Can You Hear Me Now? An Exploration of Targeted Professional Development Delivered to School Counselors

Lesli Clara Myers
St. John Fisher College

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Second Supervisor
Cynthia McCloskey

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Can You Hear Me Now? An Exploration of Targeted Professional Development Delivered to School Counselors

By

Lesli Clara Myers

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Dr. John Travers, Dissertation Chair

Dr. Cynthia McCloskey, Committee Member

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education St. John Fisher College

November, 2008
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education  
St. John Fisher College  
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We recommend that the dissertation by

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Entitled: Can You Hear Me Now? An Exploration of Targeted Professional Development Delivered to School Counselors

Be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Education Doctorate degree.

John Travers, Ed.D., Chair

Cynthia McCloskey, DNS, Committee Member

10/28/08 Date
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to four very important people in my life: my father, the late Dr. Earl T. Myers, my maternal grandmother, the late Mrs. Addie Terry Mills aka “nana”, my younger sister, Linda Alice Myers (cheerleader and task master), and my mother, Mrs. Clara Alice Mills-Myers. “Never could have made it, never would have made it without you!”

This dissertation is also dedicated to school counselors across the country who give their all because “every child deserves and needs a school counselor.”
Biographical Sketch

Lesli C. Myers is currently an Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. Ms. Myers attended the University of Rochester from 1987 to 1994 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in 1992 and a Masters of Sciences degree in Counseling and Human Development in 1994. At the University of Rochester, Ms. Myers was the Chilson Award winner, and earned a Fifth Year in Teaching Award for her Masters degree. She attended Saint John Fisher College from 2000 to 2001 and graduated with a Master of Science degree in Educational Administration in 2001.

She continued her studies at Saint John Fisher College in the summer of 2006 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Myers pursued her research in studying the professional practices of school counselors under the direction of Dr. John Travers and Dr. McCloskey and received the Ed.D. degree in 2008.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Judith Pastel, Superintendent of Schools for supporting my dissertation by allowing me to conduct my research in the district. I am also indebted to the school counselors who participated in my research and allowed me to enter in their “professional space.”

There are several other people whom I’d like to thank. First I’d like to thank Dr. John Travers (dissertation chair) and Dr. Cynthia McCloskey (committee member) who constantly challenged me to produce a dissertation of quality and merit. I am forever grateful to Dr. Arthur “Sam” Walton, my mentor and sensei who continually reminded me of my abilities and talents. I’d also like to acknowledge the varied Saint John Fisher College professors who helped me reach all of the milestones. I am extremely appreciative to Dr. Carol Dahir, Dr. Lisa Buckshaw, Dr. Sherry Brennan, and Dr. Bonnie Rubenstein for helping me with all of the technical aspects of my dissertation (proofing, editing, etc.)

Personally, I’d like to acknowledge my extended family and friends (Pastor Alvin Parris, III, Pastor Debra Parris, Reverend McGill, Dr. Cynthia McGill, Melany J. Silas, Delores Curry, Andrea Cain, Kevin Ivy, Lisa Dorsey, and Derek V. Chambers) who listened to my complaints, encouraged me to never give up, and gave me the kick in the pants I needed.
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Abstract

While many scholars have spent time examining trends and changes within the field of school counseling, little or no attention has been given to the types of professional development that may assist school counselors in making the corresponding adjustments to these trends and changes (Akos & Galassi, 2004). The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine the impact of targeted professional development upon school counselor practice. The question guiding this study was, “How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?”

Three professional development sessions (based on the Transforming School Counseling Initiative and American School Counselor Association Model) were offered to 14 school counselors during a five-month period. Quantitative and qualitative data collected from the professional development evaluations, focus groups, formal and informal observations, and interim projects found that the professional development sessions had minimal impact on school counselors’ practice and that school counselors were resistant to the changes that the transformed role of the school counselor required.

Recommendations based on the findings of this study include: systemic support of school counselors; joint training of school counselors and their school administrators; oversight of school counselors by a central office supervisor, and increased opportunities for school counselors to collaborate with each other.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The field of school counseling has experienced a number of changes in recent decades (Goodnough & Perusse, 2004). School counselors who previously served only those students who were referred for crisis, academic, career, or emotional reasons are now expected to create comprehensive school counseling programs designed to serve all students on their caseload (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2003). This major shift within the field requires an assessment of school counselors' current skill levels and then subsequently providing support and training in areas that are lacking.

While many scholars have spent time examining trends and changes within the field of school counseling, little or no attention has been given to the types of professional development that may assist school counselors in making the corresponding adjustments to these trends and changes (Akos & Galassi, 2004). Two movements within the field, Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Education Trust, 1999) and the 2001 and 2007 revisions to the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, represent important influences on school counselor training (Akos & Galassi, 2004).

National organizations such as the Education Trust, the National Association for College Admissions Counselors, the American Counseling Association, and American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed and continue to develop competencies, strategies, programs, models, trainings, and services for school counselors to address and assist with the varied changes that are occurring within the profession. While these
organizations support school counselors in their professional development, no effective means by which to ensure that such professional development is taking place has been identified (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997).

Although recognized as important, professional development is woefully inadequate (Bemak & Chi-Ying Chung, 2005; Borko, 2004). For example, the College Board’s National Office for School Counselor Advocacy was established in 2004, not only to advocate for the needs of school counselors but also to supply much needed professional development (College Board, 2004).

Unfortunately, many school counselors are not adequately trained and are therefore unable to meet expected competency (P. Martin, personal communication, May 23, 2007). Inadequate training opportunities for school counselors can be traced back for more than a decade, as indicated by Fall and VanZandt (1997), who state that graduate programs for school counselors often lacked the topics, courses, and subjects needed to address the realities that exist within the nation’s public schools.

Historically, the predominant notion of school counseling has been that of a stand-alone, isolated program; today school counseling programs must be systemic, accessible, and delivered to the entire school and community (Green & Keys, 2001; Hines, 1998; Reynolds & Hines, 2001). School counselors are no longer viewed as credentialed professionals working individually to assist students, but as purveyors of comprehensive programming with various stakeholders involved (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

School counseling research and literature has begun to reflect public education’s focus on raising student achievement and the corresponding role that the school counselor
plays in assisting to meet this new mandate (Dahir & Stone, 2003; Sink & Stroh, 2003). One specific shift within the school counseling profession involves aligning the school counselor’s work with the school or the school district’s mission and vision. Further, school counseling professionals have advocated for strengthening the connection between school counseling and academic achievement and have called for school counselor practitioners to move from being gatekeepers to advocates (Borders & Drury, 1992; Hart & Jacobi, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Otwell & Mullis, 1997; Perry, 1992).

Working within the school’s academic framework represents a philosophical shift in thinking and application of knowledge and skills relative to the transformed role of the school counselor. Administrators and others acknowledge school counselors’ capabilities, yet frequently misunderstand how their skills fit into the school environment (Louis, Jones, & Barajas, 2001). To add to this, school counseling has come under increased pressure and scrutiny due to increased financial and political pressure from boards of education and school and district superintendents (Goodnough & Perusse, 2004). If school counselors are unable to demonstrate their institutional value and their distinct contribution to the school’s academic mission, vision, and achievement goals, then counseling programs may very well be seen as replaceable or nonessential (Fields & Hines, 2000). School counselors, therefore, must enhance and develop their skills through participation in professional development.

**Professional Development Mandate**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 mandates the provision of professional development to assist with changing practice and improving student achievement (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007). This provision is particularly critical for
school counselors because the improvement of student achievement is one of the most daunting evolutionary changes within the school counseling profession.

On an annual basis, schools, districts, professional organizations, and the federal government spend significant funds on in-service seminars and other forms of professional development that are often fragmented, intellectually superficial, and devoid of meaning (Borko, 2004). This often occurs due to inadequate planning and a belief that a single professional development workshop can serve the needs of many different educational stakeholders. Sykes (1996) characterized the inadequacy of conventional professional development delivered to educators as “the most serious unresolved problem for policy and practice in American education today” (p. 465). Sykes’ declaration further emphasizes the importance of providing targeted professional development to school counselors.

Background

In the late 1990s, the Education Trust, under a grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, developed an agenda to assist with improvements in counselor education programs and school counseling pedagogy in order to realign school counselors’ work with reducing achievement gaps (Louis et al., 2001). School counselors from across the country, assembled in Washington, DC, and received intensive professional development (Goodnough & Perusse, 2004). The Transforming School Counselor Initiative identified specific areas in need of development:

The Transforming School Counselor Initiative (TSCI) recommended that school counselors should be proficient in seven skill domains: (a) advocacy for students; (b) leadership and facilitation of systemic change; (c) counseling and coordination
of student assistance services; (d) action research designed to provide data to spur change; (e) teaming and collaboration with educators, parents, students and communities; (f) use of technology to increase effectiveness and as a tool for advocacy; and (g) application of multicultural and diversity competencies (House & Martin, 1998, p. 2).

This initiative proffered that the position that school counselors need to be trained as leaders in their schools and that academic achievement should be set for all students, especially minority students, as a top outcome priority (Education Trust, 2002). Further, in October 2007, the ASCA developed a draft of skill sets for school counselors. These competencies set the standard regarding how school counselors must be equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the profession and the needs of K-12 students, as well as to ensure that future school counselors will be able to continue to make positive differences in the lives of children (ASCA, 2008). Four competencies fall under the management section of the skill sets and state:

1. Participates in professional organizations.
2. Develops a yearly professional development plan demonstrating how the school counselor advances relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions.
3. Communicates effective goals and benchmarks for meeting and exceeding expectations consistent with the administrator-counselor agreement and district performance appraisals.
4. Uses personal reflection, consultation and supervision to promote professional growth and development (p. 6).
Worsham (2005), the 2003 ASCA National Middle School Counselor of the Year, discussed school counselors’ lack of proper training. Worsham’s article described her experiences as a school counselor, noting the school principal’s approval of her work, yet reiterated the fact that her principal had limited time to train her. Worsham concluded that there were many essential elements necessary to be an effective middle school counselor, and the most important element was participation in targeted and continued professional development.

*Statement of the Problem*

In one mid-size school district located in the northeastern part of the United States, professional development for school counselors has been inadequate and inconsistent for several years (T. Phillips, personal communication, July 19, 2007). This school district, fictitiously named Rosedale School District, became the school district under study. The Rosedale School District, like other school districts across the country, dedicates time during the school year for school personnel to exchange ideas, to share their expertise, and to learn from experts with the expectation that these experiences will help improve student achievement. Often, the focus is primarily on the needs of the classroom teacher and not other school faculty and staff. During these staff development days at Rosedale School District, school counselors rarely have had specific training provided to meet their professional needs. Usually they participated in professional development designed specifically for teachers (K. Fontana, personal communication, August 14, 2007).

Moreover, the school counselors in Rosedale School District had little direct supervision or direction from central office administration relative to current research
outcomes or best practices in the field of school counseling (T. Phillips, personal communication, July 27, 2007). Studer and Sommers (2000) indicated that, although school and district administrators value the varied roles of school counselors, the development of these skills often are not supported with resources. Upon entry into Rosedale School District, this researcher was asked to work with the school counseling department, a department that was described as lacking in leadership, direction, and training for many years.

The school counselors in Rosedale School District were described in negative terms by their colleagues (teachers and school administrators) and were often portrayed by school and community stakeholders as very negative, holding inappropriate views of students and their families, inflexible with their practices, and unwilling to accept feedback from superiors in the district. The superintendent was candid about her concerns about the school counselors and the need for specific interventions to help them with their professional practices. Specifically, contemporary professional development for the District’s school counselors was identified as critically needed.

Setting

Rosedale School District, which encompasses a small city and surrounding areas, enrolls about 5,400 preK-12 students in eight elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and a 6-12 alternative community school. Of the 5,400 preK-12 students enrolled, 71% of the students are White, followed by 12% African-American students, 11% Asian/Pacific Islander students, 5% Hispanic or Latino students, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native students (Rosedale School District Report Card, 2006-2007). The faculty and staff of approximately 561 teachers, 18 social workers, 15 school
psychologists and interns, 14 school counselors, and 226 paraprofessionals are actively involved in improving educational practices at Rosedale School District based on identified best practices and educational research.

Rosedale School District's mission is to: (a) educate every student to become a life-long learner; (b) foster academic excellence, (c) provide social, emotional and physical development; (c) nurture an understanding and respect for all people in a multicultural and multi-ethnic world; and (d) promote responsible citizenship in a democracy (Rosedale School District Mission Statement). Further, the School District prides itself on strong academic programs and various extracurricular activities that prepare students for a variety of postsecondary options. In addition, Rosedale School District allocates significant funds to provide all staff meaningful and relevant staff development.

Over the years 2002 through 2007, Rosedale School District faculty and staff have been working to develop and implement an Equity Strategic Plan, a district-wide program that focuses on the elimination of race, class, gender, and disability as predictors of success. Of the three major components of the plan (building capacity, direct services to students, and developing partnerships), building capacity is particularly relevant for school counselors, because it is important for them to demonstrate their ability to provide services throughout the district to the varied constituents they serve (J. Pastel, personal communication, September 14, 2007). Rosedale School District's Board of Education holds all constituents accountable for their delivery of service according to their established priorities. Much of school counselors' work is performed within the framework of the three components of the Equity Strategic Plan, yet they continue to
struggle with the demands of accomplishing this ideal successfully and effectively

Significance of the Study

School counseling practitioners and educational scholars have written about the redefined roles of school counselors and have made recommendations for new guidelines within the field (e.g., Fitch & Marshall, 2004; House & Martin, 1998; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Stone & Dahir, 2006). However, no national data have been collected to describe school counseling programs and activities in more than two decades, with the 1984 High School and Beyond Survey being the last national data available that describes school counseling programs and activities (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/200315.pdf).

To address the lack of current information, the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (2003) conducted a national survey on high school counseling for the year 2002. The survey generated statistical information related to programs and activities of high school counseling staff in the United States. The survey analyzed several areas within school counseling, including the amount of time school counselors participated in professional development. Respondents indicated whether their state or school district provided in-service training or professional development in selected topics for high school counselors. Each survey respondent reported the number of hours spent on professional development activities.

Results of the survey indicated that between 38% and 51% of high school counselors spent four hours or less participating in in-service training or professional development in selected topics in 2002 (United States Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Specifically, 38% of school counselors received
four or less hours of training on state or local academic curriculum standards/frameworks or assessments, as compared to 30% of school counselors who received eight or more hours of training. Further, 40% of school counselors received four or less hours of training on state or local career guidance standards/frameworks/models, compared to 30% who received eight or more hours of training. Moreover, 44% of school counselors received four or less hours of training on how to work with students with special needs, as compared to 24% of school counselors who received eight or more hours of training. Perhaps most noteworthy was that 51% of school counselors received four or less hours of training on how to interpret test scores and assess student achievement, in contrast to only 18% who received eight or more hours of training (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003015.pdf). Clearly, a need for targeted professional development for the nation’s school counselors was dramatically identified.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of targeted professional development on school counselor practice. A particular focus was placed on analyzing the school counselor’s acceptance of the characteristics and requirements of the transformed role of the school counselor (i.e., advocacy, teaming & collaboration, systemic change and cultural competence). The present study addressed the following research question: How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?

Theoretical Rationale

Professional development should be a process that continues after formal education; yet, there has been little focus on post-graduate professional development for
school counselors either in the professional literature or in policy (Brott & Myers, 1999). Analyses of effective program components of professional development upon teacher practice have been conducted (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Borko, 2004; Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Fenstermacher & Berkiner, 1983; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Guskey, 2003; Hirsh, 2006; Knapp, 2000; National Staff Development Council, 2001). A review of these studies results in the importance of the connection between professional development, teacher learning and student performance (Borko, 2004). This is particularly meaningful when considering the shift in the role of the school counselor to that of encompassing student achievement with alignment to the mission and vision of the school.

Because the intent of this study was to examine the impact of targeted professional development upon school counselors’ practice, an important outcome involves how practice changes. This involves not only acceptance of the change, but also resistance to the change. The work of Prochaska (1979) provided the theoretical backdrop for the implementation of the transformed role of the school counselor professional development sessions on 14 school counselors at the Rosedale School District. Teacher professional development literature commonly states that professional development must be sustained over time to increase teachers’ skills (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Professional development programs that include an explicit focus on subject matter can help teachers develop powerful understandings relative to their practice (Borko, 2004). Educational writers and researchers indicated that teachers are more apt to change their practice when professional development directly focuses on classroom events (Anonymous, 2007; Guskey, 2003). Similarly, this
researcher concurred that professional development that specifically focuses on school counselor content will help school counselors continue to reflect upon their current practices.

**Definition of Terms**

This research study touches upon several areas within the field of education. Several terms used in the present study are common to school counseling, professional development, and education. These terms are defined in Appendix A.

**Summary**

Several authors have discussed the radical changes that have occurred within the school counseling profession (e.g., Dahir, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2004; House & Martin, 1998; Stone & Clark, 2001). However, the accompanying training to meet these changes is lacking. In the late 1990s, the Education Trust launched a national initiative that stressed the importance of school counselor training for leadership in their schools, particularly in helping to reduce achievement gaps that exist between various student subgroups (Akos & Galassi, 2004). In addition, the High School and Beyond Survey, extensively reviewed by National Center for Education Sciences, described a decades-old need for adequate professional development for school counselors in areas such as curriculum or student achievement (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003015.pdf).

With this in mind, a study that analyzes the impact of targeted professional development delivered to school counselors was warranted. School counselors have unique reflective skills to overcome any resistance to this necessary change by engaging in productive program development and planning and assessing their efforts (Isaacs, 2003). To commence an investigation with regard to the evolution within the school
counseling profession and the varied aspects of professional development, Chapter Two presents the literature related to the history of school counseling and components of the transformed role of the school counselor. Further, the literature review provides a synthesis of research conducted on increased accountability for educators and the varied components of professional development.

Summary of the Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter examines and explains the literature as it relates to school counseling, professional development, and individual and organizational change.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology relative to qualitative and quantitative approaches to examining the impact of delivering targeted professional development to school counselors.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter provides the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings, the limitations, and recommendations.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This literature review begins with a historical overview of the field of school counseling. The historical review of the field is followed by definitions and examples of the transformed role of the school counselor with corresponding challenges identified within the profession. Next, a discussion of the change process is described as change that occurs on an individual level and on an organizational level. Specific attention is given to description of the Transtheroretical Model of Change (DiClemente, & Prochaska, 1983), because the present study was concerned with the introduction of new skills by providing formal opportunities for professional growth experiences (e.g., Brott & Myers, 1999). Lindeman's (1989) theory of adult learning is also included and explained in the literature. The impact of the NCLB Act on public education, particularly relating to training educators and specific implications for school counselor practitioners, is another section of focus within the literature review.

Further, the literature examines specific characteristics of quality professional development (i.e., types, merits, limitations, and evaluation). In this section of the review, many of the studies are primarily concerned with teachers and not school counselors. However, the themes, ideas, insights gained, processes used, and outcomes expected for professional development apply in many ways to the new, transformed role of counselors. The teacher professional development findings serve as proxy for the companion data sets that may be in place for school counselors but unfortunately are not.
Finally, literature is examined that provides a means of determination of an appropriate professional development plan that would work best to train the school counselors of Rosedale School District. The transformed role of the school counselor resulting from educational, environmental, and state and federal mandates and changes served to frame the sections of this review of literature.

*History of School Counseling*

Preparation for work with a primary focus on job selection and placement highlighted the efforts of the early guidance pioneers in secondary public schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 1988). In 1898, a high school principal in Detroit, Michigan, commenced the evolution of what was then known as vocational guidance to what is now known as school counseling (Coy, 1999). “Frank Parsons is often credited as the individual who began the school counseling movement” (Stone & Dahir, 2006, p. 7). Parsons’ attention to vocational guidance was coupled with his concern about society’s failure to provide resources for human growth and development, especially for young people (Schmidt, 1999).

