitate these school relationships, the school counselor can assign a small caseload of students to the SCIT. The SCIT would be required to meet regularly with the students, consult with both teachers and parents, and inform the administrator of their functioning within the school. Expecting SCIT to attend school board meetings and other community sponsored events dealing with youth are also within the realm of the school counseling internship experience. Given the effectiveness of developmental comprehensive programming is based on data and effective practices, it is in the best interest of all professional school counselors to learn the language of those who make the decisions concerning what happens in schools and how children and adolescents are impacted by those decisions. It is in this fashion that professional school counselors demonstrate their effectiveness and that of their program.

Cultivating resources. There are advantages and disadvantages for professional school counselors as they perform their multiple roles and responsibilities. It is a distinct advantage to have the clients (students and their parents) readily available as the school setting allows, yet the shear numbers create the disadvantage of not having the time to know and serve each individually. Practicing school counselors know that 5, 10, or 15 minute sessions are the norm and 50 minute sessions the rarity. Consequently, the need to know who else is capable of providing clients with the services they need becomes imperative. Being aware of which resources are available and how to access those resources is invaluable. This conceptualization identifies resources in terms of agencies, or those institutions funded by local, state, or federal monies such as the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and non-profit agencies such as the Lions Club whose local chapters may offer free or reduced fee eye exams and glasses to qualifying minors and other volunteer service organizations. Each community has unique resources, so it is incumbent upon the school counselor, and a task related to internship, not only to identify which resources are accessible, but to cultivate that accessibility at the local, state, national and international levels.

Cultural competence and advocacy. Continuous and required attention must be given to the development of SCIT multicultural competence and their advocacy skills. The counseling program gauges the "affective pulse" of the school, and within that pulse is the level of acceptance and support students perceive. As SCIT hone clinical skills and earn the required client contact time, the supervisor must consistently bring the issue of cultural competence into the supervisor-supervisee relationship. SCIT must also gain experience in cultural competence with relation to school climate. SCIT will gain a greater sense of the degree of social justice within the school, can design advocacy projects, and foster attitudes toward that end by asking questions similar to the following: How do students and staff define and demonstrate respect? Is there evidence of multicultural competence in the building? Are students of color and of poverty in the Advanced Placement or other honor courses? What if any significance is placed on school-community connections? How are parents and other caregivers included in school decision-making? Is the school discipline policy punitive or preventative? Which student organizations are most valued?

Experience indicates that some students require professional counseling skills and training more than others. Those least able to advocate for themselves have a higher priority in terms of a counselor's time and energy. Students whose caregivers are financially or socially privileged may, in reality, not receive the same individualized time and attention as less privileged or able students. Empowering SCIT to look at school

policies, teacher attitudes, and student behaviors with regard to the tenants of social justice and how all students are being served is an essential growth experience.

School Counselor Ethics, Evaluation, and Executive Skills

Ethical and Legal Issues

Balancing the rights of clients, the rights and responsibilities of supervisees, and the responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees to their clients is at the core of the ethical issues confronting supervisors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Clarifying this concept with the supervisee at the beginning of the relationship is critical so that the supervisee can be "invited to express expectations, empowered to make decisions, and become an active participant in the supervisory process" (Haynes et al., 2003, p. 153).

Campbell (2000) identifies two main areas of concern for supervisors: 1) the supervisory relationship, and 2) the supervisee's actions with the client. Focusing on the supervisory relationship, Campbell explains that supervisors and supervisees need to understand that most ethical and legal dilemmas stem from the problems resulting from dual relationships. Any kind of relationship that is exploitive or harmful to the supervisor-supervisee relationship is to be avoided. Even the evolution of a personal friendship can create an ethical quandary.

The ethical guidelines of the American Counseling Association (ACA, 1995) and the *ACES Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors* (1993) clearly establish that the supervisee should be made aware of the hierarchical structure of the supervisory relationship, and that the potential for harm exists. Again, the competent supervisor acknowledges the challenges of supervision with regards to supervisor/supervisee competencies, issues of due process, confidentiality, evaluation, and vicarious liability and in that vein conveys the importance of these ethical considerations to the supervisee. Kitchener (1984) suggests that counseling professionals rely on the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, fidelity, and justice as the basis for making ethical decisions. Sounds like a good idea.

Evaluation

Evaluating supervisees is another challenging undertaking for supervisors. Supervisors have the ethical responsibility to provide honest, critical feedback based on the knowledge of what specifically the supervisee is doing with the client (Borders, 2001). As part of the initial phase of forming the supervisory relationship supervisors should initiate a discussion of the goals and outcomes for the supervisee in order to identify criteria for evaluation. Differing programs may choose to emphasize particular counseling skills and competencies, and each supervisee will have differing strengths and growth edges that need to be considered (Haynes et al., 2003). Regardless of the specific criteria to be evaluated, the process should be well defined so that confusion and frustration may be minimized.

Ultimately, the purpose of evaluation is to empower SCIT to gain a level of professional confidence and autonomy allowing them to self-supervise (Haynes et al., 2003). The ability to assess one's own strengths and weaknesses, to recognize when personal issues are interfering with the counseling relationship, and to know when to seek consultation is the "hallmark" of a competent counselor. The supervisor must also be open to receiving feedback, both formal and informal, regarding his or her performance. Because each supervisory situation is unique, carrying its own dynamic process, each opportunity to supervise presents unique challenges and professional growth opportunities for the supervisor. Haynes et al. suggest topics on which supervisors can welcome feedback and evaluation including: supervisor availability, communication skills, cultural competence, ethical and legal knowledge, professionalism, responsiveness to supervisee's needs and ideas, supportiveness, and use of supervision interventions. The supervisor must also display the qualities of self-evaluation that he or she wishes to encourage in the supervisee.

