

2013

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Volume 5, Number 1

Edina Renfro-Michel

Montclair State University, jcpsnaraces@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.wcsu.edu/jcps>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), and the [Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Renfro-Michel, E. (2013). The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Volume 5, Number 1. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 5(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.2013>

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Volume 5, Number 1

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

Volume 5, Number 1
Editor: Edina Renfro-Michel

Spring, 2013
ISSN 2164-3288
DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/00.5277>

The Journal of Counselor Preparation & Supervision



**Official Journal of the
North Atlantic Regional Association for Counselor Education and Supervision**

Editor

Edina Renfro-Michel
Montclair State University

Assistant Editors

Jonathan Mazza
Jennifer Midura
Jessica Spera
Montclair State University

Editorial Board

Vanessa Alleyne
Montclair State University
Jenine Bernard
Syracuse University
Ford Brooks
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania
Larry Burlew
Montclair State University
Beverly Burnell
Plattsburg State University
William Casile
Duquesne University
Stuart Chen-Hayes
Lehman College
Kim Desmond
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Kathryn Douthit
Rochester University
Deborah Drew
Husson University
Louisa Foss-Kelly
Southern Connecticut State University
Harriet Glosoff
Montclair State University
Michael Hannon
Penn State University
Diana Hulse
Fairfield University
Jelane Kennedy
The College of Saint Rose

Leslie Kooyman
Montclair State University
Dana Levitt
Montclair State University
Gabriel Lomas
Western Connecticut State University
Gary McClain
Montclair State University
Elizabeth McDonald
Walden University
Cheryl Notari
Montclair State University
Eva Reed
Walden University
Catherine Roland
Montclair State University
Susan Seem
SUNY Brockport
Angela Sheely-Moore
Montclair State University
Matthew Shurts
Montclair State University
David J. Tobin
Gannon University
Marie Wilson
Caldwell College
Jane Webber
New Jersey City University
Tyler Wilkinson
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

The mission of the *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision* is to provide a high quality platform for research, theory and practices of counselor educators, counselor supervisors and professional counselors. We believe the journal chronicles current issues, concerns and potential solutions that enable counselors to continue to grow and develop as practitioners, educators and human beings. The journal publishes high-quality articles that have undergone a thorough and extensive blind peer-review.

There are six general categories that help focus the content of the journal.

Research. These articles focus on research (qualitative, quantitative, mixed) in counselor preparation, professional development, supervision, and professional practice.

Techniques. These articles focus on professional models for teaching empirically grounded techniques used by professional counselors, as well as teaching and supervision techniques used in professional preparation programs.

Counselor Development. These articles include insightful commentary on means by which professional counselors can continue to develop professionally. Effective teaching strategies for counseling students as well as continuing education for experienced counselors will be highlighted.

Supervision. These articles specifically target ideas, research, and practice related to counselor supervision. These articles should investigate and discuss supervisory issues from a perspective applicable to site supervisors, counselor educators and/or clinical supervisors (e.g., supervising professionals working toward a professional counseling license).

Issues, Concerns and Potential Solutions. These articles identify and discuss significant issues facing the field of professional counseling with particular focus on issues in counselor preparation, professional development, and supervision. Exploration of these topics should include elaboration of the concerns as well as an examination of potential remedies or effective responses to the issues.

Clinical Supervisors Stories. These articles describe current issues in counselor preparation and supervision from the perspective of site supervisors. The emphasis on these articles should focus on the story of the issue, potential solutions and the uniqueness of the message. Authors are encouraged to forgo significant literature review and attend directly to the intended message to the field.

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision is an EBSCOHost and ProQuest affiliated journal. It is indexed under the Education Research Complete database.

Submission Guidelines:

Because JCPS is an on-line journal, all correspondence and submissions are electronic. Authors are to submit manuscripts in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), or rich text format (.rtf). We do not accept Macintosh or WordPerfect formats. Submissions to the journal should be sent to:

JCPSNARACES@gmail.com

Please use the following guidelines to attend to the details of manuscript submission.

1. All manuscripts must be the original, unpublished work of the authors. We do not accept manuscripts that are currently under review with other journals. The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision retains copyright ownership of all works published in said journal.
2. The editor of the journal will review each manuscript submitted. Once accepted for further review, the manuscript will be sent to at least two additional editorial board review members. Comments, suggestions and edits will be sent to authors. Authors and reviewers will remain anonymous during the process.
3. Manuscripts are not to exceed 30 pages.
4. The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision uses APA style. Authors must adhere to the 6th edition of the APA formatting and style. Manuscripts that do not utilize the APA 6th edition will not be considered for review.
5. All manuscripts should use 12-point Arial font, be double spaced including references and extensive quotes, allow 1" margins on all sides, and include an abstract of no more than 150 words.
6. All manuscripts must include keywords/phrases (between 5 and 10).
7. Manuscripts should follow this order (title page, key words, abstract, body, references, tables and figures, and, a brief biographical statement on each author).
8. For blind review, authors are to submit the title page as a separate document and should not have their names on the submitted manuscript.
9. The journal strives to return feedback and comments on submitted manuscripts in a timely fashion. In most cases, the lead author will be notified within 1 week of the receipt of the manuscript; the lead author will be notified as to the decision of the journal within 3 months of acknowledgement of receipt of manuscript. All correspondence will be between the editor of the journal and the lead author of the manuscript.

Permissions:

Copyright is held by the North Atlantic Regional Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES). NARACES grants reproduction rights to teachers, researchers and libraries for scholarly purposes on the condition that no fee for use or possession of copies is charged to the ultimate consumer of the copies.

Publication:

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision is published bi-annually (April and October). Subscription is provided free of charge.

NARACES Membership:

Benefits include:

- The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision
- Conferences
- Newsletters
- Networking
- Leadership Opportunities

Dues (paid bi-annually):

Professional Member \$32 (\$16 per year)

Student Member \$10 (\$5 per year)

First Year Professional \$16 (Free first year, \$16 second year)

Retired Professional FREE!

Dues are collected for 2 years of membership. During even numbered years (i.e., 2010, 2012) NARACES holds its bi-annual conference. Your membership will expire the month of the conference. For your convenience, membership dues can be renewed as part of our regional conference registration fee. For more information or to join NARACES, visit us on the web at:

<http://www.naraces.org/index.html>

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

April 2013 Volume 5 Number 1

Editorial

Edina Renfro-Michel

Featured Articles

Research

Are Middle School Counseling Programs Meeting Early Adolescent Needs? A Survey of Principals and Counselors, Suzanne McCotter & Sarah Cohen

Professional Impairment and Gatekeeping: A Survey of Master's Level Training Programs, Mikal Crawford & Paula Gilroy

Counselor Education

Creative Group Strategies for Interviewing Applicants for Counselor Education Programs, Jacqueline M. Swank & Sondra Smith-Adcock

The Perceived Value of Counselor Preparation for Student Affairs Professionals, Jake J. Protivnak, Matthew J. Paylo, & J. Carol Mercer

Student Goal Statements for the Experiential Learning Group, David J. Tobin, Shannon L. Brown, & Kalyn E. Carney

© 2013 by the North Atlantic Regional Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. All rights reserved.

Editorial

In this edition of JCPS we included articles focusing on research and practice in counselor education. As per the mission of the journal, we welcome all submissions in the following categories: research, techniques, counselor development, supervision issues, informed practice, clinical supervisor's stories, and book reviews related to counselor education and supervision.

Two of our articles are empirically based. McCotter and Cohen used the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and National Middle School Association (NMSA) standards as a basis for investigating how well middle schools are meeting the specific needs of their students. The findings, while not surprising, have not been documented in literature. It is apparent that administrators and counselors have different beliefs about students' needs and accommodate those needs differently, and we might not be meeting the career needs of our students. Crawford and Gilroy surveyed counseling and psychology programs to determine the type of gatekeeping practices being utilized including pre-admission screening, student evaluations, utilizing personal growth experiences, and remediation of impaired students.

Our practice articles provide information for counselor educators to inform our work. Swank and Smith-Adcock provide counselor educators with a thorough literature review on pre-admission screening and provide group interview technique examples to facilitate the gatekeeping process. Protivnak, Pahlo and Mercer provide an argument for why Higher Education/Student Affairs Master's students should be trained as counselors. They compare the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards with a solid foundation of professional literature to determine the specific areas that should be address in counselor education higher education programs. Tobin, Brown and Carney utilized Group Dynamics student experiences to develop positive goal statements for counselor-in-training experiential groups. These goals can be used as examples for future students, and may provide structure for experiential student groups.

As editor, I want to thank all of the dedicated reviewers who responded quickly to everything asked of them, and helped to produce high quality manuscripts for JCPS. I also thank my wonderful Editorial Assistants: Jonathan Mazza, Jennifer Midura, and Jessica Spera. They spend endless hours organizing the process, working with reviewers and authors, editing articles, and putting everything together. Additionally, I thank the NARACES Board for giving me the opportunity to continue to share practical research and knowledge with our members by appointing me as editor of the *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, and Montclair State University for providing support for our journal.

Edina Renfro-Michel, **Editor**

Are Middle School Counseling Programs Meeting Early Adolescent Needs? A Survey of Principals and Counselors

Suzanne McCotter & Sarah Cohen

This article explores the needs of middle school students in regards to how their school provides for their academic, career, personal, and social development. School counselors and administrators in the state of New Jersey completed an online survey that explored how well their programs attend to the needs of their students and the guidelines set forth by the American School Counselor Association. A discussion is provided which explores multiple aspects of the data. The authors explore the perceptions of respondents on their guidance program's effect on students. The relationship between the counselor's and administrator's perceptions is also discussed.

Keywords: Middle school, school counselor, administrators, American School Counseling Association, counseling programs, academic needs, career needs, social needs, personal needs

The needs of early adolescents in our society are paramount; teens and tweens must learn about themselves, relationships, safety, and school. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends that school counseling programs meet student needs in three broad areas: Academic Development, Career Development, and Social/Personal Development (2004). These standards dovetail with the needs of adolescents laid out by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) in the 4th edition of their position paper, *This We Believe* (2010). Namely, the needs of middle school students which should be attended to in schools that serve 4th through 8th graders include: physical development, cognitive-intellectual development, moral development, psychological development, and social-emotional development.

This research examines the perceptions of middle school counselors and administrators in the state of New Jersey about the overall counseling program in their schools, particularly focused on how well programs meet the needs of students and the ASCA guidelines. An online survey sent to all practitioners in these categories focused on these research questions:

1. In what areas do counselors and administrators feel like they are meeting the needs of students?
2. Do middle schools counseling programs tend to focus on some ASCA-recommended areas more than others?
3. What attributes contribute to the success of schools meeting ASCA guidelines?

Literature Review

Meeting the needs of middle school students often falls on the shoulders of school guidance counselors, who ideally work in collaboration with administrators to best serve

adolescent students. Studies in the area of middle school counseling programs describe programs and their success rates. To support counselors and schools in meeting student needs, the American School Counselor Association has a set of standards and a national model for their implementation, including accountability and evaluation measures. Since the standards' publication in 2004, research has focused on the extent to which they impact the lives of students.

Academic Needs

Several studies show that counseling programs with focuses on group counseling (Brigman & Campbell, 2003), goal setting and progress monitoring (Cook & Kaffenberger, 2003), career (Fouad, 1995), and mentoring (Lampley & Johnson, 2010) positively impact student achievement. Such studies typically have examined the impact of counseling programs on student achievement as measured by standardized tests and grades. Schools that deliberately focus on implementation of ASCA's standards for five or more years show significantly better academic performance than schools that do not (Sink, Akos, Turnbull & Mvuddud, 2008).

A connection between social development and academic development is also apparent in the literature, as programs typically associated with improving students' social and personal growth lead to additional benefits in the area of academic achievement. Examples link book club groups to increased reading indicators (Whittingham & Huffman, 2009), social support and parent involvement to reduced dropout rates (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009), and group interventions to achievement test scores (Campbell & Brigman, 2005).

Career Needs

Effective career counseling programs in middle schools, while more general than the targeted programs found in high schools, help provide students with early exposure to identifying their interests and aptitudes. Such programs often give students opportunities to sample relevant and challenging work, including opportunities to work or volunteer in businesses (Maddy-Bernstein & Dare, 1999).

The influence of career programs in middle school is often measured by examining survey data regarding student perceptions. The programs that are structured in systematic and integrated ways have shown increases in student confidence (Chaplin, Bleeker, & Booker, 2010), career maturity and attitude (Legum & Hoare, 2004), and school engagement (Perry, Xiongyi & Pabian, 2010).

Social and Personal Needs

Middle school counseling interventions that successfully address social and personal development include problem solving (Hall, Rushing & Owens, 2009), strategies to deal with bullying (Young et al., 2009), and cultural awareness (Bernier, 1995). After-school programs, service learning, and various group strategies have all contributed to effectively supporting students in their social, emotional and moral development.

The success of these initiatives is often measured by examining student perceptions about social and personal indicators. Other measures include the frequency of disciplinary referrals (Hall, Rushing & Owens, 2009) and academic achievement (Stott & Jackson, 2005).

ASCA National Model

Several studies have connected the success of counseling programs with the perceptions of counselors about the implementation of ASCA standards and their self-reported work distribution. Counselors in high-achieving schools tend to spend more time than their counterparts in low-achieving schools on program management and evaluation, maintenance of professional standards, and coordination of activities (Fitch & Marshall, 2004). In terms of counselor preferences, counselors who indicated that they attempted to incorporate the ASCA standards into their work were more likely to be practicing in their preferred way (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Finally, a survey of middle school counselors also revealed their collective belief that their participation in school-level activities related to academic and social achievement are important to the overall health of a school, as well as the alignment of the counseling program with standards (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008). This connection between the administration of the school-as-a-whole and the success of counseling programs bears further investigation. In this descriptive study, both middle school principals and counselors provide perceptions about the success of meeting the developmental needs of the adolescents they serve.

Methodology

Every middle school counselor and principal in New Jersey was invited by e-mail to participate in a twenty-minute survey using the online tool Survey Monkey. After multiple reminders, 123 participants completed the survey. Of that number, 53.6% work as school counselors, 16.2% are school principals, and 30.2% did not indicate their position. The greatest number of respondents indicated that their school is in a suburban area (80.6%), followed by rural (13.8%), and urban (5.4%). The size of the school ranged from fewer than 200 students to over 600 students. Each school had between one and four counselors (see Table A1).

Each respondent was asked to complete an online survey (see Appendix B) which focused on the programs in place to meet the needs of middle school students; the extent to which academic, career, personal, and social needs of those students were being met; and the involvement of various stakeholders in program development and implementation.

Most questions consisted of Likert scale responses on a 4-point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which a particular statement was true of their school. Additional open-ended questions sought information about the typical types of programs offered in the school setting. After the data had been collected, SPSS was used for quantitative, descriptive analysis. Qualitative responses were coded and categorized.

Findings

Fifty-two percent of respondents feel that most or all of student needs are being met by existing programs. The percentage declined in respect to career needs, with 37.5% of respondents perceiving that most or all of student needs are met by existing programs. Personal needs are perceived as a relative strength, with 60.2% of participants believing that most or all of student needs are met. 51.3% of participants feel that most or all social needs are met. Table A2 depicts in greater detail the extent to which participants believe student needs are being met. Respondents perceive that counseling programs are best meeting the needs of students in terms

of personal and social development, while meeting fewer of their academic and career needs. In some cases, differences exist between the perceptions of counselors and administrators (see Table A3). The largest discrepancy was in the area of career needs, where counselors see more needs than administrators.

Participants were also asked to reflect on the specific ways in which school counseling programs meet the needs of students in their schools. The detailed questions were taken from subgroups within the four key areas of the ASCA standards. An additional question in each category prompted participants to list specific programs that meet student needs.

The Likert scale nature of the questions allowed us to quantify responses and develop mean scores for each, using the following key for ordinal categories, using a typical sample response:

- Students have not acquired those needs = 0
- Students have acquired some of those needs = 1
- Students have acquired most of those needs = 2
- Students have acquired all of those needs = 3

Means, then, could range from 0 to 3, with higher means indicating perceptions of stronger aspects of programs.

Academic Needs

In terms of student's academic needs, means of participant responses range from 1.83 (relationship of academics to life at home) to 1.39 (attitude toward learning outside of school) (see Table A4). The greatest variance was found in the relationship of academics to the world of work, which links perceived academic needs to perceived career needs.

In the open-ended question, respondents discussed programs developed within their schools that address the academic needs of the students. Some of the most popular programs revolve around tutoring and teaching skills to students so that they become better equipped to deal with academic demands. Tutoring programs involve extra help from teachers or student tutors. Respondents noted how these programs can be beneficial to at-risk students or gifted students. Homework clubs are also created in which students are given a time after school and a mentor to help get homework done. Additionally, study skills and organizational skills are taught to students. The skills provided are both preventative and remedial. Academic programs delivered by counselors are somewhat balanced between individual, small group, and whole class models.

Career Needs

Overall, the area of career needs has lower means than the ones for academic needs, ranging from 1.51 (strategies to achieve career goals to gain satisfaction) to 1.13 (skills to investigate the world of work) (see Table A5). Variables related to knowledge are less strongly rated than variables related to employing strategies.

Although there were fewer specific examples of career programs in participants' open-ended responses than other categories, respondents shared the career development programs that are offered at their middle schools. Programs target career exploration, career education, career planning, and career development. Much of the career development that respondents considered

includes individual sessions with students. Career planning also includes career days where students are educated on various possible careers. Interest inventories are used by schools to aid in the exploration of student interests as well. Counselors also offer high school preparation and future course selection to try to link the student's interests with future career choices.

Social and Personal Needs

Personal and social needs, combined in the ASCA standards rank higher than either academic or career needs (see Table A6). The highest mean is 1.94 (understand safety and survival skills) and the lowest is 1.62 (interpersonal skills to understand and respect self and others). Again, the cognitive areas, related to understanding, rank lower than the variables regarding setting goals and taking action, which are more applied areas.

Participants had several examples of the types of programs in their schools that meet the personal and social needs of students. Social and personal programs include teaching students about tolerance and diversity, bullying prevention, anger, anxiety and stress management, and support groups. A popular type of program that is used to address social and personal needs is a lunchtime group. This type of group targets both the social and the personal development of students by bringing them together with peers while letting them talk about their own concerns.

Support groups offered in the schools include divorce and changing families, death, illness, and grief groups, social support or social skill groups, and groups that target self-esteem issues. The interaction involved in such groups merges the personal and social needs of the students.