The concept of guidance and counseling in schools during the first two decades of the 20th century was accomplished by appointing classroom teachers to the position of vocational counselor, often with no reprieve from their teaching duties and with no additional reimbursement (Ginn, 1924). These educators were given a list of duties to perform in addition to their regular duties, and, as a result, guidance and counseling in schools were carried out by individuals in positions without formal organizational structures in which to work (Gysbers & Lapan, 2003).
During the period between the Great Depression and outbreak of World War II, employers began using new appraisal instruments such as intelligence tests and vocational aptitude tests for placement purposes (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Similarly, “high schools began to administer intelligence measurements for students and welcomed group testing for the purposes of group evaluation” (p. 7). Between 1929 and 1939, several concerns began to arise during this time on the part of educators and educational administrators regarding usage of personality and intelligence testing in American schools. Specifically, those in the field of education began addressing issues relative to the lack of unified and consistent program within guidance and counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

During the next several decades (1950s-1980s), there were several influences that began to shape the direction of the school counseling movement which included: (a) reform within the field of education, (b) the work of counseling and psychology theorists and practitioners, and (c) various social, political, and economic events (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Moreover, national professional associations began to emerge as strong influences, and most notably, the ASCA became a division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association in the 1950s (Stone & Dahir, 2006). All of the aforementioned influences propelled guidance and counseling programs in schools and the numbers of counselors increased significantly due to a major stimulus, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (Herr, 1979).

Wrenn’s (1962) book, *The Counselor in a Changing World*, is referenced as an influential force in the school guidance and counseling movement (Wittmer, 2000). The increased attention to programs and school counselors influenced heightened attention
paid to reviewing school counselors’ responsibilities. Wrenn (1962) emphasized that attention should be focused on individual developmental needs of students, rather than reactionary methods that focus on crisis intervention. In the 1970s, the concept of guidance and counseling for development began to emerge (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). It is during this time that an emphasis was placed on changing a critical concept in school counseling which was comprehensive programming for all students. Gysbers and Henderson (2001) recommended the importance of school counseling’s orientation to a more comprehensive and developmentally appropriate approach.

From the mid 1980s to the present, the role of the school counselor continued to develop and change (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Several important changes occurred that directly impacted the school counseling profession. A significant name change occurred which had implications relative to the practice of and role definition for school counselors. The term guidance counselor was replaced by the name school counselor as counselors were recognized as an important element of the school framework (R. Wong, personal communication, November 2007).

In the early 1990s, national organizations dedicated to supporting the school counseling field began to address specific professional needs of school counselors. Organizations such as the College Board, the National Association for College Admissions Counselors, the American School Counselor Association, the Council for Counseling Accreditation and Related Educational Programs, American Counseling Association, and the Education Trust began to specifically develop programs, initiatives, competencies, workshops, and caucuses to train school counselors beyond their formal graduate coursework, fieldwork, and internship training. Specifically, the Education Trust
developed an initiative that worked to transition school counseling from the periphery of school business to a position front and center in constructing student success and accountability (Education Trust, 2002).

Transformed Role of the School Counselor

Beginning in the late 1990s the Education Trust began holding summits with school counselors, counselor educators, graduate students, and administrators to address the need for transforming the role of the school counselor to meet the contemporary needs of schools, children, and families. Consequently, the Education Trust implemented the National School Counselor Training Initiative in February 2002, which focused on skills such as advocacy, systemic change, and teaming and collaboration (House & Martin, 1998). This initiative advocated a position that school counselors need to be trained as leaders in their schools and to set academic achievement for all students, especially minority students, as a top outcome priority (Education Trust, 2002).

Advocacy is a meaningful component of effective school counseling programs (Field & Baker, 2004). Stone & Dahir (2004) defined school counselor advocacy “as (a) surveying the internal and external school landscape; (b) identifying the barriers that are impeding student success; and (c) collaborating to impact the conditions necessary for all students to be successful in their academic, personal, career, and social development” (p. 136). Similarly, House & Martin (1998) characterized advocacy as the ethical and moral orientation of a school counselor to fight injustices and participate in individual and purposeful actions that lead toward improving circumstances for individual and groups of students. Moreover, the National Model (ASCA, 2005) cited advocacy as an important
responsive outreach service of school counseling programs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

School and district policies must be in place to support and not hinder student success. These policies must be reviewed frequently to ensure they align with the contemporary needs of students. School counselors are able to assist with making recommended changes to policies that are not inclusive of the entire student population in their schools. Systemic change refers to changing “the organizational policies, procedures and/or practices of either a school or school district” (Stone & Dahir, 2006, p. 127).

Professional development, along with other important factors (shared vision, capable leadership, research based practices, etc.) assist school counselors with implementing and sustaining systemic change in their schools and districts (Raelin, 2004). Systemic change allows school counselors to collaborate with other critical stakeholders to develop programs and systems that expand students’ opportunities (Stone & Dahir, 2006).

School communities provide rich resources for the school counselor to develop and to establish partnerships that benefit the students they serve. Therefore, school counselors must partner and team with varied stakeholder groups to assist in delivering the varied components of their comprehensive school counseling program (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Strong relationships with parents, teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and others require skill and finesse (Trusty & Brown, 2005). Requirements for effective collaboration begin with a sincere need to make partnerships work and a commitment to the time and energy required to effect change (Stone & Dahir, 2006).
School counselors play a significant role in ensuring student success. Because they have a school-wide perspective on serving the needs of every student, school counselors are in an ideal position to serve as advocates for all students and as agenda for removing systemic barriers to academic success (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Despite the recent emphasis upon a radical transformation of schooling and the corresponding role that school counselors should play, practicing school counselors have struggled and rebelled against change (Aubrey, 1985; House & Martin, 1998).

**Challenges within the School Counseling Profession**

The role of the school counselor is intricate, complicated, and often misunderstood by many (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Historically, this confusion has occurred because students, teachers, administrators, parents and other educational stakeholders have varied expectations that lead to different definitions as it relates to this new role (Burnam & Jackson, 2000). The school counselor’s role and purpose have undergone various transformations in response to laws and mandates at the state and federal levels (i.e. NCLB), changing societal forces (i.e. media and technology influences), and professed student achievement needs (Lewis & Borunda, 2006). School counselors are now expected to align their practices with the school reform process as well as any corresponding school redesign (Sparks, Johnson, & Lewis, 2005). This creates challenges for school counselors who have not been prepared to think or perform their responsibilities in this manner.

One major challenge among current school counselors is the ability and skill to lead initiatives concerning program development, professional identity, and accountability outcomes for all students (Lewis & Borunda, 2006). Graduate school
counseling programs prepare school counselors to connect with students in meaningful ways, assess students’ issues and needs, and work with students to remove barriers that impede learning. However, school counselors struggle with the development of systemic programs that effect change within their schools. This occurs as a result of a lack of training or oppositional thinking to lead new efforts. This philosophical stance limits the ability of school counselors, precluding any professional initiative, to become more effective in their transformed role (Sparks et al., 2005). Resistance on the part of school counselors, to both school reform and a new professional approach, indicates the challenge of change (Sparks et al.).

Further complicating an already fragmented issue is the challenge of understanding the new role that often begins in graduate school in counselor preparation programs (Mallory & Jackson, 2007). Since the mid 1990s, school counseling programs have shifted from an emphasis on serving individual students to a systemic view (Brown & Trusty, 2005). Unfortunately, there is a lack of organization and consistency among graduate school counseling programs and the failure of the profession as a whole to address the issue of student achievement (Brown & Trusty, 2005). This inconsistency continues to demonstrate the need for school counselor professional development.

*Individual Change Process*

The change process is both complex and ambiguous (Pascale, 1990). Moreover, consciousness-raising is the most frequently applied process of change (Prochaska, 1979). Educational professionals (or any professional for that matter) seldom welcome change into their pedagogy. Resistance in varying degrees often occurs, because
changing requires individuals to carefully examine and assess current customs, routines, and traditions against the requisites of new practices.

There is a fundamental duality to our response to change: we both embrace and resist it. We acknowledge its inevitability, and yet a profound conservative impulse governs our psychology, making us naturally resistant to change and leaving us chronologically ambivalent when confronted with innovation (Evans, 1996, p. 21).

Because the process can be difficult, and resistance is inevitable, school and district leaders must conduct extensive research, develop persuasive and meaningful reasons for the need to change practice, model effective and desired practices, and work along with practitioners during this time of change. Similarly, the corresponding professional development must be in place to ensure that the change process lasts and initiatives occur for each educational stakeholder group in schools and districts.

Major change, moreover, always entails inevitable costs to the persons involved: interference in practices, apprehension, uncertainty, and individual effort (Hutton, 1994). The cost can be so great to the individual, group, or organization, that the change-agent often experiences frustration, sabotage, and extreme resistance. “To those involved, the gain must outweigh the pain; the compelling reason for change must outweigh the costs of transition” (p. 38).

Prochaska (1979) and his colleagues developed the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) that analyzed an individual’s reaction to change (see Table 2.1). The TTM was first applied to smokers who successfully stopped smoking on their own compared to smokers participating in two well-known treatment programs. The TTM specifically
outlines how people modify a problem behavior or acquire a positive behavior (Prochaska et al. 1994). The TTM applies to the transformed role of the school counselor in that there are new skills, which more than likely were not previously taught to school counselors in their graduate programs. Current practices or behaviors must be examined and then retooled to align with the transformed role.

The stages of the TTM show that, for most persons, a change in behavior occurs gradually. The individual moves from being uninterested, unaware, or unwilling to make a change (precontemplation), to considering a change (contemplation), to deciding and preparing to make a change (preparation). Genuine, determined action is then taken and, over time, attempts to maintain the new behavior occur (action and maintenance). Relapses are almost inevitable and become part of the process of working toward lifelong change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982).

Table 2.1

**Transtheroretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Change</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-contemplation</td>
<td>Individuals deny the problem, are unaware of the negative consequences of their behavior, believe the consequences are insignificant, or have given up because they are demoralized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplation</td>
<td>Individuals are likely to recognize more of the pros of changing. However, they overestimate the cons of changing and, therefore, experience ambivalence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Individuals have decided to take action in the next 30 days and take small steps towards that goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Individuals are overtly engaged in modifying their behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>Individuals have been able to sustain action for at least six months, and are striving to prevent relapse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relapse</td>
<td>Individuals revert back to repeating their old behaviors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Organizational Change**

Organizational change is often met with resistance. Kotter (1995) determined that organizations must “establish a sense of urgency” (p. 38) in order to move forward with the change process in a significant, meaningful and impactful way. Particularly, change that lasts is characterized by “implementation, fidelity, impact, institutionalization, maintenance, and replication” (Garmston & Wellman, 1999 p. 4) and requires steady leaders to oversee the change efforts.

Many schools then strive to implement what Evans (1996) terms as first order change which tries “to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of what we are already doing” (p. 5). Evans declares that first order changes are shallow and meaningless and usually do not have an impact on the frameworks and structures that are intended to be changed. Evans also postulated that second order changes, which are embedded through the school’s structure, help school administration, faculty, and staff, “…to not just do old things slightly differently but also change their beliefs and perceptions” (p. 5). It is second order change that therefore will help to move the transformed role of the school counselor agenda forward in schools and districts across the country.

**Adult Learning**

Schools are complex, dynamic, and unique learning environments for both students and adults. These established learning environments can either encourage or stifle progress as it relates to adult learning and growth. By understanding a school’s learning environment, educators can better understand the meaning behind their responsibilities and actions (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Thus, the aim of interpreting a school learning environment is to understand and make meaning of adult members’ experiences.
(Schultz, 1994). Deal and Peterson (1999) uphold that experiences provide a more accurate and intuitively appealing backdrop to help school leaders to understand (a) the way they learn, (b) the way they understand how they learn, (c) the skills and aptitudes they need to learn, and (d) how adults feel about their growth and development.

*The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*

With rigorous state learning standards and NCLB’s accountability for schools, student learning and accountability is the focal point for most districts across the country (Dahir & Stone, 2003). “NCLB’s goal is that all students will be proficient in reading and mathematics by the end of the 2013-14 school year. It requires that states assess students in those subjects in grades 3-8 and once in high school, and to hold schools and districts accountable for making adequate yearly progress toward meeting the 2014 deadline” (Hoff, 2007, p. 23). Adequate yearly progress is an individual state's measure of progress toward the goal of 100% students achieving to state academic standards minimally in reading/language arts and math. It sets the minimum level of proficiency that school districts and schools must achieve each year on annual tests and related academic indicators (United States Department of Education, 2002).

The NCLB Act of 2001 was enacted to close achievement gaps between various sub groups of students in elementary, middle, and high school and requires high levels of accountability and verified academic results (Dahir & Stone, 2003). Despite strong opinions about NCLB, the fact remains that it has had a significant impact on the schools and educators in the twenty-first century and school counselors should be knowledgeable of the components of the Act (Myers, 2006).
The NCLB Act stresses the importance of high-quality professional development to guarantee that all teachers are highly qualified and that all students reach high levels of achievement (Guskey, 2003). “This emphasis compels visionary leaders to reexamine professional development efforts with a keen eye for issues of value and worth” (p. 4). One important component of NCLB is the provision that allows for greater flexibility for effective professional development and the establishment of high standards for professional development, States and local districts are permitted to use Eisenhower Professional Development Program funding and the Class Size Reduction program funding to meet specific professional development needs and to strengthen the skills and improve the knowledge of their public school teachers, principals, and administrators. In return, states and districts are required to ensure that federal funds promote the use of scientific, research-based and effective practice in the classroom (United States Department of Education, 2002).

Although NCLB makes specific provisions for professional development for highly qualified teaching staff, school counselors have been forgotten (P. Martin, personal communication, June 10, 2006). This discrepancy was addressed at the College Board’s National Office for School Counselor Advocacy Legislative Forum. Both in October 2006 and June 2007, school counselors, counselor educators, directors, and supervisors of school counseling met with legislative representatives and College Board staff to discuss the reauthorization of NCLB and its implications for school counselors. Several heterogeneous groups worked together to develop legislative statements for consideration in the reauthorization process. Four components from NCLB were addressed (a) assessments, (b) adequate yearly progress, (c) standards, and (d) highly
qualified school counselors. Under the highly qualified school counselor component, there was agreement that professional development was lacking, unavailable, and sporadic for school counselors. Unequivocally, the determination was made that professional development needed to be consistent for school counselors and a recommendation moved forward that school counselors must participate in and document job relevant professional development for a minimum amount of time (V. Lee, personal communication, October 20, 2006).

Professional Development

Learning occurs in varied aspects of educational practice including classrooms, school communities, and professional development courses or workshops (Borko, 2004). Moreover, Lambert (2003) defined effective professional development components as “learning opportunities that can be found in collegial conversations, coaching episodes, shared decision making groups, reflective journals, parent journals, or other such occasions” (p. 22). Specifically Lambert stressed that professional development that attends to both teacher and student learning, uses a reciprocal process of constructivist learning and contains (a) surfacing of ideas, (b) engaging in inquiry, (c) entering into dialogue and reflections, and (d) reframing actions and plans to account for what a learner knows and understands.

Borko (2004) mapped the terrain of research relative to teacher professional development and posed two questions for consideration:

1. What do we know about professional development programs and their impact on teacher learning and student academic performance?

2. What are important directions and strategies for extending our knowledge in
In order to begin thinking about these two questions, Borko (2004) indicated that it was important to identify the key elements that make up any professional development system which include “(a) the professional development program, (b) the teachers, who are learners in the program, (c) the facilitator, who guides teachers as they construct new knowledge, and (d) the context in which the professional development occurs” (p. 4). Borko’s research has particular importance for the creation and implementation of targeted professional development for school counselors. Most clearly, there is a gap in knowledge between professional development programs and the impact on school counselors. Furthermore, Borko’s thoughts reinforce the importance of exploring the impact of targeted professional development upon practice. Borko’s key elements are helpful in making determinations relative to the establishment a targeted professional development program.

Brott and Myers (1999) proposed a grounded theory of school counselor professional identity development that consists of four phases: (a) structuring, (b) interacting, (c) distinguishing, and (d) evolving. The structuring phase is an external perspective based on experiences during a training, workshop or staff development experience that initially shapes a school counselor’s professional identity development. This professional identity serves as a frame of reference for carrying out one’s role, making significant decisions, and developing as a professional. Therefore, the training program (structuring phase) becomes a critical aspect for developing one’s self-conceptualization as a professional school counselor (Brott, 2006). In summary, professional development should be purposefully planned to assist with professional
expectations (Hirsh, 2006). This is particularly important for the implementation of professional development relative to the transformed role of the school counselor. Professional development of school counselors should align with clearly outlined expectations.

There are several types of professional development available to all educators. The most common form of professional development is a workshop which usually takes place outside of the school day and away from the educator’s immediate environment workshops (Garet et al., 2001). Detailed below are examples as they relate to school counselors. In some instances, however, teacher professional development is included due to the paucity of research for school counseling.

A workshop is one of the most common approaches to professional development and is described as a structured approach to learning that occurs outside of the learner’s classroom, office, or school (Garet et al., 2001). However, it is short lived and “occurs for a short amount of time usually without accountability” (p. 921). Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Styles (1998) defined a workshop as groups of participants gathered together for the purposes of learning from an expert in a specific field or subject. Barnes (2006) suggests that workshops that are conducted by former classroom teachers who are able to apply best practices and research to the classroom are most effective. “These presenters use catch phrases and gimmicks to keep their audiences interested, but also give concrete examples and real scenarios” (p. 32).

The National Center for Transforming School Counseling offers professional development workshops for practicing school counselors throughout the country. The primary goal of these workshops is to make the practice of school counseling essential to
the mission of schools and education reform by equipping school counselors with the skills and knowledge necessary to help all groups of students meet high academic standards. School counselors working in this model help students gain access to a rigorous, quality education (Education Trust, 2002).

The workshop series is designed to help school counselors connect to school reform, and become an integral part in creating an equitable education system. The training helps practicing school counselors acquire and apply skills in leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, and use of data, all of which are directed toward systemic change designed to provide access and equity for all groups of students. Participants develop an action plan that they will implement in their school or district (Education Trust, 2002). The professional development that was delivered to the school counselors in this study was based upon the transformed role of the school counselor characteristics that were mentioned above.

Moreover, the College Board offers a variety of professional development for school counselors. Specifically, high school counselors can attend workshops that touch on subjects related to College Board initiatives, college and financial aid advising, and legal and ethical issues in the counseling profession” (College Board, 2004). Further, workshop participants learn techniques and best practices and have the opportunity to engage in discussions with school counseling colleagues.

Reform types of professional development include mentoring, and coaching which often take place during the regular school day in the educator’s environment (Garet et al., 2001). This involves participants working along side a “master” or exemplary teacher to develop and practice new skills. Greece Central School District
provided mentor teacher positions dedicated to the notion of having exemplary teachers work with new and struggling teachers. Each new teacher was assigned a mentor teacher to discuss annual goals, develop lesson plans, and to co-teach lessons (C. Pospula, personal communication, October, 2005).

Similarly, reform professional development has implications for school counselors. A “master” school counselor (who practices transformed role of the school counselor skills) would model effective practices with school counselors. This school counselor would provide constructive feedback to school counselors and assist with the development of new skills and dispositions. By locating opportunities for professional development within a teacher’s or school counselor’s regular work day, reform types of professional development may be more likely than traditional forms to make connections with classroom teaching (school counseling practices), and they may be easier to sustain over time” (Garet et al., 2001, p. 920).

Staff development must be based upon a clear understanding of the teaching and learning process (National Staff Development Council, 2000). Moreover, staff development should focus on improvements for all stakeholder groups in the school including students, faculty, and staff (Gilles, Cramer, & Hwang, 2001). However, “difficulties in understanding the effects of professional development on students are exacerbated by the fact that student learning is influenced by many different sources, not just by a direct link through a teacher from professional development” (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007, p. 580). Similarly, staff development for school counselors must be based upon a clear understanding of the role of the transformed school counselor. The
facilitator should be knowledgeable about the varied components of the role in order to clearly articulate that role to the school counselors.

