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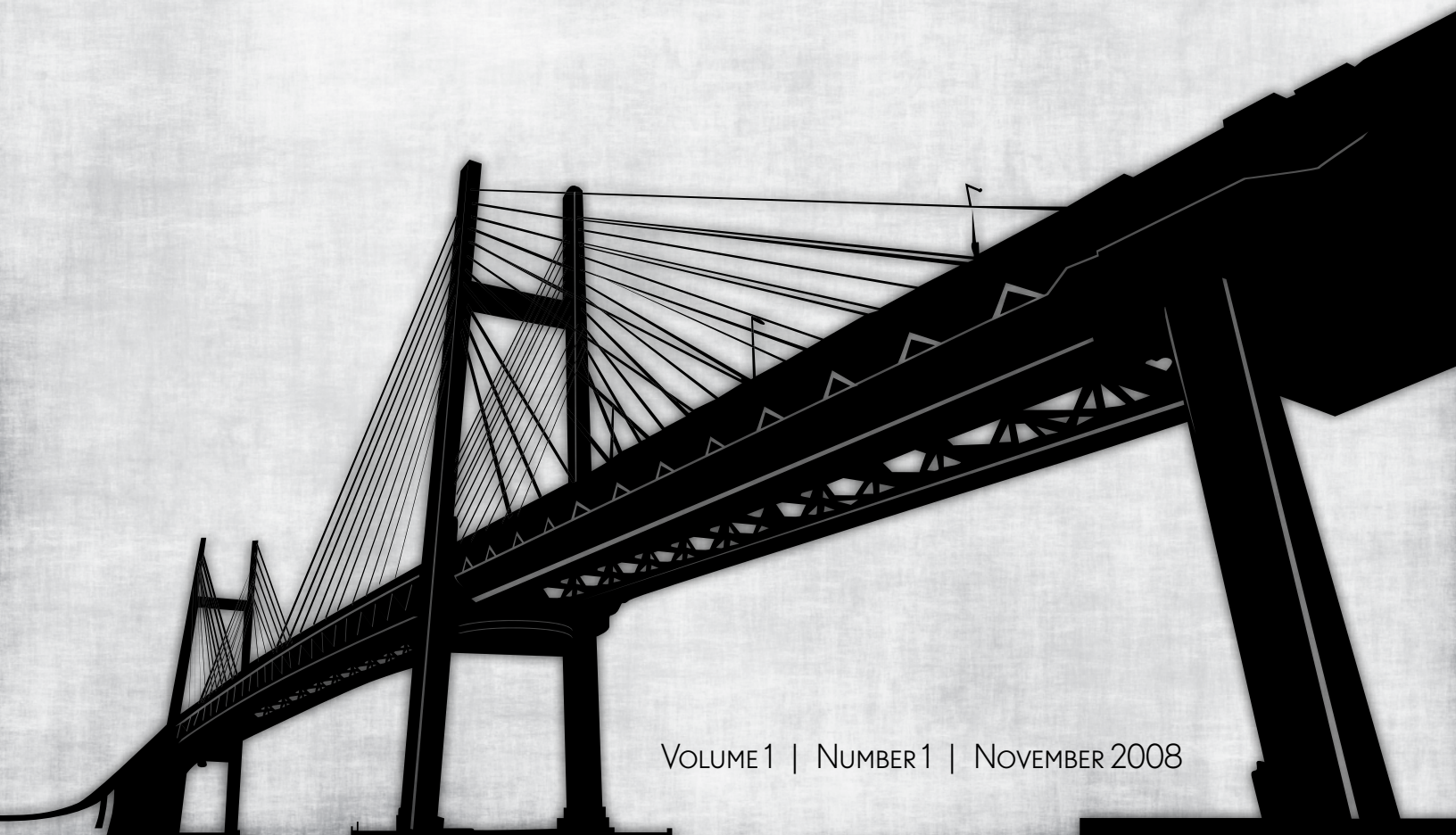
Journal

Special Issue: Celebrating Our Past Editors

Pat Marr • Glenda Almand • James Bergin
Fran Mullis • Susan McCarthy • Erin Mason



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Editorial Review Board

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From Your GSCA President

Greetings fellow Professional School Counselors! It is with great pleasure that I present to you your *GSCA Journal*. We have dedicated this 15th edition of the *GSCA Journal* to our past journal editors. As you read the manuscripts I know you will discover a great learning opportunity in the area of professional school counseling. GSCA is proud to afford you this journal as an element of research and professional learning.

I have selected as this year's theme, GSCA: *Bridging the Gap to Student Achievement*. As professional school counselors we build many bridges that break down the barriers to learning. Bridges connect people to other horizons and goals. Professional School Counselors in Georgia from grades P-12 connect students to achievement and their learning potential by serving their emotional/personal/social, academic, and career planning needs.

I hope you will use the *GSCA Journal* as a bridge to knowledge about pertinent issues that affect your job as a "connector" to student achievement. A special thank you goes to the authors of the manuscripts. Also, thanks to the many journal editors who have built bridges by providing a professional, educational journal over the past 15 editions. Thanks for building bridges and the services you provide to the students of Georgia.

Always...for the children,

Brian Law
GSCA President 2008-2009

From the *GSCA Journal* Editor

Once again I am honored to be a part of the *GSCA Journal* editorship crew. This is a special issue because in it we pay our respects to all of the previous editors. Each editor has contributed to make the *Journal* the prestigious publication that it is today. Our professional school counselors (PSCs) benefit because of their past efforts. These editors have made the *Journal* an important aspect of the Georgia School Counselors Association. In the Special Features Section, Jim Bergin, Elizabeth Hatcher and I present the *Journal's* historical perspective and describe what each editor thought to be highlights of his/her editorship. As a second component of this celebration of the 15th edition of the *Journal*, I invited members of the review board to write a short manuscript so readers could see that the reviewers also write well. The reviewers were invited to write about the review process or another aspect of the *Journal*. Jim Klein, Lisa Schulz, and Rhonda Bryant chose to write about their perspectives on the review process and helpful hints for publication. These are also published in the Special Features Section. Leann Logsdon wrote a book review to present another dimension of the *Journal*. Leann and I were disappointed in not receiving any "best practices" for the column this year but we hope to resume this aspect of the *Journal* next year.

This year the *Journal* received a record number of manuscripts and while not all were ready for publication this year, the authors have proposed revising them for possible publication next issue. My review board members were very attentive to timelines for their reviews and gave great suggestions for revisions, when needed. The revisions the authors were willing to make have strengthened the articles and we gladly present these articles.

I believe our readers will find the articles in this edition timely for use in professional school counseling. There are several research based articles. First, Nicholas Miller describes an action research study that he conducted. Within the manuscript Nicolas describes various ways PSCs can get involved in a collaborative effort with their teachers using the Pyramid of Interventions to help support students. Julie Chibbaro and Li Cao present the results of a research study on advocacy definitions and advocacy interventions from the perspectives of PSCs in one Georgia system and by school counselor candidates. Yuehong Chen Foley and Fran Mullis present basic guidelines for interpreting our student/client's art. Kenyae Reese discusses ways to help students of color, students from low SES status, and possible first-generation students achieve college admission. Jill Thompson and Noran Moffett present the results of a study that ties instructional leaders and PSCs to the same goals of using data-driven studies to help students achieve academic success. Brent Snow and several colleagues present interesting statistics on professional school counselor graduation rates for the state and the southeast region of the United States. Finally, in another category, Leann Logsdon reviews a book that could be helpful in working with young women of color. The book discusses the effects of resiliency and the benefits derived from a mentor.

Brian Law, GSCA President has been a great support this year allowing me to make several changes to the *Journal* which I think the members will like. Last year we used highly glossy paper for the entire *Journal* but found out this year that we need only use cover weight paper for the cover. The manuscripts are printed on non-gloss paper. Brian also allowed me to choose two reviewers for the editorial board, both of whom are practitioners.

The new editorial review board members are Hope Munro and Rene Stegall. Hope is not new to the *Journal* as she helped last year as my editorial assistant and has now moved to reviewer status. Renee is a graduate at both the master's and specialist level from the University of West Georgia and brings much experience to the review board. Lynn Hunnicut and Roger Lotson leave the review board this year. Both have served for several years. Elizabeth Goff Hatcher was invaluable as my editorial assistant. Elizabeth is a student at UWG in the school counseling specialist program. Elizabeth did the research for the Special Features article celebrating the 15th edition of the *Journal*. She also helped with much of the correspondence and other editorial items, such as the copyright documents so that I could concentrate on the reviews, revisions, and other features of the special edition.

I am positive you will enjoy reading this issue. Once again I ask each of you to seriously consider submitting a manuscript for next year's *Journal*. The official deadline is May 1, 2009 but I gladly accept manuscripts all year. 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*

In Celebration of the *GSCA Journal*

Susan R. Boes, James J. Bergin, and Elizabeth Goff Hatcher

Susan R. Boes, is the *GSCA Journal* Editor 2007-2010 and teaches at the University of West Georgia.

James J. Bergin is the immediate GSCA Past President 2007-2008. Jim teaches at Georgia Southern University.

Elizabeth Goff Hatcher was the *GSCA Journal* Editorial Assistant for the 2008 issue.
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Abstract

This article presents the readers with the historical perspective of the *GSCA Journal* from its initiation to the present. Additionally, the article reports on many of the achievements of each editor and is meant to celebrate their work. Their efforts created a publication that is highly professional.

In Celebration of the *GSCA Journal*

This being the 15th edition of the *GSCA Journal*, it seems fitting to celebrate the work that has gone on to make the *Journal* the success it is today. Without the dream of a publication by the first editor Pat Marr and President Elect Ginger Little to celebrate the work of school counseling practitioners and counselor educators across the state, our *Journal* might not have come to fruition. Georgia's professional school counselors (PSCs) are fortunate because many states still have no journal to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work with children. It is with much respect that we commemorate the hard work of our past editors, their reviewers, and the leadership teams which have supported this endeavor. From its commencement in 1991 with the publication of a few articles every other year, the *GSCA Journal* has grown to the quality peer reviewed *Journal* it is today. Recently, a researcher in Arizona, who completed a study on school counselors in Georgia, discussed with GSCA leaders and the editor the possibility of seeking publication in the next issue of the *Journal*. We are known**,** ladies and gentlemen, and it is due to the wonderful efforts of your past editors, reviewers, and of course the authors, who were willing to take the time to write about their work. The purpose of this article is to share the historical background about the *GSCA Journal* and to celebrate the work of past editors as they initiated, developed, and refined the *Journal*. They have done a great job and deserve our thanks.

Historical Perspectives

When Ginger Little was president (1990-1991) she and Pat Marr had a vision that professional school counselors (PSCs) across the state could present the great work that they do through a publication. While the opportunity for presenting their work was available at the annual conferences, not every PSC finds he/she is able to attend each year, thus it was felt that a publication sharing ideas and best practices could reach every member of the Georgia School Counselors Association. Because Georgia's were such winners at the ASCA national level due to their innovative ideas, Pat felt it was time to share these ideas around the state in a professional publication. The foresightedness of these leaders has created an outstanding publication to showcase the work of PSCs and is to be respected. We owe much to Pat and Ginger's collaboration on this initiative.

In the Beginning

Pat Marr and Glenda Almand were the pioneers for the *GSCA Journal* gearing it toward the publication it is today. It was because of their perseverance and patience with the process, the reviewers who sometimes needed nudging to complete their reviews and the periodic lack of manuscripts**,** that the *Journal* survived. Currently we have more than enough manuscripts to share with our members. Initially, the *GSCA Journal* was only published

every 2 years and was printed in half page format. Today the *Journal* looks different from the original publication but this has evolved after several previous changes in the printed format. The *Journal* was initially printed on linen paper and today has a slick new look but while the format for presentation is impressive the writing that has evolved over the years is more impressive. The authors have courageously been willing to encounter a rigorous review process of their manuscripts. Additionally, the authors generally have been open to the revisions suggested by the reviewers because the revisions strengthen the manuscripts.

When Pat Marr was asked to be the editor by then President Ginger Little, Pat contacted the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) for help learning about the publication process and suggestions for submission guidelines. Thus the *GSCA Journal* was patterned on the ASCA publication at that time. The main obstacle that Pat encountered as editor was the lack of confidence by school counselors to write about their work, thus she felt one of the highlights of her editorship was encouraging practitioners to write about their work. Pat felt her major achievement as editor was the very act of seeing it come to fruition. Simply stated, the organization and work to get it off the ground was a huge accomplishment. While the leadership team, reviewers, and members were enthusiastic and supported the need for a publication, the work was significant and it was accomplished with little training in the publication process, yet Pat feels the editorship provided the perfect opportunity to learn new ideas while utilizing her background in Language Arts. Pat's aspiration for the future of the *Journal* is the wish to enter the *Journal* into an appropriate competition to display the impressive work of our writers and editorial staff. Bottom line for Pat is the fact that publishing the work of our many practitioners, counselors-in-training, and counselor educators helps benefit the children of the state of Georgia and perhaps beyond as our work is shared with our readers.

Glenda Almand began as a reviewer for the *Journal* before following Pat as editor. Glenda felt the publication of the first issue under her editorship, which was the second *GSCA Journal* issue, was important because it demonstrated the permanence of the *Journal*. Glenda reflected that faithful members who wrote manuscripts, competent reviewers who gave great suggestions, and a wonderful printer who designed the setup, while coping with GSCA's needs, were the true "heroes" for the success of the *Journal*. As the *Journal* became known and fears dissipated about writing skills, more authors tried their hand at writing and the *Journal* began to have more articles. Glenda noted her greatest accomplishment, while editor, was "putting the baby to bed" because the work of getting all of the items together and in the mail to the printer was a challenge but very worthwhile. Glenda would like to see more people read the *Journal*, not just receive it in the mail and put it aside. She feels the *Journal* is a great undertaking and one in which our professional school counselors should be proud.

Those Who Followed

Jim Bergin. Jim Bergin became the 3rd editor and served for 4 years from 1995-1999 in that capacity. Jim's major purpose for the *Journal* was as a public relations tool to showcase data in order to demonstrate that PSCs are effective at what they are doing. When Jim took the reins, the *Journal* was only published every other year and presented 6 or 7 articles. One of Jim's greatest accomplishments as editor was to contact presenters who received good reviews at the annual GSCA conference, and ask them to write articles about their presentations. This initiative increased the number of articles; sometimes as many as 13 articles were published in a given year. During Jim's last year as editor, the *Journal* won an award from ASCA.

Jim's original idea when restructuring the *Journal* was to help PSCs who had not published become published, therefore he created a column *"Practical Ideas for Counselors"*. The purpose of the column was to share novel ideas by writing about them. He hoped that PSCs, while becoming acclimated to the writing process, would use the column as a stepping stone or precursor to writing a full article. Jim also hoped the person who was column editor would become the next editor for the Journal.

Fran Mullis. The editor following Jim was Fran Mullis, who served as editor not once but twice. Fran served as editor from 1999-2001 and from 2005-2006. Fran continued Jim's idea about choosing highly rated presentations from the GSCA conference and asking the presenters to write about their topics. Fran shared that it was an honor to serve on the Leadership Team and to see first-hand the dedication and hard work of GSCA's leaders. Fran especially liked having the column that Dana Edwards edited on professional school counselor practices. The column provided an opportunity for PSCs to briefly share activities that they found successful. It

was also very rewarding to Fran to hear how pleased and excited many of the newly published authors were to see their work in print**.** Fran would like to see a continued emphasis in the *Journal* on research related articles and the column on practices that work reinstated. For the school counseling profession, her hopes are that professional school counselors will be recognized for the great work they do in helping students succeed in all life skills.

Susan McCarthy. Susan was editor from 2002-2003. Highlights from her tenure as editor include the focus on the National Standards for School Counselors in the 2002 issue followed by the spotlight on the ASCA National Model implementation articles in the 2003 *Journal* edition. Susan worked arduously to get more practitioners to submit articles for publication in both editions. She feels her best accomplishment for the *Journal* was keeping up the great tradition of providing a quality professional *Journal* for the membership even though she had no major experience in publishing research based articles. Susan is proud of the work it took to bring the *Journal* to life each year. Susan's wish for the *Journal* is to continue as a practitioner's tool for PSCs in the state of Georgia. She feels this will be accomplished as the *Journal* continues to publish both research and practitioner based articles. She thinks the current format continues to be an easy to read format and doesn't see the need for change. Her sincere wish is that the Georgia School Counselors Association continues to see the benefit of publishing the *Journal* on a regular basis.

Erin Mason. Erin served a 1-year term (2004) and while it was short she believes it was a tremendous learning experience. Erin felt she gained unsurpassable respect for the process of publishing and for all the responsibilities editors are charged with doing. She learned that editing requires much more than one might expect and creating a cohesive, professional product is a labor of love. Erin feels GSCA is fortunate to have a professional *Journal* as there are many state organizations that do not have such a publication. She would like to see the *Journal* continue its tradition and to see more practitioners contribute articles highlighting their school counseling projects.

Into the Future

Susan Boes. As the current editor of the *GSCA Journal* in my second year, I am pleased to be given the freedom to make changes to the *Journal* with the support of the Leadership Team. Being able to choose reviewers, whose work I know or have heard of, is an additional privilege because it is important to understand how my team works as a whole. Additionally, being given the chance to add an editorial assistant to my team has been a real blessing. By offering an advanced graduate student in the specialist program, the opportunity to help with the *Journal* has allowed Hope Munro, last year, and Elizabeth Goff Hatcher, this year, an opportunity to learn the publishing process but more so it has helped me with my job as editor. The tasks of reading and rereading the manuscripts, checking for grammatical errors and typos, and concentrating on APA format are so tedious that another set of eyes is wonderful. The efforts of an editorial assistant also help from the perspective of another view when the reviewers' comments need to be discerned. Both editorial assistants have served the *Journal* well and I hope future editors will have the good fortune to have this additional help. My wish for the future of the *Journal* is to give it more exposure. By opening the *Journal* at our website, the *Journal* will have more impact because it will have national and possibly international exposure. Not only will PSCs from around the nation be able to review the work of our authors but this exposure will open the author's work to readers in other fields as well.

Having the Leadership Team allow me the freedom to make changes to the format and look of the *Journal* as a whole, as long as it is within budget, is also appreciated. But while the look is new the concepts are not. As editor, I am committed to presenting the work of practitioners, school counselors-in-training, and counselor educators. Professional school counselors in the 21st Century are held accountable to many stakeholders. As the times have changed, PSCs are asked to perform many roles quite different from the roles taught in their training programs so it is especially important to keep abreast of the trends and issues in the field. This medium extends the opportunity to write about what works to benefit our students in the schools which is our goal as PSCs. Therefore I applaud the efforts of the authors who put their writing out for review because it can be scary to have one's work scrutinized within the review process. While the purpose of the reviews is to strengthen the article, it means having others judge our work. My reviewers are committed to working with authors to make revisions that strengthen the manuscripts and they take their role seriously.

Finally, let me share with members that we welcome works other than theoretical pieces, research based manuscripts, and best practice documents. This issue

offers a book review that can be a valuable edition to one's library. Others have asked about the publication of a poem. This can also benefit our work and all your creative ideas are welcome.

Parting Words

This article presented a brief synopsis of the developmental growth of the *Journal*. The historical perspective of future sighted leaders has carried the *Journal* into the 21st Century with sometimes minor and at other times more core changes. Yet, each new focus has added to the professional development of school counselors across the state and ultimately to the benefit of our children in the schools. The *Journal* has served as an instrument to highlight the work of school counselors, school counseling candidates, and counselor educators. Each theoretical article, research study, or best practice presentation has the potential for practitioners to better their scope of practice. The work of the many authors, the review board members, and past editors are to be applauded. The *Journal*, as noted by the comments of the past editors is highly valued and truly is as one past editor noted "a labor of love", however the *Journal* cannot stand on past claims, it needs your manuscripts to describe the work that you do, so please share this by writing about your work.

Author's Note

Life for Erin Mason includes a new professional experience as she recently became an assistant professor at DePaul University in Chicago. Erin worked for 13 years as a school counselor in the greater Atlanta area and completed a doctorate in Counselor Education from Georgia State University. Her current aspirations are to continue to contribute to the field of school counseling through teaching, scholarship and professional advocacy. We wish her the best of luck. Illinois has gained a leader.