Overall Needs

After thinking carefully and evaluating the impact of their current programs, respondents were asked to think about the needs of students in their schools, and the extent to which the needs of various groups of students are being met. In addition to asking about the needs in general areas of the ASCA standards, participants also reflected on various other needs related to middle school students, including bullying, self-esteem, drug use, sexual behavior, relationships, and school behavior (see Table A7). Consistent with earlier results, career development is regarded as the lowest-ranking need of students, while needs related to social and personal development, including self-esteem and bullying prevention, are the highest.

Who is Involved?

Respondents used a Likert scale to answer how much various stakeholders are involved in the implementation of counseling programs (see Table A8). School counselors receive the highest rating of 2.33 (on a scale of 0 to 3), falling right between involved in the implementation of "most" and involved in the implementation of "all" programs. The next group of answers falls in between involved in the implementation of "some" programs and involved in the implementation of "most" programs. Administrators follow school counselors with a mean of 1.75, followed by students at 1.33, and teachers at 1.18. People outside of the school receive the lowest mean, being involved in an average of a little less than "some" of the programs. Parents and family members receive a mean of 0.91 while community members receive a mean of 0.75.

Programs are perceived as serving the needs of a broad base of students. Respondents said that some or most programs were designed and implemented to meet the needs of all students (see Table A9). The highest average is for the whole student body; students with developmental needs, special needs, and at risk students are closely grouped in the next cluster. The student group with the lowest mean is gifted students.

Student/Counselor Ratios

In schools with over 600 students, we explored whether counselors thought their school have programs to meet students' needs dependent on the number of counselors working at the school. The responses of counselors from schools with two, three, and four counselors in this size school were compared. In the case of schools with four counselors, 100 percent of them said that they have programs to meet students' personal needs and 100 percent said they have programs to meet students' academic needs (see Table A10).

Schools with two counselors, three counselors, and four counselors are about even in terms of meeting the students' personal needs (see Table A11). Even though 100% of counselors in schools with four counselors said they have programs to meet academic needs, the average extent to which these programs meet students' needs is slightly less than that with two or three counselors.

Regarding career needs, the schools with two counselors are more likely to say they have programs to address these needs than the schools with more counselors employed. Looking at the extent to which programs meet career needs, on average the schools with two counselors said they meet those needs more than schools with a greater number of counselors.

In terms of social needs, the schools with two and three counselors were more likely to say that they have programs that address these needs than the schools with four counselors. Although we found that schools with four counselors responded with the lowest mean for whether they have programs to meet students' social needs, they have the highest mean regarding to what extent they have met the social needs of students.

Discussion

Stepping back from the data, several trends and areas of interest can be raised by this study. The first area relates to the perceptions of how well student needs are being met in the various ASCA areas. The second focuses on the relationship between principal perceptions and counselor perceptions. Finally, the data found in this survey raise other questions to be investigated.

Are Needs Being Met?

Although ASCA recommends that school counseling programs meet the needs of students at all levels (including middle school) in the areas of academics, career, and personal/social, both counselors and principals in New Jersey perceive differing degrees of success in how well those needs are being met. Personal/social needs tend to have the highest perceived degree of success, while career needs are seen as being least met.

Students' career needs, on the Likert responses to the survey, trended more towards "not being met" or "some being met". Specific questions about out-of-school career needs had more responses in the category of "a lot of needs met" than did other questions. Specific areas that were perceived as weaknesses included investigating the world of work, making informed career decisions, and understanding the relationship between school and careers. At the middle level, career decisions may seem far removed. However, because decisions about high school course selection have a ripple effect on a student's future trajectory, it is important for students to begin to understand the long-term ramifications of decisions that they make. Guidance for high school course selection is appropriate career guidance for intermediate level students. The exploratory nature of the middle school student also makes it an appropriate time to start thinking about their preferences and interests.

Responses to the perceived effectiveness of academic programs tend to range from "meet some needs" to "meet most needs". By looking at the variables in order of increasing means, it is apparent that the attributes associated with learning outside of school are perceived as the least effective, while the ones regarding relationships between academic areas and external factors are perceived as the strongest. Interestingly, however, the latter also have the widest standard deviation. Specific areas of strength in academic counseling programs included those that involved out-of-school aspects, including the relationship of academic learning to the community, home, and world of work. The latter is a seeming discrepancy from the career findings, but may be explained by the focus on meeting academic needs rather than career needs.

Both counselors and principals perceived meeting the needs of students in the area of personal and social development as a relative strength of counseling programs. Many of the responses on the Likert scale fell in the "meets most of the needs" and "meets all of the needs" range. This finding is consistent with the trend found in the broader literature (Bernier, 1995; Hall, Rushing & Owens, 2009; Stott & Jackson, 2005; Young et al., 2009).

Varied Perceptions

In a few areas, there were notable differences between the perceptions of counselors and principals regarding student needs. One of those areas was in career needs, where fewer principals recognized that this is a need for middle school students than did counselors. This raises a critically important question of how well-versed administrators are in the counseling needs of the middle school population. If career decisions seem too far removed, does that imply, to these school leaders, the absence of a need to be addressed?

Another area in which there was some discrepancy was the area of academic programs facilitated by the counseling program. Principals saw these programs as meeting more academic needs than did counselors. However, elements of their open-ended responses, e.g., lists of all academic subject areas, beg the question of whether they were considering only counseling programs, or all programs in the school.

Different Populations

Counselors and administrators were more involved in implementation of counseling programs than "out-of-school" groups, including parents, family members, and community members. This suggests that some schools may involve these groups of people in some

programs while other schools do not involve them in the implementation of any programs. School improvement research indicates a (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010) link between parent and community involvement to increased student achievement and well-being, making this an area to potentially strengthen.

Both counselors and administrators did not see their programs as tailored to address the needs of specific groups of students, but as “one size fits all” programs, equally meeting the needs of all students. Because the needs of gifted students were not viewed as specifically met, however, it is possible that most programs focus on preventative and remedial programs targeting problems and solutions rather than strengthening already present skills.

Ongoing Questions

Like all descriptive survey studies, this one raises questions that can only be answered by further, more in-depth investigation. The discrepancies described in the previous section are an example of those questions – “How well do principals understand the roles of counselors and how well do they understand the functions of their programs?” Similarly, although our survey attempted to clearly define terms, we wonder if everyone brought the same context and understanding to their answers. These questions would likely benefit from a follow-up qualitative study with interviews or focus groups.

Another question needing further investigation is “Does the number of counselors in a school building impact the quality of programs?” Focusing on this question more specifically would give greater insight into that issue.

One final question regards the settings represented in this study: “How effective are counseling programs in New Jersey’s urban middle schools?” The knowledge gained from this study pertains to the subset of counseling programs in New Jersey middle schools, and did not represent urban schools effectively. Further iterations could add to the knowledge base by filling in the gap of more diverse settings and other geographic areas.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.0015>

References

- American School Counselor Association (2004). *ASCA National Standards for Students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Bernier, C. S. (1995). *Multicultural education: Raising cultural awareness and reducing prejudice among a middle school population* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from Education Resources Information Center. (ED382386)
- Brigman, G., & Campbell, C.A. (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling, 7*, 91-98.
- Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Campbell, C. A., & Brigman, G. (2005). Closing the achievement gap: A structured approach to group counseling. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 30*, 67-82.
- Chaplin, D., Bleeker, M., & Booker, K. (2010). *Roads to success: Estimated impacts of an education and career planning program during middle school* (Document No. PR10-04). Retrieved from Mathematica Policy Research website: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/>.
- Cohen, J. S., & Smerdon, B. A. (2009). Tightening the dropout tourniquet: Easing the transition from middle to high school. *Preventing School Failure, 53*, 177-184.
- Cook, J. B., & Kaffenberger, C. J. (2003). Solution shop: A solution-focused counseling and study skills program for middle school. *Professional School Counseling, 7*, 116-123.
- Fitch, T. J., & Marshall, J. L. (2004). What counselors do in high-achieving schools: A study on the role of the school counselor. *Professional School Counseling, 7*, 172-178
- Fouad, N. A. (1995). Career linking: An intervention to promote math and science career awareness. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 73*, 527-34
- Hall, K. R., Rushing, J. L., & Owens, R. B. (2009). Anger in middle school: The solving problems together model. *Journal of School Counseling, 7*, 2-22.
- Hatch, T., & Chen-Hayes, S. F. (2008). School counselor beliefs about ASCA national model school counseling program components using the SCPCS. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, 34-42.
- Lampley, J. H., & Johnson, K. C. (2010). Mentoring at-risk youth: Improving academic achievement in middle school students. *Nonpartisan Education Review, 6*, 1-12.
- Legum, H. L., & Hoare, C. H. (2004). Impact of a career intervention on at-risk middle school students' career maturity levels, academic achievement, and self-esteem. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 148-156.
- Maddy-Bernstein, C., & Dare, D. E. (1999). *Career Guidance for Elementary and Middle School Students*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
- National Middle School Association (2010). *This we believe: Successful schools for young adolescents*. Youngsville OH: Author.
- Perry, J. C., Xiongyi, L., & Pabian, Y. (2010). School engagement as a mediator of academic performance among urban youth: The role of career preparation, parental career support, and teacher support. *Counseling Psychologist, 38*, 269-295.
- Scarborough, J. L., & Culbreth, J. R. (2008). Examining discrepancies between actual and preferred practice of school counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*, 446-459.

- Sink, C. A., Akos, P., Turnbull, R. J., & Mvuddud, N. (2008). An investigation of comprehensive school counseling programs and academic achievement in Washington State middle schools. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, 43-53.
- Stott, K. A., & Jackson, A. P. (2005). Using service learning to achieve middle school comprehensive guidance program goals. *Professional School Counseling, 9*, 156-159.
- Whittingham, J. L., & Huffman, S. (2009). The effects of book clubs on the reading attitudes of middle school students. *Reading Improvement, 46*, 130-136.
- Young, A., Hardy, V., Hamilton, C., Biemesser, K., Sun, L., & Nieberall, S. (2009). Empowering students: Using data to transform a bullying prevention and intervention program. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, 413-420.

Appendix A

Student Population	1 counselor	2 counselors	3 counselors	4 counselors
Fewer than 200	1	0	0	0
200-400	10	2	0	0
400-600	7	13	4	1
Over 600	0	19	24	6

ASCA Area	These programs do not meet needs	These programs meet some of needs	These programs meet most of needs	These programs meet all of needs
Academic	2.3%	45.3%	44.2%	8.1%
Career	16.7%	45.8%	31.9%	5.6%
Personal	2.4%	37.3%	54.2%	6.1%
Social	3.8%	45.0%	47.5%	3.8%

	Principal		Counselor	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Academic	90.0%	10.0%	92.3%	7.7%
Career	52.6%	47.4%	66.7%	33.3%
Personal	100.0%	0%	92.4%	7.6%
Social	100.0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
Understand relationship of academics to life at home	1.83	.737
Understand relationship of academics to world of work	1.76	.862
Understand relationship of academics to community	1.62	.799
Academic preparation to choose post-secondary options	1.59	.751
Knowledge for effective learning in school	1.54	.552
Attitude toward learning in school	1.53	.503
Skills for effective learning in school	1.51	.530
Skills for learning outside of school	1.44	.552
Attitude for learning outside of school	1.39	.568

Table A5 <i>Perceived Career Counseling Needs</i>		SCALE 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met	
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Employ strategies to achieve career goals to gain satisfaction	1.51	.750	
Knowledge of self, related to interests	1.43	.688	
Employ strategies to achieve career goals to gain success	1.43	.802	
Understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and world of work	1.40	.725	
Ability to make informed career decisions	1.15	.725	
Skills to investigate world of work	1.13	.691	

Table A6 <i>Perceived Social and Personal Counseling Needs</i>		SCALE 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met	
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Understand safety and survival skills for personal and social development	1.94	.784	
Take necessary action to achieve goals	1.90	.736	
Make decisions to achieve goals	1.88	.777	
Set goals for personal and social development	1.72	.643	
Knowledge to understand and respect self and others	1.70	.692	
Attitudes to understand and respect self and others	1.68	.657	
Interpersonal skills to understand and respect self and others	1.62	.644	

Table A7 <i>Perceived Counseling Needs of Middle School Students</i>		SCALE 3 = all needs met 1 = some needs met 2 = most needs met 0 = none needs met	
Perceived Needs	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Bullying Prevention	2.01	.763	
Social Development	2.00	.646	
Personal Development	1.97	.598	
Academic Development	1.94	.756	
Self Esteem Development	1.94	.770	
Relationship Development	1.78	.688	
School Behavior Development	1.65	.748	
Drug Prevention	1.54	.800	
Sexual Behavior Programs	1.53	.872	
Career Development	1.41	.764	

Table A8 <i>Stakeholders Involvement in Implementation of Programs</i>

Stakeholder Group	Mean (on scale of 0-3)
School Counselors	2.33
Administrators	1.75
Students	1.33
Teachers	1.18
Parents/Family Members	0.91
Community Members	0.76

Table A9 <i>Student Group Needs Being Met</i>	
Student Group	Mean (on scale of 0-3)
All Students	1.9
Special Needs	1.7
At Risk	1.61
Developmental Needs	1.6
Gifted	1.24

Table A10 <i>Program Availability to Meet Needs of Students in Schools with 600+ Students</i>				
	Academic	Career	Social	Personal
2 counselors	94.4%	78.95%	89.47%	89.47%
3 counselors	83.33%	54.17%	91.67%	95.83%
4 counselors	100%	60%	66.67%	100%

Table A11 <i>Extent of Programs Meeting Needs of Students in Schools with 600+ Students</i>				
	Academic	Career	Social	Personal
2 counselors	1.59	1.29	1.59	1.56
3 counselors	1.62	1.25	1.5	1.61
4 counselors	1.5	1	1.75	1.6

Appendix B

Part I: Programs in Place

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **academic** needs of your students?

Yes / No

Please describe any **academic** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **academic** needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **career development** needs of your students?

Yes / No

Please describe any **career development** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **career development** needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **personal** needs of your students?

Yes / No

Please describe any **personal** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **personal** needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Do you have counseling programs to meet the **social** needs of your students?
Yes / No

Please describe any **social** programs you have in place at your school.

To what extent do you see your programs meeting the **social** development needs of students?

1	2	3	4
These programs do not meet those needs	These programs meet some of those needs	These programs meet most of those needs	These programs meet all of those needs

Please describe any **other counseling** programs you have in place at your school.

PART II: Demographics

Please check all that apply:

What grades are served at your middle school?

4 5 6 7 8 9 Other _____

In what setting is your middle school located?

Rural Urban Suburban

How many school counselors work in your school?

1 2 3 4 5+

How many students attend your school?

Less than 200 students 200 – 400 students 400 – 600 students Over 600 students

What is your position in the middle school?

Administrator School Counselor Other _____

PART III: Addressing Academic Needs

Directions: For each of the following questions please think about the counseling programs at your school that address the **academic needs** of your students.

Through these programs students in my school have acquired an **attitude** that has contributed to effective learning in **school**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have acquired **knowledge** that has contributed to effective learning in **school**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have acquired **skills** that have contributed to effective learning in **school**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

To what extent do you think these programs have helped students acquire an **attitude** that has contributed to effective learning **outside of the school (across the lifespan)?**

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

To what extent do you think these programs have helped students acquire **knowledge** that has contributed to effective learning **outside of the school (across the lifespan)?**

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

To what extent do you think these programs have helped students acquire **skills** that has contributed to effective learning **outside of the school (across the lifespan)?**

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

those needs those needs those needs those needs

How much will these programs help students to complete school with the **academic preparation** essential to choose from a **wide range of post-secondary options**?

1	2	3	4
Unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely	Extremely Likely

To what extent have these programs helped students to **understand the relationship of academics to the world of work**?

1	2	3	4
Have not at all helped	Have helped a little	Have helped a somewhat	Have helped a lot

To what extent have these programs helped students to **understand the relationship of academics to life at home**?

1	2	3	4
Have not at all helped	Have helped a little	Have helped a somewhat	Have helped a lot

To what extent have these programs helped students to **understand the relationship of academics to the community**?

1	2	3	4
Have not at all helped	Have helped a little	Have helped a somewhat	Have helped a lot

Part IV: Addressing Career Development

Directions: For each of the following questions, please think about the counseling programs at your school that address the **career development** of your students.

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **skills to investigate the world of work**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have the **knowledge of self-related to interests**.

1	2	3	4
Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **ability to make informed career decisions**.

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Students have not acquired those needs	Students have acquired some of those needs	Students have acquired most of those needs	Students have acquired all of those needs
--	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school are better able to **employ strategies** to achieve future career goals to **gain success**.

1 Students will not employ those strategies	2 Students will employ few strategies	3 Students will employ several strategies	4 Students will employ many strategies
--	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school are better able to **employ strategies** to achieve future career goals to **gain satisfaction**.

1 Students will not employ those strategies	2 Students will employ few strategies	3 Students will employ several strategies	4 Students will employ many strategies
--	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school are better able to **understand the relationship** between **personal qualities, education, training,** and the **world of work**.

1 Students will not employ those strategies	2 Students will employ few strategies	3 Students will employ several strategies	4 Students will employ many strategies
--	--	--	---

Part V: Addressing personal and social development

Directions: For each of the following questions, please think about the counseling programs at your school that address the **personal and social development** of your students.

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **knowledge** to help them **understand and respect self and others**

1 Students have not acquired those needs	2 Students have acquired some of those needs	3 Students have acquired most of those needs	4 Students have acquired all of those needs
---	---	---	--

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **attitudes** to help them **understand and respect self and others**.

1 Students have not acquired those needs	2 Students have acquired some of those needs	3 Students have acquired most of those needs	4 Students have acquired all of those needs
---	---	---	--

Through these programs students in my school have acquired the **interpersonal skills** to help them **understand and respect self and others**.

1 Students have not acquired those needs	2 Students have acquired some of those needs	3 Students have acquired most of those needs	4 Students have acquired all of those needs
---	---	---	--

Through these programs students will **set goals** for their **personal and social development**.

1 Students are not able to set goals	2 Students are somewhat able To set goals	3 Students are mostly able To set goals	4 Students are fully able To set goals
---	--	--	---

Through these programs students in my school will be able to **make decisions to achieve goals**.

1 Students will not do this to achieve goals	2 Students will do this few times To achieve goals	3 Students will do this some of the time To achieve goals	4 Students will do this often To achieve goals
---	---	--	---

Through these programs students in my school will be able to **take necessary action to achieve goals**.