Professional development becomes highly effective when school leaders allow educators to share their practices and strategies with their colleagues in a supportive and encouraging environment (Guskey, 2003). The literature however, does not specify which type(s) of professional development works best for school counselors. Dr. Russell Sabella, Past President of the ASCA corroborates this statement by stating the difficulty of delivering meaningful and targeted professional development to school counselors (personal communication, November, 2004). Most staff developers are former teachers or teachers on assignment and are not well versed about the professional development needs of school counselors. Staff developers should understand the concerns of school counselors and future implications for the profession (ASCA, 2007).

Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) contend that professional development is often assessed by measuring participants’ satisfaction levels and the usefulness of the information learned. Historically, evaluation has been viewed as a non-ancillary component of professional development (Guskey, 1998). There are many ways that professional development can be evaluated and the professional development coordinator should keep in mind the following four questions, “(a) Is this program or activity leading to the results that were intended? (b) Is it better than was done in the past? (c) Is it better than another, competing activity? and (d) Is it worth the cost?” (p. 3). These are all important questions that should be considered in the planning, development and implementation stages in the professional development process. In consultation with the national consultant, this researcher used these three questions along with the transformed
role of the school counselor, and feedback from the school counselor committee as a framework for the development of school counselor professional development.

Another evaluation component is the importance of encouraging critical reflection of professional practice in the school environment (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006). Giles, Cramer, and Hwang (2001) explained that the ultimate value of staff development is determined by whether changes occur in teacher behavior that is beneficial for students. Transformation and change of professional development must include elaborate and well thought evaluation measures (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007)

Summary

The school counseling profession has transformed over the past 110 years (Goodnough & Peruse, 2004). Many of these changes resulted from state and federal mandates with increased expectations for all educators including school counselors (Stone & Dahir, 2006). In particular, the NCLB Act of 2001 had significant implications for school counselors which included reducing achievement gaps for all students, increased levels of accountability and confirmed academic outcomes (Dahir & Stone, 2003). In many instances, NCLB’s conditions required school counselors to change or modify their current practices. Unfortunately, many school counselors are ill-prepared to meet NCLB’s requirements. Therefore, professional development is needed to assist school counselors with making the necessary shifts.

The transformed role of the school counselor (Education Trust, 1997) is one approach that prepares school counselors to meet the current needs of students (House & Martin, 1998). The transformed role of the school counselor requires school counselors to develop skill in areas such as advocacy, systemic change, and collaboration. Several
school counselors and school counselor educators across the country were trained to
deliver the transformed role of the school counselor professional development.
Unfortunately, this training is not always offered to school counselors because many staff
developers are more focused and experienced with the professional development needs of
teachers and not school counselors. School districts must continue to understand the
educational needs of school counselors.

The literature was extensively reviewed that pertained to the professional
development of school counselors. In doing so, what is known and not known about the
impact of professional development on school counselor practices was identified and
described. The literature reviewed established the need for a study that would examine
the impact of targeted professional development on the practice of school counselors.
Further, the review pointed out influential movements, namely, the Transformed School
Counselor Initiative and federal mandates (e.g., NCLB), that focused the kinds of support
that today’s school counselors can utilize. The literature also suggested that the
Transtheoretical Model of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982) was an effectual lens
through which to view professional development and a frame within which professional
development for school counselors may be organized.

Workshops are the most common forms of professional development made
available to school counselors. However, due to the short-term nature of the professional
learning and interactions, workshops are not always effective (Garet et al., 2001). The
research indicates that reform types of professional development are more effective in
assisting educational professionals with improved practice (Garet et al., 2001).
This approach would be considered for this study if school counseling mentors, coaches or developers were available in the district. This study will be taking place in a medium-sized school district and the already limited resources are not dedicated to mentoring staff for school counselors. School counselors in this study indicated regular use and a comfort level with varies forms of technology (blogs, emailing, etc.). Further, there are a small number of school counselors in the district of this study. Also, a survey administered to school counselors in the Fall of 2007, indicated a need and interest in receiving targeted professional development. Therefore, this researcher used a combination of workshops, online technology, focus groups, and interim projects as sources of data in the conduction of the present study.

Chapter 3 explains in detail the plan of research of the present study, using an integrated professional development approach to address the training needs identified by school counselors at Rosedale School District. Additionally, it explains the methodology relative to qualitative and quantitative approaches to examining the impact of delivering targeted professional development to school counselors.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and the research context in which the present study was conducted. The instrumentation (data collection tools) used in the study is discussed in the chapter, as well as the content of the professional development sessions, which serves as a basis for the data collection tools. This chapter also describes the research participants, the procedures for data collection, and the means of data collection and data analysis.

General Perspective

The review of literature clearly points to the need for further research relative to professional development, particularly targeted professional development delivered to school counselors. In particular, Garet et al. (2001) suggested the need for additional research relative to different and unconventional forms of professional development. An important consideration in designing effective professional development series is to determine school counselors' perceptions of the daily challenges they face (Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004).

Education researchers have a particular obligation and opportunity to take a leading role in considering how research can improve student circumstances (Hostetler, 2005). Rowell (2006) maintained that action research is rising as a meaningful and significant viewpoint within the school counseling profession. Specifically, research is an
important way to discover specific strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of school counselors (Farber, 2006).

**Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research is the more traditional methodology used by researchers (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2005). Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) explained that “quantitative research derives from a positivist epistemology which holds that there is an objective reality that can be expressed numerically. As a consequence, the quantitative perspective “emphasizes studies that are experimental in nature, emphasize measurement, and search for relationships” (pp. 39-40). Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined quantitative research as seeking causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings. Cottrell and McKenzie (2005) described characteristics of quantitative methods which include: (a) measures level of occurrence, (b) asks how often and how many, (c) studies actions, (d) is objective, (e) provides proof, (f) is definitive, and (g) measures levels of actions and trends. This type of research is important because, “professional development’s tainted history of effectiveness and lack of strong evidence showing its direct link to improvements in student learning outcomes led policy makers to demand assurances of quality in these endeavors” (Guskey, 2003, p. 4).

**Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is broadly defined as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). “Qualitative researchers accomplish research of high quality and have a long tradition of demonstrating quality in reports of their investigations” (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007, p. 25).
The distinguishing characteristic of qualitative research is that it requires the researcher to carefully enter the lives of the individuals being studied as fully and unobtrusively as can be (Stainback & Stainback, 1998). “Qualitative research is open and supple, and one of its strengths is that it incorporates philosophies, theories, and research and design methods as diverse as post-positivist, multi-methods approaches and postmodernist social critiques” (Freeman et al., p. 25).

Farber (2006) indicated that the purpose of qualitative research is to gain comprehensive information about people, environments, programs, events, or any phenomenon by working closely with the people one is studying. “Qualitative researchers’ concerns about the quality of their work are evident in discussions about formulating both research design and questions within explicit theoretical and philosophical traditions; accessing and entering settings; selecting, collecting, and analyzing data; and building a case for conclusions” (Freeman et al., 2007, p. 27).

Mixed Methods Research

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as a class of research that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches into a single study. Mixed methods research has become increasingly recognized as a legitimate research approach (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, Turner, 2007). Russek and Weinberg (1993) argue that by using both quantitative and qualitative data, their study of technology-based materials for the elementary classroom gave insights that neither type of analysis alone could provide. Today’s research world is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, complex, and dynamic; therefore, many researchers need to complement one method with another, and
all researchers need a solid understanding of multiple methods used by other scholars (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This researcher used a mixed methods approach which afforded the opportunity of mixing and matching design components to align with the exploration of professional development delivered to school counselors. In the researcher’s estimation, choosing the mixed methods approach best answered the proposed research question: How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?

Research Context

The location of the present study was a school district in the northeastern region of the United States fictitiously named Rosedale School District. The researcher is also an administrator and responsible for the oversight of the school counseling program in the same school district. This allowed for open and regular access within the institution. This access permitted the conduction of a needs assessment in the Fall of 2007, and Rosedale School District’s 14 school counselors provided recent and salient information for the researcher’s use in planning the present study (see Appendix B). Further, the researcher was able to interact with the school counselors and obtain observational data, as well as act as an in-house resource person during the five-month period in which the research activities took place. Knowledge of the institutional environment advanced researcher clarity regarding external and internal factors influencing school counselor practice in an actual school district.

Research Participants

The superintendent of Rosedale School District considers the professional development of its District’s school counselors an institutional priority and all of the
District's school counselors were given the opportunity, in terms of time and scheduling, to be involved in this research. This involved three full days of release time with permission granted from each school counselor's direct supervisor.

Because professional development subsequently was delivered to all of the school counselors in the Rosedale School District, each school counselor was asked to participate in this present study. In September and October of 2007, time was spent during two district school counselor meetings to specifically describe the research project to the school counselors. Also, the researcher provided opportunities for school counselors to ask specific questions about the research. Furthermore, a group of six school counselors volunteered to review the content of professional development sessions and provided feedback back to the researcher. This feedback was incorporated into the professional development sessions.

Therefore, the researcher conducted purposeful sampling based on convenience. Specifically, the 14 participants in the present study were school counselors who were permanently certified in the northeastern state where Rosedale School District is located. Twelve of the 14 of the participants have 11 or more years of experience working as a school counselor, which means that they were prepared for their profession prior to the emergence of the transformed role of the school counselor model.

National Consultant's Professional Development Training

Overview

The professional development sessions were delivered to school counselors on three separate occasions: February 6, 2008, April 2, 2008, and May 19, 2008, each requiring a six-hour period. The professional development sessions were constructed
based on the transformed role of the school counselor competencies and best practice exemplars from the ASCA and Rosedale School District’s regional School Counseling Models (see Appendix C).

After each professional development session, a summative assessment was made by the researcher and the national consultant that addressed the professional development content of the particular session. This was accomplished by a review of the participant evaluations that were handed out to the school counselors and retrieved at the end of the three professional development sessions. In addition, both before and after a professional development session, questions were posed on Blackboard to provoke reflection relative to the particular content of the session. Further, interim projects were assigned at the end of each professional development session to allow school counselors to apply the school counseling concepts taught during the professional development session. Informal and formal observations were made throughout the five months of programming. Finally, two focus groups were conducted for approximately 60 minutes by the national consultant and occurred in April 2, 2008, and May 19, 2008.

**Professional Development Sessions**

A synopsis of the three professional development sessions is provided. The first professional development session was conducted on February 6, 2008, focused on social justice, and was entitled, “Do We Have the Will to Ensure Every Student Receives a Quality Education?” Participants were introduced or reintroduced to the following concepts:

1. Addressing the educational system and the barriers that inhibit student success,
2. Learning to assume a leadership role as a school counselor,
3. Establishing the importance of counselors as critical players in school improvement,

4. Understanding the impact of counselor action on student achievement and development,

5. Advocating for rigorous academic curriculum and the best teachers for all students, and

6. Connecting the principles of Transforming School Counseling.

The professional development session was delivered in a multi-modal format: lecturing, reflection, and hands-on activities. At the end of this workshop, participants were assigned an interim project entitled, “Social Justice and Systemic Change” and were asked: (a) to identify a social justice/equity need in their school; (b) to gather the data necessary to better understand the situation; and (c) to reflect on what can be done as a school counselor leader, advocate, team payer, and collaborator to positively impact this challenge. This project was due by the next professional development session which occurred on April 2, 2008 and questions relative to this interim project were posted on Blackboard.

The second professional development session, “Taking the Next Steps: Aligning Our Program with the ASCA and Regional Models,” was conducted on April 2, 2008. One hour prior to this session, a focus group (n = 5) was conducted by the national consultant. The purpose of this workshop was to help participants examine their own practices and align these practices with components of the ASCA and Regional School Counseling Models. Participants were introduced to the components of a comprehensive school counseling model and shown how the two models presented in the session
reinforce the transformed role of the school counselor. The consultant conducted an activity that required participants to develop the foundational component of a comprehensive model. The participants developed a draft mission and belief statement for the school counseling program at Rosedale School District (see Appendix D). Further, participants learned about the national school counseling standards and identified potential stakeholder groups with which to collaborate. Next, the national consultant reviewed the social justice projects by asking participants to share their school counseling leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaborating strategies to positively impact the challenges identified in each of their schools.

At the end of this session, participants were assigned an interim project in which they were asked to present their written comprehensive program draft to their principal, school faculty, and staff. This project was due by the next professional development session which occurred on May 19, 2008 and questions relative to this interim project were posted on Blackboard.

The third and final professional development session entitled, "MEASURE 101: School Counselor Accountability" was conducted on May 19, 2008. One hour prior to this session, a focus group (n = 6) was conducted by the national consultant. The purpose of this session was to help participants review various data elements and align their work with the mission and vision of their respective schools. Participants worked in grade level teams (elementary, middle, and high school) to discuss and review the varied gaps that existed in their schools. The national consultant conducted an activity that required participants to think about how to effectively team with other educational stakeholders in their schools. Further, the consultant encouraged participants to focus on results and
measuring outcomes connected to school improvement. During the final workshop session, participants were assigned a final project in which they were asked to use data to inform their work as school counselors in the Rosedale School District. Specifically, each school counselor was asked to collaborate with their colleagues, to develop a comprehensive plan for school counseling in the Rosedale School District. This project was completed in draft form and submitted to the researcher on July 2, 2008.

Data Collection Tools

This researcher explored the impact of targeted professional development training by collecting and analyzing data from several sources: (a) school counselor evaluations of professional development sessions, (b) Blackboard discussion groups (no data was collected from this tool and discussion will occur in chapter four), (c) focus groups, (d) formal and informal observations, and (e) interim projects. Data collection was conducted over the course of a five-month period to accommodate the sequential phases of the research design.

School Counselor Evaluation

The first data collection tool, the school counselor evaluation, was a researcher-designed instrument used to measure school counselors’ reactions to the professional development session (see Appendix E). After each professional development session, this evaluation was administered to the school counselor, serving as a formative assessment of each six-hour professional development session. This instrument’s format and content was based on Guskey’s (2000) criteria, incorporating two of five of Guskey’s characteristics for evaluation of professional development: (a) participants’ responses and (b) participants’ learning. In addition, the researcher reviewed a selection of evaluations
provided as a general professional resource to researchers by the ASCA (2003) and the work of Carey and Dimmitt (2007) to finalize the format and content of this instrument. In its final form, the school counselor evaluation consisted of four parts: (a) a brief information section placed essentially for sorting/coding purposes, (b) a section of 14-items using the Lickert-scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and no basis for judgment) to elicit participant reactions, (c) a section of four open-ended questions to elicit participant responses to learning that occurred, and (d) a section of two items to elicit participant responses to other recommendations they may have regarding the professional development session.

**Blackboard Online Technology**

The second data collection tool, *Blackboard* Online Technology, is an online educational site that assists school districts in the launching of successful and innovative approaches to educational programming such as professional development (http://library.blackboard.com/doc/as/Bb_K12_Brochure.pdf). Approval to use this site was granted on January 4, 2008, and the Web page was developed and aligned to the present study’s school counselor professional development sessions. The district’s technology mentor emailed each participant their password and specific instructions on *Blackboard* technology use. The mentor also offered a training session for any participant that required assistance with *Blackboard*. No participants signed up for the training.

The national consultant and this researcher posed questions prior and after the professional development sessions to provoke thought and contemplation relative to the workshop sessions (see Appendix F). It was anticipated that the school counselors would
use the Blackboard online discussion groups to build a professional learning community through the sharing of ideas, best practices, as well as failures.

*Focus Groups*

The third data collection tool, focus groups, was used as a means of direct discussion in this research. Dean (1994) defined a focus group as, “an informal, small group discussion designed to obtain in-depth qualitative information” (p. 339). Many researchers pointed out the merits of conducting focus groups. For example, the American Association for Public Opinion Research (http://www.aapor.org) indicated four reasons to conduct focus groups:

1. As a precursor to quantitative research by defining language perceptions, and possible hypotheses
2. To get qualitative data in support of issues surfaced by quantitative data
3. To observe and understand how interactions with peers can change or reinforce the opinions of individuals
4. To allow executives to privately observe consumer reactions to their organization’s services and products (p. 1).

The questions and statements used in the two focus groups conducted in this present study were the result of the collaborative effort of the national consultant and this researcher. The national consultant facilitated both focus groups, which lasted for approximately one hour, and which took place after the initial professional development session in February of 2008, and prior to the April and May 2008, professional development sessions. Participants had the chance to discuss the impact that targeted
professional development sessions had upon their practice. The statements and questions used in the focus groups can be found in Appendix G.

**Formal and Informal Observation**

The fourth data collection tool, formal and informal observation, was used as a means to identify professional practice occasions where the school counselor may be utilizing the knowledge provided by the professional development sessions. Informal observations were made when an occasion arose to scrutinize a counseling activity that related to any of the content presented in the professional development sessions already attended.

Formal observations followed the in-place protocol already existing at Rosedale School District. This protocol includes a pre-conference meeting with the school counselor and the researcher, where observation content is negotiated in advance of the actual formal observation meeting. The researcher reminded each participant of the transformed role of the school counselor characteristics (i.e. advocacy, systemic change, and collaboration) and discussed with each participant how these characteristics might be incorporated in the lesson being observed. Following the formal observation meeting, a post-observation meeting occurred where a collaborative effort was made to detail strategies and insights found upon reflection. Conducting formal and informal observations are a normal part of the researcher’s responsibilities at Rosedale School District.

**Interim Projects**

The fifth data collection tool, interim projects, was used as a means to provide school counselors with directed activities that enabled realization of development or skill
learned in a professional development session. Interim projects were assigned to participants after each professional development session. Participants engaged in interim projects individually. Specific detail about each interim project can be found in Appendix H.

*Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis*

Three full day professional development sessions were delivered to each of the school counselors over a five-month period. A national consultant specializing in school counseling designed a series of professional development sessions that were delivered to each of the school counselors and conducted the professional development sessions. The number of participants in the present study was small (n=14), and careful attention was made to keep information confidential, including the names of participants, the schools where they are employed, and any other information that could lead to the identification of a participant. This researcher employed a mixed methods approach, which resulted in the securing of both quantitative and qualitative data.

*Procedures Related to Participants*

The researcher followed the guidelines for informed consent as determined by the Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College. A letter of interest was sent to each school counselor and followed up with e-mails and phone calls to request their participation (see Appendix I). All participants were invited to attend the three professional development sessions. Once the school counselors volunteered to participate in the focus groups, the researcher reminded each participant via e-mail. Each consent form was signed and handed in prior to the focus groups beginning (Appendix J).
The national consultant taped the interviews and allowed time after each of the interviews to debrief and clarify questions and responses. Once the focus groups were completed, the researcher hired a professional to transcribe the tapes. The scribe was sworn to confidentiality and all data including tapes, notes, and interview protocol forms were internally coded and kept under lock and key by the researcher to protect the confidentiality of the participants. All identifying information was removed from the transcribed text. The scribe returned all tapes to the candidate and along with the other sources of data (evaluations, interim projects, and formal and informal observations), remained under lock and key at a safe location known to the researcher. These data will be kept for five years from the time of the conclusion of the present study.

Summary

It was the expectation of this researcher that conducting a mixed methods study with the above-outlined instrumentation, procedures, and processes for data collection and data analysis would allow for exploration and understanding of the issues impinging professional development for school counselors. The research was conducted by using both quantitative and qualitative data, and the benefits of both were delineated. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study, along with the data analysis conducted by the researcher and a summary of the findings.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to explore the impact of targeted professional development on school counselor practices. To meet this purpose, the researcher used a mixed methods design and collected both quantitative and qualitative data on school counselors who participated in three targeted professional development sessions delivered over three non-consecutive days. Data collection activities spanned the course of a 5 month period to accommodate the sequential phases of the research design. These data were collected to examine the research question, “How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?” The data for this study was derived from professional development session evaluations, focus group interview transcripts, interim project reports, and informal and formal observations. A coding system was used to organize the information and transcriptions from the various data sets. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data sets. The researcher examined the results of the analyses to discern trends and patterns across the data sets, and to identify responses in categories.

