SCHOOL COUNSELING FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: ATTITUDES AND

BELIEFS OF SCHOOL COUNSELING GRADUATE STUDENTS ABOUT

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING

A DISSERTATION IN

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by
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ABSTRACT

School counselors are uniquely positioned to mitigate gaps in opportunity, achievement, and attainment for culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, culturally responsive school counseling is a relatively new field and many practicing school counselors lack requisite knowledge and skills. This heuristic, critical qualitative inquiry explores the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors-in-training in a school counseling graduate program at a Midwestern, urban university focused on equity and social justice. Participants were chosen based on their commitment to multicultural competence, social justice, and culturally proficient consultation and advocacy. Results revealed the importance of cultural responsiveness, bias awareness and mitigation, advocacy, and critical, reflective practice. In addition, participants shared beliefs that all students deserve a facilitative learning environment, that the world is fundamentally unjust, that children's family experiences are formative, and that they are the experts of their own experiences.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Education, have examined a dissertation titled "School Counseling for the Achievement Gap: Attitudes and Beliefs of School Counseling Graduate Students About Culturally Responsive School Counseling," presented by Andrew R. Schuerman, candidate for the Doctor of Education, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"On the way here, I got pulled over" (Mr. Henderson, personal communication,

October 15, 1997).

It was with these words I began a journey of self-reflection and self-discovery that

has most profoundly shaped my values and feelings related to my research topic. In 1998, I

attended a retreat sponsored by my undergraduate university's Office of Multicultural Affairs

that brought together about thirty students from diverse racial and socioeconomic status

(SES) backgrounds (as diverse as they could be in a postsecondary institution that limited not

only the SES diversity due to its cost and racial/ethnic diversity because of its location in a

predominantly White, Midwestern state). As a White, heterosexual-identified (at the time),

Christian, cis-male (born male, identify as a man) member of an all-White fraternity (a

traditionally elitist and segregated institution), I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

A friend of mine encouraged me to attend.

The man who directed the retreat, whom I'll call Mr. Henderson, drove a utility truck

to the retreat filled with bed clothes and other supplies for the retreat/camp facility where the

event was held. He arrived after the bus that brought the participants. After he assembled us

and began the retreat, he told us that he had been pulled over on his way to the retreat in the

utility truck. Mr. Henderson is an African American man and the retreat facility was in an

exurban, nearly rural setting outside the mid-sized, Midwestern city where the university is

located. Mr. Henderson said that, after he was stopped, he was asked to get out of the vehicle

and the police officer asked to search it. He described in painstaking and excruciating detail

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the humiliation and degradation he felt as the police officer, for no apparent reason, rifled through the sheets, pillows, cases of water and soda, and boxes of snacks. After what he described as an inexplicably long amount of time, the police officer finally allowed Mr. Henderson to continue to the retreat without citation or an explanation for why he was stopped.

I was infuriated. I could not imagine why Mr. Henderson would have been pulled over. While he did not say it directly, it was clear that he was implying it was because he was Black. Having been born and raised in the state where I attended college and in which Mr. Henderson was pulled over, I refused to believe this. How could this be? How could my beloved state have a police officer who would be so blatantly racist? There must be another explanation! And so I was pushed over the cliff of ignorance, of sheltered safety, of uncritical existence, into the harsh reality of racism, prejudice, and White privilege. During the next couple of days, I found myself irrationally defending members of fraternities and sororities, people in positions of power, and institutions, I found out just then, pulled people over just because of the color of their skin. I realized toward the end of the retreat that the entire time I was defending racist, privileged, White people, and I was ashamed. It was at the retreat that I became aware of what McIntosh (1986) calls the "invisible, weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks" that comprise white privilege.

At the end of the retreat, I found out that the story about Mr. Henderson being pulled over by a police officer was fabricated, he made it up. At first, I was a little irritated, but then I realized how critical this story was for putting me on the path toward deeper self-reflection

and learning. As hooks (2010) notes, "[s]tories enchant and seduce because of their magical multidimensionality". She also notes that there is "no absolute truth" and "we all believe what we see from our perspective, and that the individual perspective is always limited" (p. 50). This fabricated story came from Mr. Henderson's lived experience, even if it was not exactly as he portrayed in that moment.

Soon after the retreat, I came out as a gay man. I had known for some time that I was gay, but I resisted coming out. I told myself stories about why, but, years later, I believe I discovered the real reason I could not be honest with myself: to come out would mean giving up the privilege to which I had become accustomed. It was the privilege I had to give up to in order to come out and accept a non-dominant part of my identity that kept me in the closet for as long as I was.

Also powerful in my intellectual and emotional journey to understand, own, and accept my white privilege was attending a cultural diversity training where I heard Gary Howard speak about his book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know* (2006). It was Howard who best elucidated White privilege for me and most persuasively introduced me to the ideas of White dominance. My reaction to learning about my White privilege is similar to that of one of Howard's workshop participants who described it as though he was "a fish who just discovered water. I've been swimming so long in dominance that I wasn't aware of it" (p. 34).

For me, understanding and owning my White, cis-male privilege was critical to learn more about and infuse in my school counseling practice cultural responsiveness and cultural proficiency. I was curious as to what experiences, either before or during their graduate

programs, would inform and enlighten school counselors-in-training about cultural responsiveness so that they would be as motivated as I am to address the achievement and educational disparities between marginalized students and their White counterparts. That is how I was called to this topic.

Problem Statement

The disparity in academic and career benchmarks for students of color compared to those for White students is well-documented and there is much research that describes the role that teachers and administrators play in ameliorating – and sometimes perpetuating – the achievement gap (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2013). There is much less research about the role of school counselors in this area and their ability to impact some of these conditions, which is of growing interest in the literature (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011). More specifically, there is a paucity of research about the attitudes and beliefs held by culturally competent and responsive school counselors despite their importance to cultural responsiveness (Grimmett & Paisely, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011).

According to Ladson-Billings (2006), the achievement gap is one of the most highly complex and mentioned concepts in education, but the analysis of the causes of the gap is not comprehensive enough, much less remedies for it. School counselors are uniquely positioned to play a pivotal role in ameliorating disparities in academic outcomes between students of color and White students, commonly known as the achievement gap, addressing both individual and school-wide barriers for students of color to achieve at higher levels (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee, 1995; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Parikh et al., 2011; Stephens &

Lindsey, 2011). The problem is that school counselors lack the culturally responsive and social justice competence necessary to meaningfully address the achievement gap.

While their ability to impact some of the disparate outcomes that comprise the achievement gap is relatively new in the literature (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011), the professional and ethical responsibility for school counselors to do so is not. Since 1998, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the nation's largest professional association for school counselors, has had a position statement on cultural diversity. The statement begins by stating that school counselors must "be more globally responsive and culturally competent in the current educational and social environment" (ASCA, 2015). The Association cites works that bolster the notion that the school counselor's role should include advocating for students of color (e.g. Dahir & Stone, 2012; Lee, 2001; Parikh et al., 2011; Portman, 2009).

ASCA's position statement on cultural diversity also includes a citation from the Association's national model of a comprehensive school counseling program that compels school counselors to "specifically address the needs of every student, particularly students of culturally diverse, low social-economic status, and other underserved or underperforming populations" (ASCA, 2015, p. 77). Finally, in its preamble, the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016) state that "school counselors are advocates, leaders, collaborators and consultants who create systemic change by providing equitable educational access" (p. 1) and Ethical Standard B.3.i. states that school counselors "[m]onitor and expand personal multicultural and social-justice advocacy awareness, knowledge and skills to be an effective culturally competent school counselor" (p. 7).

Unfortunately, while school counselors have an ethical and professional responsibility to advocate for students of color to help close the achievement gap, they may lack the training and skills to do so. Some even suggest that school counselors may play a role in maintaining the status quo of educational outcomes for students from marginalized backgrounds (e.g., Fallon, 1997; House & Sears, 2002; Militello & Janson, 2014; Welton & Martinez, 2013). While most counselor education programs require some type of multicultural or pluralistic counseling component, most "do not offer consistent training (e.g., coursework, field experiences) in anti-oppression work and cultural history and in the related awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work effectively with multiple cultural groups and identities" (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011, p. 96). Further, Holcomb-McCoy (2007) asserts "many school counselors are not trained to assist students to overcome societal, familial, and educational barriers" (p. 3). School counselors must then work "to create social environments for students that support social justice" (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011, p. 96). To be culturally competent, school counselors must go beyond skills they use with all students by challenging the teachers of students from oppressed backgrounds to maintain high expectations and to advocate for more educational support services (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). This work must also include the critical analysis and questioning of "the beliefs, assumptions, and values behind inequitable school policies, structure, or actions" (House, Martin, & Ward, 2002, p. 185).

There are numerous references in the literature that support school counselors' lack of multicultural competencies to meaningfully address the achievement, attainment, opportunity, and income gaps (e.g., Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy &

Chen-Hayes, 2011; House & Sears, 2002; Lee, 1995); yet, there are relatively few studies conducted to validate this problem. Two quantitative studies that have validated this claim were conducted by Holcomb-McCoy & Myers (1999) and Holcomb-McCoy (2005) when assessments were used that measure the multicultural competency of counselors. Both studies used a measure developed by the authors based on the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development's Multicultural Counseling competencies and a revised version, tailored to school counselors, was used for the Holcomb-McCoy study.

The measure asked participants to respond to 32 statements on three dimensions: self-perceived competence, adequacy of multicultural training received, and the types of multicultural training received. After a multi-factor analysis of variation (MANOVA) was conducted, the statements were grouped into five categories: knowledge of multicultural issues, awareness of multicultural issues, definitions of important multicultural terms, racial identity development, and skills related to multicultural counseling. When asked to rate their competence, respondents were given a 4-point Likert-type scale: 4 = *extremely competent*, 3 = *competent*, 2 = *somewhat competent*, 1 = *not competent*. In the first study, the sample was drawn from the membership of the American Counseling Association, which includes non-school counselors, and just 31% of the 151 respondents worked in K-12 schools. The results indicated that the areas of multicultural competence in which respondents were least informed and trained were in the areas of multicultural knowledge ($M = 2.70$) and racial identity development theories ($M = 2.33$) (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999).

The second study conducted by Holcomb-McCoy (2005) used what became known as the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R). All of

the participants in the second study ($n = 209$) were school counselors as the sample was drawn from the membership of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The factor analysis on this data set revealed three groups of factors: Multicultural Terminology, Multicultural Knowledge, and Multicultural Awareness. Using the same Likert-type scale described above, the respondents were asked to rate their level of competence on 32 statements. The results revealed that respondents, on average, rated themselves at least "somewhat competent" on all three factors (Multicultural Knowledge, $M = 2.46$; Multicultural Awareness, $M = 3.37$; Multicultural Terminology, $M = 3.41$).

A growing body of research indicates the importance of training and ongoing professional development to address the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors about students from diverse backgrounds with whom they work. From the effects of the religious beliefs of school counselors on their work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students and those questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (LGBTQ) (e.g., Bidell, 2014; Grzanka, Zeiders, & Miles, 2016), to working with students who live in poverty (Bray & Schommer-Aikins, 2015), to working with gifted students (Wood, 2012), the literature is fairly conclusive about the importance of affecting attitudes and beliefs in order to be culturally responsive. These negative attitudes and beliefs can create what McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) call "equity traps," or "conscious and unconscious thinking patterns and behaviors that trap teachers, school leaders, and others, preventing them from creating schools that are equitable, particularly for students of color" (p. 601). This study explored attitudes and beliefs about school counselors-in-training to attempt to identify patterns among those who may be more likely to engage in socially just and equity-focused practices.

A study that explored the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors was conducted by Grimmett and Paisley (2008). It involved four school counselor members of the ASCA randomly selected from each of the 50 states in the US and the District of Columbia and the final sample included school counselors form all states except Maine, Nevada, New Jersey, and Texas. The sample was comprised of 88.9% (72) women and 11.1% (nine) men, 3.7% (three) African Americans, 2.5% (two) Asian and Hispanic Americans, 1.2% (one) Native American, 88.9% (72) White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic) Americans, and one person who did not indicate race/ethnicity. Forty-two percent of the sample worked at the elementary level, 42% at the middle level, 22.2% at the high school level, and 17.4% indicated "other" for level at which they worked. The participants' average service was 11 years and the average age of the participants was 47 years. The participants completed a demographic questionnaire and the Professional School Counselor Belief Statements (PSCBS) form (developed by the researchers).

Large percentages of the participants endorsed egalitarian statements like "All children can learn" (93.8%), "Cultural differences are real and cannot be ignored" (97.5%), and "Schools should be responsible for providing a safe and nurturing environment for every student" (98.8%). However, participants also endorsed with curious frequency statements that contradict or at least confound those statements. For example, just 21% of the participants believed that "The educational system responds to the academic needs of all children adequately and appropriately" and 88% believe that "Students should be ultimately accountable for their own learning." Although 83% of participants believed that "Social or institutional barriers can keep students from achieving their potential," 30.9% believed that

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"Students use disabilities as a reason not to be successful academically" and 18.5% believed that "Students use minority status as a reason not to be successful academically." As the authors point out, while any conclusions about the congruence of these beliefs would be tentative without further study, "school counselors who maintained these beliefs…may believe that all children can learn, yet students with disabilities or students who were members of some other minority group, used these characteristics as reasons not to achieve or learn" (p. 106).

When school counselors lack culturally responsive and social justice competence, opportunities are missed to intervene to address academic disparities of students of color. Commonly known as the "achievement gap", the discrepancy in performance between students of color and White students as illustrated by multiple measures, including standardized test scores, graduation rates, advanced course completion, and college enrollment. While the achievement gap is much more complex (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2013) than these factors as will be discussed further in the Literature Review, these measures will be summarized here to demonstrate the significance and impact of the problem because they are both some of the most frequent measures cited in the literature and they are factors that school counselors can considerably influence.

The National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) is a national standardized assessment that compares the achievement of students across multiple states and school districts. The most recent data available show that Black and Latinx (preferred, genderless term for a person who lives in the U.S. and comes from, or whose family comes from, Latin American; Salinas Jr. & Lozano, 2017) students continue to perform below the level of

White students, even when accounting for factors that researchers have found to significantly impact student achievement, such as socioeconomic status and certain student and teacher characteristics. Further, those data are disaggregated by the density of the schools' Black and Latinx populations, as achievement in schools with higher densities of Black and Latinx students has been found to be lower overall. Despite controlling for this factor, the disparity between Black and Latinx student performance compared to that of White students is still significant (NAEP, 2015).

For example, on the NAEP grade 8 mathematics examination, achievement for Black and White students was compared in schools with over 20% Black populations to those in schools with less than 20% Black students. Regression analyses were conducted to control for socioeconomic status, percentage of students with disabilities, teacher qualifications, teacher instructional practices, and school climate. The study found that the achievement gap between students in the schools with the largest density of Black students (40 to 60% and 60 to 100 %) was significantly ($p < .05$) lower than that in schools with the lowest density of Black (0 to 20%) students. Further, achievement for White students was not significantly different in the lowest compared to the highest density schools, but Black student achievement was lower in schools with a higher density of Black students. These results are especially poignant knowing that they control for factors that have been found to significantly affect the achievement of all students, regardless of their race or ethnicity (NCES, 2015).

The impact of school counselors on standardized test scores is negligible, however. They play a more direct role in placing students in advanced courses, preventing students

from dropping out, and guiding students as they enter postsecondary education. The most recent data available from the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights' Civil Rights Data Collect (CRDC) show a disproportionate number of students of color enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Whereas 38% of students enrolled in schools that offer AP courses are Black or Latinx, just 29% of students enrolled in at least one AP course are Black or Latinx. In schools with high Black and Latinx populations, just 33% of them offer calculus and 48% offer physics, compared to 56% and 67% in schools with low Black and Latinx student populations, respectively. More troublingly, just 71% of schools with high Black and Latinx student populations offer Algebra II, the level of math required for the lowest level math courses required at the college level (CRDC, 2016). While school counselors do not control the master schedule and what classes are offered, they may provide input, and this is an important opportunity for them to advocate for students in ways that meaningfully prepare them for postsecondary options.

While not directly attributable to the intervention of school counselors, persistence to high school graduation is a factor on which many school counselors exert considerable influence. Part of what Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes (2011) call the "attainment gap", an important function of school counselors is encouraging students to remain in high school by connecting students to support services and alternative programs to help students persist. It is worth noting, then, that the national average for high school graduation for White students is 87%, while the average is just 73% for Black and 76% for Latinx students (NCES, 2014). Further, the three-year moving average (average of the previous, current, and subsequent years to reduce fluctuations) for college enrollment of recent high school completers for

White students is 68.3%, 63.1% for Black students, and 62.5% for Latinx students (NCES, 2014). This is another opportunity for school counselors to more aggressively advocate for students of color to enter postsecondary education.

While school counselors are uniquely positioned to mitigate the factors that contribute to the achievement gap between students of color and White students, counselors may require additional and specific training to leverage their skills and position to do so. This study was designed with these needs in mind. Starting with views of graduate students about their preparation as counselors is a significant pathway for lessening the impact of the achievement gap on our most vulnerable students.

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Purpose Statement

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The purpose of this heuristic, critical qualitative study is to explore graduate students' attitudes and beliefs regarding a Master's program in school counseling at a Midwestern Urban University (MUU). For the purposes of this study, culturally competent school counseling will be generally defined as the transformation of school counseling to include socially just practices aimed at deconstructing the systemic oppression that exists in society. This systemic oppression takes place on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, class, ability level, and sexual orientation (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Culturally competent school counselors advocate for students, especially those from historically oppressed and disenfranchised backgrounds (Bemak & Chung, 2005).

The unit of analysis for a study is what, or who, is being studied (Patton, 2015). The unit of analysis in this study are the attitudes and beliefs of school counseling graduate students about cultural responsiveness and social justice issues and how their experience in

the Master of Arts in Counseling and Guidance program shaped those attitudes and beliefs. The attitudes and beliefs of the participants will be examined in a pragmatic, qualitative analysis in order to gain "practical understandings and wisdom about concrete, real-world problems" (Patton, 2015, p. 152); in this case, the problem of preparing school counselors-in-training to be cognizant of and remove barriers for an increasingly diverse student body. Pragmatic methods like these are becoming increasingly common due to the growing number of disciplines considering qualitative questions and widely disparate understandings of and faculties with qualitative research methods (Caelli, Ray, Mill, 2003). In addition, empirical inquiry often requires the mixed use of qualitative and quantitative methods for which pragmatic, generic qualitative methods are particularly well-suited (Morgan, 2014).

This study uses a critical lens, described by Patton (2015) as an inquiry approach "to critique society, raise consciousness, and change the balance of power in favor of those less powerful" (p. 692). Research from a critical theory perspective illuminates systems that sustain the status quo with respect to power and oppression. The purpose of this study is to "use theory to interpret or illuminate social action" (Creswell, 2013, p. 30) by highlighting the role school counselors play in either furthering, or breaking down, oppressive systems that substantially determine the future of students with whom they work. Fay (1987) posits that critical theory research methodologies can serve to empower people from historically disenfranchised and oppressed groups and critique society in such a way that envisions new possibilities.

This study was also heuristic in nature, as it "brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher" (Patton, 2015, p. 118). Moustakas (1990) explains that heuristic research

> …refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. Heuristic processes incorporate creative self-processes and self discoveries. (p. 9)

As a practicing school counselor passionate about culturally responsive practices, I "have personal experience with and interest in the phenomenon under study" and have "an intensity of experience with the phenomenon", two required components of heuristic study (Patton, 2015, p. 119).

Research Questions

Research questions in qualitative research are intended to be open-ended and "narrow the purpose to several questions that will be addressed in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 138). They must be narrow enough to focus the study but broad enough to allow for the emergent nature of qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013). The following questions guided the study:

1) What attitudes and beliefs about culturally responsive school counseling are held by students in the school counseling program?

    a) What changes do they report about their attitudes and beliefs as a result of their experiences with the school counseling preparation program?

    b) What culturally responsive practices do they plan to use in their work as school counselors?

2) What are the perceptions of graduate students of the culturally responsive training in the school counselor education program and their preparedness for working with diverse clients in their practicum and internship settings?

   a) To what extent would graduate students say what they have learned about culturally responsive school counseling has been integrated throughout the program?

   b) What components of the culturally responsive training in their school counselor education programs are vital for working with diverse clients?

Theoretical Framework

My experience at the diversity retreat in college compelled me to examine my own attitudes and beliefs about privilege, power, oppression, and equity. This formative experience has permanently altered the way I view the world, especially in my work as a school counselor. While I didn't earn or ask for it, my White privilege affords me access to systems and power structures that can meaningfully address systemic maladies like the gaps that exist in achievement, opportunity, attainment, and income between students of color and White students (McIntosh, 1986). My experience coming out as a gay man has increased my empathy for members of oppressed groups, which has strengthened my commitment to addressing the achievement gap as a school counselor.

In addition, these experiences have powerfully shaped and helped me clarify my values of equity, justice, democracy, acceptance, and conservation. I believe in empathy, conscientiousness, compassion, and listening. I am pre-disposed to believing the stories of the oppressed and disenfranchised and am skeptical of the voices of the dominant group. For

me, understanding and owning my White privilege was critical in order to learn more about and infuse in my practice cultural responsiveness and culturally proficiency.

In suburban school districts with increasingly diverse student bodies but faculty and staff members who remain predominantly White – and no less so as the students become more diverse – it seems to me that understanding White identity, privilege and power is very important in order to meaningfully implement culturally responsive teaching and learning and school counseling practices. I believe that educators must engage in race talk that overtly names and claims the importance of race in the identity development of students in order for students of color to feel supported and empowered (Pollock, 2004). I believe that, in general, suburban school counselors can talk about the importance of creating a culturally proficient school, but lack understanding of how their own White identity, privilege and power will affect their ability to do so.

It is from this background and worldview that I approach this study. From my perspective, as well as a review of the literature, I have put together a theoretical or conceptual framework for this study. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) define a conceptual or theoretical framework as a visual or written product that "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, variables, or constructs—and the presumed interrelationships among them" (p. 20). The theoretical framework for this study is based on four topics that contextualize it and serve as "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs" my research (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39). The four topics are (1) culturally responsive school

counseling, (2) critical theory, (3) counselor attitudes and beliefs, and (4) school counselor preparation programs.

The first element of the theoretical framework is culturally responsive school counseling, what is effectively the response of school counselors to the achievement gap. What can and should school counselors do to meaningfully address the achievement gap? I contend that through more culturally responsive practices, school counselors can work with their partners to address systemic inequities and power imbalances to help close the achievement, attainment, opportunity, and income gaps between students of color and White students. The next element of the theoretical framework is critical theory, the lens through this study will be undertaken. Critical theory is a body of work that examines how all knowledge is socially constructed and influenced by power structures that are inherently biased and oriented toward self-aggrandizement, so one must examine them critically to identify where power and subordination exist. Next, the theoretical framework will discuss counselor attitudes and beliefs that are essential areas for analysis in my study and should be an emphasis in their preparation. The final area is a focus on school counselor preparation and training. Hence, the study examined how the attitudes and beliefs of pre-service counselors about culturally responsive school counseling are formed, in order that they will have the training necessary to meaningfully address the achievement gap.

Culturally Responsive School Counseling

Since 1988, the American School Counselor Association, the nation's largest professional association for school counselors, has had a position statement on cultural diversity stating that the school counselors must "be more globally responsive and culturally

competent in the current educational and social environment" (ASCA, 2015). ASCA's position statement on cultural diversity also includes a citation from the association's national model of a comprehensive school counseling program that compels school counselors to "specifically address the needs of every student, particularly students of culturally diverse, low social-economic status, and other underserved or underperforming populations" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 77). Finally, the ASCA Ethical Standard B.3.i. states that school counselors "[m]onitor and expand personal multicultural and social-justice advocacy awareness, knowledge and skills to be an effective culturally competent school counselor" (ASCA, 2016, p. 7).

To properly contextualize culturally responsive school counseling, one must begin with a discussion of its origins: the disparate achievement and attainment outcomes between culturally and linguistically diverse students and their White counterparts. Popularly known as the "achievement gap," this gap is the *raison d'être* of this study and typically includes disparate performance on standardized test scores, graduation rates, advanced course completion, college enrollment, and income expectancy. Beneath the multiple measures related to the achievement gap data are the insidious roots of racism and bias in fields ranging from the social sciences to psychometric testing. Despite much evidence that the achievement gap has nothing to do with genetic inferiorities or innate, intellectual weaknesses, these racist and biased roots still pervade scholarship on student achievement (Tucker, 1994).

Perhaps the best evidence of the racist genesis of the nation and its clear contradiction of its purported ideals of "inalienable rights" and "equality and justice for all" is the

enslavement of Black people since its founding (Tucker, 1994). The historical roots of the achievement gap continue beyond the founding of the nation, and follow closely the development of multicultural education that began with the education of African American children. This education began as desegregation in the early colonial and early national periods, became segregated during the early 1800s, saw a push for desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s, and is now predominantly segregated once again (Banks, 2004). All the while, the education of students of color has been underfunded and under-supported (Tucker, 1994). That has led to a persistent gap in achievement for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

But these gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment are much more complicated than merely disparities in standardized test scores and graduation rates. Ladson-Billings (2006) points out that the literature is replete with studies that prove the existence of the achievement gap – something that has been a settled fact for some time – but a dearth exists when it comes to solutions to address it. Further, she asserts the achievement gap is analogous to the national deficit, when we should instead be focusing the debt that is owed to culturally and linguistically diverse students whose families have been caught in the "historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society" (p. 5) that created this debt. Milner (2013) posits that current literature on the achievement gap is reductionist as it fails to portray the complexities and nuances undergirding it. He further asserts that achievement gap literature tends to frame White students as the norm against whom culturally diverse students are compared, force readers to conceptualize LCD students from a deficit perspective, and shift focus from the real culprits

of the achievement gap, the "inequitable, racist, and sexist structures, systems, contexts, policies, and practices that lead to perceived achievement gaps" (p. 5). Other researchers echo these sentiments and encourage researchers to focus more on solutions than on what Gutiérrez (2008) calls a "gap-gazing fetish." Chapter Two: Literature Review discusses in greater depth the complexity and the history of the achievement gap, along with theories about its perpetuation and examples of how it has been counteracted.

The ASCA, in the various publications cited above, gives a good overview of the elements included in the broader realm of "culturally responsive school counseling." From this overview, along with a review of the literature, I have found that culturally responsive school counseling involves the following attributes: (a) multicultural counseling; (b) social justice-focused counseling; and, (c) culturally proficient consultation and advocacy. These themes will be briefly discussed here and more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

Multicultural counseling has been widely discussed and examined for some time in the literature (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2016). The multicultural counseling framework designed by Derald Wing Sue and David Sue is widely cited in the literature and their textbook is a standard in counselor education programs. Their model includes four elements: cultural awareness and beliefs, social justice implications of counseling, culturally competent counseling skills, and racial/cultural identity development. This model necessitates that school counselors recognize and appreciate the differences between their own culture and that of their clients (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016). School counselors' facility with the three elements of Sue and Sue's (2016) multicultural counseling model are more broadly known as their "multicultural competence". There are a

few studies that assess the multicultural competence of school counselors, a couple that were discussed above (e.g., Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005).

A qualitative study that involves the multicultural competence of school counselors was conducted by Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sánchez, Sardi, & Granato (2004) who offered a multicultural professional development program that consisted of seven monthly sessions. Thirteen of the 35 counselors were selected to participate in the study to learn about their experiences in the program and about their multicultural competencies in general. The participants were mostly female, with just one male participant. Their professional experiences in school counseling ranged from between 10 and 20 years and less than five years, with a mean number of years of experience in school counseling of 10 years. Seven of the participants had significant experiences working with linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students, which was the focus of the multicultural professional development program. The respondents came from a large, very diverse, suburban school district and worked extensively with families new to the United States. The interviews were analyzed and findings revealed that a majority of the participants expressed at least some discomfort with their multicultural competence, especially in the areas of intercultural communication (i.e. questioning behaviors, mannerisms, etc.), cultural knowledge (i.e. views and beliefs), and intracultural conflicts (resulting from the clash of home and school cultures).

Some argue that just being multiculturally competent is not enough; school counselors must transcend simply possessing knowledge and skills informed by favorable attitudes and beliefs of diverse clients and "must be grounded in a commitment to social justice that necessitates an expansion of professional activities beyond individual counseling"

(Vera & Speight, 2003, p. 254). Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes (2011) assert that "social justice is central to the practice of multicultural school counseling" (pp. 96-97), and there are many ways it can be manifested. Two components of social justice-focused school counseling will be featured here: acceptance of the role power and privilege play in schools and society and student empowerment.

All systems and structures are imbued with power and privilege. Some in those structures and systems hold power and privilege and too often use them to oppress those who lack power and privilege. Writers like Habermas (1984; 1992) and Foucault (1970; 1972; 1980) have written for some time about the power and privilege endemic in schools and education. Yet there is strong evidence that pre-service teacher education (Marx, 2006; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2017) and school counseling graduate programs (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016) do not adequately address these topics. Smith and Geroski (2014) write about the dominant colonizing discourses embedded in the school counseling profession that fail to adequately acknowledge the unequal playing field for students of color, students from impoverished backgrounds, and LGBTQ students. A strong component of training programs for educators should be the development of a "critical consciousness" to examine and identify ways to deconstruct structures and systems that privilege some and oppress others, especially in schools (Freire, 1980, 2004). Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007) write that it is "evident that if professional school counselors are to be successful in facilitating the empowerment of students, they must engage in a self-reflective process that leads to their own development of critical consciousness and sense of empowerment" (p. 344).

This leads to the next element of social justice-focused school counseling featured here: student empowerment. Also known as "self-advocacy skills" (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003), student/client empowerment involves school counselors helping students identify their own strengths and resources, differentiate between individual and systemic barriers, recognize internalized oppression as an internal barrier, learn to navigate these individual and systemic barriers, create plans to do so, and assist them in carrying out these plans. Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007) suggest that school counselor educators can train school counselors-in-training to do this with student-clients by "incorporating issues of social inequalities, leadership development, public policy, ethnic studies, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies, women's studies, and social justice into counselor education curricula" (p. 344). Due to the age and legal restrictions for minors, Chen-Hayes, Miller, Bailey, Getch, & Erford, (2011) recommend extending these self-advocacy and empowerment strategies to the parents/guardians and teachers of LCD students.