1 Students will not do this to achieve goals	2 Students will do this few times To achieve goals	3 Students will do this some of the time To achieve goals	4 Students will do this often To achieve goals
---	---	--	---

Through these programs students in my school will **understand safety and survival skills** for their personal and social development.

1 Children do not understand these skills	2 Children will understand few of these skills	3 Children will understand some of these skills	4 Children will understand most of these skills
--	---	--	--

Part VI: Areas being addressed

To what extent is **academic development** a need of students in your school?

1 Not a need	2 Somewhat of a need	3 A need	4 An extreme need
-----------------	-------------------------	-------------	----------------------

To what extent is **career development** a need of students in your school?

1 Not a need	2 Somewhat of a need	3 A need	4 An extreme need
-----------------	-------------------------	-------------	----------------------

To what extent is **personal development** a need of students in your school?

1 Not a need	2 Somewhat of a need	3 A need	4 An extreme need
-----------------	-------------------------	-------------	----------------------

To what extent is **social development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **bullying prevention** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **self esteem development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **drug prevention** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **sexual behavior programs** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **relationship development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

To what extent is **school behavior development** a need of students in your school?

1	2	3	4
Not a need	Somewhat of a need	A need	An extreme need

Part VII: Target Population

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit **gifted students**?

1	2	3	4
None of the Programs target those students	Some of the programs target those students	Most of the programs target those students	All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit **students with developmental needs**?

1	2	3	4
None of the Programs target those students	Some of the programs target those students	Most of the programs target those students	All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit the **special needs population**?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

None of the Programs target those students

Some of the programs target those students

Most of the programs target those students

All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit the **at risk population**?

1

2

3

4

None of the Programs target those students

Some of the programs target those students

Most of the programs target those students

All of the programs target those students

To what extent do the programs at your school benefit the **student body as a whole**?

1

2

3

4

None of the Programs target those students

Some of the programs target those students

Most of the programs target those students

All of the programs target those students

Are there any other groups of students that you feel programs at your school benefit?

Part VIII: Stakeholders

Please indicate which stakeholders are involved in the implementation of counseling programs.

To what extent are **school counselors** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1

2

3

4

These stakeholders are not involved in programs

These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs

These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs

These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **administration** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1

2

3

4

These stakeholders are not involved in programs

These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs

These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs

These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **teachers** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1

2

3

4

These stakeholders are not involved in programs

These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs

These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs

These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **parents or family members** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1	2	3	4
These stakeholders are not involved in programs	These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **community members** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1	2	3	4
These stakeholders are not involved in programs	These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

To what extent are **students** involved in the implementation of school counseling programs?

1	2	3	4
These stakeholders are not involved in programs	These stakeholders are involved in some of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in most of the programs	These stakeholders are involved in all of the programs

Are there any other stakeholders that you feel are involved in school counseling programs at your middle school?

Author Note

Suzanne Schwarz McCotter, PhD, Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership, Montclair State University, 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07043
mccotters@mail.montclair.edu

Sarah Cohen, MA, Thom Stecher and Associates, SJC264@gmail.com

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Suzanne Schwarz McCotter at mccotters@mail.montclair.edu

Professional Impairment and Gatekeeping: A Survey of Master's Level Training Programs

Mikal Crawford & Paula Gilroy

The authors of this study investigated professional impairment and gatekeeping practices in 112 master's-level clinician training programs. Results indicated that while programs generally have procedures for monitoring students to ensure skill level and quality clinical performance, the procedures, policies and timing of evaluations vary widely. An overview of existing practices is presented as well as suggestions for future research in the area of gatekeeping.

Keywords: counseling, gatekeeping, impairment, master's level training programs, evaluation procedures

Counselor educators have an ethical obligation to prepare students who will function effectively as clinicians in their professional endeavors. This requires establishing and maintaining gatekeeping standards by which students are selected for admission and evaluated throughout their training to identify and deal with any impairment issues that may arise. Such standards will help to ensure students are capable of functioning professionally in their course work, practical experiences, and most importantly, as practitioners in the counseling field. Homrich (2009) states "equally critical as academic and clinical accomplishment in determining future success as a counselor is affirmation of the interpersonal readiness of the trainee to work with clients and colleagues" (p. 2).

Effective gatekeeping requires attention to all aspects of the student's performance. In an effort to talk about those aspects of a student's performance that are not linked to grades, some researchers continue to use the term *impairment*, while others use terms such as *problematic professional competence* (Elman & Forrest, 2007) or *professional performance* (Foster & McAdams, 2009). However, there remains a lack of agreement as to which terminology to use (Falender, Collins, & Shafranske, 2009; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Homrich, 2009).

After an extensive review of the literature, and serious consideration of the term impairment, the authors suggest the use of *professional impairment* incorporating the definition of Lamb et al. (1987):

Trainee impairment is an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior;
- (b) an inability to acquire professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency;
- (c) an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional

functioning (p. 598).

This is consistent with Wilkerson (2006) and Forrest, Elman, Gizara, and Vacha Haase (1999) who believe the definition incorporates the essential components of impairment including (a) unethical behavior, (b) trainee incompetence, and (c) impairment of any kind. While the importance of distinguishing the use of the term impairment in counselor education from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) verbiage is noted, the current authors believe the term professional impairment describes students of concern in graduate counseling programs. The term is understood in the field of counseling to be separate and distinct from the ADA use of the word.

The gatekeeping role of graduate programs is addressed extensively in the literature (Baldo, Softas-Nall, & Shaw, 1997; Bhat, 2005; Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Homrich, 2009; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999; McAdams, Foster & Ward, 2007, Wilkerson, 2006; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The ethical codes of professional associations, such as the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Association for Counselor Education & Supervision (ACES), as well as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) present clear directives for gatekeeping responsibilities for counselor educators and supervisors (Adams, Foster & Ward, 2007; Li, Trusty, Lampe, & Lin, 2008; Wilkerson, 2006). Homrich (2009) discusses gatekeeping “as a metaphor that identifies the process of monitoring progression through a series of stages via critical points of entry or passage” (p. 1). Homrich further describes the function of gatekeepers in the mental health field as one of protecting “not only the integrity of the profession; they are also responsible for preventing harm to future clientele that could result from a lack of competence on the part of their trainees” (p. 2).

Ziomek-Daigle and Christensen (2010) recommend a four phase model of gatekeeping that includes the following: (a) pre-admission screening, (b) post-admission screening, (c) remediation plan, and (d) remediation outcome. Wilkerson (2006) proposes a similar stage model aligned with the therapeutic process. His model begins with providing programmatic policies and procedures to prospective students (informed consent) at the pre-admission stage, admissions process (intake and assessment), monitoring progress through program (evaluation), remediation as needed (treatment planning), and finally graduation or dismissal if goals are not achieved (termination).

When setting up gatekeeping practices, counselor educators must also be aware of trends in the legal system around the issues of students exhibiting professional impairments. Frame and Stevens-Smith (1995) suggest that the legal precedent is established for training programs to incorporate academic and experiential components into their monitoring and evaluation processes. More recent challenges to gatekeeping practices of graduate programs likewise show support from the courts for programmatic decisions around dismissal of students for reasons of professional impairment (e.g., Keeton v. Anderson-Wiley, 2010); Ward v. Wilbanks, 2010).

While gatekeeping practices are addressed at length in the literature, no uniform model for handling this responsibility has emerged. As Homrich (2009) suggests, the support of professional associations and/or accrediting bodies in setting forth a uniform model for gatekeeping would give professional sanction to programs and provide legal backing to decisions regarding student retention. Homrich further states that such a model would “set a professional standard that would prevent gateslipping in counselor education programs” (p. 16). This would

mean that programs would be less likely to allow students with professional impairment to graduate and enter the profession. The present study was designed to gather information on the incidence of professional impairment as well as gatekeeping practices and challenges in programs training master's level clinicians.

Method

Participants

The subjects in this study were 112 program coordinators/department chairs in programs training master's-level clinicians. Of those programs that self-identified by title, 78% were counseling programs, and 22% were psychology programs. Thirty-two of the fifty states were represented in the sample.

Sampling and Procedure

The programs sampled were identified by the first author using graduateguide.com with the focus being on master's-level practitioner training programs. Utilizing Survey Monkey, 558 program coordinators/department chairs of identified graduate programs received via email a cover letter with informed consent and a link to the survey designed by both authors. Prior to distribution, the survey was piloted with nine counselor education faculty and practitioners familiar with the topic of professional impairment. Feedback was incorporated into the final draft of the survey. Participants completed the surveys on-line and submitted them anonymously through Survey Monkey. A total of 112 usable surveys were collected for a response rate of 22%.

Measures

The survey consisted of 34 multiple response questions, one open-ended question, and eight demographic items. Questions were developed from issues and focal points identified in the literature. Examples of survey questions included: (a) "What options are available in your setting to assist students with professional impairment?"; (b) "In your program, what are the barriers to dismissing a student who is identified as having a professional impairment?"; and (c) "In your program, what are the grounds for dismissal?". Examples of demographic questions included: "What is the title of your program?" and "In what state is your college/university located?" Respondents also had the option to check "other" and share pertinent information. The open-ended question was the final question in the survey and asked participants "Is there anything else you would like to tell us about students with impairment and your program?". Responses were collected in the aggregate and anonymity was assured.

Results

Incidence of impairment

Professional impairment is clearly an issue for the graduate programs surveyed in this study. Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported having at least one student with a professional impairment. Of the total of 414 students identified as having a professional impairment in this study, 384 (93%) were offered remediation options. Of that number, 72

(19%) students refused the remediation options. Of the 312 students who accepted remediation options, 220 (71%) were successful. One respondent indicated that success might mean a student choosing to discontinue the program. Of those 414 students identified as having a professional impairment, 83 were dismissed over the past five years. Of the 83 dismissed students, 28 (33%) appealed the dismissal decision. Of the 28 students who appealed, 3 (11%) were readmitted.

Survey responses indicate that graduate programs address their gatekeeping responsibilities in four general ways: through pre-admission screening, with post-admission evaluation processes, with curricular components for continued gatekeeping, and with procedures that address identification of professional impairment and due process.

Pre-admission Screening

Programs use a variety of written materials and other procedures in considering applicants including both objective and subjective data, most often undergraduate GPA, reference letters and personal statements (see Table 1). When programs considered personal characteristics in pre-admission screening, the following criteria emerge: interpersonal skills, interpersonal maturity, self-awareness, the ability to perceive one’s areas for growth, the ability to perceive one’s strengths, openness to feedback, and potential for growth. Respondents wrote in characteristics such as humility and teach-ability, career goals and ambitions, and ability to work in a group. Seven respondents named appreciation of and openness to diversity as important characteristics.

Sixty-five percent of programs surveyed offer both full and provisional admission. Of those offering provisional admission, 68% cite the undergraduate GPA below the minimum as the major criterion for such admission followed by a lack of prerequisite coursework, substandard GRE scores, and concerns noted by references. Respondents wrote in criteria such as “telephone interview had to suffice”, “concerns at group interview,” and “writing sample somewhat weak or lacking in depth”.

Criterion	Percentage
Undergraduate GPA	100
Reference letters	96
Personal statement	95
Relevant experience	73
GRE scores	70
Individual interview	51
Group interview	32

N=109

Post-admission Evaluation Process

Once a student has been admitted, there are various checkpoints and curricular components in place to ensure that students are aware of the timing of evaluations and the criteria which are used to evaluate their progress. Students are informed of evaluation procedures prior to applying for admission, at the time of admission, and during program

orientation. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated their programs communicate this information both verbally and in writing. Other delivery points include pre-practicum, pre-internship, midway during practicum and internship, and post-internship. This implies the majority of programs have some type of scheduled checkpoints for evaluating and communicating performance to students.

Respondents were asked to identify formal evaluation checkpoints for continued enrollment in the program. Seventy-one percent of programs deliver feedback to students at the end of each semester. However, 13% of participants stated they deliver feedback only as needed rather than on a scheduled basis. Fifty-nine percent of programs communicate feedback verbally through an advisor as well as in writing.

Ninety-two percent of programs provide feedback on both academic and personal/interpersonal performance. Personal/interpersonal feedback most often includes the criteria of interpersonal skills, openness to supervision and feedback, awareness of one's impact on others, ability to respect individual differences, interpersonal maturity and judgment. In addition, 89% of program respondents said they evaluate student performance based on adherence to professional and ethical standards. One respondent reported the following regarding his/her program's retention policy: "Our retention policy refers to both academic criteria and adherence to ACA's ethical codes and psychological functioning." Others indicated, "Ethics is a way for me to justify a higher level of non-academic performance with my students (i.e., self-care, interpersonal skills, team work, role and boundary adherence)" and "All rubrics specify that if students do not adhere to the professional and ethical standards they will receive a failing grade for the course. Students are given feedback on the degree to which they adhere to such standards in presentations, etc."

Degree candidacy is a procedure which requires students to satisfactorily complete a specific number of academic credits as well as demonstrate professional ethical and interpersonal behavior. This affords programs another point at which to evaluate students. Less than half of participants indicated they have a formal procedure to advance students to degree candidacy. Programs that did report such a procedure utilize satisfactory progress in course work, professional growth, evaluation by all faculty, and personal growth as criteria for candidacy decisions.

Curricular Components for Continued Gatekeeping

Another area addressed with this survey is the way in which program curricula address professional behavior issues related to impairment. Seventy percent of programs report they offer a stand-alone ethics course. Those programs that do not offer an ethics course address ethics as part of other courses including practicum and internship.

Students are introduced to the impact of clinical work on the practitioner and practitioner self-care in a variety of courses. Most participants reported these topics are addressed in an introductory skills course. However, the topics are also covered in ethics, practicum, and internship courses. It is interesting to note that 2% of programs indicate that the personal impact of clinical work is not a focus in their programs. Likewise, 5% of respondents indicate they do not introduce the concept of practitioner self-care anywhere in their programs.

Only 35% of participants said they require a personal growth experience in their programs. Of these programs, experiential courses, group experience led by program faculty,

group experience led by outside professionals, and individual counseling/therapy both on and off campus are the examples most often endorsed.

Identification of Professional Impairment and Due Process

As previously indicated, our sample shows a total of 414 students over the past five years were identified as having a professional impairment. The means by which a student with a professional impairment comes to the attention of program faculty included interactions with program faculty and site supervisors as well as interactions with peers. Options available to assist students with professional impairments include: (a) withdrawal from the program, (b) leave of absence from the program, (c) individual therapy on-campus, (d) repeat recommended course/s, (e) increased advising and mentoring, and (f) reduction in course load. Due process procedures range from meeting with the program coordinator to informal hearings (see Table 2).

While due process procedures are important to program integrity, there are barriers to faculty identifying and taking action with students of concern (see Table 3). Respondents identified additional barriers to those listed in the survey including “a lack of formal guidelines,” “the university legal department,” and “finances.” In addition to academic deficits, grounds for dismissal decisions include a number of problematic behaviors (see Table 4). Respondents also noted “failing out” and “the inability to remediate” as reasons for dismissing students.

Due Process Procedure	Percentage
Meeting with program coordinator or department chair	88
Meeting with advisor	85
Written mandates for remediation specifying expected behavioral changes, time line, and consequences of no action	82
Verbal and written listing of concerns	79
Notification of appeal process	65
Notification of process for dismissal	60
Meeting with faculty committee	52
Informal hearing	38
N=96	

Barrier	% Initiate	% Dismiss
Fear of insufficient evidence to support dismissal	58	46
Discrepancy between grades and low evaluation of clinical work	50	34
Desire to protect student's privacy	34	22
Desire to avoid long-term career consequences for student	30	43
Fear of lawsuit against department or university	29	46
Desire to avoid long-term consequences for student well-being	28	34
Discomfort with "bad guy" role vs. nurturing role	23	15
Belief problem will correct itself	21	9
Fear of lack of administrative support for dismissal decision	2	24
Fear of grievance against faculty member	15	18
May reflect poorly on faculty teaching/training skills	4	2
Fear of poor student evaluation of faculty member	2	2
	N=83	N=82

Table 4
Grounds for Dismissal from Graduate Program

Grounds for Dismissal	Percentage
Ethical misconduct	93
Academic deficits	92
Emotional problems which impact professional behavior and/or functioning	81
Clinical skills deficits	78
Interpersonal skills deficits	62
N=90	

Discussion and Implications for Counselor Education

The results of this study indicate that gatekeeping is occurring across the programs surveyed to address issues of professional impairment with students. Due to the disparity in measures programs use and the timing of application of these measures, consistency in effectively handling the gatekeeping obligations in the field of counseling appears to be absent. It is difficult to compare effectiveness of gatekeeping in a program which does not interview students as part of the admissions process and gives feedback only when a concern arises, with a program which conducts pre-admission screening interviews and evaluates students each semester as they progress through the program.

Existing models of gatekeeping suggest a comprehensive approach beginning at pre-admission and continuing through to graduation or dismissal from the program (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Wilkerson, 2006; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The current study affirms these models, taking a holistic approach which would be applied to all students, not just students of concern, from pre-admission to graduation or dismissal from the program. For example, at the pre-admission point, in addition to providing clear information on the evaluation procedures and policies used in the program (consistent with Foster & McAdams (2009) proposing transparency in the process) utilization of a screening interview (individual, group, or both) with prospective students allows program faculty to interact face-to-face with applicants rather than just on paper. Assessing both previous academic performance and personal characteristics essential to the work of the counselor would enhance the picture of prospective applicants.

Once students are admitted to the program, regular evaluation points are suggested for all students to insure that development along academic and professional behavior tracks is occurring. Personal characteristics set forth by Frame & Stevens-Smith (1995) include openness to new ideas, flexibility, willingness to accept and use feedback, awareness of own impact on others, and ability to accept personal responsibility. Incorporating such characteristics into the evaluation process together with grades and clinical skills allows program faculty to have a more complete picture of each student's performance.

In addition, having curricular components in place which provide the opportunity to learn about the impact of the professional work on the practitioner, as well as effective means of self-care would enhance the student's understanding of the work they are preparing to do. McAdams & Foster (2007) suggest a developmental sequence of coursework which focuses not only on counseling knowledge, but also on self-awareness. This is consistent with the curricular components of self-care and understanding the impact of the profession on the counselor suggested in the current study. Also, in terms of curriculum, a clear focus on the ethics of the

profession, through either a stand-alone ethics course, or infusion of ethical material across the curriculum is an essential part of the training program. These curricular components may also serve as preventive measures against professional impairment.