Study Results

Professional Development Session Evaluation Results

The first professional development session focused on social justice, advocacy, and quality educational experiences for all students. The second professional development session focused on helping the participants review their own practices and
on aligning these practices with components of the NYSSCA and ASCA Models. Participants were introduced to the components of a comprehensive school counseling model and were shown how both models reinforce the transformed role of the school counselor. The third professional development session focused on introducing the participants to data-driven decision making in school counselor practice. Participants worked in grade level teams (elementary, middle, and high school) to discuss and to review varied academic achievement gaps that exist for the students in each of their schools.

Part 1: General information section. In the general information section, participants were asked to indicate the grade level that they worked with, their years of experience, and gender. Of the 14 participants, 1 (7.1%) participant worked at grade levels K-5, 4 (28.6%) participants worked at grade levels 6-8, 2 (14.3%) participants worked at grade levels 6-12, and 7 (50%) participants worked at grade levels 9-12. Further, 12 (85.7%) participants have been practicing school counseling for 11 or more years. Ten (71.4%) participants were female and 4 (28.6%) participants were male.

Part 2: Fourteen-item query on “reactions.” In performing the analysis, the quantitative data was compiled from 14-item Lickert-scale questions of the school counselor evaluation. Each Lickert-scale response was inputted into an Excel spreadsheet and was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics to see if an increase in knowledge had occurred after the delivery of content during the three professional development sessions. The data were sorted to examine characteristics and skills of the trained participants. This researcher used percentage, frequency, mean, and mode in order to conduct quantitative analysis.
In the participants' reactions section, participants were asked to respond to 14 questions querying their reactions to the professional development sessions. The questionnaire used Lickert-scale scorings ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” with an additional option of “No Basis for Judgment.” The values assigned to each rating are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Lickert-Scale Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Basis for Judgment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a complete listing of the results from all three professional development evaluations, refer to Appendices K, L, and M.

February 6, 2008 findings and analysis. Of the 14 participants attending the first professional development session, 10 (71.4%) participants completed the school counselor evaluation. (The low percentage rate of evaluation completion will be discussed further in this section.) The mean scores for the 14 Lickert-scale items ranged from 3.40 to 4.80 (see Table 4.2). Two questions, question 4, “The workshop met my expectations” and question 14, “The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic” had mean scores of 3.50 and 3.40, respectively. Question 14 received the lowest
### Table 4.2

*First Professional Development Session Mean Scores of Participants for School Counselor Evaluation Questions on “Reaction”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The workshop was easy and clear to follow.</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly.</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The workshop matched the advertised description.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The workshop met my expectations.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs.</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The presentation was effective.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose.</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The technology used was appropriate and adequate.</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague.</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I will use most of what was presented.</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The workshop presenter’s style kept me focused and interested.</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean score, 3.40, with 2 of 10 participants (20%) marking either “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” to this question.
Prochaska & DiClemente’s Transtheoretical Model (1982) which was introduced in chapter two serves as an effective lens relative to why question 14 might have received the lowest rating. Precontemplation is the stage in which people are naively uniformed about their behavior (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1994). In this study, the school counselors who believe their practices to be adequate may not see that the targeted professional development being offered applying to their own practices.

The next lowest mean (3.50) was reported for question 4, “The workshop met my expectations.” Again, this mean score supports the view that the 10 respondents remained in the Precontemplative stage. An ambivalent response (neither agree nor disagree) to this question may indicate that participants’ expectations for the professional development may not have been met or the training may not have aligned with their pre-established definitions of school counselor practices.

During the first professional development session, 4 participants (28.6%) did not complete professional development evaluations. A few possible explanations are provided as to why this may have occurred. Some participants may have not completed the evaluation because of fatigue from attending 6 hours of professional development. Other participants may not have completed the evaluation due to disregard of the professional development. Precontemplators are resistant and deny that problems exist (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1994). A number of participants may have not completed the evaluation because of a dislike of the national consultant’s approach to conducting the professional development. For example, 4 (28.6%) of 14 participants stated their discontent about the national consultant during a district school counselor meeting. (It is unclear whether or not the same 4 participants who did not complete the evaluations are
the same 4 participants who made the comments.) The percentage of participants completing a professional development evaluation decreased for the second and third professional development session to 57.1% and 63.6% respectively. It remains unknown as to exactly why this occurred.

April 2, 2008 findings and analysis. Of the 14 participants attending the second professional development session, 8 (57.1%) completed the school counselor evaluation. Three fewer participants from the second professional development session chose not to complete a professional development evaluation than the first professional development session. This continues to signify the participants’ silent resistance to the professional development sessions.

The mean scores for the 14 questions ranged from 3.25 to 4.50 (see Table 4.3). The ranges are slightly lower than the response ranges indicated in the first professional development session, with items 6 through 13 showing a mean score of 4.25. Lower mean scores may indicate that participants reacted less favorably to the subject matter of the professional development session, which required participants to review their own practices and align these practices with components of the NYSSCA and ASCA Models.

Question 14, “The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic” continued to have the lowest mean score of 3.25, with 3 of 8 participants (37.5%) responding with a rating of either “Strongly Disagree,” “Neither Agree nor Disagree.” or “No Basis for Judgment.” This was the lowest mean of the three professional development sessions (see Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4). An analysis of this data continues to affirm that participants are more than likely in Prochaska & DiClemente’s (1982) Precontemplative stage.
Question 2, “The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly,” received the highest mean score of 4.50, with 7 of 8 participants (87.5%) marking “Strongly Agree” and one participant (12.5%) marking “Strongly Disagree.”

The actions of the national consultant may have accounted for this high mean. During the first focus group and the second professional development session (which both occurred on April 2, 2008), the national consultant began both sessions by soliciting feedback from participants. Comments from participants during the second professional development session indicated an appreciation for taking time to acknowledge their concerns.
Table 4.3

**Second Professional Development Session Mean Scores of Participants for School Counselor Evaluation Questions on “Reaction”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The workshop was easy and clear to follow.</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The workshop matched the advertised description.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The workshop met my expectations.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The presentation was effective.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The technology used was appropriate and adequate.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I will use most of what was presented.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The workshop presenter’s style kept me focused and interested.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirteen of the 14 mean scores for Lickert-scale items related to “reaction” on the second professional development session received an “Agree” rating (4.13 or higher) which indicate that eight participants’ reactions were favorable to the training. However,
it remains unclear how the training was received by all 14 participants because even fewer participants completed the professional development evaluation (n = 8).

_May 19, 2008 findings and analysis._ Of the 11 participants attending the third professional development session, 7 (63.6%) completed the school counselor evaluation. (3 participants were excused due to previously scheduled commitments.) The mean scores for the 14 questions ranged from 3.57 to 4.43 (see Table 4.4). The mean score for 7 of the 14 items was 4.14. On this professional development evaluation, 1 of 11 participants (14.3%) consistently marked “Strongly Disagree” for each of the 14 questions.

Question 2, “The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly” received the lowest mean of 3.57. During this professional development session, participants reviewed various data elements (achievement, attendance, suspensions, etc.) and were asked to align their work with the mission and vision of their respective schools. Many participants shared with the consultant that this task might not be possible given the current hostile conditions that existed in some of their schools. The consultant continually stressed the importance of conducting this activity which may account for feelings of not be heard or respected.

Question 7, “The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose” again received the highest mean score, 4.43, with 6 of 7 participants (85.7%) marking “Strongly Agree.”
Table 4.4

*Third Professional Development Session Mean Scores of Participants for Questions on “Reaction”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The workshop was easy and clear to follow.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly.</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The workshop matched the advertised description.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The workshop met my expectations.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs.</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The presentation was effective.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The technology used was appropriate and adequate.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I will use most of what was presented.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The workshop presenter’s style kept me focused and interested.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, question 13, “The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood” received a mean score of 4.43. If there were questions about the material being taught, participants expressed through the professional
development evaluation that the national consultant provided clear explanations even though they might not have agreed with the concept attached to the explanation.

For the third professional development session, 13 of the 14 mean scores for the questions related to “reaction,” received an agreement marking, which indicate that the 7 of the 11 participants’ (63.6%) reactions were positive. It continues to be unclear relative to the reactions of the 11 participants as 7 completed a professional development evaluation.

Summary of Lickert-scale questions. In summary, the data provided in this section are a result of 25 out of a possible 42 (59.5%) responses. The participants who chose to complete a professional development evaluation, the responses indicate that participants’ reactions were mostly in the “Agree” range regarding all three of the professional development sessions. On future surveys, the researcher will not provide the option of including both a “Neither Agree Nor Disagree” and a “No Basis for Judgment” category. This option gave participants an additional opportunity to opt out of providing a response.

Because the response rate did not encompass all of the participants’ responses for the 14 Lickert-scale questions, it is unclear whether the responses indicate a positive reaction to the training. It is also unclear why participants chose not to respond, although the Transtheroretical Model (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1983) provides a lens relative to a possible explanation.

The percentage of participants choosing to provide feedback relative to the professional development evaluations was lower than expected (71.4%, 57.1%, and 63.6%). These percentages possibly indicate that participants begrudgingly attended the sessions and demonstrated resistance to receiving the training due to mandatory
attendance. Two conditions occurred previous to the training which makes this finding puzzling. First, a professional development assessment was emailed to all 14 school counselors at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, and 100% of the participants (n = 14) indicated the need for professional development. Once the need was established, the researcher consulted with a national consultant whose expertise aligned with the school counselors identified needs.

Also, the researcher emailed the description of the three professional development sessions and a sub-committee of school counselors (n = 6) was formed to discuss the content of the professional development sessions. (Note: These 6 participants could have been the participants who were consistently providing feedback about the professional development sessions.) Feedback was gathered and submitted to the national consultant both verbally and electronically. In this study, 12 participants did not complete a professional development evaluation. The Precontemplative stage was manifested by participants' reactions to the professional development sessions by a failure to complete the professional development evaluations and by commenting negatively about the way the national consultant conducted the training.

Part 3: Open-ended statements querying “learning.” In the participants’ learning section, participants were asked to respond to three open-ended questions relative to their learning of the material. Guskey (2000) states that the actual “learning” which occurred is another way to examine the impact of professional development upon practice.

The first question asked participants to, “Share three things you learned from today’s workshop (“Aha!” moments).” Participant responses to this first open-ended query statement shows what the participants remember from each professional
development session. The responses from the three professional development sessions were organized into the following descriptors (a) school counselor advocacy, (b) data-driven decision making, and (c) national and state educational programs and initiatives (i.e., NCLB Act, ASCA School Counselor Models, and the regional School Counselor Model).

Participant responses relating to school counselor advocacy include: “need to identify the critical issues within one’s school district,” “we have a voice although we often do not feel so in this particular school district,” “school counselors should create their own improvement plan before administration does,” and “creating our own mission statement.”

Participant responses relating to data-driven decision making include: “urgency of school counselors in this district to provide data on our impact,” “…reporting data issues,” “find ‘passion’ in data collecting,” and “choose data research you are curious/passionate about.” Participant responses relating to national and state and national programs/initiatives include: “government educational agenda is high-stakes testing,” “No Child Left Behind has five goals…history of No Child Left Behind,” “more understanding of NYSSCA model. Connection with competencies,” “ASCA/NYSSCA Model are very consistent w/one another,” “during the collaborative discussions regarding the purpose of the NYSSCA structures ‘align,’” “more about the NYSSCA/ASCA models.”

The second open-ended question posed on the professional development evaluation asked participants to, “Share two ideas that aligned with their current thinking about the topic and/or the field of school counseling.” Participant responses to this second
open-ended query statement may show that they began to examine their practices as outlined in the contemplation stage of the Transtheoretical Model of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). During this stage of the model, and identified within participant responses to this statement, the school counselors began to mention the benefits of change. Responses that support this claim include: “Accountability isn’t always bad or punitive, it’s a good reflection of what we already do,” “We need to work to clearly identify activities that will align with competencies,” and “National standards are imperative to help define our roles and express the importance of our work in our buildings and district.”

Twenty-nine responses were analyzed from 25 participants and data analysis indicated that participants responses were in one of three descriptive areas (a) school counselor advocacy; (b) national and state educational programs and initiatives (i.e., NCLB Act, ASCA School Counselor Models, and regional School Counselor Models); and (c) collaboration with varied stakeholders.

Responses that align with the transformed role of the school counselor initiative include:

1. “Teaming and collaboration is essential for a school’s success.”
2. “We need to work to clearly identify activities that will align with competencies.”
3. “Access to quality and equitable education should be available to all students.”

Advocacy is a powerful term in the school counseling field. School counselor advocacy contributes to furthering educational opportunity for all students (Stone & Dahir, 2006). “The school counselor as advocate is ideally situated to impact important
areas, such as helping students to access and succeed in rigorous academics, creating a safer school climate, and helping students and families understand and widen their opportunities" (pp. 126-127).

The ASCA/Regional Models and Standards is another important characteristic within the school counseling field as it provides a foundation for comprehensive school counseling programs and reflects a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management and accountability (ASCA, 2003). Moreover, teaming and collaboration received 7 responses from participants as an area that aligned with current thinking. Teaming and collaboration are the result of purposeful interactions among school counselors, as well as the establishment of relationships with the varied constituents they work with. In turn, symbiotic relationships help school counselors effectively advocate for the students they are charged to serve. Collaborative relationships are particularly important in the environment that school counselor describe as being hostile and non-supportive.

The third question, “Share one concept or activity relative to how you will use the information acquired from the workshop,” asks what participants plan to incorporate into their current practices. This question specifically requires participants to share if they plan to use any information from the professional development training in the future. In essence, this question challenges participants to use material which could represent modifications to current practices or represent new ways to practice school counseling.

Participant responses for the first two professional development sessions were vague. However, participant responses at the conclusion of the third and final professional development session showed expected future school counselor activities that
were more concrete in description. These activities include: “creating a comprehensive plan,” “mapping the tasks and identifying the connection to the standards [academic, career, social],” “MEASURE [Mission, Element, Analyze, Stakeholders-Unite, Results, Educate],” “I project to track grades from 6 to 7 and 8 to 9 on a selected group of students,” and “mapping to drive my calendar with my colleagues [creating a curriculum map with a timeline of events].”

In general, participant responses to this open-ended statement varied from vague to thoughtful, from checking Internet websites to plans to continue self-education to collaborating with teaching colleagues. At the point at which school counselors had received all of the professional development sessions, they identified increasingly specific and concrete ways to better their practice.

However, from a possible 42 responses for this section of the professional development survey, 29 (69%) completed an evaluation which accounted for 17 responses for this question. It is this question that required participants to share with the researcher how they planned to use the actual professional development. Of the 17 participants who completed an evaluation 5 (29.4%) completed this question. This low participation rate may indicate a decision to not apply the content learned from the professional development which continues to support that participants remained in the Precontemplative stage. Another possibility is that the content was irrelevant or inconsequential, and the participants objected their time being wasted during each professional development session.
Blackboard Technology Results

The researcher used Blackboard discussion groups (an online learning community and support system for education professionals) with the intention of establishing an online community of school counselor learners. A Web page was created to provide a means by which dialogue could occur among the participants of the present study. Reflective questions were posted prior to and after each professional development session.

Blackboard technology was chosen by the researcher based upon the comfort level and regular use of technology as indicated by the school counselors. Each school counselor regularly uses email and the high school counselors (n = 7) host a school counseling website and use other electronic means to converse with parents and guardians relative to school counselor programming.

For the 5 month period of the study, no discussion, dialogue, or online exchange occurred despite several attempts by the researcher to solicit Blackboard use. The Rosedale School District’s technology mentor offered individual assistance to the participants regarding the use of Blackboard Technology. Further, the researcher posted questions on three separate occasions to ensure the technology was properly functioning. Several participants responded to the email to signify it was working. Furthermore, participants were informed by email that an online tutorial was available for their use. None of the participants in this study asked for assistance with Blackboard.

What might account for the non-use of Blackboard? School counselors shared through varied mediums (district and school counselor meetings, emails, professional development sessions, and focus group dialogue) the stressful conditions that existed in
some of their schools. Further, the high school counselors talked about tensions between the school counseling department and the school administration (principal and associate principal). Also, the school counselors often shared that inappropriate responsibilities were assigned to them (data input, filing, etc.).

Another potential explanation for lack of participation is participants’ concern of absolute confidentiality, a key value in school counseling. Particularly, some of the participants may felt that the confidentiality promised by the researcher might not be honored or maintained. Kouzes & Posner (2002) speak to the importance of leaders creating an atmosphere of trust with the constituents they serve. “At the heart of collaboration is trust. It’s the central issue in human relationships within and outside organizations” (p. 244). With the aforementioned environmental and situational conditions, the introduction of Blackboard added another set of expectations that may have been viewed as extraneous, unnecessary, or insincere.

Interim Projects

Interim projects were assigned by the national consultant at the conclusion of each professional development session. The purpose of the interim projects was to afford participants the opportunity to apply concepts and skills learned from the professional development sessions. Two of the three projects are discussed in more detail. The third interim project assignment required completion by the participants during the course of the summer and for part of the 2008-2009 school year.

First interim project. The first interim project required school counselors to identify a social justice issue within their school and bring the necessary data to support the issue. Only 1 of 14 of the participants (7.1%) brought actual data to the second
professional development session, which was attendance data for an entire marking period. The participant showed colleagues, through the data, a breakdown of attendance by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status. It was pointed out that, for students of more affluent families, teachers tended to be more willing to excuse the absences, whereas students from lower socio-economic families tended to be penalized when having missed classes.

Even though the remaining school counselors did not bring social justice data to the professional development session, two participants verbally shared with the entire group a social justice issue that existed in their schools. One participant mentioned a concern relative to eligibility of students to participate in the advanced placement program. At the high school, a social studies course is offered to students during their 11th and 12th grade year in high school. Teachers require that students take a placement test to determine their readiness for the course. The school counselor mentioned using a free tool entitled AP Potential, which helps schools identify eligible students who otherwise might not participate in advanced placement courses. This service is offered free through the College Board. The participant emphasized the importance of advocating for students, particularly those who regularly do not participate in rigorous courses such as advanced placement courses.

Another participant discussed the course selection process that occurs for eighth-grade middle school students moving into high school. The school counselors regularly work with students to develop their first high school schedule. A strength-based approach is taken in that students’ interests are taken into consideration to determine the specific courses taken during their freshman year. Each student is seen individually to ensure that
the course selection is specifically tailored to meet identified interests. The participant pointed out that, despite that the courses have been chosen, several students' course selections are modified by the academic department chairs to decrease enrollment numbers to more manageable numbers. Unless the school counselor speaks up, or a guardian advocates for an additional section to be created, the student is placed in a course not of their choosing. The participant shared that these students are often either rural or minority students.

Second interim project. The second interim assignment required school counselors to present their comprehensive program draft to their principal and colleagues. This draft included the following four components:

1. Discussing how to improve academic achievement and eliminating the information and opportunity gaps in their schools.
2. Showing how the school counseling mission is aligned with the school and district mission.
3. Identifying school counseling competencies with colleagues that will assist students in being successful.
4. Finding the data that their school needed to improve (i.e. academic, attendance, etc.).

The same school counselor for the first interim project completed this assignment. This participant sat with her leadership team consisting of her principal and the assistant to the principal to discuss how best to work together as a team to effect student change. She shared the transforming school counselor worksheet. Follow-up with this participant indicated a positive outcome. First, the school counselor outlined her role with the
leadership team. Further, she answered questions and was able to clarify misunderstandings about her role. Furthermore, they reviewed student data (attendance, suspension, grades, etc.) and began to develop a multi-lens perspective on how to address student concerns. This outcome is an indication that the training enabled one school counselor to embed the content from the professional development session into her current practices.