A final component of culturally responsive school counseling practices is culturally informed collaboration and advocacy. Both the terms "advocacy" and "consultation" are specific roles of the school counselor (ASCA, 2012b). School counselors consult with teachers and parents/guardians in an effort to help students solve problems. This process is particularly important when the cultural background of the consultant (school counselor) differs from that of the student and even of the consultee (teacher or parent/guardian) (Lee, 1995). However, little discussion about culturally proficient consultation and collaboration exists in literature about school counseling (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016). Stephens & Lindsey (2011) developed a rubric that defines culturally proficient collaboration that

includes counselors as working with stakeholders in schools "to meet the needs of all students, with particular attention to marginalized groups of students" (p. 71). Holcomb-McCoy (2007) asserts that consultation "is a very powerful process that is indirect in its approach, but has the capacity to affect large numbers of students" (p. 55). Consultation better enables school counselors to advocate for individual students and for groups of students experiencing inequity or injustice. This work must begin before school counselors start their first jobs in the field, during their school counselor preparation programs.

Critical Theory

Critical theory embodies the notion that all knowledge is socially constructed, that those who put forth knowledge have engaged in a recursive process of some type of observation and interpreted, through their own, subjective lens, what they observe to construct information they then share with others. Postpositivist in nature, critical theory firmly rejects the notion that there is a normative "right," especially related to phenomena observed and reported on by human beings who imbue those observations and reports with their own, socially constructed perspective. Horkheimer (1992) posits that even the way that individuals experience the world with their own senses is inextricably linked with socialized values and biases.

With its origin in the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, or the Institute of Social Research (popularly known as "the Frankfurt School"), critical theory was borne out of a zeal for the writings and philosophy of Karl Marx. Marxist philosophy is vehemently anti-capitalist and highlights the injustices within oppressive structures in which workers find themselves when the ruling class have profit as their primary motivator. Critical theory also has roots in Greek

philosophy with its ruminations on logic and reason (Bronner, 2011), the Enlightenment and its regard for the emancipatory or repressive potential of knowledge (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995), as well as the early writings of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger (Bronner, 2011; Jay, 2016; Wheatland, 2009). The most cogent version of critical theory, as we know it today, came from the writings of those associated with the Frankfurt School, including Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno, and Habermas (Jay, 1996; Rothe & Ronge, 2016; Wheatland, 2009).

Likely one of the most cited and earliest studies in the postmodern era that used a critical qualitative method was that conducted by Willis (1977) entitled *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. Willis studied the trend of children of working class parents who seemed to perpetuate that cycle in their own employment choices. The ethnographic, comparative case study involved twelve boys attending school in a working class town in central England for which Willis uses the pseudonym Hammertown. Willis began observing the boys in their final year of school and six months into their first jobs. In addition to observation, his research methods included interviews and journals he asked the boys to keep, as well as recorded conversations with the boys' parents, teachers and schools administrators. Willis concluded that the boys embraced their own versions of cultural nonconformity that both consciously and unconsciously acknowledged their powerlessness in society. This is reflected in a number of ways, including how the boys reacted to the compulsory career lessons that seemed like a futile attempt to force them to explore careers for which their social position essentially disqualified them. Willis writes that "'the lads reject, ignore, invert, make fun of, or transform most of what they are given in

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career lessons" (p. 92) in an effort to assert their own, if enervated, power. This was but one example of their resistance that demonstrates their at least partial recognition of their social position and possible acquisition of class consciousness that may one day allow them to refuse to submit to capitalist demands.

An important concept in critical theory is emancipation. Marx and later the writers of the Frankfurt School (notably Marcuse, 1992) position critical theory as a way to free the proletariat from the control of the bourgeoisie. Many have expanded on these topics (e.g., Biesta, 2005; Blake & Masschelein, 2002; Peters, 2005), including a theorist later associated with the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas. In arguably one of his most important contributions to critical theory, Habermas (1984) describes the power of what he calls "communicative action," the ability of language to be used to analyze human actions and reorient them toward freedom, and further "to make possible a conceptualization of the social-life context that is tailored to the paradoxes of modernity" (Habermas, 1984, p. xi). Emancipation is also central to the critical work of Paulo Freire (1980, 2004), especially with the notion of "conscientization" or "man looking for knowing" (1980, p. 74). Schools are often the last opportunity for students to learn critical, emancipatory skills.

Critical theory also involves the juxtaposition of those in power to "the other," those who not only do not hold power but also those to whom the disempowered majority are positioned by the bourgeois in opposition. Based on the earlier writings of critical theorists, Foucault (1980) writes how those who wish to remain in power often use that power in an oppressive and coercive manner. One method they use is to wield the concept of "otherness", vilifying and demonizing certain "others" to maintain dominance. At first, Foucault focused

on those labeled "insane" whose pathology was legitimized by a field of science. Too often in education, the education of "the other" is wielded by those in power as proof that public education has failed certain groups, rather than focusing on the emancipatory capacity of education available to all (Freire, 2004).

School Counselor Attitudes and Beliefs

Much evidence exists that indicates the importance of teacher beliefs on effective instruction and that teacher beliefs should be a focus in teacher preparation (Ashton, 1990; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Wilson, 1990). Similarly, the literature strongly indicates that teachers' attitudes and beliefs are the critical unit of analysis when it comes to learning more culturally responsive teaching and learning practices (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2013). While the literature are not as saturated on this topic, recent scholarship indicates the same for the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors (Grimmett & Paisely, 2008; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Parikh et al., 2011; Sue & Sue, 2012). This topic is part of the theoretical framework as it serves as the critical unit of analysis for the study.

But just what are attitudes and beliefs? This is not an easy question to answer. An early researcher in this field, Rokeach (1968) offers a fairly enduring definition when he wrote that "…beliefs—like motives, genes, and neutrons—cannot be directly observed but must be inferred as best one can, with whatever psychological devices available, from all the things the believer says or does" (p. 2). About attitudes, Rokeach writes that they are "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation", and that this system of beliefs predisposes "one to respond in some preferential manner" to those objects and

situations (p. 112). Similar to Rokeach, but put another way, Pajares (1992) defines attitudes as "clusters of beliefs around a particular object or situation [that] form attitudes that become action agendas" (p. 319).

More recently, when summarizing beliefs about mathematics education and one's capacity for math, Philipp (2007) wrote that "beliefs might be thought of as lenses that affect one's view of some aspect of the world or as dispositions toward action" (p. 259). Zhang and Morselli (2016) note that there is a trend of exploring the "*dialectic relationship* between beliefs and practice (or, similarly, between professed beliefs and beliefs inferred by the observed practice)" (p. 12, emphasis in original). The authors summarize the inconsistent findings in this vast realm, including the important role that context plays when observing how beliefs influence actions (Skott, 2009), how important it is to fully understand participant beliefs in studies that attempt to match them with behavior (e.g., Cross, 2015; Leatham, 2006), and how previous assumptions about the durability of beliefs are increasingly disproved (Liljedahl, Oesterle, & Bernèche, 2012; Swan, 2007). Particularly salient to this study are findings by Grootenboer (2008) that emphasize the important role that pre-service training has on the beliefs of teachers.

Why is this discussion important? Because, as cited above, the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors play an important role in their adoption of culturally responsive school counseling practices. In a quantitative study involving randomly selected members of the ASCA ($n = 298$), Parikh et al. (2011) found two variables had a statistically significant impact on school counselors' social justice advocacy attitudes. In addition to a demographic questionnaire, the participants completed two scales: the Social Justice Advocacy Scale

(SJAS; Van Soest, 1996) and the Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS; Lipkus, 1991). The SJAS measured participants' behaviors related to advocacy on behalf of people from marginalized or oppressed backgrounds. The GBJWS measures the extent to which participants believe the world is just, "that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get" (Parikh et al., 2011, p. 61). Participants qualified their political ideology on a six-point Likert scale (1 = *very conservative* to 6 = *very liberal*).

First, the study found that political ideology was a significant predictor of a higher score on the SJAS (meaning participants are more likely to advocate on behalf of marginalized or oppressed persons). The more liberal the participant rated her or his political ideology, the higher the score on the SJAS. In addition, results of the GBJWS and SJAS were inversely related: the higher one scored on the GBJWS, the lower they scored on the SJAS. In other words, the more participants believe the world is a just place and people get what they deserve, the less likely they were to indicate they would advocate on behalf of marginalized or oppressed people. These findings are significant because a belief in a just world is thought to be something that can be taught and therefore has implications for school counselors and their training (Parikh et al., 2011).

Holcomb-McCoy (2007) also discusses the importance of the attitudes and beliefs of counselors related to culturally responsive practices, noting that "[w]ithout a doubt, a counselor's fear and discomfort [with students from backgrounds different from the counselor's] will interfere with the counseling relationship" (p. 32). Finally, one of the three domains of multicultural counseling competence posited by Sue & Sue (2012) is awareness,

which involves school counselors examining their attitudes and beliefs about topics like power, privilege, and oppression, in order to make their practice more culturally competent.

School Counselor Preparation and Training

The roots of school counseling can be arguably traced into prehistory when societies sought advisors outside the family to guide selected young people, like elders, teachers and mentors (Herr & Erford, 2011). However, "guidance" or "counseling" was neither equally available to all young people, nor was it planned and systematic" (p. 19). This inequitable access to the services of school counselors continues today with widely disparate, and largely discretionary, school counselor-to-student ratios (Herr & Erford, 2011). To understand school counselor preparation and training, it is important to know a little history of the profession, understand the foundation of it – the Comprehensive School Counseling Program – and recognize the absence of consistent training of school counselors in cultural responsiveness.

Largely an American invention, various authors cite different conditions that gave rise to the school counseling profession. These conditions range from the division of labor resulting from advances in technology and the spread of democracy that extended vocational education (Brewer, 1942), to the forces of religion, philanthropy, and social change that led to the seeking of mental hygiene and the movement to know students as individuals (Traxler & North, 1966). In 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), passed largely in response to the Russians' launch of *Sputnik,* thrust school counselors into a national emphasis on encouraging bright students to pursue the "hard sciences", which meant students needed to be psychologically assessed and given career guidance. This led to a huge expansion of the

number of professional school counselors and their presence in a growing number of high schools. In 1965, in response to rising unemployment, poverty, and the increased prevalence of technology and its concomitant effects on occupations, a specific funding stream for school counselors was added to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). With the establishment of a division within the U.S. Department of Education focused on vocational guidance, school counseling was further ensconced in elementary and secondary education.

To understand school counselor preparation and training programs, it is important to understand the foundation of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program, the ASCA's (2012a) National Model for School Counseling Programs. This model has four components: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability. It is on this foundation and through the National Model that "brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice, which creates unity and focus toward improving student achievement and supporting student development" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 13). Comprehensive school counseling programs have some empirical support (Borders & Drury, 1992; Whiston & Quinby, 2009; Whiston & Sexton, 1998; Whiston, Tai, Rahardja, & Eder, 2011). Whiston et al (2011) provided the most recent and most comprehensive meta-analysis of studies that test the effectiveness of school counselor interventions. The study used two types of meta-analysis to analyze 117 school counseling studies, both published and unpublished (i.e. dissertations, theses) since 1980. The study contained sufficient data to calculate an effect size ($d = .30$) and found that "students who received school counseling interventions score almost a third of

a standard deviation higher on higher on various outcomes than do students who do not receive school counseling interventions" (Whiston et al, 2011, p. 45).

While widely viewed as uniquely positioned to meaningfully address the achievement gap (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee, 1995; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011), the extent to which school counselor preparation and training programs train school counselors-in-training to do so is dubious. Historically based on what are known as "the three C's of counseling"— counseling, consultation, and coordination — it has become clear that "these roles are now too limiting and no longer provide enough breadth and depth of scope for professional school counselors to be effective" and the model "does not provide a basis for serving all students" (Erford, House, & Martin, 2007, p. 5). School counseling educators must "broaden their roles to include leadership, advocacy, teaming, and collaboration, counseling and coordination, and assessment and use of data" (p. 5). A school counseling program must be set up to intentionally and systematically better serve all students (Bemak & Chung, 2005). It is clear that, while the profession possesses much potential to ameliorate the achievement and opportunity gaps for students of color, more systemic and transformational change in the preparation and training programs must first take place.

Methodology Overview

The purpose of this heuristic, critical qualitative study is to explore graduate students' attitudes and beliefs regarding a Master's program in school counseling at a Midwestern Urban University (MUU). Qualitative research methods are appropriate when an issue needs to be explored in depth, rather than simply obtaining a more limited snapshot that quantitative studies often elicit. Creswell (2013) contends that qualitative research is

necessary "because of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, or hear silenced voices" and qualitative research methods are appropriate when "we need a *complex,* detailed understanding of the issue" (p. 48, emphasis in original). An advantage of this approach is it allows researchers to explore issues "without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis [that] contributes to the depth, openness, and details of qualitative inquiry" (Patton, 2015, p. 22).

The qualitative method for this study is critical, qualitative inquiry. Generic qualitative inquiry is appropriate when taking on pragmatic, "practical questions of people working to make the world a better place (and wondering if what they're doing is working)" and when these questions "can be addressed without allegiance to a particular epistemological or philosophical tradition" (Patton, 2015, p. 154). This approach is often used in mixed methods studies and those in which researchers are seeking to understand a given setting or problem. Caelli et al. (2003) define this research paradigm as "generic qualitative research as that which is not guided by an explicit or established set of philosophic assumptions in the form of one of the known qualitative methodologies (p. 4). This type of research has many names in the literature, including "interpretive description" (Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997), "basic or fundamental qualitative description" (Sandelowski, 2000), and "basic or generic qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998).

The research method is also critical inquiry, a research method firmly rooted in critical theory, discussed in more detail in the Theoretical Framework herein. This method augments traditional qualitative inquiry's mandate to merely "*interpret* the world" and

extends it "to *change* the world in ways that resist injustice while celebrating freedom and full, inclusive, participatory democracy" (Denzin, 2016, p. 9, emphasis in original). Fay (1987) notes that critical qualitative inquiry is used when the goal is to empower people to transcend constraints placed on them due to race, class, and gender. Agger (1991) posits that critical qualitative inquiry involves two types of elements: methodological—how it affects the language of studies—and substantive—in how it affects the theories and topics covered in studies. This study is critical in nature as it seeks "to critique society, raise consciousness, and change the balance of power in favor of those less powerful" (Patton, 2015, p. 692).

In addition, this study is heuristic in nature because it "brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher" (Patton, 2015, p. 118). As a practicing school counselor who is determined to transform the school counseling profession into one that is more focused on social justice and cultural responsiveness, along with performing this study at an institution "[w]ith an emphasis on individual/cultural diversity and social justice" (MUU, 2017), this study meets Patton's criteria for heuristics.

The site for this study was the Master of Arts Counseling and Guidance program with an emphasis in School Counseling at a Midwestern, urban university. The site was selected due to its stated emphasis on multicultural competence, social justice, and cultural responsiveness. The participants were selected using a matched comparison, purposive sampling strategy based on results from the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). This survey identified participants who differ significantly on their measures of multicultural competence in order "to understand what factors explain the difference" (Patton, 2015, p. 267).

Data sources for the study included participant interviews, a focus group, and analysis of student portfolios required for graduation. In-depth interviews were the primary data source for the study, in order to provide a "thick, rich description" in order to capture the "voices, feelings, actions, and meanings" of the school counseling graduate students. The capstone project for the students in the Master's of Guidance and Counseling program, the student portfolio, was used "to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin, 2009, p. 103), such as data collected from participants from interviews and the focus group. For example, how do the student portfolios reflect how integrated throughout the program are elements of culturally responsive school counseling, and how does this compare to data collected from participant interviews on this topic?

Data gathered from the interviews was reviewed several times to identify themes. These themes then formed the basis for the questions asked in the focus group of study participants with the hope data collected from it would contribute "something unique to [my] understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Morgan, 1997, p. 3). Data collected from both of these methods were then checked against a review of student portfolios to corroborate recollections, beliefs, and attitudes of participants shared therein.

Data analysis involved two simultaneous methods. The data were analyzed using the heuristic inquiry method developed by Moustakas (1990) as an overarching lens for constructing meaning of all data sources, which involves five steps: immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. This distillation of the data, further discussed in Chapter Three: Methodology, facilitated the First Cycle and Second Cycle processes described by Saldaña (2013), conducted in the illumination and explication steps of

the heuristic analysis. In these steps, data gathered from the interviews, focus group, and portfolio document sources were labeled and an enumerative approach was used to identify interpretive codes from which themes were revealed (Grbich, 2013). Underlying this basic data analysis technique was a critical stance as a researcher to identify power issues related to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability levels (Fay, 1987).

Significance of the Study

Coming to terms with and understanding my White, cis-male privilege was critical to enable me to learn more about and infuse in my school counseling practice cultural responsiveness and cultural proficiency. Key formative experiences for me informed and enlightened my practice and I wondered whether this was the case for other school counselors-in-training. Are there attitudes, beliefs, and experiences that can be fostered and replicated for school-counselors-in-training that can galvanize them to address the achievement and educational disparities for students from marginalized backgrounds? These questions called me to this topic.

In addition, the ability of school counselors to target their work toward narrowing the achievement gap is strongly supported in the literature (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee, 1995; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). However, school counselor preparation programs largely lack the training in social justice and advocacy that school counselors need to meaningfully fulfill this role (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; House et al., 2002). Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes (2011) suggest that culturally competent school counselor training must include topics related to "anti-oppression work and the cultural

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history and in the related awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work effectively with multiple cultural groups and identities" (p. 96).

There is broad consensus in the literature that this type of training is needed for school counselors (e.g. Bemak, 2000; House & Sears, 2002; Lee & Wagner, 2007; Militello & Janson, 2014). Further, it is clear that school counselors must examine their attitudes and beliefs regarding social justice and racial equity to effectively infuse culturally responsive and social justice into their practice (Grimmett & Paisley, 2008; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Parikh et al, 2011). As the unit of analysis for this study, learning more about the attitudes and beliefs of school-counselors-in-training in a graduate program that professes to be culturally competent and focused on social justice (MUU, 2017) filled an important gap in the literature about how these may be affected by graduate education. With what attitudes and beliefs did graduate students enter the program? How were they affected by their courses and field experiences? With what attitudes and beliefs about social justice and cultural responsiveness are the school-counselors-in-training leaving their graduate program and entering the profession? Answers to these questions can inform school counselor educators in order to improve outcomes for school counseling graduate students. A more complete discussion of the scholarship that builds the foundation for this study will be provided in Chapter 2.

This study filled an important gap in the literature that is a cogent, cohesive set of themes and beliefs that should be included in school counselor training to prepare culturally responsive school counselors. Schwallie-Giddis et al. (2004) note that further research should be conducted of "counselors' perceptions of the challenges they face in their work with

diverse students" (p. 15). The authors further note that "[w]hat is lacking is an understanding of school counselors' perceptions of their work as multicultural counselors from their own perspectives and in their own words" (p. 16). School counselor training programs can use this research to analyze attitudes and beliefs that should be fostered in order to develop culturally responsive training for school-counselors-in-training.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of literature provides the reader with a comprehensive and up-to-date summary of topics endemic in the concept under review, in this case, culturally responsive school counseling (Galvan, 2014). This review is built on the theoretical framework for the study, constructed both by the reflexive experiences of the researcher, as well on foundational bodies of knowledge that helped form the research questions and direction for the study (Miles et al., 2013). To demonstrate "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs" my research (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39), the following topics will be covered in the literature review: (1) culturally responsive school counseling, (2) critical theory, (3) educator attitudes and beliefs, and (4) school counselor preparation programs.

Attending a diversity retreat about twenty years ago where I was a racial minority for one of the first times in my life, while discussing such emotionally charged and visceral topics like White privilege, dominance, and oppression, set me on the path toward this research. Coming out as a gay man a few years later reified the privilege to which I was hanging on before coming to terms with who I am. These experiences have forever altered my worldview, instinctively sensitizing me to stories of the oppressed and cynical about those of the privileged. The experiences galvanized my work in school on behalf of racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, students with disabilities, and bi-/multi-lingual students and those learning English. It is from this foundation that I endeavor to learn

what attitudes and beliefs are present in school counselors-in-training so a new generation of helping professionals in schools can carry on this mission.

The purpose of this heuristic, critical qualitative study is to explore graduate students' attitudes and beliefs regarding a Master's program in school counseling at a Midwestern Urban University (MUU). This school counselor preparation program positions itself as one that emphasizes cultural diversity, social justice, and equity (MUU, 2017), and exploring what attitudes and beliefs graduate students in the program hold about these topics will inform the work of other school counselor educators. By listening to the voices of these students, my hope is that we can enhance our existing efforts to train culturally responsive school counselors focused on equity and social justice.

There are many conditions necessitating this work. First, the gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment between culturally and linguistically diverse students and their White counterparts persist, despite copious research, countless hours of professional development for educators, and numerous "reform" campaigns to mitigate these gaps (Gutiérrez, 2008; Howard, 2010). Of particular salience to school counselors based on the work they do in schools are gaps in opportunity and attainment. For example, the efforts of school counselors to provide access to upper-level and rigorous courses must be examined with respect to the disproportionate enrollment of culturally and linguistically diverse students in these classes (Militello & Janson, 2014; Perna et al., 2008; Schoener & McKenzie, 2016; Tyson, 2013; Welton & Martinez, 2013). Disparate graduation rates for culturally and linguistically diverse students are apparent (NCES, 2014) and persistence to

graduation is another area in which school counselors play a pivotal role (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Stevenson, 2012; Noguera & Wing, 2006).

Why a focus on school counselors, then? In addition to their inimitable position in schools that typically provide access to information, decision-making bodies, and constituent groups (i.e. students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, etc.) (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Welton & Martinez, 2013), they are increasingly embracing the leadership role they can play in schools on efforts such as equity and access (Chen-Hayes, et al., 2011; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Mason, 2010; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). Unfortunately, their preparation and training often lacks the culturally responsive aspects necessary to equip them to effectively address gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Feldwisch & Whiston, 2015; Goodman et al., 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Vera & Speight, 2003). The present study endeavors to add to scholarship about school counselor preparation and training to better equip school counselors-in-training for these tasks.

My review of the literature began with a deep dive into broader topics like multicultural education and white privilege. These topics were chosen based on my experience in large, suburban school districts where the reality is starkly illustrated that our students continue to come from more racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, but our teaching professionals continue to be overwhelmingly White (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010). Close looks at books like Banks and Banks' (2004) *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* and Banks' (2012) *Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education* helped to guide my review of multicultural education that led me to the second fulcrum for my search, white

privilege. This included seminal works on this topic from McIntosh (1986) and broader

views of this topic like Kendall's (2006) *Understanding White privilege: Creating Pathways*

to Authentic Relationships Across Race, along with the salience of this topic to the

counseling (e.g., Mindrup, Spray, & Lamberghini-West, 2011) and school counseling

specifically (e.g., Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007).

From there, my search led to Holcomb-McCoy's (2007) *School Counseling to Close*

the Achievement Gap: A Social Justice Framework for Success, one of the most

comprehensive works on the topic of culturally responsive school counseling. Then, I did a

thorough search of the literature on the achievement, opportunity, and attainment gaps for

culturally and linguistically diverse students beginning with Howard's (2010) *Why Race and*

Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Classrooms and

Valencia's (2015) *Students of Color and the Achievement Gap: Systemic Challenges,*

Systemic Transformations. After that, multiple searches of academic databases were

conducted combining school counseling/school counselor with search terms such as

"culturally responsive," "social justice," "critical theory," "power and privilege," "attitudes

and beliefs," "training programs and preparation," and "training programs and criticism."

As noted in this chapter, this study proposed to fill gaps in the literature on this topic.

First, there is a general lack of research on school counselor beliefs, especially compared to

the prolific amount of data compiled about teacher beliefs and attitudes (Grimmett & Paisley,

2008). Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sánchez, Sardi, & Granato (2004) specifically note that

"[w]hat is lacking is an understanding of school counselors' perceptions of their work as

multicultural counselors from their own perspectives and in their own words" (p. 16). The

literature is coalescing around social justice being a key component in culturally responsive practices, and there is a lack of good data around this topic for school counselors (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011). In general, more needs to be learned about what factors contribute to multicultural counseling competence (Barden & Greene, 2015; Hill, Vereen, McNeal, & Stotesbury, 2013; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

The first section, culturally responsive school counseling, will situate this study in the context of the school counseling profession's efforts to respond to the call to address gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. It begins with an overview of what is colloquially (and far too simplistically) known as the achievement gap, then gives an overview of the primary elements of culturally responsive school counseling: multicultural counseling, social justice-focused school counseling, and culturally proficient consultation and advocacy. The section concludes with the mandates for infusing these elements in both the training and preparation of, along with the practice, of school counselors, including ethical and moral obligations. While not an exhaustive compilation of literature on any one of these topics, the summary includes the most salient elements for the present study.

Next, a circumscribed look at the expansive discourse of critical theory is undertaken, again focusing most directly on elements therein that pertain to this study. A brief history of this prodigious topic begins the section, along with profiles of the contributions of key theorists in the educational progeny of critical theory, critical pedagogy. Next, key elements of critical theory germane to this study – emancipation, otherness, and power/hegemony –

will be discussed, with a summary of critical theory as it relates to school counseling to conclude the section.

  With all that is known about the importance of the attitudes and beliefs of teachers in culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Murrell & Foster, 2003; Nieto, 2013; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018), along with those of school counselors (Grimmett & Paisley, 2008; Kuranz & Pérusse, 2012; Parikh et al., 2011; Sue & Sue, 2016), attitudes and beliefs were chosen as the units of analysis for this study and are the next section of the literature review. Definitions of these related but discrete terms – both from the literature and those synthesized therefrom used for this study – along with definitions for tangential terms are provided, then a summary of what we know about changing attitudes and beliefs is provided. This section concludes with a summary of the importance of attitudes and beliefs when it comes to culturally responsive school counseling practices.

  The final section in this review of literature is an overview of the profession of school counseling. It includes a succinct history of the profession, along with defining and showing evidence of the value of comprehensive school counseling programs. Also included is an overview of the training for this profession, one institution for which is the site for this study, along with critiques of and recommended reforms for school counseling preparation programs. This section concludes with a summary of the importance and salience of school counselor leadership. Embedded in all of these topics are elements of this chapter's first section, culturally responsive school counseling.

Culturally Responsive School Counseling

The school-age population in the United States is growing increasingly diverse. In the most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2015), there are just over 50 million children enrolled in public school, preschool through high school. Of those, 5.3 percent have a disability (under the age of 18), 4.9% were born outside the United States, 4.02% are not US citizens, and 22% speak a language at home other than English. Of the 5-17 year old population enrolled in public school, 1.06% identify as American Indian and the same percentage as Asian, 15.84% as Black, 0.19% as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 23.13% as Hispanic (multiple races), 66.76% as White, 4.68% as two or more races and 10.41% as Other or three or more races. Just over twenty percent of this population is born at or below the poverty level. See Table 1 for a summary of these and other demographic characteristics of the school-age population in the United States enrolled in public school.

The richness of this diversity presents great opportunities for public educators, no less school counselors. When this diversity is seen as a strength and the differences students bring to the classroom are viewed as advantageous, the education for all students improves (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Nieto, 2013; Valencia, 2010). Inequity exists when it comes to providing school counseling services to this increasingly diverse population, however. Minority and poor students are less likely to have access to comprehensive SC programs (Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009; Johnson, Rochkind, Ott, & DuPont, 2010; McDonough, 2005). Counselors in higher poverty schools with higher percentages of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds

reported having less time for counseling activities and tasks related to college and career

planning and for meeting students' personal and social needs (Welton & Martinez, 2013). As

more thoroughly described in the Problem Statement,

school counselors often lack the training necessary – even when school counselors

implementing comprehensive school counseling programs are present – to effectively

ameliorate disparate outcomes for CLD students (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy,

2005; Militello & Janson, 2014).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of School-Age Children in the U.S.

Demographic Characteristic	Percent
American Indian	1.06[a]
Asian	1.06
Black	15.84
Hispanic (multiple races)	23.13
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.19
White	66.76
Two or more races	4.68
Other (3 or more races, etc.)	10.41
Foreign born	4.92
Born below the poverty level	20.15[b]
Speak languages other than English	22.17[c]
Not a U.S. citizen	4.02

Note. Data from National Center for Education Statistics (2015). [a]Race, Hispanic, and birth country percentages based on a total population of 50,129,120. [b]Based on a smaller population of retrievable data, 49,368.745. [c]Based on the population of 5-17 year olds enrolled in public school, 47,966,590.

This section summarizes the growing scholarship in the area collectively known as

culturally responsive school counseling (CRSC). From a close review of various publications

from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA; 2012a; 2012b; 2015; 2016) and a

review of the literature, I have found that culturally responsive school counseling involves

the following attributes: (a) culturally informed counseling; (b) social justice-focused counseling; and, (c) culturally proficient consultation and advocacy. In addition to discussing these elements, this section includes a discussion of the imperative for school counselors to be culturally responsive both individually as well as collectively. To begin, I will discuss the origin of CRSC: the disparate achievement and attainment outcomes between culturally and linguistically diverse students and their White, English-fluent counterparts. Popularly known as the "achievement gap," this gap is the *raison d'être* of this study and typically includes disparate performance on standardized test scores, graduation rates, advanced course completion, college enrollment, and income expectancy.

Achievement Gap

The discrepancy in achievement, attainment, opportunity, and income between students of color and White students is illustrated by multiple measures, including standardized test scores, graduation rates, advanced course completion, college enrollment, and income expectancy. Beneath mere data, however, are the insidious roots of racism and bias in fields ranging from the social sciences to psychometric testing. Despite much evidence that the achievement gap has nothing to do with genetic inferiorities or innate, intellectual weaknesses, these racist and biased roots still pervade scholarship on student achievement (Tucker, 1994). The roots of the achievement gap are also tied directly to the birth of the United States. Despite being founded on principles like "inalienable rights" and "equality and justice for all", these rights were really only available to White, property-owning males (Howard, 2006).