Due process procedures which have been articulated to students at pre-admission are also an essential component to effective gatekeeping. When applied consistently, these procedures ensure that students are given the opportunity to remediate any deficiencies and remain in the program. Transparency of these procedures (Foster & McAdams, 2009) once again allows for all parties to understand the process and lessens the chance that a student can claim unfair treatment. McAdams & Foster (2007) delineate due process considerations for programs, such as clarity of expectations, providing clear supervision and support, providing ongoing progress evaluation, and thorough documentation of all actions.

Because there are clear challenges and “barriers” to program faculty identifying and initiating action with a student of concern, all faculty must understand due process procedures, actively endorse them, and learn to apply them consistently with students. Programs have an additional responsibility to educate their respective institutions about the obligation to gatekeeping and due process for their graduate programs. The push for “bodies in the chairs” must not overshadow the need for effective evaluation and intervention when students of concern are identified.

Our responsibilities as counselor educators are to serve our students, their future clients, the profession and the larger communities in which we live and work. In order to best carry out these interwoven duties, we must strive for excellence and objectivity in selection, training, evaluation and mentoring of our students.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The major limitation of the current study is the sample size. Due to the current authors’ efforts to survey programs rather than individuals, the survey was sent to program chairs and directors identified through the graduateguide.com website. It was the intention of this study to address only master’s level programs that train clinicians. If a particular program chair or director was out of the office during the time of the survey, there was no opportunity to collect a response.

However, the authors were able to gather essential information which may enhance the development of a working model of gatekeeping for master’s level training programs. Future research should focus on evaluating components identified in the current study and in previous research to establish the structure of a working model of gatekeeping. In addition, it would be valuable to understand the attitudes of counselor educators toward gatekeeping as well as the barriers to their being able to effectively carry out the gatekeeping responsibilities. In addition, collaboration with professional associations (ACA, ACES, and CACREP) to create a framework for best practices which can be adapted to meet the needs of individual programs would be appropriate.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.0030>

References

- Baldo, T. D., Softas-Nall, B. C., & Shaw, S. F. (1997). Student review and retention in counselor education: An alternative to Frame and Stevens-Smith. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 35*, 245-253.
- Bemak, F., Epp, L. R., & Keys, S. G. (1999). Impaired graduate students: A process model of program monitoring and intervention. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 21*, 19-30.
- Bhat, C. S. (2005). Enhancing counseling gatekeeping with performance appraisal protocols. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 27*, 399-411. doi:10.1007/s10447-005-8208-z.
- Elman, N. S., & Forrest, L. (2007). From trainee impairment to professional competence problems: Seeking new terminology that facilitates effective action. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 38*, 501-509. doi: 10.1037/0735-028.38.5.501.
- Falender, C.A., Collins, C.J. & Shafranske, E.P. (2009). "Impairment" and performance issues in clinical supervision: after the 2008 ADA amendment act. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 3*, 240-249.
- Forrest, L., Elman, N., Gizara, S., & Vacha-Haase. (1999). Trainee impairment: A review of identification, remediation, dismissal, and legal issues. *The Counseling Psychologist, 27*, 627- 686. doi: 10.1177/00111000099275001.
- Foster, V.A. & McAdams, C.R. (2009). A framework for creating a climate of transparency for professional performance assessment: Fostering student investment in gatekeeping. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 48*, 271-284.
- Frame, M. W., & Stevens-Smith, P. (1995). Out of harm's way: Enhancing monitoring and dismissal processes in counselor education programs. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 35*, 118-127.
- Gaubatz, M. D., & Vera, E., M. (2002). Do formalized gatekeeping procedures increase program's follow-up with deficient trainees? *Counselor Education & Supervision, 41*, 294-305.
- Gizara, S. & Forrest, L. (2004). Supervisors' experiences of trainee impairment and incompetence at APA-accredited internship sites. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 35*, 131-140.
- Homrich, A. M. (2009). Gatekeeping for personal and professional competence in graduate counseling programs. *Counselor and Human Development, 41*, 1-22.
- Keeton v. Anderson-Wiley, 733 F. Supp. 2d 1368 (2010)
- Lamb, D. H., Presser, N. R., Pfof, K. S., Baum, M. C., Jackson, V. R., & Jarvis, P.A. (1987). Confronting professional impairment during the internship: Identification, due process, and remediation. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 18*, 597-603.
- Li, C.S., Trusty, J., Lampe, R., & Lin, Y. F. (2008, September 2). Remediation and termination of impaired students in CACREP-accredited programs. Retrieved from <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>
- Lumadue, C. A., & Duffey, T. H. (1999). The role of graduate programs as gatekeepers: A model for evaluating student counselor competence. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 39*, 101-108.

- McAdams, C.R. & Foster, V.A. (2007). A guide to just and fair remediation of counseling students with professional performance deficiencies. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 47*, 2-13.
- McAdams, C. R., Foster, V. A., & Ward, T. J. (2007). Remediation and dismissal policies in counselor education: Lessons learned from a challenge in federal court. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 46*, 212-237.
- Ward v. Wilbanks, No. 09-CV-11237, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 127038, (2010).
- Wilkerson, K. (2006). Impaired students: Applying the therapeutic process model to graduate training programs. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 45*, 207-217.
- Ziomek-Daigle, J., & Christensen, T. M. (2010). An emergent theory of gatekeeping practices in counselor education. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 88*, 407-415.

Author Note

Mikal Crawford, Ed.D, Counseling & Human Relations, Husson University, 1 Husson Circle, Bangor, ME 04401, crawfordm@husson.edu

Paula Gilroy, Ed.D., Counseling Center, University of Northern Iowa, 1227 West 27th Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50691 paula.gilroy@uni.edu

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Mikal Crawford at crawfordm@husson.edu

Creative Group Strategies for Interviewing Applicants for Counselor Education Programs

Jacqueline M. Swank & Sondra Smith-Adcock

Counselor educators have the challenging task of screening applicants for their programs. This process involves assessing applicants' academic potential, as well as their dispositions and behaviors. This manuscript focuses on the use of creative group strategies to assess the personal characteristics of applicants in gatekeeping for the counseling profession. The authors present several creative strategies to assist counselor educators in screening applicants.

Keywords: counselor education, gatekeeping, admission, interviews

The counselor education admissions process is a challenging, time-consuming experience for applicants and counselor educators. Generally, the admissions process involves a large amount of paperwork, including the submission and review of test scores and supporting documents (e.g., letters of recommendation). Additionally, the selection process may involve interviews. In face-to-face interviews, applicants attempt to present themselves in a positive manner, in order to accomplish their goal of being accepted into the counselor training program. During the screening process, counselor educators work diligently to identify individuals who possess qualities that are linked with counselor effectiveness (Leverette-Main, 2004; Nagpal & Ritchie, 2002). Therefore, careful planning is essential to facilitate experiences within the interview process, in addition to the other screening procedures, that will assist counselor educators with selecting quality applicants who will become effective counseling professionals.

Counselor educators have the ethical and legal responsibility to be gatekeepers for the counseling profession (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2005; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2009). A comprehensive gatekeeping process begins during the screening of applicants (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010) and continues throughout the counselor preparation program. Due to the challenging, complex process of dismissing counseling students with deficiencies, it becomes essential to carefully screen applicants and to deny admission to individuals who demonstrate behaviors and dispositions that might be contradictory to the qualities of effective counselors (e.g., emotional maturity, empathy, ability to give and receive feedback). Thus, a need exists for clarity regarding the qualities that counseling selection committees are seeking in applicants and the identification of screening procedures and strategies that will assist counselor educators with recognizing these characteristics in applicants.

Group interviews are useful during the admissions screening process to address time constraints and provide opportunities for counselor educators to observe and assess applicants' qualities that may not be evidenced in individual interviews (e.g., leadership potential and interpersonal skills). Thus, a need exists for the development of creative interview strategies to

integrate within the screening process. This manuscript (a) addresses the need for gatekeeping procedures during the admission process, (b) identifies applicants' characteristics to examine within group interactions, (c) presents creative group approaches to evaluate applicants' qualities, and (d) discusses the implications for counselor education and supervision.

Why Gatekeep during the Admission Process?

Counseling researchers have reported that approximately 5% of counseling trainees lack the psychological well-being and competence to work with clients. However, this approximation likely underestimates the number of students with deficiencies in counselor preparation programs because it focuses only on students who receive remediation (Guabatz & Vera 2002). When counseling faculty estimate the number of students identified as incompetent or impaired, but not receiving remediation, the number may rise to as high as 10% (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002, 2006). Thus, effective screening procedures are needed to assist with selecting quality applicants, and therefore striving to reduce the number of counseling students with impairments.

Researchers have developed and examined a variety of assessments to measure students' counseling competencies, assessing skills such as verbal response modes, nonverbal behaviors, and facilitative conditions in counseling (e.g., *Counseling Skills Scale* [CSS], Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2003; *Skilled Counseling Scale* [SCS], Urbani et al., 2002), and comprehensive measures that include counseling skills, dispositions, and behaviors (e.g., *Counseling Competencies Scale*; Swank, Lambie & Witta, 2012). However, counselor educators have used these assessments solely to measure the performance of counseling students after they are enrolled in preparation programs, instead of also integrating them within the admissions process.

Early screening helps to minimize challenges that arise when counselor educators attempt to address student deficiencies after counseling students have advanced academically in the program and are engaged in the clinical experiences component of training (practicum or internship). At this late stage in the program, faculty members may experience difficulty intervening with counseling students with impairments due to concern about receiving poor teaching evaluations, which may result in fear of job security. Faculty may also experience fear of legal ramifications (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). Therefore, a need exists for comprehensively screening applicants through the use of procedures that assess academic potential and personal characteristics and dispositions prior to acceptance into a counselor training program.

The CACREP (2009) *Standards* and the ACA (2005) *Code of Ethics* identify the ethical and legal responsibility that counselor educators have to gatekeep in regards to the admissions process. The CACREP *Standards* specify that the selection committee should consider three things in the selection of candidates: (a) "potential success in forming effective and culturally relevant interpersonal relationships in individual and small group contexts, (b) aptitude for graduate-level study, and (c) career goals and their relevance to the program" (p. 4). In addition to the general admissions consideration, the CACREP *Standards* specify that the selection committee should consider five additional areas for selecting doctoral students: (a) "academic aptitude for doctoral-level study, (b) previous professional experience, (c) fitness for the profession..., (d) oral and written communication skills, and (e) potential for scholarship, professional leadership, and advocacy" (p. 53). Additionally, the ACA *Code of Ethics* emphasizes counselor educators' responsibility to be gatekeepers for the counseling profession, which includes the screening of applicants. Thus, the call to address deficiencies in counseling students, along with the acknowledgement of gatekeeping within the CACREP *Standards* and

the ACA *Code of Ethics* establish a need for gatekeeping procedures during the admissions process.

Screening Applicants

Counselor education programs have the challenging task of recruiting and selecting applicants who have the ability to excel in a graduate-level learning environment. Additionally, programs seek applicants who possess the personal characteristics that are associated with effective counselors, including interpersonal skills. Therefore, it is important to review group-based screening methods used by counselor education programs, while also identifying the characteristics that these methods are designed to assess during the admission process.

Screening Methods

Counselor education programs utilize a variety of methods to screen applicants. Grade point average (GPA) and Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores are the most common screening methods utilized by programs (Leverette-Main, 2004). However, GRE scores do not consistently predict the success of counseling and psychology students (Leverette-Main, 2004; Smaby, Maddux, Richmond, Lepkowski, & Packman, 2005; Sternberg & Williams, 1997). Specifically, Smaby and colleagues (2005) found that counseling students' ($N = 80$) GRE and GPA may predict knowledge attained and effort needed to develop counseling skills. However, these academic requirements are not strong predictors of personal development. Additionally, Sternberg and Williams (1997) found that GRE scores were a modest predictor of grades among graduate students in psychology ($N = 167$). However, this was only during the first year and it was not a predictor of other aspects of success (i.e., creativity, research). Therefore, in considering the triarchic theory of human intelligence (Sternberg, 1985, 1988), GRE scores may help predict students' academic-analytical abilities, but not their synthetic-creative and practical-contextual abilities (Sternberg & Williams, 1997). This is a concern because synthetic-creative and practical-contextual abilities are essential in counseling and are required in counselor training (i.e., experiential activities within classes, practicum and internship experiences). Thus, relying on GPA and GRE scores to screen applicants appears to be problematic in fulfilling counselor educators' gatekeeping responsibilities during the admissions process.

Counselor education programs may use additional strategies to assist with screening applicants in regards to academic potential, as well as personal characteristics. Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel (2001) surveyed school counseling programs ($N = 189$) and found that programs preferred the following methods for screening applicants: (a) GPA, 98.4%, (b) statement of purpose (76.3%), (c) interview (69.4%), (d) entrance exam (64%), (e) group experience (15.1%), and (f) portfolios (5.4%). Additionally, Walfish and Moreira (2005) examined admission criteria within marriage and family counseling programs ($N = 25$) and found the following factors considered, which are ranked from highest to least in importance: (a) interviews performance, (b) GPA over 3.2, (c) personal statement, (d) clinical experience, (e) letters of recommendation, (f) GRE over 1100, (g) GPA last two years, (h) research experience, and (i) courses taken. Furthermore, Bradey and Post (1991) surveyed counselor education programs ($N = 133$) and found the following criteria considered by selection committees: (a) standardized tests (100%), (b) GPA (94%), (c) letters of recommendation (81%), (d) interviews (57%), (e) writing samples (47%), (f) other (i.e., autobiography, personal statement, work

experience, or experiential exercises) [33%], and (g) work samples (8%). Thus, there appears to be some consensus regarding the admission screening materials utilized by counselor education programs.

Counseling researchers have also explored the perceived effectiveness of various methods used to screen applicants. When surveying program directors ($N = 216$), Leverette-Main (2004) found that personal interviews were viewed as the most effective screening method and GRE scores and letters of recommendation were viewed as the least effective measures for screening applicants. In addition, a small number of respondents ($n = 10$) suggested considering prior experience, faculty assessment, and student products during the admissions process.

Characteristics to Assess When Screening Applicants

In screening applicants, it is important to assess both academic potential and personal characteristics identified as being crucial to counselor effectiveness. Integrating assessment strategies within the admissions process requires the identification of specific areas to measure. Assessing the academic aptitude of applicants may involve a variety of criteria: (a) GPA, (b) standardized test score, (c) letters of recommendation, (d) personal statement, and (e) experience (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010).

Examining personal characteristics involves a clear understanding of what qualities are important to measure, and then determining methods that demonstrate reliability and validity for assessing the qualities. Counseling researchers have examined qualities contributing to counselor effectiveness that are crucial to consider when screening applicants during the admissions process. In analyzing responses from counselor educators ($N = 9$), Nagpal and Ritchie (2002) identified 10 qualities in three areas that counselor educators assess applicants for during admissions interviews. The three areas included professional attributes, personal qualities, and interpersonal skills. Within professional attributes, the counselor educators identified four characteristics: (a) goal appropriateness, (b) motivational appropriateness, (c) professional preparedness, and (d) academic preparedness. In the area of personal attributes, three characteristics were discussed: (a) personal maturity, (b) flexibility, and (c) emotional maturity. Finally, three interpersonal skills were recognized: (a) presence, (b) social appropriateness, and (c) verbal skills. The three areas identified by Nagpal and Ritchie are similar to counselor educators' responses ($N = 30$) identified by Duba, Paez, and Kindsvatter (2010), which include professionalism, personality, and interpersonal interactions.

Pope and Kline (1999) also explored characteristics crucial for counselor effectiveness, as identified by counselor educators ($N = 10$). A list of 22 characteristics was identified through the literature and counselor educators ranked them according to importance and responsiveness to training. The top 10 characteristics listed in order of most critical for assessing during interviews were (a) acceptance, (b) emotional stability, (c) open-mindedness, (d) empathy, (e) genuineness, (f) flexibility, (g) interest in people, (h) confidence, (i) sensitivity, and (j) fairness. Additionally, Wheeler (2000) examined characteristics to assess during the screening process and found seven crucial areas identified by counselor educators ($N = 27$): (a) personable-alloof, (b) open-closed, (c) secure-insecure, (d) self aware-unaware, (e) intelligent-unintelligent, (f) professionally skilled-not skilled, and (g) committed-not committed. Furthermore, Halinski (2010) examined 47 sources within the counseling literature to identify the most commonly recognized counselor traits for measuring counselor effectiveness. The top five characteristics were (a) warm and

accepting, (b) empathic, (c) flexible, (d) self-aware, and (e) genuine. Thus, counselor educators have identified crucial qualities to assess applicants for during the admissions process.

Creative Group-Based Interview Strategies

Interviews may provide information (i.e., interpersonal skills, personal characteristics) about applicants that is not assessed through other admissions screening procedures (Nagpal & Ritchie, 2002; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). This may involve the integration of various activities (i.e., questions, role-play vignettes, and informal discussions) within the interview process (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The creative group interventions discussed in this section focus on assessing seven counseling characteristics and dispositions emphasized in the counseling literature. Five of the characteristics are those identified in the analysis of counseling sources conducted by Halinski (2010), which include (a) warmth and acceptance, (b) empathy, (c) flexibility, (d) self-awareness, (e) genuineness. Two additional areas that are emphasized by counseling researchers (Duba et al., 2010; Nagpal & Ritchie, 2002; Pope & Kline, 1999; Swank et al., 2012) are emotional stability and open mindedness.

Questions

Questions are a standard component of an interview and some questions may be well suited for group interviews. Therefore, the types of questions and the manner in which they are asked may assist counselor educators in assessing the personal characteristics and dispositions of applicants. Conducting group interviews might be particularly helpful with assessing dispositions such as self-awareness, flexibility, and open-mindedness.

When selecting questions for interviews, counselor educators may consider wording that will provide information about the past, present, and future in regards to both personal and professional growth and development. The authors have found that simple questions (e.g., “What experiences led you to seek a degree in counseling and how might those experiences influence your graduate work and your counseling career?”), when used in a group format, allow interviewers and interviewees the opportunity to demonstrate collegiality and cohesion. If an applicant responds with a general or vague response, interviewers may also pose a scenario to assess how the applicant would respond to the situation. For example, providing a scenario about a cross-cultural counseling experience and asking students to address conceptualization, clinical impressions, and treatment will often yield insight into self-awareness and multicultural dispositions. Scenarios may require applicants to provide more personal and specific information that allows counselor educators the opportunity to assess the applicant’s character and dispositions. In a group format, these discussions often yield more insight than in an individual interview because the applied scenarios may evoke emotions that allow interviewers to assess the applicant’s emotional regulation and stability. These group interviews, or go-arounds, can also provide a warm-up for more intensive group interactions.