What might account for this school counselor participant being so accepting of the professional development and willing to embed the transformed role of the school counselor components into her work? Several times, the participant shared with this researcher her excitement and appreciation for the provision of professional development. This participant was the first to turn in her informed consent form, attended each professional development session, and made positive contributions during the professional development sessions. This participant was clearly in Prochaska and DiClemente’s (1982) preparation and action stages.

During the preparation stage, individuals plan to make changes in their behavior and actions (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1994). Further, they may experiment with incremental changes as their resolve to modify their behavior increases. For example, a school counselor might decide to address a student issue during a faculty meeting and use data to affirm their claim. The school counselor would wait to see what type of reaction occurs from colleagues and if the behavior was worth the risk.

“Action is the stage in which people change their overt behavior and the environmental conditions that affect their behavior. Self-esteem tends to be high because people are acting on their beliefs in personal self-efficacy” (Prochaska & DiClemente,
This participant’s confidence was very high and she often reminded her colleagues of the importance of the training. She was very positive throughout the five-month period of the research study. Individuals in the action stage, “...tend to follow through on any homework assignments religiously [and] expend the most behavioral energy during this stage” (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1994, p. 28). However, this participant did not contribute to online Blackboard discussions.

Third interim project. The third and final interim project was completed in part by 7 of 14 participants (50%) prior to the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Participants were asked to develop a comprehensive school counseling plan that included a mission, vision, belief statements, data elements, and national school counseling standards. School counselors worked individually and in teams to develop various aspects of the comprehensive plan. A draft of the district plan was created and turned into the researcher in July 2008. This draft included a mission and belief statement, school counselor benchmarks, school counseling national standards, and school counseling research. Consistent progress continues relative to the creation of a comprehensive plan, curriculum planning, and the implementation of national standards.

Interim project analysis. What might account for scant participation rate for the three interim projects? It was indicated several times during the professional development sessions that school counselors were overwhelmed with work demands. April and May (the months of the second and third professional developments sessions) were busy months for school counselors. At the middle and high school levels, school counselors were continuing to work on scheduling for the upcoming year. Also, school counselors at all levels worked with struggling students to help them prepare for final exams. At the
high school level, school counselors were expected to assist with Advanced Placement examinations which added an additional 10-15 hours of work per week. School counselors were asked to complete homework assignments on top of everything else they were expected to do. It is not surprising that the participation rate was as low given the stressful environmental situations described by participants.

Formal and Informal Observations

Formal and informal observations were conducted during the course of the school counselor professional development. These observations provided additional data for the researcher, which afforded opportunities to document if what had been previously taught during the professional development sessions was being applied by the participants. The researcher looked for characteristics of the transformed role of the school counselor: advocacy, cultural competence, and teaming and collaboration (House & Martin, 1998).

Formal observations. Three formal observations were conducted by the researcher and occurred in February, March and April of 2008. Each observation included a pre and post observation conference between the researcher and the participant. During the pre observation conference, each participant explained the content of the upcoming observation. The researcher (as observer) provided input relative to the observation including suggestions on how the transformed role of the school counselor might be incorporated into the observation. The three observations are described relative to evidence (or lack thereof) of the transformed role of the school counselor.

During the first formal observation, the participant demonstrated advocacy when the parent tried to tell her child which course her son should take. The participant, firmly yet professionally, reminded the parent about the importance of student choice and
interest in coursework beyond the requisite courses. There was also a demonstration of *teaming and collaboration* as the participant clearly had established a relationship with the parent, and it was clear that she had consulted with teachers to solicit feedback and information relative to the academic status of the student. There was exhibition of *cultural competence*, as the participant was aware of the culture of over-involved parents, and the participant verified this competence with the observer in the post observation conference. The parent required finesse in this area. Further, the school counselor asked the researcher to conduct a cultural audit of her office to ensure that it was welcoming to all students on her caseload.

During the second formal observation, there was a demonstration of *teaming collaboration* as the participant collaborated with all stakeholders during the meeting and consulted with the teacher about the student’s social studies class. The one recommendation made for this observation indicated a lack of attention paid to *advocacy* and *cultural competence*. Specifically, the observation noted, “It is important to model and promote appreciation for students’ cultural heritage, unique endowments, learning styles, interests, and needs.” Furthermore, the participant’s student receives special education services and did not always advocate for herself during the meeting. The school counselor should advocated on behalf of the student.

During the third formal observation, the school counselor participant demonstrated *cultural competence* and *advocacy* by collaborating with the ESOL teacher to support both the student and her parents, who are bilingual. The student was very shy, and several times during the meeting, the participant validated the student by monitoring her nonverbal communication. The participant’s interactions with both the student and
her family were thoughtful and honest, which contributed to the sense of a safe 
environment. Further, the participant’s tone of voice contributed to the congenial 
atmosphere, as it was very calm and even-toned. Finally, the participant encouraged her 
student to provide her own perspective during the meeting. Creating and maintaining a 
caring and respectful demeanor with students allows them to take more risks during 
sessions and to move forward in their academic endeavors to a greater degree.

The participant could have used her advocacy skills on two occasions where she 
did not do so. First, the ESOL teacher shared that the student was a gifted writer and 
could certainly take both an honors English course and an honors mathematics course 
during the 2008-2009 school year. When it came time to discuss the mathematics course, 
the mathematics teacher was hesitant to agree that the student should take a mathematics 
honors course. A suggestion during the post observation conference included sharing 
with the participant that she should use her advocacy skills and urge her student’s place 
in the mathematics honors course if her student’s desire and end of year grades indicated 
an honors course placement.

The second instance occurred relative to the ESOL teacher mentioning several 
times that the participant was the “guidance counselor.” During the post observation 
conference, the researcher shared this observation with the participant by commenting 
that this was an opportunity to capitalize on a teachable moment. Listed below is 
feedback from the school counselor relative to her observation and the process:

Thank you for your evaluation of my performance… I will work on my advocacy 
skills, especially when involving the more experienced teachers. I agree that these 
are ‘teachable moments’, and I appreciate needing to follow through on those
critical times in this profession!! I appreciate all of your excellent suggestions and will certainly work on them in the fall. I look forward to next year's observation!"

(E-mail Communication Tuesday, June 24, 2008 3:14 PM)

The three observations allowed the researcher to peer into the professional practices of three school counselors during the present study. The observation process, in its optimal form, allows the educator the opportunity to grow and learn from the experience of the process. It is important to note that each participant previously voiced a desire to participate in the observation process prior to the announcement of the present study. Each participant agreed to still be observed as a part of the present study.

Although it was difficult to ascertain if the professional development training caused each participant to demonstrate transformed role of the school counselor characteristics, certainly characteristics were witnessed during the school counselor observations. Collaboration was existent for each participant and had it not been present would have made it nearly impossible to complete the work on behalf of their students. Two of the three participants showed cultural competency during the observation process with their students, and two of the three demonstrated advocacy on behalf of their students. No rubric or observation process is in place specifically for school counselors, and therefore, the framework used to cull the results in this section is based on this researcher's previous experience and knowledge as it relates to the observation process of school counselors.

Informal observations. The first informal observation was conducted less than one month after the first professional development session. The participant introduced the school community to the "Careers Begin in Kindergarten Program. This program was
developed to help students consider options available to them after graduating from high school. By involving local and school community members, the program addresses goal setting, exploring, and examining career options and recognizing the necessary skills and paths taken by their teachers, family, and community members to reach their career goals. This program connects to the *systemic change* and *teaming and collaboration* components in the transformed role of the school counselor initiative. An example of *systemic change* is that the participant devised a program that opened students' awareness to varied options upon their high school graduation. This is the first time that post-secondary planning was discussed with elementary students in such a targeted manner. *Teaming and collaboration* was demonstrated due to the participant collaborating with school and community stakeholders to conduct classroom presentations and school assemblies.

The second informal observation occurred during a school counselor meeting at the end of February, 2008. The researcher provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss the first professional development session. During this meeting, participants shared several negative commentaries regarding the first professional development session. One participant stated, “I’m completely challenged on how it [i.e., the training] fits with my job...it needs to be made relevant” (Participant Number One, personal communication, February 25, 2008). Another participant said, “I felt lectured to...[there were] little to no activities” (Participant Number Two, personal communication, February 25, 2008). Still another participant declared, “I felt our previous knowledge was not taken into account” (Participant Number Three, personal communication, February 25, 2008). One participant emphatically claimed, “It will be hard to sit through training if it is
conducted in this manner” (Participant Number Four, personal communication, February 25, 2008). The four aforementioned comments certainly indicate that participants remain in the Precontemplative Stage of DiClemente & Prochaska’s Transtheoretical Model of Change (1982) relative to embracing the change to the transformed role of the school counselor.

After hearing the negative feedback, this researcher reminded participants about the main components of the professional development sessions which involved the transformed role of the school counselor and stated that their feedback would be shared with the national consultant. Furthermore, the researcher spoke to each principal about the school counselors’ feedback and encouraged each principal to talk about the professional development sessions with their school counselors.

After this meeting, the researcher spent an extensive amount of time sharing the feedback from the school counselors with the national consultant. The national consultant directly solicited additional feedback from the participants and specifically addressed their concerns during the first focus group meeting and the second professional development session.

There are techniques that are helpful in assisting individuals who are in the Precontemplative stage (UCLA, 2008). The first is to validate the lack of readiness by the individual. This involves assessing the willingness to move forward with the change process. The researcher could have met with all of the school counselors and addressed the demonstrated concerns of the professional development sessions. Another technique is to specify the behavior in need of changing and encouraging a re-evaluation of current behavior. The researcher might have specifically identified the specific concerns that the
transformed role of the school counselor addresses and differentiated the training based upon the varied skill levels of the school counselors. A final technique explains and personalizes the risk of change. Having candid conversations about risks helps to validate the concerns. It is important to note, that these techniques are commonly used by school counselors in their work with students with making adjustments.

The third informal observation was conducted during a district-wide school counselor meeting, and the topic was cultural competence. The participant shared an encounter he had had with an African-American family who was quite angry with the district for stereotyping their son by describing him as “a big and aggressive student” during a disciplinary meeting.

Noted strengths of this participant included: (a) a willingness to learn about a culture that he was unfamiliar with, and (b) promoting candid and courageous conversations about race. There was an example of advocacy when the participant shared the concerns of the parents with the female teacher and set up a meeting to discuss how to move forward in a positive and meaningful way. House and Martin (1998) believe that transformed school counselors must advocate for the specific needs of their students. Also, the participant had a willingness to expand his level of cultural competence, by meeting with both parents several times and then setting up a professional development training with his entire department. School counselors who reflect the cultural competence component of the transformed role of the school counselor devise ways to meet the needs of a diverse student population (House & Martin, 1998).
Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted one hour prior to the second professional development session (April 2, 2008) and the third professional development session (May 19, 2008). Focus groups were used by the researcher to clarify and to analyze relationships and emerging themes relative to school counselors’ understandings as a result of participating in the professional development sessions. Focus group protocols and guidelines were used with participants to gather data.

Five of a total 14 participants were part of the first focus group, and 6 of 14 participants were part of the second focus group. The boardroom of the central office of Rosedale School District was the location of both the professional development sessions as well as the focus groups. Five of the 6 participants had four or more years of experience working as a school counselor in the District, and 1 participant was completing a first year in the District. In addition to conducting the focus groups, the national consultant also recorded the conversations.

The prompting questions for the focus groups were developed after reviewing the literature related to effective focus groups implementation, professional development evaluation measures (Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2000) and the Transformed Role of the School Counselor Initiative. The focus groups were conducted to answer the research question: “How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?”

The focus group used the following prompters:

1. Tell me about the workshop session and what it does for your practice as a school counselor in your District.
2. What were the key components of this workshop session that worked for you?

3. Tell me how this professional development offering connects to other professional development that you have attended.

4. Tell me about a time when you used information from the training with a student, parent teacher, or administrator.

5. Talk about how this training fits with your other roles as a school counselor.

6. If you were creating professional development, what would you include?

Specifically, the prompters were designed to clarify how specifically the professional development sessions impacted the practice of the participants. The national consultant facilitated each focus group by welcoming participants, setting the tone, and reminding them of their voluntary participation in the research study.

Focus group summary. The school counselors’ responses during the first focus group session tended to be more negative than positive and reflected feelings of being overwhelmed. The national consultant often had to refocus participants because they returned to discussions about what was not going well in their schools and in the District.

The school counselors’ responses during the second focus group session were decidedly more negative than positive, and reflected feelings of despair and hopelessness. The national consultant struggled against this negativism to engage participants in discussion based on the prepared prompters. However, the majority of group time resulted in discussion about school counselor professional problems within the District.

Whereas focus group participants affirmed how difficult the school year was and how undervalued and unappreciated they felt, the final few moments turned more positive in that meaningful steps were being made to move forward and support from
central office was being directed to school counselors by the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.

**Key Themes**

The researcher initially planned to use the open-ended queries, Blackboard discussions, focus group dialogue, interim projects, and formal and informal observations to develop themes of the study. However, due to limited data from the open ended queries and interim projects and non-participation in the online Blackboard discussions, the researcher relied heavily upon the focus group discussions.

The five themes that emerged from the analysis include (a) an overwhelming sense of frustration of being undervalued and overworked; (b) the importance of school counselor voice; (c) a demonstration of school counselor courage; (d) the value of school counselor collaboration, and (e) the significance of providing joint training for school counselors and administrators. These five themes are discussed at length below in this chapter.

**Undervalued and overworked.** Participants in this study commonly mention being undervalued and overworked in their role as a school counselor in the Rosedale School District. This theme was articulated throughout many of the data sources in the study. For example, the researcher postulated that non-use of Blackboard was attributed either to Prochaska and DiClemente’s Precomemplative Stage (1982) or that the expectations put additional effort on an already full load. The lack of Blackboard data might be attributed to being overwhelmed. Additionally, very few participants completed the three interim projects assigned by the national consultant. Participants mentioned during the professional development sessions of being busy and having too many other
responsibilities to complete which caused them to be unable to complete the projects. At the end of each professional development session, participants were asked to complete an evaluation. The responses for the open-ended responses also confirm the theme of being overwhelmed and include:

1. "[There is] not enough time in the day to reach all kids; [I] work in crisis mode."

2. "The way that the hierarchy is functioning in Rosedale School District [is frustrating]."

3. "Counselors [should] create own improvement plan before administration does."

Further, during the focus groups, many of the conversations were guided back to the original prompters of the focus group because the participants frequently made negative comments when describing their respective school experiences. The following comment is an example of a participants’ perspective of being overwhelmed: “I think the other frustration...and I have heard other counselors share with me...is that we are so overwhelmed with the responsibilities we have and we’re working [so hard]. We’re not proactive...we’re very reactive, particularly this year.”

Another participant struggled with the conflict between desiring to embed concepts from the training and dealing with the reality of current circumstances:

[It’s just] one more thing on your plate...just about to break us. And to look at the new model and say, ‘now, we have to start,’ and I know there was homework for today that I didn’t do...now we have to start looking at data, and the last thing I want to be doing is to look at data. That’s an added frustration for me. I am
holding onto the old model because I just don’t want to have to, you know [do this].

Despite several attempts by the national consultant, both focus groups continued to be oriented around stressful conditions and trying to survive in the profession:

I think this year, particularly in the [school level omitted], we are incredibly overwhelmed. And I think that’s the problem I had with the planning part of it. We know, as school counselors, what we should be doing. And we know what we would like to be doing to help our students, but we don’t have the time...and now we don’t have the energy to be able to implement them...because there are outside forces causing us to do other things... and we don’t have the flexibility. We can’t move in and say, ‘this is what we would like to do’ because there are outside forces causing us not to have that kind of [professional] flexibility.

This quote confirms that school counselors worked in a stressful school environment and other barriers (administrators, teachers, policies, etc.) prevented school counselors from practicing in ways that they want to be able to.

Focus group participants also agreed that this school year was generally more difficult than previous years. During the focus group discussion, one participant commented:

...What we’re finding is that we can’t find time to get them [the work] all done. As [omitted name] said before, what are we going to give up so that we can survive? I mean, there are some proactive things we are finding we have to give up because of the other responsibilities we are being assigned that are not really
counselor responsibilities. And I guess the planning, the mapping part of it...this is what we would like to be doing...[and] this isn’t really what we are doing. The quote from this participant demonstrated the frustration resulting from a lack of clarity relative to the school counselor’s role (both by school counselors and others) and assignment of non-counselor duties.

An analysis of the data indicates that school counselors feel unrecognized, unappreciated, overwhelmed, and misunderstood relative to their role and function. The focus group dialogue shapes this theme as responses to questions posed by the national consultant led to discussions about concerns and complaints about poor administrative relationships, undefined and inappropriate roles of school counselors, and lack of voice. When the national consultant attempted to veer the conversations back to the focus group questions, many participants shared that they could not change their current practices given the current climate or would like to but were too overwhelmed and frustrated to do so and went back to venting about their specific concerns.

Despite many negative comments about job conditions, the majority of the participants in the focus group agreed (n = 5) that the professional development sessions helped to validate and affirm the role of the school counselor. One participant’s comments represented that of the entire focus group:

...I need positive reinforcement sometimes in this profession. I have many years left in this profession. I really have a long way to go. I easily find myself sometimes sucked into the dark politics of education. It can be very discouraging, and I think most of us are already sensitive human beings or we would not be in this field. So, when we have those kinds of presentations like yours [referencing
the national consultant], and kind of reaffirming what we do and remind us why we do it. It's helpful to me to be a better counselor and to... refine my skills and be rejuvenated.

The comment resonated with another participant who stated, “Keep us supported... when we are not feeling very supported. To have someone [national consultant] come in and remind us what we are doing is a good thing.” This comment was confirmed by yet another participant, who weighed the value of session time between being introduced to new professional material and conversing with colleagues.

When I was hearing what you were saying that day, it was very relevant to what we do. It was very much reaffirming. We talked a lot about ethics and things like that and you gave us great things to review.

Additionally, this first theme demonstrates a need for several of the school counselors to have emotional support relative to job concerns. The focus groups often turned into group counseling sessions where the national consultant used school counseling techniques such as reflecting and reframing their feelings. Clearly, the Rosedale School district must develop systemic processes that begin to ease school counselors’ stress, address concerns, and fight burnout (Baker & Gerler, 2001). This type of assistance is needed given the school counselors’ stories.

School counselor voice. Conditions in the Rosedale School District are stressful. Tension and discord exists between varied racial and ethnic groups. Community members regularly defy authority which causes educators’ practices to be regularly challenged and questioned. Negative events that occur in the district are commonly featured on the front page of the local newspaper which prompts frequent phone calls from parents and
guardians. Also, the community is quick to pursue legal recourse against school and
district administrators, faculty and staff. School counselors are often the target of the
internal and external negativity that exists in the Rosedale School District.

Two of the concepts taught by the national consultant include advocacy and
systemic change. The national consultant encouraged participants to use these strategies
(as well as others) taught during the professional development sessions. Comments from
the open-ended responses include:

1. “We have a voice although we often do not feel so in this particular school
district.”

2. “Learning to live to fight another day.”

3. “Advocate for school counselors.”

4. “I believe my department needs help knowing how to sell ourselves and why
we are so important.”

Some of the suggested strategies presented by the national consultant during the
professional development sessions challenged participants to incorporate new practices
into their current repertoire. One participant’s comment during the focus groups
described attempts to use advocacy skills in the school counseling profession:

There was one thing you affirmed for me about being a leader and being a ‘voice,’
and I’ve really tried to step up and be more vocal in leadership meetings and not
allow my feelings to get hurt when people are less than respectful to me or when I
get many, many doors shut in my face and many, many responsibilities thrown
our way...the whole attendance debacle that’s been going on this year and how its
been thrown back at us to fix.
Another participant shared how they used school counselor voice by developing specific protocols with other mental health staff to assist with clearer definition of responsibilities:

Well, I started working on the social/emotional protocols [that] they [the District] handed down that they say only social workers and psychologists can do. Because ...we...the team...we have been able to develop a counseling program just with staff, so they understand that this kid needs counseling. Well, we just can’t simply pick up this kid...there’s protocol and procedure.