It is difficult to ignore the clear contradiction of these purported ideals is the

enslavement of Black people since its founding (Tucker, 1994). The historical roots of the

achievement gap continue beyond the founding of the nation and closely follow the

development of multicultural education beginning with the education of African American

children. What initially began as desegregated education in the early colonial and early

national periods, elementary and secondary education became segregated during the early

1800s, saw a push for desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s, and is now predominantly

segregated once again (Banks, 2004). But the education of students of color has perpetually

been underfunded and under-supported during all of these periods (Tucker, 1994). Howard

(2006) frames the history in terms of White social dominance. He writes

> It is no mere coincidence that the children of certain racial, cultural, linguistic, and
> economic groups—those who have for centuries been marginalized by the force of
> Western White domination—are the same students who are now failing or
> underachieving at disproportionate rates in our nation's schools. The race-based
> achievement gap in public education today *is* the demographic embodiment of our
> history of White social, political, and economic dominance. (p. 118, emphasis in
> original)

Closely related to the historical roots of the achievement gap are those who attempted

to use science to assert the genetic and intellectual inferiority of people of color, specifically

Black Americans. Influenced by her mentor, Henry Garrett (1962), Audrey Shuey (1958,

1966) is thought to have published the definitive work on what Valencia (2010) calls

"genetic pathology deficit thinking" (p. 42), as it was widely cited by others attempting to

corroborate the myth of genetic inferiority of Black people (e.g., Newby, 1967; Osborne &

McGurk, 1982). During over 380 discrete studies, Shuey's work included the study of more

than 120,000 participants who took more than 80 intelligence tests. In her 1966 edition, she

stated her conclusion plainly: "[The test results] all taken together, inevitably point to the

presence of native differences between Negroes and Whites as determined by intelligence

tests" (p. 521). Her work has been discredited by many, most notably Bond (1958), Pettigrew

(1964), and Hicks and Pellegrini (1966), who point out numerous flaws in both her

methodology and conclusions.

The work of Shuey was built upon by Arthur Jensen (1969) who titled his seminal

work on the genetic inferiority of Black people "How much can we boost IQ and scholastic

achievement?" This title "cleverly captures the core of Jensen's thesis, that the capacity of

poor and Black children to boost their scholastic achievement is very limited (and only in a

very prescribed manner) and their IQ even less" (Valencia, 2010, p. 42). Just like Shuey's

research, Jensen's work was widely discredited (Crow, 1969; Phillips & Kelley, 1975; Smith

& Bissell, 1970, Taylor, 1980) for its methodological flaws and its spurious conclusions.

Sadly, this wasn't the last time these claims of genetic and intellectual inferiority

were made. As recently as 1994, with the release of their book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence*

and Class Structure in American Life, Charles Murray and Richard Hernstein postulated an

intellectual stratification ranging from the *cognitive elite* to the *very dull*. They put forth this

rather complicated theory despite having never before authored a paper on this topic

published in a peer-reviewed publication (Dorfman, 1995). Nonetheless, "*The Bell Curve*

ranks as one of the most sustained treatises on genetic pathology deficit thinking ever

published in regard to the poor and people of color" (Valencia, 2010, p. 47). Tucker (1994),

when reviewing research on the same topic, observed how curious the enduring nature of this

type of research appears to be:

The scientific conflict over genetic differences between groups is now well into its second century. Unlike other, more traditional scientific controversies, in which the argument diminishes as new discoveries are made or as scientists with opposing views retire or die away, the bitter dispute over race has arisen anew in each generation, to be debated all over again in almost exactly the same terms but with a fervor that seems more theological than scientific. (p. 4)

So why is there a perpetual gap in levels of achievement, attainment, opportunity, and income between White students and students of color? While there do not appear to be definitive *causation* explanations, there appears to be some relevant *correlations* (Berlak, 2009). First, a number of studies have suggested that stereotype threat is a likely cause. Steele (1997) administered an exam composed of some of the more challenging items on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) to White and African American students at Stanford University, where all students must have high exam scores to be admitted. Half the students were told that the exam did not assess ability, but provided information about "understanding the psychological factors involved in solving verbal problems" while the others were told it was a valid instrument to assess academic skill and ability. African American students in the former group—who thought the test was about assessing psychological factors involved with solving verbal problems—scored at identical levels with the White students, while African American students who thought they were taking a test measuring their academic capacity scored significantly lower than the White students. Berlak (2009) summarizes this and other likely causes of the achievement gap:

> First, is students' perceptions of the opportunities in the wider society and the realities of "making it." Second, are the educational opportunities available in the education system itself—within school districts, schools, and within each classroom. Third, are the cumulative psychic and emotional effects of living in a social world saturated with racist ideology, and where racist practices and structures are pervasive, and often go unnamed. (p. 68)

To say that all students of color and poor students do not perform well academically is untrue. There are many examples of students from disenfranchised backgrounds who are achieving in proportion to their White peers. Howard (2010) highlights four schools who are helping all students achieve, regardless of their demographics. A mixed-methods study conducted by Howard involved him spending over 1,000 hours in four schools identified through a nomination process of schools that consistently achieved success in narrowing the achievement gap. These public or public charter schools, two elementary, one middle, and one high school, had majority racial/ethnic minority student populations, at least 60% of whom who qualified for free or reduced lunch, and had to show improvement in student achievement in core subject areas over at least a two year period. The work identified five themes across the schools: visionary leadership, effective instructional practices, intensive academic intervention, explicit conversations about and a focus on race, and engaged parent/guardians. Data for the study were gathered from observations, interviews, and informal conversations with teachers, administrators, students, and parents/guardians. The researcher also conducted and observed staff development during the two academic school years (2007-08, 2008-09) during which data were gathered.

The first theme Howard (2010) identified was visionary leadership, something that has been widely cited in the literature for its importance in transforming schools (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2006; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Noguera, 2006). Transformational leaders with success narrowing the achievement gap tended to focus on the instructional aspects of their administrative duties and maintained "an intense and persistent effort to promote academic achievement" (Howard, 2010, p. 134). Leaders in

schools where the achievement gap was narrowed maintained a strong belief that this was possible—and vociferously challenging those who held contrary opinions, a strong care and concern for staff members and students, and relentless efforts to engage families in their children's education. Their leadership was critical to the manifestation of the other themes Howard identified, especially effective instructional practices.

The importance of strong, effective instructional practices for student success is well-documented in the literature; many even propose it is the most important variable in bringing about those results (e.g., Dalton, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). Howard (2010) found similar results where he conducted interviews and observations and noted teachers' abilities to reduce distractions, remain focused on instruction, build classroom community, implement effective classroom management strategies, multi-task, and assess students in multiple ways. This included a focus on collaboration with other teachers, particularly on student achievement data analysis and contingency planning. Howard also noted that the instruction involved social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) and culturally relevant topics and concepts (Ladson-Billings, 2013). When these practices proved unable to help students achieve, schools Howard observed implemented intensive academic interventions.

Another theme Howard (2010) identified in his study was implementing support services for students who were not meeting their objectives. Before and after-school tutoring, "Homework Clubs" where students were able to complete homework at school with help from teachers and college student tutors, and additional instruction time during lunch and recess, were all examples of additional interventions used when students were falling behind.

At the high school Howard observed, an after school spoken word class was formed to help students augment their awareness of and exposure to literature, persuasive writing skills, and oral presentation skills; generally, "a space where students hone many of the skills and concepts that were taught in their English class" while focusing on relevant topics like police brutality, relationships, race, class, and gender. Howard noted the willingness of the school staff members to forego "traditional approaches and routines" in favor of "transformative interventions…that sought to increase students' engagement in schools as well as their academic achievement" (p. 143).

Another common theme among the schools Howard (2010) observed is not directly related to educational leadership or pedagogy: the extent to which staff members openly and candidly discussed race, racism, and their impact on education. Howard noted that "[t]he principals of these schools insisted that dialogues around race and ethnicity be an integral part of the professional development that teachers received" (p. 144). This includes explicit conversations about the racial and ethnic backgrounds of students, especially as it relates to their learning, leaders at these schools insisted that student achievement data were disaggregated by race/ethnicity and they encouraged their staff members to have open and honest conversations about certain groups of students, often students of color, were achieving at disproportionately low levels.

A final theme Howard (2010) identified at the four schools where he collected data was what he called the "salience of parent engagement" (p. 145). The literature is replete with evidence that parent involvement has a positive impact on student achievement (e.g., Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, Reamer, & Stair, 2004; Garbacz, McDowall, Schaughency,

Sheridan, & Welch, 2015; Jeynes, 2007). The engagement observed by Howard extended beyond frequent requests from school staff members for donations of time and money, however. Parents and guardians at these schools were observed working directly with students carrying out academic interventions, chaperoning field trips, and participating in decision-making in the school through Parent-Teacher Associations and similar organizations. One school had a Parent Center where parents could go for information about the school and how to support their children educationally. Howard noted that the most striking feature of these schools related to parent engagement was how important they were viewed by school staff as part of the educational process. One staff member noted that "[p]arents are these students' first teachers; without them doing their jobs, we could not do what we do." Howard concluded that parents were "viewed as important stakeholders in the school's mission of academic success" (p. 147). This finding was similar to one from Noguera and Wing (2006), discussed below.

From a diversity and equity project conducted by a team of educators and researchers at Berkeley High School in Berkeley, California, led by Noguera and Wing (2006) and school leaders conducted over six years, a number of recommendations emerged for how to narrow the achievement gap. First, the researchers suggest eliminating course offerings that allow, and sometimes encourage, students to diminish the rigor and college preparation of their class schedule. In addition, the course offerings should be aligned with the state's university system to create a more seamless transition to college. Mentoring programs should be in place to support students from marginalized backgrounds who are at greater risk of not reaching their fullest potential. Of particular relevance to school counselors, a system should

be in place to ensure equitable access to college planning and course selection advice and guidance that sometimes gets transferred informally among certain groups of students and parents, often widening gaps in opportunity and access. Highly qualified staff members should be assigned to teach all levels and types of classes, not just the most rigorous or college level courses, including English Language Learner (ELL) and classes with students who qualify for special education. Finally, systems should be in place to identify and remediate academic deficiencies and inequitable discipline consequences.

Advice from Noguera and Wing (2006) extends to the teaching staff, as well. Professional development should be provided to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to identify gaps in their curriculum and student outcomes, and those with this knowledge and experience should be available in coaching roles to novices in the area of equity and achievement. Instructional support from administrators must provide meaningful and useful feedback for how to improve classroom equity practices. This training and feedback should also help teachers meaningfully engage the parents and guardians of their students in the educational process. Individual teachers and school leadership must provide "explicit advice on how to support their students' academic needs and future goals after graduation" (p. 293), along with systems to elicit feedback from parents and an "inclusive parent organization focused on the pressing issues of access to the best quality teachers and curriculum and to equity in student achievement outcomes" (p. 293).

Finally, this study yielded recommendations for improving student learning and participation. This advice ranges from more effectively facilitating the transition between middle and high school to creating more meaningful methods for eliciting and utilizing

student feedback and input into school-wide decision-making processes. In addition, this set

of recommendations involves improving college and career readiness guidance provided to

students and supporting their personal, social, and emotional development. Among all of the

recommendations, the researchers points to the importance of support from community

organizations, social service agencies, and municipal and county governmental entities.

Embedded in the recommendations from the Noguera and Wing (2006) study at

Berkeley High School are the observations—both empirical and anecdotal—from a variety of

researchers regarding the inability of schools to substantially address gaps in achievement

between White students and culturally and linguistically diverse students without the

involvement of other, societal forces. As Noguera (2006) writes,

> …school reforms that lead to greater equity are impossible to achieve until efforts to
> address social inequality in the larger society are undertaken. The capitalist economy
> of the United States operate on the premise of inequality between classes and groups;
> there will always be far more workers than owners and far more people who are poor
> than rich…Under the cover of a pseudo-meritocracy—a system in which status is
> determined by effort and merit—education is used to make the inequality that is
> intrinsic within a capitalist system appear natural and warranted. (p. 283)

Schools reflect larger societal trends and discourses produced by social forces that far eclipse

their unilateral ability to change them (Anyon, 1997; Rothstein, 2004). The next section

provides an overview of the elements of culturally responsive school counseling that reflect

that profession's efforts to do its part to narrow the achievement gap.

Finally, a structural practice that perpetuates the achievement gap on which school

counselors have more direct influence is the tracking of students in higher or lower ability

courses. The process of how students get into tracks—or the sequential series of courses in

which students are placed based on previous academic achievement and/or their perceived

ability—involves multiple factors (Gamoran, 1987; Perry, 2002; Tyson, 2013; Welner, 2001). These factors include teacher recommendation, course scheduling conflicts, and parents' requests and demands, as well as student socioeconomic status and race. While school counselors cannot necessarily alter course prerequisites or sequences for individual students, they do play an important role in advocating for more equitable practices in course placement (Davis et al., 2013; Militello & Janson, 2014; Perna et al., 2008; Schoener & McKenzie, 2016; Welton & Martinez, 2013).

A charter school affiliated with the University of California, San Diego called The Preuss School engaged in a bold effort to eliminate tracking. The Preuss School serves low-income, 6-12 grade students from highly diverse race/ethnicity backgrounds, nearly 100% of whom are first generation college students. Through a dense system of supports, including tutoring, low teacher-to-student ratios, and a longer school day and year, every 12th grade student had taken at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course by the time they graduated, with no tracking system in place (Tyson, 2013). At South Side High School, a diverse suburban high school on Long Island, New York, tracking was eliminated at the middle school level. Through intensive supports include math workshops and after-school tutoring, all students were heterogeneously grouped in all subject areas over a several-year implementation plan. This produced similar, positive results on the state's Regent's exam for students from all racial and ethnic backgrounds with the gap in achievement closing between White and Asian students compared to students from African American and Hispanic backgrounds (Burris & Welner, 2005). While no research on broad scale has been conducted

to corroborate or empirically validate these results, this is a promising area to pursue when it comes to narrowing the achievement gap (Tyson, 2013).

The persistent and troubling gap in achievement, attainment, opportunity, and access for students of color has deep, historical roots extending back to the founding of the United States. While attempts to address these gaps have been made, more work is needed to address what Ladson-Billings (2006) collectively calls the "education debt" owed to CLD diverse students. The efforts of the school counseling profession to address these gaps – what is collectively known as "culturally responsive school counseling – will be discussed next.

Elements of Culturally Responsive School Counseling

The call for school counselors to play a larger role in narrowing the achievement gap for culturally and linguistically diverse students has been made by many in the literature (e.g., Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee, 2001). Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007) state is succinctly:

> Oppression is a reality faced by students of marginalized communities. It causes negative psychological effects and sociopolitical effects. These negative effects permeate the school system and serve as barriers to the advancement of marginalized communities. The school counseling profession in partnership with oppressed students and communities can play a pivotal role in facilitating the empowerment of such groups. (p. 331)

This section summarizes the major elements of culturally responsive school counseling, social justice-focused school counseling, and culturally proficient advocacy and consultation.

Multicultural Counseling. The imperative for counselors of all types, including school counselors, to be culturally competent, along with research and theory about how to become culturally competent, is not new in the literature (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2016). The multicultural counseling framework designed by

Derald Wing Sue and David Sue is widely cited in the literature and their textbook is a standard in counseling education programs. However, it was only recently that their model reflected more contemporary themes in cultural competence such as the role oppression and social marginalization play in the psychological development of clients from CLD backgrounds. With fewer than 50% of school counselors trained using this expanded, more inclusive model (Harris, 2013), gaps likely exist in the cultural competence of school counselors.

Sue and Sue's (2016) model includes four elements: cultural awareness and beliefs, social justice implications of counseling, culturally competent counseling skills, and racial/cultural identity development. This section will give a further explanation of these elements, along with a brief overview of the history of multicultural and culturally competent counseling.

The first element of Sue and Sue's (2016) model for cultural competence focuses on the internal, reflective work counselors must do in order to be effective helpers for clients from marginalized backgrounds. This work is important both for counselors from majority groups as well as those from marginalized groups. The authors talk about how counselors' "worldviews" will cause them to respond differently to issues of racism, sexism, and heterosexism, and that these reactions will often be emotional in nature that can become obstacles to cultural competence. They further posit that these worldviews must be considered in order to more effectively understand, empathize, and work effectively with diverse clients. This aligns with other views in this field that assert school counselors

recognize and appreciate the differences between their own culture and that of their clients (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016)

Endemic in the first element of Sue and Sue's (2016) model is also a thorough understanding of culturally sensitive and competent counseling, specifically in contrast to traditional counseling and clinical practice that emphasizes Eurocentric assumptions. School counselors must then examine how these assumptions will need to be adapted when working with clients who differ in race, gender, sexual orientation, and other group identities. This culminates in a deep look into obstacles that can interfere with cultural competence, including stereotypes, attitudes and beliefs among people of color toward other marginalized groups and therapeutic barriers likely to arise between counselors of color working White clients along with those arising when counselors of color work with clients of color.

The impact and social justice implications of counseling and psychotherapy is the next element of Sue and Sue's (2016) model. This element emphasizes that counseling does not take place in a vacuum, that the sociopolitical environment in which clients live, now and in their past, must be taken into consideration when treating clients, especially those from marginalized backgrounds. This is similar to the sociopolitical implications that culturally responsive teaching and learning theorists assert must be considered for culturally and linguistically diverse students (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2013; Nieto, 2013). The authors assert that this sociopolitical climate affects everything associated with the counseling and therapeutic process, including the "manifestation, etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological disturbances in socially devalued groups in our society" (p. 117). In addition, there are systemic factors that must be considered outside the therapy room, including

institutional policies, practices, and regulation, that affect mental health and counseling practices. Considering these factors, along with those from the other elements of the culturally competent model put forth by Sue and Sue, leads to what they call "social justice counseling." This is a separate element of this Chapter and will be discussed in more detail below.

The third element of Sue and Sue's (2016) model for counseling cultural competence involves the actual practices of culturally competent counselors. This includes being aware of and mastering strategies to avoid barriers to multicultural counseling and therapy. Understanding communication styles among various cultural groups is one important way to facilitate culturally competent counseling with clients from diverse backgrounds. In general, counselors must learn to identify and utilize empirically supported treatments found to be effective with clients from various cultural groups and counselors should strive to use evidence-based practices. Finally, this element includes awareness and value of indigenous, non-Western methods of healing and the important role of spirituality when working with clients from diverse religious backgrounds.

The final element of Sue and Sue's (2016) model is racial/cultural identity development and its role in counseling and therapy. First, counselors must understand the concept of racial and cultural identity development, the process that people go through as they come to terms with their race and/or culture and how it interacts with and affects their surroundings. This is likely most exemplified by Cross' (1971) model of Black identity development that includes five stages: preencounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment. Racial and cultural identity development

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models exist for many racial and cultural groups and understanding how they impact the counseling relationship is an important aspect of culturally competent counseling. The same is true for White people who must also come to terms with their Whiteness, including the privilege associated with their skin color and what White people must do to develop a nonracist and antiracist White identity.

Again, this model of culturally competent counseling has only been part of the training of school counselors-in-training since the fifth edition of Sue and Sue's (2008) preeminent textbook on this topic. Previous models left out important aspects of culturally responsive school counseling, including the social justice aspects discussed above and in depth below. This is also one of the requisite elements of the broader field of culturally responsive school counseling, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The competence school counselors demonstrate with Sue and Sue's (2016) four elements is more broadly known as their "multicultural competence." The literature show that school counselors generally rate their multicultural competence in the average range. A few of these studies will be discussed next.

Holcomb-McCoy (2005) conducted a study, also discussed in Chapter 1, that used a systematic stratified sample of the members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) representative of all 50 states and U.S. territories ($n =209$). The sample includes school counselors of varying lengths of service with most having 1-4 years (37%, $n = 78$), 26% ($n = 54$) having 5-10 years, 14% ($n = 30$) has 11-14 years, and 22% ($n = 22$) had 15 years or more. Most of the respondents were White/European descent (89%, $n = 187$), 3% ($n = 6$) were African/Black, 1% ($n = 3$) Hispanic/Latino, 2% Asian ($n = 5$), 2% ($n = 4$) Native

American, and 2% "other" (*n* = 4). School counselors who worked in elementary schools (37%, *n* = 79), middle schools (23%, *n* = 49), and high schools (31%, *n* = 65), were represented in the sample, along with 7% (*n* = 16) who worked in other types of school settings, such as K-12 schools.

Results of this study indicated that the multicultural competence of the participants fell into one of three groups of factors: Multicultural Terminology, Multicultural Knowledge, and Multicultural Awareness. Participants were asked to rate their competence on 32 statements using a 4-point Likert-type scale: 4 = *extremely competent*, 3 = *competent*, 2 = *somewhat competent*, 1 = *not competent*. The results revealed that respondents, on average, rated themselves at least "somewhat competent" on all three factors (Multicultural Knowledge, *M* = 2.46; Multicultural Awareness, *M* = 3.37; Multicultural Terminology, *M* = 3.41).

In a more recent study that sought to predict the interaction among the race/ethnicity of school counselors, their multicultural counseling competence (MCC), and their racial/ethnic identity, Chao (2013) recruited a sample of 259 ASCA members. The sample had a mean age of 41.34 (*SD* = 7.65) and was comprised of 70% women (*n* = 181) and 30% men (*n* = 78), and 69% White/European Americans (*n* = 179), 12% Blacks (*n* = 31), 11% Latino/Latinas (*n* = 28), 5% Asian Americans (*n* = 13), 0.4% Native American (*n* = 1), 2% biracial (*n* = 5), and 0.7% multiracial (*n* = 2). Participants were asked to rate their level of multicultural training using the classifications indicated by Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, & Corey (1998), In the sample, 9% (*n* = 23) did not have any multicultural

training, 77% ($n = 199$) had taken at least one multicultural course, and 14% ($n = 36$) had taken two or more courses.

Participants completed five instruments in the study. First, they completed a demographic questionnaire supplying information about their sex, age, and race/ethnicity, as well as their levels of multicultural training using Sodowsky et al.'s (1998) classifications. Then, they completed the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1991) that measures respondents' tendencies to give socially desirable responses for which Chao (2013) controlled. Next, participants took the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) that measures racial/ethnic identity awareness for multiple racial/ethnic groups, including people from White/Caucasian backgrounds. Participants then took the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000) to measure their level of acceptance of things like racism and effect of race on the lives of people. Finally, the participants took the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Riger, & Austin, 2002), a 32-item scale that uses two subscales: Multicultural Awareness (12 items) and Multicultural Knowledge (20 items) and the scale itself controls for social desirability (Ponterotto et al., 2002).

The study found that there is a significant link between each of the following with the multicultural counseling competence for school counselors: race/ethnicity, multicultural training, racial/ethnic identity, and color-blind racial attitudes. Using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, Chao (2013) found that race/ethnicity and multicultural training were significant predictors of MCC ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .05$), meaning that, while racial/ethnic minority

school counselors had higher levels of MCC when both they and their White school counselor counterparts had lower levels of multicultural training. This difference decreased with increasing levels of multicultural training producing no significant differences between White and racial/ethnic minority school counselors with similar levels of multicultural training. In addition, the study found that the higher levels of racial/ethnic identity (as measured by the MEIM; Phinney, 1992), the higher the MCC of participants ($B = 1.67$, $SE = 0.41$, $\beta = .25$, $t(258) = 4.07$, $p < .001$). Finally, the study found that high levels of color-blind racial attitudes (as measured by the CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000) mitigated the impact of higher levels of multicultural training and race/ethnicity on MCC. These results indicate that, in addition to multicultural training being important to improve school counselors' MCC, that training must also include interventions to reduce their color-blind racial attitudes and work on their racial/ethnic identity development.

Schwallie-Giddis et al. (2004) conducted a qualitative study that included 13 school counselors selected from a group who participated a multicultural counseling professional development series during seven sessions throughout a school year. The participants were all female except for one male. Nine ranged in age from 40 and 60 years with a mean age of 48. All participants had at least a Master's degree and their years of experience ranged from less than 5 years ($n = 5$) to between 10 and 20 years ($n = 5$) with a mean length of service of 10 years of experience. Ten of the participants were European American, two were Hispanic, and one was African American. Of the participants, 7 had significant experience working with linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students ranging from 15 to 20 years, with 2 participants having more than 25 years of experience and an overall mean of 15 years of

experience working with LCD students. Four of the participants were bilingual and three were fluent Spanish speakers, one in French. All of the participants were from large, highly diverse, suburban schools.

The participants were selected from a group of 35 school counselors who participated in a seven-session, professional development series that addressed 31 multicultural, counseling competencies. The 13 study participants were asked questions using a standardized, open-ended interview protocol collectively developed by the researchers with the interviews conducted by an independent interviewer. Using cross-case analysis, the study found that a majority of the participants expressed at least some discomfort with their multicultural competence, especially in the areas of intercultural communication (i.e. questioning behaviors, mannerisms, etc.), cultural knowledge (i.e. views and beliefs), and intracultural conflicts (resulting from the class of home and school cultures). Further, the study indicated a desire on the part of the participants to receive ongoing professional development in order to increase their multicultural counseling competence.

Much research supports the need for school counselors to have high levels of multicultural counseling competence in order to enhance their ability to work with diverse groups (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2016; Sue & Sue, 2016). As the definition and scope of "cultural competence" grows, training in this area will better prepare school counselors for work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, there is much evidence that key aspects to more meaningfully support and advocate for students from marginalized backgrounds is necessary, including a stronger focus on social justice and the associated aspects of power and oppression (Bemak & Chung, 2008;

Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Vera & Speight, 2003). Some of these elements of culturally responsive school counseling will be discussed next.

Social Justice-Focused School Counseling. While multicultural counseling competence is an important place to begin, there is increasing scholarship that shows school counselors must transcend merely adopting more favorable attitudes and beliefs toward diverse clients and "must be grounded in a commitment to social justice that necessitates an expansion of professional activities beyond individual counseling" (Vera & Speight, 2003, p. 254). Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason (2009) found that there is a need to distinguish between multicultural competence and counselor education that is infused with social justice concepts and practices. While they note that a precise definition of social justice is somewhat ambiguous, one that encapsulates most of the elements found in the literature is offered by Goodman et al. (2004): "the scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self determination" (p. 795).

Embodied in the above definition of social justice is the basic idea that some in society have power and others do not; in fact, some not only lack power, but they are systematically oppressed in covert and even overt ways by those in power, from ongoing and perpetually poorer education outcomes (CRDC, 2016; NAEP, 2015) to mass incarceration of Black males (Alexander, 2012) to poorer mental health outcomes (Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005). In addition to the importance of school counselors being familiar with cultural differences among students, it is also important they understand the pervasive impact of

marginalization and oppression on CLD students (Sue & Sue, 2016), along with the power they have to affect systemic patterns and services in schools where they serve (Martin & Robinson, 2011; Young, 2011). Unfortunately, the topics of systemic power and oppression are those most often absent from school counselor education programs (Feldwisch & Whiston, 2015; Goodman et al., 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011).

For counselors to truly imbue their practice with social justice principles, they must be aware of the effects of historical oppression on the lives of people from marginalized backgrounds, particularly people of color, and how this influences the counseling process. Sue and Sue (2016) argue that traditional counseling approaches do not sufficiently acknowledge this impact and may even be "antagonistic to the lifestyles, cultural values, and sociopolitical experiences of marginalized clients" (p. 155). In fact, Capodilupo (2016) asserts that microaggressions are often perpetrated, consciously or not, by helping professionals against clients. Microaggressions are defined by the author as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to a target group, such as people of color; religious minorities; women; people with disabilities; and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals" (p. 194). Sue and Sue's (2016) model indicates that it is imperative for school counselors to understand the psychological impact of microaggressions and take measures to avoid them.

In a grounded theory study involving 16 school counselors who self-identified as "social justice advocates," Singh, Urbano, Haston, and McMahon (2010) used a demographic questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to collect qualitative data. The participants were recruited from electronic fliers distributed among school counselor listservs in the

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Southeastern U.S. and used a purposive sampling method (Patton, 2015) with the following criteria: hold a Master's degree in school counseling, have prior experience as a school counselor, and identify as a social justice advocate. Of the 16 participants, 12 were female, 4 were male, 11 identified as White, 4 as African American, and 1 as Asian. The ages of the participants ranged from 27 to 56 years ($M = 39$ years) and 5 identified as upper middle class, 10 as middle class, and 1 as lower middle class. Six came from public elementary schools, 2 from public middle schools, 1 from a private middle school, and 7 from public high schools. The mean years of experience were 8.6 and the range was 1 to 22 years.

The study revealed seven, overarching strategies used by the participants to incorporate social justice into their practice. The first two, political savvy and consciousness raising, informed the other five strategies and involved knowing when and how to intervene in situations to raise awareness and consciousness of others to systemic inequity that existed in their schools. A third strategy was broaching difficult dialogues—that often resulted in discomfort and defensiveness among others—in order to call attention to how students were being treated in both school-wide and classroom settings. Building relationships with deliberately selected stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, administrators (building and district), other school counselors, janitors, nurses, social workers, and other key community members, was a fourth strategy used by all but 2 of the participants. A fifth strategy is teaching students self-advocacy skills among marginalized youth. All but one of the participants discussed a sixth strategy, the use of data to promote on a broader scale the absence of social justice practices in school and trends that reflected inequity. Finally, 14 of the participants emphasized the importance of educating others about the role of school

counselors in advocating for social justice in schools. This study produced some important themes for school counselor educators to consider adding to their training.

There is much evidence that school counselors can meaningfully impact positive educational outcomes for students, whether it be their academic achievement (Barna, & Brott, 2013; Bruce, Getch & Ziomek-Daigle, 2009; Sink, 2008; Trusty, Mellin, & Herbert, 2008; Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2011), preventing students from dropping out of school (Stanard, 2003), along with their postsecondary aspirations and attainment (Poynton & Lapan, 2017; Welton & Martinez, 2013). From a social justice perspective, then, it is important to know *which* students specifically benefit from school counseling programs. There is a large amount of evidence that students who are *least* likely to have consistent access to high quality school counseling programs are those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Bell, Rowan-Kenyon, & Perna, 2009; Perna et al., 2008). Therefore, it is important that school counselors monitor and evaluate their programs to ensure they are serving all students.