Advancing One's Understanding of School Counseling Through Publication: The "What" and "How" of Writing an Article

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Abstract

Writing for publication is a great privilege and one that should be approached deliberately as well as innovatively. As experts in our respective fields, writing for publication is an opportunity to share original thoughts, take positions, and/or report findings as well as simultaneously advance foundational knowledge in our areas. The power and influence of such scholarly pursuits should be taken seriously. More specifically, one's efforts should be well thought out and demonstrate a willingness to take risks by legitimately suggesting a novel idea or an approach to the epistemology of school counseling. The following commentary reflects my paradigm for evaluating manuscripts and characterizes the "what" and "how" of writing for publication.

The "What"

When contemplating the "what" of writing for publication in the area of school counseling, it is advantageous to consider efforts that involve data. The current culture of education is replete with terminology such as *data driven, decision-making, evidence-based practices, standards,* and *rubrics*. Furthermore, school counseling cannot avoid the influence of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and therefore must consider the value of how data commingles with school counseling.

Projecting, collecting, analyzing, and using data for many counselors is a daunting task and can feel anticomplimentary to what we really enjoy doing. However, the more we work with data and write about how to use data effectively to inform school counseling, the more data becomes demystified. This is not to say that position papers or theory-driven work is less valuable, but wrestling with, and writing about data can offer tremendous risks and rewards. Therefore, I enjoy reviewing manuscripts in which authors have used data to support or validate their efforts and desire to share these great ideas and approaches with colleagues via publication.

According to Stone and Dahir (2007), "data brings our attention to issues that require schoolwide conversations and planning" (p. 18). I believe this assertion can be extended more specifically to school counseling. Data demands attention and often facilitates meaningful dialogue around school counseling and what does or does not constitute a "best practice." By publishing empirically-based articles, not only does one continue the process of demystification, but one also encourages discourse that can lead to well informed decisions and planning.

Stone and Dahir (2007) offer the following benefits associated with data: (a) data can accurately present the current situation of student challenges and accomplishment in critical areas, (b) data can assist in identifying the needs of students on your caseloads, (c) data can reveal school and/or system wide challenges that affect success, and (d) data helps to identify and eliminate barriers. These qualitative findings should be evidence enough that writing data-based articles is not only an acceptable risk, but a necessary one when writing for publication relative to school counseling issues.

The "How"

My consideration of the "how" is a two pronged discussion. The first prong deals with "how" does one access meaningful data to write evidence-based articles. The second prong offers a glimpse into what I hope to experience when reviewing a manuscript.

First, given the numerous challenges associated with writing evidence-based articles, it would behoove future authors to consider collaborative ventures. As Viccora (2007) suggests, join forces with data-savvy partners

such as faculty at universities and colleges. Counseling is a relationally-based field and writing in such a way can be mutually beneficial for countless stakeholders. Furthermore, Stone and Dahir (2007) remind us that many school counselors have access to meaningful data right under their noses. Examples would be management systems or databases that include demographic information, course information, and copious student information. These positions suggest that writing evidence-based articles does not require an experimental design, nor does it require one to reinvent the wheel. Simply expound upon existing data and open the readers' minds to new and exciting ideas.

The second prong involves the approach to writing that I hope to find when reviewing a manuscript. Overall, I enjoy reviewing a manuscript that contains passion for the subject matter, conviction of thought, and brevity. I would encourage authors to take risks and follow their heart. Our greatest work comes from articulating that which we love. I would also encourage authors to venture into uncharted territory. One does not always have to agree with the status quo and while incremental ideas have great value, bold ideas facilitate substantive changes. Finally, I think the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association's* (APA, 2001) concept of *economy of expression* is fundamental to quality writing. "Say only what needs to be said. The author who is frugal with words not only writes a more readable manuscript but also increases the chances that the manuscript will be accepted for publication" (p. 34).

Final Thoughts

It is a tremendous joy and honor to be an external Review Board Member for the *GSCA Journal*. The professional counselors of Georgia do incredible work and will continue to do so well into the future. I look forward to reviewing further manuscripts and sincerely hope the above words can be of assistance and/or guidance. My thoughts and positions are by no means absolute, and only represent guiding principles I use when reviewing manuscripts.

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Writing for the *GSCA Journal:* Capturing the School Counselor Experience

Lisa L. Schulz

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Abstract

This article is designed to provide the reader with three different designs from which to choose when planning a possible publication for the *GSCA Journal*. The first focuses on writing up the best practices school counselors already utilize. The second suggests using a six-step accountability model to document the data of student outcomes. The third proposes using a qualitative approach to gather data which explores more in depth student's perceptions and experiences. Georgia School Counselor Association members are encouraged to consider the value in sharing their work in schools with other practitioners and contributing to the advancement of the school counseling profession.

Writing for the *GSCA Journal:* Capturing the School Counselor Experience

School counselors serve as the affective compass of schools. A varying degree of developmental and personal concerns eventually find their way to our offices. We are witnesses to the academic and personal peaks and valleys of administrators, staff, and students and their caregivers. How can it be, then, that we have nothing to write about? Clearly, there is more than enough to write; we just need to know that the pay off for investing in the writing process is worth the time and energy it will take. The process of writing about your experiences as school counselors is much the same as attending a professional conference. We attend so as to commiserate with colleagues and glean new ways of being as school counselors. In writing for a professional journal, the same need is realized: to be invigorated and validated by the sharing of your insights, ideas, and experiences that are grounded in the existing literature. Now is the time for you to take a turn to stimulate the profession by sharing some of the best practices and experiences which have shaped your way of being as a professional school counselor.

Writing About What You Do

Just last week, I was witness to a wonderful event. A school counselor was gathering the students of a grief and loss group for their final session. Together, in their group, they had found mutual support as each allowed the others to know of their sorrow. As the culminating group activity, they each carried the ceramic tile they had created and placed it at a fountain created as a memorial to their loved ones. There wasn't a lot of talking, just doing. They placed their tiles, made planters by which they could remember the event and their contribution. I walked away inspired by what we, as counselors, can do. I was inspired by the knowledge that while the counselor provided the opportunity, the participants provided the experience.

This particular school counselor could write about the process she undertook to initiate the group, screen the members, plan the activities, and support the member's emotional investment. She could have the students speak to the value of the group dynamic and how their participation impacted their desire to come to school or a renewed desire to get out of bed. She could share with us their improved attendance, rising grades, and improved test scores. From this accounting, we all could get a sense of how effective the work of one individual can be. We may be inspired to do the same.

This is the type of experience that inspires and needs to be shared with other school counselors. Whether it is grief, attendance, a certain science teacher, divorce, or peer relations, there are common experiences that unite students and their counselors. Decide to tell the story of how you came to know which need required the intervention. Explain the process from creation to fruition. Write a step by step accounting. Help us know

how we might do what you did. Your publication will be your current best practice.

Documenting Student Outcomes

Perhaps one of the elements of writing for publication which seems off-putting to many is the idea it must be research-based. An example is a paper describing some quantitative study, deductive in nature, designed to test some theory which results in numerical data too difficult to decipher. While data does need to drive the decision-making process in our programs, it does not always need to be in the form of anovas and chi-squares. Stone and Dahir (2007) created a concrete model by which we can document our work and demonstrate its effectiveness without having earned an "A" in Statistics.

The focus on student outcome data measured by a six-step accountability process provides the means to "play a proactive role in identifying and responding to the issues, policies, and practices that stratify and impede student opportunity" (Stone & Dahir, 2007, p. 113). Working to close the achievement gap takes many forms, all of which are measurable. You don't have to be a mathematician, just a reporter. By reporting the direct benefit of your interventions to students, we speak the language of those in a position of power. Direct benefit to students can take the form of a reduced number of discipline referrals, a higher percentage of minority students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses, or a lower percentage of non-completers. Data demonstrate how effective our programs are by revealing how our students are improved.

Giving Voice to the Experience

School counselors are witnesses to school improvement and student success. In fact, school counselors are already researchers and "are researching all of the time" (Farber, 2006, p. 367). School counselors instinctively look beyond the data to student perceptions and experiences to further explain how the circumstance occurred. It is incredibly meaningful to learn how students interpret and describe their experiences. As school counselors we are in an ideal position to provide the means by which students can speak to their own experience in schools. The data here are words, not numbers.

If you find yourself more intrigued with the "what" and "how" of student achievement then consider employing a more qualitative approach. By utilizing focus groups and other narrative data which provide a depth of rich information, we learn student's stories. The focus is not just how much or how many; perception data allows us to understand students' lived experiences. Farber provides an excellent breakdown of how you might conduct qualitative research in schools. In fact, the entire June 2006 issue of *Professional School Counseling* is dedicated to research methods in school counseling.

Concluding Remarks

This article was designed to provide three different avenues by which you can frame a publication: relating the details of a best practice, producing student outcome data using the Stone and Dahir (2007) accountability model, and giving students a voice by exploring their experience at a deeper level (Farber, 2006). Sharing your experience as a school counselor demonstrates the effectiveness of your work and provides incentive for colleagues. As the affective compass of schools, let it be part of our mission to work for the academic achievement and social justice that all our students deserve and then share these "best practices" with a larger public. Brigman (2006, p. 425) inspires with his words: "Showing that school counselors 'make a difference' in students and schools has never been more important".

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Scholarly Promotion of Professional School Counseling: School Counselors and the *Georgia School Counseling Association Journal*

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School Counselors and the *Georgia School Counseling Association Journal*

School counseling is a relative newcomer in the landscape of helping professions. Although our profession has roots in Davis' 'guidance' curriculum introduced in the Grand Rapids, Michigan public school system's curriculum in 1907 and Parson's Vocational Bureau Movement of 1909, much has changed over the last 100 years. While at one time school counselor training consisted of two to five graduate classes, current professional school counseling standards, as outlined by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP), require a minimum of 48 hours leading to the Master's degree. CACREP also identifies eight core counselor preparation areas that include professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, and research and evaluation (CACREP, 2001).

As a springboard from the professional preparation core offered by CACREP, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) has presented its National Model (ASCA, 2003) for practitioners to develop, implement, and evaluate school counseling programs. With the support of CACREP and ASCA initiatives, professional school counselors across the United States can receive direction on how to excel in the school counseling profession. In Georgia, however, new developments have underscored the need for professional school counselors to engage in an underutilized tool to promote the utility of school counseling: scholarly writing.

School Counseling Issues in Georgia

On December 17, 2007, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) adopted a board rule, which allows persons with a license in Clinical Social Work to receive certification as a school counselor, on a time-limited basis, as long as the certificant is accepted into an accredited school counseling program. Interestingly, in 2005 Georgia's Board of Regents (BOR), which governs the University System of Georgia colleges and universities, mandated that all system schools with school counseling programs must pursue and receive CACREP accreditation by 2008 or face possible sanctions or shutdown *(Regent's Principles, 2004)*. The disconnection between the Commission's rules for school counselor certification and the Board of Regent's mandate for strict adherence to CACREP policies further belies the significance of many Georgia school districts' adoption of the ASCA National Model as the framework for their school counseling programs. These inconsistent developments intimate that efforts to standardize counselor preparation and service delivery may face greater challenges in the near future. School counselors have lobbied, petitioned and demanded intervention from state officials. What other steps can we take to protect the integrity of the school counseling profession? The purpose of this article is to reiterate to school counselors the importance of promoting our profession through scholarly research and publication.

School Counseling Research and Outcomes

The school counseling profession is driven by theory based and research validated best practices that guide our interventions with stakeholders. Yet, the degree to which we utilize research and evaluation in the presentation of outcomes and accomplishments remains dependent upon a variety of factors. Bauman (2004) found that intrapersonal factors that influence school counselors' use of research and evaluation can include confidence in research ability, perceived relevance of research, and perceived value of research. Bauman also found that only

36% percent of the school counselors reported reading the flagship journal of the American School Counseling Association entitled *Professional School Counseling*.

Moreover, systemic issues can also preclude scholarly inquiry into the effectiveness of counseling interventions, program outcomes, or evaluation. These can include building, district, or system policies that remain fixed in antiquated models of school counseling that emphasize administrative duties rather than comprehensive developmental school counseling. For example, districts may favorably evaluate the counselor on how often he or she interacts with students and disregard the counselor's efforts to develop interventions based on individual and system data.

Publishing in the *Georgia School Counseling Journal*

Georgia school counselors can use the Georgia School Counseling Association and its *journal*, the *Georgia School Counseling Journal*, as a conduit to demonstrate how students have benefited from school counseling. For some of us, hearing the word research causes trepidation and for others, disinterest. Yet, research seeks to answer questions that we have about our work, our stakeholders, and how we can maintain our equilibrium while we develop new courses of action. To participate in the *Journal,* a author must possess some key skills in order to experience success.

First, the aurthor must be curious and develop questions about an intriguing aspect of their work. Most of us go through the day asking "why" or "how" – unwittingly taking the first steps of conducting research. Second, the writer must be willing to write these questions down and search articles found in databases such as GALILEO, Questia, ERIC, or other scholarly collections to see if others have asked the same questions, found the answers, and even added to the questions. If a writer has a Georgia library card, he or she has access to GALILEO. Complexity does not characterize excellent research but strong interest in the topic and familiarity with current work in the area lay a strong foundation.

Next, the writer must read articles and become familiar with technical writing as articulated by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2001). Finally, the writer must not fear making mistakes because technical writing takes practice. One recently minted doctoral student described learning to write in APA style as learning to ride a bicycle – the smallest steps indicate progress and life affords multiple opportunities to perfect one's form even after reaching mastery.

The *GSCA Journal* offers school counselors a wonderful opportunity to promote and sustain the profession in this era of educational reform. The submission process includes feedback from reviewers, and the editor. If the manuscript is written well, utilizes appropriate APA format, and most importantly addresses an issue relevant to the school counseling profession, there is a revision request contingent to publication or a major revision and a resubmission process, if the manuscript is relevant. There can be a rejection if the manuscript is better suited to another journal or does not connect to the school counseling profession, is written too poorly for a timely revision or does not adhere to APA format. This process is not adversarial but designed to facilitate the author's development of a quality article and the preparation of a *Journal* that highlights the profession's role in educating all children and demonstrates the utility of the profession. GSCA editorial review board members look forward to your submissions.

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Pyramid of Interventions: Results of a School Counselor's Action Research Study at One Suburban Middle School

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Abstract

This paper examines the implementation of the Pyramid of Interventions (POI) at a suburban Georgia Middle School through an examination of teacher understanding, assessment of overall effectiveness, and the need for further professional development. The Pyramid of Interventions is the response to intervention (RTI) component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) reauthorized in 2006. Multiple states, systems and schools have implemented RTI since the reauthorization as an addition to discrepancy based evaluations for identifying students with disabilities. This action research study (ARS) examines the teachers' perspective of its implementation, specifically the school counselor's involvement in identifying interventions for students and teachers. The results indicate a successful implementation with future opportunities for further research.

Pyramid of Interventions: Results of a School Counselor's Action Research Study at One Suburban Middle School

Across the country schools must implement plans to provide interventions to students prior to a referral for a special education evaluation. In the past, referrals to special education resulted in an evaluation based on the discrepancy model in which students were identified as being low achieving or having a deficiency in one area of achievement as compared to another. The Pyramid of Interventions (POI) has been implemented as a result of the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004 (IDEIA). In all Georgia public schools, it is the Response to Intervention (RTI) component of the act and is designed to facilitate meeting the needs of students exhibiting difficulties succeeding in academic or behavioral achievement. Bender and Shores (2007) state:

> *As a result of No Child left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, Response to Intervention (RTI) is now a mandated process for documenting the existence or nonexistence of a learning disability (Abstract).*

Problems with over-identification of minority students when utilizing the discrepancy model have led to a tiered model of interventions. Data collection prior to a referral is due to recognition that some students will respond beneficially to appropriate intervention while others will need further evaluation. Dykeman (2006) suggests RTI provides opportunities for broader assessment strategies and interventions and must be based on best practices. Thus, a tiered model of intervention with appropriate documentation is considered an additional resource to the evaluation process. IDEIA encourages schools to utilize RTI as a part of the evaluation procedures to support struggling students and determine eligibility for special education (SPED). The purpose of this paper

is to report the results of an action research project conducted at a Middle School by the school counselor. The action research (AR) was designed to evaluate the implementation and understanding of the school's POI model and identify areas to be addressed through future professional development. School counselor involvement is clearly discussed.

Design of Pyramid of Interventions

State, system, and school plans are similar only on the basis of design. As a result of RTI some states use three tiered models; whereas, many schools in Georgia have implemented a four tiered model with interventions at each level progressing toward a more defined focus based on student needs. The structure of this model was developed by the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE, 2006). The inclusion of the third tier is a result of a Supreme Court legal judgment where Georgia is mandated to implement a step prior to referral to SPED with or without the POI called the Student Support Team (SST). The RTI process must be implemented with evidence based interventions before considering a referral to SPED (Harris-Murri, King, & Rostenberg, 2006).

Literature Related to RTI and POI

Much literature is related to providing interventions to underachieving students both within a framework such as the RTI framework and without. For the purpose of this study, the literature focuses on the RTI or POI models developed in the past 5 years. The POI is designed as a pre-referral resource to lessen the need for full special education enrollment while working the student's issues as identified by parents and teachers. Through the tiered model, interventions become more focused as needs become more significant (Harris-Murri, et al., 2006). Conversely, as the children's needs lessen, interventions and number of resources decrease. The key to the RTI model is the requirement for teachers and stakeholders to provide reliable intervention while collecting data at each level of the framework (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Canges, & Murphy, 2007). RTI is beneficial for meeting student needs when an impact is recognized thus reducing the need for further intervention including enrolling students in SPED. It is better to meet needs in a way that marks less permanence and has a weaker potential impact on the students' future educational endeavors.

Advantages of RTI

VanDerHeyden and Jimerson (2005) discuss advantages to implementing RTI such as validity, contextual decision-making and improved identification accuracy for learning disabilities, and more effective interventions as well as the need for further research contributing to effective intervention identification and assuring appropriate intervention integrity, frequency, intensity and duration of intervention implementation to eliminate specific concerns. The necessity for stakeholder understanding of the purpose, clarification of goals, measuring the effectiveness, and the need for continuous professional development related to RTI's systematic implementation, monitoring and improvement to insure improved student outcomes are needed. Likewise, Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements and Ball (2007) discuss concerns that include limited research of current practices, limited evidence based interventions, and the need to train personnel to conduct alternative assessments. Providing feedback on intervention effectiveness and sustainability in education is mandatory. Benefits of RTI are supported by the multiple layers and easily implemented at the early grades thus reducing failures and frustrations (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Improving interventions can improve student and teacher performance.

Professional Development for RTI

Further necessity for professional development related to RTI implementation is based on meeting the needs of diverse learners. It is necessary to find out what works in order to decide if a practice is appropriate for RTI resources. Instruction and interventions should be validated by students to whom it will be applied (Klingler & Edwards, 2006). Danielson, Doolittle and Bradley (2007) suggest there are many questions to be answered.

These include:

> *What are the evidenced based practices in various components of RTI? What outcomes can schools expect if they implement these practices within the RTI framework with fidelity? How can we prepare teachers to optimally implement a system of RTI? What do states, districts, and schools need to consider if they are to sustain the use of RTI over time? And finally, what are future research needs? (p. 632)*

Specific strategies to identify at-risk students undoubtedly differ from school to school. Fuchs and Fuchs (2007) identify assessing each student's score in

a given grade on a norm referenced test and benchmark assessments or a high stakes test required and accepted by NCLB. In Georgia at the Middle School level, the assessments include but are not limited to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for the norm referenced choice, benchmark assessments at each grade level based on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), and the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) as the high stakes test given by schools. These assessments when viewed together may or may not indicate the need for intervention through the POI. The scores on the assessments can also be referenced in relation to the student's current achievement in the classroom.

Preventive Nature of RTI

The premise of RTI is to move from the concept of student failure to a focus of prevention and intervention. It requires collaboration from every individual involved in a given student's education and progress, including the school counselor. School counselors often are involved in the SST programs across the state and they play important roles: as an advocate for students, consultant to stakeholders, and collaborator for the success of all students. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has position statements related to discipline, high stakes testing, equity for all students, at-risk students, students and student assistance programs which clarify and define the school counselor role placing the counselor in a lead role in meeting the special needs of students (ASCA, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2007a, 2007b). It is easy to distinguish the role school counselors play within RTI whether as a consultant, progress monitor, student data interpreter, coordinator of interventions, information gatherer and supporter of students and teachers.