Counselor educators may also provide documents (e.g., *ACA Code of Ethics*, journal articles) to applicants prior to the interview to have them review and be prepared to discuss during the interview. This strategy exposes applicants to the counseling literature and facilitates a discussion about various topics (e.g., counseling ethics, multiculturalism). Applicants are also introduced to the expectations for engagement, reflection, and critical thinking integrated throughout the counseling program. This may assist applicants in deciding if the program is a

good fit for them. This group activity is also beneficial to interviewers in learning about applicants' beliefs and values and evaluating their critical thinking skills. Additionally, interviewers assess how applicants respond to others, especially when differences are expressed regarding beliefs, values, or ideas. Hence, counselor educators may utilize various strategies (e.g., scenarios, documents) to provide greater depth to interview questions and discussions.

Group Experiential Activities

Experiential exercises may provide opportunities to assess applicants' characteristics and dispositions because the individuals are engaged in activities that assess these qualities through doing, instead of talking about them. These activities facilitate self-awareness (Achenbach & Arthur, 2002) and provide an opportunity for applicants to experience the type of learning they will engage in throughout the counselor training program. This is important because applicants may have limited experience engaging in experiential activities alongside their peers during their undergraduate experiences, which are crucial within a counselor preparation program. Thus, we present the following examples of group experiential activities that counselor education programs may want to consider integrating within the admissions screening process.

Miniature introductions. Applicants are asked to select a miniature or small object from a variety of items available that is appealing to them. The first author has used items from her sandtray collection for this activity that include a variety of categories (e.g., people, cartoon characters, vehicles, animals, religious symbols, objects). The applicants then talk about the object they have selected and what it means to them. Interviewers may also integrate additional prompts within the discussion about the miniatures (e.g., What quality does the miniature represent in you that may contribute to you being an effective counselor or counselor educator [doctoral interview]?). This activity may prompt applicants to discuss things that they might not otherwise share about themselves because the miniature chosen reminds the person of something. This provides an opportunity to assess appropriate self-disclosure. Additionally, it offers a creative way to facilitate introductions, which may lower anxiety associated with the interview process. Furthermore, the activity fosters group interactions and may facilitate discussions among applicants in a more natural context.

Group consensus. A group consensus activity assesses applicants' ability to interact with others. Specifically, it assesses their leadership skills and their ability to compromise. Applicants are asked to create an individual list related to a specific topic (i.e., qualities of effective counselors/counselor educators, keys to success in graduate school). Then as a group, the applicants are asked to identify the three most important things related to the topic, which requires them to share their ideas and compromise to create a consensus among the group. During this process, interviewers have the opportunity to observe how the applicants interact with each other. The interviewers may also facilitate a discussion about the list of qualities that applicants developed during the exercise asking applicants which qualities they acknowledge as being their strengths and what areas they identify for growth, which assesses self-awareness.

A variation of this group activity may involve applicants working together to accomplish a specific task. For example, interviewers may ask applicants to create something (i.e., a structure) using a selection of items (i.e., newspaper, tape, paper clips, cardboard) given to the group. Alternatively, applicants might be asked to work together to solve a problem, answer a list

of questions, etc. Specifically, counselor educators may facilitate group activities that promote teamwork and problem-solving and then engage applicants in processing the group activity, allowing applicants to give and receive peer feedback. Throughout this activity, the focus remains on assessing the applicants' interpersonal skills. Furthermore, counselor educators may introduce a counseling scenario and have applicants work together to identify the key issues within the case. The expectations will vary depending for master's and doctoral interviews. Doctoral level applicants would be asked to critically analyze the counseling scenario.

Psychodrama. Interviewers can use group activities based in Psychodrama (Moreno, 1993) to facilitate self-expression (Gladding, 2010). The Affective Seating Chart, discussed by Scholl and Smith-Adcock (2007), can be modified for use in admissions interviews. In this activity, students take turns sitting in a chair and describing feelings they have about their counseling relationships. Interviewers modify this activity for admissions interviews by having applicants take turns sitting in the chair and talking about different feelings they have about becoming a counselor or counselor educator. The use of Psychodrama activities invites others in the group to respond to their peers. Process questions can expand the emotional expression of the activity (e.g., "What hopes and aspirations do you have for your counseling future?" "What scares you the most about becoming a counselor?") Interviewers can also use process questions to encourage group process (e.g., "Who else has a similar feeling?"). This activity may foster students' self-expression and invite them to demonstrate empathy, warmth, and acceptance.

Informal Interactions

During the group interview, counselor educators may allow time for applicants to engage in more informal group interactions with each other, current students, and faculty (e.g., panel discussion, lunch, reception). During these interactions, applicants have the opportunity to ask questions about the program and to get to know the faculty better. Additionally, the faculty may observe the interactions of the applicants with each other and with students and faculty. Engagement in informal interactions may assist faculty and prospective students with determining if the program and the prospective student are a good match. Furthermore, having a relaxed setting may promote a more natural display of behaviors and dispositions that will provide additional insight during the screening process.

Peer Assessment

Peer assessment, described by Halinski (2010), is another group interview technique. This activity is used at the end of the group interview process. Applicants receive an evaluation form and are asked to rate themselves and the other applicants in their group regarding their ability to express themselves, understand others, care about others, act genuinely, and their potential to become an effective counselor. A modified version of this activity involves applicants providing verbal feedback to each other at the end of the group interview experience. Interviewers facilitate this process by asking applicants to give one feedback statement to the person sitting next to them. This activity provides interviewers with the opportunity to obtain information from the applicants regarding their insight about themselves and others and to observe the applicants' behaviors and responses to the activity.

Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision

Gatekeeping for the counseling profession starts before an applicant is admitted to a training program (Ziomek-Daigle & Christenson, 2010). However, limited literature exists in regards to discussing gatekeeping procedures during the admissions process. This is perhaps attributable to the difficulties inherent in observing and assessing applicants' fit for the counseling profession in brief interview sessions and limited interactions. Therefore, counselor educators have suggested that multiple interactions and opportunities for personal contact are crucial to gatekeeping at pre-admission (Ziomek-Daigle & Christenson, 2010) and many programs are now using group interviews to quickly and intensively examine students' interpersonal qualities.

We recommend developing a detailed protocol for implementing group strategies within the admissions process, similar to the system discussed by Halinski (2010). We suggest the use of rating scales, multiple observers, and multiple interactions. Additionally, counselor educators need a rationale for using each group interview strategy, which supports using the activities in a purposeful, intentional manner. Furthermore, drawing on counseling characteristics and dispositions emphasized in the counseling literature (Duba et al., 2010; Halinski, 2010; Nagpal & Ritchie, 2002; Pope & Kline, 1999; Swank et al., 2012), the observed qualities should be specific (e.g., professionalism, openness to feedback, emotional maturity). Thus, counselor educators are strategic in developing detailed and uniform procedures that are helpful if faculty are challenged about an admission decision from the applicant or the administration.

The integration of creative group interview activities is useful to counselor educators in screening applications for training program. Additionally, the group interview experience is useful for the applicants. As discussed previously, the applicants have the opportunity to learn about the expectations of the counselor preparation program, beyond simply being told about them through their participation in the experiential activities. Experiential exercises and involvement in group activities are central components within the counselor education program curriculum and applicants may use their experiences in the group activities to help them determine if the counselor preparation program is a good fit for them. Furthermore, applicants may personally benefit from the group interview experience by increasing their self-awareness. Thus, the group interview process is mutually beneficial for counselor educators and applicants.

Lastly, the use of creative group processes during screening and selection of counseling students has clinical implications. When applicants are engaged in experiential activities, they can become emotionally charged. Though these group activities are suggested as a way to elevate process and emotional expression, the process can leave applicants exhausted, emotionally vulnerable, and confused about faculty's expectations. Therefore, applicants should be informed in advance of the interview that they will be asked to engage in various activities that will involve them sharing personal information. Additionally, faculty should be mindful of ethical and legal considerations (e.g., disclosure of personal information that requires further processing or a referral for counseling) when implementing experiential activities. In considering this, counselor educators structure activities to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of experiential work. Furthermore, faculty should facilitate activities and process the experience in a way that reflects on the intent of the process, examines personal meanings, and provides cohesion and closure.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research regarding the use of group interview processes appears to be sparse. Additionally, most of the research on gatekeeping at pre-admission is limited to academic ability (e.g., use of GRE scores) and counselor characteristics (e.g., Wheeler, 2000). Only a few studies (Halinski, 2010; Nagpal, & Ritchie, 2002) have examined the admissions process and specific approaches for interviewing applicants. However, with a greater emphasis on admissions' procedures that extend beyond commonly used methods (e.g., standardized tests [GRE] and academic records [GPA]), a need for research exists to explore the effectiveness of creative group interview strategies.

Researchers have a variety of areas to study with the integration of creative group interview strategies. Key research questions may include: (a) How effective are these approaches at helping counselor education faculty screen applicants at pre-admission? (b) How congruent are specific activities with desired counselor characteristics? (c) How do these activities prepare incoming students for counselor training? (d) How does group process work to highlight specific counselor qualities that prospective students model when engaged in experiential activities? (e) Do these admissions activities predict student success in counselor preparation?

Counselor educators have developed several assessments to measure counseling competencies (e.g., *Counseling Skills Scale* [CSS], Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2003; *Skilled Counseling Scale* [SCS], Urbani et al., 2002; *Counseling Competencies Scale* [CCS], Swank, et al., 2012). However, these instruments have not been used to screen applicants. Future studies might examine whether these assessment or variations of the instruments can be used to identify basic counseling competencies, as demonstrated in group-based admissions processes.

Identifying students who are not well suited for the counseling profession is a complex and daunting task for counselor educators. Although most counselor educators view gatekeeping during pre-admission as important, a paucity of literature is provided about how to facilitate this process. In this article, we proposed several creative ways to use group activities during the admissions screening process. We advanced the idea that group activities are a natural fit for identifying some of the core characteristics of effective counselors. Although the integration of group interview activities requires examination regarding their effectiveness, these strategies allow for a two-pronged approach that helps to screen applicants and also to initiate students into the world of counselor education. Thus, counselor education programs are encouraged to consider the integration of creative group interview strategies within their admissions processes to enhance the screening of applicants and uphold their ethical and legal responsibilities to gatekeep for the counseling profession.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.0039>

References

- Achenbach, K. & Arthur, N. (2002). Experiential learning: Bridging theory to practice in multicultural counseling. *Guidance and Counseling, 17*, 39-45.
- American Counseling Association. (2005). *Code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Bradey, J., & Post, P. (1991). Impaired students: Do we eliminate them from our counselor education programs? *Counselor Education and Supervision, 31*, 100-108. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.1991.tb00148.x
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2009). *CACREP2009 standards*. Retrieved April 10, 2012, from <http://www.cacrep.org/2009standards.html>
- Duba, J. D., Paez, S. B., & Kindsvatter, A. (2010). Criteria of nonacademic characteristics used to evaluate and retain community counseling students. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 88*, 154-162. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2010.tb00004.x
- Eriksen, K., & McAuliffe, G. (2003). A measure of counselor competency. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 43*, 120-133. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2003.tb01836.x
- Gaubatz, M. D., & Vera, E. M. (2002). Do formalized gatekeeping procedures increase programs' follow-up with deficient trainees? *Counselor Education and Supervision, 41*, 294-305. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2002.tb01292.x
- Gaubatz, M. D. & Vera, E. M. (2006). Trainee competence in master's-level counseling programs: A comparison of counselor educators' and students' views. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 46*, 32-43. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2006.tb00010.x
- Gladding, S. (2010). *Counseling as an art: The creative arts in counseling* (4th ed), Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Halinski, K. (2010). *Predicting beginning master's level counselor effectiveness from personal characteristics and admission data: An exploratory study* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Order No. 3385790)
- Leverette-Main, S. (2004). Program directors' perceptions of admission screening measures and indicators of student success. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 43*, 207-219. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2004.tb01843.x
- Moreno, J. L. (1993). *Who shall survive? Foundations of sociometry, group psychotherapy, and sociodrama*. Roanoke, VA: Royal.
- Nagpal, S. & Ritchie, M. H. (2002). Selection interviews of students for master's programs in counseling: An exploratory study. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 41*, 207-218. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2002.tb01284.x
- Perusse, R., Goodnough, G. E., & Noel, C. J. (2001). A national survey of school counselor preparation programs: Screening methods, faculty experiences, curricular content, and fieldwork requirements. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 40*, 252-262. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2001.tb01258.x
- Pope, V. T., & Kline, W. B. (1999). The personal characteristics of effective counselors: What 10 experts think. *Psychological Reports, 84*, 1339-1344.
- Scholl, M. B., & Smith-Adcock, S. (2007). Using psychodrama techniques to promote counselor identity development in group supervision. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, 2*, 13-34. Retrieved from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wcmh20>
- Smaby, M. H., Maddux, C. D., Richmond, A. S., Lepkowski, W. J., & Packman, J. (2005). Academic admission requirements as predictors of counseling

- knowledge, personal development, and counseling skills. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 45, 43-57. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2005.tb00129.x
- Sternberg, R. J. (1985). *Beyond IQ: A triarchic theory of human intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1988). *The triarchic mind: A new theory of human intelligence*. New York: Viking Press.
- Sternberg, R. J. & Williams, W. M. (1997). Does the Graduate Record Examination predict meaningful success in the graduate training of psychologists? *American Psychologist*, 52, 630-641. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.52.6.630
- Swank, J. M., Lambie, G. W., & Witta, E. L. (2012). An exploratory investigation of the Counseling Competencies Scale: A measure of counseling skills, dispositions, and behaviors. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 51, 189-206. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6978.2012.00014.x
- Urbani, S., Smith, M. R., Maddux, C. D., Smaby, M. H., Torres-Rivera, E., & Crews, J. (2002). Counselor preparation: Skill-based training and counseling self-efficacy. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 42, 92-106. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6978.2002.tb01802.x
- Walfish, S., & Moreira, J. C. (2005). Relative weighting of admission variables in marriage and family therapy graduate programs. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 33, 395-402. doi: 10.1080/01926180500274542
- Wheeler, S. (2000). What makes a good counsellor? An analysis of ways in which counsellor trainers construe good and bad counselling trainees. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 13, 65-83. doi: 10.1080/09515070050011079
- Ziomek-Daigle, J., & Christensen, T. M. (2010). An emergent theory of gatekeeping practices in counselor education. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 88, 407-415. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2010.tb00040.x

Author Note

Jacqueline M. Swank, PhD, School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611 jswank@coe.ufl.edu

Sondra Smith-Adcock, PhD, School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611 ssmith@coe.ufl.edu

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Jacqueline M. Swank at jswank@coe.ufl.edu

The Perceived Value of Counselor Preparation for Student Affairs Professionals

Jake J. Protivnak, Matthew J. Paylo, & J. Carol Mercer

Student affairs programs share a common goal of developing master's level professionals for employment in higher education. Approximately one-third of student affairs training programs are counseling-based and half of those programs are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). However, there is a lack of literature regarding the preparation of student affairs professionals trained in counseling programs and the importance of counselor training to the student affairs profession. Based upon a review of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education Professional Standards, CACREP standards, and other related research, this article will discuss the perceived value of counselor preparation to the functional areas within student affairs and categorize the specific student affairs functional areas based upon the perceived value of counselor training.

Keywords: Counselor education, student affairs, college counseling, higher education, functional areas

Counselor training is an important component in graduate programs of student affairs professionals (Saginak, 2010). Recent studies of college student mental health indicated that psychological and emotional issues appear more frequently than in previous years (Center for Study of Collegiate Mental Health [CSCMH], 2009) and college student stress may be on the rise (American College Health Association [ACHA], 2009). College students uncertain of how to manage academic, emotional, and social pressures may exhibit anxiety and depression (Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008) and may make use of problematic means of coping such as binge drinking, drug abuse, and suicide attempts (CSCMH, 2009; Grayson & Meilman, 2006; National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [NIAAA], 2008). As social and emotional problems increase in the lives of college students, it may be beneficial for student affairs professionals who have interpersonal contact with students (e.g., college counseling, career counseling, academic advising, etc.) to having training in counseling knowledge and skills in order to effectively respond to the interpersonal issues of students in higher education.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2012) outlined specific competencies for 43 functional areas within student affairs. These functional areas include the following: Academic Advising; Admission Programs; Adult Leader Programs & Services; Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Programs; Assessment Services; Auxiliary Services; Campus Activities; Campus Information and Visitor Services; Campus Religious and Spiritual Programs; Career Services/Counseling; Clinical Health Services; College Unions; College Honor Societies; Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs; Conference and Events Programs; Counseling Services; Dining Services; Distance Education Programs; Disability Service Programs; Educational Abroad Programs and Services; Financial Aid; Graduate and Professional Student

Programs and Services; Health Promotion Programs; Housing and Residential Life Programs; International Student Programs and Services; Internship Programs; Learning Assistance Programs; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Programs; Master's Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs; Multicultural Student Programs and Services; Orientation Programs; Recreational Sports Programs; Registrar Programs and Services; Service-Learning Programs; Student Conduct Programs; Student Leadership Programs; TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity Programs; Undergraduate Research Programs; and Women Student Programs and Services. Five new functional areas (i.e., Campus Police and Security Programs, Parent and Family Programs, Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Prevention Programs, Transfer Student Programs and Services, and Veterans and Military Programs and Services) were added as functional areas in the most recent edition of the CAS standards (2012). A full description of each of the functional areas, including recommended knowledge, skills, degree, and associated tasks for each functional area can be found in the *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* (CAS, 2012).

The authors examined the CAS standards in light of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2009) 2009 Standards (e.g., Standards for Student Affairs and College Counseling Programs). The authors categorized the student affairs functional areas that appeared to be closely aligned to counselor preparation and those less aligned with counseling-based preparation (e.g., dining services, undergraduate research programs, etc.). To more clearly delineate between functional areas that may or may not be perceived to benefit from counselor training, the authors examined the CAS standards. While the CAS standards provided a broad overview of each functional area (i.e., mission, program, organization, ethics, policy, access, institutional relations, financial resources, technology, facilities, assessment), the authors examined the 'Human Resources' section of each functional area and the Role of Master-Level Student Affairs Preparation Program to identify if a counseling degree and/or counseling training was recommended by CAS for professionals in each functional area. According to CAS (2012), while student affairs programs may have different areas of focus (i.e., administration, counseling, student development, student cultures), they should prepare students to work in a variety of functional areas. From the perspective of faculty preparing students in a counseling-based student affairs program, an examination of student affairs functional areas generated the question: Within the 43 different student affairs functional areas, to what extent are counseling knowledge and skills indispensable, important, helpful, or unnecessary to the tasks performed by student affairs professionals? The purpose of this paper is to present a general categorization of the functional areas within student affairs based upon the perceived value of counselor preparation.