Unfortunately, there is a moderate amount of evidence that suggests school counselors are not ensuring equitable access to their programs on a pervasive basis (Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzales, & Johnston, 2009; Militello & Janson, 2014; Welton & Martinez, 2013). In their study including school counselors in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, Holcomb-McCoy et al. (2009) used a convenience sampling method (Patton, 2015) to recruit 130 school counselors to take the School Counselor Attribute and Data Usage Survey (SCADUS) developed by the researchers. The SCADUS was developed using items revised from existing instruments including the General Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer &

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Jerusalem, 1995) and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Scale (1997), along with the researchers'

review of the literature and collective expertise. Of the 130 participants, 91.5% ($n = 119$)

were female, 61.5% self-identified as White ($n = 80$), 36.2% as Black/African American ($n = 47$), 0.8% as Asian ($n = 1$), 0.8% as Latino ($n = 1$), and 0.8% as other ($n = 1$). Elementary

counselors comprised 37.7% ($n = 49$) of the sample, while 25.4% worked in middle schools

($n = 33$), 28.5% in high schools ($n = 37$), and 8.5% ($n = 11$) worked in "other" types of

schools. With a mean number of years of service of 8.36 ($SD = 7.9$), 21.5% ($n = 28$)

completed graduate school within the 6-10 years range, the same percentage within the 11-20

years range, 16.2% ($n = 21$) within the 3-5 years range, 12.3% ($n = 16$) within the 21+ years

category, the same percentage within the 1-2 years range, and 10.8% ($n = 14$) within the year

of taking the survey.

Items on the SCADUS were grouped and means were calculated for seven areas,

including school counselor use of data. While not part of a hypothesis being tested nor

intended outcomes of the study, results indicated that school counselors rated among the least

likely uses of data "to determine if all students have equitable opportunities" (Holcomb-

McCoy et al., 2009, p. 348). The item with the highest mean for possible uses of data was

"…on my school counseling program to my supervisor" ($M = 3.84$) and the lowest was

"…on my school counseling program to parents" ($M = 2.64$). Just above that was the item

regarding the use of data to determine if all students have equitable opportunities ($M = 2.84$).

As the researchers note, it is disappointing that school counselors rated this use of data as

such an infrequent activity "given the research that indicates a positive relationship between

data usage and an increase in achievement among low-income students and students of color" (p. 349; e.g., Earl & Katz, 2002).

The benefits of infusing social justice elements into school counseling practice are numerous in the literature. Chen-Hayes et al. (2011) assert that school counselors' leadership and advocacy on academic achievement fosters that of other educational professionals. This is in part due to school counselors' potential to impact school-wide policies, procedures, and practices. Martin and Robinson (2011), in fact, posit that the goal of school counselors should be to fix inequitable and socially unjust policies and procedures rather than just focusing on working with and "fixing" individual students. However, this cannot happen without the important role school counselors play in empowering students with whom they work.

The important role that student empowerment plays in culturally responsive school counseling is summed up nicely by Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007):

> It is evident that if professional school counselors are to be successful in facilitating the empowerment of students, they must engage in a self-reflective process that leads to their own development of critical consciousness and sense of empowerment. This is especially crucial for counselors whose racial/ethnic background, socioeconomic status, ability, or sexual orientation gives them a position of power and privilege both in the school setting and the general society. Counselor educators would do well to facilitate the empowerment process for school counselor trainees; this would entail incorporating issues of social inequalities, leadership development, public policy, ethnic studies, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies, women's studies, and social justice into counselor education curricula. (p. 344)

Hipolito and Delgado clarify that school counselors should not assume a "savior role" and they "must be seen as important, but ancillary to the movement of students for personal and community empowerment" (p. 344).

Equally important in socially just school counseling programs to student empowerment is educating and equipping parents and guardians with resources (Jeynes, 2007; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Wilder, 2014). Holcomb-McCoy (2010) noted some deficits in how school counselors viewed their role in involving parents/guardians of low income students and students of color in the college planning process despite how important it is to do so. Chen-Hayes et al. (2011) posit that school counselors play a key role in breaking down barriers that often exist for parental involvement. In many cases, parents/guardians had poor experiences in schools themselves, so their willingness and ability to engage with schools is further diminished. The authors further assert that school counselors must "help parents and guardians to maneuver through unfamiliar territories to access services…[,]understand and interpret information received from the school…[, and] to understand their rights as parents or guardians" (p. 121).

Moving from multicultural competence to a more systemic, equity-focused approach for school counselors is critical for school counselors to maximize their ability to mitigate the gap in achievement, opportunity, and attainment for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Fully understanding and incorporating into their practice the effects of oppression on CLD students, the important impact of power in schools, and the critical nature of student and parent/guardian empowerment, are all important elements of social justice-focused school counseling. Equally important are culturally competent and informed consultation and advocacy methodologies that will be discussed in the next section.

Culturally Proficient Consultation and Advocacy. Effective consultation as a responsibility for school counselors is strongly indicated in the literature as a critical element

of social justice-focused and equitable counseling programs (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzelez, 2016; Ponterotto, Mendelowitz, & Collabolletta, 2008; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). The American School Counselor Association mentions this role several times in its School Counselor Competencies in three of the four major areas of the ASCA National Model (2012a). This is an important first step to fully understand and to be able to better empathize with culturally and linguistically diverse students before advocating for individual and groups of students, another important element of culturally responsive school counseling (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Sue & Sue, 2016; Trusty & Brown, 2005). This section will more thoroughly cover these topics.

   Culturally proficient consultation. Consultation in school counseling is an important part of the comprehensive school counseling program and an integral role for school counselors (ASCA, 2012a) and effective consultation practices are part of school counselors' ethical obligations to their students (ASCA, 2016). Despite this, little empirical research exists on the methods used and effectiveness of school counselor consultation (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Perera-Diltz, Moe, & Mason, 2011). This section will define consultation, especially related to the role of school counselor, and position it as integral to culturally responsive practice.

   Consultation for school counselors is a triadic relationship between consultant, consultee, and client on whose behalf and for whose benefit consultation is conducted (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2006). In most cases, the school counselor is the consultant and students are the clients; consultees for school counselors are typically teachers,

parents/guardians, administrators, other school-based mental health professionals (i.e. school social workers, psychologists, school nurses), and community mental health providers (Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). This school counselor function engages important stakeholders in students' lives "to receive information on student needs and to identify strategies that promote student achievement" and equips school counselors to advocate for students "to promote academic, career and personal/social development" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 87).

In a study conducted with members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Perera-Diltz et al. (2011) found that 79% of counselors engage in some form of consultation. The sample ($n = 998$) included 16.5% males and 83.3 females, 6.4% African Americans, 0.8% Asian Americans, 83.9% European Americans, 5.8% Hispanic Americans, 0.7% Native Americans, and 2.4% who indicated Other for ethnicity. Those who consulted indicated a mean age of 40.9 years ($SD = 11.4$, range = 44) and 81.4% had trained in the ASCA National Model. They completed the School Counselor Survey (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008, 2010) that asks respondents to indicate real compared to ideal duties performed by school counselors based on the ASCA National Model (2012a).

Results from this study indicate that nearly two-thirds (65.73%) of respondents often or always consult with other school counselors, and over half (55.31%) do so with principals and over three-quarters (78.86%) do so with teachers. Only about a quarter (25.25% consult with community mental health counselors and just under one-third consult with school psychologists (31.96%) often or always. Almost seventy percent (69.34%) consult often or always with parents and guardians and 61.72% consult on those bases with school nurses. In a MANOVA conducted on the academic level of counselors (i.e. elementary, middle, high, or

mixed), the authors found that there is a statistically significant ($p \leq .0001$) but small (Cohen, 1988) effect size ($\eta^2 = .177$) accounting for differences in consultation habits among counselors from various levels. Elementary counselors were less likely than their middle, high, and mixed-level colleagues to engage in consultation.

Consultation and collaboration with others is particularly important for culturally responsive school counselors (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011; Sue & Sue, 2016). Stephens and Lindsey state it plainly when they write about school counselors' goals to address individual and institutional barriers that impede the progress of culturally and linguistically diverse students:

> School counselors cannot achieve these goals in isolation. Accomplishing these goals requires collaboration with others. To effectively identify the needs of students requires knowing who the students are, the communities in which they live, and the family issues they face. (p. 39)

Brigman and Webb (2008) encourage "school counselors to consult because children and adolescents often feel powerless to make changes; therefore, it becomes useful to work with significant adults in the children's lives" (p. 507). The authors also note that school counselor consultations typically involve "assisting teachers or parents in helping students who have developmental as well as special needs" (p. 507). Effective consultation is not only beneficial for the student client who is the subject of a given consultation event, but also those in systems or groups of which the student is a member. For example, consulting with a teacher about how to affect a student's behavior in the classroom can also have positive effects for her/his classmates, especially those from similar backgrounds (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011).

A number of authors caution that consultation, while critical for cultural competence, can exacerbate existing power imbalances and further marginalization. Brigman and Webb (2008) assert that effective consultation for school counselors must involve a collaborative, equity-focused relationships with consultees. Holcomb-McCoy and Gonzalez (2016) note that consultations between schools and home often involve a "information as change agent perspective" that "can create several problems if consultants fail to take cultural factors into account when consulting with parents of diverse backgrounds" (p. 258). They further note that consultation must "consider the importance of psychosocial influences such as family structure, cultural value systems, interactional patterns, and adaptive coping strategies on behavior and functioning in culturally diverse families" (p. 258). Otherwise, the efforts may further alienate and marginalize culturally diverse families. When it comes to consulting with someone to assist the school counselor to better help a student-client whose background differs from the counselor's, say one who identifies as transgender, Sue and Sue (2016) note that type of consultation is most effective when it occurs within an existing relationship cultivated either with a particular consultant or members of a particular community.

Consulting with others to provide better service to students is an important part of the role of school counselors (ASCA, 2012a). This is especially the case for students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and even more so when those backgrounds differ from the school counselor's (Brigman & Webb, 2008; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Perera-Diltz et al., 2011). Stanley et al. (2009) note the importance of consultation in order for school counselors to serve as effective advocates for students. This important and related function for school counselors will be discussed next.

Advocacy. The role of school counselors specifically mentioned as "advocates" goes back as far as the early 1970's when Dworkin and Dworkin (1971) called for school counselors to take a more active role in promoting the academic, career, and personal/social well-being of students. When school counselors are advocates for students, they do so on both the micro- and macro-levels. This means learning about and identifying needs for, then working with others to form a plan to address those needs, for both individual and groups of students (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Gibson, 2010; Ratts, DeKruhf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007).

A more expansive call for school counselors to take a more active role in addressing inequities among groups of students was undertaken by The Education Trust (2009) when it established the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) in 2003. Launched at a time when schools were increasingly focused on accountability and standards, this initiative operationalized some of the diffuse calls for school counselors to play a more active role in racial equity and social justice. The mission of NCTSC is to "transform school counselors into powerful agents of change in schools to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement for low-income students and students of color" (Education Trust, 2009, n.p.). This led to The College Board (2010), the national organization that provides standardized assessments such as the SAT and Advanced Placement (AP) exams, to create the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy. The stated goal of this organization was to advocate "for school counselors in order to affirm the importance and value of their role in advancing school reform and student achievement" in the areas of:

- Equity in college and career readiness;
- Leadership in systemic education reform; and

- Transformation of school counseling practice. (n.p.)

Implied in these initiatives were criticisms of the role school counselors had played prior to them in addressing educational inequities and advocating for all students. Bemak and Chung (2005) even asserted that school counselors played a role in "perpetuating the status quo and maintaining the inequities that currently exist in our schools" (p. 197). While they quickly note that this reality was mostly because "[s]chool administrators and school systems have externally defined the job of the school counselor" and school counselors have "adopted and internalized these roles, with little or no input or discussion" (p. 197), this was still quite an indictment of the school counseling profession. These sentiments were echoed by others more recently but also more narrowly when discussing the achievement and college-going tendencies of students of color (Militello & Janson, 2014; Perna et al., 2008; Schoener & McKenzie, 2016; Welton & Martinez, 2013) and low-income, first generation college students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Savitz-Romer, 2012). This has led to a renewed focus on the role of advocacy played by school counselors (Davis, Davis, & Mobley, 2013; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016).

Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek (2003) proposed a model of school counselor advocacy that balances to what extent school counselors act *with* as opposed to *on behalf of* students with the micro- and macro-levels of advocacy in three arenas: within and with the client/student, in the school and community, and in the public arena. When counselors act with students on a micro-level, they empower students to utilize their own strengths and resources, within the context of social, political, economic, and cultural factors that affect them, to create and carry out action self-advocacy action plans. Trusty and Brown (2005)

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extended this model by adding specific dispositions, knowledge, and skills necessary for

school counselors to effectively advocate for their students. These models operationalized the

broader calls by the Education Trust (2009) and the College Board (2010) for school

counselor advocacy, discussed above.

Holcomb-McCoy (2005, 2007, 2010) has written extensively about culturally

responsive aspects of school counselors' roles and asserts advocacy should be infused among

all of them, rather than a stand-alone responsibility. She states it plainly in her book, *School

Counseling to Close the Achievement Gap: A Social Justice Framework for Success* (2007)

when she writes: "There is no way that a school counselor can work from a social justice

framework without having the ability and willingness to challenge biased views, practices,

and behaviors" (p. 95). And these biased views, practices, and behaviors pervade the other,

discrete responsibilities of school counselors, including their responsibilities in counseling

and intervention planning; consultation; connecting schools, families, and communities;

collecting and utilizing data; and coordinating student services and support. She gives

guidelines for challenging bias in each of these areas:

- Be aware of your own attitudes, stereotypes, and expectations;

- Actively listen to and learn from others' experiences;

- Acknowledge and appreciate diversity, don't just tolerate it;

- Be aware of your own hesitancies to intervene;

- Expect tension and conflict; and

- Work collectively with others.

She notes that the responsibility to advocate for students includes an obligation to encourage and facilitate conversations about social justice in schools.

Advocacy is one of four themes that pervade the ASCA National Model (2012a) discussed below. The organization asserts that "school counselors are ideally situated to serve as advocates for every student in meeting high academic, career and personal/social standards" and "work to ensure these needs are addressed throughout the K-12 school experience" (p. 4). The organization notes, as do others (e.g., Chen-Hayes et al., 2011) that counselors' leadership and advocacy on academic achievement for all students fosters that of other educational professionals. This leads into the professional and moral imperative for school counselors to be culturally responsive, to be discussed next.

Mandates for Culturally Responsive School Counseling Practices

School counselors have ethical, professional, and moral responsibilities to be receptive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds (ASCA, 2016; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; MPCAC, 2017; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011; Sue & Sue, 2016). In this section, elements of these professional, ethical, and moral imperatives for utilizing culturally responsive practices will be discussed, including the accreditation standards for the university that will be the site for this study, the professional and ethical standards of the profession's largest, national organization, the American School Counselor Association, and a case for school counselors' moral responsibility in this area will also be made.

Accrediting Bodies. School counseling education and training programs seek accreditation from bodies such as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) and the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council

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(MPCAC) in order to adhere to a known set of standards (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Davis, 2015). Accreditation signifies a level of excellence of programs, aids institutions in attracting graduate students and, in turn, helps those students meet licensure and certification standards in states where they practice (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Lee, 2013; Milsom & Akos, 2007). There is not national or standardized method for school counselors to gain necessary credentials for practicing as these standards are decided by the states where those credentials are sought (Wheeler & Bertram, 2015).

Wheeler and Bertram (2015) further note that it is state licensure and certification standards that most directly drive the standards for the profession, but that accrediting bodies and professional associations generally play an important role in advocating for and pressing states to adopt those standards. As a result, the accreditation standards of the largest accreditor of school counseling programs (CACREP) and the accrediting body of the institution that was the site for this study will be discussed, especially those standards that pertain to cultural responsiveness, racial equity, and social justice.

Goodman-Scott (2015) estimates that about forty percent of school counseling education programs are accredited by Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP). According to CACREP's website (2018), 272 programs with a specialization in school counseling are accredited by the organization. There are numerous references to cultural diversity, pluralistic society, multicultural counseling, and social justice throughout the CACREP (2016) standards. One such reference is found in the Foundation section and stipulates that objectives in CACREP-accredited program should "reflect current knowledge and projected needs concerning counseling practice in a multicultural and

pluralistic society" (p. 9). An entire section in the standards is devoted to "social and cultural diversity" and require that "counselor education programs must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum," including "theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy" and "strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination" (p. 10). Other references in the standards involve culturally sensitive strategies in assessment and testing, research, and these elements in the specialization areas that can be accredited by CACREP (e.g., addiction counseling, career counseling, etc.).

According to organization's website, the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC, 2018a) accredits fifty-one institutions in the United States, seven of which are specifically denoted as school counselor specializations. The institution in this study is accredited by the MPCAC through 2024 (MPCAC, 2018a). MPCAC (2017) includes a reference to cultural responsiveness in its mission statement and a number of other times throughout their accreditation standards. The most salient is one titled "multiculturalism and diversity" and requires accredited programs to "demonstrate evidence of students' professional competence," including the "knowledge, self-awareness, and skills in working with individuals, groups, and communities who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics" (p. 5). The organization refers in its mission statement to promoting the "public good," which they then stipulate includes "a social justice perspective" (p. 12).

The standards and ethical standards set by professional associations are also important ways for school counseling education and training programs, along with practicing school counselors, to determine best practices and align them with their peers (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Davis, 2015). Those of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the largest such body in the United State, will be discussed next.

ASCA Standards and Code of Ethics. The American School Counselor Association is the largest professional association whose mission specifically includes school counselors. Until 2018, the ASCA was the school counseling division of the American Counseling Association, the largest professional association for professional counselors in the United States (ACA, 2018a). In March of 2018, the organizations announced they now operate separately and autonomously, but retain their collaborative relationship (ACA, 2018b). The ASCA's membership is comprised of 81% female and 15% male members, one percent who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, three percent Asian, fourteen percent Black/African American, less than one percent Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Island, and eighty-one percent White (ASCA, 2018b). The mission of ASCA is "to represent school counselors and to promote professionalism and ethical practices" (ASCA, 2018a).

ASCA publishes a number of publications that compel school counselors to be culturally responsive. First, the ASCA National Model (2012a), discussed below, includes language about the necessity for school counselors to be culturally competent and responsive. Next, the Association has a position statement on cultural diversity (ASCA, 2015) and equity for all students (2012d). The organization also published *School Counselor Competencies* in which there are many references to cultural diversity and social justice. Finally, the

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Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) contain language relevant to this topic.

The ASCA National Model (2012a), discussed below, provides a framework for comprehensive school counseling programs. Comprehensive school counseling programs "promote student achievement" and "are comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and developmental in nature" (p. xii). Specifically, the model "ensures equitable access to a rigorous education for all students" (p. xii) and "is delivered to all students in a systematic fashion" (p. xii). These references to equity and systematic access are both essential for social justice-focused school counseling (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007) and their absences are frequent criticisms of the school counseling profession (Bell, Rowan-Kenyon, & Perna, 2009; Bryan et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2010). Aligning the practice of school counselors to a program that strives to provide high quality, comprehensive services to all students – with a critical eye on equity – is an important way to be culturally responsive (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016).

In 1988, the ASCA created a position statement on cultural diversity. Updated five times since then, most recently 2015, the statement begins by stating that school counselors must "be more globally responsive and culturally competent in the current educational and social environment" (p. 1). ASCA also has a position statement on Equity for All Students (2012d) that states that school counselors "recognize and distinguish individual and group differences" and "advocate for the equitable treatment of all students in school and in the community" (p. 1). The position statement asserts that school counselors do this by "maintaining professional knowledge of the ever-changing and complex world of students'

culture," informing staff of those changes, and "promoting the development of school policies leading to equitable treatment of all students and opposing school policies hindering equitable treatment of any student" (p. 1).

To standardize the practice of school counseling and to provide a national model, ASCA (2012b) published competencies for school counselors to "outline the knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes that ensure school counselors are equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the profession and the needs of pre-K–12 students" and to "help ensure new and experienced school counselors are equipped to establish, maintain and enhance a comprehensive school counseling program addressing academic achievement, career planning and personal/social development" (p. 1). These competencies were first developed 2007 and were most recently revised in 2018 and include Knowledge, Abilities and Skills, and Attitudes school counselors need to successfully carry out the functions within the ASCA National Model's (2012a) framework of School Counseling Programs, Foundations, Management, and Accountability. There are a number of these competencies that emphasize the role of school counselors in being culturally responsive and socially just in their practice.

In the School Counseling Programs section of the competencies, knowledge a school counselor must possess pertains to "Barriers to student learning and use of advocacy and data-driven school counseling practices to close the achievement/opportunity gap" (p. 1). Relevant Abilities and Skills in this section include an entire sub-section on advocacy, including that a competent school counselor "Understands and defines advocacy and its role in comprehensive school counseling programs" and advocates for students individually as well as "with school and community stakeholders" (p. 3). Another sub-section in the

Abilities and Skills section of School Counseling Programs is one that asserts a school counselor "Acts as a systems change agent to create an environment promoting and supporting student success" (p. 3). Finally, Attitudes a school counselor must possess within the School Counseling Programs section include that "Every student should have access to and opportunity for a high-quality education" (p. 3).

In the Foundations section, Abilities and Skills needed for a school counselor to understand "the legal nature of working in a pluralistic, multicultural and technological society" and possesses Attitudes that lead to a school counseling being "intentional in addressing the information, opportunity and achievement gaps" (p. 5). In the Management section, the Knowledge competencies compel school counselors to understand and utilize organizational theories "to facilitate advocacy, collaboration and systemic change," and Abilities and Skills competencies related to the use of data to needed "for systemic change in areas such as…equity and access…and achievement, opportunity and/or information gaps" (p. 7). In the Delivery section are outlined the Knowledge school counselors ought to have about "[p]rinciples of working with various student populations based on characteristics such as ethnic and racial background, English language proficiency, special needs, religion, gender and income" (p. 8), and Abilities and Skills around developing the school counseling core curriculum around pluralistic and student demographic trends.

Another important document that ensures school counselors retain a focus on social justice and racial equity is the Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2016). In its preamble, the standards state this responsibility plainly: "Professional school counselors are

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advocates, leaders, collaborators and consultants who create opportunities for equity in

access and success in educational opportunities" (p. 1). It continues,

> Each person has the right to be respected, be treated with dignity and have access to a
> comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students
> from diverse populations including: ethnic/racial identity, age, economic status,
> abilities/disabilities, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender
> identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance. (p. 1)

Also salient in the preamble of the Ethical Standards is the stipulation that school counselors

should affirm the "group identities" of students, "with special care being given to students

who have historically not received adequate educational services, e.g., students of color,

students living at a low socio-economic status, students with disabilities and students from

non-dominant language backgrounds" (p. 1). Finally, Ethical Standard E.2. is titled

"Multicultural and Social Justice Advocacy and Leadership and part of it states that "[s]chool

counselors develop competencies in how prejudice, power and various forms of

oppression…affect self, students and all stakeholders" (p. 5). Beyond policy documents and

ethical standards, many argue, above all, that school counselors possess a moral obligation to

be culturally responsive (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Davis, 2015;

Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee & Goodnaugh, 2011; Martin, 2002; Militello & Janson, 2014;

Stephens & Lindsey, 2011).

      Moral Imperative. The imperative for school counselors to be culturally responsive

is evident from the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016), ASCA position statements (2012d;

2014; 2015), and the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b). But many argue that

the necessity for school counselors to focus their work on social justice and racial equity

transcends these policy and ethical elements and is a moral one. Lee and Goodnaugh (2011)

state it very directly: "Commitment to a vision of social justice and a mission of equitable educational outcomes for all students is a moral imperative and ethical mandate for the school counseling profession" (p. 129). Trusty and Brown (2005) developed advocacy competencies for school counselors that include dispositions, knowledge, and skills necessary for school counselors to effectively advocate for their students. The competencies indicate that school counselors must have an advocacy disposition that involves them embracing their roles as advocates, being "autonomous in their thinking and behavior", possessing an "altruistic motivation with the major concern being students' well-being", and being willing to "take risks in helping individual students and groups of students meet their needs" (p. 260).

This theme of moral imperative and school counselors developing the savoir-faire for working within their organizations to identify and intervene when groups of students are being treated inequitably and/or unjustly is echoed by Stephens and Lindsey (2011) who write: "The moral imperative to ensure equitable opportunity for all students requires a resolve and ability to engage in artful communication with fellow educators, parents/guardians, staff, and community partners from diverse backgrounds" (p. 58). Bemak and Chung (2005) state it even more directly:

> It is essential for school counselors to have the skills to balance the institutional realities of working within systems where they may have minimal power yet have the ethical and moral responsibility to advocate for social justice and equity for all students. Critically important is to be aware of the realities that school counselors must face as advocates and introduce strategies to deal with the institutional and individual barriers. (p. 198)

Finally, Holcomb-McCoy (2007) summarizes the importance of school counselors enduring these difficulties while "discovering and challenging inequities in school," despite how

"burdensome and tiring" it can be, because doing so "can change the lives of many students and their families" (p. 120).

Conclusion

Through more culturally responsive practices, school counselors can work with their partners to address systemic inequities and power imbalances to help close the achievement, attainment, opportunity, and income gaps between students of color and white students. After a review of the reason this topic is so important – the achievement and opportunity gaps for culturally and linguistically diverse students – this section of the Literature Review elucidated topics important to culturally responsive school counseling, including it components of multicultural counseling, social justice, and culturally proficient consultation and advocacy. It ended with a summary of the reasons why this topic is to salient to the practice of school counseling, including imperatives outlined by accrediting bodies of school counselor education programs and the American School Counselor Association, along with a more transcendent, moral imperative.

Culturally responsive school counseling is the foundation of this study and it is informed by the other elements of this literature review. As the unit of analysis for this work, it is important to elucidate the topic of educator attitudes and beliefs, both to discretely define these and related terms, but also to explore how critical they are to culturally responsive, equitable, and socially just practices. As the site for the study, learning more about both the preparation and training programs themselves as well as a history and overview of what have now become known as comprehensive school counseling programs is the final section of this chapter. A healthy skepticism, a critical stance, must be adopted when reviewing all literature

knowing it is infused with the biases and lived experiences of the researchers, and the current study must also be imbued with that critical perspective, which leads to a discussion of Critical Theory.

Critical Theory

Critical theory is a body of work that seeks to interrogate power, examine and reify racial and class privilege, and emancipate the disenfranchised, marginalized, and the oppressed (Bronner, 2011; Freire, 2004; Jay, 2016; McLaren, 2015; Rothe & Ronge, 2016). Its roots can be traced back to Greek philosophy with its ruminations on logic and reason (Bronner, 2011), the Enlightenment and its aims "to improve human existence by viewing knowledge for its emancipatory or repressive potential" (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995, p. 2), as well as the early writings of Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger (Bronner, 2011; Jay, 2016; Rothe & Ronge, 2016; Wheatland, 2009). Critical theory eschews the notion that there is a set of facts and ideas that constitute official "knowledge" stipulating the biases and prejudices of the epistemologists who construct it (Apple, 1982; Foucault, 1970; Horkheimer, 1992; McLaren, 2015). Further, the aims of education must be to educate and empower the oppressed and marginalized to both be conscious of ways in which they are colonized by these notions of "official knowledge" and likely deleteriously influenced by them (Freire, 1980; McLaren, 2015).

This section will give a brief history of critical theory, especially the elements most germane to this study. Next, three theorists will be profiled for their important and relevant contributions to a descendent of critical theory, critical pedagogy. Then, three integral elements of critical theory – emancipation, otherness, and power/hegemony – will be

discussed in more detail. Finally, a summary of critical theory as it relates to school counseling will be provided. First, a brief history of critical theory.

History of Critical Theory

Borne out of Marx's anti-capitalist theory and its focus on arming the proletariat with knowledge and power to challenge those of the bourgeoisie, critical theory centralizes the racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression that pervade society and its structures, including public education (McLaren & Girarelli, 1995). It is important to note one major departure from Marxist theory, however; while Marx pointed to socialism as a vehicle for the emancipation of the proletariat, critical theorists are skeptical of and analytical of all institutions and traditions – especially those that profess to liberate the oppressed (Bronner, 2011). What would become the birthplace of modern critical theory was the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, or the Institute of Social Research, more popularly known as "the Frankfurt School."

The Frankfurt School was founded in 1923 and was to be a think tank devoted to research, specifically that from the Marxist tradition and its criticism of the subjugation of the working class at the hands of authoritarian, mostly capitalist forces. Founded by Felix Weil and funded by his family's wealth, the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, as it was officially called, was affiliated with the University of Frankfurt and was a bastion for socialists and Marxists beleaguered after the First World War (Wheatland, 2009). The Institute was established as an independently endowed institution due to its roots in multiple disciplines (and German academia at the time preferred specialized research institutes) and its likely penchant for radical, Marxist research (Jay, 1996). Carl Grünberg was the first director of the

Institute and firmly asserted this connection to Marx's work. The products of the Institute during Grünberg's directorship were largely a collection of historical accounts of socialism, the labor movement, economics, and on the history and criticism of political economy. Its seminal work under Grünberg was likely its publishing of a new edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels (Wheatland, 2009).

An important part of the philosophical and research paradigm of the Frankfurt School but less part of its organizational structure was Max Horkheimer who succeeded Grünberg as director after Grünberg suffered a stroke in 1927. A noted enthusiast of social justice and Marxism and a critic of bourgeois society, Horkheimer was an unexpected successor to Grünberg due to his publicly apparent disconnection from the Institute in its early days both from organizational and research standpoints. One plausible explanation is the Institute's directors' desire to disavow a growing criticism of its ties to the Communist party and Horkheimer's well-known disaffiliations with it (Wheatland, 2009). Some of the best known critical theorists became part of the Frankfurt School during Horkheimer's time as its director. These theorists included Friedrich Pollock, Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, the latter known as one of the "principal architects of Critical Theory" (Jay, 1996, p. 46). All of these men made prominent contributions to what is known as classical critical theory in a period that is known in the Institute's history as pre-exile (Wheatland, 2009).