School counselors and school psychologists play a critical role in meeting the needs of students and stakeholders in and out of the educational setting (Barona & Barona, 2006). Since RTI functions primarily as a pre-referral system, school counselors must be involved at the outset and schools must provide professional development related to meeting student needs (Holliday, 2005). This includes training in best practices related to effective instructional skills, data collection, and classroom management and intervention identification and development. School counselors can participate as a resource on the leadership team to insure RTI success and facilitate continuous communication between all stakeholders. In addition, just as it is important for teachers to implement interventions that work, it is important for counselors to assist teachers when interventions are not working. School counselors can assist teachers in assessing the validity and integrity of their practices. For example, reviewing discipline referrals relating to interventions within the classroom is beneficial for counselors, teachers, and administrators. It is within this framework that the counselor's role will be further defined. In addition, school counselors can play an active role in assessing the need for and designing and/or delivering professional development within their schools. Furthermore Danielson et al. (2007) state:

> *… in our discussion of professional development and building capacity for sustainability, we saw that an emerging knowledge base is present, but again, the research base will need to expand greatly if educators are to be supported in improving the achievement of all students—the ultimate goal of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (p. 635)*

Description of Tiers in Georgia POI

Tier 1 is based on implementation techniques that would be available to every student in the school's student population and includes research based instruction, standardized curriculum and differentiation when appropriate. This tier is implemented in the general education setting and involves high quality instruction that is standards and evidence based. Instructional grouping is driven by need and can involve variations that include whole group instruction, flexible group instruction, and small group instruction while focusing on what all students should know and be able to do as a result of the instructional design and delivery. Tier 2 is more defined but still driven by the teacher's observation of need at the general education level. The teacher may possibly seek intervention support outside of the classroom through consultation and collaboration with various stakeholders in the school or system to identify programs or processes to meet and identify student needs. Tier 2 instruction is monitored and varies from general education to needs based and could include differentiation, early intervention programs, individual supplemental academic programs or consultation with an intervention specialist focused on the area of need the student has or in which he/ she is deficient. Tier 3 is based on individualized instruction and centers on the SST model. A team of stakeholders including teachers, parents and administrators focus on the need of the student and make recommendations for intervention. Therefore, Tier 3 instruction is more

structured and individualized with specific interventions. Whereas Tiers 1 and 2 are more informal and teacher driven, Tier 3 is formal in that SST recommendations are designed to be implemented, monitored and recorded in meeting minutes and is often managed by a school coordinator or administrator (GDOE, 2006; GDOE, 2008). Tier 4 is the top tier where students benefit from specifically designed instruction based on need and SPED requirements. This tiered model is seemingly progressive in that the achievement of all students is continuously monitored. For students who do not achieve, interventions are provided and those not responding positively are referred for further evaluation by a school psychologist usually after transitioning through Tier 3. Glover and DiPerna (2007) state,

> *Because RTI practices target all students, rather than those identified as at risk, services are provided along a continuum, with all students receiving class or school-wide instructional or behavioral supports and select individuals participating in need-based intervention of varying levels of intensity. (p. 527)*

Tier Progression

The model is based on a pyramid with the expectation that as one progresses from one tier to another the interventions become more focused. The effect of this progression being that as students' needs are met students exhibit success and continuation of interventions is extinguished. Theoretically then, as students progress through the tiers, SST and SPED referrals are reduced by successful interventions within the previous tiers. Additionally there is a reduction of over identification of minority students and an additional reduction of students participating at each of the upper levels of the pyramid. Responsibility is placed on the teacher initially, including the delivery of a quality curriculum while quickly and appropriately identifying students with academic or behavioral needs and working with stakeholders to meet those needs (Harris-Murri, et al., 2006)

Methodology

Preliminary activities included seeking administrative permissions, submitting the required paperwork, and informing teachers about the process. The willingness of the administration to allow this study to occur within the school environment supports the need to conduct this research. This study evaluated the effectiveness, understanding, and need for further professional development among the teachers. Variables for the study included limiting the influence or communication of biases or presuppositions to teachers participating in the study while providing a climate that allows them to feel comfortable expressing their honest opinions pertaining to the POI.

The hypothesis of this study was that there are various factors that negate the impact of the POI that leads to teacher frustration and isolation including teacher's understanding of the process, individual resolve to meet student needs, and the variation of those needs. In other words, at the Middle School prior to the POI being implemented, teachers utilized the SST to communicate student needs to stakeholders. The new process places significant responsibility on teachers to conduct due diligence in identifying, implementing, documenting, and communicating classroom interventions prior to progressing through the tiers. In addition, previously the school counselor played a significant role as the SST coordinator for the school. That role has been reduced as a result of fewer students being served in that tier as a result of prior successful interventions.

Prior to the POI being implemented at the Middle School, SST was perceived as a primary resource for teachers to meet their students' needs and led to a process that often moved quickly in identifying students needing services through special education. This sometimes led to an over-identification of a population segment in those programs. Because RTI relies on evidence-based practices, there is a possibility for a reduction in inappropriate referrals (Barona & Barona, 2006). The POI has been designed to lessen students being fast tracked through that process and referred for an evaluation through SPED.

Another hypothesis of this study is that there is a gap as significant as the learning gap in education in the ability and understanding of teachers to identify, implement, and document appropriate interventions within the classroom. This was observed in the differences in administrative and counselor referrals from one class and one student to the next. Teachers must have a significant understanding of their role in this process. In addition, the role of the counselor and administrators must be clearly articulated in relation to the POI in order to more effectively meet the academic and behavioral needs. The merits of the POI are not in question rather the continuous implementation process that contributes to effectiveness, understanding, and the need for professional development is and needs to be clarified and researched to offer systemic support to

the process.

Research questions are related to measuring the effectiveness and teacher understanding and assessing the need for professional development. First, how well is the POI being implemented at the Middle School? Second, what is the counselor's role in the POI including identifying best practice classroom interventions for teachers? Third, what type of professional development would improve implementation of the POI at the Middle School?

One intervention component of this study is perhaps the study itself and includes the desire to further strengthen the understanding, implementation, and results of the POI. Thus a more specific understanding of the teachers' needs related to their perceptions, knowledge, and professional development needs may result in improvements insuring consistency and continuous communication.

Data Collection Sources

Each research question relies on different data sources. The data collection consisted of survey questions, discussion questions, interviews, a literature review, and discipline records. Survey responses were formatted on a Likert scale. There was an additional option for respondents to elaborate if they so chose. The Survey Monkey Website was used to design the 16 item survey and collect and analyze data (www.surveymonkey.com). In addition, each participant was asked to volunteer as an interview participant with anonymity insured.

Participants

Teachers were the primary respondents to the survey designed to assess their understanding and perception of the POI. They were a sample of convenience of all 26 teachers at the Middle School. Additional information gathered through interviews with the school administration team to assess perceptions on POI performance, outcomes and perceived responsibilities and duties related to the POI were utilized. Twenty teachers responded with a return rate of 77%. Several participants volunteered to discuss their responses. Multiple insights were provided related to POI implementation at the school.

Data Analysis

Surveys were used as a primary source of information. Results were analyzed by combining participant responses and comparing response percentages. Each survey item and response option was created to measure teacher level of agreement or disagreement to subjective statements about their experience with the POI at the Middle School and answered the question of how well the POI was being implemented. Triangulation was accomplished by examining teacher elaboration to responses on the survey and interviews along with the literature review on the school counselor role. Particular interest was given to responses to the school counselor's role in the POI including identifying and communicating classroom interventions for teachers. Accuracy of the data was facilitated by the resources of the Survey Monkey website to collect and analyze teacher responses. Additionally, responses and interviews led to an understanding for further professional development to improve implementation of POI at the Middle School.

Results

The data provided insight into the research questions. Demographic data indicated that 60% of the respondents had been in education for 11 years or longer. Ninety five percent indicated they reviewed the school's POI at least monthly with 50% responding they actually refer to the POI weekly. Greater than 80% indicated that they had a clear understanding of the POI and its use in supporting the success of their students. The same majority indicated that communication with administrators about student academic or behavioral needs is facilitated by the POI though only 65% indicated that those needs have been appropriately addressed when brought to the administrations' attention. This 65% is consistent with the number of teachers who indicated utilizing artifacts, inquiry data and observational data to measure intervention effectiveness within the classroom identified on the survey. Sixty percent of the teachers believe the POI helps to enhance the academic achievement of all students while 25% indicated that it did not. Concerns in follow-up statements included: delays in students receiving help in a timely manner, holes in the process that miss many students despite what test scores indicate, and inadequate support within a tier. Sixty percent felt that although the SST process is less active as a result of the POI, student needs were being met yet 15% stated the needs are not being met.

Professional development, to meet the academic or behavioral needs of their students, to be conducted by

an administrator or school counselor related to the POI was indicated as a need by a minority of respondents (35%). A higher number indicated they would benefit from professional development on classroom intervention options and the documentation process for RTI prior to implementing the POI (45%) (Appendix A).

Comments regarding question 12 revealed overwhelmingly (70%) that the significant tiers were 1 and 2 because this is where initial services are provided for a majority of students (Appendix B). Respondents indicated tiers 1 and 2 are where weaknesses in student achievement are first revealed. It is the starting point and where teachers are trying to solve the problems. When asked to indicate on question 13 specific strengths or weakness of the POI, teachers revealed multiple beliefs (Appendix C). Strengths included: very specific, targets all students as well as small populations, counselor and administrator facilitation. Weaknesses were the belief that more consistency is needed as well as training, the process is too slow and formal, the class sizes are too large for adequate differentiation of instruction and interventions to work effectively, there is a lack of support staff, and that some students are still being left behind.

The survey and interviews revealed a significant role for the school counselor within the POI. Results indicated 75% of the teachers believe concerns about student achievement and behavioral needs have been appropriately addressed through the POI when brought to the school counselor's attention. Ninety percent indicated that communication with the school counselor about students' academic needs is facilitated by the POI (Appendix A). One teacher stated "I believe I am welcome to address, with the counselor, concerns about persistent behaviors that need a second look. There are some of my students that were targeted for the needs based instruction at tier 2 through data evaluation by the school counselor and administration".

Discussion

The school counselor is a primary resource for teachers seeking assistance for students with academic or behavioral needs. The administration of the school supports that need by including the school counselor in leadership meetings, intervention design, along with data collection and analysis. The administrators understand that the counselor is often the first person teachers seek for assistance. This is supported by POI design at the Middle School.

Though teachers may understand the purpose of fulfilling the mandate, the goal is an understanding of the purpose in relation to the success and needs of their students. The data indicate a discrepancy related to several factors. It is clear that the teachers know what the POI is; however, it is unclear if they truly understand its purpose. There is an understanding about how POI supports the success of the students; yet, a reduced number (33%) indicated data collection and analysis in the classroom is taking place to include artifacts, inquiry data and observational data. There is also a reduction in the perceptions that student needs are being met through the POI which is significant based on the indicators for understanding and effectiveness.

This leads to questions about how effectively it is being implemented. Specifically, there is an observation that it does contribute to meeting the needs of some of the students. However, the question is can the number of students impacted be increased and how? Perhaps it can through professional development and better communication about student needs? Is this something that will improve with longer implementation? These questions will be answered through intervention as a result of this study. Issues to be addressed include professional development, more defined roles, and clearer expectations. The role of teachers, counselors and administrators along with appropriate steps for teachers to take must be communicated. In addition, expectations must be clarified if there is any student who has academic or behavioral needs to be met.

Limitations of this Action Research Study

Specific limitations are based on survey design flaws including providing teachers with a "neither disagree nor agree" response option and allowing them to skip survey questions. Both flaws limited the statistics and effectively stifled the significance of the feedback. More genuine results may have been revealed by utilizing the forced choice method. There is optimism inherent in this study that may have limited the outcomes which is the recognition that teachers may have been inclined to answer the survey in ways that do not support the hypotheses. It was hoped that teachers expressed true perceptions so the goal of continuous improvement to meet the needs of students is met. Another limitation includes the size of the study as the results are based on a small group of participants at one Middle School. While AR does not support generalization (Stringer & Dywer,

2005) because by its nature results apply directly to the environment studied, some aspects of this study can possibly be generalized to other settings suitably similar but additional limitations could occur. These would be based on the levels of POI implementation and variations in interventions and student needs as well as teacher understanding and perceptions.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are multiple areas to improve this study despite the useful information obtained. First, limiting responses to "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree" and "strongly agree" while eliminating "neither disagree nor agree" would provide clearer information related to teacher perceptions of the POI. In addition, it would be useful to collect or compare data related to specific responses such as time employed as an educator versus understanding, desire for professional development and overall effectiveness. In addition, questions could be developed related to validity of responses because no comparison was conducted related to ability levels of students within a given teacher's classroom. One observation or generalization is that some classrooms have significantly more students with academic or behavioral needs as compared to others. How did gifted certified teachers respond versus general education or early intervening teachers? Does teaching experience factor into the ability to provide interventions within the classroom outside the scope of the POI while less experience is more reliant on outside support? These questions might be beneficial for replication and further study is warranted.

Implications and Conclusions

This study revealed that the POI as implemented at this Middle School is widely understood. However, some discrepancy about current effectiveness and understanding of the POI's purpose by some Middle School faculty was indicated by various negative or non- responses. The school counselor roles have been further defined. This study offers insight into the POI model. This design can be useful for additional school stakeholders to implement to establish baseline data to evaluate program effectiveness and teacher perceptions of RTI implementation and clarify roles.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Middle School POI Survey Results

Question	Response Percent/ n = 20					
	SD	D	ND or A	A	SA	SQ
2. Years participants have worked in education.	5.0%	10.0%	25.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%
3. Frequency of review of the POI.	5.0%	50.0%	40.0%	5.0%	0.0%	
4. Degree that teachers agree or disagree that they have an understanding of the POI.	5.0%	0.0%	10.0%	75.0%	10.0%	0.0%
5. Administrators have appropriately addressed student needs through POI when notified.	0.0%	10.0%	25.0%	60.0%	5.0%	0.0%
6. Data collection process is used by teachers prior to seeking assistance through POI	0.0%	5.0%	25.0%	40.0%	20.0%	10.0%
7. POI does not help enhance achievement of all students.	20.0%	40.0%	15.0%	15.0%	10.0%	0.0%
8. Though SST is less active my students needs are being met as a result of the POI	0.0%	15.0%	25.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9. Professional development on the POI would be beneficial	5.0%	15.0%	40.0%	25.0%	10.0%	5.0%

Appendix A

Table 1

Middle School POI Survey Results

Question	Response Percent/ n = 20					
	SD	D	ND or A	A	SA	SQ
10. Professional development led by the administrator or school counselor on the POI would be beneficial.	5.0%	15.0%	40.0%	25.0%	10.0%	5.0%
11. I would benefit from professional development on classroom intervention prior to implementing POI.	5.0%	20.0%	30.0%	35.0%	10.0%	0.0%
12. Please list what you believe to be the most important stage of the POI process. Why?	Appendix B					
13. Please list the most significant strength or weakness of the Middle School's POI.	Appendix C					
14. The school counselor has appropriately addressed student needs through POI when notified.	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	65.0%	10.0%	0.0%
15. Degree that teachers agree or disagree that the POI facilitates communication with the school counselor.	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note. Question 2 response options = < than 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 20 years, skipped. Question 3 response options = Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Yearly, Skipped. Question 4 through 13 response options = Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither disagree nor agree, Agree, Strongly agree, skipped.

Appendix B

Table 2

Please list what you believe to be the most important stage of the POI process. Why?

Response #	Response
1	I actually think they each have their own importance, but the first stage is important because without correct documentation and diagnosis of the true issue, you will not be successful.
2	Tier 2 seems to be an important stage to me. Some students really take off when they get a little extra help, feel a little successful. Sometimes this will carry over to the classroom if they are motivated and have enjoyed the feeling of success. I think
3	Tier 1 - because it targets all students. It really is hard to say which stage is the most important.
4	Tier 3 & 4 because the students receive help in the areas that they are struggling that is designed specifically for them.
5	Tier 1 : That is the area in which the first sign of help will show up.
6	Tier 1 and 2- it identifies the students that need help
7	Probably Tier 1. If the teacher is not using every resource available in Tier 1 you cannot truly tell if or where a problem exists.
8	Tier one because you are trying so hard to solve problems.
9	I believe tier 2 is the most important because it is the tier where needs are meet if there is a problem.
10	level I
11	Tier 2 - because I feel that most of our struggling students' needs can be met at this level.
12	I believe Tier 2 which beings interventions for struggling students are most important.
13	I believe Tier 1 is perhaps the most important, simply because it is the starting point of any and all decisions regarding what assistance is needed and what assistance may be required.
14	Tier 4; it contains the fewest number of students that are requiring the most specialized instruction.
15	The first as it is the beginning of helping a child.
16	The first stage is the most important because it is in this stage that we are to reach and serve all students.
17	I think Tier 2 is the most important because at this point there is a small bit of concern about the students' weaknesses. If Tier 1 is not working then we need to intervene early and that should occur at Tier 2.
3	Respondents skipped responding to this question

Appendix C

Table 3

Please list the most significant strength or weakness of the Middle School's POI

Response #	Response
1	I think it works well. Maybe knowing exactly who to go to when you don't have to use too often. But I think this process and trying to differentiate is much too difficult with large class size. You just aren't as effective as you could be if you could
2	Extra help provided trough double-dipping, jump start. Basically help and support are available. They just have to be utilized by teachers, students, and parents.
3	strengths – very specific, targets all students as well as small populations
4	Need to find a way to streamline the process nationwide, not just here.
5	Tier 1 – Things are fine as they are for now,
6	I think students needing extra help due to Special Ed- are being left behind. Too much paperwork can also lead educators to not seek extra help.
7	I think the strength is that we understand the POI, and our counselor and administrators do a great job of facilitating it.
8	We need more direct support
9	The most significant strength is how tier 2 is done. Each child is receiving help in areas where they are weak.
10	Overall I think we do a good job of implementing the pyramid of intervention and I think it will become easier to use and remember as we continue to utilize it over time.
11	We need to be consistent in use of it. Also, as previously mentioned, more training on how to use it and interventions before the pyramid would be useful.
12	I think the tutors and double dipping for reading are particularly beneficial. I have a couple of students who need specific help with hand writing, but do not have knowledge of Handwriting Without Tears.
13	By the time you go through the process, the year is about over.
14	Tier 4; Our strength would be, to me, our ability to target students that need specialized learning and then our ability to have in place the means, strategies, and services to assist them.
15	Strength- caring professionals Weakness- shortage of such caring professionals- we need many more support personnel and assistants.
16	I would have more certified teachers to help with inclusion.
17	I think that some students may need to be referred for testing before they get to Tier 3.
3	Respondents skipped responding to this question

Please E-mail the author regarding the instrument.

Call for Submissions

The Editorial Review 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 which highlight the positive outcomes of counseling with students and/or which support the accountability of counseling programs in Georgia are of particular interest to our readers. Manuscripts which 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 writing will also be included in the issue.

Additionally, manuscripts for the column *Networking Notebook* are invited. These are brief manuscripts describing the best practical program ideas and interventions you have designed or adapted. By sharing these practices other professional school counselors and school counseling candidates can learn new ways to work with students, and counselor educators can share what they learned with future professional school counselors.

For more information regarding the *Journal* contact Susan Boes, Editor, in writing at *GSCA Journal,* University of West Georgia, Counseling and Educational Psychology, Carrollton, Georgia, 30118; by phone at (678) 839-6122 or email at sboes@westga.edu.

Submission deadline is May 1, 2009 but **manuscripts are accepted at any time** as it takes time for the reviewers to read and make suggestions for revisions.

Interpreting Children's Human Figure Drawings: Basic Guidelines for School Counselors

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Abstract

The literature was reviewed and summarized to provide common interpretations of human figure drawings. Basic guidelines for interpreting human figure drawings (i.e., face and head, body, arms and hands, and legs and feet) are presented. Expectations for students at different developmental levels (ages 1½ through adolescence) are identified, and the influence of artistic talent is discussed. Two children's drawings from case studies in a school setting are interpreted. Ethical considerations such as privacy, confidentiality, displaying drawings, and keeping drawings for documentation are summarized.

Interpreting Children's Human Figure Drawings: Basic Guidelines for School Counselors

Many counselors and psychologists believe that all people convey something of their emotional state when they draw a picture and that this information can be used in counseling. Drawings can be used in school settings with students who are struggling with normal developmental issues. Children's drawings are indicators of emotions, self-esteem, and social competence, as well as other aspects of personality (Di Leo, 1973; Malchiodi, 1998), and are a way for children to call attention to topics that are personally important or emotionally significant (Thomas & Silk, 1990).