Another participant remarked about school counselor voice by discussing the possibilities of developing department goals and establishing boundaries relative clearer role definition:

I think maybe, as a department, what may have been as a consequence of the conversation about how we were trying to define precisely what our role is as counselors in the high school. Talking with not only each other but also [this researcher] about clerical staff and stuff like that.” Where the lines have been gray...hoping to do more of [correcting]. We have been talking about our goals...what our department should be.

Another participant’s comments further cemented this theme with these comments:

One would think I would like to add...with all the things we are doing like what we are trying what we are hoping to do is define what the guidance department [school counseling department] does rather than what school counselors do rather than have other people define what we do. You know, sometimes part of the
problem is that there are certain things that are expected that aren’t necessarily part of our role… that don’t fit in if there are certain expectations imposed on our role.

The school counselors continue to try and survive in a negative and highly toxic environment. Sadly, there are overwhelming negative perceptions about school counselors held by staff and community members. There are adversarial relationships within and across stakeholder groups which include teachers, administrators, support staff. This unhealthy imbalance has led to a significant divide between school administrators and school counselors which are visibly noticeable to other stakeholder groups. There are significant levels of misperceptions about school counselors. All of these activities contribute to a lack of shared goals, values, and sense of purpose and mission. “Mere feeling of indifference may lead to idiosyncrasies; differences which do not get themselves realized in action may readily become regrets and frustrations. “Once we lose the sense of active, directive participation in affairs, we sink to the level of inaction or what is worse, silent opposition” (Lindeman, 1989, p. 37).

School counselor courage. Another theme uncovered during this study was school counselor courage. Almost half of the school counselors (n=6) individually approached the researcher at varied times during the study and privately shared their appreciation for the provision of targeted professional development. Specifically, it was shared that little to no professional development had occurred in the district that directly addressed their pedagogical needs. Each however, stated their fear of publically sharing their gratitude because of cynical and critical school counseling colleagues.
During the two focus group sessions, 6 focus group participants risked collegial rejection and spoke to the merits of the professional development sessions by offering voices of hope:

I just think that, for me, I mean I have had a counseling degree for over 20 years, so, just to hear just to be on top of what’s going on [is great]...because it [the field] does change and it has grown so much! I think it’s really helpful.

Another participant was encouraged by this comment and shared:

It’s showing...where we are going...we’re meeting, we’ve met monthly. And this had not been the tradition...what we had done...it continues to move us forward even if we are not quite ready to do that [training suggestions]. We’re still moving in an upward direction...that is so key...it’s amazing and phenomenal...we need to do it, but there are [smaller] steps [we must take].

Similarly, a third participant stated, “We are starting from a place where we are looking at things from a new perspective...a new place...a great way to look at things...it hasn’t happened as much...[and we realize that] there are going to be communication gaps...”

Stone & Dahir (2006) speak to this theme by saying, “the optimists who bring skills to the fight for systemic change ...will sometimes have to steady themselves before the cynics, who will quickly point out that we have tried that before, and your ideas won’t work” (p. 125). Myrick (2003) argues that school counselors must demonstrate courage in light of the fact that they be discovered as incompetent, or others have such high expectations that any thing less than perfection in their work is discouraging and personally confronting of their efforts.
School counselor collaboration. Despite the aforementioned school counselor courage theme, the participants shared they enjoyed each being in the company of each other. This may seem to be a dichotomous theme. However, there was a certain “magic” when they met during the professional development sessions. These professional development sessions allowed school counselors to spend 18 hours together. As the national consultant facilitated the discussions, all of the participants agreed that the targeted professional development sessions allowed participants to learn and grow by hearing varied colleagues’ lived experiences. Additionally, the participants described the value of “...simply being together for extended periods.” One participant stated:

I always think it is helpful to hear other comments from counselors in the District, no matter the subject matter. I like to hear everyone in the room say their piece on subject matter that is relevant. Just getting us all connected...somehow, I think it really helps me get ready...I think it’s really great to hear how different [participant’s school] is and the ways that are relevant to the subject and its broader cause. I get a bigger perspective on my school within the District.

This comment resonated with another participant and another remark immediately was made:

Thank you for bringing that up. That’s what I probably got from the last one [professional development session] too. Not so much information or different ways of working with people but just one more opportunity to get to know the other counselors in the District. We get pretty isolated over there, and we do have different issues, and even in these meetings, we often get the ‘you should come to them,’ anyway...because you have so much to offer...even if what we’re doing
isn’t what you’re doing over there. But it really feels good, and I know I am speaking for [name omitted], to be with the other counselors in the District. Another participant added:

It was almost reaffirming for me because I kind of feel how you feel [names omitted]… feel like an independent contractor. To have that time to share with you [other school counselors] and to recognize that, it helped me to reflect on my practice and to realize that I am not alone, and we are all in this for the greater good and for the students and the families. And sometimes when you feel you are beating you’re head against the wall facing systemic issues, you look forward to that collegial support…So that just helped me to reflect on my practice.

...but I wanted] to hear more from my colleagues and maybe some of that cutting edge kind of …information might be good to branch off from…on that day.

...having everyone in the same room, reaffirming and I think it does rejuvenate us.

An analysis of the data under this theme indicates an increased need for school counselor interactions in group settings across levels and schools. School counselors in this study have indicated that these types of interactions have been significantly lacking. Even when school counselors worked with more than one school counselor, there were limited opportunities for school counselors to spend time problem solving and brainstorming ideas. Because the conditions have been so stressful in the Rosedale School District, school counselors would benefit from spending time together to form supportive relationships.
Joint training of school counselors and school administrators. Concluding the discussion on the impact of targeted professional development, focus group participants profusely agreed that their school administrators should have been involved in the professional development sessions. One participant's comment described the need for school administration to be educated about the role of the school counselor:

I feel that a lot of administrators need to hear this...because our roles have been compromised for so many [years] ... we're on the bottom level. We don't get asked. Our training is so extensive... other than the school psychologist, and [we are] mostly testing for academics... and that's my biggest gripe.

Another participant readily agreed with this comment by saying, “I think we could benefit from professional development with administration...something we can do together, something [at least we can do this together].”

Therefore, school counselor professional development should not solely be delivered to school counselors. School administrators who oversee and evaluate school counselors and direct the programs they initiate must also be trained and educated relative to the transformed role of the school counselor. Principals who are educated and trained relative to the needs of school counselors are certainly allies in the efforts to move forward comprehensive school counseling programs and the transformed role of the school counselor (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

If school and district administrators do not fully understand the role, they will be less likely to support the counselors' change efforts and may even been seen as hindering the process and supporting or encouraging inappropriate or antiquated behaviors (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Ponec & Brock, 2000; Stone & Dahir, 2006; Vaught, 1995). When school
administrators work closely as a team with school counselors, school counselor’s roles are clarified, territorial disputes are reduced, and duplication of efforts can be addressed, which helps to expand the administrator’s understanding of the proper use of the school counselor (Johnson & Johnson, 2003).

Summary

The school counselors in this study were introduced to professional development that outlined the Transformed Role of the School Counselor components. The data suggest that their acceptance and implementation of the targeted professional development was generally met with varying degrees of resistance. School counselors’ perceptions of the professional development sessions were examined by the use of descriptive statistics to understand their reactions to three separate sessions. Also, school counselors’ stories were captured, identified, examined, and assembled into themes by reviewing the study’s varied data sources which include: (a) professional development evaluations, (b) focus groups transcripts, (c) interim projects, and (d) formal and informal observations.

The present study on school counselor professional development highlighted the effect of professional development and solicited additional needs self-identified by school counselors. It also illuminated how professionals react to the change process. Lastly, the researcher intended and successfully accomplished adding to the limited body of knowledge of the impact of professional development on school counselors as a result of execution of this methodology.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This present study enlisted 14 school counselors from a mid-sized school district located in the northeastern region of the United States given the fictitious name of Rosedale School District. The school counselors participated in a targeted professional development training conducted by a national consultant with the intention of culling the effect of this professional development training. The effect of the professional development on the school counselors was determined by several means, including professional development evaluations, interim projects, focus groups, and formal and informal observations. In order to utilize and organize the various sources of data, a mixed methods approach was selected as the research design.

The findings indicate that targeted professional development given to the participants was too advanced and inappropriate given the current environment and culture of the Rosedale School District. Participants were unable to fully benefit from the training received in the professional development as evidenced by the responses during the two focus groups. (The researcher postulates that the focus group participants were the more hopeful school counselors in the group.) The lack of responses and passive aggressive behaviors are a reflection of the surroundings they experience daily. For example, the focus groups often turned into venting sessions. Because the professional development sessions allowed participants to be together, a rare opportunity allowed them to be heard relative to the depth of their circumstances.
This chapter discusses the results of the present study framed by the following research question, "How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?" Data analysis and findings are presented, followed by concluding remarks. The limitations of the study are identified and discussed, and suggestions for practice through recommendations are delineated.

Implications of Findings

It is important for school counselors to learn about and then develop the specific skills and competencies needed to help effectively meet the needs of all students they serve (McMahon, 2001). However, as demonstrated in the present study, the corresponding changes school counselors must make in their practice requires reflecting upon current actions, changing behaviors, and learning new skills. This type of change is difficult without support and guidance at varied levels (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Specific implications of the study are presented as it relates to the exploration of the impact of targeted professional development on school counselor practices.

Implications for School Counselors

This study illuminated the need for school counselor role clarification. The school counselors in this study are much more comfortable with the traditional role of the school counselor, rather than the transformed role of the school counselor. To reduce the current issues of role ambiguity and incongruence, school counselors must be aware of the impact they can have in speaking the same language, in terms of an acceptable role coupled with the delivery of comprehensive programming that serves all students (Stone & Dahir, 2006). Having these types of issues clarified helps to change established
perceptions of school counseling by varied school personnel. To understand and possibly alleviate the current incongruence between the actual and the ideal professional identity of school counselors, the profession needs to be understood, appreciated, and then possibly reconstructed (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

It will be critically important for this researcher to address the incongruence about the role of the school counselor in the Rosedale School District. First this researcher will have candid conversations with the school counselors relative to the importance of working together for a common purpose. Several activities will occur to determine the current understandings and components concerning their current role as school counselors and conversations will occur relative to the components that must be abandoned. “Effective leadership means guiding people through differences and, indeed, enabling [the] differences to surface” (Fullan, 2001, p. 114). School and district data will be used to help create the sense of urgency that Kotter (1995) suggests. It will be critically important for all of this to occur in order establish school counselor buy-in and to move forward in meaningful and impactful way.

Implications for School Districts

The findings of this study have implications for local school districts, superintendents, staff developers, school administrators, and school counselors. One finding of this study was the need for clear policies, processes, frameworks, and structures in this district which directly impact the work of school counselors. First, as school counselors often mentioned, the role of the school counselor was unclear and defined differently throughout the district. Work expectations varied significantly across levels and buildings which caused confusion, stress, and tension between school
counselors and other stakeholder groups in this district. Cunanan & Maddy-Bernstein (1994) state, “When schools fail to clearly define the counselor’s role, school administrators, and parents with special interests, teachers or others may feel their agenda ought to be the school counseling program’s priority. The results often lead to confusion and criticisms when they are disappointed” (p. 1). This sentiment has led to school counselors being labeled as guidance counselors, (an antiquated and unacceptable term) unprofessional, and unwilling to collaborate with others in the school. Certainly, the researcher will need to develop these frameworks and then educate all stakeholders beginning with school administrators.

Johnson & Johnson (2003) assert that the quality of an organization can be measured by the quality of the questions it chooses to answer. In 2003, ASCA challenged districts to pose this new and specific question, “‘How are students different because of what school counselors do?’ The way an entire school, district, and community sees and thinks about the school counseling program must undergo a fundamental change if school counseling is to move ahead (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). One essential shift includes encouraging school administrators (principals, assistant principals, and deans) to support school counselor’s work, especially when faced with competing, non-counseling related tasks which include bus duty, substitute teaching, and handing out punishment as part of discipline (Sabella & Booker, 2003). Change can be extremely difficult and most schools and districts prefer to maintain status quo (Lambie & Rokutani, 2002). School counseling must be proactive and embedded into the framework and strategic plans of the entire school district (Johnson & Johnson, 2003).
This researcher will first work with the school counselors to devise ways for this to be accomplished. Time will be allocated during monthly school counselor meetings to allow the school counselors to make connections between the school counseling frameworks (i.e. mission, vision, beliefs, etc.) and the Board of Education priorities, the Equity Plan priorities, and the overall goals of the Rosedale School District. Again, this first step is important in order to establish school counselor buy-in. Next, this researcher will share the work of the school counselors with the executive team (superintendent and three assistant superintendents) and solicit additional feedback relative to how this work can be incorporated into the Rosedale School District Frameworks. Additionally, this researcher will conduct a presentation to the Rosedale School District’s Board of Education to discuss the school counselor frameworks and the alignment to the Board’s priorities and goals. Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) stress the importance of mobilizing commitment to change through a shared and collaborative analysis (at varied levels) of the current issues.

Next, this researcher expected to use year-end evaluations to see how professional development impacted the practice of school counselors. The purpose of a year-end evaluation is to comment on merits of practice and to make recommendations for improvement in practice. After reviewing the school counselor’s evaluations, most lacked depth and included the developed goals, but failed to comment on the progress towards meeting those goals. A school counselor performance appraisal instrument is important because it outlines standards of practice expected from school counselors and is annually reviewed and agreed upon between the school counselor and administrator.
To address this issue, this researcher has met with the Prek-12 School Counseling Coordinator and reviewed the 2007-2008 end of year school counselor evaluations. (The creation of this position is discussed in detail in the recommendations section.) Emails have been sent to each principal stating that the Prek-12 School Counseling Coordinator will assist with the creation of goals for each school counselor in the Rosedale School District during the 2008-2009 school year. The Prek-12 School Counseling Coordinator will work with each school counselor and principal pair to embed the transformed role of the school counselor components into the school counselor’s goals.

Also, this researcher has asked for school counselor representation at each school level (elementary, middle, and high school) to discuss the key components that should be included in a new school counselor evaluation tool. Components from the role ambiguity discussion will be included into the development of the tool to ensure that appropriate roles of the school counselor are included. Further, this researcher has created a committee of administrators, school counselors and teachers to commence the examination of a school counselor evaluation tool.

Implications for School Counselor Research

“There was a time when school counselors were accepted on faith alone” (Myrick, 2003, p. 174). Myrick’s comments describe how the school counselors have been allowed to operate in the Rosedale School District. School counselors must break out of established boundaries and routines, to become more creative and to involve others in the change process and role definition (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Research studies present opportunities for counselors to tell their story and let others know about the
programs they develop, the services they provide, and the efforts they lead (Myrick, 2003).

At the conclusion of this study, this researcher spent time reviewing the findings of the study with the school counselors. Specifically, the themes of this study were discussed in detail through a "member checking process." As the researcher discussed the themes, the school counselors vehemently agreed with all five themes of the study. The school counselors were particularly interested in both the school counselor courage and school counselor voice themes. One school counselor remarked, "Lesli, thank you for your interest in the field, but most importantly thank you for your interest in us as school counselors and helping to give us voice." Research studies can compel school counselors to look at themselves and their expectations and provide foundation information for positive movement toward change. It is this researcher's hope that conducting work with the school counselors in a collaborative manner will effect the positive change that is needed.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. One limitation was the researcher also directly supervised the school counselors. Because of role conflict, this researcher often struggled with the degree to which this role conflict was handled. Holding this dual role certainly hindered this researcher's ability to collect data as evidenced by incomplete interim assignments and failure to contribute to the Blackboard discussions.

Secondly, time is another limitation of the study relative to the application of knowledge and understanding of information from participation in each professional development session (Poynton, 2005). This researcher conducted the study from February
2008, through June 2008. A follow-up study at various intervals (3 months, 6 months, and a full year) should be conducted to review application of new skills learned. This researcher will be working with the school counselors during the monthly meetings to accomplish this work. Also, the researcher will communicate the results of the study with the consultant and determine the specific areas that should be addressed during the 2008-2009 school year.

Third, the study participants work in a culturally, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse school district located. The findings from this study might not be generalized to other similar districts and other parts of the country, because the student and community demographics are unique to this district.

Fourth, because most of the data collection methods involved self-reporting, some of the participants may not have expressed their actual beliefs and opinions relative to the effect of professional development based on the role of the researcher in the district. The researcher is one of four Assistant Superintendents in the district and is responsible for oversight of student support services or what is commonly termed as pupil personnel services. Specifically, the researcher oversees the PreK-12 School Counseling Department for the district.

Fifth, the consultant who conducted the three professional development sessions also conducted the two focus groups. Participants may have not been as candid as they would have liked to have been due to a worry of offending the trainer. However, the transcript from the first focus group revealed that school counselors made several recommendations to the national consultant.
Finally, the number of participants in this study was small (n=14) which made it impossible to generalize the findings beyond the district where the researcher works and the participants who were involved. The findings are helpful in being able to determine short and long term professional development goals for the Rosedale School District school counseling department.

Recommendations

After hearing the disgruntled comments from the school counselors following the first professional development session, it was evident that the school counselors needed the instruction, but would be resistant to the content of the professional development sessions and the notion of changing. Systemic support of school counselors should have occurred prior to and during the implementation of targeted professional development. Therefore, it is important to investigate the variables that will contribute to improving the environmental conditions for school counselors.

This researcher has met and will continue meet with the school counselors during the 2008-2009 school year, to discuss the findings and results of this research study. Significant time will be spent with the participants to accomplish this goal. Information will be gathered and clarified during school counselor meetings to ensure accuracy. Furthermore, this researcher will communicate this information (along with the themes and outcomes of this study) to the school administrators. The researcher will identify the main issues and then brainstorm and implement solutions to help improve the environmental conditions that exist for school counselors. This action will be accomplished during executive team meetings and administrative team meetings.
Another recommendation involves additional support for school counselors through direct supervision from a coordinator of school counseling. School districts should allocate their resources to include a school or central office supervisor of school counseling to oversee the efforts of school counselors. Many of the school counselor participants in this study were highly resistant to change and remained in Prochaska and DiClemente's (1982) precontemplative stage. Therefore, many of their concerns need direct attention with consistent follow-up. Because of this study, the researcher petitioned the superintendent for additional support for the school counselors. A district PreK-12 Coordinator of School Counseling has been assigned to assist and to advocate for the needs of the school counselors. Her office is located in the high school and she conducts weekly meetings with the high school counselors and monthly meetings with district school counselors to help troubleshoot issues and make recommendations to school and district administration. School counselors have commented on the helpfulness and need for this additional position.

The PreK-12 School Counseling Coordinator has an integral role as it relates to the school counselors in the Rosedale School District. The position was created with the intention of providing direct support to the 14 school counselors in the Rosedale School District. Specific supports include reform efforts such as mentoring and coaching during the regular school day (Garet et al., 2001). The PreK-12 School Counseling Coordinator will work with school counselors in each of their respective schools to (a) build an appreciation for the reconstruction of the school counselor role; (b) develop school counselor policies and frameworks; (c) assist with the implementation of the transformed role of the school counselor skills; and (d) and create expectations and definitions of the
school counselor's role that are congruent across the Rosedale School District. The Coordinator will have immediate and direct information as a result of immersing herself in each school’s culture and from surveying the landscape in each school. This reform approach to professional development builds personal connections with the school counselors and “may be easier to sustain over time” (Garet et al., 2001, p. 920).