With the rise of the Nazi party in Germany and many people from Jewish backgrounds who were part of the Frankfurt School, the Institute was forced to move to Switzerland in 1933 when the Nazis gained a majority in the German *Bundestag.* The

Geneva branch of the Frankfurt School was incorporated in 1933 and was renamed the *Société Internationale de Recherches Sociales* (International Society of Social Research). A few other small branches were founded in that same year in Paris and London. Geneva was never intended to be the Institute's permanent home and the search for one began soon after the exile. The Frankfurt School smoothly relocated to Columbia University's Department of Sociology in the summer of 1934, and this smooth transition was due to the robust funding it enjoyed from its founders and supporters. There were challenges aligning the research paradigms of the leftist Marxists and the more conservative American scholars, however. This challenge was exacerbated somewhat by the insistence by the Institute's principals that they continue to publish their work in their native German language, to the chagrin of the American academe. This was in part to avert the growing feeling outside of Germany that all things German were malevolent or nefarious due to the spread of Nazi fascism (Jay, 1996). It was during the Institute's stay at Columbia that some of the later voices in critical theory were added to it, including (officially) Adorno, Otto Kirchheimer, Franz Neumann, and Walter Benjamin (who never escaped Nazi Germany) (Wheatland), 2009).

One of the later voices that constitutes the "post-exile" phase of the Frankfurt School's history, and one of its most prolific writers, is Jürgen Habermas. Habermas was a student of Horkheimer and Adorno and made important contributions to critical theory, all from Europe and mostly from his native Germany, during a pivotal time in the world, let alone in the United States where the Frankfurt School remained located. Facing somewhat of a crisis regarding what Horkheimer (1947) dubbed the "eclipse of reason," Habermas forged a path forward connecting classical critical theory with a more modern version that

acknowledged the power and ubiquity of communication. After the Frankfurt School's return

to Frankfurt after the end of World War II, Habermas became increasingly critical of

Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse – especially their conceptions of reason – and he was

indelibly affected by his service in the Nazi army and subsequent denouncement and

criticism of it and similar fascist regimes (Jay, 2016). Habermas went on to influence many

institutions and theorists, including Dewey's (1916) conception of democratic education

(Englund, 2016) and political discourse (Jay, 2016).

A key shift in critical thought occurred in the post-World World II era and into the

civil rights era in the United States that paved the way for contemporary critical theory

(Wheatland, 2009). Debates between founding members of the Frankfurt School and those

who split with the Horkheimer Circle – theorists like Habermas and Marcuse – about the

relationship between theory and praxis shifted critical theory to more practical interpretations

of it manifested in topics like critical pedagogy (Jay, 1996; Wheatland, 2009). Pioneered by

theorists like Freire (1970, 1980), hooks (1994), McLaren (1999, 2000, 2015) and Apple

(1982, 1993, 2004), critical pedagogy seeks to enlighten and awaken us to the pervasive

presence of politics and power in education and compel us to critically examine it. McLaren

(2015) defines critical pedagogy as "a politics of understanding and action, an act of knowing

that attempts to situate everyday life in a larger geopolitical context, with the goal of

fostering regional collective self-responsibility, large-scale ecumene, and international

worker solidarity" (p. 9).

Known as the "father" of critical pedagogy (Kirylo, 2013), Paulo Freire is likely most

associated with this critical examination of education and pedagogy with his seminal work,

Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970). Focused initially on literacy efforts of the working class in Brazil as a means to empower them, Freire soon became an integral figure in critical pedagogy. First, he conceptualized education as a "banking system" in which teachers are the subjects and students are the objects into which knowledge is "deposited," and the need to evolve from this oppressive system in which colonization and disenfranchisement are endemic, to critical education characterized by "problem-posing" rather than "problem-solving." The goal of education should be "conscientization", or the fostering in students a critical consciousness to make them aware of class, race, and gender disparities and power imbalances, among others. More than just an "apprehension of reality", conscientization involves "an epistemological position: man looking for knowing" and is a "test of environment, a test of reality" (Freire, 1980, p. 74). Freire is profiled here in large part because I hope to enliven this spirit among school counselors. A key element of Freire's writing is hope as it is the fuel of conscientization. When interviewed by his student Moacir Gadotti and former director of the Freire Institute, Freire (Freire & Gadotti, 1995) opined

> I cannot give up hope because I know, first of all, that it is ontologic, I know that I cannot continue being human if I make hope disappear and the struggle for it. Hope is not a donation. It is part of me just as the air that I breathe. Unless there is air, I will die. Unless there is hope, there is no reason for history to continue. Hope is history, do you understand? (p. 260)

This theme of hope is shared by another critical pedagogue, Michael Apple.

Michael Apple (1982, 1993, 2004) writes about the co-opting of "official knowledge," how those in power get to decide what is "official knowledge," not through empirical observation, rational and reasoned debate, or other more academic and objective methods, but through the power and privilege they wield. Shaped by his own upbringing in a

low income household and teaching in inner city schools, Apple has written extensively about the injustices and inequities in American schools (Nganga, & Kambutu, 2013). In the preface of his seminal work *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age,* Apple (1993) invokes Freire and his assertion that educational practice must be "directed at a dream, an idea of utopia" and, thus, "a serious education cannot be neutral…[i]t must be based on a set of ethical and political principles, one that overcomes immobility and fatalism and enables learners to become the subjects of their own lives and histories" (p. 15). His work is also clearly linked to Marxist philosophy and critical theory, primarily through his discussions of the reproduction of inequality from institutions like education (Apple, 1982). Apple was chosen to profile here due to the possible role school counselors play in this inequality reproduction. This is especially relevant in his writings about the commoditization and the colonization of curriculum (Apple, 2004). The colonization of the minds of the oppressed, put forth by Fanon (1963) and others, and the important role education ought to play in decolonization, is a notion shared with another critical theorist, bell hooks.

The work of hooks is substantially characterized by her epiphany after reading Freire's (1970) work that led her to "question deeply and profoundly the politics of domination, the impact of racism, sexism, class exploitation, and the kind of domestic colonization that takes place in the United States" (hooks, 1994, p. 46). Growing up poor, Black, and female in the American south in the 1950s and 1960s, she identified with the marginalized peasants of whom Freire wrote and his writing gave her "a political language" to articulate the process of living through the struggle for racial desegregation while being

"in resistance" (hooks, 1994, p. 46). She first experienced being "in resistance" when her school was desegregated, when she lost the zeal to learn fostered before this time by mostly Black teachers who "were committed to nurturing intellect" and who reinforced in her that a "devotion to learning, to a life of the mind, was a counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization" (p. 2). It was at this time when she was taught "the difference between education as the practice of freedom and education that merely strives to reinforce domination" (p. 4). This critical pedagogue was chosen to profile because of her strong desire to keep education stimulating, intriguing, and invigorating. She was born Gloria Watkins but uses the pen name "bell hooks" to honor her mother's and grandmother's names, distancing herself from her former identity, and uses lower case letters to emphasize her work and not her name (Wisneski, 2013). This reproduction of domination and subjugation is a strong influence from early critical theorists and is a shared theme with another critical pedagogue, Peter McLaren.

McLaren (1999, 2000, 2015) has made important contributions to the field of critical pedagogy and his textbooks are considered definitive within it. Now in its sixth edition, *Life in Schools* examines how American schools reproduce patterns of labor commodification and exploitation, power and oppression, and privilege (Smith & Rodriguez, 2013). Thoroughly Marxist in origins, McLaren's (2015) writing is imbued with the notion that all empirical observation is ideological, that "[n]othing that can be observed or named is ideologically neutral or innocent" (p. xxv) and must be analyzed within its context. This stems from his doctoral dissertation, a critical ethnography titled *Schooling as a Ritual Performance,* in which he describes the interactions and links among schooling, socialization and the larger

economy, and this has led to a textbook with the same name now in its third edition (McLaren, 1999). His book documenting the lives and teachings of two seminal critical pedagogues, Paulo Freire (described above) and Che Guevara, *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution* (McLaren, 2000), is another definitive work as it explicates the reproductive and hegemonic nature of capitalism (Smith & Rodriguez, 2013).

McLaren (1995) is also known for his writing about critical ethnography and other critical, qualitative research methods, cautioning researchers not "to absolutize or totalize the groups we study, to see them as existing homogeneously…and to ignore the way in which power operates as a regulating force that centralizes and unifies often conflicting and competing discourses and subjectivities" (p. 276). Instead, critical researchers must "connect empirical data to the discourses that produce them and that, at the same time, protect our subjects under study" in an "attempt to engage in a form of theoretical decolonization" (p. 276). This guidance was instructive for this study and played a large role in how McLaren was chosen to profile here. .

It was from these theorists and based on the foundations of this study that a few prominent themes in critical theory, especially related to and infused throughout critical pedagogy, were chosen to highlight in more detail: power/hegemony, otherness, and emancipation.

Key Elements of Critical Theory

First, power – and its requisite privileging some and oppressing others – was chosen due to its relevance in this study that examines themes of social justice and racial equity. Otherness is another theme that will be explored, the idea that those in power weaponize

"otherness" (i.e. *not* the majority, perhaps not even "normal") in the pursuit of retaining power. Finally, the emancipatory elements of critical theory and culturally responsive practices and techniques will be elucidated. First, more on power.

Power and Hegemony. Alienation is a foundational concept within critical theory (Bronner, 2011). Alienation is "the inability to establish a relation to other human beings, to things, to social institutions and thereby also— so the fundamental intuition of the theory of alienation— to oneself" (Jaeggi, 2014, p. 3). The idea of alienation, "[t]he alienated subject becomes a stranger to itself; it no longer experiences itself as an actively effective subject but a passive object at the mercy of unknown forces" (Jaeggi, p. 3), is the genesis of critical thought. It was the alienation of workers, the disconnection from what they produced and the merging of their work and personal identities that led Karl Marx to write the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,* the foundational work of Marxism in which he profiled a utopian society contrasted against the misery suffered by subjugated workers, partly due to their "inability to grasp the workings of history and subject them to human control" (Bronner, 2011, p. 35), another way to define alienation. While conscious-raising among workers is an important aim of critical theory, there will always be some element of the bourgeois convincing the proletariat of their dependence on them (Hegel, 1931). The goal of consciousness-raising is to make workers aware of their power and harness it (Bronner, 2011).

It is for this reason the topic of power and the pervasiveness of cultural hegemony was chosen to feature in this Literature Review. Schools are imbued with racist, sexist, classist and hegemonic elements, some conscious and some unwitting, but all insidious

(Apple, 1982; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2015). The concept of cultural hegemony was first coined by Gramsci (1971) and it the notion that state actors maintain control of cultural aspects, processes, and norms, in order to exert control and power over its citizenry. This leads to the internalization of "the dominant class's ideology and though it be counter to their own best interests the dominated classes may succumb to its logic" (Rodriguez & Smith, 2013, p. 70). Just as a country exerts overt and more subtle forms of control over less powerful countries, so too do hegemonic groups exert this control over subordinate cultural groups. The government controls many aspects of education, therefore it can – often unwittingly, sometimes consciously – participate in this replicative process.

Critical theorists have also noted the relationship between knowledge and power. Foucault (1972) essentially equated the two as those in power retained authority to anoint certain sets of facts as "true" knowledge and therefore being in a position to manipulate, perhaps even weaponize knowledge for power's sake. Habermas (1984) wrote extensively on the importance of communication and its direct connection to power. He asserted that the only way to combat the cultural and economic reproduction that critical theory aims to deconstruct is if a "free flow" of information is maintained. Knowledge claims are discovered through a dialogical, discursive process (Freire, 1985). Both of these theorists posited that knowledge is as important a resource as any natural, human, or political one (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Given that schools and education are the formative sites where knowledge is imparted to young people, it is essential that educators are critical about whose and what "knowledge" is being imparted.

Foucault (1978) also described what he calls "biopowers," institutions like schools, prisons, and hospitals in a "disciplinary society" that maintain power through surveillance and other forms of control over human bodies. Biopower and its use involve "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations marking the beginning of an era of biopower" (p. 140). This surveillance and control is often concealed as legitimate "research" through scrutiny and analysis to achieve what he calls the "calculable man." Schools, then, could function as a "normalizing apparatus" to legitimize this practice of surveillance and calculability, a biopower that "questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light" (Foucault, 1977, p. 143) through its tutelary apparatuses offered by the medical, psychological, and pedagogic professionals. Schools are organized in notably similar ways to other "biopowers" like prisons and the time people spend in schools serves to legitimize and normalize how people are treated within them (Alexander, 2012; Nolan, 2009).

Often neglected in this discussion of power and cultural hegemony is that, while they inherently lead to the disenfranchisement and marginalization of individuals and groups of people, they also grant some unearned privilege. This redaction is no less the case for school counselors (Kendall, 2006; Moss & Singh, 2015). Awareness of privilege in the field of counseling is critical for effective practice (Mindrup, Spray, & Lamberghini-West, 2011; Moss & Singh, 2015). The invisible nature of privilege (McIntosh, 1986) makes it appear synonymous with the status quo, which can then discourage people with privileged identities to support discussions about racial equity and the role privilege plays in it in order to maintain the status quo (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Topics on systemic

power, oppression, and privilege are those most often absent from school counselor education programs (Feldwisch, 2015; Goodman et al., 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011). That such a large percentage of school counselors come from White, middle class backgrounds (ASCA, 2018b) makes another topic in critical theory salient in this study, the concept of otherness.

This discussion is critical when the field of school counseling is involved for a number of reasons. To start, it centralizes the critical stance of this researcher, especially in the context of a heuristic study in which I am more prone to ignore unfavorable criticisms of my profession. A strong criticism can be made of the school counseling profession in this realm, with striking omissions of the language of power and hegemony. There are no references to power in the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016). Interestingly, while the word "power" appeared in the last version of the ethical standards, it has been removed since the last update in 2010. Oppression and privilege are both just mentioned once in the ethical standards in the same statement, highlighting the school counselor's ethical obligation to "[u]nderstand how prejudice, privilege and various forms of oppression based on [various aspects of students' identities]…affect students and stakeholders" (p. 7). There is no mention of "power," "privilege," or "oppression" in the ASCA's (2012d) position statement on student equity, nor in the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b). There is one reference to power and "various forms of oppression" in the position statement on cultural diversity, but the reference is a citation from the now outdated 2010 version of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors. That position statement contains one other reference to school counselors' role in helping "students and

their families navigate systems of oppression and injustice" (p. 19). These omissions are notable for a profession that professes to ensure "equitable access to a rigorous education for all students" (ASCA, 2012a, p. xii).

Otherness. Foucault (1980) writes how those who wish to remain in power, and often use that power in an oppressive and coercive manner, are skillful at wielding "otherness", vilifying and demonizing certain "others" to maintain dominance. At first, Foucault focused on those labeled "insane" whose pathology was legitimized by a field of science. Jones and Ball (1995) write when they summarize Foucault's work in this area:

> Otherness is the antithesis of reason and epistemology seeks to subject it to reason. This subjection takes the form of scientific inquiry and diagnosis of the irrational subject, whether it be the criminal, the insane, the diseased, the child, or the woman. Psychiatry, anthropology, criminology, and sociology work to constitute otherness in discourse. (p. 47)

Also referred to in the literature as alterity (McGowan, 2007), otherness began being applied to those who insisted on maintaining their cultural customs and beliefs after being occupied and colonized by others. So people from non-European backgrounds, whose cultural traditions made them somehow visibly and socially conspicuous, could be used to create fear or somehow manipulate the populace for those in power to maintain it in order to fuel anti-democratic school reform initiatives (Jones & Ball, 1995). Freire (1980) calls others "the oppressed," but notes that oppressors rarely do, referring instead to "those people," "savages," "natives," or "subversives" (p. 56). Howard (2016) suggests that a modern version of "othering" is the questioning of President Barak Obama's citizenship status as an African American man as president did not fit into some people's narratives of national, political leadership.

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Inextricably linked to the concept of otherness are discourses, or "modalities that to a significant extent, govern what can be said, by what kinds of speakers and for what types of imagined audiences" (McLaren, 1995, p. 275). Discourses are comprised of both knowledge and power (Foucault, 1972), involve a normative "right" and assert legitimacy and authority from the power structure from which they are contrived. Importantly, they often involve a juxtaposition of these normative rules and those who disembody or violate them, the "others." Critically analyzing and deconstructing these discourses, especially when they vilify and marginalize individuals and groups of people – make them the "other" – is an essential aim of critical theory (Foucault, 1980; Jones & Ball, 1995; McLaren, 2015). Others in "official discourses" are integral to spurring social and political action and are used in myriad cultural debates, from immigration and civil rights restrictions to incarceration and ethnic cleaning (McGowan, 2007).

How does this relate to a study pertaining to culturally responsive school counseling? First, a postmodern approach to research from a critical theory perspective centralizes the difficulty of researchers to speak for "the other", the subject of the research that is being studied. While critical theory research must contain some form of liberation or emancipation for the marginalized, for the other, any research contains an asymmetrical element "simply because the researcher is the person who frames the questions and in telling the story, has the last word" (LeCompte, 1995, p. 100). In addition, I must heed McLaren's (1995) caution, that

> …it is extremely tempting to absolutize or totalize the groups we study, to see them as existing homogeneously, rooted in particular world views, and to ignore the way in which power operates as a regulating force that centralizes and unifies often conflicting and competing discourses and subjectivities. (p. 276).

Finally, it is with issues of power, hegemony, and alterity in mind that I approach this study to bring about its critical and ultimate purpose: to emancipate and liberate students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from the oppressive forces that constrain them.

Emancipation. The final theme to be elucidated is emancipation, a central one within the broader field of critical theory (Biesta, 2005; LeCompte, 1995; Peters, 2005). Throughout the literature on critical theory, especially critical pedagogy, it is noted that schools can serve as vehicles for the reproduction of cultural and social hegemony, but also can play a pivotal role in liberating students from these constraints (Apple, 1982; Freire, 1980; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2015). The extent to which schools serve as emancipatory and liberating elements for students depends on the socio-political and historical contexts (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Solorzano & Yosso, 1998), along with the critical consciousness of educators in general (Ladson-Billings, 2013; Sleeter, 2012) and specifically on the critical consciousness of school counselors (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Singh et al., 2010), an important reason this discussion is included here.

Freire (1980) compared the liberation of the oppressed to "childbirth, and a painful one" (p. 49). A new being is born existing independently of the oppressed-oppressor dichotomy to which it was theretofore inextricably linked. Part of this birth process is making the oppressed aware that they are being oppressed, which then leads to praxis, *action* that leads to the revolution where the oppressed are no longer so. The goal of critical research and culturally responsive practices, then, must be to educate students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds about oppression and how aspects of their identities are

marginalized in order that liberation may occur (Freire, 1980; Kozol, 2012; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2015). Freire calls this "conscientization," as discussed above.

The emancipatory potential of education is often referred to as liberatory pedagogy and both Freire (1970) and hooks (1994) assert this notion. To maximize the potential of education to emancipate students from their oppression, a dialogical approach must be taken to refocus education as problem-posing and knowledge-generating for students, rather than the "banking" system described by Freire and summarized above. This dialogical approach – influenced substantially by the importance of the knowledge-communication nexus described by Habermas (1984) – depends on the development of the student voice. This means more than simply allowing students to share their experiences in classrooms; it involves using those experiences strategically in pursuit of broader, liberatory aims (hooks, 1994). This aligns with Freire's notion of the basis for dialogical practice, "*the word*" (p. 87, emphasis in original). The word must contain its "constitutive elements," that to be truly liberatory, words must be imbued with both reflection – so as to select authentic, deliberate words – and action, as all words used in emancipatory education must be aimed "to transform the world" (p. 87). Divorced from action, words are reduced to mere verbalism, "an alienated and alienating "blah,"" and divorced of reflection, words become *activism*, "action for action's sake" (p. 88).

The liberatory and emancipatory potential of decolonized, critically conscious, and equity-focused school counseling programs is evident in the literature (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Singh et al., 2010). But more work in this area needs to be done to systematize and standardize the extent to which and the imperative for school

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counselors to engage in this work (Feldwisch, 2015; Goodman et al., 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Smith & Geroski, 2014). The next section will discuss what is, and is not, being done in the field of school counseling to infuse it with the aspects of critical theory discussed above.

Critical Theory and School Counseling

This discussion of the field of school counseling within the context of critical theory is relevant for a number of reasons. First, it highlights the critical stance of the researcher when examining disciplines like school counseling situated within institutions like schools and the role power plays in its policies, documents, and ethics. Strong positions are taken by professional associations like the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) about cultural diversity (2015) and equity (2012d), unequivocal ethical guidelines are established for school counselors on these issues (ASCA, 2016), and clear competencies are established for school counselors in the way of social justice and racial equity (ASCA, 2012b); yet these statements, documents, and ethical guidelines must all be viewed from a critical perspective with the knowledge that they were all constructed in a landscape of cultural and educational reproduction (Apple, 1982; McLaren, 2015).

This discussion is also important because of some of the criticisms of the school counseling profession in the past that it is rooted in White, Eurocentric ideology (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2007), lack adequate social justice topics such as power and oppression in their preparation (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Feldwisch, 2015; Goodman et al., 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Vera & Speight, 2003), and may even play a role in maintaining the status quo for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Fallon, 1997;

House & Sears, 2002; Militello & Janson, 2014; Welton & Martinez, 2013; Smith, 2013). These criticisms include my own summarized above when noting the absence of references to "power" in foundational documents and polices from the profession, and the paucity of references to oppression and privilege.

School counseling practice should infuse more principles from theories like critical race theory (Taylor et al., 2009), specifically how elements of their work with students relate to broader conversations like race, racism, power, and privilege (Moss & Singh, 2015). In addition, school counselors must perpetually conceptualize and situate their work with students in the broader context of power and oppression, systematic bias and discrimination, and other unjust and inequitable systems and practices to adequately empower students (Cholewa, & West-Olatunji, 2008; Smith, Davis, & Bhowmik, 2010).

In the school counseling literature, emancipation and liberation are discussed mostly in terms of student empowerment. A fuller description of this literature resides in the section of the Literature Review on Culturally Responsive School Counseling due to the integral role it plays in that field. To summarize, culturally responsive and competent school counselors work *with* students to support efforts they take to confront social injustice and racial inequity, not *for* students in a "savior role" (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Martin & Robinson, 2011). In addition, school counselors must be aware of their own biases, prejudices, and cultural backgrounds in order to effectively empower their students, especially those from dissimilar cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011). And school counselors must also serve to empower the parents and guardians of culturally and linguistically diverse students to

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holistically support them (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Jeynes, 2007; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Wilder, 2014). Finally, school counselors must empower fellow educators to view their practice from a social justice lens in order to identify inequities and to actively endeavor to ameliorate them (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011).

School counselor interventions have been found to be effective in empowering youth from marginalized backgrounds to become aware of power and oppression and learning methods to mitigate achieve their potential despite those forces (Capizzi, Hofstetter, Mena, Duckor, & Hu, 2017; Howard & Solberg, 2006; Jackson, 2017; Kim, Fletcher, & Bryan, 2018; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2010;). The empowerment of educators to manifest this quality in the youth they teach is also an essential element of critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2015). Smith, Davis, and Bhowmik (2010) conducted youth participatory action research project (YPAR) in which the last two authors ran small groups during their field experience in their school counseling graduate programs. Participatory action research is a qualitative research method consistent with the principles of critical theory as it serves to empower the disenfranchised and marginalized (Fay, 1987; Mertens, 2009). Similar to this study, the findings were as informative for the graduate students as it was for the secondary student participants (Smith et al., 2010).

The YPAR was conducted in a high school in a large, Northeastern metropolitan area. There were nine participants, five girls and four boys, three who identified as Latina/o, four as African American, one as African, and one as Caribbean-American. The group had one freshman, six sophomores, and two seniors and all had parent consent to participate in the group offered as an option among other counseling activities. It met weekly for two hours

during an elective period that included lunch. The three graduate students who ran the group (two of whom are the second and third authors on the study) were in their second year of the Master's program and they also participated in a week-long, intensive summer training experience that inculcated them with principles, theories, and activities for participatory action research projects. Further, the graduate students had three hours of supervision per week and attended a two-hour large group meeting of the YPAR research team and an hour-long small group supervision with a graduate advisor. During early group sessions, the graduate student researchers led the high school student co-researchers in discussions about their experiences with power and privilege, the biased construction of knowledge and its associated power, along with participatory action research methods. The graduate student researchers talked openly about their racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic identities in order to facilitate trust and openness among the high school student co-researchers. The group chose health and sex education as a topic to focus their work.

Results from the study were gathered in an audio-taped focus group of all of the co-researchers as they shared their reflections on the meaning and results of the work. One theme of these reflections indicates the importance of how those in authority regard the work of the YPAR. One of the students in the group observed the principal's reaction when they presented their findings to him and noted that he apparently "realized that we're actually serious about the topic" (Smith et al., 2010, p. 179). Another theme was the feeling of agency and empowerment. One participant noted that "[This is] the only school where I've ever had an opportunity—ever imagined an opportunity—to change the way I'm being educated" (p. 179). Another high school student who participated noted the power of working on these

issues himself versus others doing it for him: "Having to do it yourself is…it gives you more experience than somebody telling you to do it" (p. 179).

Even the presentation of the results from the project – both at an academic conference and to the administration of the school and district – empowered and emboldened the participants. One student said that experience helped her understand "the feeling of how people feel when they're doing their work…like we were doing professional work" (p. 179). Finally, how the work was recognized by the participants' families was a theme observed from the focus group. One participant noted that his mother's reaction to him telling her about the work was only the second time she indicated that she is proud of him.

Conclusion

Critical theory is a topic that is used to inform the practice of many disciplines, from urban planning (Matthews, 2013) to criminology (Anderson & Quinney, 2000), business management (Miller & Tsang, 2011) to animal liberation (Sanbonmatsu, 2011). Its import in the field of education, especially as it constructs the basis for critical pedagogy, is well-documented (Apple, 1982; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2013; McLaren, 2015; Sleeter, 2017). While school counseling has made strides in infusing critical theory – and its central tenets of power, oppression, alterity, and emancipation – into the field, there is much work left to do in this area (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Feldwisch, 2015; Goodman et al., 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Vera & Speight, 2003). This section of the Literature Review provided a brief history of critical theory and featured aspects of it from four theorists: Paulo Freire, Michael Apple, bell hooks, and Peter McLaren. These theorists were chosen in part because they most prolifically embody

elements of it that are salient to this study and those elucidated in this section, including

power and hegemony, otherness or alterity, and emancipation. Finally, this section

summarized aspects of school counseling most related to critical theory. A critical stance is

taken in this study, especially on elements so integral to it, including the attitudes and beliefs

of educators as related to their culturally responsive practices.

Educator Attitudes and Beliefs

From the beliefs about necessary readiness skills for incoming Kindergarteners

(Hustedt, Buell, Hallam, & Pinder, 2018) to expectations for their postsecondary plans

(Villarreal, Heckhausen, Lessard, Greenberger, & Chen, 2015), the literature is clear about

the salience of educator attitudes and beliefs and their impact on pedagogical practice. This is

no less important for the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors and their relevance to

culturally responsive and inclusive practices. Kuranz and Pérusse (2012) state it most plainly:

> The school counselor's beliefs are the engine powering the school counseling
> program. If school counselors do not believe in high expectation, rigorous course
> planning, post-secondary/career planning, and a safe and respectful learning
> environment for all students, they will not advocate for a school counseling program
> that serves all students. In essence, their lack of belief in all students maintains the
> status quo. (p. 32)

But consistent definitions for these terms are elusive, some even suggesting researchers

simply take for granted that readers do not need a definition of these terms (Phillipp, 2007).

This section of the literature review gives an overview of what is the unit of analysis

for the study: the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors. First, an overview of just what

are these discrete terms "attitudes" and "beliefs," along with important distinctions from the

related terms, "knowledge" and "behavior," will be given that will lead to a working

definition for them used in this study. Next, a review of literature will be undertaken that

substantiates how important are affirmative and positive attitudes and beliefs toward culturally and linguistically diverse (LCD) students for those who work with them. This overview will include the role that beliefs and attitudes play in culturally responsive teaching, learning, and school counseling practices. First, a discussion will be provided to distinguish among distinct but related terms: attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge.

Attitudes

There is a complex relationship among beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Some suggest that the former two interact to cause or influence the latter while others suggest a more complicated relationship. Hannula (2011) writes,

> Within mathematics attitude research, attitudes have typically been defined as consisting of cognitive (beliefs), affective (emotions), and conative (behavior) dimensions. If we try to combine the tripartite framework with McLeod's [1992], we see that attitude is at the same time a parent and a sibling to emotions and beliefs. (p. 38)

It is increasingly clear that attitudes are measurable less in quantitative terms and much more in qualitative ones; the emotional and situational context in which attitudes are observed are much more important than a Likert scale measuring their direction (i.e. positive or negative) or relative strength. Attitudes are thought to be much more interpretative, helping to explain beliefs and behavior rather than causing them (Di Martino, 2016).

In a grounded theory study about attitudes, Di Martino and Zan (2011) analyzed essays of 1,662 students in Italy, grades 1-13, responding to the prompt, "Me and mathematics: My relationship with maths [*sic*] up to now." This method was chosen in response to criticism of previous methods to measure attitudes utilizing questionnaires and inventories that often superficially introduce antecedents to attitudes for respondents (Eagly

& Chaiken, 1998; Munby, 1984; Pajares, 1992). The authors posited that using the narratives of the participants will reveal the "tacit knowledge underneath practice, which cannot be expressed in propositional or denotative form" (Di Martino & Zan, 2011, p. 475) and the grounded theory tradition will produce "a theory that emerges from the collected data through a cyclical analytical process" (p. 475).

The study included 874 students from primary grades (grades 1-5), 368 from middle school (grades 6-8), and 420 from high school (grades 9-13) and the essays were anonymous, assigned and collected in math class by someone other than their math teacher. The narrative data from the essays were analyzed using a two-step process: First, essays that included references to a negative emotional disposition toward mathematics were selected among the 1,662 submitted. Next, these selected essays were analyzed for any references to causal links between these negative dispositions and antecedents to identify dimensions of these links.