Overview of Student Affairs and Counseling

Student affairs had been closely aligned with counseling at the beginning of the student affairs profession. Lois Kimball Matthews published the first book on college student personnel work in 1915, describing duties of deanship to include: matters of vocational guidance, and service advocating for the problems of students (Waple, 2006). The original 1937 student personnel point of view statement, proposed duties of student personnel services officers were to engage in "educational counseling, vocational counseling...student health, social programs" as well as a number of other administrative duties (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 1937, pp. 39-40).

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) was one of four founding organizations of the American Counseling Association (ACA), originally established as the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) in 1952 (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2010a). Through the development of the CACREP guidelines, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) also took a leadership role in establishing standards for the preparation of student affairs professionals (Cooper & Dean, 1989).

Dr. Theodore Miller, former board member of ACPA, representative to CACREP, and president of CAS from 1979 to 1989 recalled the establishment of standards for student affairs:

At some point in the 1970's I became clearly aware that, as an emerging profession, student affairs must have some clearly defined professional standards to guide practice.... ACES took the lead in this arena...ACES was a major player in that [establishment of preparation standards], and ACPA connected with that because we valued preparation for... student personnel or student affairs education...Originally, [ACPA] wanted it [CACREP] to be [named] the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Student Personnel Services...I had many battles with counselors over the fact we were not really dealing with 'student personnel,' about how well that fit in, and about whether it ought to be there at all...The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs grew out of those discussions. From the get go I had contact, discussions and debates about the role and functions of student affairs as opposed to the roles and function of counseling...we did ultimately get the student affairs preparation standard component as a specialty area (Cooper & Dean, 1989, pp. 199-200).

ACPA took leadership developing standards for student affairs training programs and invited National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) to become a part of the process. Both associations invited other student affairs orientated organizations to attend an exploratory meeting in June 1979. This resulted in the development of an inter-association consortium to offers guidelines, standards, and learning outcomes for preparation within student affairs (CAS, 2012). Debates regarding the efficacy of similar preparation standards within student affairs and counselor education programs, as well as the pursuit of distinctive professional identities eventually led to the disaffiliation of ACPA from ACA in 1992 (ACA, 2010b). ACPA chose to become independent of ACA in order serve those with primary identities as student affairs professionals. This created an opening for the development of the American College Counseling Association (ACCA) within ACA and it became an organization to promote dual identities as professionals for both college counselors and student affairs professionals (Davis, 1998).

The ACPA's (2010) 2010-2012 online Directory of Graduate Programs Preparing Student Affairs Professionals listed 153 universities offering graduate programs comprised of 130 master's degrees, seven specialists degrees and certification programs, and 60 doctoral programs. The majority of student affairs programs were housed in colleges of education; however the programs varied across different departments (e.g., counseling, higher education administration, educational leadership, etc.). The Directory of Counselor Preparation Manual (Schweiger, Henderson, & Clawson, 2008) sponsored by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) listed 45 universities offering counseling-based student affairs programs. The counseling-based degrees included three doctorates in Student Affairs, six education

specialists in student affairs, 42 masters in student affairs, one master's in student services higher education, one master's of academic advising, one master's of student services in higher education, and one master's of student services intercollegiate athletics. This provided an estimate that approximately one-third of student affairs programs are identified as counseling-based. Of those 45 counseling-based student affairs programs, approximately half currently hold CACREP accreditation. Therefore when we refer to counseling-based programs, we are referring to programs operated within a counseling program with or without CACREP accreditation. The majority of the non-CACREP-accredited student affairs programs in the ACPA online directory do not list a curriculum of study with courses with "counseling" in their title, unless the courses were electives. A review of the graduate programs listed on the ACPA online directory found 13 CACREP-accredited programs, 39 program requiring at least one course that would be found in a CACREP counseling program, and the remainder not requiring any courses with 'counseling' in the title. Of the student affairs programs requiring at least one counseling course, the courses most frequently required were skills courses (e.g., counseling skills, counseling theory). While differences exist, it was easy to recognize some of the curricular overlap between CACREP accredited and non-counseling based programs. The curriculum of student affairs programs consistent with CAS (2012) are reported to focus on the following: historical and philosophical foundations of higher education and student affairs; student development theory; student characteristics and the effects of college on students; individual and group interventions; organization and administration of student affairs; assessment, evaluation, and research; and supervised internship in at least two different functional areas.

In the ACPA/NASPA (2010) Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners, 'Advising and Helping' was identified as one of the ten competency areas for student affairs professionals. ACPA/NASPA defined this area as encompassing basic, intermediate, and advanced knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to "counseling, and advising support, direction, feedback, critique, referral, and guidance to individuals and groups" (p. 6). A number of the specific skills advocated in this area are consistent with skills listed in the CACREP standards (e.g., active listening skills, establishing rapport, confidentiality, crisis management, group dynamics, identify mental health concerns, culturally sensitive counseling strategies, advocacy, consultation, assess counseling interventions, etc.). Student affairs professionals trained in counseling-based programs would seem to have a higher level of 'Advising and Helping' knowledge/skills. While these competencies were logically connected to some student affairs functional areas (e.g., counseling services), the perceived value of these counseling skills across the student affairs functional areas may be less clear.

A few studies have reported that counseling skills training was essential in entry-level tasks of student affairs professionals (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stofelt, 2005; Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009) and advocated a need to integrate counseling and administrative management skills. Some researchers have suggested the need for future inquiry examining differences in curricula of administrative-based programs and counseling-based programs (Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007).

As discussed, CACREP (2009), CAS (2012) and ACPA/NASPA (2010) have standards to guide faculty preparing professionals to work in student affairs. It is important to note the difference between accreditation standards (i.e., CACREP) and professional association standards (i.e., CAS, ACPA). Accreditation standards provide individuals with an understanding of a minimum level of knowledge and skills received by students in an accredited program and the standard of quality is judged by an external review. While standards set forth from

professional associations are self-regulated and do not involve the use of an external review board to evaluate the adherence to standards. Association standards may be viewed as levels of quality that are voluntary self-regulated by individuals or groups (CAS, 2012).

Counselor Preparation within the Functional Areas of Student Affairs

Historically, guidance and counseling were considered prominent duties in the job expectation of the student affairs professional. Over time, student affairs evolved into diverse functional areas (i.e., the grouping of individuals based on the functions provided in an organization; Kuk, Banning, & Amey, 2010), resulting in a necessity for entry-level professionals to be competent in a variety of tasks. However, a clear understanding as to what extent counselor training is critical to the various functional areas in student affairs is lacking. For example, individuals can be hired in a number of student affairs areas with or without counseling degrees, and many with just undergraduate degrees. This may lead college administrators, faculty, and potential students questioning the purpose and value of the counseling-based student affairs program. Burkard et al. (2005) suggested that faculty in student affairs programs should focus their curriculum on one student affairs functional area of emphasis rather than a single overall standard for all areas. It has been argued that counseling-based student affairs programs may not be adequate to cover the now complex and diverse preparation needed for the profession of student affairs in their work in the different functional areas within higher education (Cuyjet et al., 2009).

Upon an examination of the 2009 CACREP (2009) standards, CACREP did not provide specific knowledge and skill standards for all 43 functional areas identified by CAS. CACREP provided a general overview of domains that promote the development of postsecondary students. The 2009 CACREP standards mentioned the following areas/populations that appeared to relate to CAS functional areas: college counseling; admissions; financial aid; academic advising; judicial services; recreational sports; disability services; international student affairs; health services; career; addiction intervention; diversity and advocacy; residents, commuters, adult learners, athletes, and first-generation students.

Both counselor education and student affairs professionals may have differing opinions regarding the ability of counseling programs to competently prepare students in all of the functional areas. Through the lens of counselor education, the authors of the current article support the position that it may be appropriate for counseling programs to focus on training students in the functional areas most closely aligned to counseling. Since there was a paucity of literature regarding counselor education's preparation of student affairs professionals, it seemed prudent to utilize the CAS Standards (2012) to explore their perspective on how counselor training is perceived within varying functional areas of student affairs.

In this article, the authors categorize student affairs functional areas based upon the perceived value of counselor training within the functional areas. This builds upon Reynold's (2009) approach who provided an overall grouping of student affairs areas into four areas: (a) counseling-oriented, (b) leadership development and educational positions, (c) administrative positions, and (d) academic affairs positions. The current authors' categorization of functional areas differs from Reynolds (2009) by specifically designating each of the student affairs functional areas into a category based on the degree of importance of counselor training as identified by the CAS Professional Standards (2012). CAS has outlined 43 functional areas, but for the utilization of this paper, the Master's Level Student Affairs Administration Preparation

Programs area has not been categorized since it provides recommendations for preparatory training programs. From this inquiry, categories were developed to provide an initial conceptualization and promote a discussion of the various functional areas of student affairs as to which counseling knowledge and skills might be more valued and utilized by professionals. The authors chose to group the functional areas in four categories to demonstrate a categorization of areas that graduates of counseling programs may work in student affairs areas in which counseling skills may be viewed as: indispensable, important, helpful and unnecessary.

The authors categorized the functional areas by both reviewing the CACREP standards (2009) and the CAS standards (2012). Primarily, the authors categorized the functional areas based upon (a) the CAS standards listing of counseling or related coursework as indispensable, important, helpful or unnecessary to a specific functional area, (b) student affairs and counseling research that highlighted the importance of counseling knowledge/skills, and (c) identification of the functional area within the CACREP standards. Functional areas that were most clearly aligned with counseling were categorized as indispensable. Functional areas that had some of the above characteristics were categorized important, and those functional areas that had the fewest of the above characteristics were categorized as helpful. If the functional area lacked the above characteristics, then the functional area was placed within the unnecessary category. The following sections provide an overview of the student affairs functional areas categorized based upon the perceived value of counseling preparation as indispensable, important, helpful, or unnecessary.

Counselor Preparation is Indispensable Counseling Services and Career Services.

This category is designated as the primary areas for counselor training within the student affairs and includes the functional areas, Counseling Services and Career Services. Basic and advanced levels of counselor training were vital for job performance in this area. The inclusion of only two of the 43 student affairs functional areas is consistent with Reynolds' (2009) categorization of those two functional areas as having the greatest emphasis on helping skills. CAS (2012) recommended that counseling services staff members complete a supervised graduate practicum/internship in a setting that involved counseling students in higher education setting, and staff members should hold state licensure or certification in counseling, social work or psychology.

Counseling skills are indispensable for this functional area as college counselors act as supervisors, group facilitators, interventionists on crisis planning teams, prevention programming coordinators and presenters, case managers, in addition to providing individual and group counseling. College counselors may also serve as consultants for faculty, staff, coaches, parents, community and student organizations from athletics to Greek organizations (Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Much, Wagener, & Hellenbrand, 2010) as well as advocates for underrepresented student populations (Zubernis & Snyder, 2007) and those managing disabilities (Corrigan, 1998; Troiano, 2003).

Career services professionals address the needs of students through individualized career counseling, career planning workshops, referrals, assessment, group career counseling and career planning services (Rayman, 1993). Students served by this functional area have the opportunity to explore skills, interests, abilities, values and personality in order to make effective vocational and academic choices, and encourage students for new transitions from college to career (Yang

& Gysbers, 2007). As a result, career services professionals often encounter conversations that focus on college student mental health and their career decision-making (Hinkelman & Luzzo, 2007). Students meeting with career center counselors may discuss career related issues and in process may reveal challenging personal, psychological and emotional issues (Niles, Anderson, & Cover, 2000), highlighting a need for career center professionals to have training in college student development, assessment, and helping skills (Winston, 1996).

While states may differ in licensure requirements and laws, a master's degree in Student Affairs from a counseling-based program may be eligible to apply for a state counseling license. For example, at a CACREP-accredited midwestern program, the Student Affairs track is 51 semester hours and the College Counseling track is 66 semester hours, and the program provides a path for graduates applying for counseling licensure in states that require 48 or 60 semester hours for licensure. However, even with a counseling license and coursework in student affairs and college counseling, it can be challenging obtaining a counseling service position at a university. According to the national survey of counseling center directors (Gallagher, 2010), 19.4% of the directors professional identify was as a professional counselor. This is an increase from the reported 11.4% of counseling center directors identifying as professional counselors in the 2007 report (Gallagher, 2007). The most recent national survey of counseling center directors (Gallagher, 2011) has omitted the question regarding professional identity of directors.

Counselor Preparation is Important

Academic Advising Programs; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Programs; Housing and Residential Life Programs; Learning Assistance Programs; and Student Conduct Programs are student affairs functional areas where counselor training remained important (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2010; Dillon, 2003; English, Shutt, & Oswalt, 2009; Kuhn, Gordan, & Webber, 2006). These areas did not require the employment of an individual with a counseling graduate degree. Rather, CAS (2012) recommended that professionals hold a degree in the field relevant to their position.

Academic Advising Programs

Academic Advisors frequently employ basic counseling skills to develop rapport in advising sessions. Advisors provide information and work to develop an individualized exploration of educational and personal goals (Kadar, 2001). Consequently, it is probable that the students' personal and academic concerns will include issues beyond the typical discussions of scheduling courses (Kuhn et al., 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising to find literature suggesting that many academic advisors hold graduate degree in counseling (Preece et al., 2007).

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Programs

As the prevalence and misuse of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs continues on college campuses (ACHA, 2009; English et al., 2009; NIAAA, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2009), student affairs professionals have a responsibility to be proactive in offering effective prevention programming, identifying students who may be at risk and referring them for necessary services (Gintner & Choate, 2006; LaBrie, Lamb, Pedersen, & Quinlan, 2006). The incorporation of prevention programming, use of peer counselors, and brief

motivational strategies has been found to be effective for decreasing high-risk behaviors and substance use (Buscemi et al., 2010; LaBrie et al., 2006; Mayhew, Caldwell, & Hourigian, 2008). CAS identified counseling services as a peripheral campus support partner with Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) programs. Similar to academic advising, CAS (2012) stated that student affairs professionals should ensure confidentiality for student's records and supervision should be provided by professional staff member with graduate degrees in relevant areas "such as health education, student services/development, psychology, social work, counseling, education, public health, or other appropriate health-related areas" (p. 62).

Housing and Residential Life Programs

Counselor-based training may also be important for professionals working in Housing and Residential Life Programs. Directors, mid-level housing managers, assistant housing directors, area coordinators and hall directors supervise and train residence assistants (RAs) in handling counseling related issues (e.g., relationship issues, managing work and school, personal identity, career exploration, substance abuse etc.). These professionals offer campus preventative programming such as alcohol awareness and sexual assault awareness and prevention (Foubert & Newberry, 2006). Resident life workers create an environment beneficial for student's intellectual, social and psychological development and academic success (Dillon, 2003). Often resident life staff duties crossover into what Reynolds (2011) refers to as "advanced helping skills:" mediation, group facilitation, de-escalating difficult incidents, identification and referral for distressed students and crisis response (p. 402). Critical incidents (e.g., mental health/suicide, domestic violence, assault, etc.) necessitate training to prepare and protect both staff and students from harm (Epstein, 2003). Consequently, CAS (2012) stated that supervisors should have an earned graduate degree in "college student personnel, college counseling, or high education administration, or other fields as appropriate" (p. 296).

Learning Assistance Programs

Counselor-based training can provide Learning Assistance professionals with resources to: build rapport, lead groups, educate and assist in student behavioral modifications (e.g., time management, goal achievement), understand college student academic development, identify and implement cognitive and behavioral interventions (e.g., reducing stress) to retain students (Stebbleton & Schmidt, 2010), or those unprepared for the tasks of college level academic disciplines or those needing help in specific skills (e.g., reading skills, time management skills) (Arendale, 2010). Casazza and Silverman (1996) suggested that learning assistance tutors' training consists of fundamental instruction in group dynamics and counseling skills. CAS (2012) reported that professional staff members should hold a graduate degree in "English, reading, mathematics, student affairs professional preparation, student development, higher education, counseling, psychology or education" (p. 329).

Student Conduct Programs

Student Conduct Programs provide remediation to students in violation of university policy. Student affairs professionals work to extinguish unhealthy behaviors while retaining students at the university, and to facilitate student development (Wilson, 1996). Kiracofe and

Buller (2009) suggested the importance of using counseling skills during mandated discipline. Training in counseling theories, human development, mediation, group facilitation may help student conduct representatives assess levels of development, adjust interventions, encourage behavioral change, and deescalate high emotional situation with students and parents. Dannell (1997) challenged higher education personnel to reconsider how they approach student discipline and called for strategies including “caring confrontation” (p. 3). This approach was similar to counseling as the conversation takes place within the context of an empathic relationship. CAS (2012) recommended that the designee responsible for student conduct programs have an education background in “college student affairs, psychology, sociology, student development including moral and ethical development, higher education administration, counseling, law, criminology, or criminal justice” (pp. 442-443). In addition, CAS stated that it would be helpful for students from graduate programs such as counseling to assist the student conduct program during their practicum/internship.

Counselor Preparation is Helpful

Counselor preparation is considered helpful in the following student affairs functional areas: Undergraduate Admissions Programs and Services; Disability Resources and Services; Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs; Clinical Health Services; Health Promotion Services; International Student Programs and Services; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs and Services; Multicultural Student Programs and Services; Parent and Family Programs; Sexual Assault and Relational Violence Prevention Programs; Transfer Student Programs and Services, and Women Student Programs and Services.

Undergraduate Admissions Programs and Services

CAS (2012) described the undergraduate admission professional as providing information, evaluating applicants, working cooperatively with college faculty, school counselors, and campus offices to help recruit and retain students. The term “admission counselor” is not specifically utilized and the requirement for a graduate degree in counseling or student affairs was not stated by CAS. Consequently training in counseling skills may not necessarily be considered for hiring undergraduate admissions professionals. However, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) advocated a position different from CAS and supported hiring admission counselors who have training in counseling. NACAC (1990) addressed the value of training in a counseling-based student affairs program in their Statement on the Counseling Dimension of the Admissions Process “NACAC stands firm in its position that counseling has been and continues to be an essential, if not the most essential, ingredient in the college admissions process” (pp. 1). Consistent with other functional areas, there are professional associations that advocate the value of counselor training beyond the position of the CAS standards.