Another recommendation involves the use of Blackboard in this study. The overall tone of this study’s participants was negative and their behaviors were often presented in a passive-aggressive manner. For example, the researcher anticipated reviewing data from online discussions on Blackboard. The only conversations that occurred on Blackboard were responses to the first posting from the researcher. All participants responded to receiving this first communication from the researcher. One modification that could have occurred during this study involves using Blackboard to host “venting sessions” for the participants. A particular topic (frustration) could have been posted with participants volunteering suggestions for improvement. The national consultant in turn, could have woven components of the professional development sessions in to the Blackboard discussions.

Despite a fear of being ostracized for positive reception of the professional development sessions by fellow school counselor colleagues, the school counselors indicated a desire and an appreciation of meeting together during the three professional development sessions. It is important to provide opportunities for school counselors to come together to discuss pertinent issues. School counselors are significantly outnumbered by their teaching colleagues and often have to tailor their discussions around teacher concerns and issues and not school counselor issues. As a result of this
study, the researcher has collaborated with the school counseling coordinator to develop formal and informal opportunities for school counselors to meet. Monthly meetings will be held beginning in the Fall of 2008, with structured agendas that focus on student improvement and data-driven decision making. Informal opportunities will be developed (such as teambuilding activities, lunches, and other social gatherings) to allow school counselors to build healthy, collaborative relationships.

A final recommendation includes joint staff development of school counselors and their school administrators. School counselors in this study emphatically stated the importance of learning about the transformed role of the school counselor with their administrative supervisors. Therefore, school counselor professional development should not solely be delivered to school counselors. An initial first step involves educating school administrators about the comprehensive plan, the appropriate use of school counselors, and the basic concepts of the transformed role of the school counselor. This will occur at an administrative team meeting during the 2008-2009 school year.

Lessons Learned

When leading any type of change effort, executive leaders must be aware of the cultures that exist in their organizations, examine the amount of change that will be tolerated, and then determine corresponding interventions to ensure that change indeed happens. Schein’s (1992) work maintains that organizational learning, development, and planned change cannot be understood without first understanding the culture. Therefore, leaders must become conscious of the cultures that embed them, or those cultures will end up managing and consuming their work (http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net). This very notion occurred during this research study.
The Rosedale Central School District is complex and intricate school system. This researcher developed a study that explored impact of targeted professional development upon school counselor practices. Therefore the focus was on professional development efforts and the change process. However, the district’s culture should have been an important aspect of this study as well as the leader’s (as researcher) ability to effect change in this culture.

Bolman and Deal (2003) examined school culture and leadership through four lenses which included the:

1. Structural Frame- rules, roles, goals, policies, and the environment
2. Human Resource Frame- how characteristics of organizations and people shape what they do for one another
3. Political Frame- realistic process of making decisions and allocating resources in a context of scarcity and divergent interests
4. Symbolic Frame- basic building blocks of the meaning of systems, or cultures that we inhabit.

This researcher lacked the full context of each of these frames in the Rosedale School District due to the short amount of time working in the district. In retrospect, given the environment and conditions in this district, the research study could have examined the experiences of being a school counselor in the Rosedale Central School District through these four lenses.

As a candidate in the Executive Leadership Doctoral Program, this researcher was exposed to contemporary issues in executive leadership. Topics studied included (a) Contemporary Issues in Executive Leadership; (b) Leading and Managing Complex Organizations; (c) Public Relations and Marketing (d) Shared Governance and
Leadership, and (e) Diversity and Leadership. An overarching theme throughout the program's coursework was the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with varied constituents in and outside of an organization.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) articulate the importance of relationship building by creating a sense of ownership and trust with constituents. This is accomplished through the five practices of exemplary leadership which include: (a) modeling the way, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) challenging the process, (d) enabling others to act, and (e) encouraging the heart. All five of these practices involve the establishment of relationships which should have been embedded into the professional development sessions.

Clearly, many of the school counselors in the Rosedale Central School District do not trust school and district administrators, which cause them to operate from a place of frustration and fear. "...much of the goal of management cannot be achieved in any real or lasting way without leadership and the establishment of [trusting] relationships" (A. Urbanski, personal communication, November 3, 2007). Initially, the researcher believed that a modest amount of information was learned relative to the impact of professional development upon school counselors' practice. However, several learning opportunities were discovered during the research process.

Leadership and shared governance are difficult to accomplish. A critical component in the establishment of shared governance in the Rosedale School District is the importance of building relationships with the school counselors and soliciting their feedback relative to the professional development sessions. "The purpose of shared governance is to fundamentally change the locus of control, the decision making process, and internal relationships in an organization" (Porter-O'Grady, Hawkins, and Parker, 1997, p. 72). The
researcher did not expect the resistance on the part of the school counselor participants. Social capital had not been built, relationships were not established, and it became increasingly difficult to move forward with the professional development sessions. Executive leaders must be critical thinkers, cognizant of the changes that need to be taken within the organization, while remaining sensitive to the needs of the people they serve.

Fullan (2001) asserts that “there are...dilemmas in leading change” (p. 46). In leading a change effort, executive leaders must be “free to express oneself, free to fail, free to take risks, [and] free to new ideas” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 154). As a former practicing school counselor, this researcher regularly employs reflective and responsive techniques to assess varied situations. Reflective practice involves a demonstration that practice is reviewed, effectively assessed, and appropriately adjusted on a continuous basis. Questions that linger for the researcher relative to the professional development sessions include:

1. Should the researcher have conducted the professional development sessions? Upon reflection, the professional development should have been conducted by both the researcher and the national consultant. Even though the researcher collaborated with the national consultant to develop the professional development, the school counselors were not fully aware of this process and may have felt that the professional development was not designed with their specific needs in mind.

2. How could a sense of urgency that Kotter (1995) suggests be created with the school counselors relative to the need for changing their practices? The transformed role of the school counselor is an appropriate model to assist school counselors with their practice (House & Martin, 1998). Children and
young adults in this district are in dire need of academic, social/emotional, and vocational support. The drop out and suspension rates remain high for students of color and special education students. The researcher should have reminded the school counselors about the varied needs that exist for students in the Rosedale School District. School counselors must develop the requisite skills needed to connect with students from wide-ranging backgrounds. In order to accomplish this task, the school district must make a commitment to develop strategic frameworks and action plans that include school counselors in this effort. With this structure established, the environmental conditions changed, and school and district administrators on board, the school counselors can be rightfully be held accountable.

3. What steps should be put in place to address the previous year with firm determination to move forward during the next school year? The researcher has been working with the Prek-12 Coordinator of School Counseling to review the plans for the 2008-2009 school year. Specifically, the findings from this study have been discussed relative to the need to provide systemic support and school counselors being frustrated with the school and district environment. Further, the School Counseling Coordinator has spent extensive time with the high school counselors to devise calendars and establish school counselor protocols. Moreover, monthly district meetings have been scheduled and the first meeting allowed the school counselors to discuss the barriers that exist for them in their work. The school counselors have been asked to continue to modify the strategic and comprehensive plan for school counseling.
Conclusion

Schools are complex, dynamic and unique cultures which help to define a school’s identity and functioning. This established culture can either encourage or stifle progress. By understanding school culture, administrators can better understand the meaning behind their responsibilities and actions. The aim of interpreting a school culture is thus to understand meaning and symbols as they have been created by the members of the culture (Schultz, 1994). Moreover, Deal and Peterson (1999) emphasize that culture provides a more accurate and intuitively appealing way to help school leaders better understand their school’s own unwritten rules and traditions, norms and expectations that seem to permeate everything: the way people act, how they dress, what they talk about or avoid talking about, whether they seek out colleagues for help or don’t, and how people feel about their work and status.

The objective of this study was to explore how targeted professional development impacts the practice of school counselors from a national school counselor trainer. This research was conducted because most of the school counselors were prepared prior to the Education Trust’s Transformed Role of the School Counselor Initiative and because the district provides little to no professional development support for school counselors.

Two training framework models were used in this study. The transformed role of the school counselor was chosen based on the TSCI and ASCA model for comprehensive school counseling. A mixed methods approach was used to examine the impact of targeted professional development upon school counselor practice. Several data collection tools were used for this study (professional development evaluations, focus
groups, interim projects, and formal and informal observations) and chapter four outlined the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of this study. Five themes emerged:

1. School counselors felt undervalued, overworked, and misunderstood.
2. School counselors lacked "voice" in their schools and the district.
3. School counselors talked about the concept of demonstrating school counselor courage.
4. School counselors valued collaborating with each other during the professional development sessions.
5. School counselors shared the importance of joint training between themselves and their school administrative colleagues.

The school counselors often mention being frustrated due to role confusion and role incongruence. The school counselors often articulated their concerns to the researcher, but when asked about moving forward with a plan, their response often was, "What's the use?" School counselors must move from talking about their concerns relative to role clarity to putting a proactive and plan in place. Therefore, systems must be put in place to help empower school counselors to address their current conditions.

School counselors must also be responsive to contemporary issues in the field, rather than critical, as the profession strives to constantly defend its merit and worth. School counselors must be aware of the impact they can have in speaking the same language, in terms of an acceptable role coupled with the delivery of comprehensive programming that serves all students (Stone & Dahir, 2006).

Professional school counseling has a rich history of recognizing societal changes, assessing changing needs, and altering services to meet those perceived needs.
During the past 20 years, (1988’ s to 2008) public schools have been challenged with a varied community issues/problems which require specific educational, career, and socio-emotional interventions (Sabella & Booker, 2003). The participating district in this study is not exempt from this leadership challenge.

Current school counselor graduate programs prepare school counselors to address the aforementioned issues. School counselors, then, must be ready to adapt their priorities and interventions to meet society’s changing needs while maintaining the sound base of their purpose and mission (Herr, 2002). In order for this vision to become a reality, the school counselors’ professional identity must accept that roles will change over the years, be aware of and responsive to the changing needs, and continue to grow as professionals in order to maintain quality programs (McMahon, 2001). “Furthermore, school counselors need to be advocates of their profession and not submissive bystanders. This includes being active members in school counseling professional associations, attending and presenting at professional conferences, reading the professional literature, staying up-to-date by attending workshops and taking courses, and seeking supervision” (Lambie & Williamson, 2004, p. 129).

As schools and district administrators continue to address the most effective ways to support school counselors’ professional efforts, corresponding resources (people, time, and money) must be allocated to ensure success. Further, superintendents and boards of education must devise ways to embed the work of school counselors into the strategic framework of the district during strategic planning meetings and board development sessions. In summary, with local, state, and national data indicating achievement and opportunity gaps between low socioeconomic students and their more advantaged peers,
there is an ethical and moral imperative for school counselors to develop and refine the necessary skills, knowledge, and aptitudes needed to close the gaps and to support all students in meaningful ways (Stone & Dahir, 2006).
References


Dahir, C., & Stone, C. (2003). Accountability: A m.e.a.s.u.r.e. of the impact school counselors have on student achievement. Professional School Counseling, 6, 214-221.


Appendix A

Definition of Terms

*Blackboard Technology* -- An online educational site that assists school districts in the launching of successful and innovative approaches to educational programming such as professional development. Approval must be granted in order to create a Web page on this site (see Appendix B) (http://library.blackboard.com/doc/as/Bb_K12_Brochure.pdf).

*Caseload* -- The number of students assigned to a school counselor calculated by the ratio of the number of students to the number of school counselors. The ASCA recommends a 250-to-1 ratio of students to counselors. (http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=325&sl=133&contentid=133)

*Consultation* -- A responsive service (either preventative and/or interventive) that meet students’ immediate and future needs and provided to parents, teachers, and/or other educators (http://www.schoolcounselor.org/).

*Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)* -- An independent agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation which accredits Master’s degree programs in: (a) career counseling; (b) college counseling; (c) community counseling; (d) gerontological counseling; (e) marital, couple, and family counseling/therapy; (f) mental health counseling; (g) school counseling; (h) student affairs; (i) doctoral degree programs; and (j) counselor education and supervision. This
agency is committed to the development of standards and procedures that reflect the needs of a dynamic, diverse and complex society and is dedicated to encouraging and promoting the continuing development and improvement of preparation programs, and preparing counseling and related professionals to provide service consistent with the ideal of optimal human development (http://www.cacrep.org/index.html).

Curriculum Coordinator/Director -- A state-certified administrator who oversees one more academic subjects or areas of focus at the central or district office level.

Education Trust -- An organization that works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels (pre-kindergarten through college) and works to close the achievement gaps that separate low-income students and students of color from other youth (http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/about+the+ed+trust).

Equity Strategic Plan -- Collaborative effort between the city and the Rosedale School District that works for the elimination of race, class, and disability as predictors of student success, are building capacity to work together to achieve that common goal (Rosedale School District Files, 2008).

Equity Report Card -- Reporting mechanism that measures the efforts toward the elimination of race, class, and disability as predictors of student success (Rosedale School District Files, 2008).

Minority Student (or student of color) -- A student whose ethnic origin is Black, Hispanic, or Native American/Alaskan/Pacific Islander.

Professional Development -- The provision of focused and ongoing learning for each and every school counselor (Fullan & Crevola 2006).
School Counselor -- An educator who holds a Master’s degree and required state certification in school counseling and delivers school counseling services through three domains (academic, career, and social/personal) (http://www.schoolcounselor.org/).

School Counseling Department/Program -- A program in which school counselor directors/coordinators collaborate with school counselors to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs. Comprehensive school counseling programs, aligned with school, district, and state missions, promote academic achievement and success for all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century (http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=389).

Strategic Framework -- An organizational structure that determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it is going to get there, and how it will know if it got there or not. The focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire organization, for example, a school district (http://www.managementhelp.org).

Student Support Services -- A delivery of support services to help students remove barriers that impede them from learning, to help students achieve their highest potential, and to provide optimal student support throughout Rosedale School District. The Office of Student Support guides social and emotional development, instruction, and assessment practices in academic intervention services, early childhood education, special education, health, school counseling, school psychology, and school social work (Rosedale School District Files, 2007).

Student with a Disability -- A student with a disability is defined in section 4401(1) of Education Law, who has not attained the age of 21 prior to September 1st and who is entitled to attend public schools pursuant to section 3202 of the Education Law.
and who, because of mental, physical, or emotional reasons, has been identified as having a disability and who requires special services and programs approved by the department (Rosedale School District Files, 2007).

*Transforming School Counselor Initiative* -- An agenda developed to assist with improvements in counselor education programs and school counseling pedagogy in order to realign school counselors’ work with reducing achievement gaps (Louis et al., 2001).

The Transforming School Counselor Initiative consists of seven distinct domains.

*Transformed Role of the School Counselor* -- The practice of school counselors who effectively use data and knowledge to lead school efforts to raise achievement and close gaps. These goals are accomplished through the following nine venues: (a) advocacy, (b) collaboration, (c) data and accountability, (d) leadership, (e) preparation/counselor education, (f) school reform/school counselors’ role in school reform, (g) selection and recruitment of school counselors, (h) technology, and (i) transforming school counseling (http://www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/Transforming+School+Counseling/main).

*Workshop* -- A structured approach to professional development that occurs outside of the learner’s classroom or office (Garet et al., 2001).
## Appendix B

**Rosedale School Counselor**

**Professional Development Needs Assessment**

RE-TYPED FROM THE ORIGINAL SURVEYMONKEY APPLICATION

Please circle the appropriate number after each statement that best reflects your opinion.

1 = strongly disagree  2 = disagree  3 = neither agree nor disagree  4 = agree  5 = strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors have clearly defined job descriptions</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors have clearly defined goals</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>16.7% (2)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>25.0% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counseling Program helps to enhance the academic achievement of all students</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (3)</td>
<td>66.7% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors have clearly defined expectations</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>25.0% (3)</td>
<td>16.7% (2)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale teachers and other staff work cooperatively with School Counselors</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>50.0% (6)</td>
<td>33.3% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors are supported by school administration</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>33.3% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>16.7% (2)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors are supported by district administration</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (3)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>25.0% (3)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors work with Rosedale teachers to provide classroom guidance curriculum</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>25.0% (3)</td>
<td>16.7% (2)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors are provided with supervision and support</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>33.3% (4)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>33.3% (4)</td>
<td>16.7% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale School Counselors are culturally competent and able to work with students and families from varied backgrounds</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>8.3% (1)</td>
<td>16.7% (2)</td>
<td>41.7% (5)</td>
<td>33.3% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rosedale School Counselors participate in relevant professional development that improves effectiveness on a yearly basis

<table>
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<td>0.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Rosedale School Counselors work as a liaison between all parties involved in a student's education

<table>
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<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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Rosedale School Counselors are viewed as an integral part of the student's educational experience

<table>
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</thead>
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<td>16.7%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICSD School Counselors believe all students can succeed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

ICSD School Counselors are effective advocates for students

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<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which topics would you like addressed for professional development during the 2007-08 school year (please choose up to three responses)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Advocacy</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability through Data</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance and Counseling</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration and Consultation</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Ethical Issues</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix C

OVERVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

School counselors can become key players in the academic success of students. By connecting school counseling programs to the goals of school improvement the needs and strengths, aspirations and dreams of every K-12 student are better addressed.

GOALS for Spring 2008:

1. To provide targeted and meaningful professional development to school counselors in the District based on self identified needs (advocacy, cultural competence, consultation and collaboration)
2. To educate and inform school counselors about the role of the transformed school counselor
3. To provide opportunities for school counselors to practice skills learned from professional development offerings and, to
4. To prepare school counselors to begin implementing the state school counseling model in the 2008-09 school year. Comprehensive school counseling establishes annual goals and has measurable objectives that support the goals of school improvement. A fully implemented program is standards-base and delivers services and activities that focus on increasing student achievement and school improvement.

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

Day 1: The Transformed School Counselor in Action

What does it take for school counselors to tackle the challenges of 21st century schools and ensure that all of our students receive what is needed to achieve? The impact of today’s school counselor and the comprehensive school counseling program goes far beyond the reach of the 20th century “guidance” program. This professional development experience will focus on acquiring and applying new skills in leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, systemic change, and using critical school data to create a climate of social justice, focus on eliminating the achievement gap and that provide every one of our students with the support academic, career and personal/social development needed to succeed!

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Day 2: MEASURE 101: School Counselor Accountability
MEASURE, a six step action plan, helps school counselors use data to connect our work to our building’s school improvement goals including attendance, test scores, promotion rates, discipline incidents, graduation rates. As an integral part of the Regional Model for Comprehensive School Counseling, MEASURE shows school counselor commitment to ensuring that every student at every grade level can succeed and ultimately graduate with access to all options after high school. A MEASURE action plan will be drafted to deliver during the 2008-09 school year.

Monday, May 19, 2008

Day 3: The New York Model for Comprehensive School Counseling: How Far Down the Road Have We Come?

This professional development experience will familiarize Rosedale counselors with the components of the NYSSCA Model by using “user friendly” tools, to work through each component of the model (Foundation, Delivery, Management, and Accountability). We will review the National Standards for School Counseling Programs and align current activities with academic, career, and personal-social development. As you examine your current practice you will also create a plan to help you go forward. A timeline to develop the District Comprehensive School Counseling Program will be established.
Appendix D

ROSEDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION, VISION AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

VISION

“All students achieving their dreams…”

MISSION

Our mission is to educate every student to become a life long learner; to foster academic, social, emotional and physical development; to nurture an understanding and respect for all people in a multicultural and multiethnic world; and to promote responsible citizenship in a democracy.

Rosedale School Counseling Department

Vision/Mission

To provide every student the opportunity to become a lifelong learner by fostering and supporting a balanced approach to the development of academic, social, emotional and physical health.

- To nurture respect and understanding for self and all people
- To promote responsible citizenship in a society, community, culture and in the world

Rosedale School District School Counselors Believe…

- Every child should have an adult in their school life that they can trust
- Every child should have hope for their future
- In valuing the unique aspect of each child
- Education should provide a balance (equal importance) of academic and affective development forces.
- All families and children are entitled to equal access to information and resources.