From the analysis, the researchers found three, core themes. First, the negative dispositions toward mathematics had four components: mathematics is full of rules and formulas to be memorized, is dry and leaves no room for emotions, is confusing and its applications unclear, and is resolute leaving no room to express one's own ideas. The second theme relates to the participants' perceived competence in math, or rather their lack of competence. The third and final theme is the connection between students' vision of mathematics – either a positive or negative one – with their perceived competence. This led the researchers to develop a model of attitude composed of emotional dispositions toward, vision of, and perceived competence in the object of attitudes and beliefs; in the case of this study, mathematics.

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Phillipp (2007) defines attitudes as "manners of acting, feeling, or thinking that show one's disposition or opinion" (p. 259). Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) define attitudes "as a latent disposition or tendency to respond with some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness to a psychological object" (p. 76). The object to which the authors refer can be any discrete element of the subject's world, including behavior. The authors also note that, while there has been some confusion in the literature about the relationship between attitudes and affect, it is increasingly clear that attitudes are evaluative in nature: positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable, or some gradient thereof. Affect, on the other hand, involves broader characterizations of mood and typically includes a somatic component (Crites, Fabrigar, & Petty, 1994). More on this distinction later.

As mentioned above, the literature is replete with studies that attempt to measure attitudes. This measurement occurs in a number of ways, including a method developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) dubbed the semantic differential. This involves respondents being asked to rate their attitudes on a scale bookended by dichotomous adjectives, such as like-dislike, bad-good, or unfavorable-favorable. These scales can be affective in nature (i.e. pleasant-unpleasant, boring-interesting) or cognitive (i.e. wise-foolish, harmful-beneficial) in nature (Lowe, Eves, & Carroll, 2002; Wilson, Rodgers, Blanchard, & Gessell, 2003). Most measures of attitude typically imbue in them the interrelationship between attitudes and beliefs and use psychometric properties to more accurately assess each (Likert, 1932; Thurstone, 1931). The accumulation of beliefs is thought to comprise one's attitude and the relative strengths of the component beliefs affect the intensity of the attitude, a relationship Fishbein (1963) labeled the expectancy-value

model. This connection between the emotional and cognitive aspects of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors leads to an extended discussion of affect.

The interplay between the emotional and cognitive aspects of behavior is characterized by affect (Evans, Hannula, Zan, & Brown, 2006). The affective domain is seen as being comprised of beliefs, attitudes, and emotions (Di Martino & Zan, 2011; Fishbein & Ajzek, 2010; Phillipp, 2007). Phillipp defines affect as "a disposition or tendency or an emotion or feeling attached to an idea or object" (p. 259) and notes that affect is comprised of emotions, attitudes, and beliefs. There is generally considered to be as strong a connection between attitudes and behavior as there is between beliefs and behavior, perhaps stronger for the former (Di Martino & Zan, 2011). There exists a large body of research on the quest "to ascribe mental states, such as beliefs, desires and intentions, to explain, predict, and justify behavior" (Apperly & Butterfill, 2009, p. 953), also known as the theory of knowledge.

For this study, attitudes are defined as a set of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts that characterize one's disposition or judgement toward a given object. As one of the units of analysis for this study, it is important distinguish it from the other, beliefs.

Beliefs

Phillip (2007) defines beliefs as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are thought to be true" and "are more cognitive, are felt less intensely, and are harder to change than attitudes" (p. 259). Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) define beliefs "as the subjective probability that an object has a certain attribute" (p. 96) or, more simply, "subjectivities probabilities" (p. 221). The authors further divide beliefs into three categories: observational, informational, and inferential. Observations behaviors are formed

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by direct experience, observing the behavior in others, and hearing direct opinions about a given behavior from trusted others (e.g., parents) about specific behaviors. Informational beliefs are informed by less trusted sources than those that form observational beliefs, such as media sources, friends, relatives, and coworkers. Inferential beliefs are formed through a combination of the two when we extrapolate information from both observations and informational sources and deduce how what we learned will apply to our own experiences.

It is through this combination of observations, acquiring information (true or otherwise), and conjecture about the meaning of it all that an overall belief system is formed (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). These beliefs are further influenced by demographic factors, including gender (Hrubes, Ajzen, & Daigle, 2001) and ethnicity (Bleakley, Hennessy, Fishbein, & Jordan, 2009); personal dispositions, including self-esteem, sensation seeking, and religiosity (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Belief systems are also influenced by other situational factors, like knowledge (Misovich, Martinez, Fisher, Bryan, & Catapano, 2003), moods, and emotions (Clore & Schnall, 2005); and the social environment in which beliefs are manifested, such as population density, prevalence of institutions like hospitals, libraries, churches and schools, and neighborhood factors like crime rates, drug use and air quality (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). While the relationship of these factors to people's espoused beliefs are generally rather weak, they can contextualize and explain some behavior variability across various social strata (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

There is a large amount of research on beliefs in teacher preparation, from working with English language learners (De Oliveira, 2015) to working with students with Autism spectrum disorders (Ferraioli & Harris, 2011; Harding, 2009); the literature is clear about the

importance of focusing on the attitudes and beliefs in teacher preparation programs (Ashton, 1990; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Wilson, 1990). There is also clear consensus on the importance of teacher beliefs in culturally responsive teaching and learning practices (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Murrell & Foster, 2003; Nieto, 2013; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). Less abundant, but no less confirmatory, are studies about the importance of counselor and school counselor beliefs when working with students and clients from diverse backgrounds, to be discussed later in this section.

As the other unit of analysis for this study in addition to attitudes, beliefs will be defined for this study as mentally held premises about the world that are thought to be true. This discussion of what people believe necessitates a distinction between that and knowledge.

Knowledge

Similar to attitudes and beliefs, knowledge is information that helps explain the world around us and a clear definition of knowledge is also the subject of great debate. Pajares (1992) asserts that we must first differentiate beliefs from knowledge when defining the former, and that both are used to form "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p. 316). Knowledge is related to motivational factors, like attitudes, beliefs, perceived norms, and perceived control, that help to determine behavior; therefore, it can help to predict, but does not directly lead to, behavior (Fisher, Fisher, Williams, & Malloy, 1994; Misovich, et al., 2003).

Starman and Friedman (2012) posit that knowledge is a justified, true belief that is supported by authentic evidence. Losee (2014) provides a similar definition, but asserts that justification and beliefs must be combined with *information,* what he defines as "the characteristics or state of the output of any process" (p. 76), in order to truly constitute knowledge. What constitutes knowledge for one person, then, may be distinct from that for others, since knowledge involves a constituent set of beliefs. Further, knowledge affirmation is a culturally bound construct as people from different cultures require different levels of evidence to confirm knowledge (Cullen, 2010; Weinberg, Nichols, & Stich, 2001).

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) point out that even the construction of knowledge for humans is influenced by beliefs. They point out that, when respondents on surveys indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a statement, even those that include decided facts, they essentially default to their beliefs about the given topic. And while evidence exists that accurate knowledge can influence behaviors related to such health prevention efforts as breast self-examination (Fisher et al., 1994) and osteoporosis prevention techniques (Ievers-Landis et al., 2003), these behaviors are still mediated by their perceived efficacy in performing those behaviors and normative beliefs about how others in their lives perceive the behaviors. This leads to how attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge affect behavior.

Behavior

One explanation for the relationship among attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and behavior is the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) that involves the interplay of beliefs and attitudes, social context, and perceived self-efficacy. The reasoned action approach attempts to isolate the predictors of and precursors to action; specifically, attitudes

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and beliefs about a particular topic that might motivate correlated actions. The approach posits that action is primarily predicated on beliefs and attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. As described above, these beliefs are informed by many sources, including loved ones, the media, and personal experiences. These beliefs are further impacted by demographic characteristics and social background and can be grouped into three categories: outcome expectancies, normative beliefs, and self-efficacy.

Outcomes expectancies are the extent to which a person believes a given behavior will yield positive consequences for them; conversely, the more likely negative are the consequences, the less likely the person is to engage in the behavior. Normative beliefs about a given behavior involve how the person believes others in their life will perceive the behavior, and "these *injunctive and descriptive normative beliefs* produce a *perceived norm*, that is, perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in the behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 20, emphasis in original). Finally, self-efficacy involves the person's confidence that she or he can successfully perform the behavior with respect to personal and environmental factors. These "*control beliefs*" result in "*perceived behavior control* with regard to the behavior" (p. 21). Taken together, these belief categories, and their relative strength, intensity, and situational salience, "lead to the formation of a *behavioral intention,* or a *readiness to perform the behavior*" (p. 21). The theory has strong empirical support (Albarracín, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile, 2001; Bamberg, 2006; Brubaker & Fowler, 1990).

The reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) is built on the theory of planned behavior (TpB) put forth by Ajzen (1991, 2011). This theory works well when the

person has a high degree of perceived behavioral control, in contrast with the reasoned action approach that is more applicable in situations when a person has less direct control over a given behavior (Sheeran, Trafimow, & Armitage, 2003). For example, the reasoned action approach has been able to explain variance in behaviors like getting more sleep, something people have less control over then, say, listening to music, an action TpB can better predict. TpB predicts behavior by combining two behavioral antecedents included in the reasoned action approach – subjective norms and attitudes and beliefs toward a given behavior – with perceived behavior control (Ajzen, 1991). The subjective norms involve how those important to someone will perceive a given action and the attitudes and beliefs about a given behavior are informed by the same sources (e.g., opinions of loved ones, co-workers, etc., along with media influences) as are those in the reasoned action approach. This model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Theory of Planned Behavior

From *Theory of Planned Behavior with Background Factors,* by I. Ajzen, Retrieved September 25, 2018, at https://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.background.html, 2017. Reprinted with permission.

While this model has its critics (e.g., Sheeran et al., 2003; Uhlmann & Swanson, 2004), it retains strong empirical support (McEachan, Conner, Taylor, & Lawton, 2011). This theory is a desirable one to use in school settings as it "explores elements of school climate that have an impact on behavior change, such as approval or disapproval of individual and group social referents as well as the perceived school-related contextual variables that hinder or augment intervention by educators" (McCabe, Rubinson, Dragowski, & Elizalde-Utnick, 2013, p. 675).

Now that cogent definitions of attitudes, beliefs, and their respective similarities to and differences from knowledge have been explored, it is important to understand how attitudes and beliefs can be changed. As the unit of analysis for this study, and given the importance of particular beliefs and attitudes with respect to cultural responsiveness, equity, and social justice for teachers (McGowan & Kern, 2014; Murrell & Foster, 2003; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018) and school counselors (Kuranz & Pérusse, 2012; Parikh et al., 2011), this discussion is salient.

How Beliefs and Attitudes are Changed

In the past, scholarship indicated that attitudes and beliefs were relatively fixed and intransigent in humans (Leslie, 1994; Liljedahl, Oesterle, & Bernèche, 2012; Swan, 2007). However, the literature is pretty clear that beliefs and attitudes can change with appropriate interventions. In this section, a summary of some of the factors found to influence change in the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors and teachers will be summarized.

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Much research exists about attitudes and beliefs related to mathematics education, some of which was described above. As it relates to changing these attitudes and beliefs, Grootenboer and Marshman (2015) posit that when learning mathematics, students must develop an identity that facilitates and is supportive of this endeavor, which must directly contradict the popular notion of "I can't do math." Some also suggest that teaching methods can influence self-efficacy attitudes among students in mathematics education (Özdemir & Pape, 2013; Schukajlow et al., 2012). This relates to the professional development of mathematics teachers, as well. In addition to helping students build an identity conducive to learning math and building their self-efficacy related to it, specific tasks performed in professional development may impact beliefs about the behaviors being performed (Swan, 2007) and individual reflection on beliefs regarding teaching (Grootenboer, 2008) as well as collaborative reflection with a group of peers (Kensington-Miller, Sneddon, Yoon, & Stewart, 2013) can lead to changes in them.

A number of studies use versions of the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; 2011) to facilitate and predict behavior change in teachers. For example, Salleh and Laxman (2015) used what they called an "elaborated theory of planned behavior" to predict and facilitate change in teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) in their courses. The original theory was elaborated by adding external factors into the model, including age, sex, subject taught, teaching experience, teaching periods per week, highest qualification, grade level taught, and computer access. In addition, the authors used a methodological means method to decompose the beliefs under study.

The study involved surveys of 1,040 teachers in 18 secondary schools in Brunei

Darussalam, an Asian nation on the island of Borneo. In Brunei Darussalam, secondary

schools consist of the lower secondary levels of Forms 1-3 (students aged 11-14 years) and

upper secondary levels of Forms 4-5 (ages 14-16 years old), and this study included 50.4% of

teachers in lower levels ($n = 521$), 30.8% in upper levels ($n = 318$), and 18.8% ($n = 194$) who

taught in both lower and upper levels. Additional relevant demographic and professional

experience characteristics are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Demographic and Professional Background Characteristics of Respondents (N = 1,040).

Group	Valid N	Valid %
Sex		
Male	1,021	33
Female		67
Age		
18-25	1,037	18.8
26-30		30
31-35		17.5
36-40		11.6
41-45		9.5
46+		12.6
Teaching experience		
0-1 year	1,032	19.6
2-5 years		31.2
6-10 years		13.8
11-15 years		13.1
15+ years		22.4
Qualification		
PhD	1,039	1.2
Master's		4.6
BA/BSc		69.8
Diploma		6.8
Certificate		18.2
Subject taught		
Math	1,032	14.2
Science		18.2

Group	Valid N	Valid %
History		5.6
Geography		9.9
Language		22.9
Religious		14.1
Phys. Ed.		2.8
Other		13.3
Computer access		
Yes	959	11.9
No		88.1
Computer laboratory access		
Yes	951	73.4
		(continued)
No		26.6
Use computer		
Yes	965	26.2
No		73.8

Note. Adapted from "Examining the Effect of External Factors and Context-dependent Beliefs of Teachers in the Use of ICT in Teaching: Using an Elaborated Theory of Planned Behavior," by S. Selleh and K. Laxman, 2015, *Journal of Educational Technology, 43*, pp. 289-319. Copyright 2015 by the authors.

Hypotheses for the study were tested using either structural equation modeling or hierarchical multiple regressions (hypotheses 12 and 13) and most were supported. Most notably for the present study, the hypothesis that a positive relationship exists between *intention* to use ICT in teaching and *attitude toward use of ICT* was supported with a path coefficient of .28 ($B = .28$). Further, the indirect factors of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs, along with the direct factors in the TPB model (attitude toward use, social norms, and perceived behavioral control) have a positive influence on the intention ($R^2 = .17$) and use ($R^2 = .13$) of ICT. Overall, the TPB model was a valid predictor of teachers' intention to use ICT with 25% of the variance explained by the three direct predictors of TPB (attitude toward use, social norms, and perceived behavioral control) and 16% of the variance in use of ICT when combined with intention to use.

This study offers practical recommendations for influencing teacher behavior by influencing their attitudes and beliefs about a given topic. In this case, teacher behavior was mitigated by their perceived efficacy with the use of information and communication technology, along with their attitudes toward it. Further, the use of the theory of planned behavior could become a method for assess professional development related to a given topic – in this case, the use of information and communication technology – as a means to promote change regarding it. As the authors note, "[p]rofessional development strategies that may promote personal improvement and sustainability could include hands-on activities or workshops that encourage teachers to practise [*sic*] the acquired skills in preparing ICT resources for teaching or learning purposes" (Selleh & Laxman, 2015, p. 316).

Self-efficacy is an important construct as it relates to predicting behavior in school counselors; therefore, it is considered critical to develop when seeking changes in that behavior. For example, Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzalez, and Johnston (2009) found that, as school counselors' self-efficacy with using data increased, the more likely they are to use data to inform their practice. As the self-efficacy of schools counselors increased in being knowledgeable about the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, so did the likelihood they would implement it effectively (Mullen & Lambie, 2016). This connection between school counselor self-efficacy and effectiveness also exists related to collaboration with school staff (Atici, 2014) and school-family-community partnerships (Aydm, Bryan, & Duys, 2012).

A more fundamental approach may be required for the changing of key attitudes and beliefs when it comes to the cultural competence of school counselors. Martinez, Dye, and

Gonzalez (2017) found that that exposing school counselors to "meaning making moments" is important to develop a social justice orientation. The authors also found that this is best facilitated using a social constructivist approach (Vygotsky, 1978) to learning. A disruption of some kind, what Liljedahl (2011) calls "cognitive conflict," is necessary to catalyze change in beliefs. Using the theory of conceptual change (Kuhn, 1970), Liljedahl found that changes in beliefs must be preceded by the rejection of *a priori* beliefs, for which the introduction of cognitive conflict was instrumental. Finally, there is strong evidence that pre-service training can enhance school counselors' work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Chao, 2013; (Mellom, Straubhaar, Balderas, Ariail, & Portes, 2018), but it may not positively affect school counselors' beliefs about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students (Bidell, 2014). A growing body of work demonstrates the importance of an orientation toward social justice when it comes to cultural competence and responsiveness (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Parikh et al., 2011).

An example of this is a study conducted by Caldwell and Vera (2010) that used a critical incident technique (CIT) methodology (Woolsey, 1986) to test experiences and processes that influence the development of a social justice orientation among counseling psychology professionals and trainees. Participants were eligible for the study if they were actively involved in a training program or practice that focused on social justice and also had to have "made a significant contribution to the study of social justice within counseling psychology (e.g., clinical interventions, program development, research and scholarship, training)" (p. 166). Thirty-six total participants comprised of doctoral students ($n = 18$) and professionals ($n = 18$) were the purposeful sample for this study, with a mean age of 37.31

years and 83.3% (*n* = 30) female and 16.7% *(n* = 6) male participants. Of the participants, 22.2% (*n* = 8) were Black/African American, 11.1% (*n* = 4) were Latino/a, 55.6% (*n* = 20) were White/European American, 5.6% (*n* = 2), and 2.8% (*n* = 1) were both Asian and Multiracial/biracial. Just over three-fourths (77.8%; *n* = 28) identified has heterosexual with the remainder identifying as Gay/lesbian (11.1%; *n* = 4), Bisexual (5.6%; *n* = 2) or Queer (5.6%; *n* = 2).

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire and the Critical Factors Questionnaire (CFQ) that followed Woolsey's (1986) framework for critical incident techniques and survey design. The CFQ involved asking participants about formative experiences they believe contributed to their social justice orientation, then asked them to list factors that contributed to this orientation formation. Then, participants were asked to rank these factors and describe how the top two factors in particular influenced their social justice orientation. The data were analyzed using a constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) that involved qualitatively analyzing the data to identify themes and concepts, connecting them to one another, then eventually developing a theory or model from these categories and connections. To reduce researcher bias and for reliability purposes, a second investigator conducted her own analysis that yielded similar results after some adjustments.

The results came from the generation of 169 critical incidents, an average of 4.7 critical incidents per participant (*SD* = 1.56), and yielded five themes: (a) Influence of Significant Persons, (b), Exposure to Injustice, (c) Education/Learning, (d) Work Experiences, and (e) Religion/Spirituality. Significant persons who contributed to or constructed for participants formative, critical incidents were mentors, parents/family

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members, and peers. Injustices to which participants were exposed included those experienced by themselves and witnessed or observed occurring to others. Formative education and learning experiences that shaped their social justice orientation included coursework, readings, scholarship, and the philosophy of their graduate training program. Sub-themes within the Work Experiences theme included clinical and community work along with research work. Finally, the Religion/Spirituality theme was found in a minority of participant responses (3%; $n = 5$) and connected their beliefs about social justice to their conception of their religion's core tenets.

These data have important implications for training programs for helping professionals as they can inform both recruitment and training efforts. Data about formative experiences early in life can help training programs find candidates with dispositions most conducive to a social justice orientation. What the study found about the import of education and training, exposure to scholarship, experience with research, and interaction with mentors can help counselor educators to develop the experiences, skills, and knowledge counselors-in-training develop during their programs toward a social justice orientation.

This section summarized research about how attitudes and beliefs can be changed, including by establishing an affirmative identity toward a given task (Grootenboer & Mashman, 2015) and the use of reflective practices (Gootenboer, 2008; Kensington-Miller et al., 2013). For teachers specifically, the use of collaborative teaching techniques have been found effective for changing attitudes and beliefs (Özdemir & Pape, 2013; Schukajlow et al., 2012) and even when performing specific tasks during professional development (Swan, 2007). Bolstering the self-efficacy of educators can help them adjust their attitudes and

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beliefs toward given tasks (Atici, 2014; Aydm et al., 2012; Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2009; Mullen & Lambie, 2016), and introducing them to critical, meaning-making moments can increase their culturally responsive self-efficacy (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Martinez et al., 2017). The next section makes the case for how important the attitudes and beliefs of educators are when it comes to working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Attitudes and Beliefs in Culturally Responsive School Counseling Practice

Much has been written about the importance of the attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding their students from culturally (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Murrell & Foster, 2003; Nieto, 2013; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018), linguistically (De Oliveira, 2015), socioeconomically (Schauer, 2018), and ability (Ferraioli & Harris, 2011; Harding, 2009) diverse backgrounds. While less research exists on this topic in the literature, there is still ample evidence that the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors are important when it comes to culturally responsive practices. This section summarizes this research to centralize the importance of a focus on attitudes and beliefs in school counselor preparation, with a particular focus on asset- versus deficit-based thinking.

For educational practices to be equitable and ensure access to all students, educators must begin by examining their own ethnic, racial and political identities (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Holcomb-McCoy (2007) asserts that school counselors must not only "be cognizant of their own prejudiced beliefs that cause them to fear and feel uncomfortable with certain groups of students" as the "fear and discomfort will interfere with the counseling relationship" (p. 32), they must also

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help others in schools examine their prejudiced beliefs on student achievement. The beliefs that school counselors hold about their students, especially those from culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds, deeply impact their effective practice with these students and being aware of these beliefs is of paramount importance (Grimmett & Paisley, 2008).

A key attitude for counselors working with culturally and linguistically diverse clients is cultural humility, which involves "(a) a lifelong motivation to learn from others, (b) critical self-examination of cultural awareness, (c) interpersonal respect, (d) developing mutual partnerships that address power imbalances, and (e) an other-oriented stance open to new cultural information" (Mosher et al., 2017, p. 223). Cultural humility is less a "way of knowing" and more a "way of being" (Sue & Sue, 2016). This concept has been examined a great deal in the social work literature (Danso, 2018) and has even been suggested to replace cultural competence as a framework for working with clients from diverse backgrounds (Fisher-Borne, Montana Cain, & Martin, 2015).

Belief in a just world (BJW; Lipkus, 1991) is regarded as a central construct in assessing helping professionals' propensity to advocate for their clients and is the idea that people generally "get what they deserve and deserve what they get" (Lipkus, 1991, p. 1172). This view essentially means that the world is fair and people get from it what they deserve based on their effort (Parikh, et al., 2011). Because those from middle class backgrounds tend to believe this compared to those from lower socioeconomic statuses (Van Soest, 1996), and because a plurality of school counselors come from middle class backgrounds (Herr &

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Erford, 2011), scrutiny on this principle in the context of culturally responsive school counseling is relevant.

Missing from most school counselor preparation programs are explicit study of privilege and oppression, yet these concepts are critical to equipping school counselors with the tools necessary to be culturally responsive (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; McGowan & Kern, 2014). Counselor education programs continue to fall short when it comes to compelling counselors-in-training to recognize and confront their racist, classist, ableist, homophobic and sexist beliefs and attitudes (Sue & Sue, 2016). Further, programs intentionally leave out *anti*-racist, antisexist, and antihomophobic curricula as this often makes graduate students too uncomfortable (Carter, 2005; Vera, Buhin & Shin, 2006).

Another key mindset for culturally responsive school counselors is a focus on the assets and capital brought to schools by students from culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds, rather than the deficits their presence in schools represent. This notion, characterized as an assets-based approach rather than a deficit thinking, will be discussed next.

Asset-Based Versus Deficit Thinking. Sadly, many efforts aimed at addressing the achievement and opportunity gaps for culturally and linguistically diverse students approach the topic from a deficit perspective, which often exacerbates the problem (Goodman, & West-Olatunji, 2010; Robinson & Biran, 2006;Valencia, 2015). Some argue that approaching culturally responsive pedagogy from the perspective of the achievement gap produces what Gutiérrez (2008) calls a "gap-gazing fetish" (p. 357), with research focusing on the mere existence of the gap rather than substantive methods for mitigating it. When pedagogy is

approached from the perspective of what is missing from the educational toolboxes of culturally and linguistically diverse students, students can end up losing important cultural assets and benefits (Valenzuela, 1999).

Deficit thinking is not a new phenomenon and has its roots in the genetic pathology movement described earlier in this chapter (Tucker, 1994; Valencia, 1997). Promulgated by "scholars" like Garrett (1962) and Shuey (1958, 1966) whose debunked research attempted to empirically support this "genetic pathology deficit thinking" (Valencia, 2010, p.42), there is a long history in the United States of both consciously and unconsciously asserting that people of color have cultural and intellectual deficiencies that explain the gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment between them and White people. Valencia (1997) defines deficit thinking as "1) a mind-set molded by the fusion of ideology and science; 2) a dynamic form of social thought allegedly accounting for between-group behaviors; 3) an actual way of thinking to combat problems (for example, imputational; top-down approach; paternalistic)" (p. xi).

In his book about the causes of the achievement gap, Valencia (2015) lists language suppression and cultural exclusion as part of the meso-level factors in his Three-M Systemic Model that also includes macro- and micro-level factors. He notes the documented extent to which power and privilege pervade all aspects of education, including the curriculum and its reliance on "official knowledge" from which people of color and others from disenfranchised backgrounds are barred from constructing (Apple, 1982). This language exclusion and cultural hegemony involve the ongoing battle regarding bilingual education, ethnic studies

programs, and the cumbersome process for assuring compliance with legal protections that require equal opportunities for all students (Valencia, 2015).

The school counseling profession is not immune from deficit thinking and it is manifested in school counselor practice in a number of ways. An important role of school counselors is both individual planning with students to meet their postsecondary goals along with identifying and eliminating barriers for them to do so (ASCA, 2012a, 2015). Too often, this responsibility is approached from the perspective of academic, financial, and college-going experience deficiencies rather than the assets of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Welton & Martinez, 2013). Placing students in courses is also an important responsibility of school counselors (ASCA, 2012a) and students of color, students from lower socioeconomic families, and students with diverse learning needs are too often tracked in less rigorous, non-college preparatory classes (Burris & Welner, 2005; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Tyson, 2013). Finally, school counselors too often fail to involve parents and guardians of culturally and linguistically diverse students in meaningful ways, many times due to their incorrect assumptions about how constructive that help would be (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Jeynes, 2007; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Wilder, 2014).

The salience of deficit thinking throughout various disciplines is evident and Yosso (2005) states it plainly when she writes that deficit thinking is "one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in US schools" (p. 75). This deficit thinking is most commonly manifested in schools through the beliefs that students of color enter school lacking normative cultural knowledge and skills and that their families do not support their children's education (Yosso, 2005). Deficit thinking is reproduced through concepts like

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Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) characterization of some cultures as "culturally poor" due to their access to middle class, dominant forms of cultural, social, and economic capital. The very use of a metric by which to assess capital acquisition of the middle class reinforces deficit thinking. This led Yosso to the identification of six reimagined and transformational forms of capital: aspirational, social, familial, navigational, resistant, linguistic, and cultural.

Aspirational capital refers to the resiliency demonstrated by many people of color despite systemic, persistent and intransigent inequality. For example, Gándara (1995) notes the consistently high aspirations for the future of children in Chicano families despite the consistently lower educational outcomes for them. These defiant aspirations are reinforced by another form of cultural wealth described by Yosso (2005), familial capital. This refers to the connection to family – immediate, extended, and friends who are considered family – that represents a broader connection to one's community and its resources. This connection teaches lessons of caring, coping, and both formal and informal education and fosters emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness (Auerbach, 2004; Elenes, Gonzalez, Delgado Bernal, & Villenes, 2001; Lopez, 2003). Related to familial capital is social capital, which expands the resources found in one's family to other people in one's broader community. These social resources have been harnessed to accomplish goals related to education, legal justice, employment, and health care.

Navigational capital is a set of skills and knowledge that enables students of color to maneuver through educational, career-related, health care, and judicial systems that are often hostile toward them. Drawing both on other forms of cultural wealth such as familial and social capital, along with lessons learned from prior experiences, students of color often

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demonstrate remarkable resilience despite this hostility and adversity (Chang, 2017; Morales, 2010; Morales & Trotman, 2010). Knowledge and skills that foster oppositional behavior that challenges inequality is what Yosso (2005) calls resistant capital. When informed by a Freirean critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and knowledge about structural racism and inequality (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), parents of color can transfer practices that resist racist, capitalist, and patriarchal systems of inequality to their children. This is done in many ways, including by the preservation and strengthening of one's native language, which the learning and continued use of enhances intellectual and social skills. This is known as linguistic capital and it transcends the mere facility in more than one language, it also includes their prowess in storytelling and the use of various forms of art to communicate, along with their enhanced ability to communicate with various audiences (Faulstich Orellana, 2003).

Cultural capital and wealth is drawn directly from the concept of "funds of knowledge," the reality that all students have knowledge formed by their experiences and passed down from generation to generation, that should be valued in schools. Based on a qualitative research approach that combined anthropology with education, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992) sought to capture the cultural and intellectual resources in Mexican American households in Tucson, Arizona. At a time when instruction in predominantly Latinx and low-income schools was increasingly rote-like and devoid of cultural and personal aspects of their students, this approach endeavored "to develop innovations in teaching that draw upon the knowledge and skills found in local households" (p. 132). An expanded view of these cultural and familial assets, called funds of identity,

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involves people using these assets for the development of their identity and to further their personal, professional and political goals (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014).

Conclusion

This section opened with a quote from Kuranz and Pérusse (2012) who wrote that school counselors' "beliefs are the engine powering the school counseling program" (p. 32), and this section sought to elucidate just what are beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and behavior that work together to power equitable, socially just, and culturally responsive practices. How beliefs are changed was also discussed, a salient topic for this study that seeks to identify key attitudes and beliefs of school counselors-in-training as they prepare to enter the profession as culturally responsive practitioners. Finally, how attitudes and beliefs fit into the broader work of culturally responsive, equitable, and socially just practices was discussed. The next section describes important elements of the profession at the center of this study, school counseling.