Strong emotions emerge in the form of images instead of words (Kramer, 1973; Naumburg, 1973). Drawing allows students to experience rather than verbalize feelings, and, therefore, may be more effective in helping children accomplish counseling goals (Withrow, 2004). Coleman and Farris-Dufrene (1996) found that children tend to be receptive to art therapy, because art is one of a child's natural ways to engage in creative self-expression, to explore conflicts, and exercise control over perceived realities (Kramer, 1979; Naumburg).

Art activities provide a safe and enjoyable means that encourage children to explore, make decisions, and solve problems (Allan, 1987), and provide a way for them to portray their inner world without having to rely on words (Gil, 2006). Kaplan (2003) and Gil suggest that although research on art-based assessments is inconsistent, drawings can help counselors increase their understanding of the client, and Carmichael (2006) states that drawings frequently are used as informal assessments for understanding children's struggles and their internal world. Drawings also can be used to help the child gain insight and to review progress through drawing records (Withrow, 2004).

When a child transfers the picture in the mind onto a piece of paper, the drawing becomes an external object that the child can use to gain control and mastery (Webb, 2004). Processing the meaning of the drawing may reinforce the child's self-exploration and motivation to change (Riley, 1994), and this effect may continue long after the counseling ends (Wadeson, 1980). An effective interpretation helps the child to accept the painful thoughts and feelings and resolve internal conflicts (Whitmont, 1969), allows the counselor to tentatively

generate hypotheses for working with the child (Furth, 2002), and facilitates collaboration between counselor and child in exploring and understanding the meaning of the drawing (Crenshaw, 2006).

When students are referred to the school counselor because they are struggling academically, personally or socially, the counselor must quickly determine what the student is experiencing and decide how best to intervene. When the specific issue underlying the concern is difficult to assess, children's drawings can be helpful in providing hypotheses. Interpretation is used only to generate hypotheses (Anatasi & Urbina, 1997; Gil, 2006; Gregory, 2000) rather than to diagnosis. As Anastasi (as quoted in Thomas & Silk, 1990) states, projective indicators such as drawings "serve best in sequential decisions, by suggesting leads for further exploration or hypotheses about the individual for subsequent verification" (p. 116).

Di Leo (1983) states that "drawings are one means of establishing a rapid, easy, pleasant rapport with the child" (p. 4). Children who are shy, quiet, impulsive, have speech and language difficulties or speak a different language from the counselor usually respond well to drawing activities (Klepsch & Logie, 1982). Drawing may be especially helpful when working with children from other cultures, because it allows children to communicate with others across barriers of language and culture and helps to establish understanding between themselves and adults (Cochran, 1996; Gil & Drewes, 2005). Gil and Drewes state that art activities are especially useful for some ethnic populations that prefer metaphors and symbols over verbal communication, and for children who may not be comfortable talking about experiences because of family messages or beliefs. The act of drawing can be therapeutic even if the child does not talk about the picture. Although art in general is less limited by cultural differences between counselor and client than talk therapies and interventions, Carmichael (2006) cautions that counselors need to be aware that some religions, such as Islam, prohibit children from drawing human figures. Children from some Asian cultures are uncomfortable with drawing spontaneously and might prefer to begin by copying a drawing (Gil & Drewes). It is important to encourage children to draw without violating their cultural or religious values.

Although many school counselors have little or no training in art interpretation, they can learn basic guidelines for hypothesizing possible meanings behind what the student draws. A general understanding of the child's situation, affective expressions, and verbalizations, as well as the actual drawing, assist in making an interpretation (Lenore, 1993). There are many types of drawings; however, only human figure drawings are discussed in this article.

Factors to Consider in Formulating Hypotheses

When making hypotheses about children's human figure drawings, there are three areas for school counselors to consider: the student's developmental level, his/her talent for drawing, and common interpretations of elements in a drawing. The drawings described for each developmental level are examples of what healthy children would draw. Counselors need to keep in mind that the developmental levels may overlap with regard to age range and that children tend to fluctuate between the stages (Malchiodi, Kim, & Choi, 2003).

Developmental Level

One and one-half years to five years. At about 18 months of age, children begin to make marks on paper. Luquet (as cited in Thomas & Silk, 1990), and Piaget (as cited in Thomas & Silk) both regarded these early scribbles as pure play and exercise, rather than attempts to draw pictures. Usually around the age of 2 or 3, this scribbling begins to be interpreted as a picture, although the child waits until the drawing is complete and then states what the drawing represents. People and animals are typically drawn using a tadpole schema, with a circle for the head or for the head and trunk, and two dangling lines for legs. Facial features and arms may be included, but the figure has the look of a tadpole. Children are unaware of color choices and typically use whatever color is close at hand (Malchiodi, 1998).

Five years to eight years. According to Luquet (as cited in Krampen, 1991) and Di Leo (1983), intellectual realism begins around 5 years of age. During this stage, children draw what they know about reality and sometimes depict the outside of a house, as well as what is inside the house, because they know that furniture and pictures are there, or they might show a person's arm even though it is hidden by the body. This type of drawing is called transparency or X-ray drawing (Di Leo, 1983; Krampen; Malchiodi, 1998) and might depict something that is not observable in the real world (Thomas & Silk, 1990) such as a bird with a worm in its stomach. Rubin (2005) states that around the time formal schooling begins, children find preferred ways of drawing things and repeat them. Children begin to connect color with what they see in the

world around them, but it is difficult to know if the colors selected have a specific meaning, if they reflect what is seen in the environment, or if they indicate experimentation with different colors (Malchiodi).

The scaling and details of pictures become more realistic during this stage. Children typically stop drawing tadpole human figures and instead draw a head, a separate trunk, attached arms and legs, and details such as hands, fingers and clothing (Thomas & Silk, 1990). Children sometimes revert to earlier stages and in the same picture might draw one person using a tadpole schema and another using a more advanced mode of representation.

Eight years to adolescence. Luquet (as cited in Krampen, 1991) and Di Leo (1983) note that children at this stage produce visually realistic drawings which correspond to the stage of concrete operations. Children begin to use perspective and draw only what is visible from a certain point of view. For example, children would not draw the outside of a house and show furniture inside, because they know you cannot see furniture from the outside of a house. Children tend to develop rules for the use of color, such as brown or black for a tree trunk and green for the leaves. Unusual color use may have more significance at this stage than at earlier stages (Malchiodi, 1998).

Many elementary school students willingly draw pictures at the request of a school counselor or other adult. Around 10 years of age, children begin to become dissatisfied, discouraged and self-critical with their drawing attempts, probably because they are unable to draw as well as they would like (Rubin, 2005). At this time, children tend to draw cartoon or comic-strip characters, and their drawings are somewhat stereotyped, or conventional (Thomas & Silk, 1990). Middle and high school students, as well as some older elementary students, sometimes hesitate to draw because they doubt their artistic ability and are critical or self-conscious of their finished product (Van Fleet, 2004). To encourage reluctant students to draw, Van Fleet suggests that school counselors draw "goofy" art and invite the student to add to the drawing. According to Koppitz (1984), young teenagers who are language-impaired and view the visual-motor area as a strength, immature adolescents, and artistically talented adolescents continue to take pleasure in drawing. When formulating hypotheses from a student's drawing, one must consider the student's drawing talent, as well as his or her developmental stage.

Drawing Talent

Winner (as cited in Thomas & Silk, 1990), states that normal children with artistic talent advance through drawing development in the same sequence as do normal children without artistic talent, but they do so more rapidly. According to Winner, all children go through a pre-conventional stage where their drawings are simple and expressive, although artistically gifted children use fewer simple shapes and more fluid contours. After age six, all children move to a conventional drawing style. Most children do not advance beyond this stage; however, artistically talented children, she argues, continue to improve their drawing quality, usually achieving a unique style by early adolescence.

When making interpretations about a student's artwork, the school counselor must consider the over all quality of the drawing. A student who is artistic might add picture elements that would ordinarily signal a concern to be explored. For example, a student might erase and redo some parts of the drawing and or use shading and a variety of line types. In some students, this could indicate insecurities or conflicts, as discussed in the next section. For students with drawing talent, such details might not indicate a problem at all (Thomas & Silk, 1990).

Common Interpretations of Human Figure Drawings

Several researchers have suggested interpretations associated with particular body parts. In general, children typically over- or under-emphasize a body part that is of concern to them. Drawings indicate that a body part has significance for the child if it is overemphasized through enlargement, more detail, or a use of heavy lines, or if it is underemphasized by a reduction in size, little detail, or a use of faint lines.

Head and face. It is common for pre-school children to draw the head disproportionately large; however, by age 7 or 8, the head is usually drawn objectively proportionate to the body (Di Leo, 1983). Children older than 7 or 8 who draw large heads on their figures often wish they were smarter and better able to achieve (Klepsch & Logie, 1982). Achievement concerns also may be indicated when figures are poorly integrated, for example, when the head does not join the body. Koppitz (1968) states that a very tiny head on a drawing points toward intense feelings of intellectual inadequacy. The mouth can reveal happiness or sadness with a smile or a frown, and emphasizing

the mouth can indicate speech and language difficulty, or being overly dependent (Klepsch & Logie). Drawing teeth (especially if there are many pointed teeth) is a sign of aggressiveness and in some cases may indicate physical abuse (Peterson & Hardin, 1997). Timid children typically do not draw teeth. According to Koppitz (1968), however, drawing a few teeth could indicate leadership abilities rather than aggression. Klepsch and Logie also provide common interpretations for drawings of the nose, ears, and eye. Emphasizing the nose can be a sign of respiratory problems. When the ears are emphasized, a hearing problem could be present, or, if there is no hearing problem, the child may be suspicious of what others might be saying about him or her. Drawing eyes with no pupils can point to visual problems but also can suggest that the child has trouble meeting and socializing with people. According to Peterson and Hardin, drawing Xs for eyes could indicate physical abuse. Large eyes hint at suspiciousness. Adolescent girls commonly give eyes cosmetic embellishment (Di Leo, 1983).

Body. Di Leo (1983) interprets the presence of a belly button in drawings by children up to age 6 or 7 as suggesting dependency, while after age 7 a belly button may signal too much dependency on others. Drawing the person turned to the side can indicate evasiveness, and drawing sex organs can indicate aggressiveness or body anxiety (Klepsch & Logie, 1982). When genitalia are explicitly drawn, it is a strong indicator for sexual molestation. Young children tend to draw explicit genitalia, while older children conceal the genitals in order to cover up sexual abuse (Peterson & Hardin, 1997). According to Homeyer (2001), some drawings associated with sexual abuse may include, but are not limited to the following: torsos with blood running down legs, two people in bed with dots, displaced body parts, large parts of the body crossed out, and a figure with a large open mouth.

Arms and hands. According to Klepsch & Logie (1982), long or large arms imply that the child wants to control others and desires strength and power, although Koppitz (1968) states that long or large arms can signal a desire to reach out to others. Small arms, state Klepsch and Logie, point toward a fear of power or of the child seeing him/herself as weak or ineffective. Again, Koppitz takes a different view and asserts that small arms can be interpreted to mean that the child is well-behaved or withdrawn. She states that drawing arms that cling to the body often indicates that the child may have rigid inner controls and that it is difficult for the child to reach out to others; therefore, he or she may have poor interpersonal relationships. Both Koppitz and Di Leo (1973) view big hands as indicating aggressiveness. Children who are aggressive often draw fingers that end in points and look like claws or talons.

Legs and feet. Drawing the legs close together indicates tenseness, an attempt to control sexual impulses, or a concern about a sexual attack by others (Koppitz, 1968). Koppitz reported that in her studies, several girls who had been sexually abused by older men drew people with their legs pressed together. Thomas and Silk (1990) also maintain that drawing legs pressed together is an emotional indicator. Drawing the feet very large or heavily outlined may indicate that the child seeks security or a firm footing, while tiny feet can be an indicator of feeling insecure or helpless (Klepsch & Logie, 1982).

In addition to the factors discussed previously, other indicators should be attended to when making hypotheses about a drawing. These indicators pertain to the techniques used, and the child's approach to the drawing.

Heavy lines are frequently associated with children who are aggressive, forceful, and have high energy, while light lines are often associated with shyness, inhibitions, insecurity, and low energy (Di Leo, 1983; Klepsch & Logie, 1982). Boys typically use heavier lines than girls (Klepsch & Logie). Excessive erasures (Klepsch & Logie) and shading (Di Leo, 1983; Klepsch & Logie; Koppitz, 1968) are related to anxiety, with increased shading pointing toward increased anxiety. According to Koppitz (1968), shading the face is very significant and indicates concern about the part that is shaded, but shading is age related and is fairly common up to age 8 for girls and 9 for boys; after that, shading is more likely to indicate concern for the shaded body part. Transparent body parts can suggest anxiety and concern about that body part.

Guidelines for Interpretation

Clients need a safe and private psychological environment to experience their inner emotions and resolve conflicts (Egan, 1998). Young children can be asked to tell a story about their picture; however, unless the child initiates sharing, it is important to not ask specific questions about the drawing such as "Is that you?"; rather, ask open ended questions or make statements that begin with "Tell me about …" For counselors with a directive orientation, saying "Tell me a story about what you have drawn," or "Tell me about your picture" may elicit helpful information that leads to meaningful discussion if anything in the drawing reminds the child of something

important in real life (Arlow & Kadis, 1993; Snyder, 1997). For counselors with a child-centered orientation, observation and empathy with an understanding of basic interpretation guidelines may be as effective.

Overall Impressions of Drawings

(Klepsch & Logie, 1982) note that "drawings represent what a person is like on the day he [sic] does the drawing" (p. 42). Keeping that admonition in mind, first consider your overall impression of the picture. Examples of overall impressions are happy/sad, friendly/unfriendly, active/passive, and strong/weak. This general impression provides an idea of the child's mood at the time the picture was drawn. Also look for themes over several drawings. If the child has drawn more than one picture, a common impression of sadness provides a stronger indication that the child feels consistently sad than does one picture. Other aspects of the drawing to consider in forming an overall impression are the use of color, the size of the people, placement on the page, especially in relationship to each other, facial expressions, and indicators of feelings in the way body parts are drawn (Furth, 2002). Furth suggests three principles in art interpretation: a) keep in mind your initial impression of a picture without sharing so as to allow the client's associations of inner world and drawings to develop, b) act as an open-minded researcher to look at focal points systematically, and c) synthesize what you have learned from individual components and assemble this information into a whole. School counselors can use these three principles to identify the focal points in the drawings and what can be learned from them. Suggestions for interpreting drawings will be discussed in the following sections.

Use of color. Developmental norms exist for the use of color in children's art as noted in an earlier section. Color has profound effects on the emotions, behavior, and body (Clark, 1975). Through the use of colors, the client can release various moods and emotions that could not be expressed by words (Withrow, 2004), thus the work in color becomes a powerful tool for emotional balance (Mahnke, 1993). According to Mahnke, the overuse of one color can lead to excessive emotional response, extreme reactions, and restlessness, whereas, the smearing and playing with bright colors enables the clients to experience various aspects of their personalities. Depressed clients use significantly fewer colors than those who are not depressed (Wadeson, 1971), and children who suffered recent traumas, such as earthquake, chose more red and black colors in drawing than others (Cotton, 1985; Gregorian, Azarian, DeMaria, & McDonald, 1996). Outgoing children often prefer warm colors like red and orange and find cool colors not stimulating enough, whereas introverts are more sensitive to cool, calming colors and report the warm colors to be distressing (Birren, 1980; Mahnke, 1993).

Although there is agreement that color is used to show feelings, mood, or tone in a drawing, there is lack of agreement on what specific colors represent (Peterson & Hardin, 1997). For example, rather than always interpreting red as standing for high emotions or danger and black as representing the unknown and fear or threat, it is more helpful to observe where color is used, its intensity and quantity, and what it is emphasizing or diminishing (Furth, as cited in Peterson & Hardin). A child might use a great quantity of black in a drawing and relate that to the sky at night, as when the family went camping and enjoyed sleeping outside. When the student chooses to share his/her own perception of a problem or solution, the school counselor may join the student in examining the harmony and balance of colors in the drawing, and support him/ her in balancing emotions and integrating solutions and problems.

Size of people. According to Di Leo (1983) and Koppitz (1968), children who draw small figures of people (about 1 to 3 inches high) frequently are timid, shy, insecure, and perhaps withdrawn, whereas drawings of very large people that take up most of the page may indicate children's aggressiveness with poor inner controls. Di Leo (1973) asserts that when children draw some people proportionately larger than others, it could connote that the larger drawn person is important to the child in some way, or it could also mean that the person is aggressive. Rezinkoff & Rezinkoff (as cited in Carmichael, 2006) studied black and white children's family drawings and found that in low-income families, the oldest child was often drawn in a more dominant position than other siblings.

Placement on the page. Placing figures at or near the lower edge of the paper may be indicative of feelings of inadequacy and insecurity and a need for support. Di Leo (1973) states that drawing figures in the upper half of the paper suggests optimism and fantasy, while drawings that slant by 15 degrees or more imply imbalance and a lack of a secure footing. Placing the figure of the person who represents the child doing the drawing close to other figures can mean that the child feels, or wants to feel, close to that person, or has a desire to be protected by that

person (Burns & Kaufman, 1972). Hulse (1951) studied children's drawings of family and found the placement of the child in the family indicates perceived closeness to specific persons. Rezinkoff & Rezinkoff (as cited in Carmichael, 2006) found that compared to girls, boys more often placed themselves in the center of the drawing and omitted mother.

Omissions in the Drawings

The omitted elements may be quite significant to the individual in representing or symbolizing what is possibly absent from the person's life (Furth, 2002). Omissions of body parts, just like the under emphasis of body parts, tend to suggest under-use and anxiety surrounding that part of the body. Some common signs associated with the omission of a particular part of the body are described next.

Omitting the mouth on a drawing of a person may reveal problems with relating to others (Klepsch & Logie, 1982), and it may also be a sign of anxiety, insecurity, fears, and withdrawal, including passive resistance (Koppitz, 1968). Omitting the nose may signal feelings of powerlessness, shyness, or withdrawal (Di Leo, 1983; Koppitz, 1968). According to Koppitz (1968), it is rare for children to omit the eyes of the person they are drawing. Children who omitted the eyes tended to be nonaggressive, social isolates that denied their problems and used fantasy as an escape. Stone and Ansbacher (as cited in Koppitz, 1968) found a relationship between the omission of eyes and other organs of communication that suggested a lack of social interest (caring, or concern about others).

By age 10, more than 90% of children draw arms on human figures; therefore, the omission of arms is more significant for children 10 years and older than for children under the age of 5 or 6, who frequently omit arms (Di Leo, 1983; Silk & Thomas, 1990). For children over the age of 6, and certainly for children over the age of 10, omitting the arms is significant and may mean they feel a lack of power and feel ineffective (Klepsch & Logie, 1982). Omitting the hands implies insecurity and problems in dealing with home, school, and people (Klepsch & Logie). Omitting the legs on a figure implies a lack of support, and immobility (Klepsch & Logie), insecurity, and anxiousness (Koppitz, 1968). Omitting feet on a figure typically signals that the child lacks security or feels helpless (Di Leo, 1973; Klepsch & Logie; Koppitz, 1968).

Two Case Studies

The following two drawings were from individual counseling sessions in 2005, and are presented here with parental permission. In one of the initial sessions, the child decided to draw and picked the paper and crayon from among a variety of choices. The school counselor instructed the student, "Could you draw a house, a tree, and a person?" After drawing, the child voluntarily shared that "the person in the picture is me," talked about the picture, and asked the school counselor to keep the picture. The school counselor used information from the drawing, along with observations of the child's verbalization and play, and the parents' and teachers' report, to generate a hypothesis and to plan interventions.