Executive Skill

Evaluation may be labeled as the most cumbersome of the administrative tasks, however, the chronicling of the supervisee's growth and development is an invaluable tool. Other administrative tasks that aid in creating a consistent and functioning working alliance with the supervisee are keeping accurate records of supervision sessions, having good time management and organizational skills, and demonstrating the ability to effectively monitor the supervisory process and adjust to the needs of the supervisee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Campbell, 2000). In addition, having a supervision plan that outlines the goals and expectations will serve to minimize potential conflicts and supervision related stress (Bernard & Goodyear).

To underestimate the importance of good managerial skills is to be ethically remiss. Kadushin (1992) reported that it was managerial failure that most affected the work of supervisee's with their clients and caused them the greatest amount of stress. As record

keeper, the supervisor safeguards the confidentiality of supervision as well as protects the liability of both the supervisor and supervisee (Campbell, 2000; Haynes et al., 2003). The supervisor is also responsible for attending to the policies and procedures that govern the credentialing requirements for supervisees (Haynes et al.). Improper management of these regulations threatens the integrity and legitimacy of the institutions, their programs, and their employees.

Implications for Site Supervisors and Professional School Counseling in Georgia

The success of the internship experience is dependent on the training and preparation of the site supervisor and the ability and willingness of the SCIT (Miller & Dollarhide, 2006). The relationship between supervisor and SCIT is the heart and lungs of the supervisory process; it strongly influences the amount of learning and growth that can occur (Borders, 2001). Building rapport and safety to the degree that the SCIT can be vulnerable is challenging given the complex issues of power and authority differentials, evaluation procedures, and differences in beliefs, values, and culture (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Haynes et al., 2003). The quality of the supervisor-SCIT relationship ultimately determines the success of the supervision experience and creating such a relationship is itself a primary goal.

As we practice our craft we come to know that it is done best collaboratively with the ultimate goal being the general welfare of the students. In the state of Georgia we must consider the CACREP standards, the ASCA National Model, and the principles of the Board of Regents (BOR) (Paisley et al., 2007). The marriage of the components of these entities with the university and the internship site can produce a collaborative and meaningful experience for each party. In support of these efforts, the Georgia Department of Education (n. d.) encourages programs to self-evaluate in terms of how much time is being spent on non-program activities and to determine what program components may be negatively impacted and thereby not accessible to all students. As a society, we have yet to purport that our schools do not need qualified, competent school counselors at all levels that carry a vision of professional school counseling as integral to the success of students.

The challenges to school counselor supervision and training are many; yet, regardless of these challenges, the site supervisor who is willing to engage in the process and provide guidance around these essential experiences required to initiate the SCIT into the "real" world of school counseling can create a mutually beneficial process. The site supervisor may need to engage in a very "hands on" approach in terms of curricular and administrative issues, being a teacher, a counselor, a consultant, and educational leader within the context of the school and community. The conceptualization presented here allows school counseling to be viewed in terms of experiences and relationships rather than theory which allows the SCIT, the site supervisor, and the university supervisor to act rather than contemplate.

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Table 1

Components of Each Experience Area

Comprehensive Programs	Constructing Relationships	Cultivating Resources	Cultural Competence and Advocacy
ASCA Standards: Academic Career Personal/Social	Students Administration Staff Parents Community	Agencies: Local State National International	Self School District State National International
National Model program elements: Foundation Delivery Management Accountability		Non-Profit: Local State National International	

Table 2

Possible Supervision Experiences

Comprehensive Programs

Develop classroom guidance curriculum in conjunction with teachers
Create calendar of program services and important dates
Provide individual planning/counseling opportunities
Provide small group planning/ counseling opportunities
Demonstrate effectiveness of program by means of data
Demonstrate the comprehensive nature of counseling program to staff

Constructing Relationships

Be in hallways during passing and be visible/available in cafeteria
Designate "drop-in" times in your office
Engage in consultation in teachers' classroom rather than counselor's office
Conduct before school and/or after school "get togethers"
Organize biweekly brown bag lunch meetings for international students or students new to school

Cultivating Resources

Check phone book, local city directory for new resources
Visit local agencies to learn procedure for referral
Volunteer time in service of needs of youth in community
Observe or participate in school wide curriculum development
Create clothes bank for students to access needed items

Cultural Competence and Advocacy

Observe interaction in hallways for student groupings, hang outs
Observe ELL, Advanced, Honors, LD, & ED classrooms
Provide individual counseling
Provide small group counseling for marginalized populations
Organize school wide observances of multicultural milestones
Organize activities and service learning projects