Disability Resources and Services

Disability Support Services is another functional area that may utilize counseling skills within daily responsibilities. CAS (2009) reported that disability services provide transitional type counseling such as “advising and counseling and support for persons with disabilities...to

assist individuals in devising strategies to adjust and succeed in higher education” (p. 234). The Association on Higher Education and Disability (n.d.) does not directly address the need for staff to hold counselor training, however some specific duties listed within their professional standards and program standards (i.e., advocacy; collaboration; consultation, promotion of self-efficacy, etc.) imply that counseling skills may be useful. The CAS standards did not recommend discipline specific degree or training, but instead report that the majority of disability services professionals have backgrounds in “counseling, social work, education, psychology, rehabilitation, and disability studies” (p. 230).

Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs

While student affairs professionals who work in the functional area of Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs may hold degrees from various disciplines, CAS (2012) suggested that it would be helpful for professionals to have graduate level course work including counseling techniques and group dynamics. There is a need for fraternity and sorority advisors to provide undergraduate students with appropriate academic, career, and personal/social guidance, accountability, high expectations and support for their development (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006). CAS (2012) also identified advisor responsibilities for providing guidance, student development, rule enforcement, and collaboration. According to Anderson (1987), student affairs professionals advising Greek organizations found counseling training helpful within their role. Anderson asserted that advisors “need counseling skills to assist students in exploring their concerns and finding solutions to their problems” (p. 82) and they must be “expert listeners, able to defuse emotionally explosive situations” (p. 83).

Clinical Health Services and Health Promotion Services

Clinical Health Services (CHS) and Health Promotion Services (HPS), otherwise known as wellness services, exist to promote the holistic wellbeing of students. Clinical Health Services exist to provide medical and health care access to students and Health Promotional Services promotes the well-being (i.e., physical, social, mental) of individuals. CAS (2012) reported a strong emphasis on the promotion of wellness and prevention, which is a position consistent with individuals trained in a counseling program. The CAS (2012) standards recommend that HPS staff members should have graduate degrees in “health education, public health, higher education administration, counseling, or community development” (p. 283).

International Student Programs and Services; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs and Services; Multicultural Student Programs and Services; Parent and Family Programs; Sexual Assault and Relational Violence Programs; Transfer Student Programs and Services; and Women Student Programs and Services

These functional areas are grouped together as they provide critical services to specific individuals on college campuses. As international student populations continue to increase, student affairs professionals working in International Student Programs and Services (ISPS) functional area have several roles to fulfill. Counselor-based training may be helpful when advising international students, assessing needs, educating and offering services to transition and access available services (Institute of International Education, 2010). CAS (2012) suggested

ISPS staff should have familiarity with various academic disciplines: including “multicultural theory, organizational development, counseling theory and practice, group dynamics, leadership development and human development, and research and evaluation” (p. 308).

Multicultural awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness were found to underscore effective and ethical practice in student affairs practice (Pope & Mueller, 2011). These are also valued competencies in functional areas for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Programs and Services and Multicultural Student Programs and Services. Multicultural programs and services support the functional areas of career services, academic advising, counseling, and health services. CAS (2012) stated that LGBT Programs and Services leaders “should have coursework in organizational development, counseling, group dynamics, leadership development, student and human development, LGBT studies, multicultural education, women’s studies, higher education, and research and assessment” (p. 342) and Multicultural Student program staff should complete coursework in “counseling theory and practice, identity development theory, group dynamics, leadership development, human development, and research and assessment” (p. 367). For Parent and Family Programs, CAS stated that programming should address “academic advising...career planning...health and wellness, resources to support students with disabilities...diversity, multicultural and international program services” (p. 385). Similarly, for Transfer Student Programs and Services, CAS recommended student affairs professionals have knowledge of theories of student development, student learning and should have a working relationship with counselors as they “help students think about academic, career, and life goals” (p. 464). For individuals who are working in Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Programs, CAS recommended training in crisis response, prevention efforts and confidentiality. Counseling programs, along with social work and nursing are listed as useful partners to help support student affairs professionals in this area. Finally, Women’s Services also depend upon multicultural competencies and skills for student affairs professionals to promote gender equality and a supportive, campus climates for women.

Counselor Preparation is Unnecessary

The remaining student affairs functional areas were grouped in the category to designate that counseling skills were unnecessary. These areas include: Adult Learner Programs and Services; Assessment Services; Auxiliary Services Functional Areas; Campus Activities Programs; Campus Information and Visitor Services; Campus Police and Security Programs; Campus Religious and Spiritual Programs; College Honor Societies; College Unions; Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs; Conference and Events Programs; Dining Services Programs; Education Abroad Programs; Graduate & Professional Student Programs and Services; International Student Programs and Services; Internship Programs; Orientation Programs; Recreational Sports Programs; Registrar Programs and Services; Service-Learning Programs; TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity Programs (TOEOP); Undergraduate Research Programs; and Student Leadership Programs; and Veterans and Military Programs and Services. Individuals who are served by these student affairs functional areas (or many other occupations in society) may prefer to work with professionals who have counseling related skills, however the distinction presented is that CAS (2012) does not identify that the student affairs professionals who are employed to work in these areas need to have counseling-related degree or coursework. CAS does not address the need for these functional areas to offer counseling services, neither do they suggest staff hold degrees in counseling, or that it is essential to obtain

course work specific to counseling. Some have suggested that counseling skills may be fundamental to all areas within student affairs (Reynolds, 2009), and proponents of specific functional areas may advocate for counseling. For example, U.S. Department of Education website (n.d.) indicated that Student Support Services TRIO programs “may offer individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic information” issues. Individuals may perceive a discrepancy between the CAS standards and their experience working in various functional areas. In these areas, depending upon the setting, a specific master’s degree focusing on those areas may be more pragmatic (e.g., Recreational Studies, Business Administration, Organizational Management, etc.). In the utilizing of CAS standards to designate these areas, the authors realize that some functional areas in practice may be more or less aligned with the CAS standards, differing in scope of practice from university to university.

Summary

This article conceptualized the perceived value of counselor training utilizing the CAS functional areas for student affairs in light of the current CACREP standards. The authors sought to provide a broad overview of many areas within student affairs in order to encourage the discussion of the counseling and student affairs. Future articles could examine one or more of the student affairs functional areas reviewed in this article (e.g., Academic Advising) and provide an in depth discussion of the importance of counselor training and/or employment of counselors. This would address the issue of counselor training beyond the review of the position of a professional association, and could provide the opportunity to more fully discuss the historical and philosophical foundations of counseling and a specific functional area. Future research in counselor education could survey student affairs professionals, with and without counseling-based student affairs degrees, in each of the functional areas to examine their opinion of the perceived value of a counselor-based training. This type of study could also be conducted with higher education administrators and individuals making employment related decisions. More specific quantitative research studies on a larger scale could provide generalizable results regarding the impact of counselor-based training on the delivery of student affairs services. Functional areas such as academic advising programs and/or housing and residence life programs may provide initial areas where counselor educators may find a correlation between counselor-based student affairs training and student outcomes. As student affairs continues to grow into a multitude of diverse functional areas, it may be worth considering the possibility that counseling training – though invaluable to student affairs work in general – may be more useful in some functional areas as opposed to all functional areas. This categorization of the functional areas and the role of counselor education can be debated by counselor educators, student affairs professionals, and students. Differences of opinions may depend upon the philosophy and job tasks within the functional areas at specific universities and/or personal experiences and philosophies. This paper will hopefully contribute to the discussion regarding the focus of student affairs training within counseling programs and the role of counselor education in promoting the profession of counseling within higher education.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.00128>

References

- American College Health Association. (2009). *National college health assessment: Reference group executive summary fall 2009*. Baltimore, MD: American College Health Association. Retrieved from http://www.achacha.org/reports_ACHANCHAII.html
- American College Personnel Association. (1937). *The student personnel point of view, 1937*. Retrieved from: <http://www.naspa.org/pubs/his.cfm>
- American College Personnel Association. (2010). *Online directory of graduate programs preparings student affairs professionals*. Retrieved from ACPA College Student Educators International Website: <http://www2.myacpa.org/comm/profprep/directory/>
- American College Personnel Association & Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. (2010) *Professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners*. Retrieved from the NASPA Website: http://www.naspa.org/programs/prodev/Professional_Competencies.pdf
- American Counseling Association. (2010a). *Our history*. Retrieved from: <http://www.counseling.org/AboutUs/OurHistory/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>
- American Counseling Association. (2010b). *Milestones*. Retrieved from: <http://www.counseling.org/AboutUs/OurHistory/TP/Milestones/CT2.aspx?>
- Arendale, D. (2010). Access at the crossroads: Learning assistance in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 35, 1-145. Retrieved from <http://www.ashe.ws/?page=176>
- Association for the Study of Higher Education. (2010). Current challenges and controversies for learning assistance. *ASHE higher education report 36*, 7-22. Retrieved from <http://www.ashe.ws/?page=176>
- Association on Higher Education and Disability. (n.d.). Professional Standards and Program Standards. Retrieved from: <http://www.ahead.org/resources>
- Anderson, J. W. (1987). Roles and responsibilities of Greek Advisors. *New Directions For Student Services*, 40, 75-86. doi: 10.1002/ss.37119874007
- Burkard, A., Cole, D. C., Ott, M., & Stoflet, T. (2005). Entry-level competencies of new student affairs professionals: A Delphi study. *NASPA Journal*, 42, 283-309.
- Buscemi, J., Murphy, J. G., Martens, J. P., McDevitt-Murphy, M. E., Dennhardt, A. A., & Skidmore, J. R. (2010). Help-seeking for alcohol-related problems in college students: Correlates and preferred resources. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 24, 571-580. doi: 10.1037/a0021122
- Casazza, M., & Silverman, S. (1996). *Learning assistance and developmental education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Center for Study of Collegiate Mental Health. (2009). *Pilot study executive summary*. University Park, PA: Penn State. Retrieved from <http://www.sa.psu.edu/caps/pdf/2009-CSCMH-Pilot-Report.pdf>
- Cooper, D. L., & Dean, L. A. (1989). The past, present, and future of student affairs: A professional profile of Theodore K. Miller. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 76, 198-201. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.1989.tb02503.x
- Corrigan, M. J. (1998). Counseling college students with disabilities: Legal, ethical and clinical considerations. *Journal of College Counseling*, 1, 181-189. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.1998.tb00135.x
- Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2009).

- 2009 Standards. Retrieved from www.cacrep.org
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). (2012). *CAS professional standards for Higher Education* (8th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Cuyjet, M. J., Longwell-Grice, R., & Molina, E. (2009). Perceptions of new student affairs professionals and their supervisors regarding the application of competencies learned in preparation programs. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*, 104-119. doi: 10.1035/csd.0.0054
- Dannell, M. (1997). From discipline to development: Rethinking student conduct in higher education. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 25*, 1-127. Retrieved from <http://www.ashe.ws/?page=176>
- Davis, D. C. (1998). The American College Counseling Association: A historical view. *Journal of College Counseling, 1*, 7-10. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.1998.tb00119.x
- DeBard, R., Lake, T., & Binder, R. S. (2006). Greeks and grades: The first-year experience. *NASPA Journal, 43*, 1-7. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/>
- Dillon, J. J. (2003). Bringing counseling to the classroom and the residence hall: The university learning community. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education & Development, 42*, 194-208. doi:10.1002/j.2164-490X.2003.tb00006.x
- English, E. M., Shutt, M. D., & Oswalt, S. B. (2009). Decreasing use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs on a college campus: Exploring potential factors related to change. *NASPA Journal, 46*, 163-182. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/>
- Epstein, B. H. (2003). Crisis intervention on campus: Current and new approaches. *Journal of Student Affairs Research & Practice, 2*, 294-316. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/>
- Foubert, J. D., & Newberry, J. T. (2006). Effects of two versions of an empathy-based rape prevention program on fraternity men's survivor empathy, attitudes, and behavioral intent to commit rape or sexual assault. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*, 133-148. doi: 10.1035/csd.2006.0016
- Gallagher, R. (2007). *National survey of counseling center directors*. Retrieved from http://www.uwlax.edu/counseling/documents/NsccdSurveyFinal_v2.pdf
- Gallagher, R. (2010). *National survey of counseling center directors*. Retrieved from <http://www.iacsinc.org>
- Gallagher, R. (2011). *National survey of counseling center directors*. Retrieved from <http://www.iacsinc.org>
- Gintner, G. G., & Choate, L. H. (2006). Screening college student problem drinkers: The role of student affairs professional. *Journal of Student Affairs Research & Practice, 43*, 338-357. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/>
- Grayson, P. A., & Meilman, P. W. (Eds.) (2006). *College mental health practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Hinkelman, J. M., & Luzzo, D. A. (2007). Mental health and career development of college students. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 85*, 143-147. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2007.tb00456
- Institute of International Education. (2010). *Open doors report on international educational exchange*. New York: Publisher. Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors>
- Kadar, R. S. (2001). A counseling liaison model of academic advising. *Journal of College Counseling, 4*, 174-178. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.2001.tb00197.x

- Kiracofe, N. M., & Buller, A. E. (2009). Mandated disciplinary counseling: Working effectively with challenging clients. *Journal of College Counseling, 21*, 71-84. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.2009.tb00041.x
- Kuk, L., Banning, J. H., & Amey, M. J. (2010). *Positioning student affairs for sustainable change: Achieving organizational effectiveness through multiple perspectives*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Kuk, L., Cobb, B., & Forrest, C. (2007). Perceptions of competencies of entry-level practitioners in Student Affairs. *NASPA Journal, 44*, 664-691. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/>
- Kuhn, T., Gordon, V. N., & Webber, J. (2006). The advising and counseling continuum: Triggers for referral. *NACADA Journal, 26*, 24-31. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/journal/index.htm>
- LaBrie, J. W., Lamb, T. F., Pedersen, E. R., & Quinlan, T. (2006). A group motivated interviewing intervention reduces drinking and alcohol related consequences in adjudicated college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*, 267-280. doi: 10.1353/csd.2006.0031
- Mayhew, M. J., Caldwell, R. J., & Hourigian, A. J. (2008). The influence of curricular-based interventions within first year success courses on student alcohol expectancies and engagement in high risk drinking behaviors. *NASPA Journal 45*, 49-72. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/>
- Much, K., Wagener, A. M., & Hellenbrand, M. (2010). Practicing in the 21st century college counseling center. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 24*, 32-38. doi: 10.1080/87568220903400138
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2008). *Research findings on college drinking and the minimum legal drinking age*. Retrieved from: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/AboutNIAAA/NIAAASponsoredPrograms/CollegeDrinkingMLDA.htm>
- National Association of College Admissions Counselors. (1990) *Statement on the Counseling Dimension of the Admissions Process at the College/University Level*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nacacnet.org/AboutNACAC/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>
- Niles, S. G., Anderson, W. P., & Cover, S. (2000). Comparing intake concerns and goals with career counseling concerns. *Career Development Quarterly, 49*, 135-145. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2000.tb00555.x
- Pope, R. L., & Mueller, J. A. (2011). Multicultural competence. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, S. R. Harper and Associates (Eds.). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Preece, J. E., Roberts, N. L., Beecher, M. E., Rash, P. D., Shwalb, D. A., & Martinelli, Jr., E. A. (2007). Academic advisors and students with disabilities: A national survey of advisors' experiences and needs. *NACADA Journal, 27*, 57-72. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/journal/index.htm>
- Rayman, J. R. (1993). The changing role of career services. In J. R. Rayman (Ed.), *New Directions for Student Services, 62*, (pp. 1-22). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Reynolds, A. L. (2009). *Helping college students: Developing essential support skills for student affairs practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Reynolds, A. L. (2011). Counseling and Helping Skills. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, S.

- R. Harper and Associates (Eds.). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Saginak, M. A. (2010). Counseling as an essential component in student affairs training. *Counseling Today*, 52, 54-55. Retrieved from <http://ct.counseling.org/>
- Schweiger, W. K., Henderson, D. A., & Clawson, T. W. (Eds.). (2008). *Counselor preparation: Programs, faculty, trends*. (12th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Stebbleton, M. J., & Schmidt, L. (2010). Building bridges: Community college practitioners as retention leaders. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 47, 78-98. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/>
- Steinhardt, M., & Dolbier, C. (2008). Evaluation of a resilience intervention to enhance coping strategies and protective factors and decrease symptomatology. *Journal of American College Health*, 56, 445-453. doi: 10.3200/JACH.56.44.445-454
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2009). *Results from the 2008 national survey on drug use and health: national findings* (Publication No. SMA 09-4434). Rockville, MD: Author. Retrieved from <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k8NSDUH/2k8results.cfm#3.1.6>
- Troiano, P. F. (2003). College students and learning disabilities: Elements of self –style. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44, 404-419. doi: 10.1053/csd.2003.0033
- U.S. Department of Education (n.d.). *Student support services program*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html>
- Waple, J. N. (2006). An assessment of skills and competencies necessary for entry-level student affairs work. *Journal of Student Affairs Research & Practice*, 43, 1-18. Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/>
- Wilson, J. M. (1996). Processes for resolving student disciplinary matters. In W. L. Mercer (Ed.). *Critical issues in judicial affairs: Current trends in practice*, *New Directions in Student Services*, 73, (pp. 35-52) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Winston, Jr., R. B. (1996). Counseling and advising. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard, Jr., & Associates (Eds.). *Student Services: Handbook for the profession* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Yang, E., & Gysbers, N. C. (2007). Career transitions of college seniors. *Career Development Quarterly*, 56, 157-170. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2007.tb00028.x
- Zubernis, L., & Snyder, M. (2007). Considerations of additional stressors and developmental issues for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender college students. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 22, 75-79. doi: 10.1300/J035v22n01_06

Author Note

Jake J. Protivnak, PhD, Department of Counseling, Special Education, and School Psychology, Youngstown State University, Beeghly College of Education, One University Plaza, Youngstown, OH 44555-0001 jjprotivnak@ysu.edu

Matthew J. Paylo, PhD, Department of Counseling, Special Education, and School Psychology, Youngstown State University, Beeghly College of Education, One University Plaza, Youngstown, OH 44555-0001 mpaylo@ysu.edu

J. Carol Mercer, PhD, Counseling and Development at Texas Woman's University, Texas Woman's University, College of Professional Education, P.O. Box 425769, Denton, TX 425769 jmercer@twu.edu

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Jake J. Protivnak at jjprotivnak@ysu.edu

Student Goal Statements for the Experiential Learning Group

David J. Tobin, Shannon L. Brown, & Kalyn E. Carney

This study delineates teaching strategies for helping counseling students to develop appropriate goal statements designed to facilitate participation in the group work experiential group process. Students reviewed literature on professional counselor development, emotional and social intelligence, and group leader characteristics. This literature delineated personal and professional attributes conducive to effective group leadership and was utilized to stimulate reflection on personal group goals. 21 students in a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited Community Counseling program completed the 10-week group experience. At the end of group, students reflected, reevaluated and reformulated their original group goals. A qualitative analysis yielded 14 student-constructed goal statements. These post-group goal student goal statements may prove helpful to future group facilitators of the group work learning experience.