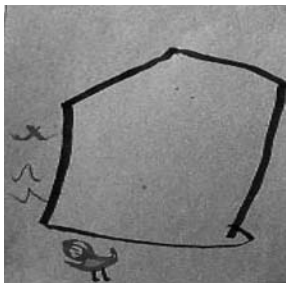
Figure 1 was drawn by a 7 year-old African-American/ Caucasian biracial girl who lost her mother at the age of 4 and who now lives with her grandmother and uncle. According to the grandmother, this child experienced some interpersonal traumas before school age and was in constant fear that her grandmother would die. She refused to sleep alone and always shared the bed with her grandmother. In kindergarten she began to struggle academically, socially, and emotionally. She acted anxious and overwhelmed and repeatedly stated that she hated attending school. She would not do any writing assignments at school nor would she do any homework until the grandmother sat nearby to help. Her frequent crying, screaming, and refusal to follow directions caused disruption in the classroom and led her to multiple discipline referrals. In the picture we see a smiling girl in between a house and a tree. In reality she received a lot of support from her grandmother and uncle, signified by the house and the tree. The mixed feelings of happiness, loneliness, inadequacy, and insecurity were implied in her drawing. Overall, the person seemed lonely in the picture, although the warm color (purple) indicates a happy mood. She said she felt happy staying in the playroom and complained about her lack of control over her crying, lack of friends in her class, and inability to manage the work. The small size of the person suggests some insecurity and timidity; the figure's large head and small body tends to suggest her wish to be more important and better able to achieve (Di Leo,1983; Klepsch & Logie, 1982; Koppitz, 1968). The special attention to the hair curling suggests her need to be cared for and her desire to be good looking. In actuality she was often eager to show the school counselor her nice clothes and her different hair styles in the early mornings. Notice the stick-like arms, the omission of nose, ears, hands, and feet, and the heavy shading in the

torso. Each of them implies the lack of security and social interest as well as communication difficulties (Di Leo, 1973; Klepsch & Logie; Koppitz). When synthesized, the information revealed in the drawing shows a general feeling of helplessness and anxiety and a need to feel important and connected to others. To improve her self-confidence and self-control, in the first 2 months, the school counselor focused on using encouragement and empathy skills with her in individual play therapy sessions and then placed her in peer group counseling sessions with a focus on practicing social skills. In the third and fourth month, the school counselor consulted with the grandmother on using encouragement, empathy, and logical consequences at home, and collaborated with the teacher in designing strategies to support the student's efforts in building friendships in class. The grandmother reported that the child started sleeping and getting up independently, becoming excited to come to school, initiating homework and appropriately solving problems with the neighborhood children. Her discipline referrals decreased significantly at school, and her behaviors significantly improved to the present.

Children draw not only to indicate personally important or emotionally significant information (Thomas & Silk, 1990) but also to verbalize the meaning of their drawing. Figure 2 was drawn by a 5-year old Caucasian girl. The mother addressed her as "baby" and shared that she received special privileges without taking much responsibility because she is the youngest of three siblings in the family. She received multiple discipline referrals because she refused to follow the teacher's directions, withdrew from work assignments, and threw temper tantrums when things did not go her way. It seems she enjoyed the special privileges as a baby but the loss of such a special position in the Kindergarten classroom resulted in her feeling lonely and unhappy**:** "This is me in Pre-K. I am happy. But not any more in Kindergarten now." Although she stated the picture depicted her during Pre-K, it implied personally important information about her functioning at the time of drawing. Overall, the person seemed happy but inadequate in the picture. The warm color (orange) indicates a happy mood and an outgoing tendency; however, the small size of the person suggests some insecurity and timidity, and the placement on the lower left edge with a slant implies feelings of inadequacy, imbalance, and a lack of secure footing (Di Leo, 1973). The emphasis on the mouth suggests the need for support, and the large head a wish that she were smarter and more important (Klepsch & Logie, 1982). In the play therapy sessions, the child consistently verbalized that family members liked her more when she was speaking and acting like a baby, but she also complained about being treated like a baby and not as an important person. She stated that her classmates teased her about speaking and acting like a baby and refused to play with her. The omission of nose and ears indicates feelings of powerlessness and difficulty in communicating with others (Di Leo, 1983; Koppitz, 1968). She verbalized that acting like a baby was an important method in gaining personal significance at home, but this behavior led to teasing by classmates at school and she felt unsure how to cope with this change. She expressed her unhappiness verbally and gained some control over this feeling by drawing it on paper. To support her in coping with this transition, the school counselor discussed with the child several ways to build her importance in the classroom and at home (e.g,. talk in normal voice instead of baby voice, work quietly, help self and others to organize materials) and followed up with her by visiting her class during recess and bus-call times. In the individual play sessions, the school counselor focused on encouraging her efforts in self-care, self-responsibility, and respecting the limits. In demonstrating to the mother how to conduct play sessions, the school counselor focused on supporting the mother in effectively setting limits, providing encouragement, and returning responsibility to the child instead of doing for the child what the child could do for herself. The school counselor also offered one paraprofessional from the child's class strategies to use in the classroom that encouraged the child in continuing positive efforts and provided immediate feedback for misbehaviors. During the 14 weeks of intervention, the child made significant behavioral and relational adjustments and became more confident and cooperative both in school and at home. Her positive behaviors continued throughout the Kindergarten year and into first grade even after the intervention terminated.

Figure 1

Figure 2



Ethical Considerations

Most school counselors are not art therapists, and making a decision about a student based solely on an interpretation of a student's drawing approaches the boundaries of professional competence. However, school counselors can be trained to understand the basic themes of children's art and can use the drawing as one piece of projective information in case conceptualization. Interpretations may, in some cases, signal the need for a referral to a community-based practitioner. Students who use drawing as a major communication tool may be referred to an art therapist or therapists with a specialty in color and drawings, for example. School counselors must keep in mind other ethical issues concerning drawings made by students.

The Ethical Standards for School Counselors (American School Counselor Association, 2004) do not address the use of art. The American Counseling Association (2005) *Code of Ethics* addresses the use of art with regard to storage and disposal of artistic documents and, in both areas, states that client consent should be obtained with regard to handling of these documents. Both ethical codes address confidentiality and privacy. Confidentiality is honored, within limits, for any verbal communication between school counselors and their clients, and privacy issues are considered when talking to students. Hammond and Gantt (1998) posit that artwork is symbolic speech and should be given the same protection as verbal communication. If school counselors use drawings to help them better understand a student, they argue, this protection should be extended to the student's artwork. This means school counselors would not show a student's drawing to others in the school, but would only verbally describe the work to someone who has a valid interest in the student.

If a student's drawing suggests that he or she may be suicidal, violent toward others, or may be the victim of abuse, the drawing should be kept for documentation, along with records of other school counselor actions taken. In this case, it would be helpful to show the picture to referral sources. If the student wants to keep the picture, the school counselor could ask permission to photograph it (Hammond & Gantt, 1998).

Young children often ask the school counselor to display their pictures. If the school counselor requests a drawing to gain useful hypotheses or information to be used in counseling, displaying the picture would be a violation of confidentiality. Displaying pictures initiated by the child may not be a breach of confidentiality, although school counselors must use their judgment about what is appropriate to display and what could be regarded as a breach of the student's right to privacy and confidentiality. If school counselors believe it would be inappropriate to honor a student's request to display a picture because of confidentiality issues, they could tell the student that they will keep that picture in a special place but would like for the student to draw a different picture to display.

Conclusion

Children's drawings can be used by school counselors in many ways. Through the use of drawings, school counselors can build rapport with students, observe and listen to their thoughts and feelings, discuss important issues, design interventions as appropriate, and refer students to community resources if necessary. Differences in interpretation guidelines emphasize the importance of formulating hypotheses rather than making hard and fast conclusions about a drawing. Cultural factors must also be considered.

To develop expertise in the use of art as a means for personal and professional growth, school counselors can begin with references listed in the reference section at the end of this article, attend workshops about art therapy, and explore techniques that are most useful across cultures.

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Exploring Perceptions of Advocacy of Professional School Counselors and School Counselors-in-Training

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Abstract

Professional school counselors in the 21st century are challenged to respond to the individual needs of their students as well as responding to the needs of families and communities. In 2003, the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Model addressed advocacy as one of its' themes. Counselors-in-training and professional school counselors' perceptions of what delineates advocacy, advocacy actions, advocacy skills and knowledge, and advocacy obligations were surveyed.

Exploring Perceptions of Advocacy of Professional School Counselors and School Counselors- in-Training

School settings in the 21st century present complex challenges to school counselors. Schools are composed of students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds which often results in inequitable academic resources and services (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Bemak, 2000; Lenhardt & Young, 2001). Professional school counselors' (PSCs) role as advocates for students and their families is a necessary and critical element for students' academic success in school (House & Hayes, 2002). As advocates, PSCs are required to address social, economic, and political issues that affect all students, promote equity for students and their families, and more importantly help poor and minority students to narrow the achievement gap (Bemak & Chung, 2005). The present study aims to increase understanding by exploring perceptions of advocacy of PSCs and school counselors-in-training (SCITs).

Responding to the conceptualization of PSCs as advocates and change agents, the current literature offers an active discussion about various aspects the role of school counselors entails (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Cobia & Henderson, 2007; Davis, 2005; Field & Baker, 2004; House & Martin, 1998). The following section reviews current literature and includes definitions of the concept of advocacy, a description of what advocacy actions entail, a discussion of the advocacy knowledge and skills school counselors need, and a brief synopsis of advocacy obligations.

Literature Concerning Advocacy for PSCs

The concept of advocacy for PSCs has been diversely defined in the literature. One definition of advocacy includes the "belief that individual and/ or other collective action must be taken to right injustices or to improve conditions for the benefit of an individual or groups" (House & Martin, 1998, p. 284). Others define advocacy in terms of a school counselor's ability to provide support and services to students that reach beyond the boundaries of a school office (Field & Baker, 2004). Still others have conceptualized advocacy as a process of identifying unmet needs and making changes so that these needs are met. This need-identifying process differentiates the PSCs' role as an advocate from those of consultants, collaborators, coordinators, and leaders (Brown & Trusty, 2005).

To clarify the role of an advocate, the American

Counseling Association (ACA) Task Force on Advocacy Competencies outlines three levels of advocacy as the client/student level, the school community level and the larger public arena (Arnold, House, Lewis, & Toporek, n.d.). Each level describes both direct and indirect interventions that an advocacy oriented counselor should embrace. Examples of direct interventions for clients/students include identifying strengths and resources; identifying social, political, economic and cultural factors affecting the students/clients; and assisting students/clients in completing action plans. Indirect interventions include helping students/clients to access needed resources; identifying barriers that affect students'/clients' development or well-being; and carrying out action plans.

Collaboration and coordination are two additional indirect advocacy interventions that are essential for professional school counseling in the 21st century. PSCs often act either implicitly or explicitly as advocates in their daily activities such as the following: collaborating with teachers to find the best way for a particular student to learn; working with parents and providing strategies or interventions for their child; providing professional development in helping teachers to identify and respond to child abuse; collaborating with teachers and administrators in establishing equitable disciplinary procedures (Cooley, 1998; Stone, 2000; Trusty, 1996). Helping students and their families to resolve difficulties and meet unmet needs proactively, directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly, broadly defines advocacy on the part of PSCs.

Advocacy Actions

The American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (2003) promotes advocacy efforts for school counselors. This involves the following: eliminating institutional barriers which may impede the development of any student; ensuring access to a quality curriculum for all students; advocating for students and the school counseling program through collaboration; and promoting systemic change through program management and professional development.

Following the ASCA model, assorted descriptions of actions taken by school counselors as advocates are described in the literature. School environments for students vary according to whether they are elementary, middle or high. Many elementary school teachers have reported that they became teachers because they love children; middle level teachers believe that they can make a difference in the lives of young people; and high school teachers state they love their subject matter (Clement, 2004; Patrick, 2007; Wiseman, Knight, & Cooner, 2002). At the elementary level PSCs often intervene on behalf of students who may be struggling with behavioral and/or developmental issues. Middle level PSCs may also be faced with similar situations as the elementary school counselors, but students at the middle level are less likely to display difficulties emotionally, physically or mentally (Davis, 2005). Students at the high school level are least likely to display difficulties in these areas (Gottfredson, 2001). PSCs work to enhance the maturity level of students at both middle and high school levels and encourage students to take responsibility for their own actions (Patrick). Guiding and teaching students and families how to delineate responsibilities and how to set and achieve goals independently of PSCs is one example of how to promote advocacy through action (Beale, 2004).

Advocacy Knowledge and Skills

In order to advocate successfully, PSCs need to develop knowledge and skills that will allow them to adapt to complex situations in 21st century school settings. Knowledge refers to what the PSC knows and skills refer to what the PSC is able to do (Brown & Trusty, 2005). PSCs should be knowledgeable in the following areas: resources, parameters, dispute resolution mechanisms, advocacy models, and systems change. Knowledge of resources within and outside of schools like programs, institutions, agencies, and community groups is necessary for effective advocacy efforts (Brown & Trusty; Cobia & Henderson, 2007; Osbourne, Collison, House, Gray, Firth, & Mary, 1998). Knowledge of parameters includes knowing school policies and procedures, possessing knowledge of legal rights of students and families, and adhering to ASCA's code of ethics (2004). Dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation and conflict resolution strategies are often necessary for successful advocacy efforts. Finally, possessing a systems perspective and understanding how systems and subsystems operate and forming partnerships across subsystems (i.e., parents, students, community groups, district administrations, and school staff) are necessary for positive advocacy results (Brown & Trusty).

In addition, PSCs should possess communication skills, collaboration skills, problem assessment and problem solving skills, organizational skills, and self-

care skills (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Bemak & Chung, 2005; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Cobia & Henderson, 2007; Arnold, et al., n.d.). Communication skills allow effective understanding of factors which might impinge upon optimal development of students. Collaboration skills help to maintain strong relationships with parents, administrators, and professionals outside of the school for effective advocacy efforts.

Advocacy Obligations

According to the ASCA National Model (2003), PSCs are required to play multiple roles as advocates. Systematic observations and data collection enable school counselors to identify the need for changes at the school or community level. In addition, PSCs need to incorporate data locally, regionally, and nationally to foster system changes in an effort to promote high educational standards for all children (Brown & Trusty, 2005; House & Hayes, 2002).

Defining advocacy obligations is often related to both legal and ethical considerations. From a legal perspective, any person working in schools who may either suspect or has knowledge of a student being physically, emotionally or sexually abused, or neglected is a mandated reporter and is obligated to report the abuse to appropriate school personnel. The PSC is obligated to provide support to the identified student as child protective services investigate charges (Baker & Gerler, 2004).

Method

Purpose of Study

A survey approach was utilized to explore perceptions of advocacy of school counselors-in-training and practicing PSCs (Appendix). Specifically, SCITs and PSCs perceptions of how to define advocacy, what are believed to be advocacy actions, skills and knowledge needed to advocate successfully, and the degree to which one is obliged to advocate were surveyed.

The first hypothesis was related to the influence of counseling experience on perceptions of advocacy assuming that experience would lead to different perceptions on different aspects of advocacy. The second hypothesis examined whether taking a class with advocacy as a major course objective would impact participants' perceptions of advocacy. The final hypothesis examined whether school environments would impact the participants' views of advocacy. It was assumed that different working environments (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school level) would influence how school counselors view advocacy for students and their families.

Participants and Procedure

A total of 80 participants voluntarily participated in the study. The participants included 75 females and five males, 57 Caucasians, 21 African Americans, 1 Hispanic and 1 Asian. Their ages ranged from 22 to 69 years old. Fifty-five participants had a bachelor's degree, 17 of them had a master's degree, and 8 of them had a specialist's degree. Fifty-six participants were SCITs, had no prior experience in school counseling, and were enrolled in a master's degree school counseling program. The program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (2001). The other 24 participants were PSCs. Their experience in school counseling ranged from 1-34 years. At the time of the study, 41 of the participants were employed as teachers; 18 were elementary school teachers, 14 were middle school teachers, and 9 were high school teachers. Of all the participants, 37 have taken a course in which advocacy was a significant objective and 43 never took such a course.

The participants were treated in accordance with the ethical standards of the American School Counselor's Association (ASCA, 2004) and participated in the study anonymously. SCITs gave written informed consent and were assured of their right to refuse participation in the study without any negative consequences. A survey questionnaire was administered to students enrolled in either practicum or internship classes. Instructors for these classes were provided with written instructions to follow for administration of the survey.

PSCs were also treated in accordance with the ethical standards of ASCA (2004) and participated in the study anonymously. Permission was gained from a local school district personnel to administer the survey to school counselors in the district. Informed consent forms were included in the survey packet and PSCs were assured of their rights to participate or refuse participation with no negative consequences. All participants were provided with written instructions to follow and were given 2 weeks to complete the survey on an individual basis. The survey packet included information on how to contact the researchers. Each school had one person designated to collect the surveys. Completed surveys were then

delivered by designees and secured at the district office until retrieved by one of the researchers.

Survey Instrument

An appropriate instrument that assesses perceptions of advocacy in the field of counseling was not located; therefore the researchers synthesized the literature and identified definitions of advocacy, advocacy actions, advocacy knowledge and skills, and advocacy obligations as the important components to examine perceptions of advocacy for school counselors. These four components were used to structure the survey questionnaire entitled "School Counseling Survey: Advocacy for Students and their Families" (Appendix A & B).

The survey questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected demographic information of the participants. (Appendix A) The second section contains four subscales that measure participants' perceptions of advocacy definition, advocacy actions, advocacy knowledge and skills, and advocacy obligations on a 5 point Likert scale, with 1 as "strongly disagree" and 5 as "strongly agree" (Appendix B). Each subscale contains 10 items synthesized from recent literature (ACA, 2005; ASCA, 2003; Baker & Gerler, 2004; Cobia & Henderson, 2007; Education Trust, 2003).

The first subscale, defining advocacy, began with the stem, "As a School Counselor, I believe the following are definitions of advocacy." Sample statements included "supporting school and social reform," and "collaborating with community agencies that provide services to students and their families." The second subscale, advocacy actions, shared the same basic stem as the first subscale. Sample advocacy actions statements included "empowering parents to advocate for their children," and "acting as a student advocate before disciplinary bodies." Advocacy skills and knowledge, subscale 3 began with the stem statement, "As a School Counselor engaged in advocacy, I believe the following skills and knowledge are important." Sample statements included, "ability to utilize resources within and outside of the school," and "collection and presentation of data." Subscale 4, advocacy obligations, shared the same basic stem as subscales 1 and 2. Sample advocacy obligations statements included, "act as a resource broker within the community to help students achieve academic success," and "be aware of discriminatory practices within the school, community and greater society."

The instrument was reviewed by three counselor educators in the field of school counseling. Upon review, minor revisions were made to the first page of the survey designed to collect demographic data. The survey questionnaire was pilot tested during the spring and summer semesters of 2004 with SCIT volunteers enrolled in the College of Education. Thirty-five graduate students participated in the pilot study and no further revisions were necessary to the survey. Internal consistency of the questionnaire evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha was 0.99 for all four subscales combined, and 0.94 for the advocacy definition subscale, 0.93 for the advocacy actions subscale, 0.96 for the advocacy skills and knowledge, and 0.96 for the advocacy obligations respectively.

Results

A series of one-way ANOVA procedures was conducted to test the three hypotheses. Specifically, an examination of the influence of experience in school counseling, whether or not a class in advocacy was taken, professional status, and school settings on participants' perceptions of advocacy was made. First, an inquiry into the impact of the professional practice of school counseling and perceptions of advocacy was determined. The participants were divided into two groups. The first group of participants had at least 6 months experience in school counseling practice (n=24). They included school counselors in practice and the graduate students who gained some experience of school counseling through practicum or internship in their training program. The participants who had no such experience formed the other group (n=56). Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that the non-experienced group reported a significantly higher mean score (M=4.43; SD=0.75) on the definition of advocacy than the experienced group (M=4.06; SD=.064) indicating that participants with no experience in schools perceived advocacy more altruistically than those who had experiences in schools. An example included responses to the statement "Going above and beyond the status quo to help students and their families." Participants who had no experience in schools "strongly agreed" (rating of 5) with this statement while the majority of participants who had experience in schools tended to have "no opinion" (rating of 3) with the statement. No significance was found between the two groups in their perceptions of advocacy actions, advocacy knowledge and skills, and advocacy obligations and all four subscales combined.

Second, whether or not the professional status would impact participants' views on advocacy was examined.

The participants were divided into two groups based on their professional status. Those who were PSCs formed one group (n=24) and those who were SCITs formed the other group (n=56). Results of the ANOVA indicated no significant difference between the two groups regarding their perceptions of advocacy actions, advocacy knowledge and skills, and advocacy obligations and all four subscales combined.