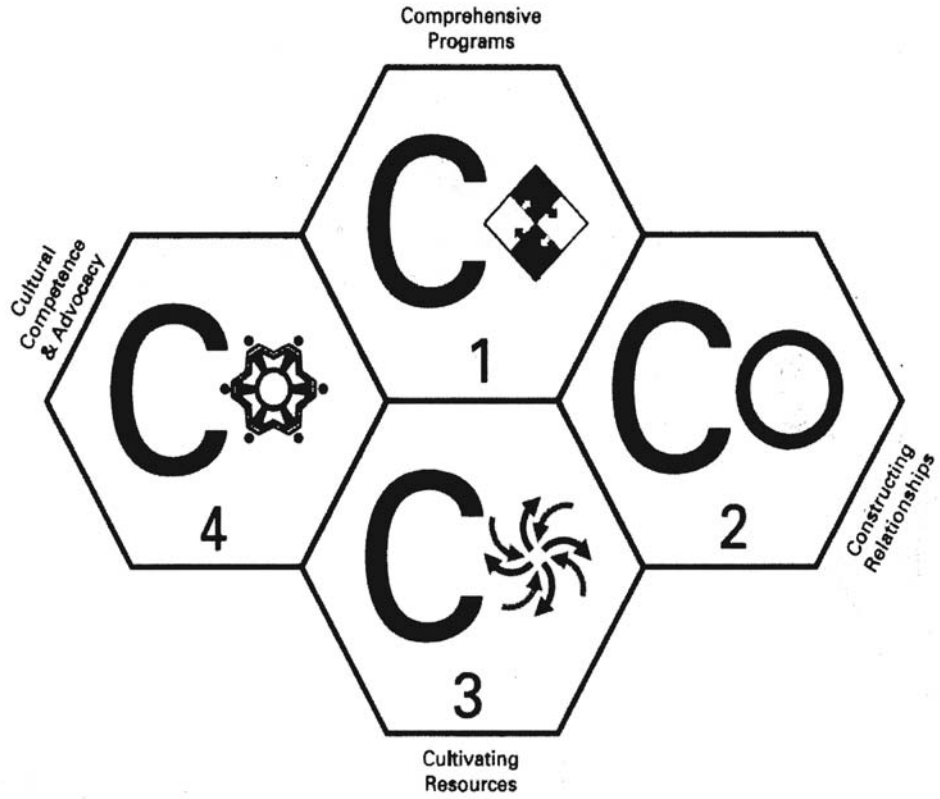

Figure 1. *Visual representation of areas of experience.*

Health and Fitness for the Professional School Counselor

Dr. Crystal Giddings-Jackson
Dr. Omar Wray

ABSTRACT

Nutritional information followed by Chair-er-cise and a 20-minute cardio exercise to light hip-hop music was presented at a workshop at the Georgia School Counselors Conference Fall semester, 2006. As a follow-up to the conference presentation, during Spring semester 2007 data was collected from Cobb County School counselors to examine the health and fitness needs of professional school counselors. This article addresses the health and fitness needs of school counselors across school levels.

School Counselors today face a myriad of issues as they seek to provide life-changing services to students, parents, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and community stakeholders. Often these entities increase school counselors' duties and responsibilities and produce excessive stress. This leaves the school counselor drained of needed energy and inspiration to thrive in the profession (Stone, 2004; Williams, 2004). In order for professional school counselors (PSC) to keep up with the daily demands of their school setting, effective collaboration and the essential services of counseling are necessary but consulting, coordinating, and appraising are not the only useful tools to meet these requirements. Professional school counselors must also attend to their health and fitness to meet these demands. Good nutrition and physical fitness improve mental and physical well-being and increase work performance. In other words, regular exercise and a balanced diet are essential to overall health and fitness (Brown, 2004; Cruise, 2004a; Rath, 2003; Schmidt, 1999; Williams, 2004).

In an effort to educate PSC about this issue the authors presented information at the Georgia School Counselors Association (GSCA) 2006 Fall Conference on the nutritional and physical fitness needs of counselors who are typically the main caregiver in schools. Later to gain a sense of PSC's habits and behaviors surrounding health and fitness, the author's surveyed PSC in Cobb County. This article addresses these findings and presents suggestions for better health and fitness.

PSC must remain healthy and physically fit in order to not only manage their caseloads but also to ensure that their caseloads do not manage them. Healthy eating is a must. According to research by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Americans spend each year more than $33 billion on weight loss products and services, while only 30% of those surveyed follow a program of eating fewer calories and exercising. Instead, most Americans consume vast amounts of fast food which largely consist of sugary products, excessive carbohydrates and fats. In order to remain healthy the school counselor must have a renewed sense of well-being and be knowledgeable of health and fitness information (Brown, 2004; Yeager, 2006; see also www.4fitbodies.com). Guided by this information, it was hypothesized that PSC need to improve their health and fitness.

Review of the Literature

There is a tremendous amount of literature on health and fitness. The suggestions which follow provide diet information and exercises designed to enhance a renewed

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sense of well-being (see Appendixes A and B). PSC should begin their day thinking "cleansing". For example, instead of starting the day with coffee and doughnuts, water with a squeeze of lemon, or a cup of green tea are better substitutes to flush out toxins in the body that accumulated from the previous night's meal and while asleep. This is a better way to "**break** the **fast**" each morning. Also, this process jumpstarts metabolism which is nature's way to control weight gain. Next, eat breakfast within the first 2 hours of the morning, yet another means of firing up the metabolic system. It is also highly recommended that food consumption take place every 2-3 hours (see table below).

Breakfast	7:00 AM
Snack	10:00 AM
Lunch	1:00 PM
Snack	4:00 PM
Dinner	7:00 PM

It may seem impossible to adhere to such a schedule, so modifications may be in order during the first several weeks. The point to remember is that the body needs fuel about every 3 hours. If the body does not get food throughout the day, it tends to store fat as a precaution. Stored fat can create loss of energy, lowered metabolism, overeating and eventual weight gain (Brown, 204; Cruise, 2004b; Longbotham & Miller, 2006; McVeight, 2006; Trudeau, 2004; Yeager, 2006; see also www.deniseAustin.com).