<div align="center">

School Counselor Preparation and Training

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Organized societies have had systems in place for young people to seek the counsel and guidance of selected members outside the family in nearly all of recorded history. These selected others have been called shamans, elders, teachers, and mentors, and have passed along knowledge in fields like philosophy, physics, and religion. Also since the beginning of recorded history, these forms of guidance or counseling were mostly only available to those in the most elite strata of society and the activities therefrom were neither planned nor systematic. This inequitable access to the services of school counselors continues today with widely disparate, and largely discretionary, school counselor-to-student ratios (Herr &

Erford, 2011). To understand school counselor preparation and training, it is important to know the history of the profession, understand the foundation of it, the Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP), and recognize the absence of consistent training of school counselors in cultural responsiveness. This section ends with a discussion of the importance of leadership in school counselor preparation and training.

History of the School Counseling Profession

Largely an American invention, various authors cite different conditions that gave rise to the school counseling profession. These conditions range from the division of labor resulting from advances in technology and the spread of democracy that extended vocational education (Brewer, 1942), the psychometric testing and mental health movements in the early to mid-20th century (Baker & Gerler, 2008), to the forces of religion, philanthropy, and social change that led to the seeking of mental hygiene and the movement to know students as individuals (Traxler & North, 1966). The military has contributed a great deal to the growth of counseling as a profession. With its emphasis on testing and concomitant placement of individuals in jobs within it, the United States military began more formally and consistently training counselors for this work (Hollis, 2000). The role of school counselors became more prominent after the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958, discussed more below. These forces, along with the contributions of key people discussed next, gave rise to the profession now known as school counseling.

There are many people who contributed to the development of the profession of school counseling, but a full accounting of them and their respective contributions is outside the scope of this Literature Review. Two people will be discussed in more detail due to their

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important contributions that are within the scope of this review. First, Frank Parsons, known as "the father of vocational guidance" (Herr & Erford, 2011, p. 20), will be featured due to the importance of career counseling to the development of school counseling as a profession (Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). Second, Norm Gysbers will be featured due to his important contributions to developing comprehensive school counseling programs, the foundation for most school counselor preparation programs.

Any historical account of the history of school counseling would be incomplete without mentioning Frank Parsons. Born in 1854, Parsons was heavily influenced by the work of Jane Addams in Chicago with poor and marginalized people (Pope, 2008). Emblematic of part of the Progressive Movement of the early 20th century (Wirth, 1980), Parsons was concerned about two major phenomena taking place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the rapid immigration of people to the United States and from rural to urban centers, and the lack of services to assist them with vocational training and placement, along with the simultaneous industrialization that led to excesses and poor management of the free enterprise system, the latter of which led "to the debasement of individual dignity" (Herr & Erford, 2011, p. 20).

The seminal work of Parsons was the career theory he advanced that organized career development into three steps: 1) identifying the strengths, talents, and aptitudes of workers; 2) learning about the attributes, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, and opportunities of various types of work; and, 3) aligning these two sets of information to inform career choices. This basic theory guides career counseling to this day (Pope, 2008). The salience of career counseling in school counseling and Parsons' seminal contributions to

the former laid the foundation for what eventually became the first college-based counselor education program at Harvard University (Schmidt, 2003).

Through the first half of the twentieth century, school counseling was largely an uncoordinated set of activities and services that varied considerably from school-to-school. During the 1970s, a paradigm shift occurred and "the role of school counselor…evolved in a way that is both programmatic, as opposed to offering services, and is expanding to address the educational needs of all students" (Stephens & Lindsey, 2011, p. 19). A key figure in this paradigm shift was Dr. Norman Gysbers. Soon after starting his faculty appointment at the University of Missouri, Dr. Gysbers became concerned about the diminished importance of vocational counseling in the field of school counseling, something he attributed to the burgeoning – and, perhaps, inflated – importance of mental health treatment within it. As early as 1969, Dr. Gysbers began the work of assembling a comprehensive and systematic approach to school counseling that was first published in 1981 in a book entitled *Improving Guidance Programs* (Gysbers, 1997). The model was implemented in a school district in Missouri under Dr. Gysbers' supervision, then he began to work with officials at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and eventually with officials from state departments of education from across the country (Good, Fischer, Johnston, & Heppner, 1994). After the model was expanded to involve grades K-12, Gysbers and his colleague Patricia Henderson published in 1988 what is now considered to be a seminal textbook on school counselor programs, *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program*, now in its fifth edition (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). It was from this model that

the ASCA published its most recent edition of the ASCA national model for school counseling programs, which will be discussed in more detail below (ASCA, 2012a).

Through a combination of the aforementioned social forces and these people who made formidable contributions to the field of school counseling, key legislation bolstered and codified the work of school counselors. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 is the first place in US law where vocational guidance is mentioned, mandating its presence in public schools, "thus solidifying the link between education and counseling guidance" (Stephens & Lindsey, 2011, p. 15). However, the establishment of formal, coordinated sets of school counseling programs was still decades away and the "influence of vocational guidance on school guidance was minimal [as] there was no accredited training programs and no widely accepted theoretical underpinnings" (Baker & Gerler, 2008, p. 28). The Vocational Education Act of 1946 (P.L.586) was the first legislation that specifically mentions and provides funding for counseling and guidance services that extend beyond just vocational guidance (Jager 1947). Funding from this act formalized and standardized the training of counselor-trainees, as well (Gysbers, 2010).

As mentioned above, the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 was also instrumental to the rise of school counseling. Passed largely in response to the Russians' launch of *Sputnik,* the NDEA placed a national emphasis on encouraging bright students to pursue the "hard sciences", which meant students needed to be psychologically assessed and given career guidance. Title V of the Act is titled "Guidance, Counseling and Testing; Identification and Encouragement of Able Students of the NDEA" (NDEA, 1958) and provides funding for testing programs and for secondary counselor training programs.

This led to a huge expansion of the number of professional school counselors and their presence in a growing number of high schools (Herr & Erford, 2011).

In 1965, in response to rising unemployment, poverty, and the increased prevalence of technology and its concomitant effects on occupations, a specific funding stream for school counselors was added to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Vocational Education Act Amendments of 1968 further expanded the role of school counseling by advocating for career guidance, specific counseling and services for people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including for people with disabilities, and adding school counseling at the elementary level. Yet another influence of career education on the history of school counseling was the passage of the Career Education Incentive Act of 1976 that institutionalized career education in schools, and promoted the importance of career guidance within that broader effort, bolstering the role of school counselors. Also in 1976, with the establishment of a division within the U.S. Department of Education focused on vocational guidance, school counseling was further ensconced in elementary and secondary education. Career guidance and its importance to the role of school counselors was reinforced by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990, and their subsequent amendments, and the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (Herr & Erford, 2011).

In a departure from the prior two decades or so of legislation that primarily focused on the career guidance duties of school counselors, the Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Act of 1995, and its expansion and reauthorization in 1999, provided $20 million to reduce the student-to-counselor ratio nationwide, and focused on a more

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comprehensive approach to school counseling. This legislation provided a foundation for the role that school counselors would play after the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002. While not specifically mentioned in the law, Herr & Erford (2011) assert the importance of school counselors is clearly implied within it:

> The need for and support of school counseling is evident in many parts of the legislation relating to dropout prevention, career counseling, drug and alcohol counseling, safe and drug-free schools, facilitation of the transition of students from correctional institutions back to community schools, identification of and services for gifted and talented students, and children who are neglected or delinquent or otherwise at risk of academic and social failure. (pp. 28-29)

School counselors are mentioned explicitly in the reauthorization and reinvention of NCLB, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed in 2015. The ESSA bolsters the role of school counselors in schools by delineating school conditions for student learning that include school counseling to all students, explicitly listing school counselors as acceptable recipients of professional development dollars, and recommending school counselors as possible sources of input for school improvement plans (ASCA, 2017a).

Another important event in the history of the school counseling profession was a report commissioned by the American Personnel and Guidance Association (now known as the American Counseling Association) in 1977 that uncovered disagreement among counselors regarding the "role of the school counselor, confusion regarding the best way to organize and deliver services, and many unresolved issues as to the leadership and supervision of school guidance programs" (Hatch, 2002, p. 32). This led to an effort to systematize and coordinate the services provided by school counselors and a move toward the comprehensive school counseling programs that are the foundation of school counselor education programs (Stephens & Lindsey, 2011) that will be discussed next.

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

To understand school counselor preparation and training programs, it is important to understand the foundation of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program, the ASCA's (2012a) National Model for School Counseling Programs. In addition to understanding its components and functions, one must understand why a comprehensive program that delivers school counseling services is needed and what empirical support for comprehensive school counseling programs exists. After discussions about those topics, this section will describe contemporary school counseling preparation programs and illustrate the need for more culturally responsive and social justice-focused components to be infused among them. First, more about comprehensive school counseling programs.

Development of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. Jesse B. Davis, a teacher and principal in Michigan, is considered to be the first school counselor as he was the first to have developed a systematic, school-wide guidance and counseling program in 1907 (DeVoss & Andrews, 2006). Through the 1930s, the duties of a school counselor were typically performed by a teacher who would spend part of the time teaching and part of the time carrying out vocational counseling duties for no additional pay and as part of no formal organizational structure (Gysbers, 2004).

In 1964, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision published the *ACES Standards for Counselor Education in the Preparation of Secondary School Counselors,* which is the first version of what is now a set of standards developed by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016). While most school counseling graduate programs are accredited by CACREP, others

utilize different accrediting bodies (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Herr & Erford, 2011), including the Midwestern Urban University (MUU) that is the site for this study. More details about accrediting bodies and their contributions to school counselor training programs will be provided below.

In addition to accreditation bodies that shaped school counseling training programs, there are a number of authors whose work have done so. Considered a seminal work in school counseling (Green & Keys, 2001), Dinkmeyer and Caldwell (1970) wrote *Developmental Counseling and Guidance: A Comprehensive School Approach.* This book articulated several foundational elements of contemporary school counseling programs, including the integration of school counseling with other educational goals, an approach that includes direct counseling along with working with groups of students, and that school counseling is for all students.

Not long after that, in 1974, Gysbers and Moore (1974) wrote the first of many resources on what is now known as the Comprehensive School Counseling Program. Gysbers and his colleagues have revised that work many times and published his fifth edition in 2012 with a book titled *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance and Counseling Program*. The ASCA (2017c) has adopted a set of standards as early as 1997 (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and revised them as recently as 2017 to guide the preparation and training of school counselors. While the adoption of specific models differ by state and school district, having coordinated programs is important in order to avoid "duplicated and disjointed programs, lost opportunities, elitism, and estrangement among counselors in the different units" (Baker & Gerler, 2008, p. 59). The iterations of a systematic, developmental

counseling and guidance model has evolved into the ASCA's National Model (2012a), to be discussed next.

ASCA National Model. The ASCA National Model represents an evolution "from position to services to program" (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012, p. 3) and has four components: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability. It is on this foundation and through the National Model that "brings school counselors together with one vision and one voice, which creates unity and focus toward improving student achievement and supporting student development" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 13). This section will more thoroughly describe the ASCA National Model, including its theoretical foundation, discussed next.

The ASCA National Model (hereafter, "The Model") is based on seven questions that address fundamental and underlying needs of students that are not automatically met by other educators. These questions are "answered" by 27 principles drawn from the Association's Ethical Standards, the profession's history, and its research base. The seven questions are below:

1. What do students need that the school counseling profession, based on its special body of knowledge, can best address?
2. Which students benefit from activities designed to address these needs?
3. What are school counselors best qualified to do to help students?
4. How does school counseling relate to the overall educational program?
5. How can school counseling be provided most effectively and efficiently?
6. How is a good school counseling program developed by a school?

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7. How are the results of school counselors' work measured? (ASCA, 2012a, pp. 137-140)

Incorporated into all four components of The ASCA National Model (2012a) are four themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change. The Association asserts that leadership is required for all aspects of The Model, from "the development of a comprehensive school counseling program to solving problems with school and community groups that promote student achievement." In fact, it asserts that its importance and ubiquity within The Model may make it "the foundation of the other essential skills needed for program implementation" (p. 1). More about the important role that leadership plays in school counseling is discussed at the end of this chapter.

Advocacy is the next theme that undergirds the components of The Model (2012a) and the Association contends that "school counselors are ideally situated to serve as advocates for every student in meeting high academic, career and personal/social standards" (p. 4). School counselors advocate for their students to promote these standards both individually with students and with the broader system in which students are educated. This is done through another theme, collaboration, that calls for school counselors to "work with stakeholders, both inside and outside the school, as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program" to leverage these resources to "work toward the common goals of equity, access and academic success for every student" (p. 6).

Through these previous themes of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, school counselors – with their access to school-wide achievement, attendance, and behavioral data – "are uniquely positioned to identify systemic barriers to student achievement" (ASCA,

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2012a, p. 8) and, thus, can leverage this position and their leadership, advocacy, and collaboration skills, to create systemic change. It is in this theme that important skills for school counselors are highlighted, though they are also mentioned in the others: data analysis and data-driven decision-making. Data must be carefully analyzed to recognize and identify systemic barriers to academic achievement, and a case based on these data must be carefully made to justify the use of precious time on the part of school leaders, teachers, students, and parents, to address them. The themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change form the foundation for the four components of the ASCA National Model, displayed graphically in Figure 2, and that will be discussed in more details next.

Figure 2. ASCA National Model Diamond

Foundation. The Foundation component of The Model (2012a) become the "what" of the program, "the student knowledge, attitudes and skills that are learned because of a school counseling program" (p. 21). This foundation must be formed in collaboration with school counseling program stakeholders, including school staff, parents/guardians, and the community and must also include a program focus, student competencies, and professional competencies. Within the program focus, the beliefs of school counselors about students, families, teachers, and the educational process must be articulated, along with vision and mission statements for the school counseling program. Finally, program goals must be set to "define how the vision and mission will be accomplished and guide the development of curriculum, small-group and closing-the-gap action plans" (p. 25).

The next task within the Foundation component of The Model (2012a) is defining and prioritizing student competencies, or the "specific knowledge, attitudes and skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of a school counseling program" (p. 29). These will be largely based on the ASCA Student Standards (2012c) that are organized into three domains: academic, career, and personal/social development. The competencies shape the school counseling core curriculum, small group activities and should be aligned with local and state standards. School counseling programs can also consider using other student standards from other sources, including state and local ones.

Finally, the Foundation component includes the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b). Professional competencies, or "the knowledge, attitudes and skills

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that ensure school counselors are equipped to meet the rigorous demands of the profession the needs of our preK-12 student" (ASCA, 2012a, pp. 29-30). In addition to being part of the Foundation for the school counseling program, these competencies can be used by school counselor education and training programs as benchmarks, as well as by in-service school counselors to develop professional development plans. The ASCA School Counselor Competencies rely heavily on the ASCA Ethical Code for School Counselors (2016) as an ethical framework. After the Foundation is formed, The Model outlines important aspects of managing the program.

  Management. To ensure that student and school counselor competencies are being met, as well as to determine the amount of time school counselors are spending delivering services within the comprehensive programs and that those services reflect the latest needs of students and stakeholders and research on associated topics, a system must be put in place to effectively manage the program. The Management component of the ASCA National Model (2012a) "provides organizational assessments and tools designed to manage a school counseling program" (p. 41). These assessments include a school counselor competency assessment and a school counseling program assessment, as well as a use-of-time assessment that determines the percentage of time school counselors spend within each of the components of The Model. ASCA recommends that school counselors spend at least 80 percent of their time in direct and indirect student services, delivering the services of The Model. The remaining 20 percent is spent on the foundation, management, and accountability tasks, as well as carrying out school counselors' fair-share responsibilities, "the routine 'running of the school' responsibilities that all members of the school staff take equal turns

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doing to ensure the school's smooth operation" (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012, p. 83). How school counselors apportion their time among the various aspects of The Model should be based on the school's academic and behavioral data, along with other, local factors (ASCA, 2012a).

Another element of the Management component of The Model (ASCA, 2012a) includes developing an Annual Agreement with building administrators. This agreement "ensures formal discussion between the school counselor and administrator about the alignment of school counseling program goals with the goals of the school and can increase an administrator's understanding of a comprehensive school counseling program" (p. 46). The agreement should include a rationale for how the school counselors purport to spend their time within The Model based on school data, a list of school counselor responsibilities, and identify areas for school counselor professional development. The Management component also includes plans to analyze and use school and student data to form action plans, as well as the lesson plans used by school counselors classrooms and a calendar of school counseling activities that reflect student needs. Finally, this component includes the formation of an Advisory Council comprised of a representative group of students, school staff, administrators, parents/guardians, and community members that meets at least twice per year to advise and guide the school counseling program.

Delivery. The Delivery component should comprise 80 percent or more of the time of school counselors when implementing The Model (2012a). This component is divided into two, broad categories: direct and indirect student services. Within the direct student services category are three sub-categories: school counseling core curriculum, individual student

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planning, and responsive services. The school counseling core curriculum "consists of a planned, written instructional program that is comprehensive in scope, preventive in nature and developmental in design" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 85). This curriculum is delivered to students in classrooms as well as in smaller group settings. Individual student planning includes working with individual students on academic, career, and personal/social goal-setting, planning for the future related to graduation progress, careers and postsecondary training. This work is carried out with students using appraisal techniques – assessing students' strengths, interests, and skills – along with advisement sessions. Responsive services is the next element of the direct student services category of the Delivery component and they "consist of activities designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns" and "are designed to help students resolve academic, career and personal/social issues" (ASCA, 2012a, p. 86) through individual counseling and crisis response for emergency and critical situations that affect larger groups of students.

Indirect student services, the other category of the Delivery component of the ASCA National Model (2012a), consist of a set of activities that, while not directly working with individual or groups of students, serve "as a means to support student achievement and to promote equity and access for all students" (p. 87). Indirect student services include utilizing strategies such as referrals to outside agencies or organizations, consultation with key stakeholders, and collaboration with internal and external parties, all in an effort to "promote student achievement for a specific student or to promote systemic change to address the needs of underachieving or underrepresented groups of students in the school" (p. 87).

Accountability. The final component of The Model (2012a) is Accountability. The central question that should be answered from the efforts to evaluate the school counseling program that fall under this component is, "How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?" (p. 99). In addition to Accountability efforts being directed to program improvement and evaluation, they also help school counselors "garner the political clout necessary to improve school-counselor-to-student staffing ratios and redefine school counselor roles and activities" (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008, p. 39). This component includes three sections: data analysis, program results, and evaluation and improvement, all aligned with the goal of collecting, analyzing, then making decisions based on program data. Data collected and analyzed include school and student data, along with use-of-time assessments discussed above. Program results, including results from the sub-categories of direct student services, school counseling core curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services, are analyzed to evaluate and make necessary improvements to those aspects of the program.

Finally, school counselor performance appraisals are also included in the Accountability component. This appraisal should be conducted once a year and include three parts: self-evaluation, administrator evaluation, and assessment of goal attainment. This evaluation should be based on the role of school counselors and the program rather than a tool used to evaluate other educators (i.e. teachers). The ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b) should be utilized in this evaluation and aligned with a job description consistent for all school counselors in the district (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

This model, along with the ASCA Ethical Standards (2016), the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b), and the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student

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Success (2014a) "have significantly influenced school counselor preparation and practice" (ASCA, 2014b, p. 8). Next, I will examine what the literature says about the effectiveness of these comprehensive school counseling programs.

Empirical Support for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

In a study published as early as the 1920's conducted by Edgerton and Herr (1924), the benefits of school counselors are highlighted. It was revealed in this study of school districts in 143 cities that outcomes of "these serious endeavors to meet current and changing demands for purposeful instruction and systematic guidance" are "marked increases in interest, ambition, and school attendance" for students who have access to guidance programs (p. 5). Gysbers (2004) writes that much of the formal organization of school counseling programs follows the profession's efforts to measure their outcomes, including a large study conducted by Froehlich (1949) and guidance program evaluation procedures compiled by Wilson (1945).

No single study exists that can unilaterally affirm the value of school counseling programs as "no single study can examine the multitude of duties performed by professional school counselors at all the different grade levels" (Whiston & Quinby, 2011, p. 59). The body of research that examines the multiple roles that school counselors play at various grade levels must be carefully examined to determine the effectiveness of school counseling programs. This is done in two ways: a qualitative review that examines research conducted in this area and summarizes their findings, and a meta-analysis that quantify the results of these studies by generating an effect size. Effect sizes are calculated by subtracting the mean of the control groups from the mean of the experimental group and dividing by the standard

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deviation of the control group. Cohen (1988) suggests that an effect size of .20 indicates a small effect, .50 a moderate effect, and .80 a large effect.

Comprehensive school counseling programs have some empirical support (Borders & Drury, 1992; Carey et al., 2012a; Carey et al., 2012b; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; MacDonald & Sink, 1999; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Whiston & Quinby, 2009; Whiston, Tai, Rahardja, & Eder, 2011; Wilkerson, Pérusse, & Hughes, 2013). Whiston and Quinby (2009) provided the most recent and most comprehensive meta-analysis of studies that test the effectiveness of school counselor interventions. The study used two types of meta-analysis to analyze 117 school counseling studies, both published and unpublished (i.e. dissertations, theses) since 1980. The study contained sufficient data to calculate an effect size ($d = .30$) and found the that "students who received school counseling interventions score almost a third of a standard deviation higher on various outcomes than do students who do not receive school counseling interventions" (p. 45).

In what is considered one of only two studies that used rigorous, quantitative methods to evaluate school counseling programs at the state level (Carey et al., 2012a), Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun (1997) analyzed data from students ($n = 22,964$), school counselors ($n = 434$) from 236 high schools. Using hierarchical linear modeling (Bryk, Raudenbush, Seltzer, & Congdon, 1989), which carefully controls for between-school factors, the researchers found that students with schools that more fully implemented school counseling programs had higher, self-reported grades (Gamma Coefficient $= .103$; $t(3.09)$; $p < .01$) , and perceptions of students of being better prepared for postsecondary education (Gamma Coefficient $= .084$; $t(2.62)$; $p < .01$). In addition, students in these schools with more fully

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implemented school counseling programs reported having more access to career information and greater feelings of belonging and safety in their school.

The other rigorous, quantitative, state-wide evaluation of school counseling programs was conducted by Sink and Stroh (2003), They found that schools with a more fully implemented comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP) promote better student outcomes over time for students in middle elementary grades (grades 3-4). For example, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds had higher gains in students achievement over time compared to schools with less-fully implemented CSCPs. This finding was reinforced by a study of middle school students conducted by Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu (2008) as student achievement levels were higher in schools that had a fully implemented CSCP for five or more years.

In a more recent study conducted by Wilkerson et al. (2013), student achievement data were compared in schools that earned a designation from the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) called RAMP, or Recognized ASCA Model Program. This designation essentially affirms that recipient schools have implemented the ASCA National Model (2012a) with fidelity. Student proficiency levels in schools that earned this designation was higher than that in non-RAMP schools in the areas of elementary school Math (6.4% higher) and English Language Arts (ELA) (6.1%), middle school Math (1.5%) and ELA (1.2%), and high school Math (4.6%) and ELA (3.2%). Further, this study looked at longitudinal data over a 4-year period and found that student achievement in RAMP-designated schools was consistently higher over this time period than control groups that did

not earn the RAMP designation. Ward (2009) found similar results in RAMP elementary schools that had higher attendance rates and higher scores on reading assessments.

In a mixed-methods study, MacDonald and Sink (1999) solicited the manuals, if they existed, for comprehensive school counseling programs in all fifty states in the United States. Three sets of analyses were conducted to determine the number of states with comprehensive school counseling programs that met their definition, along with qualitative analyses that assessed their developmental nature and identified patterns among the programs. Twenty-four states were found to have developmental, comprehensive school counseling programs that met the researcher's criteria. The study found that most models were based on the Gysbers and Henderson (2012) model, known at the time as the "Missouri Model." From a qualitative perspective, few themes emerged and much inconsistency existed among the models due to vague and ambiguous language. The authors attributed this inconsistency to a lack of theory-driven practice by experienced school counselors, outdated programs, and a misunderstanding of the term "developmental" that led to many interpretations thereof.

Carey et al., (2012b) note a shift in the latter part of 2000's in states adopting comprehensive school counseling programs aligned with the ASCA National Model (2012a). In their study, they tested which features of the ASCA National Model were most effective in positively influencing student outcomes. The study gathered data from school counselors (n = 88) in Utah and analyzed student outcome data reported to the Utah State Office of Education (USOE). Using hierarchical linear regression to control for between-school variance, the study found that the ASCA National Model accounted for higher ACT scores, higher numbers of students taking the ACT, higher state test scores, and higher graduation

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rates in career and technical education programs. Specifically, the elements of the ASCA National Model found to be most effective in bringing about these results are a programmatic focus (e.g., deliberate planning around CSCP implementation) and a focus on using data to drive decision-making and program delivery.

In a similar study conducted in Nebraska, Carey et al., (2012a) found that schools with comprehensive school counseling programs like the ASCA National Model, even after controlling for key demographic factors, have lower suspension rates, higher attendance rates, and higher math and reading proficiency. Further, the study found that schools with lower counselor-to-student ratios had better student attendance, an increase in students' proficiency in career and technical education programs, and an increase in completion rates in those CTE programs. These outcomes are corroborated by other authors who found similarly positive outcomes in schools with lower counselor-to-student outcomes (e.g., Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Whiston & Wachter, 2008). Consistent with comprehensive school counseling programs like the ASCA National Model, lower counselor-to-student ratios allow school counselors to more fully implement comprehensive school counseling programs and reduce the time spent on tasks not related to a developmental, comprehensive program that addresses students' personal, social, academic, and career planning needs (Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, & Pierce, 2012).

In addition to comparisons of student achievement, researchers have found that students' perceptions about safety and their overall well-being are higher in schools with CSCPs. Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2003) found that middle school students in schools with CSCPs felt safer in school, had better relationships with teachers, thought their

education was more relevant and important for their future, were more satisfied with the quality of education and their school, and earned higher grades.

Much of this body of outcomes research depends on the extent to which a school counseling program is implemented with fidelity. Due to the highly complex and dynamic nature of school environments, it is difficult to measure the number of schools in the United States that utilize some form of a comprehensive school counseling program (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Lapan et al., 2012). Several authors note the prevalence of CSCP in schools due to such factors as formal adoption of these programs at the state level (e.g., Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Neukrug, Barr, Hoffman, & Kaplan, 1993; Sink & MacDonald, 1998, MacDonald & Sink, 1999). Martin, Carey, and DeCoster (2009) found that 34% of states (17) had established comprehensive school counseling programs, although the study did not measure the level of those program's implementation in schools. Pyne (2011) found that 58.8% of schools in Michigan were implementing the ASCA National Model in a comprehensive manner.

Martin, Carey, & DeCoster (2009) conducted a review of the current status of state school counseling program models in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This study updated and improved upon a similar review conducted by Sink and MacDonald (1998). Martin et al.'s review was conducted using telephone interviews and written responses to interview questions to determine the presence of nine, pre-selected features that indicated the degree of implementation of a school counseling model. Based on the states' responses, they were given one of the following ratings: Established, Progressing, and Beginning. The study yielded a rating for each state and the District of Columbia and found that 17 states had

Established models (seven to nine features were present), 24 were considered Progressing (four to six features were present), and 10 states were classified as Beginning (one to three features were present).

Now that a little more is known about the school counseling profession and the role of school counselors, it is important to know how school counselors are trained. This is especially important for this study as it examines the attitudes and beliefs of school counselors-in-training as they prepare to enter the profession.

School Counselor Training and Preparation Programs

Training for school counselors varies considerably, but there are some common elements among academic programs that prepare future school counselors (Akos, & Scarborough, 2004; Education Trust, 1997; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Pérusse, & Goodnough, 2005; Pérusse, Goodnough, & Noël, 2001). This section will give a brief overview of school counselor training and preparation programs, highlight the leadership focus in them, and accentuate the need for more culturally responsive elements within that training and preparation. First, a brief overview of the training and preparation of school counselors.

History and Overview of School Counselor Academic Preparation. Education and training that is focused on preparing school counselors-in-training traces its roots to the early 20th century when there was an increasing presence of school counselor-related topics in journal articles and books (Baker & Gerler, 2008; Gysbers, 2010). However, training for a similar profession was advocated as long ago as the 1880s when Richards (1881) proposed a profession he called "Vocophy." The functions of school counselors were carried about my many personnel categories, including principals, deans, and teachers (Gysbers, 2010). The

first known course was designed by Frank Parsons who died in 1908 before he could teach it at Boston University. The first course taught at an institution of higher education was offered for the first time at Harvard University in 1911 (Brewer, 1942). From there, school counseling education training programs follow closely the history of the profession itself (see above).

One example of how the evolution of school counselor training programs followed the history of school counseling as a profession is the establishment of accrediting bodies to hold institutions of higher education accountable for maintaining certain standards. This began in 1964 with the body that evolved into the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016), mentioned above. Goodman-Scott (2015) estimates that around 45% of school counseling training programs in the United States are CACREP-accredited with the rest being accredited by MPCAC, another accrediting body, or not accredited at all. In a national study administered by The College Board (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2012), 59% of school counselor respondents said they graduated from a CACREP-accredited training program. As mentioned above, the institution in this study is accredited by the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) through 2024. The ASCA (2017c), CACREP (2016), and MPCAC (2017) all recommend that school counselor academic programs be taught at the graduate (Master's or above) level.

The ASCA (2014b) recommends that school counselor preparation programs rely heavily on the Association's National Model (2012a), the ASCA School Counselor Competencies (2012b), its Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016), and the ASCA

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Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success (2014a). ASCA contends that school counselor

preparation programs should ensure their "graduates are well-prepared to design, implement

and evaluate a comprehensive school counseling program that is proactive, accountable, and

aligned with the mission of the school" (ASCA, 2014b, p. 52). Coursework should equip

graduates with knowledge skills and attitudes in educational foundations; legal, ethical, and

professional issues; developmental, counseling, multicultural, and social justice theories;

referral and community resources; collaboration and consultation; advocacy and data

analysis; comprehensive school counseling programs and their effective implementation and

evaluation; and leadership development. Field experiences "are essential to the preparation of

school counselors" and "should provide training that aligns with the school counselor

preparation program and further develops the student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes

necessary to implement a comprehensive school counseling program" (p. 53).