Keywords: Group work training, group goal training

Group Work is one of the core content areas of the counseling profession (National Board for Certified Counselors and Affiliates Inc., 2011). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) delineates standards for the content area of Group Work (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2011). In addition, CACREP specifies that all students participate in an experiential group that spans ten hours of training. However, the group content and focus of this learning experience are not specified. We observed that counseling students who participate in the experiential group often display primary tension over the purpose and expectations of the group experience. Apprehension and vagueness about group goals seems to be a universal experience (Corey, 2004). Our experience leading and participating in the group also indicated that student participants experience primary tension. The purpose of this study is to delineate teaching strategies for helping students to develop appropriate goal statements designed to facilitate greater personal development and involvement in the experiential group process. This paper also provides a representative list of student-constructed goal statements for the experiential training group.

Counselors Development

Counselor educators have emphasized the importance of group participation for counselors-in-training. Coyne, Ward and Wilson (1997) accented the significance of “personhood and the ability of the group leader to maintain a purposeful connection with group members” (p.43). They also identified self-awareness as the means toward interpersonal

competency comprised of the ability to appropriately self-disclose, take risks, and give feedback. The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) provides standards for diversity-competent group workers and lists awareness of self as a governing principle (Association for Specialists in Group Work, 1998). In regard to counselor education, Corey and Herlihy (1996) conveyed that “training programs are based on the assumption that the counselors’ personal qualities make a significant difference in the outcomes of the therapeutic relationship” (p. 276). Other researchers on the development of a reflective practitioner have challenged counselor educators to cultivate reflective learning habits within students (Tobin, Willow, Bastow, & Ratkowski, 2009). They reported that the experiential group was structured around the idea that reflectivity is an essential component of effective group counseling. Reflective learning was deemed an essential strategy in counselor development. Therefore, students need to be provided with opportunities for self-exploration of personal issues related to their ongoing counselor development.

Group Leader Characteristics

Literature on counselor professional and personal development provides a basis for counseling students to formulate the goal statements for their experiential group. The primary textbook on group work served as a resource for educating and training students on group goals. For instance, Gladding (2008) identifies personal qualities of an effective group leader: “poise, judgment, empathy, ego strength, freedom from excessive anxiety, a desire to help people, tolerance of frustration, imagination, intuition, perceptiveness, and an ability to avoid self-preoccupation” (p.81). Corey and Corey (2006) also illuminate desirable qualities for group leaders such as courage, openness, self-awareness, and humor. All of these traits are considered essential to effective group leadership and attainment of positive group outcomes.

Others have specified personal characteristics of effective group leaders. Capuzzi, Gross, and Stauffer (2006) reviewed the group work literature and consolidated a list of characteristics and behaviors conducive to effective group leadership that included personal traits such as presence, personal power, courage, and self-awareness. They concluded that “emotionally present group leaders who are in touch with their own life experiences and associated emotions are better able to communicate empathy and understanding because they can relate to similar circumstances or emotions” (p.22). Leaders with personal power influence the group with their self-confidence. Courageous leaders are able to take risks, share life experiences and serve as role models. Furthermore, counselor self-awareness is considered essential to prevent the counselor’s unresolved issues from impeding the counselor role and detracting from the overall group experience (Capuzzi et al., 2006).

For the purpose of our course the literature on emotional intelligence (EI) and social intelligence (SI) was also reviewed. Emotional intelligence was defined as having the ability to motivate oneself and endure in times of frustration; to manage impulsivity and postpone satisfaction; to control one’s moods and keep distress from affecting the ability to think; and to be empathic and optimistic (Goleman, 1995). Goleman expanded emotional intelligence into five constructs: self-awareness of emotions; managing feelings and reactions; self-motivation; empathy; and social competence in relationships. EI connotes a sense of emotional attunement, internal control, and empathic understanding.

Social intelligence (SI) placed emphasis on the capacity and quality of social interactions, primarily social awareness and social facility (Goleman, 2006). *Social awareness* referred to the

ability to “instantly sense another’s inner state and understanding his or her feelings and thoughts as well as understanding complicated situations” (p.84). *Social facility* “builds on social awareness to allow smooth, effective interactions” (p.84). Social awareness relies on traits such as accurate empathy and listening with full receptivity. Social facility calls upon an effective self-presentation and the ability to influence social interactions. As evidenced, the literature on EI and SI seems consistent with the literature on desirable traits for effective group leadership.

Group Goal Statements

The group experience typically begins with a well-developed group proposal, followed by an overall group goal with proposed general objectives for group participation (Gladding, 2012). Accordingly, group members are asked to formulate and verbalize personal goals prior to participation in the group experience. Gladding contended that a written contract facilitated changes related to goal attainment. Specific individual goals should be stated in a positive and measureable manner. According to Erford (2011), while “guiding members in developing positive specific and measureable goals, the leader establishes a group environment that engenders growth and development in individual members and the group as a whole” (p.91). Several researchers have developed general goals for group members. For example, Carroll and Wiggins (1990) comprised a list of general goals deemed potentially helpful to group members:

Become a better listener; develop sensitivity and acceptance of others; increase self-awareness and develop a sense of identity; feel a sense of belongingness and overcome feelings of isolation; learn to trust others as well as self; recognize and state areas of belief and values without fear of repression; transfer what is learned in the group to the outside; and accept responsibility for solving one’s own problems (p.25).

Furthermore, Carroll and Wiggins proposed process goals designed to encourage group participation, such as: “help members stay in the here and now, prevent storytelling related to the there and then, help members to confront others with care and respect, learn to give non-evaluative feedback, learn to risk by speaking from the first person” (p.290). They concluded that these types of goal statements are pertinent to group facilitation and the formulation of an overall positive group experience.

In addition to the primary text on group work, several researchers have emphasized the importance of formulating and articulating appropriate group goals for counselors-in-training. One group of researchers supported the contention that group members who were taught to establish appropriate here-and-now group goals would engage in a positive manner, both inside and outside of group (Kivlighan, Jauquet, Hardie, Francis, & Hershberger, 1993). They researched undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a master’s program in counseling psychology. Their results suggested that here-and-now agendas contributed to increased group member productivity and desirable outcomes. Another group of researchers emphasized the importance of providing structure for the group learning experience for graduate students in a psychology program (McGuire, Taylor, Broome, Blau, & Abbott, 1986). They contended that structure improved levels of interpersonal communication and self-disclosure among group members. The implications of these studies for group leaders affirm the importance of developing appropriate group goals.

Group workers have also commented on group goals when designing, planning, and processing group activities. Furr (2000) recommended guidelines for establishing group goals. She stated that goals should be reasonable and challenging for the participants as well as achievable. They should be written in a measurable manner that allows participants to self-evaluate individual goal attainment. Clearly defined individual goals also prompted members to attain a level of congruency with the overall goals of the structured group. Stockton, Morran, and Nitza (2000) provided a conceptual map for processing group events. They instructed group leaders to process group incidents in order to enable members to relate their group experience to their group goals. Goodrich and Luke (2012) also updated the literature on the requisite experiential group and counselors-in-training. They emphasized the obligations of counselor educators to deal with problematic behavior when it occurred in group work. They contended that “counselor educators should set boundaries around counselors-in-training disclosure and remind trainees of this often” (p. 341). Establishing appropriate group goals and preparing and emphasizing here-and-now agendas may modulate self-disclosure and facilitate group involvement for counseling students.

Group Dynamics

The counseling students in our Group Dynamics course were required to review literature on professional counselor development, emotional and social intelligence, and group leader characteristics. This literature delineated personal and professional attributes conducive to effective group leadership. We observed that this literature helped students to identify areas of desired personal and professional development. Counseling students were instructed to read this literature in order to stimulate self-reflection on personal goal attainment. This literature delineated personal and professional traits conducive to effective group leadership; and helped orient them to the experiential group.

The purpose of the experiential group was to provide a training experience that enhanced interpersonal competency and self-awareness. The experiential group also provided the students with the opportunity to observe group formation, group leadership skills, participate in group dynamics and group process, and to encounter therapeutic factors (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). In line with these objectives students were asked to specify developmental goals of a more personal nature. In order to facilitate this process, students were asked to reflect on their professional and personal development. They were asked to develop a personal narrative that delineated areas of personal attributes as well as areas of desired improvement. They then synthesized the narrative to construct three goal statements relevant to the anticipated group experience.

Student Goal Statements

The group dynamics class consisted of 21 students in a CACREP-accredited Community Counseling program. They all participated in a one and a half hours experiential group that spanned 10 weeks. The pre-group assignment was to develop a professional statement that identified qualities of an effective professional counselor, and to delineate personal strengths and areas of development. In order to help students develop their personal statement, they were asked to reread counseling texts on helping relationships by Gerig (2007) and counseling skills by Young (2009). The students were also provided with a mini-lecture and handouts on emotional and social intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, 2006). Prior to group participation, students

formulated three personal group goal statements. Students stated their goals in the first group session and referred to these throughout the group process. At the end of their group experience, students were asked by the course instructor to assess their progress in meeting their goals.

After the termination of the group, the students were asked to reflect on their group experience, and to reevaluate and reformulate their group goals. Students were assigned to task groups of three to five members. The task groups were instructed to form a list of twelve goal statements that were relevant to the learning process of the group experience. Two students served as research assistants and combined all of the lists into one master list of 60 goal statements. They edited the master list for redundancy. Goals were collapsed, coded, and categorized based on emergent themes. They engaged in reflexivity, a practice used to reach consensus in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

This qualitative analysis yielded a final list of 14 goal statements. Goal statements were formulated into positive self-statements (i.e. I will be more receptive of accepting feedback; I will engage in group activities and group discussions). The goal statements were then coded into emergent themes: involvement; awareness; emotions; and skill building. Involvement is defined as a willingness to engage in group activities. Awareness is defined as a striving towards self-knowledge and understanding of others. Emotion is defined as the development of EI. Skill building is defined as the acquisition of counseling skills (see Appendix).

Discussion

Group dynamics and the experiential student group are core components of counselor education and counselor preparation. The purpose of this study was to delineate teaching strategies for helping students to develop goal statements designed to facilitate greater personal development and involvement in the experiential group process. The results of this study yields a list of student goal statements constructed from the experience of group members. At the completion of this course students were asked to reflect on their group experience and to reevaluate and reformulate their group goals. This qualitative inquiry yielded 14 goal statements that were coded into emergent themes: involvement, awareness, emotions and skill building. These student constructed themes were reflective of their group experience and seemed consistent with the goal and purpose of the experiential training group.

Group facilitators typically request participants to develop goal statements prior to beginning or at the start of the group experience (Gladding, 2012). Student feedback solicited in this course revealed primary resistance to development of personal goals prior to group engagement. Our impressions suggest that the development of student group goals helps to facilitate the formation of group and encourages participation. Goal statements added a sense of structure and purpose to being involved in an experiential group process. We also noticed a change in the quality of student goal statements. The pre-group goal statements were more subjective and personal. The post-group goal statements were indicative of the benefit that can be derived from group participation. The focus of our group was experiential and developmental, and emphasized working in the here and now. Therefore, the final group statements tended to reflect this type of process-oriented group. Since they were constructed from the actual experience of group members, we considered them valid and representative examples of appropriate goal statements. The post-group goal statements developed by students who participated in a group may prove helpful to future group facilitators of the CACREP-required group experience.

These types of goals also suggest a greater understanding of self-disclosure. In addition to primary tension over group goals our experience reveals that the group members experience anxiety over expectations for self-disclosure. According to Corey (2004), self-disclosure “does not mean revealing one’s inner most secrets and digging into one’s past” (p.114). Ideally appropriate self-disclosure involves sharing reactions to critical incidences or here and now activation that occurs in group. Self-disclosure may also reveal emotionality as a result of unresolved personal issues, conflicted goals, or transference. Appropriate self-disclosure also refrains from storytelling and “not letting group pressure dictate the limits of one’s privacy” (Baldwin & Pierce, 1990, p.152). It is inconceivable that all past references be eliminated from group. Some sharing of past experiences helps to establish individual identities and exposes participants to appropriate risk taking. Past issues that emerge in group illuminate unresolved areas of concern that may impede counselor development. According to Baldwin and Pierce (1990), “attempting to restrict all potentially revealing information would run counter to known principles of group development and process” (p.151). Group leaders should attempt to maximize interpersonal and intrapersonal learning, and at the same time assure for a safe learning environment.

We recommend group leaders to explicate expectations for appropriate self-disclosure, especially in the experiential learning group. Group leaders should consider modeling and setting explicit group norms for appropriate self-disclosure. The here and now focus that emphasizes active participation in group process rather than self-revelation may also contribute to a safe learning environment. Furthermore, applying group goals and appropriate self-disclosure may also abate ethical concerns around the experiential group.

Counselor educators have commented upon the potential ethical dilemma for a dual relationship when the experiential group is part of a classroom requirement (Merta & Sisson, 1991). Shumaker, Ortiz and Brennkmeier (2011) surveyed experiential group training in master’s level counselor education programs. They recommended the following critical safeguard elements for promoting a positive experiential group experience: instructor’s self-reflection, informed consent of students, and self-disclosure training. The American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics also cautioned counselor educators in instances when program requirements call for self-disclosure and self-growth experiences (F.7.b.; American Counseling Association, 2005). This seems to be an ongoing area of exploration and discussion among counselor educators responsible for the group training experience.

In summary, we found that students were able to construct goal statements conducive to personal and professional development as well as group participation. The review of the literature on professional counselor development, emotional and social intelligence, and group goals helped students facilitate their personal group goal statements. These goal statements also provided a sense of structure and purpose for the experiential group. We postulate that the development of goal statements may help manage the ambiguity and primary tension over the purpose and expectations of the group experience. Further inquiry into this area is warranted. We recommend that counselor educators and group facilitators systematically address the formation of student goal statements in order to facilitate participation and positive group outcomes.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/51.0016>

References

- American Counseling Association. (2005). *ACA Code of Ethics*. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org>
- Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW). (1998). ASGW best practice guidelines. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 23, 237-244.
- Baldwin, C., & Pierce, K. (1990). Participation versus privacy in the training of group counselors. *Journal for specialists in group work*, 15, 149-158.
- Capuzzi, D., Gross, D., & Stauffer, M. (2006). *Introduction to group work* (4th Ed.). Denver, Colorado: Love Publishing Company.
- Carroll, M., & Wiggins, J. (1990). *Elements of group counseling: Back to the basics*. Denver, Colorado: Love Publishing Company.
- Coyne, R., Ward, D., & Wilson, R. F. (1997). *Comprehensive group work: What it means & how to teach it*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Corey, G. (2004). *Theory and practice of group counseling* (6th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole- Thomson Learning.
- Corey, G., & Herlihy, B. (1996). Counselor training and supervision. In G. Corey, & B. Herlihy (Eds.) *ACA ethical standards casebook* (5th Ed.) (pp. 275-284). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2011). *What is accreditation?*. Retrieved from <http://www.cacrep.org/index.cfm/what-is-accreditation>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Erford, B. (2011). *Group work: Process and applications*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Furr, S .R. (2000). Structuring the group experience: A format for designing psychoeducational groups. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*. 25, 29-49.
- Gerig, M. S. (2007) *Foundations for mental health and community counseling*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gladding, S. (2008). *Groups: A counseling specialty* (5th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Gladding, S. (2012). *Groups: A counseling specialty* (6th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Goodrich, K. M. & Luke, M. (2012) Problematic student in the experiential group: Professional and ethical challenges for counselor educators. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 37, 326-346.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. New York, New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, New York: Bantam Books.
- Kivlighan, D. M., Jauquet, C. A., Hardie, A. W., Francis, A.M., & Hershberger, B. (1993). Training group members to set session agendas: Effects on in-session behavior and member outcome. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 40, 182-187.
- McGuire, J. M., Taylor, D. R., Broome, D. H., Blau, B.I., & Abbott, D.W. (1986). Group structuring techniques and their influence on process involvement in a group counseling training group. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 33, 270-275.

- Merta, R., & Sisson, J. (1991). The experiential group: An ethical and professional dilemma. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 16*, 236-245.
- National Board for Certified Counselors & Affiliates Inc. (2011). *National certification and state licensure*. Retrieved from <http://www.nbcc.org/Certification-Licensure>
- Shumaker, D., Ortiz, C., & Brenninkmeyer, L. (2011). Revisiting experiential group training in counselor education: A survey of master's-level programs. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 36*, 111-128.
- Stockton, R., Morran, D. K., & Nitza, A. G. (2000). Processing group events: A conceptual map for leaders. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 25*, 343-355.
- Tobin, D. J, Willow, R. A., Bastow, E. K., & Ratkowski, E. M. (2009). Reflective learning within a counselor education curriculum. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, 1*, 3-9.
- Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. New York, New York: Basic Books.
- Young, M.E. (2009). *Learning the art of helping: Building blocks and techniques (4th Ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Appendix

Goal Statements for Counselors in Training

Theme	Student Goals
Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I will focus on the here and now.• I will acknowledge and adhere to group norms.• I will engage in group activities and group discussions.• I will communicate and provide appropriate feedback to other members.
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I will become aware and be comfortable addressing multicultural diversity.• I will become aware of the occurrence of group dynamics and group process.• I will strive to be aware of transference and countertransference.• I will engage in interpersonal and intrapersonal self-awareness.
Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I will improve my emotional intelligence.• I will increase empathy towards others.
Skill Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I will strengthen my observational and listening skills.• I will be more receptive of accepting feedback.• I will be comfortable with group confrontation and conflict.

Author Note

David Tobin, PhD, Department of Psychology and Counseling, Gannon University, 109 University Square, Erie, PA, 16541 tobin001@gannon.edu

Kalyn E. Carney, MS, Sarah Reed Children's Center, Erie, PA kcarney@sarahreed.edu

Shannon L. Brown, MS, Family Services of Northwest Pennsylvania, Franklin, PA 16323 sbrown@fsnwpa.org

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to David Tobin at tobin001@gannon.edu