Acidic Foods versus Alkaline Foods

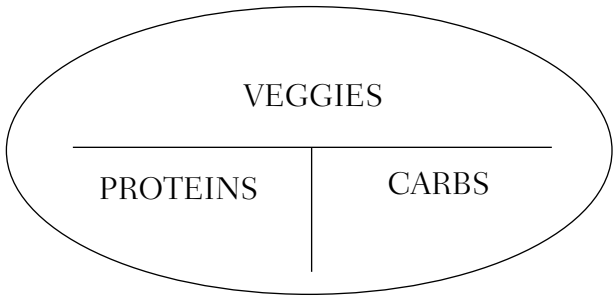
Another tip for PSC seeking a healthier lifestyle is to turn the body's pH from acidic to alkaline. Human blood pH should be slightly alkaline (7.35-7.45). The higher the number, the more alkaline foods are. For some, this may have to be done in gradual steps. A partial list of acidic foods include white rice, cheese, milk, butter, green peas, beef, fish, lobster and sunflower seeds, while alkaline foods include garlic, collards, apples, tomatoes, cinnamon, ginseng, herbal teas, eggs, all berries, bananas, yogurt, and watermelon. The pH scale for acidic and alkaline foods ranges from 0-14. Spending time looking at the foods commonly eaten and where they fall on the pH scale is invaluable.

The pH scale

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 healthy 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Do not be fooled by the lemon into thinking that it falls in the acidic category. Though acidic outside the body, once the lemon juice is digested and assimilated in the body, it becomes alkaline. However, the opposite is true with meat. Meat tests alkaline before digestion, but leaves a very acidic residue in the body. This may be the reason many people become vegetarians (www.rense.com/1.mpioms/acidalka.htm; www.essence-of-life.com; and www.health.com).

When meal planning, think of the pH scale and then balance the meal with more alkaline foods than acidic. Half of the plate should consist of vegetables; 1/4 should be proteins and 1/4 carbohydrates. Controlling portion size is the way to jumpstart healthy eating habits. There is no need to measure your food; just switch to a salad plate instead of a dinner plate. Soon your body will adjust to your new eating habits. The following graph represents a suggested food plate distribution per meal:



While following the suggested food distribution is beneficial, there is more to be said about one's proper diet and its relationship to a longer and healthier life (Brown, 2004; Cruise, 2004b; McVeight, 2006; Longbotham & Miller, 2006; Rath, 2003). First, there is protein that can be found in meats, fish, seeds, and nuts. Protein, a Greek word that means "of first importance," is essential for the formation of bone, connective tissue, hair and muscle. Proteins are composed of building blocks called amino acids. The body is only able to create 12 of the needed 20 amino acids. We must get the others from the foods we eat, usually meats (see www.jordanrubin and www.low-fat-recipe.com.

Carbohydrates are the second element of a healthy diet and have gained much popularity as well as controversy. Their function is to provide energy in the body. Good sources of carbohydrates include grains, whole brown rice, root vegetables, and fruit. Bad sources of carbohydrates are usually sweet and salty-tasting foods such as potato chips, French fries, cookies, ice cream and soda drinks, to name a few. Excessive amounts of such carbohydrates can cause obesity, cardiovascular disease and even tooth decay. Also, mood swings and hyperactivity have been noted in children. Tinned and packet foods are surprisingly full of sugar (Brown, 2004; Trudeau, 2004).

The third component of a proper diet is vegetables. Vegetables include five subgroups that are based on nutrient content and range from broccoli to

carrots to beans to tomatoes to corn. The dark green vegetables are the most preferred among health enthusiasts. Starchy vegetables such as corn, potatoes and lima beans tend to work like the carbohydrates food group. So eat 1/2 plate of corn for your veggies and 1/4 plate of potatoes for your carbs. Remember, eat to live not live to eat (Brown, 2004; McVeight, 2006; Longbotham & Miller, 2006; Rath, 2003; see also www.jordanrubin.com and www.low-fat-recipes.com).

Physical Exercise

The need for physical exercise is paramount. Physical exercise is divided into two types, aerobic and anaerobic. Aerobic refers to physical conditioning that causes the body to have a marked temporary increase in respiration and heart rate. Anaerobic refers to physical conditioning that does not cause a marked increase in respiration and heart rate. Jumping rope would be an example of aerobic exercise while stretching the arms above the head would be an example of anaerobic exercise. Both are useful in stress reduction and essential to the health and wellness of the PSC. Using a chair, counselors can perform "Chair-er-cise" which is mostly anaerobic. Emphasis is placed on performing body movements that could be done in the office. Counselors are able to work their obliques, upper rectus abdominals, lower rectus abdominals, thighs and hamstrings, back of arms and shoulders, and back of thighs and buttock. Using a chair for balance, six additional routines can be performed standing up (see Appendix B) (Ambandos, 2004, 2003; Cruise, 2004a, 2004b).

Participation in aerobics is crucial to overall health and fitness. A 20-minute routine that incorporates squats, leg extensions, marching, lunges, and even the grapevine are typical movements. These aerobic steps are usually cumulative in nature with aerobics from one song added to the new routine on the next song. A marked temporary increase in respiration and heart rate is the desired goal. Plenty of water is needed throughout and after all aerobic routines to avoid dehydration. The idea is to make exercising fun and a daily habit. Physical conditioning that includes aerobic and anaerobic exercises keep the body agile and strong for many years (Basic Step, 2004; Work It Off Cardio Sculpt, 2004; Yeager, 2006; see also www.4fitbodies.com).