School counseling program shares the responsibility of carrying out the mission, vision and goals of the district.
Appendix E

Professional Development Evaluation

Title of Professional Development Activity: ________________________________

Date: February 6, 2008    April 2, 2008    May 21, 2008

1. General Information:

Grade level:   ___ PreK-5   ___ 6-8   ___ 6-12   ___ 9-12

Years of Experience:

2. Participants’ Reactions:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this professional development workshop?

1 = strongly disagree  2 = disagree  3 = neither agree nor disagree  4 = agree  5 = strongly agree  6 = No basis for judgment

The workshop was clear and easy to follow. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The workshop matched the advertised description. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The workshop met my expectations. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The presentation was effective. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The technology used was appropriate and adequate. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I will use most of what was presented. 1 2 3 4 5 6
The workshop presenter’s style kept me focused and interested.

The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.

The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood.

The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic.

3. Participants’ Learning:

Share three things that you learned from today’s workshop (“Aha!” moments):

Share two ideas that aligned with your current thinking about the topic and/or the field of school counseling?

Share one concept or activity that you will use the information acquired from this workshop?

4. Other Recommendations

Please suggest any improvements for this workshop:

What type of professional development would be helpful in the future?

Thank you for taking time to complete the evaluation!
Appendix F

BLACKBOARD QUESTIONS

Blackboard Discussion: February 13, 2008-February 27, 2008
What types of successes and challenges have you experienced relative to the implementation of your social justice plan? Which strategies do currently have in place? What is missing?

Blackboard Discussion: March 15, 2008-March 29, 2008
When you hear the word data being used as it relates to school counseling, what comes to mind? What experiences have you had with using data in your school and with your students? What type of assistance could you use to help you begin to use data?

Blackboard Discussion: April 14, 2008-April 28, 2008
What types of successes and challenges have you experienced relative to the implementation of your "mini-measure"? Which strategies do currently have in place? What is missing?

Blackboard Discussion: May 1, 2008-May 15, 2008
What do you know about the New York State School Counseling Model? What are your thoughts about the National Standards for School Counselors? What type of assistance could you use to help you implement the model?

Blackboard Discussion: May 27, 2008-June 1, 2008
Which components of the timeline have you worked on? What has been easy to develop and what has been difficult? Where are you on your school’s timeline? What type of further assistance could you use to help you implement the model?
Appendix G

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

April 2, 2008 Focus Group Questions:

The research study proposes to explore the following research question: How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?

Interview questions:

1. Tell me about the workshop session and what it does for your practice as a school counselor in your district.

2. What were the key components of this workshop session that worked for you?

3. Tell me how this professional development offering connects to other professional development that you have attended.

4. Tell me about a time when you used information from the training with a student, parent teacher, or administrator.

5. Talk about how this training fits with your other roles as a school counselor.

6. If you were creating professional development, what would you include?

May 18, 2008 Focus Group Questions:

The research study proposes to explore the following research question, “How does targeted professional development impact the practice of school counselors?”

Interview questions:

1. Tell me about the workshop session on Comprehensive School Counseling and how it helped you in your practice as a school counselor in your district.

2. What were the key components of this workshop session that worked for you? Didn’t work? Foundation, Delivery, Management, and Accountability

3. Tell me how this professional development offering connects to other professional development that you have attended.

4. Tell me about a time when you used information from the training with a student, parent teacher, or administrator.
5. Talk about how this training fits with your other roles as a school counselor.

6. If you were to choose the topic for the next professional development, what would you include?
Appendix H

INTERIM PROJECTS

February 6, 2008

Interim Project: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE
Identify a social justice/equity need in your school; gather the data necessary to better understand the situation; reflect on what you can do as a leader, advocate, team payer and collaborator to positively impact this challenge.

April 2, 2008

Interim Project: MINI-MEASURE
Identify a targeted group of students who are at risk on not moving to the next grade level. Develop a mini-Measure that you and two other colleagues can implement for the remainder of the school year. Monitor your progress and report your results in June.

May 19, 2008

Interim Project: COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM DRAFT TO YOUR PRINCIPAL AND COLLEAGUES
Over the summer, begin to develop a comprehensive plan. Be sure to include:
- Improving academic achievement and eliminating the information and opportunity gaps;
- How the school counseling mission is aligned with the district mission;
- Identifying student competencies with colleagues that will help your students
- Connecting your work to support the data that your school needs to improve.
Appendix I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Dear Colleague:

I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Ed.D. in Executive Leadership Program at St. John Fisher College. Both the Rosedale School District and the Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College has reviewed and approved this study.

The purpose of this study is to explore how targeted professional development makes a difference with school counselors. A particular focus will be placed on exploring school counselors’ perceptions and lived experiences as the result of participating in professional development sessions that focus on characteristics of the transformed role of the school counselor (i.e. advocacy, collaboration and consultation, and cultural competence). It is expected that the data gathered from this study will inform current practices related change in practice upon receipt of targeted professional development. Ultimately, it is the intention of the researcher that the data will act as a “guide” to foster professional development initiatives as they relate to the transformed role of the school counselor.

This research will be completed through an analysis of data collected from focus groups, online Blackboard discussions, professional development surveys, interim projects, and observations. Your participation in the study varies from participating in one or more of the following activities: a) two 30-45 minute focus groups and b) online Blackboard discussions. Further, I would like to analyze data from the a) professional development evaluations, b) interim projects, as well as c) formal/information observations. The aforementioned activities are professional expectations, however, I am asking for your consent to use this data for my study as well.

All information will remain confidential. Participants/respondents will not be identified in the study, but will be coded so that only the researcher will have access to the initial data. All focus group sessions will be conducted by a national consultant and the online Blackboard discussions will be conducted in accordance to the Rosedale School District’s Information Technology (IT) guidelines.

Again, I expect that this data will help inform effective practices, practices that will foster increased staff development opportunities, which in turn, are expected to foster increased student achievement.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. As a part of your professional responsibility, you are expected to attend the three professional development sessions, however, you may choose not to take part in one or more of the activities (i.e. Blackboard discussions or focus groups) or you may withdraw from the study at any time. In either case, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled as a school counselor in the Rosedale School District. Further, no punitive action will be taken by the researcher as a result of this study or your withdrawal from this study.

Thank you very much for considering this request. It is my hope that this information will be useful to school counselors, counselor educators, graduate students in school counseling, school and district administrators, as well as school counseling associations. To this end, the major findings of the study and recommendations may be shared with the aforementioned parties in part or in entirety.

Collegially,
Lesli C. Myers
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
Appendix J

CONSENT FORM

St. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study: Speaking, Thinking, and Understanding: An Exploration of Targeted Professional Development Delivered to School Counselors

Name(s) of researcher(s): Lesli C. Myers
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John Travers
Phone for further information: 607-229-8530

Purpose of study: The purpose of this study is to explore how targeted professional development makes a difference with school counselors. A particular focus will be placed on exploring school counselors' perceptions and lived experiences as the result of participating in professional development sessions that focus on characteristics of the transformed role of the school counselor (i.e. advocacy, collaboration and consultation, and cultural competence).

Data will be collected and analyzed from the following sources: (a) professional development evaluations, (b) focus group conversations, (c) online blackboard discussions, (d) interim projects and (e) informal and formal observations.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: A medium-sized school district

Length of participation: One semester

Risks and benefits:

Your participation in the study will put you at no greater risk than the normal daily risks you would encounter while participating in professional development training. It is possible that in discussing your experiences in the focus groups or the online Blackboard discussions, that you might discover something about yourself or your position that causes you to feel uncomfortable. If that happens, I will use my knowledge and skill as a Regionally Certified School Counselor to help you cope with your feelings or identify additional resources in the community to help answer additional questions or concerns you may have. Below, the researcher has outlined potential concerns of participants as they relate to online Blackboard discussions and the focus groups:

During the online Blackboard discussions, research participants will have the opportunity to talk about successes as well as struggles with the implementation of strategies learned from the professional development sessions. The researcher and national consultant will pose online questions before and after each professional development session which are outlined in Appendix A. Prior to participating in the online discussions; each school counselor will be given a “Netiquette Policy” to follow (see Appendix F). This will help to create a “safe” environment for
discussions that are both professional and respectful. Should a participant make an unprofessional and/or inappropriate comment, the researcher will immediately "check in" with the offended party to determine his/her ability to continue in the online discussions and his/her comfort level in continuing in online discussions with the "perpetrator."

Focus groups will be conducted prior to the April and May 2008 professional development sessions. The researcher will not be in the room during the focus groups. The national consultant will conduct the focus groups and tape both sessions. The recordings will be professionally transcribed verbatim, checked by the researcher, and destroyed to prevent voice recognition of participants. Should you experience any discomfort during the focus group session, immediately ask the session to stop and the national consultant will address the concern(s). The consultant is a nationally certified trainer in school counseling and is able to provide immediate mental health assistance on site.

All information (professional development evaluations, notes, and tapes) related to the proposed study will be kept in a secure location. Each participant will be provided with an informed consent letter.

The benefits to participating in this study include receiving targeted professional development based upon best practices and self-identified needs from a national consultant. Participants will be informed of the results and recommendations from the study. Furthermore, the results of the study may be used to offer suggestions relative to best practices in offering professional development to school counselors specifically about the transformed role of the school counselor.

**Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:**

**Your rights:** As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty from the researcher.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

**What to do if you decide you want to withdraw from the study:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in one or more of the activities (i.e. Blackboard discussions or focus groups) or you may completely withdraw from the study at any time. In either case, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled from the Rosedale School District. **Further, no punitive action will be taken by the researcher as a result of this study.** If you have any questions regarding you rights as a research participants, the following person may be contacted:

Ms. Eileen Merges, IRB Chair, Office of Academic Research, and sponsored Programs, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY 14618 emerges@sjfc.edu

**Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your interest in this study.**

**Investigator:**
Lesli C. Myers
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education
St. John Fisher College
Rochester, NY 14618
(607) 229-8530
I give my consent to participate in the research project entitled "Speaking, Thinking, and Understanding: An Exploration of Targeted Professional Development Delivered to School Counselors." The researcher has discussed the research project with me and I have read the description of the project. I have also had a chance to ask questions about the study and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep for future reference.

Participant's Name Printed  Participant's Signature  Date

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)  Signature  Date

Print name (Investigator)  Signature  Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 585-385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 585-385-8280 for appropriate referrals.
Appendix K

FEBRUARY 6, 2008 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION RESULTS

Lickert-Scale Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>No basis for judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was easy and clear to follow.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td>66.7% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>11.1% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>11.1% (1)</td>
<td>77.8% (7)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop matched the advertised description.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop met my expectations.</td>
<td>20.0% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>60.0% (6)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>20.0% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>70.0% (7)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation was effective.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>70.0% (7)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>20.0% (2)</td>
<td>80.0% (8)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The technology used was appropriate and adequate.</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>80.0% (8)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>20.0% (1)</td>
<td>60.0% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will use most of what was presented.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>20.0% (1)</td>
<td>60.0% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter's style keep me focused and interested.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>20.0% (1)</td>
<td>70.0% (7)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>30.0% (3)</td>
<td>50.0% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>60.0% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic.</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>40.0% (1)</td>
<td>30.0% (3)</td>
<td>10.0% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-Ended Responses:

I. Share three things you learned from today’s workshop (“Aha!” moments).
   a. February 6, 2008
      i. Education training and pay slide.
      ii. Listing of issues was relevant.
      iii. Need to identify critical issues within one’s school district.
iv. We have a voice although we often do not feel so in this particular school district.

v. How would students answer, “Because of school counseling…”

vi. The way that the hierarchy is functioning in (district name omitted).

vii. Government educational agenda is high stakes testing and reporting data issues.

viii. Students can receive an IEP Diploma.

ix. Urgency of school counselors in this district to provide data on our impact.

x. No child left behind has five goals. History of no child left behind.

xi. Program must be constant and bigger than we are.

xii. Coping and resiliency skills most important skills to teach students.

xiii. Counselors create own improvement plan before administration does.

xiv. Ethical obligation more than just confidentiality.

xv. Don’t really have any-mostly review.

xvi. Learning to live to fight another day.

II. Share two ideas that aligned with your current thinking about the topic and/or the field of school counseling.

a. February 6, 2008

   i. Teaming consulting.

   ii. Student advocacy.

   iii. Teaming and collaboration is essential for a school’s success.

   iv. A counselor can positively influence a student’s achievement and development.

   v. Applying an ethical code during discussions with administration, teachers, and colleagues.

   vi. National standards are imperative to help define our roles and express the importance of our work in our buildings and district.

   vii. I believe in improvement and change-would like to understand better ASCA and the regional model!

   viii. Counselors are vital to schools. Lucky to work in a school with excellent, genuinely concerned teachers.

   ix. Begin with the end in mind.

   x. Collaboration.

   xi. Teaming consulting.

   xii. Student advocacy.

III. Share one concept or activity relative to how you will use the information acquired from the workshop.

a. February 6, 2008

   i. Identify barriers that prevent student success.

   ii. I will use and visit the postsecondary organization site.
iii. I am going to sit down with my administration and do the transforming school counseling program and get their perspective in the different principles of the worksheet.

iv. Advocate for school counselors.

IV. Other Recommendations
   a. General Comments
      i. February 6, 2008
         1. Please have better refreshments—plain water and hot tea is needed.
         2. Please provide lunch next time.
         3. I believe my department needs help knowing how to sell ourselves and why we are so important.
         4. Great workshop!

   b. Please suggest any improvements for this workshop:
      i. February 6, 2008
         1. More activities needed—less talk—more collaboration
         2. Race/ethnic piece over conversation was troubling to me because [name omitted] and [name omitted] were asked to respond when discussing issues around Africans—what makes them be appropriate to represent the entire race? Presenter appeared uncomfortable and unsure around ways to cover our issue of race, ethnicity/cultural/SES.
         3. None

   c. What type of professional development would be helpful in the future?
      i. February 6, 2008
         1. I am interested in developing my ability to use technology i.e. SASI and scheduling.
         2. I am interested in understanding the Regional standards, development of, and implications to current programs
         3. Curriculum development-school counselors role and responsibility scheduling on the elementary level for your building
         4. ASCA and Regional Counselor Education Workshop
         5. Keeping up with Career Development Counseling (career zone, discover, bridges)
Appendix L

APRIL 2, 2008 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION RESULTS

Lickert-Scale Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>No basis for judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was easy and clear to follow.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>75.0% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>87.5% (7)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop matched the advertised description.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>37.5% (3)</td>
<td>50.0% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop met my expectations.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>37.5% (3)</td>
<td>50.0% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>37.5% (3)</td>
<td>50.0% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation was effective.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The technology used was appropriate and adequate.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will use most of what was presented.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter’s style keep me focused and interested.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not completely understood.</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>37.5% (3)</td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-Ended Responses:

I. Share three things you learned from today’s workshop ("Aha!” moments).
   a. April 2, 2008
      i. Learned about careerzone.com.
      ii. National standards: Academic, Career, Personal/Social
iii. How cohesive our [unreadable text] is in best practices & theory & delivery of services
iv. We already do most of what’s expected/hoped for
v. Our district is way off the mark.
vi. The way we already do things that I didn’t realize that we were already doing in career guidance
vii. That we will have a plan that will promote our occupation
viii. More understanding of NYSSCA model
ix. Connection with competencies
x. Better understanding of where we’re headed with these meetings
xi. ASCA/NYSSCA Model are very consistent w/one another
xii. Career development and how to document what we do
xiii. Creating our own mission statement!! Having a vision of our own!
xiv. During the collaborative discussions regarding the purpose of the NYSSCA structures “align”
xv. More about the NYSSCA/ASCA models
xvi. Our mission as counselors
xvii. The career development components

II. Share two ideas that aligned with your current thinking about the topic and/or the field of school counseling.
   a. April 2, 2008
      i. We need a comprehensive school counseling program Prek-12
      ii. Our developed mission statements and we believe statements
      iii. Boynton needs to improve in the career development area
      iv. Not enough time in the day to reach all kids; work in crisis mode
      v. Counselors as change agents in many areas
      vi. We should develop a school counseling plan
      vii. We need to work to clearly identify activities that will align with competencies
      viii. We should have our own goals and mission statement
      ix. Accountability isn’t always bad or punitive, it’s a good reflection of what we already do
      x. Serving all students
      xi. Access to quality and equitable education should be available to all students
      xii. We should help every student to achieve and success

III. Share one concept or activity relative to how you will use the information acquired from the workshop.
   a. April 2, 2008
      i. Careerzone.com
      ii. 9 Standards
      iii. Offer expertise in he family and consumer science classes next year; gather career portfolios
iv. I will try to be more engaged with family and consumer science teachers/classes when they do their career exploration, including getting printouts.

v. Continued work on aligning our activities w/competencies and also articulating to leadership and advocating for an effective counseling program.

vi. Check out careerzone.org/ASCA model and read Regional Model.

vii. Further develop my knowledge on career awareness.

IV. Other Recommendations
a. General Comments
i. April 2, 2008
   1. Time to debrief and share about over time together today before disbanding.

b. Please suggest any improvements for this workshop:
   i. April 2, 2008
      1. This was amazing. It provided us an opportunity to talk and also put our discussion into action.
      2. Overload of information.
      3. It was great!

c. What type of professional development would be helpful in the future?
   i. April 2, 2008
      1. More knowledge on technical schools available to graduating seniors.
      2. Fully develop process started today.
      3. More of the same.
      4. Mental health issues are becoming more prominent during our day; staying up on counseling students with mental health issues would be great!
Appendix M

MAY 19, 2008 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION RESULTS

*Lickert-Scale Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>No basis for judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was easy and clear to follow.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>42.9% (3)</td>
<td>42.9% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter encouraged questions and answered them clearly.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop matched the advertised description.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>28.6% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop met my expectations.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>28.6% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content was relevant to my pedagogical needs.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>71.4% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation was effective.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>28.6% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The materials were relevant and contributed to the purpose.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The technology used was appropriate and adequate.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>28.6% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this workshop to another school counseling colleague.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>71.4% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will use most of what was presented.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>28.6% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter's style keep me focused and interested.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>28.6% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter provided practical examples to illustrate the point.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>71.4% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop presenter provided clear explanations when a point was not</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>85.7% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completely understood.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop resolved most of my issues relative to the topic.</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>14.3% (1)</td>
<td>57.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-Ended Responses:

I. Share three things you learned from today’s workshop (“Aha!” moments).
   a. May 19, 2008
      i. This is doable!
      ii. Organizing what we need to do
iii. Love the relationship to the state’s expectations
iv. Keeps us real in the 21st century
v. Structuring/organizing a comprehensive school counseling program
vi. Find “passion” in data collecting
vii. Choose data research you are curious/passionate about—MEASURE!
viii. Be patient one step at a time
ix. Quality counts-national data 2008

II. Share two ideas that aligned with your current thinking about the topic and/or the field of school counseling.
   a. May 19, 2008
      i. I feel my department is behind on the Regional Model, etc. so it’s good to keep them (us) updated
      ii. Being proactive
      iii. Data is important and critical
      iv. Accountability provides credibility

III. Share one concept or activity relative to how you will use the information acquired from the workshop.
   a. May 19, 2008
      i. Creating a comprehensive plan
      ii. Mapping the tasks and identifying the connection to the standards (academic, career, social)
      iii. MEASURE
      iv. I project to track grades from 6th to 7th, 8th to 9th on a selected group of students.
      v. Mapping to drive my calendar with my colleagues

IV. Other Recommendations
   a. General Comments
      i. May 19, 2008 (None)

   b. Please suggest any improvements for this workshop:
      i. May 19, 2008
         1. Too much sitting and listening. Hard to focus.
         2. Sharing a Comprehensive School Counseling Plan.
         3. Not so much time in between sessions. 3-day session to fully understand the connectedness and value of the material

c. What type of professional development would be helpful in the future?
   i. May 19, 2008
      1. Lots more on current trends, etc.
      2. Current career/college planning trends/curriculum.