Following the above results, Table 1 demonstrates, the participants with no experience in school counseling reported significantly higher mean scores on item 2, "taking a stand for the rights of students," (M=4.14), item 3, "working to change school and system policies and procedures that are inequitable to individuals and groups of students and their families," (M=4.63), Item 5, "promoting social and educational equity for ALL students," (M=4.61), and item 8, "teaching students and parents about their rights and helping them to make changes for themselves with promote social justice," (M=4.39) than the participants who had experience. The same results were found on the professional status variable. SCITs reported significantly higher means on Item 2 (M=4.69), Item 3 (M=4.62), Item 5 (M=4.62)

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations on the Items of the Defining Advocacy Scale by Experience and Professional Status

		No Experience Group		Experienced Group		Counselors in Training		Practicing Counselors	
	School counselors define advocacy as:	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Going above and beyond the status quo to assist students and their families	4.14	.94	3.73	1.03	4.13	.94	3.83	1.05
2*	Taking a stand for their rights of students	4.70	.74	4.18	.66	4.69	.74	4.21	.66
3*	Working to change school and system policies and procedures that are inequitable to individuals and groups of students and their families	4.63	.75	3.86	.83	4.62	.76	3.92	.83
4	Supporting social and school reform	4.23	.93	3.86	.64	4.24	.94	3.88	.61
5*	Promoting social and educational equity for ALL students	4.61	.82	4.14	.83	4.62	.83	4.13	.80
6	Emphasizing referrals and use of resources in the larger community to assist students and their families.	4.34	.92	4.23	.81	4.33	.92	4.29	.81
7	Collaborating with community agencies that provide services to students and their families	4.50	.87	4.14	.83	4.49	.88	4.17	.82
8*	Teaching students and parents about their rights and helping them to make changes for themselves which promote social justice.	4.39	.95	3.82	.85	4.40	.96	3.88	.85
9	Taking a stand for families	4.27	.98	4.00	.76	4.27	.99	4.00	.72
10	Emphasizing parental involvement in a child's education	4.48	.93	4.50	1.01	4.49	.94	4.50	.98

* Statistically significant differences were found on these items between the experienced vs. no experience group and between the practicing counselors vs. counselors in training at the .05 level

and Item 8 M=4.40 than practicing PSCs.

Third, whether taking a class with advocacy as a major course objective would impact participants' perceptions of advocacy was examined. Those who had taken an advocacy course formed one group (n=40) and those who had not taken such a course formed the other group (n=40). Results of the one–way ANOVA analysis indicate there is no significant difference between the two groups regarding their perceptions of definitions of advocacy, advocacy actions, advocacy knowledge and skills, and advocacy obligations and all four subscales combined.

Finally, whether the school environments would impact on the participants' views of advocacy was examined. The participants were divided into four groups based on the school setting in which they were working. Those who were full-time students formed group one (n=40), those working in elementary schools formed group two (n=16), those working in middle schools formed group three (n=15), and those working in high schools formed group four (n=9).

Discussion

The purpose was to gain a clearer understanding of perceptions surrounding different aspects of advocacy. The research was aimed at defining the role, actions, competencies, and obligations of the school counselor as advocate. Insights that may help improve the training of both SCITs and PSCs was also sought. In this section, the findings of the study in relation to the literature reviewed are discussed.

Data analyses focused on examining the influence of having experience as a PSC, completing a course in advocacy, and school settings on participants' perceptions of advocacy. Findings failed to support the proposition that gaining experience as a PSC is important in developing a professional viewpoint regarding advocacy (ACA, 2005; Education Trust, 2003). In fact, the results indicate that there is no significant difference between the experienced group and the non-experienced group on the views of advocacy actions, knowledge and skills required to advocate for students and their families, and advocacy obligations.

These findings suggest that experience in school counseling practice would not make a difference on how school counselors define advocacy. According to the data, having experience as a PSC in and of itself does not insure a commitment to advocacy. The data does suggest that SCITs may be idealistic and have a greater consideration of the counselor's role as advocate.

Furthermore, the results indicate how taking an advocacy course did not make a difference on school counselors' views of advocacy. The advocacy oriented counselor is able to identify environmental factors which may serve as barriers to students' development and provide and interpret data showing the need for change (Arnold, et al., n.d.).

The second major finding points to the influence of different school settings on the perceptions of advocacy. Overall views of advocacy were also found to be significantly different between full time students at the (4.45), elementary (4.40), middle (4.33) and high school (3.67) levels. In addition to advocacy being one of the four themes in ASCA's National Model (2003), the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (2003) emphasized the importance of PSCs advocating for access to a rigorous academic education for all students. These paradigms are discussed in classes so that full time students in the field of counseling are particularly cognizant of the importance of becoming an advocate (Cobia & Henderson, 2007; House & Hayes, 2002).

Findings from the study indicate overall differing perceptions and definitions of advocacy according to whether one is a student, or practitioner, and whether or not one is employed at the elementary, middle or high school level. This may be due to particular survey statements and the reality of working in school settings. For example, defining advocacy, survey item 3 stated "working to change school and system policies and procedures that are inequitable to individuals and groups of students and their families," indicated that SCITs had a higher mean (4.62) than PSCs (3.92). Many practicing PSCs may feel that making changes at school and system levels is not possible to attain, whereas SCITs may not have an idea of what is needed to make changes in schools and systems.

Implications for school counselors

The greater understanding PSCs possess in regard to advocacy and knowledge needed to respond as advocates, the more likely issues will be resolved adequately (Baker & Gerler, 2004). Through advocacy class assignments and lectures, counselor educators should train their students to be more active than passive, and be informed and committed to providing the best counseling services

possible (Bemak & Chung, 2005). In addition, counselor educators should prepare students to have a systems perspective and understand how systems and subsystems operate and how to form partnerships across subsystems (i.e., parents, students, community groups, district administrations, and school staff) in order to have positive results as advocates (Brown & Trusty, 2005). When PSCs become aware of external factors that may act as barriers to an individual or to students' development, they may choose to respond through advocacy. Becoming an advocate is an integral part of current national standards and a crucial component of a school counselor's professional competence (Education Trust, 2003).

Counselor education programs could help PSCs who have been practicing in the field by providing continuing education courses/modules/seminars to keep them updated as to current trends in the field. Many practitioners lack both time and opportunity to explore the most recent literature surrounding their chosen profession.

ASCA's National Model (2003) focuses on school counselors advocating for systemic change through program management and development. As PSCs advocate for the elimination of institutional barriers which may impede the development of any student and for access to a quality curriculum for all students, school counseling programs would serve to empower both students and families. Preparing students with the necessary competencies for a successful future speaks to the heart of what school counselors' desire.

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Please E-mail the author regarding the instrument.

Instructional School Leaders and School Counselors Collaborate: Maximizing Data-Driven Accountability

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Abstract

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model (2003) indicates a paradigm shift in school counseling programs from service-centered for some of the students to program-centered for every student. The main question is how students are different as a result of participating in school counseling programs. As a result professional school counselors (PSCs) are posed to demonstrate their contributions to students' academic achievement The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has led to an intense focus on educator accountability. This study examined whether performance-based, data-driven projects in counselor preparation programs enhance PSCs' abilities to collaborate with instructional leaders and advocate for students' academic achievement effectively.

Instructional School Leaders and School Counselors Collaborate: Maximizing Data-Driven Accountability

Education reform that requires institutional vision is designed to improve student achievement. Members of Congress reauthorized the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 as the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 2002 which has led to the development and establishment of a definition of student achievement that can be measured by state officials. The measurable components are reading scores and mathematics scores of students in the public schools of the United States, particularly in grades three through eight.

High Stakes Testing (HST) is the term often used to describe the accountability measures that are driving educational reform (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Administrators of public schools strive to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with the stated outcome of improved student achievement, as measured by reading scores and mathematics scores. Educational support teams are needed to understand and to collaborate on data-driven performance outcomes to maximize accountability. Because each state determines the instrument of measurement for the assessment outcomes in reading and mathematics, collaboration between instructional leaders and professional school counselors (PSCs) may be significant independent variables that impact student achievement within the school learning environment.

Student achievement data must be analyzed to understand where achievement gaps exist and rigorous objectives must be articulated to measure student outcomes (Rosenshine, 2003). While professional school counselors are not specifically mentioned in NCLB, PSCs are in a prime position to assist with both data-driven interventions and data dissemination. As allies, the PSC and the instructional leader can be proactive to foster rigorous academic standards (Capuzzi & Gross, 1996).

According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2003), the new question is, Are school counselors prepared to enhance student achievement via a data-driven curriculum? Consequently, the implementation of data-training activities in school counseling preparation

programs is essential. Counselor education programs have responded to the call for educational reform by including in their counselor preparation programs and field practice a focus on accountability outcomes for services offered to students.

The counselor and the administrator should be prepared through the design of counselor education programs and educational leadership programs to observe the teaching and learning phenomena with a collaborative lens toward connecting the cognitive and affective taxonomical domains for the advancement of achievement for all students (ASCA, 2003; Educational Leadership Constituent, 2002; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Although efforts to develop alliances and to work and to think from a data-driven frame of reference are still a work in progress, if counselor education programs and educational leadership programs were to be designed to prepare counselors and teachers to integrate their own with the other's field, together they could turn a collaborative lens toward improved academic achievement. Yet, the field of education has become defined by the dictates of HST as the barometer for the measurement of student achievement and school building accountability for higher academic performance for all students. Improved academic achievement is the focus for instructional leaders. Thus, collaboration among instructional leaders and professional school counselors (PSC) is an essential relationship for improving services to students. The purpose of the article is to report on study using performance-based, data-driven projects in a counselor preparation program as an enhancement of PSCs' abilities to collaborate with instructional leaders and advocate for students' academic achievement.

Rationale for Data-Driven School Counseling Programs

The inclusion of data training in counselor education programs was for accountability, which is integral to educational reform and to students' academic success. School counselor accountability may be defined as the dissemination of specific information to stakeholders and to supervisors about the effectiveness and efficiency of school counseling services through the use of measurable outcomes (Erford, 2003; Gallagher, 1998; Schmidt, 1993). It is the "show-me" attitude that is used to answer the questions about the effectiveness of school counseling programs to students, families, teachers, schools, and districts (Cobia & Henderson, 2003; Gysbers, 2001; Gysbers & Henderson, 2002; Thompson, 2002).

This research model began with a focus on training future PSCs to be drivers of accountability because evidence is required to ensure accountability. Examples of typical areas of accountability in schools are attendance, tardiness, test scores, discipline, and detentions (Howley, 1996). Thus, the question was, Are school counselors prepared to be members of the instructional leadership team to promote rigorous data-driven curricula for all students?

Professional Foundation

According to ASCA (2003), PSCs have the knowledge and skills to foster the personal, academic and career development of all students. Specifically, PSCs have the knowledge and skills to address various aspects of human development. In addition, school counselors are both leaders and advocates of students and for students. According to ASCA (2003), PSCs operate from a leadership position, "promote student success," (p. 24) and "help every student gain access to rigorous academic preparation that will lead to greater opportunity and increased academic achievement" (p. 24). One of the purposes laid out in the ASCA National Model is the directive that as advocates, PSCs have the responsibility to articulate and demonstrate an understanding of the impediments to student learning and to student academic achievement. Moreover, PSCs advocate for students by the elimination of barriers to academic achievement via curriculum strategies and professional skills that advance students' ability to negotiate the school environment.

Educational Leadership

Operationally, the collaborative leader is viewed as the instructional school leader who embraces the implementation of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions outlined by both the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC; 1996), and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council Elements (ELCC; 2002). To that end, instructional school leaders are critical of the facilitation of the ASCA framework for comprehensive school counseling programs. Implementing an operational definition of a collaborative leadership model is necessary to the professionals who are engaged in student achievement outcomes. This definition will be instituted in conjunction with the proposed data-driven strategies, which are to align with ISLLC Standards III

and ELCC Standard III and their relationship with the ASCA National Model's themes of advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change. This proposed alignment of Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs) standards provides the foundation for professional collaboration between the fields of educational leadership and school counseling. The suggested collaborative leadership definition is driven by the need of public school officials to respond to this era's requirement of high-stakes testing outcomes for student achievement.

Collaborative Leadership Education Model

The collaborative leadership education model proposed by the authors of this research will have two groups of dedicated professionals unite to redouble their efforts toward work with newfound efficiency in attaining their common vision. A shared vision leads to mutual understanding and commitment. All stakeholders share responsibility in advocating for educational quality for all students. That is, inclusion rather than exclusion, a dialog of open problem-solving and the promotion of systemic and long-term versus symptomatic and short-term change (McKibben, 2004). A collaborative model of leadership that includes ASCA's National Model of comprehensive school counseling programs can be linked to ISLLC Standards III and ISLLC Standards IV, and ELCC Standard III. Hence, the recognition of professional standards outlined by these groups may provide the context for the collaboration between educational leaders and professional school counselors. The use of the standards of the SPA promotes the operating definitions for effective collaboration. For example, ASCA's Comprehensive School Counseling Model posits the themes of advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change. With an awareness of this model by school leaders and the facilitation of a marriage designed for effective enactment, educational leadership collaboration between the ASCA's school counseling comprehensive model and the correlated ISLLC and ELCC standards cited for school leaders can be implemented. The new ambassadors at the district and at the schools within the district can shape an oasis for data-driven instructional strategies to improve academic success for all students. Therefore, a collaborative leadership model is important in that educational concerns are complex and interdependent, and require a system approach with diverse input variables to increase holistic accountability.

Conceptual foundation. The theoretical perspective that serves as the foundation for this study is embedded within two developmental theorists and one humanistic theorist. In the socio-cultural theory Vygotsky (1962), emphasized how cognitive development proceeds as a result of social interactions between members of a culture. On the other hand, in his psychosocial developmental theory, Erikson (1963) spoke to changes in individual interactions with and comprehension of one another, as well as in one's knowledge of self as a member of society. Conjointly, these two theorists considered the social and cultural factors that affect human development. In addition, in his Client-Centered theory, Rogers (1951) formed the foundation of the therapeutic aspect of the professional development working alliance. The postulates of empathy are unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and congruence (Erickson, 1963; Rogers, 1951; Vygotsky, 1962).

Program Accountability in the ASCA National Model

The ASCA National Model consists of four components: foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability (Dahir, 2000; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). According to ASCA, professional school counselors must collect and use data to link the school counseling program to student achievement. Accountability measures the effectiveness of school counseling programs. Thus, answers are sought to the question, "How are students different as a result of participating in the school counseling program?"

Why infuse data-driven curriculum into the field experience? Whiston (2005) stated some counselors' reticence in the field toward accountability is due in part to lack of training of PSCs in data analysis and their low level of efficacy as related to data analysis. Therefore, the infusion of more assessment activities and evaluation activities into courses is one strategy that can guide the development and the evaluation of school counselor preparation programs. Data-analysis infusion into courses may be used by school counselors-in-training to evaluate their professional development and to evaluate their need for continuous professional growth. Moreover, the evaluation of data can become the yardstick that is used to measure the need for systemic change, confirm progress, and highlight gaps within the educational environment. Then the process of bridging the gap between success and failure in schools can begin. As PSCs partner with instructional leaders and key stakeholders (persons who

have a vested interest in guiding the future of an issue or are affected by the issue) to embrace accountability, they also embrace furthering the academic success of every student (Stone & Clark, 2001). Sharing accountability for school improvement with all stakeholders has become critical for the collaborative roles and functions of professional school counselors in our nation's schools.

Research on the accountability need of school counselors. Although ASCA is not a new association, a national model was not developed until 2003 by ASCA leaders to address a comprehensive approach to professional school counselor accountability, management, delivery services, and program foundation. The National Model provides the framework by which PSCs design, coordinate, implement, manage, and evaluate their programs for all students' success. PSCs trained under this National Model are encouraged to switch their current service-centered emphasis for some students to a program-centered emphasis for all students.

Staggering comparisons of minority students to majority students continue to highlight the achievement gaps (Moffett & Persaud, 2005). This gap between minority and majority students is demonstrated in differential graduation rates from high schools and colleges as well as in performance rates in reading and math on national standardized tests. The Education Trust (2003) reported that far fewer Latinos and African Americans than Asians and Whites reach proficient levels in reading and mathematics. National data for 2003 indicated that 61% of African American 4th graders were below basic proficiency in reading and 61% of African American 8th graders were below basic proficiency in mathematics. The same national data survey demonstrated a similar disparity with Latinos; 57% of 4th graders were below basic in reading and 60% of 8th graders were below basic in mathematics. In addition, it was reported that fewer minority students are enrolled in algebra and advanced placement courses. On the other hand, there are elementary, middle and senior high schools where minority students are excelling. Educators cognizant of the importance of a challenging curriculum aligned with standards for all students, who establish clear goals to forward the curriculum, implement data-driven school counseling programs and systematic evaluation for both curriculum and programs are equipped to respond to the question, "How are students different as a result of what we do?" (ASCA, 2003).

The Rationale for the Current Study

The overall goal of the study was to investigate and explore school counselors-in-training level of efficacy in relation to the enhancement of and the advocacy of student achievement via data-driven interventions and curricula. Bandura, (1986) indicated that behavioral performance has a major impact on perceptions of self-efficacy. Specifically, the research questions addressed in this study were:

1. Will there be an increase in the measured perceptions of the participants' self-efficacy beliefs about the development, evaluation, and delivery of data-driven intervention and curricula from pre-course assessment to post-course assessment?
2. Was there a difference in mean scores perception of the participants on the Counselor Candidate Perception Inventory Instrument (CCPII)?
3. Will there be an increase in the measured perceptions of the participants on the desire to share in educational reform accountability via collaboration with instructional leaders from pre-course assessment to post-course assessment?

More specifically, the ASCA National Model emphasized the need for PSCs to demonstrate the effectiveness of school counseling programs by generating data via evaluation of school counseling interventions and of entire programs. Professional school counselors and instructional leaders who possess the skills to aggregate and disaggregate student information would increase their relevant self-efficacy perception to act as advocates to identify and reduce environmental practices that deter equitable access and opportunities for student success in a rigorous curriculum.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of 20 2nd-year master's degree candidates from three sections of the course titled, "Organization and Administration of School Counseling Programs." The course is a part of a School Counseling Master's Program in a small, historically private Black Catholic University in the southern region of the United States.

More specifically, the participants consisted of 18 women (90%) and 2 men (10%) with a mean age of 36 years; range = 24–55 years. A minority of participants

(20%) reported that they had completed a master's degree in school counseling, and 80% held a baccalaureate degree.

Self-reported racial characteristics of the sample were 19 African Americans (95%) and 1 White (5%). Approximately 50% of the students reported they had taken a statistics course and 90% reported that they had participated in a research project. Assignment was done through self-selection and was non-random. All students elected to participate in the study.

Design and Procedures

Instrumentation. The researchers developed The Counselor Candidate Perception Inventory Instrument (CCPII) (See Appendix) to gather support for the research questions. The instrument consisted of a demographic section and two content-related sections. The participants used a 4-point Likert scale to rate each item, ranging from 1, which meant *no significance* or *not at all*, to 4, which meant *very much*. Section 1 included six demographic items pertaining to age, gender, race, education level, purpose for degree, and statistics/research experience (SRE). Statistics/research experience included completion of a graduate level course in statistics and research, as well as the number of research projects in which the student participated over the previous 2 years. Education level included two categories: master's degree in school counseling and baccalaureate degree.

The second section of the survey assessed participants' levels of anxiety when analyzing data and the usefulness of data-analysis training. The 9 items addressed anxiety levels as they related to aggregating and disaggregating data and the usefulness of data-analysis training in school counselor preparation programs. The third and final section of the survey asked participants to identify their desire to develop skills in accountability, system collaboration, program development, program evaluation, and program delivery. The final section of the survey assessed the usefulness of data-analysis projects. The CCPII has good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the subcategories ranged from 0.77 to .087.

Project structure. The researchers framed the didactic delivery of the project around six key components: a) developing the survey, b) collecting the data, c) analyzing the data, d) discussing the data, e) writing recommendations, and f) sharing the data. The focus of the class on survey development was to identify constructs related to the delivery service of four components (curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, system support) and the three domains of delivery services (academic, personal/social, career/vocational) as established by the ASCA. The focus of data collection and data analyses was to develop skills in coding, entering, and interpreting data for and from SPSS.

The teaching process. Each class was formatted sequentially; the researcher called this "facilitating small steps of accomplishments." A typical class included a lecture on one of the aforementioned components (45 to 60 minutes) followed by whole-group collaborations; pair-and-share break-out groups followed according to school level (elementary, middle/junior, and senior). The class concluded with a group check-in, a question-and-answer session, and feedback by the professor. This feedback included how well candidates understood how to collect and analyze data.