Methodology and Results

Professional school counselors in the Cobb County School District were asked to participate in this study. Cobb County School District located west of Atlanta, is the second largest school system in Georgia with over 107,000 students and 184 school counselors, school social workers and psychologists (see http://www.cobb.k12.ga.us/generalinfo/aboutus.htm). A survey was developed to explore questions about the health habits and behaviors of the sample population. PSC were invited to take the JW Health and Fitness Quick Health Assessment in April 2007. The 10-item survey (see Appendix C) was emailed to approximately 125 school counselors. There was a 1-week turn-around period to email responses resulting in a 52% response rate with 65 respondents. The purpose of the survey was two-fold: (a) to assess school counselors' perceptions of their current health and fitness status and, (b) to promote self-awareness among counselors in paying attention to their health and fitness. Data from the surveys indicate that many school counselors do consider their health and fitness, but may still need to do more in order to remain healthy throughout their lifespan. The counselors' responses to the survey items are indicated below.

Question 1: Do you eat breakfast each morning?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
87%	Yes
12%	No
<1%	Sometimes

Question 2: How often do you eat from at least three of the traditional 4 food groups per meal (protein, vegetable, fruit and diary)?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
34%	1 meal
48%	2 meals
13%	3 meals

Question 3: Do you have a bowel movement within 2-3 hours of each meal?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
50%	Yes
34%	No
11%	Sometimes

Question 4: You smoke how many cigarettes per day?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
98%	None
>1%	1-4

Question 5: You drink how much water per day?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
28%	Pint
55%	Quart
14%	Gallon or More

Question 6: Would you consider yourself a health and fitness enthusiast?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
21%	Definitely
48%	Somewhat
28%	Seldom

Question 7: On average, how many times per work do you participate in physical activities (such as hiking, jogging, running, swimming, racquet ball, tennis)?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
16%	One Time
40%	2-4 Times
36%	5-7 Times
1%	7 Times or More

Question 8: Which of the following do you participate in at least 4 times per week for 45 minutes or more? Check all that apply.

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
53%	Walking
11%	2 or more
33%	None

Question 9: How well do you handle your job-related stress?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
17%	Very Well
50%	Good
16%	Fairly Well
16%	Poorly

Question 10: You see a physician for your annual check-ups?

Percentage in Agreement	Item Response
68%	Always
26%	Sometimes
>1%	Only if Sick

Discussion and Conclusions

The survey results indicated the overall health and fitness level of Cobb County school counselors to be consistent with the authors' hypothesis. While many health areas for the counselors responding to the survey appeared to be satisfactory, a need for counselors to improve their health and fitness was evident. For instance, counselors need to increase their intake of meals per day, eat from the four food groups, and consume fewer calories. While discussions of bowel movements are not a popular topic, they are essential to good health. Therefore, efforts to increase solid waste elimination are needed. The responses indicated a 1-quart consumption of water daily by most counselors which is good in that the body needs water to keep all bodily functions working including regulating the body temperature and removing waste. However, the body may need more water as one's activity levels increase such as daily exercising. Efforts to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water would be optimal.

Most counselors reported eating breakfast while less that 50% eat two additional meals per day. Counselors should be aware that eating one meal per day can cause the metabolic rate to become sluggish causing the storing of fat which often leads to weight gain. For PSC seeking to lose weight, eating a substantial breakfast should strongly be considered.

Less than half of the counselors reported participating in regular physical activity. This is of great concern since the benefits of regular exercising such a walking can be instrumental in weight reduction, releasing toxins and relieving daily stress. Counselors need to incorporate regular exercise in their schedule.

Perhaps the most positive item on the survey was related to smoking. Only one of the 65 respondents indicated that smoking occurred. Another positive item on the survey was that most counselors see a physician on an annual basis. Many counselors are able to handle job-related stress, while others reported not being able to handle job-related stress.

Limitations

This survey did not inquire about the demographics of gender, race, socio-economic status, school setting, or educational attainment. The timing of the data collection during Spring semester and the 1-week deadline for emailing responses may have been factors in response rates. Additionally three surveys were incomplete. The exact sample size was unknown until the surveys were returned. Though the sample size was small, the surveys do demonstrate trends in the health and fitness of PSC in Cobb County Schools. However, the sample size may be too small to generalize to a larger population.

Implications for Professional School Counselors

The implications of this study are for PSC to become aware of proactive steps for better health and the need to practice healthy habits throughout their lifespan. While these implications are not exclusive to PSC, the stress that comes with the school counseling profession requires counselors to be healthy and physically fit so that they will not succumb to the high demands of their school setting, in particular, and life in general. A combination of good food choices and exercise is essential (having variety in meal planning and exercise is best so as to not reach a plateau). Lifestyle changes may be necessary for many school counselors to improve, enhance, and maintain good health.

Before data was collected for this study, a brief educational session at GSCA's 2006 annual conference was presented in an effort to provide information useful to PSC in seeking measures to begin or improve their health status. The presentation sparked an interest in collecting data from a local school counseling population to check the hypothesis that PSC need to improve their health and fitness. While the research did not cover all facets of wellness, the review of the literature provided information and resources for counselors to easily become health conscious. Some of the health tips are simple and can readily be applied. If PSC are healthy, they will be in a better position to help students. Also, maintaining a healthy lifestyle throughout the lifespan is an important concept to model to students.

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Related Websites

www.4fitbodies.com
www.health.com
www.densieAustin.com
www.health-fitness-tips.com
www.low-fat-recipes.com
www.rense.com/1.mpioms/acidalka.htm
www.essence-of-life.com

APPENDIX A

Lifestyle Changes for Longer Healthier Living:

- Detoxify the body through cleansing.
- Eat last meal/snack 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- Buy and use a juicer.
- Increase intake of fruits and veggies and begin to see a natural increase in bowel movements.
- Avoid transfats, artificial sweeteners including high fructose core syrup.
- Read food labels.
- Try organic foods. It is cheaper to pay the local grocery than any doctor.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water throughout the day.
- Eliminate drinking milk with meals. It slows down the digestive process and may cause bloating and gas.
- Walk one hour 3-5 times weekly and/or jump rope for 30 minutes every other day.
- Buy a rebounder. It is easy on the joints. Try 10 minutes 4 days a week and notice the difference.
- Add weight-lifting to your exercise routine.
- Sleep 6-8 hours each night to maximize your body's natural healing process.
- No smoking.
- Lower or eliminate alcohol consumption.
- Consider not eating later than 7:00 p.m. You may be able to eat just about anything you want with this plan and still lose weight considerably.
- Consult your physician if you are in doubt about your food intake and any physical exercises.

Note: These wellness tips represent recommendations based on the authors' personal lifestyle changes and a review of the literature. Please consult your physician and/or nutritionist for professional advice.

APPENDIX B

CHAIR-ER-CISES:

1. Seated Torso Rotation: Obliques
2. Seated Crossover: Upper Rectus Abdominals
3. Seated Crunches: Lower Rectus Abdominals
4. Seated Stretch: Thighs and Hamstrings
5. Seated Bridge: Back of Arms and Shoulders
6. Seated Bridge: Back of Thighs and Buttocks
7. Standing Knee Lifts: Front of Thighs
8. Standing Leg Lifts: Back of the Thighs and Buttock
9. Standing Leg Swings: Inner Thighs
10. Standing Side Raises: Outer Thighs and Hips
11. Standing Pump: Calves
12. Superman Hold: Lower Back

APPENDIX C

JW Health & Fitness Survey
for
The Professional School Counselor

Directions: *Read each item below. Underline the statement or question that represents your best response.*

1. Do you eat breakfast each morning?
   - ❒ Yes
   - ❒ No
   - ❒ Sometimes

2. How often do you eat from at least three of the traditional 4 food groups per meal (protein, vegetable, fruit and dairy)?
   - ❒ None
   - ❒ One meal per day
   - ❒ Two meals per day
   - ❒ Three meals per day

3. Do you have a bowel movement within 2-3 hours of each meal?
   - ❒ Yes
   - ❒ No
   - ❒ Sometimes

4. You smoke how many cigarettes per day.
   - ❒ None
   - ❒ 1-4
   - ❒ 5-10
   - ❒ 11-15
   - ❒ 16 or more

5. You drink how much water each day.
   - ❒ None
   - ❒ One pint
   - ❒ One quart
   - ❒ One gallon or more

6. Would you consider yourself a health and fitness enthusiast?
   - ❒ Yes, definitely
   - ❒ Somewhat
   - ❒ Seldom
   - ❒ Never

7. On average, how many times per week do you participate in physical activities (such as hiking, jogging, running, swimming, racquet ball, tennis)?
   - ❒ O times
   - ❒ One time
   - ❒ 2-4 times
   - ❒ 5-7 times
   - ❒ More than 7 times

8. Which of the following do you participate in at least 4 times per week for 45 minutes or more? Check all that apply.
   - ❒ Fitness Club
   - ❒ Walking
   - ❒ Golf
   - ❒ Tennis
   - ❒ Snow Sports
   - ❒ Water sports
   - ❒ Basketball
   - ❒ Racquet Ball

9. How well do you handle your job related-stress?
   - ❒ Very well
   - ❒ Good
   - ❒ Fairly Well
   - ❒ Poorly

10. You see a physician for your annual check-ups.
   - ❒ Always
   - ❒ Sometimes
   - ❒ Only if sick
   - ❒ Never

Communicating Professional School Counselor Roles to Principals

LaWanda Edwards

ABSTRACT

Professional school counselors (PSC) are constantly given responsibilities that are nonguidance duties. When given these duties, PSC are not able to implement and maintain effective guidance programs. Often school principals assign these duties because they are unaware of the impact school counselors have on the goals of the school. Therefore, it is important that school counselors promote the profession and inform school principals of their roles and how they affect the school. This article offers school counselors suggestions on how to communicate more effectively with principals.

Professional school counselors (PSC) are being held accountable to various stakeholders. By using the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model (ASCA, 2005), and other accountability tools, such as M.E.A.S.U.R.E. (Dahir & Stone, 2007) PSC are demonstrating the connection school counseling programs have to their school's mission and goals. Accountability is essential for the school counseling profession to continue to flourish, but it is not enough. While school counselor roles are being promoted and published across the nation through various channels including many websites and discussions at school counseling conferences, the reality is that PSC are still being asked to complete nonguidance duties. These nonguidance duties include such activities as: handling records, scheduling, enrolling students, completing special education referrals, working with testing materials, grades and report cards, and serving as nurse/medical coordinators (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). It is all too evident that the message is still not reaching many professionals who are instrumental in making the decisions about school counselor roles.

Principals often make the decisions about the roles of the counselors in their individual schools (Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994) and PSC must advocate for themselves by communicating their roles and the needs of their programs to principals. Research studies suggest that PSC want to communicate with principals on a regular basis (O'Conner, 2002), but the question is, "How do school counselors communicate effectively with school principals?" The purpose of this article is to provide PSC with clear suggestions on how to communicate more effectively with their principals.

Strategies for Communicating More Effectively with Principals

School principals are task-oriented (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000) and focus on accomplishments and results. It may be advantageous to keep this in mind as school counselors advocate for their profession because communicating with principals in a language they understand and focusing on program results may bring greater success. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2006) recommends several strategies for effective advocacy which may help when communicating roles to principals. These are:

- Ask for what you want
- Be specific
- Think of the other person's perspective
- Be credible

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- Anticipate opposition
- Be organized and
- Keep it simple.