Dealing with the challenge. This data-analysis activity required the researchers to increase their ability to discern the students' aptitudes and strengths. As such, the researchers integrated the intelligences within the daily activities that allowed students to go through a vibrant environment which created "light bulb" moments. Those environments led to cognitive, affective, and interpersonal learning moments. Reflection became crucial to the effectiveness of the project.

Researchers and participants reflected on what was learned in each class. Part of the reflection process involved immediate reflection while the class was fresh in everyone's minds; this technique allowed participants to identify what worked and what did not work. In addition, the researchers made a conscious effort to monitor the body language and the facial expressions of each participant. If students appeared to be confused, the researchers provided additional explanations. If the students were obviously anxious, the researchers articulated words of encouragement.

Results

Analysis

Data generated from the survey was entered into a data file. The 9 closed-ended questions were coded based upon the response items presented to the respondents on the Likert scale and demographic information was compiled based upon pre-established response options. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

12.0 was used to analyze the data.

In order to meet the objective of the study, the researchers employed simple descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations which indicated the results of the Likert ratings on students' confidence and belief in contributing to the accountability for school improvement (see Table 1). A significant difference was found between the before scores (M = 1.3) and the after (M = 2.9) scores on students' confidence in the development and delivery of data-driven school counseling curriculum. In addition, participants' perceptions on their ability to contribute to the accountability of school improvement indicated that the mean score prior to the activity was (M = 2.1) and the after mean score following the activity was (M = 3.2).

The qualitative analysis revealed that the most common explanation for participants' confidence ratings of 55% (n = 11) was that they found the data-analysis activity to be a considerably positive educational experience and 15% (n = 3) found the data-analysis activity to be a very positive educational experience. The second common explanation for students' confidence rating of 80% (n = 16) was uncertainty about their ability to aggregate and disaggregate. In explaining the rating regarding their ability to share in the accountability after the activity, participants' most frequent response of 90% (n = 18) was from *considerably* to *very much*, as compared to before the activity, *not at all* 20% (n = 4), *some* 45% (n = 9) and *considerably* 35% (n = 7).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Likert Rating (n=20)

	Abbreviated Questions	Mean	SD
1.	Did the assignment cause initial anxiety?	3.20	.89
2.	Did you have anxiety during the project?	2.40	.82
3.	How beneficial was the instruction?	3.35	.49
4.	How beneficial was peer collaboration?	3.20	.83
5.	Did this assignment increase your knowledge about data-driven schooling programs?	3.70	.47
6.	Confidence to develop data-driven programs before assignment?	1.30	.73
7.	Confidence in developing data-driven programs after assignments?	2.90	.67
8.	Belief in ability to share in accountability before activity?	1.20	.75
9.	Belief in ability to share in accountability after activity?	2.60	.73

Note. In addition, when participants were asked whether the assignment increased their knowledge about developing data-driven school counseling programs, all of the participants responded from considerably to very much 100% (n =20). Moreover, when asked about the importance of peer collaboration, 75% (n = 15) of the participants responded from considerably to very much, which suggested that learning occurred from group brainstorming and discussions.

Discussion

Limitations of the Study

With this study, the researchers yielded important information about the influences of perceived self-efficacy, usefulness of problem-based activity, and the desire to collaborate with educational leaders for accountability in an era of High Stakes Testing in school environments. However, the sample size was small and convenient; a more comprehensive conclusion would require further testing. Further, generalizing the current results as a prescription for other counselor education courses with the same focus should be considered with caution. The measures used were created specifically for this study. Finally, future research should reinvestigate variables used in this study with a treatment and control group to increase the reliability and validity of the findings.

Implications for Intervention

In Georgia, the requirements for certification in the fields of counseling and educational leadership include newly implemented certification examinations to access candidates' knowledge and skills through the Georgia Assessment for Certification of Education (GACE). The ideal is accountability of the professional educators entering the field; therefore, this study has the following implications for Counselor Education Programs and Educational Leadership Preparation Programs:

1. Counselors-in-training are interested in sharing accountability and collaborating with instructional leaders.
2. Counselors-in-training are interested in learning about school counseling program development, evaluation, and delivery.
3. There is a lack of school counseling program development, evaluation, and delivery in counselor education preparation.
4. A joint course with the expected outcome of collaboration between the professional school counselor and instructional leader in data-driven projects should be included in master's degree programs for the fields of school counseling and leadership.

Conclusions

The most important findings of the current study were consistent with Bandura's self-efficacy theory and indicated that a data-analysis training activity has had a positive impact for school counselors-in-training on their perceptions of self-efficacy to engage in data-driven curriculum development and on their ability to collaborate with instructional leaders. Practice in data analysis increases self-efficacy ratings, which has implications for wide-range training and pedagogical strategies and data-analysis training. Moreover, the qualitative data suggested a concern that might affect students' development, such as misconceptions or fears about aggregating data. In the study, the researchers provided strong evidence that the infusion of assessment and evaluation into school counselor preparation programs would be beneficial to the professional school counselor's new leadership role with an alliance with the instructional leader, given the state of education to transform schools to ensure the academic success of all students.

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Bridging the Educational Gap through College Access Programs

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Abstract

College access and subsequently college attendance rates of students of color, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and those who would be first-generation college students are still significantly below second generation students and European-Americans. The gap exists because the dissemination of college information is inconsistent and informal. Short of students taking the initiative to walk into a professional school counselor's office there is no formalized and continuous way to get students the college materials they need. In response, one high school counseling department partnered with a privately-funded college access organization called Collegiate Candidates, Inc. to create such a formalized program. Results indicated that students who participated in the program produced higher college application rates than their non-participant peers.

Bridging the Educational Gap through College Access Programs

The U.S. educational system has made great strides since the struggle for civil rights of the 1960s to increase access to higher education for all Americans. Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, for example, is the largest pre-collegiate program geared toward improving access for underrepresented populations (Fallon, 1997). Researchers believe that certain populations of students, namely students of color, students from lower socioeconomic status (SES) and those who would be classified as first-generation college students, have difficulty accessing education (Erford, 2003; Harvey, 2004; Howard & Levine, 2004; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). The on-going need for college access programs is apparent. The literature suggests that disparities exist because educators expect less from students of color and those from lower SES , and underestimate the issues associated with being a first-generation college-bound student. In addition, a two-tiered educational system continues wherein European-Americans and/or middle class students receive high-quality, college-tracked curriculum while remedial or less rigorous curriculum is offered to others (Diamond, 2003; Erford, 2003; Goldsmith, 2003; Kahlenberg, 2001; Rodriquez, 2003; Tyson, 2003).

Recent statistics support that college access and subsequently college attendance rates of students of color, students from lower SES and those who would be first-generation college students are still significantly below second-generation students and European-Americans. Consider these facts: (a) the college-going rates for African Americans are 29.7% vs. 37.4% for Caucasians (Chronicle of Higher Education, as cited in Opp, 2001), (b) students from upper-income families are seven times more likely than students from lower-income backgrounds to earn a bachelor's degree by age 24 (Hoffman, 2003), and (c) only 27% of first-generation students enroll in a 4-year institution, while 71% of students whose parents have bachelor's degrees do so (Harvey, 2004).

School Counseling Partnerships with Privately-funded Organizations

The Current College Application Process

The problem identified is that some students are not attending college at as high a percentage rate as their peers because the dissemination of college information is inconsistent and informal. Short of students taking the initiative to walk in to a professional school counselor's (PSC'S) office to obtain information about college and the college application process, there is no formalized and continuous way to get students the material they need. However, it is largely the responsibility of the school counselor to ensure that all students have access to post-secondary options (Erford, 2003; Fallon, 1997; Shill, 1987). This is particularly the case since the college application process has become a source of anxiety and stress for both students and parents (Smith, 1997). PSCs are key to helping students make knowledgeable decisions as they pursue higher education.

Collegiate Candidates, Inc.

In response to the glaring disparities among some populations of students in accessing college, a counseling department at a high school within the greater Atlanta area partnered with a privately-funded college access organization called Collegiate Candidates, Inc. (CCINC) to create a formalized program. CCINC was formed in 2004 to assist underrepresented high school seniors in matriculating into post-secondary options (mainly higher education) by equipping them with the knowledge and resources necessary for making a smooth transition. The program supports on average 30 students, primarily students of color, first-generation and low-income, to participate each year. It is fully staffed by volunteers who work under the direction of CCINC personnel and PSC to give students individualized, college-related attention.

In order to explore the impact of the program in creating access for the high school in this study, a formal assessment was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the program based on two variables: (a) the rate at which students apply to college in comparison to non-participant peers who have similar demographics, and (b) student satisfaction with the workshops and information provided to them throughout the program. As the founder of Collegiate Candidates, Inc. and as a high school counselor, I designed the program assessment to compare the rate at which the student participants applied to college relative to students from the same demographics who were not participating in the program. I also wanted to examine the extent to which the students made the program an integral exploration into post-secondary options, particularly higher education.

Rationale for Structured College Access Programs

The rationale for writing this article was simple. All students have the right to receive the same information about college in a fair and structured manner. Without a process, the decision of obtaining an education is left to the individual motivation of a student to visit a counselor's office. Or, the decision is left to the time that PSCs have to dedicate to this issue and a plethora of other items simultaneously. One way to ensure that the above does not happen is to create intervention programs, such as the one developed by Collegiate Candidates, Inc, for groups of students that directly impact a need and to share the success with other practitioners

Methods

Participants

The PSCs and Collegiate Candidates, Inc. personnel involved in this study selected 26 high school senior males to participate in the college access program. The majority of students were members of ethnicities of color, derived from a lower socioeconomic background (as determined by their eligibility for free and reduced lunch) and self-identified as first-generation and college-bound. The program developed by CCINC was set up in two phases and took place every 2 weeks for 90 minutes during school hours. Phase I of the program focused on assisting students with the college identification and application process through workshops covering topics such as general admission requirements, financial aid, and writing college admissions essays. The most important and a unique feature of the CCINC program was that the participants had the opportunity to acquire college applications and were given time and assistance during the program hours to complete them. Phase II of the program focused on college access issues such as exploring college majors, getting involved in student organizations and identifying services to support students on campuses. The intervention meeting times rotated on "block" hours so that students did not miss the same class twice in a row. All meetings were supervised by a PSC and during each

phase of the program, parents and school administrators were kept abreast of program happenings.

Procedures for Evaluation

Two methods were used to measure program outcomes. The first method, used to determine the rate at which students applied to college were students' official transcripts mailed from the high school counseling office to the respective colleges or universities. Transcripts mailed to colleges or universities throughout the year as well as "final" transcripts sent were considered in this study. Final transcripts are those that are mailed after a senior finishes all high school courses required for graduation. The number of students from the Collegiate Candidates, Inc. program who sent off transcripts (throughout the year and "final" transcripts) was compared to the number of students who sent off transcripts (throughout the year and "final" transcripts) from the original pool.

The second method of measuring program outcomes was the use of evaluations given at the conclusion of each workshop. The evaluation captured student satisfaction with workshops and information received during the program. Questions on the workshop evaluation form elicited information regarding how well the students were exposed to various aspects of higher education as a result of participating in the program. The evaluation forms used a 5-point rating scale and were assessed using Microsoft Excel. Excel was chosen as the means of collecting data based on its ease of use. All workshops were evaluated separately in different worksheets of Excel. The data was then merged and averaged in order to rank the workshops from most satisfied to least satisfied.

Results

College Application Rate

Students who participated in the Collegiate Candidates, Inc. program demonstrated higher college application rates than their non-participant peers. It must be noted that the final number of participants was reduced from 26 to 24 for the following reasons: Two of the students' transcript requests could not be considered in the evaluation process because one student entered the armed forces, therefore making a transcript request irrelevant, and the other student did not graduate from high school. Of the 24 remaining participants, 17 students requested to have "final" transcripts mailed to colleges or universities. This represents a 71% application rate versus the non-participant rate of 20%. The 7 students who did not request transcripts each received three follow-up telephone calls by the researcher. Three of the 7 students could not be located using the information on file with the high school; one student had not received acceptance or rejection letters from the colleges to which he applied and the other three students reported that they were still planning to request transcripts before mid-June.

Workshop Evaluations

Students' satisfaction with the workshops was measured in three areas: Relevancy of the Workshop, Knowledge Gained and Usefulness. The outcomes indicate that as a result of participating in the Collegiate Candidates, Inc. program, students found the workshops to be relevant and valuable to their college application process and significant in helping them gain more knowledge about the college application process and college as a whole. This conclusion is based on the students' 92% overall Satisfaction rate with the workshops, their 94% overall Usefulness rating and their 93% overall Relevancy rating. The highest rated workshop was the College Visit, which received a 97% rating. Other highly-rated workshops included Admissions, Essay Writing, SAT/ACT Prep and Healthy Living. They all received ratings in the mid-to-high 90% range. The Dining Etiquette workshop was received least favorably with an overall average score of 87%. Students did not feel that this workshop was relevant to their admission process, nor did they find it useful.

Limitations to the Study

Although program outcomes indicate benefits to the student participants, a few caveats must be stated. First, since contact could not be made with several students in the Collegiate Candidates, Inc. program and others had not turned in transcript requests before the conclusion of this evaluation, the overall effectiveness of the program in relation to non-participants can only be suggested. The same transcript issues may also apply to students in the control group. Another item for consideration is that although students applied to college and appear to be enrolling due to their actions in sending off final transcripts, there is no way to ensure enrollment short of getting information directly from college admission offices. A limitation of the study was the fact that the 26 high school seniors were chosen from a select group meeting the criteria: students of color, low SES, and self-

identifcation as first-generation to be college-bound.

Implications for School Counselors

Implications exist for school counseling departments which desire to partner with privately-funded organizations. First, do these collaborations hurt the integrity of the profession in that it may appear that professional school counselors are not capable of handling the responsibility of preparing students for college? The researcher thinks otherwise. Educating students takes many resources and individuals. Reaching out to stakeholders only strengthens our ability to nurture brighter, more prepared students. Furthermore, partnering with organizations may lead to internships and scholarship opportunities for students that otherwise may not have been available.

Another inference to consider is whether or not relationships between PSCs and the private sector puts public school positions in jeopardy. Will PSCs become obsolete in lieu of consultants who have ready-made programs? The researcher believes otherwise in that PSCs are professionally trained to work with the individual and group needs of all students. PSCs work to develop the whole student. The profession is more than a business—school counselors help build lives.

Finally, PSCs should contemplate the best time in a student's educational career to implement a college access program. Is it too repetitive or do we lose student interest if programs start in elementary or middle school? Are students' minds already made up in high school about their ability to access college therefore making access programs in short "preaching to the choir"? Support exists for such beginnings to happen at the middle school level, yet research shows that college access programs implemented on the high school level can still be effective (Trusty & House, 2004). Often it is the type and intensity of the curriculum and partnerships at this level that can make the difference between the program's success or failure. High school programs should include a component on a college campus or college visits at the minimum, incorporate a mentor program using current college students or college graduates as mentors, assist students with acquiring college applications and financial aid and inform parents every step of the way (Dervarics, 2005; Jacobson, 2004).

Recommendations

The program evaluation did provide data which points to the benefits of a college access program. However, a few clarifications are in order. First, this assessment did not evaluate all of the organization's goals, which included assessing the students' ability to perform and recall the steps needed to apply to a college or university. In order to more rigorously evaluate the program's worth, additional assessments need to be put into place to measure stated goals and objectives. Other assessments may include qualitative data in the form of focus groups, interviews and essays, and will include other program stakeholders such as professional school counselors, parents and volunteers. Second, it is unclear, given the consistent high scores, whether or not the students took the evaluations seriously. In the future, it should be communicated to students the importance of the evaluation forms and how they are designed to assist the school counseling department in planning future programs. Additional time at the conclusion of each workshop may also be needed to help students process the information contained in each session.

Furthermore, it is going to take a collaborative effort on the part of the stakeholders to ensure that access programs such as Collegiate Candidates, Inc. are adequately meeting the needs of the students and increasing the pools of students ready for the collegiate environment. One example is for the PSCs to obtain periodic grade reports from teachers to make certain that the participants are on track to graduate and are meeting minimal academic requirements for the college. In addition, students would benefit from more face time with their counselors, who are aware of policies and procedures related to the college application and access process. Mentors are also needed to work with the students on a one-on-one basis between formal meeting times to ensure that participants have consistent support outside of school. A supplemental training session should be added to the mentoring program to inform mentors about the college application process as well as the barriers that students of color and first-generation students encounter while going through the application process.

A formalized, on-going college access program has been shown to be beneficial in helping students reach higher education. Partnerships between outside firms and school counseling departments represent a unique response to the challenge of meeting the needs of students glaringly underrepresented in U.S. college enrollment figures. However, in order to provide students with the most effective support, more research needs to be done on the types and outcomes of college transition programs and the effectiveness of such programs in helping students

apply to higher education. The researcher presenting this article hopes to fill some of that gap.

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Professional School Counselor Graduates in Georgia: Findings Regarding Numbers

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Abstract

As key players in the school, professional school counselors have many roles and tasks however not all are trained with the same curriculum. In the state of Georgia, school counselor training is becoming more similar than different because all university system programs are mandated by the Board of Regents (BOR) to become accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (*Regent's Principles,* 2004). This article discusses the number of professional school counselor graduates in the state of Georgia and the immediate southeastern area of the United States.

Professional School Counselor Graduates in Georgia: Findings Regarding Their Numbers

School counseling programs are a necessary component of schools and now more than ever, it is easier for professional school counselors (PSCs) to identify and solidify their roles and tasks. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) to ensure training meets current school demands. Additionally, the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) was developed to create a model framework that provides K-12 professional school counselors an appropriate structure to guide their programs with interventions and services for students. Before the ASCA National Model was implemented, the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) became a national perspective. TSCI "became the impetus for seeking and developing the fundamental changes needed to bring the work of school counselors into alignment with the mission of schools for the 21st Century (Martin, 2002, p. 148).

A shared factor in the ASCA National Model, the National Standards, and TSCI is the educational focus which connects school counseling programs to the total school program. In this capacity PSCs along with others are working to fulfill the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) legislation. Professional school counselors are involved in the national standards-based movement and as such, are expected to be accountable for providing comprehensive, developmental programs (Curry & Lambie, 2007).

Georgia is a state focused on school improvement and school counseling programs are highly involved. A few years ago, the Board of Regents (BOR) for the University

System of Georgia decreed that all school counseling programs in the state would be accredited by the largest and most prestigious accrediting body in the nation for counseling programs. This is explicitly explained in the *Regents' Principles and Actions for the Preparation of Educators for the Schools* (2004) section IIB (10) where it states training programs are to "seek and maintain national accreditation for school counseling programs through the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)"(p. 7). CACREP has set the standard for the training of school counselors in the United States and while many programs may aspire to gain this accreditation, not all are supported at the state level similar to Georgia.

The purpose of this article is to share data from a review of reported graduates of school counseling programs throughout the state by American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (both CACREP and non-CACREP accredited). While the comparison data is somewhat outdated, it is the only data that specifically denotes graduates as reported on annual reports by individual colleges and universities. Other reports and manuals (see Clawson, Henderson, Schweiger, & Collins, 2004; Hollis, 1997; Hollis & Dodson, 2000; Hollis & Wantz, 1990, 1994) that note information about counselor education programs, including school counseling programs, report estimates about various aspects of programs and are not published on a regular basis. Additionally the article discusses the BOR mandate for school counseling programs to become CACREP accredited.

Table 1

Universities with School Counseling Programs in Georgia

University Name	CACREP Status
Albany State University	No
Augusta State University	Yes (2006)
Clark Atlanta University	No
Columbus State University	Yes (1997)
Fort Valley State University	No
Georgia Southern University	No
Georgia State University	Yes (1980)
University of West Georgia	Yes (2001)
University of Georgia	Yes (1987)
Valdosta State University	Yes (2008)

Note: The year indicated in parenthesis is the initial year of CACREP accreditation.
Georgia Southern University has a CACREP application in progress.

School Counselor Training Standards

In addition to training school counseling candidates (SCCs) in the areas of academic success, career preparation, and social emotional development, PSCs in the 21st Century must be trained to meet multiple demands. These include being advocates for social justice (Bailey, Getch, & Chen-Hayes, 2007; House & Martin, 1999; Phillips, Sears, Snow, & Jackson, 2005), bridging the gap and helping with the education of low income children (Amatea & West-Olantunji, 2007), developing diversity training for school personnel (McFarland & Dupuis, 2001), and using and understanding data that effectively demonstrates changes in student behavior and in academics (Stone & Dahir, 2007). PSCs must be thoroughly educated to effectively meet these demands.