ASCA (2007) also proposes several approaches for working with administration and Boards of Education. ASCA suggests that PSC focus on student results and use charts and graphs to demonstrate data when dealing with administrators because data demonstrate accountability.

Johnson (2000) endorses several examples of how PSC can promote the profession:

- Represent the guidance department on school and community boards
- Publish a newsletter for the school community
- Develop a brochure that promotes the counseling program
- Hold "accountability" conferences with principals at least once a year and provide accountability data
- Invite principals to sit in on classroom guidance sessions
- Develop a professional portfolio
- Give the administrator an agenda for department meetings
- Prepare and publish an Annual Report for stakeholders
- Offer in-service workshops and consultation services to instructional staff
- Distribute a quarterly calendar of events and highlight activities that focus on academics.

These tactics for promoting the school counseling profession can be used to inform school principals of what PSC are doing and how they are making a direct impact on school goals.

Using Management Agreements

ASCA (2005) suggests that PSC develop a management agreement when communicating with principals about counseling duties and responsibilities. The management agreement is between the school counseling staff and the administrator(s) and is based on the school's needs and goals. This document is discussed, agreed upon, and signed by the counseling staff and administrator(s) at the beginning of each school year. Information should include 1) how students are assigned to PSC, 2) the amount of time counselors will devote to individual student planning, guidance lessons, managing system support, and responsive services, 3) how the available budget will be used to implement the program, 4) the program development that is needed, 5) how often the school counseling department will meet as a team, with principals, teachers and their advisory councils, and 6) how support services for the school counseling department will be provided. This meeting with administrators is the perfect opportunity for PSC to demonstrate how their time is spent on guidance activities and how these activities impact the school while connecting to the mission of the school.

Implications for Counselor Educators

Counselor educators play an important role in helping future professional school counselors promote the profession. Ballerstero, Fitch, Marshall, and Newby (2001) recommend that counselor educators teach students to start promoting the nature of counseling programs beginning at the job interview. This fosters understanding and collaboration from the initiation of the relationship. PSC should be encouraged to publish a newsletter informing the administration, staff, parents, and students of the counselors' roles. It is also important that counselors-in-training (CIT) be taught how to be assertive and "choose their battles".

Ballerstero et al. (2001) also suggest that counselor educators consult with the educational leadership department faculty at their college/university to help future administrators understand the roles of the professional school counselor. Shoffner and Williamson (2000) recommend seminars for school counselors and administrators in a cross-discipline group to allow them to share experiences and thoughts about each profession. This collaboration is essential to effectively address the needs of the students in the schools. Other suggestions by Ballerstero et al. include conducting region-focused research with principals which can help CIT effectively prepare for potential obstacles. Acknowledging administrators who support high quality school counseling programs is another supportive measure.

Implications for Professional School Counselors

It is important for PSC and principals to form trusting, understanding, sensitive, and nurturing relationships with one another in order to meet the needs of students (Wesley, 2001). If PSC continue to advocate for the school counseling profession to principals and work toward teaming and collaboration with them, they can reach their school's goals together. Professional school counselors can advocate for the profession by writing articles about school counselor roles for peer reviewed journals that principals read and by presenting at conferences that principals attend. PSC also need to become more knowledgeable about what duties are

considered nonguidance duties and advocate for removal of these duties from their job descriptions.

Johnson (2000) suggests that veteran counselors maintain membership in professional organizations and actively participate in professional development to stay current on developments in the profession. This is equally important for new inductees to the profession. The support of school principals for appropriate school counselor roles is vital to the development, implementation, maintenance, and success of school counseling programs (Brock & Ponec, 1998). It is the responsibility of PSC to inform school principals of counseling roles and ensure that they are knowledgeable about the effectiveness of their programs. School counselors and principals who commit to communicating with each other, developing trust and support for the school's programs and who demonstrate sensitivity to each other increase their effectiveness in schools (Wesley, 2001). Collaboration will improve school climate, increase knowledge and respect for both professions, and ultimately improve student achievement.

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Networking Notebook: Practical Program Ideas and Interventions Designed by School Counselors in the Field

Leann Logsdon, NCC, LAPC
Column Editor

Games People Play: Building Trust in Students Through Simple Games.
Submitted by **Stacey Klias**, an elementary School Counselor at Lincoln Elementary Magnet School
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(Contributions from Julie Walker, and Dolores Floyd)

School counselors are in a unique and wonderful position. We are able to be a student's teacher, friend, and advisor. Sometimes a student wants to share with a trusted adult but is not sure how to do it. By playing games with students, we can build trust that will last until we break it. I work in a magnet school where the primary focus is academics, so many of my students feel stress and pressure daily. Realizing they need to have fun to relieve some of that stress, I decided to invest in a variety of games. Several of my counselor colleagues and I presented a workshop at the GSCA Fall 2007 conference entitled, "Games People Play." Here are some highlights:

Balloon Bop *(Dr. Dolores Floyd)*
This activity allows students to demonstrate the value of listening, cooperating, and problem solving, all while exercising self-control. Students form a circle and work as a team to keep a balloon in the air. They cannot leave the circle or get on the floor to hit the balloon. If the balloon goes out of bounds or beyond a student's reach, the game is called. Once the game is stopped, the counselor begins to process the activity by asking questions like, "What is the problem?" and "How can we solve the problem?" The game then continues.

Empty Stocking *(Dr. Dolores Floyd)*
Cards with feeling words are placed in a stocking, the group is divided into teams, and each student picks three feeling cards. Stimulus situations are read, such as, "When no one lets me play with them, I feel _____." Students raise their hands if they think the answer is one of their feeling cards and then explain why. A spinner determines the number of responses each team can give per turn. Each card a student turns in after answering represents a point for their team. Students replenish the cards in their hands until the stocking is empty.

Math Full Circle *(Julie Walker)*
This activity allows students to work on the skills of listening, paying attention, thinking, and staying focused. Specially prepared math cards are distributed to students, each presenting a basic math operation: "I have 1. Who has this and 4 more?" The student with the card "I have 5. Who has this and 3 more?" answers. The 25 questions continue full circle, ending with "I have 4. Who has this minus 3?" This is a great grab-and-go activity that can involve students who are standing, sitting, or lining up. Counselors will find the game presents endless opportunities to talk about respect for others, teamwork, and self-control.

Commercially Available Games *(Stacey Klias)*
I use a variety of games such as Trouble, Sorry, Checkers, and Chess to model appropriate behavior for students who are easily angered or frustrated. I place feeling words on Stak Attack pieces so that as each wooden block is removed from the stack, the student tells about a time they felt that way. I attach review questions to the

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squares in Toss Across (a game similar to Tic Tac Toe) for an added challenge.

All these activities can be used in the classroom, in small groups, or with individual students to improve student learning as well as to review previously taught skills. Counselors can also use games with students to build trust through play. The most important result, though, is to use these activities to open the lines of communication between counselors and students.

CATS PRIDE Night: A High School Transition Program for Incoming Ninth Graders. Submitted by **Dr. Linda B. Dugan**, 9th grade counselor at Richmond Hill High School, Bryan County Schools. For correspondence e-mail Linda: Ldugan@bryan.k12.ga.us

Many students find the transition from middle school to high school to be a journey accompanied by both anticipation and anxiety. Young adolescents entering high school look forward to having more choices and making new friends; however, they are also concerned about having harder work, making lower grades, and getting lost in a larger environment. Middle school students want to know what high school is going to be like and their parents seek an understanding of high school programs and procedures, particularly the process for ninth grade course selection in relationship to long-term decision-making.

It is critical to have a solid high school transition program in place that enables high school administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and students the opportunity to work together. Transition programs that encourage active participation from students and parents alike create a positive atmosphere and facilitate the adjustment process to the next educational level.

It is especially important that counselors communicate effectively with parents and foster collaboration between eighth and ninth grade personnel. Transition programs address the information gap by providing parents and students a wealth of information about the academic, social, and organizational similarities and differences between middle school and high school. By promoting effective communication between home and school prior to freshman year, counselors are laying the foundation for success.

In April 2006, Richmond Hill High School implemented a transition program entitled "CATS PRIDE" Night: Communicating Achievement with Teachers, Students, and Parents Results in Developing Excellence. The goal of the event was to provide information to both parents and students in order to increase communication between home and school as well as promote the dynamic programs of the high school. Students, teachers, coaches, and representatives from school organizations participated in the event. Faculty members from all academic departments interacted with parents and students in a small group format.

All participants were given a 20-page *Freshman Survival Manual* which contained the school's mission, graduation requirements, 4-year plan, contact numbers, descriptions of end of course tests, study and test- taking tips, a school calendar, school map, recommendations from current ninth grade students, and more. Information about the school's extra-curricular activities, attendance policies, and communication tools was also included. In addition, each family received a compact disc produced by current high school students suggesting ways to help students be successful.

The event began with introductions of the superintendent, principal, and counselors, followed by a brief presentation. Twenty-six clubs, athletic teams, and community organizations were represented, and sponsors made themselves available for questions for the remainder of the evening. Parents and students were able to follow a schedule, which provided them the opportunity to meet with the four core teachers and two elective teachers while getting a feel for the layout of the school.

The evening finale took place in the gymnasium, where the band, flag corps, JROTC, cheerleaders, and students performed. Rising ninth grade students left the campus filled with great enthusiasm for attending ninth grade. The evening also helped students solidify connections with their peers, making the high school transition easier. "CATS PRIDE" Night facilitated communication between home and school, increased understanding of the high school requirements, and helped develop a positive relationship to Richmond Hill High.

Call for Submissions

The Editorial Board of the GSCA *Journal* is requesting that practicing school counselors, supervisors, counselor educators, and other professionals interested in the promotion of school counseling in Georgia submit articles for publication in the next issue of the *Journal*.

Articles that highlight the positive outcomes of counseling with students and/or that support the accountability of school counseling programs in Georgia are of particular interest to our readers. Manuscripts that address ethical/philosophical issues relevant to school counseling, describe successful school counseling techniques and practices, review books and other media products of interest to school counselors, poetry and other creative writings will also be included in the issue.

For more information regarding the *Journal* contact Susan R. Boes, Editor, in writing GSCA *Journal*, University of West Georgia, Counseling and Educational Psychology, Carrollton, Georgia 30118; by phone at 687-839-6122 or e-mail at sboes@westga.edu. Submission deadline is May 1, 2008 but **manuscripts are accepted at any time** as it takes time for the reviewers to read a make suggestions for revisions.

GSCA *Journal* Guidelines for Authors

1. All manuscripts should conform to the guidelines for publication listed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition*.

2. Submit an original and two copies of the manuscript to the editor by May1, 2008 **or earlier if possible** as the reviewers need time to read and make suggestions. These are to be hard copies rather than e-mail attachments so that the APA format stays intact.

3. On the manuscript include a cover page with the title of the article, the name, title, institutional affiliation, address, and telephone numbers (day and evening) for each author, and the date of submission. Provide a summer address and phone number in addition to a school address for the first author. E-mail contact information is also helpful. The first author will be the person contacted by the editor.

4. You need not submit the manuscript on CD at this time. If/when accepted, a CD of the manuscript will be required.

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