School counseling programs are involved with many systems within the school including students, parents/caregivers, faculty and administration, community and other stakeholders. PSCs are expected to develop and evaluate a comprehensive program that meets many demands but particularly those of their students in the areas of academic achievement, career preparedness, and social/emotional development. With all that PSCs are expected to do and are accountable for within the school, system, and state, the need for strong counselor education training programs is imperative.

National and State Standards

Training standards within the counseling profession have been outlined by CACREP since 1981. With the National Standards for School Counseling Programs, the ASCA National Model, credentialing through various boards including the National Board for Counselor Certification (NBCC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), it might seem that school counselor candidates (SCCs) are trained with the same knowledge, skills, and strategies for their future careers. But can we indeed assume that all SCCs are trained in a like manner with equal skills? Can we expect that all SCCs are educated with similar curricula? Do all SCCs perform the same tasks at their sites in the same manner? In the state of Georgia when the BOR mandate for CACREP accreditation is completed *(Regent's Principles, 2004),* the difference in answers to these questions should be negligible. The importance of graduating well-trained PSCs is further heightened when one looks at the large number of professional school counselors needed in Georgia.

Inducting Professional School Counselors

Coupled with Georgia's efforts to standardize training, another mandate by the BOR is the induction of professional school counselors into the career in a professional and systematic manner *(Regent's Principles, 2004)*. This focus on induction originated with TSCI. The new vision of school counseling on increased academic achievement "acknowledged the role of counselors as change agents and advocates for the removal of barriers that impede student success". Appropriate support and guidance within the profession for these transformed professional school counselors who are eager to apply their knowledge and skills is critical as they enter the field yet the challenge to many novice PSCs is instituting this new focus into an environment not always fully supporting these transforming principles (Jackson, et al., 2002, p. 177). Additionally counselor education programs are challenged to induct PSCs into the profession when sometimes the number of school counselor graduates is much larger than faculty members are equipped to handle. Thus, it is especially important that counselor education programs work with PSCs in the field to help with this induction.

Challenges to CACREP Accredited Programs

There is a dearth of literature related to graduates of CACREP versus non-CACREP accredited programs and much of it is outdated. Bobby and Kandor (1992) note one of the purposes of CACREP accreditation is to promote quality. Their study investigated barriers programs identified that kept them from seeking CACREP accreditation. Their findings included barriers of the 600 clock-hour internship and the student-to-faculty ratios set by CACREP. Other identified concerns were the 48 semester hour program (72 hour quarter), the requirement of a minimum of 2 full-time faculty members (currently 3 full-time faculty members) in an individual program, and the 20-1 (now 10-1) advisor/advisee ratio. Although few accredited programs reported any major difficulty meeting the above criteria, sometimes financial and faculty support for the accreditation process can be challenging to acquire.

Akos and Scarborough (2004) examined internships for preservice counselors, which CACREP considers, along with practica, to be the most demanding experiences in a counselor education program. Both CACREP accredited and non-CACREP programs were investigated. Using a qualitative analysis of internship program syllabi, Akos

and Scarborough found vast disparities in expectations for interns during these clinical experiences yet within CACREP internships, programs creatively handle these experiences in individual manners all the while adhering to the standards.

Within the review of the literature, no investigations were located specifically addressing the number of school counseling graduates from CACREP and non-CACREP accredited programs. Thus this study was instituted.

Method

The collection of data for this study was based on a review, analysis, and compilation of information found in various directories of members from 1995 to 2002 published by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). Part of each directory is an analysis of the productivity at AACTE member institutions. These member institutions and colleges submit an annual report through the AACTE/NCATE Professional Education Data System and information is presented for teachers, administrators, and school counselors. The data is about 2 years old when published in each directory so information found in the 2002 directory is actually reporting data from 2000. After the 2002 directory information for counseling is not identified specifically but is grouped under "advanced" programs. Information about school counseling graduates (or completers as used by AACTE), was available only through the 2002 directory.

Results

Using this database from AACTE, every college or university reporting school counseling graduates (completers) was identified. The identification of accreditation status by CACREP was then established for each reporting institution. Those that were accredited by CACREP were identified with the year accreditation was granted. In the analysis of data, only graduates who completed the school counseling program during or after the year accredited were considered CACREP graduates. Thus, an institution may have both graduates from a CACREP program and graduates from a non-CACREP program. Only institutions with school counseling programs in the state of Georgia are reported within this article.

Georgia School Counseling Programs

Currently there are 10 universities that have school counseling programs in the state of Georgia (Table 1). Not including on-line programs, there is one private institution (Clark Atlanta University) with a school counseling program. Only six (6) universities currently have CACREP accreditation while others are in various stages of progress. For example, Georgia Southern University has its application in progress (CACREP, 2008b). Georgia State University was the first program to acquire CACREP status in 1981 while the University of Georgia followed in 1987. It was not until a decade later in 1997 that Columbus State University acquired CACREP status. The University of West Georgia became accredited in 2001 and Augusta State University acquired CACREP status in 2006 (CACREP, 2008a). More recently, Valdosta State University was awarded accreditation in 2008 (T. Cunningham, personal communication, August 8, 2008). Those universities which do not have an application in progress for CACREP accreditation status at this time in Georgia include Albany State University, Clark Atlanta University, and Fort Valley State University.

The total graduates of school counseling programs in the state of Georgia approximates 2,276 for the years 1995-2000 (AACTE, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) and individual program numbers for these reporting years range from 33 graduates at Albany State University to a high of 620 from the University of West Georgia (UWG)(Table 2). This high number of graduates from UWG occurred prior to the university receiving CACREP accreditation. While this data is not the most current (it is the only data available), it gives an idea about graduates.

Top Ten Graduating Programs in the Southern ACES Region

As a comparison, looking at the Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) region, the top 10 producing universities with school counseling graduates from both CACREP accredited programs and programs that are not CACREP accredited for these (1995-2000) years include: Western Kentucky University (non-CACREP), University of West Georgia (CACREP), University of South Carolina (CACREP), Prairie View A&M University (non-CACREP), Eastern Kentucky University (CACREP), Georgia Southern University (non-CACREP), University of Georgia (CACREP), University of South Florida (non-CACREP), Morehead

Table 2

School Counselor Graduates by Number in Programs in Georgia (1995-2000)

University	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	Total
Albany State University	4	14	-	14	1	-	0	-	33
Augusta State University	12	11	24	10	29	24	16	19	145
Clark Atlanta University	-	-	-	32	-	21	36	1	90
Columbus State University	3	10	18	9	8	8	8	1	65
Fort Valley State University	25	16	-	50	31	8	5	11	146
Georgia Southern University	35	52	74	46	38	88	48	46	427
Georgia State University	72	11	44	31	44	22	53	72	349
University of West Georgia	13	38	53	94	96	116	112	98	620
University of Georgia	64	69	31	35	66	33	59	44	401
Subtotal	**228**	**221**	**244**	**321**	**313**	**320**	**337**	**292**	**2276**

Note: These numbers represent the totals as reported to AACTE in a given year. They may not reflect actual numbers for each year as a university may collapse data and report numbers at different time frames.

Table 3

SACES Top Producing School Counseling Programs
Top Ten Universities (1995-2002)

University Name	N	X
Western Kentucky University	931	116
University of West Georgia	620	78
University of South Carolina	602	75
Prairie View A&M University	517	65
Eastern Kentucky University	449	56
Georgia Southern University	427	53
University of Georgia	401	50
University of South Florida	375	47
Morehead State University	367	46
Georgia State University	349	44

NOTE: These numbers represent the totals as reported to AACTE in a given year. They may not reflect actual numbers for each year as a university may collapse data and report numbers at different time frames.

State University (non-CACREP), and Georgia State University (CACREP) (see Table 3 for numbers of graduates) (CACREP, 2008a; AACTE 1995-2002) Five of these top producers have attained CACREP status while the other five programs are not/were not accredited at the time.

Discussion

The mandate by the BOR of the University System of Georgia (*Regent's Principals*, 2004) calling for all school counseling programs to attain CACREP accreditation in the near future works to strengthen school counseling programs in the state of Georgia and positions the state to be a national model. Additionally, the BOR is clearly foresighted about the importance of programs that teach the same type of curriculum. Similarities in curricula allow school counselors throughout the state and southern region to develop similar comprehensive programs that help P-12 students in the areas of academic achievement, career preparedness, and social/emotional development.

It is interesting to note that the various items Bobby and Kandor (1992) noted as keeping programs from seeking CACREP accreditation are those that tend to make programs outstanding due to the curriculum standards, the low number of advisees, and the clinical supervision. Accreditation standards also allow graduates to develop exceptional comprehensive guidance programs because they have learned to align their programs to academic achievement, career preparedness, and social/emotional development. The 600 clock-hour internship plus a 100 clock-hour Practicum gives graduates a minimum of 700 clock-hours of work in a school under the direct supervision of a site supervisor. This 2-semester (or longer) clinical experience was considered the most critical experience of counseling programs (Akos & Scarborough, 2004). It is expected that programs throughout the state with similar curricula will graduate professional school counselors who are capable of developing similar comprehensive school counseling programs. The student-to-faculty ratios, advisor/advisee ratio along with the minimum of two full-time faculty acts to keep classes small and offers the opportunity to get school counseling candidates' needs met while in the program. While accredited programs found little difficulty meeting CACREP standards in the Akos and Scarborough study, programs that are not accredited do not realize the impact these standards set.

With 10 school counseling programs at institutions in the state of Georgia, six of these with CACREP accreditation and others focused on achieving this premier accreditation, school counseling programs in the state will improve their training. Adhering to CACREP standards will benefit P-12 students in the state of Georgia because similar curricula will ensure school counselors throughout the state develop similar comprehensive programs. Thus, the areas of academic achievement, career preparedness, and social/emotional development as mandated by ASCA and BOR to meet the counseling needs of P-12 students in the state of Georgia are accomplished.

Georgia also has two school counseling programs that were awarded TSCI grants (University of Georgia and University of West Georgia) and graduates of these programs are helping to transform school counseling programs within their districts. Other university training programs in Georgia have also adopted the TSCI arenas into their work. The ASCA National Model and Standards for School Counseling Programs have been incorporated into many training programs as well as in the comprehensive guidance programs in individual schools and systems. It appears the state of Georgia's PSC graduates are working to better meet the needs of our children and training programs are involved in making changes. By mandating that programs become CACREP accredited, the Georgia BOR (*Regent's Principals, 2004)* is working to ensure that future professional school counselors are highly-trained and prepared to face the multiple demands in schools today.

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Blurring Boundaries: Promoting Resiliency Among African American Girls
A review of the book *Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms*

by Venus E. Evans-Winters

Reviewed by Leann F. Logsdon

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"Will you be my mentor?"

I have been asked this question hundreds of times over the course of my teaching career and my glib response of "Oh, darling, I'm everyone's mentor" always seemed adequate. After reading *Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms* by Venus E. Evans-Winters (2005), I am less comfortable with my answer. The ease with which I previously have dismissed personal mentoring requests indicates that I have been underestimating the importance of my role as a source of support in my students' lives. This review summarizes ways educators can promote resiliency in their African American female students based on the research findings of a recent ethnographic study.

Research Summary

From the opening chapter, Evans-Winters (2005) made it clear that she conducted this ethnography as a participant-observer. Her participants' words convey such powerful meaning because Evans-Winters herself had experienced life at the same intersection of race, gender, and class as the three girls she observed. The author wrote, "As a young girl, I attended high school in a majority Black low-income and working-class neighborhood" (p. 2). The question of why some girls overcome many of the social barriers that affect school achievement while others do not became the researcher's fore grounded problem.

Gaps in the Literature

As Evans-Winters began to review the literature to find out how those students who stay in school are able to survive oppressive barriers related to race, class, and gender, she discovered that "most of the literature on African American female students focused on pathology and deficits, e.g., [*sic*] school dropout and teenage pregnancy" (p.3). She decided to frame her research in terms of a strength-based perspective, moving beyond the five basic "W" questions ("who," "what," "where," "when," "why") to deeper, process questions ("what is happening," "what are people doing," "what does it mean to them"). The result is a hopeful study that never tries to go beyond its research scope. After clearly stating her research goal was "to inform theory and practice that speaks to agency and resiliency in urban classrooms" (p. 13), Evans-Winters explains that "the findings presented in this book examine the school experiences of individual girls in a small city and cannot be generalized beyond the individual women's stories, families, communities, or schools" (p.19).

The researcher organized the literature review in a cohesive and understandable manner, highlighting findings on resiliency from the past 2 decades. The gaps in the literature led her to pose six research questions:

"(a) What are the coping strategies of the most resilient students? (b) What factors contribute to students staying in school? (c) When are students at their most resilient? (d) What are the historical, economic, and political conditions in which the students are experiencing schooling? (e) How do African American female students cope, resist, or

buffer adversity? and (f) How can educators apply these findings to the urban classroom?" (pp. 4-5).

This last question prompted me to reflect on my own praxis as a White school counselor in a school in which over 97% of the students are African American. I serve pre-kindergarten through third grade, so when I consider my school of over 900 students, I am forced to take a hard look at how I am supporting resiliency among the 200 girls whom I teach and guide.

Theoretical Perspective and Research Design

Evans-Winters adopted a theoretical stance that merges the tenets of postmodernism with those of Black feminism. Simply put, she refused to reduce her participants' experiences into tidy categories and acknowledged that there is not one monolithic Black experience into which her participants could be neatly placed. Indeed, the process of ethnography can be messy at times, but the researcher's honesty with her participants and with her readers allows the themes associated with resiliency to emerge.

As a former arts educator, I understand how collecting stories can produce a rich source of data for ethnographic research. Just as plays and novels tell truths, so do the narrative portraits Evans-Winters created in her sections on each of the three participants. From my background in theatre and music, I see tremendous value in interpreting how people perform culture. The researcher, as a woman of color, made a valid point about how her experiences allowed her to bring to her research insider knowledge of the how, when, and why of human behavior in particular situations. I find that my arts training and background in counseling also provide me with a unique sensitivity to the subtleties of social interaction. Indeed, in order to enter into our students' worlds where boundaries are often blurred, it becomes increasingly important to become astute interpreters of cultural meaning in all its textual forms.

The researcher gained tremendous insight by following the same girls over a 3-year period beginning in eighth grade and continuing through sophomore year in high school. She was able to understand more fully how resiliency is a process tied to emotional, physical, and intellectual development. She observed how the girls constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed resiliency over time as they negotiated the rites of passage of adolescence. I agree that the longitudinal design was appropriate in providing valuable data to inform theory and practice on resiliency.

The Participants

Nicole. Although Nicole did not talk until the age of 10, she now eagerly told her story, celebrating the gift of voice. She lived with two older brothers and her maternal grandmother, to whom she referred as mother. The surrounding neighborhood was an unsafe environment, and Nicole's grandmother did not let her leave the house. Evans-Winters pointed out that to Nicole race was real and was attached to privilege and power. The most important buffer against the stressor of race was the support of the female caregiver, in this case, Nicole's grandmother, to whom she was very close in looks and in temperament. She missed her one African American teacher from middle school, a female, and was happy when she met a second African American female teacher in high school. Nicole appreciated the fact that these teachers understood her culture. She turned to both female caregivers and female teachers for support, thus blurring the boundaries between home and school.

The agency demonstrated by Nicole and the other two participants in seeking out their own sources of support relates to interactions with my students. My most successful interventions have been those in which I have built on the strong attachment between my students and their female caregivers, including mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and sisters. Evans-Winters pointed out that among African American families, fictive kin, that is, close family friends, often step into the support role. Expanding narrow definitions of family represents another way that blurring boundaries can strengthen home-school networks of support for students.

Besides her two teachers, Nicole found other sources of support at school. She joined Junior ROTC to be around positive young people and have the chance to compete. Because she wanted to be a teacher working with special needs children, Nicole also sought out activities in the community to help on this path. She worked at the Boys and Girls Club as a paid tutor and became involved at church. Nicole demonstrated agency in seeking out supportive activities, a trait associated with resiliency**.** Evans-Winters effectively argued that, based on the data, it makes little difference to resilient girls which entity sponsors the activities; the boundaries between school and community are blurred.

Zora. Zora and Nicole exhibited resiliency in strikingly similar ways. Like Nicole, Zora decided to join JROTC because she believed it would give her leadership experience, and she also worried about making good grades. Zora,

however, was only moderately attached to her school. She expressed much anger toward discipline practices she observed at her school, such as the implementation of a restrictive dress code and the requirement to wear student ID tags on campus. Zora was outraged that students at her school were subject to these restrictions even though schools in other parts of the district did not have those same policies. Structural racism was very real to the participants.

Zora remained extremely focused on her goals, dropping friends when she found out they were "phony." She occasionally got into trouble with her mother, but like Nicole, Zora objectified herself as a "good girl." Based on the themes emerging from the girls' stories, resiliency is associated with having a high internal locus of control.

Yssis. "Smart-bad girl." "Tough-smart girl." Those are two labels school officials used to describe Yssis. In the top 15% of her class sophomore year, Yssis often became upset and argumentative with her teachers. Evans-Winters interpreted her tough façade as a strategy she adopted to counter overwhelming stressors associated with race, class, and gender that she faced each day. Yssis spoke about smart family members who helped her with school work. Like Nicole and Zora, her mother was her primary source of support, although she also looked up to her older sister, had a long-term mentoring relationship with a female teacher, and joined a girls' club for support. Resiliency is evident in the decisions the participants made as they found ways to foster supportive interpersonal relationships.

Yssis communicated quite effectively that she knew exactly what she had to do to reach her goals. She was cognizant of the work she had to put in to pass the 8th grade test, she knew what and whom she wanted to avoid, and she knew where to turn for support in her family, at school, and in the community. In short, Yssis, like the other resilient girls in the study, showed persistence and tenacity.

Implications for School Counselors

The participants in this study demonstrated high levels of educational resiliency in the ways they successfully dealt with stressors in their neighborhoods and schools. Evans-Winters urges educators to take a new view of African American girls by acknowledging their persistence, tenacity, and tremendous sense of personal agency in defining and reaching their goals. School counselors in particular should note that resilient girls access sources of support in their families, schools, and communities simultaneously, especially since we work to strengthen connections among all three. One of the most interesting conclusions Evans-Winters reached is that stressors and support systems can work bidirectionally. For example, difficult school assignments prompted Yssis to turn to her family for help even though her family members often caused her considerable stress. One crucial way school counselors can promote resiliency is by being available to assist girls – and boys – when they seek help. Above all, students need and want the support of adults who respect, acknowledge, and appreciate their raced, classed, and gendered experiences.

Because the female caregiver is the primary source of support for Black girls, Evans-Winters recommended that they be welcomed more openly and directly into schools, along with members of the circle of related and non-related female "family" members who already provide girls support as mentors and muses. This is clearly an area where school counselors can play a leadership role in promoting resiliency. We might also consider joining the author in urging policymakers to promote more research and funding for programs that eradicate the boundaries that artificially separate family (in its widest context), community, and school.

Concluding Reflection

I see several practical ways in which I can improve my school counseling praxis to better support resiliency among my female students. For example, as chair of the Student Support Team (SST), I facilitate weekly meetings that bring together the school psychologist, social worker, teachers, and parents to discuss ways to support individual students. Referrals are typically initiated by the teacher and focus on areas of deficit in the academic, behavioral, or social domains. Based on the findings in *Teaching Black Girls*, I am going to insist that the team design intervention plans that emphasize students' strengths and resiliency rather than their deficiencies. I also want to pay particular attention to the importance of our female caregivers, whose own resiliency is often overlooked. In addition, I plan to refine my individual and group counseling interventions in light of what I have learned about the bidirectionality of supports and stressors.

As a member of the arts leadership team, I am continually astounded by the power of the arts to transform students' lives. What better way to give our girls a voice and a sense of personal agency than through the arts! Music,

theatre, visual art, and dance are powerful vehicles for developing and sustaining resiliency because they allow students to further blur the boundaries separating family, school, and community while affirming their individual core strengths. With *Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms*, Evans-Winters has succeeded in writing a hopeful yet realistic ethnography that challenges us to rethink our roles as professional school counselors.

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