MPCAC (2018) "accredits counseling and psychology master's programs, located in

regionally accredited colleges and universities in the United States, that educate students in

the science-based practice of counseling and psychological services" (Scope, para. 1).

MPCAC (2016) further notes that its accreditation process focuses on "the *competencies*

acquired and the *professional activities* pursued" (History, para. 4, emphasis in original)

rather than on the title of a degree or location of a training program. Further, the accrediting

body explains why higher education institutions might seek their accreditation rather than

that from the more broadly known CACREP, which includes CACREP's restrictions on in

what departments certain degree programs can be housed and the prescriptive credentials of

faculty within those departments. As of 2015, the organization reports it has accredited forty programs (MPCAC, 2018a).

The standards for accreditation used by MPCAC (2017) include guidelines about the mission and objectives for counseling and psychology programs, along with their orientation, core curriculum, research and clinical instruction, institutional requirements, faculty and staff credentials and training, along with program organization, administration, and evaluation. Most relevant to this study are standards related to multiculturalism and diversity to which a reference is made in MPCAC's mission statement indicating the organization's desire to accredit programs "that are culturally responsive and that promote the public good" (p. 3). The "Program Orientation and Core Curriculum" standard requires that accredited programs must demonstrate evidence of students' professional competence…gained by completion of the program through academic and applied experiences" (p. 4) in multiculturalism and diversity, including the demonstration of "knowledge, self-awareness, and skills in working with individuals, groups, and communities who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics" (p. 5).

Requirements for school counselor education and training programs vary to a large extent (Akos, & Scarborough, 2004; Education Trust, 1997; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Pérusse, & Goodnough, 2005; Pérusse, Goodnough, & Noël, 2001), although there is substantial consistency on a core block of courses (Education Trust, 1997; Pérusse, & Goodnough, 2005), discussed below. State certification requirements often drive what courses are required in school counseling programs (Pérusse, Goodnough, & Noël, 2001), along with requirements of the two, primary accrediting bodies for school counselor programs: the

Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) and Master's in Psychology and Counseling Association Council (MPCAC, 2017).

The core course requirements for school counseling education and training programs recommended by both CACREP (2016) and the American School Counselor Association (2014b) include the following, graduate (Master's) level course work: (a) counseling (individual, group, career, multicultural); (b) counseling theories and techniques; (c) data-driven methods, including research, evaluation, and assessment; (d) human growth and development; (e) professional orientation and ethics; (f) consultation; (g) comprehensive school counseling programs (CSCP), such as the ASCA National Model; (h) prevention; and (i) fieldwork experience, such as practicum and internship. Coursework required by MPCAC (2017) is much less prescriptive and that accrediting body's standards simply state that "coursework in the program should emphasize the scientist-practitioner model, which includes the use of current scholarly and research literature to inform practice" and that [t]he program must reflect a commitment to recognizing varying degrees of applicability of such knowledge and skills to specific populations and settings" (p. 4).

Pérusse, Goodnough, & Noël (2001) conducted a study to determine the extent to which school counselor education programs were using the National Standards for School Counseling Programs in their curricula. The 195 respondents in the study responded to both forced-choice and open-ended items and a majority indicated they utilized the National Standards moderately (53.8%) or extensively (14.4%). After analyzing responses to open-ended items and after conducting follow-up interviews, the study concluded that there is considerable variability about the implementation of the National Standards. In addition,

about 30% of the respondents gave responses that indicated there was confusion about the National Standards, sometimes conflating them with the ASCA Ethical Code (2016) or the CACREP standards (2016).

The study cited above by Pérusse et al. (2001) is considered to be one of the most comprehensive reviews of school counselor training programs. In it, the authors surveyed 189 school counselors and found there is a relatively consistent set of core, graduate-level courses required for Master's degrees in school counseling. On average, one or two of the required courses contain content specific to school counselors, but most are also required by those in community or mental health counseling programs. Required classes include those on topics like career and lifestyle development (n=188), theories in counseling (n=188), group counseling (n=186), helping relationships (n=186), and research methods and evaluation (n=183). Just 29.1% (n=55) of respondents reported that an introduction to school counseling course was required, 21.7% (n=41) reported that one was required in their program for organization and administration of school counseling programs, and 20.1% (n=38) required a school counseling-specific consultation course.

In a content analysis that examined the syllabi in 59 school counselor education programs in a regionally representative sample from across the United States, Akos and Scarborough (2004) found a great deal of variability in the requirements for field experience for school counselors-in-training. The authors examined syllabi for internship courses, defined by CACREP (2016) as "a distinctly defined, post-practicum, supervised clinical experience" (p. 42), to determine the consistency of expectations among this representative sample of school counselor academic preparation programs. Results from this analysis reveal

similarities in the internship expectations related to skill development, awareness of self and professional behavior, and alignment with CACREP standards (when just 71% of the programs were actually CACREP-accredited). Considerable variability existed among the institutions' expectations regarding on-site supervision requirements, objectives, and textbooks. Finally, there was a surprisingly low number of required individual counseling hours. The authors note that this variability has particularly troublesome implications for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Recommended Reform of School Counselor Training Programs. There is considerable criticism in the literature of school counselor training and preparation programs, especially that regarding their failure to adequately prepare school counselors for the social justice and racial equity aspects of their job. On this very topic, Martin and Robinson (2011) state it succinctly: "For the professional school counselor to assume the role of leader and advocate working to make systemic change to benefit all students, professional school counselor preparation programs will need to change practices." (p. 15). Some even recommend wholesale changes to school counselor preparation programs. In its *Transforming School Counseling Initiative*, the Education Trust (2009) recommends such drastic changes in its *Ten Essential Elements for Change in School Counselor Preparation Programs*, including infusing its racial equity and social justice tenets in the mission statements of school counselor training programs, curricular reform in them, and ongoing professional development for faculty within the training programs.

Holcomb-McCoy and Chen-Hayes (2011) also state it plainly:

Professional school counselors typically lack the specific training necessary to address the problems and effects of oppression and multiple cultural identities

because most counselor education programs do not offer consistent training (e.g., coursework, field experiences) in anti-oppression work and cultural history and the related awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work effectively with multiple cultural groups and identities. (p. 96)

Erford, House, and Martin (2007) echo but expand upon this sentiment when they wrote that school counseling educators must "broaden their roles to include leadership, advocacy, teaming, and collaboration, counseling and coordination, and assessment and use of data" (p. 5).

Further, school counselor training programs do not consistently include differentiated approaches for working with gifted and talented youth (Peterson, & Morris, 2010; Wood, Portman, Cigrand, & Colangelo, 2010), lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth (Bidell, 2014), English language learners (Davis, 2015), or working with special education issues (Quigney, & Studer, 2004). Brott (2006) asserts that school counselor education programs should bolster their focus professional identity development to improve school counselors' practice. Finally, Parikh (2013) observes that school counseling programs should focus more on connections they make to the community, including to postsecondary institutions, to provide effective career and college readiness counseling services.

In their review of developmental, comprehensive school counseling programs discussed above, MacDonald and Sink (1999) found a lack of focus on cultural and ethnic development issues. References to this topic were often vague, using phrases like "recognize differences" or "appreciate others" and were not presented in a context of ethnical or cultural identity development. School counselor preparation programs typically lack explicit discussions about privilege and oppression, despite how essential they are for culturally responsive practices Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; McGowan & Kern, 2014). In

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general, many authors note that school counselors-in-training too often do not sufficiently confront their racist, ableist, homophobic and sexist beliefs and attitudes (Vera et al., 2006; Carter, 2005; Sue & Sue, 2016).

Positive steps to incorporate more effective and comprehensive elements into school counselor preparation and training are being taken (Chao, 2013; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Nelson, Bustamante, Sawyer, & Sloan, 2015), but there is more work left to do. Despite what we know about the value of comprehensive training with a focus on equity and access, school counselors continue to enter the field without this training. Advocating for this will require more study, along with leadership on the part of school counselors.

School Counselors as Leaders. Strong leadership is a critical component of effective implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2012a; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). School counselors must especially demonstrate leadership when addressing issues of racial equity and social justice in schools (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). The topic of this dissertation was chosen in part due to the critical role that leadership plays in school counseling. This section explores some specific areas in which school counselor leadership is particularly important.

Gysbers and Henderson (2012) contend that leadership of comprehensive school counseling programs is a critical difference between guidance and counseling programs of the past and serves as a "point of departure" for contemporary school counseling programs (p. 30). As one of the themes that undergird the ASCA National Model (2012a), leadership "is an essential skill for school counselors as they develop and manage a comprehensive

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school counseling program" and "may be the foundation of the other essential skills needed for program implementation" (p. 1). School counselors must assume the job that once only belonged to administrators when "advancing academic achievement, reducing barriers to learning and creating equitable learning environments" by demonstrating effective leadership skills (Young, 2012, p. 11). Leadership is important in all aspects of the ASCA National Model, including its Foundation, Management, Delivery, and Accountability.

Leadership is also an important component in the ASCA Ethical Code for School Counselors (2016). In the Preamble, the Association proclaims that "Professional school counselors are advocates, leaders, collaborators and consultants who create opportunities for equity in access and success in educational opportunities by connecting their programs to the mission of schools" (p. 1). In the section about Professional Competence, school counselors are compelled to "Strive through personal initiative to stay abreast of current research and to maintain professional competence in" a number of areas, including leadership (p. 5). Finally, the Ethical Code states that school counselors will "Work as advocates and leaders in the school to create equity-based school counseling programs that help close any achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps that deny all students the chance to pursue their educational goals" (p. 6).

Finally, leadership is an important component of several, key position statements the Association publishes on its website. A few are summarized below:

ASCA Position Statement on Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (2017c): "School counselors participate as members of the educational team and use the skills of leadership, advocacy and collaboration to promote systemic change as appropriate" (p. 18).

ASCA Position Statement on Identifying At-Risk Students (2017b): "The school counselor advocates for school-based interventions and mental health referrals before moving toward expulsion or other disciplinary measures and provides proactive leadership in identifying, preventing and intervening with student at-risk behaviors" (p. 43).

ASCA Position Statement on The School Counselor and School Counselor Preparation Programs (2014b): "School counselors are assuming an increasingly important leadership role in education, and school counseling preparation programs are vital to the appropriate development of that role" (p. 52).

There is likely no greater topic on which the literature indicates the important leadership role school counselors play than in promoting social justice and racial equity in schools. Stephens and Lindsey (2011) assert that school counselors act as powerful leadership agents of change when it comes to advocating to close the achievement and opportunity gaps, and "schools provide school counselors wit countless additional opportunities to take on leadership roles" (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011, p. 112). In its *Transforming School Counseling Initiative,* the Education Trust (2009) emphasizes the leadership role school counselor play in identifying and addressing gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment for K-12 students in schools.

In a research project involving school counselor leadership and the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs, Mason (2010) sought to examine the relationship between these areas. The sample was drawn from a school counseling organization conference in a southern US state and included 305 participants, 92.5% ($n =$ 282) were female and 7.5% identified as male ($n = 23$). Of the 293 participants who

identified their race/ethnicity, 77 (25.2%) identified as African American, 218 (71.5%) as Caucasian, and 10 (3.3%) identified as Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, or multiracial. The mean age of the participants was 42.4 years ($SD = 11.0$, median =41), with a range of 23-63 years. There were 138 (45.2%) worked in elementary schools, 80 (26.2%) who worked in middle schools, 75 (24.6%) in high schools, 5 (1.6%) in alternative schools, 7 (2.3%) identified their schools as "other," which included multi-level schools. The average student populations in these schools was 1,209 ($SD = 753.4$, median = 1000), and these schools had an average of 3.03 school counselor ($SD = 1.94$, median = 3).

Participants indicated their schools were composed of 37% ($n = 113$) White/Caucasian students, and 35.4% (($n = 108$) reported their schools were a mix of two or more ethnicities. Thirty-three percent ($n = 101$) reported that their students were a blend of socioeconomic statuses, 24.8% ($n = 75$) reported the majority of their students were from low SES backgrounds, and 12.5% ($n = 38$) reported their students were from high SES backgrounds. Forty-two participants (13.9%) characterized their school as urban, while 217 (71.9%) described their school as suburban and 43 (14.2%) as rural. Most participants in the study held a Master's degree and 149 (49%) of participants reported they were exposed to the ASCA National Model in their graduate programs. Average experience for the participants was 9.76 years ($SD = 8.03$, median = 8), and the average number of years at their current employment was 5.58 years ($SD = 5.95$, median = 4).

The participants took a demographic survey and two scales: the Leadership Practices Inventory Self-Instrument (LPI; Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and the School Counseling Program Implementation Survey (SCPIS; Carey & Elsner, 2006). Standard forward

regression analyses were performed to determine the association among various items on the surveys. The results showed that were statistically significant relationships between higher levels of leadership and program implementation, especially two, specific elements of the surveys: Model the Way practices ($t = 3.65, p < .001$) and Enable Others to Act practices ($t = 2.28, p < .05$), both of which were shown to significantly predict the extent of program implementation.

In her book *School Counseling to Close the Achievement Gap: A Social Justice Framework for Success,* Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy (2007) outlines the important leadership role school counselors play in identifying and developing interventions to close gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment. Holcomb-McCoy organizes this role into six key functions: counseling and intervention planning; consultation; connecting schools, families, and communities; collecting and using data; challenging bias; and coordinating student services and support. Through their role in analyzing and utilizing data to assess equity and to identify and address gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment, along with that which they play in building school-family-community partnerships, school counselors have countless opportunities to demonstrate leadership to implement school counseling programs focused on social justice (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Further, this leadership and advocacy serves to "empower teachers, parents, guardians, and students to speak out and change unjust institutional and systemic practices" (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011, p. 110).

Conclusion

This section provided a history of the school counseling profession, from its inception in ancient societies that provided mentors to young people. Unfortunately, the profession kept some of the racist and classist features of these formal and informal mentoring programs that the development of comprehensive school counseling programs – also discussed in this section – sought to extricate. A review of school counseling preparation programs was then provided, including critiques thereof calling for more consistent and comprehensive foci on culturally responsive, equity-focused, and socially just practices. Finally, the relevance and import of leadership to school counselors was discussed, along with implications for their culturally responsive work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this heuristic, critical qualitative study was to explore graduate students' attitudes and beliefs regarding a Master's program in school counseling at a Midwestern Urban University (MUU). This program was chosen because it promotes itself as one that emphasizes social justice and preparing graduates to work in urban settings. (MUU, 2018a). Participants were in one of their first field placements, called practicum or internship, in order to better evaluate how well prepared they are for culturally responsive school counseling practices after they have completed most of their coursework.

A well-documented gap exists between the opportunities, achievement, and attainment of White students and their peers of color (CRDC, 2016; NAEP, 2015; NCES, 2014). The problem this study addresses is that, while uniquely positioned to address these gaps in achievement, opportunities, and attainment between White students and students of color (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee, 1995; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011), school counselors lack the appropriate training to do so (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; House & Sears, 2002; Lee, 1995). While school counselors rarely directly impact many aspects of student achievement that comprise these gaps, they have a significant impact on the opportunity and attainment gaps, such as placement in college preparatory and college-level courses, persistence to graduation, and enrollment in postsecondary programs (Belasco, 2013; Davis, Davis, & Mobley, 2013; Lapan, Gysbers, Stanley, & Pierce, 2012; Stanard, 2003). Holcomb-McCoy (2007) summarizes the power of school counselors to address these measures:

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School counselors must assume the power that they have in school, power that enables them to either dampen the dreams of students or help them to realize their dreams…[T]he school counselor can be the one person in a school that will act as an advocate for students. (p. 5)

This study is significant because it explored what school counselors-in-training know and what attitudes and beliefs they hold about culturally responsive school counseling just before entering the profession. My hope is that it revealed elements critical to the culturally responsive training of school counselors. To accomplish the purpose and to address the problem of focus, the study will sought answers to the following research questions:

1) What attitudes and beliefs about culturally responsive school counseling are held by students in the school counseling program?

   a) What changes do they report about their attitudes and beliefs as a result of their experiences with the school counseling preparation program?

   b) What culturally responsive practices do they plan to use in their work as school counselors?

2) What are the perceptions of graduate students of the culturally responsive training in the school counselor education program and their preparedness for working with diverse clients in their practicum and internship settings?

   a) To what extent would graduate students say what they have learned about culturally responsive school counseling has been integrated throughout the program?

   b) What components of the culturally responsive training in their school counselor education programs are vital for working with diverse clients?

This chapter outlines all aspects of the methodology for this study. First, a rationale for the broad research paradigm for this study, qualitative inquiry, will be provided. Next, the

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justification for the specific theoretical traditions selected for this study – critical qualitative inquiry and heuristics – will be discussed, as well as my role as the researcher. The data collection and analysis methods will then be elucidated, followed by a discussion of this study's limitations, including validity and reliability and ethical considerations. To begin, the qualitative research will be positioned as the most appropriate perspective of inquiry for this study.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Quantitative data about the disparity between the achievement of students of color and White students are indisputable. As discussed above, the achievement of students from marginalized backgrounds is uniformly lower compared to White students, even after controlling for various, salient factors like socioeconomic status and school setting (CRDC, 2016; NAEP, 2015; NCES, 2014). What is less clear is *how* educators can meaningfully address it. While school counselors do not directly impact many measures of student achievement, they affect what Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes (2011) call the "attainment gap", factors like persistence to graduation and enrollment in rigorous, college preparatory courses. How do school counselors develop the attitudes and beliefs necessary for them to embrace the role they can play in mitigating these gaps? For questions like these that involve processes much more complex than the laboratory-like manipulation of variables, qualitative research is the best method of inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Maxwell, 2013).

The definition of qualitative research is ever-evolving and some texts on the topic lack a cogent definition on it (Creswell, 2013). In their SAGE *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* Denzin & Lincoln (2011) offer this definition:

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Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

This study, to paraphrase Denzin and Lincoln, through "a series of representations", attempted "to make sense of, or interpret" the phenomenon of culturally responsive school counseling "in terms of the meanings" graduate students in a school counseling Master's program "bring to them" (p. 3).

School counseling is a clinical profession replete with deep knowledge and skill bases that require supervision and mentoring from practicing school counselors (Brown & Trusty, 2005; Dahir & Stone, 2012; Erford, House, & Martin, 2011). Stake (2010) notes that, "Professional knowledge overlaps with but is different from scientific knowledge" (p. 13). He continues,

Clinical knowledge is a form of professional knowledge…gained by a teacher, nurse, counselor, or other engaged in human services through direct experience with those they are trying to help. Usually the clinician is professionally trained and acts according to professional standards and ethics…Professional and clinical knowledge rely heavily on qualitative inquiry. However refined the instruments used, it is expected that the choices of action will not be mechanically determined but will be reached through interpretation. These interpretations will depend on the experience of the researcher, the experience of those being studied, and the experience of those to whom information will need to be conveyed. (p. 14)

Hence, qualitative research is well suited for the clinician role. It is also useful for settings like those for this study.

Qualitative research is the observation of people in their natural settings – with the position of the observer being central to the study – that attempts to "make sense of, or

interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). It is more interested in *how* things work, not merely what is happening at a given moment (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007). Culturally responsive school counseling involves complex factors, including the cultural background and experiences of students and school counselors, along with multifaceted and multidimensional concepts like social justice, equity, and advocacy (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; House, Martin, & Ward, 2002; Vera & Speight, 2003). Qualitative research methods are compatible with explicating complex phenomena such as culturally responsive school counseling. As a qualitative theoretical tradition, generic or pragmatic qualitative inquiry in particular is uniquely suited for this topic.

Pragmatic Qualitative Inquiry

The particular qualitative method for this study is pragmatic qualitative inquiry. When a study takes on "practical questions of people working to make the world a better place (and wondering if what they're doing is working)" and when these questions "can be addressed without allegiance to a particular epistemological or philosophical tradition" (Patton, 2015, p. 154), generic or pragmatic qualitative inquiry is appropriate. It is common to find the use of generic, qualitative methods in the field of education drawn upon concepts, theories, and research bases in the fields of educational, developmental, and cognitive psychology, as well as from sociology (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Percy, Kostere, & Kostere (2015) define generic qualitative inquiry thus: "Generic qualitative inquiry investigates people's reports of their subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or reflections on their experiences, of things in the outer world" (p. 78). This type of research

has many names in the literature, including "interpretive description" (Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997), "basic or fundamental qualitative description" (Sandelowski, 2000), and "basic or generic qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998). Sandelowski (2000) notes that what distinguishes this method from other descriptive methods like grounded theory, phenomenological, or ethnographic methods, is that the descriptive qualitative method will use various types of data to assemble a complete set of facts to describe an event, but those facts offer a description that stays closer to surface of the event or phenomenon under review. The author is quick to point out, however, that the word "surface" merely conveys "the depth of penetration into, or the degree of interpretive activity around, reported or observed events" as "[t]here is nothing trivial or easy about getting the facts, and the meanings participants give to those facts, right and then conveying them in a coherent and useful manner" (p. 336). For the purposes of this study, the term "pragmatic qualitative inquiry" will be used to describe the primary methodology.

The use of pragmatic qualitative methods are appropriate when researchers are looking for answers about a phenomenon that have a special relevance to practitioners, but are not (or not yet) widely theorized or grounded in existing literature (Sandelowski, 2000). Thus far, there is general consensus that generic qualitative methods are most appropriate in applied disciplines with a heavy focus on practice, such as the health sciences (Caelli et al., 2003; Thorne et al., 1997; Sandelowski, 2000). This approach is also appropriate when the researcher has a partial understanding of and familiarity with a given event or phenomenon and wants to explore some specific aspects of it (Kennedy, 2016; Percy et al., 2015). Kennedy (2016) asserts that generic qualitative methods may be appropriate as researchers,

especially novice, student researchers working on their dissertations, develop and learn about their interpretive lens and philosophical viewpoint about epistemology. These methods are appropriate when a researcher has a "focus on a priori knowledge integrating with newly constructed knowledge" and a "desire to affect change and relate knowledge to action" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 1372).

As the researcher, I chose pragmatic qualitative inquiry because the other descriptive, qualitative methods did not adequately yield the epistemological or methodological imperatives of this study. The nascence of school counselors-in-training in their practice makes stories they may tell about it less instructive, so narrative inquiry seemed inappropriate. Due to the lack of access to the actual settings in which school counselors work for various logistical, ethical, and policy-related reasons, ethnography was impractical as it requires access to the many social actors that construct the group or setting being studied (Creswell, 2013). Case study was the initial inquiry method selected for this topic, but was later rejected because the school counselors in training lacked the "clearly recognizable boundaries that differentiate the case from any other collection of instances" (Percy et al., 2015) required of case studies. Grounded theory was also considered, but, similar to the reasons narrative inquiry was rejected, the school counselors-in-training were still very much developing their senses of selves as practitioners that would dilute any theory generated from their experiences. Finally, phenomenology was also considered and ultimately rejected because I was less interested in the inner dimensions and "essences" of the "lived experience" of the participants, as is the typical unit of analysis in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013), as the "external content or referents that may trigger the cognitive

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processes" (Percy et al., 2015, p. 77) of which pragmatic qualitative inquiry are the typical units of analysis (Percy et al.).

Caelli et al. (2003) propose four guiding principles to increase credibility that must be observed when conducting qualitative inquiry: "the theoretical positioning of the researcher, the congruence between methodology and methods, the strategies to establish rigor, and the analytic lens through which the data are examined" (p. 9). There is disagreement in the research community about the relevance and interpretation of researcher biases and the extent to which they can be "bracketed," or even what that term means. What is clear, is that researchers' philosophical orientations and assumptions that may affect the interpretation of data must be clearly explicated, especially in critical inquiries like this one. Also important in increasing credibility in pragmatic qualitative inquiry is distinguishing between *methodology* – the beliefs about epistemology within a broader philosophic framework of the researcher (van Maanen, 1988) – and *methods* – the "how" of collecting qualitative data (Maxwell, 2013). A lack of clear methodology is a common problem in pragmatic qualitative inquiry, and thus something that should be given special attention in the design phase of this type of study. Another important area to consider in pragmatic qualitative research is rigor, the credibility and quality of data collected and the process used for its interpretation (Patton, 2015). Caelli et al. suggest that pragmatic qualitative researchers clearly reflect on and articulate their approach to rigor that is congruent with their inquiry. Finally, the authors assert that the "analytic lens" or "how the researcher engages with his or her data" (p. 17) be clearly and explicitly articulated.

Pragmatic qualitative inquiry is often misidentified as a less rigorous (Caelli et al., 2003; Kennedy, 2015), "easier" (Kennedy, 2015), the "crudest form of inquiry" (Thorne et al., 1997), or even "less sexy" (Sandelowski, 2000) than other forms of qualitative inquiry. However, for studies like this one that attempt to provide a fairly thorough description of the attitudes and beliefs with which school counselors-in-training are leaving their graduate program about culturally responsive school counseling from a practical and pragmatic perspective, this research approach is suitable (Caelli et al., 2003; Kennedy, 2015; Percy et al., 2015; Sandelowski, 2000). What differentiates this study from other pragmatic inquiries is the critical lens through which all aspects of it will be viewed, to be discussed next.

Critical Qualitative Inquiry

A research paradigm that answers the call "to redress inequalities by giving precedence…to the voices of the least advantaged groups in society" (Mertens, Holmes, & Harris, 2009, p. 89), critical inquiry is another theoretical tradition used for this study. Firmly rooted in critical theory discussed above in the Theoretical Framework, critical qualitative inquiry compels researchers who employ it to not take anything for granted in any aspect of the study, and requires them to stipulate their biases and lived experiences that pervaded the project (Denzin, 2016; Fay, 1987; Willis, 2007). Denzin states it plainly in the opening of his article on critical inquiry methods that he asserts responds to

> a call for interpretive, critical, performative qualitative research that matters in the lives of those who daily experience social injustice. This is a call for inquiry that addresses inequities in the economy, education, employment, the environment, health, housing, food, and water, inquiry that embraces the global cry for peace and justice. (p. 8)

A central component of critical inquires is power: who owns it, from whom is it protected and kept, and how does that power imbalance lead to societal inequities and injustice (Cannella, 2015; Denzin, 2016; LeCompte, 1995). While the main focus of the study are students who are disenfranchised and whose voices are often marginalized in education, empowering their teachers and school counselors to foreground emancipatory and socially just practices in their work can serve the same purposes (McLaren, 2015; Willis, 2007).

Critical inquiry is a relatively new qualitative research method that emerged from the paradigmatic battles among postpositivists, postmodernists, poststructuralists, and critical theorists, and later among within the mixed-methods community (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). The research tradition is firmly rooted in critical theory discussed in Chapter Two, a tradition borne out of the work of Marxist theorists focused on worker-capitalist conflict. It differs from Marxism, however, in that it focuses more broadly on issues of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. The tradition has been in development for forty plus years and is firmly embedded in civil rights movements that have occurred during that time frame (Cannella, 2015). Critical inquiry emerged from a postmodern revolution, one that shone a light on what Hoy (1989) called the "unthought," or what is *not* elucidated by the literature on a given topic, either because it is intentionally or unintentionally obscured or redacted by researchers or it has not yet been examined, all due substantially to the privilege and power of researchers (Lather, 1991). A critical researcher uses a critical "voice," one that "focuses on the sociopolitical implications of fieldwork; critically examines, usually through a Marxist lens, the sociological and cultural underpinnings of human dynamics" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013, p. 327). This relates closely to what van Maanen (2011) calls the advocacy

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voice that takes a deliberately moral perspective, interrogates power relationships and inequities, and works toward social justice and empowering the oppressed.

To understand the role of critical inquiry in qualitative studies, it is important to understand the concept of a paradigm and how it influences and shapes research. A paradigm is "a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field" (Willis, 2007, p. 8). It includes axiology, or the assumption about the nature of ethical behavior; ontology, or views about the nature of reality; epistemology, the roots of knowledge and who can know what, by what means; and, methodology, approaches to systematic inquiry (Mertens et al., 2009). This critical stance or paradigm pervaded all aspects of the study, from the analysis of the literature on related topics to the methodology and methods chosen, to the data analysis and discussion of the results.

Critical inquiry is similar to the other research methods described in this section in that it provides information about my "philosophical and methodological stance" that help to "explain and justify [my] design decisions" and allows me to "build on an accepted and well-developed approach to research" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 43). It differs in that it is less a set of methodological considerations and "less focused on methodology than it is on the reason for doing research" (Willis, 2007, p. 84). Guba (1990) prefers the title "ideologically oriented inquiry" for this research method because it emphasizes the centrality of ideology in research that employs this paradigm. In fact, Budd (2008) asserts ideology is "[t]he most pressing challenge for the [critical] researcher" as it tends "to be suffused throughout society" and ideological forces "are less than conscious in their influence over action" so the critical researcher will need "to engage in self-critique" in order that the effects of ideology "can be

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fully comprehended" (p. 178). Studies that use critical inquiry often employ the

methodological prescriptions of other research paradigms as they center power and voices of

the oppressed to identify ways to empower and bring about substantive change to these

oppressive structures (Denzin, 2016; Maxwell, 2013).

Heuristics

This study is heuristic in nature because it "brings to the fore the personal experience

and insights of the researcher" (Patton, 2015, p. 118). Moustakas (1990) explains that

heuristic research

> …refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and
> meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation
> and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while
> understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences
> growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. Heuristic processes incorporate creative
> self-processes and self discoveries. (p. 9)

As a practicing school counselor, I was unable to avoid inserting myself into the inquiry. My

background knowledge hopefully enhanced the findings, and at the same time enhanced my

knowledge about and deepen my commitment to equity-focused school counseling practices.

As a school counselor who is determined to transform the school counseling

profession into one that is more focused on social justice and cultural responsiveness, I meet

Patton's first criterion for heuristics: "the researcher *must* have personal experience with and

intense interest in the phenomenon under study" (p. 119, emphasis in original). The second

criterion is that those "who are part of the study must share *an intensity* of experience with

the phenomenon" (p. 119, emphasis in original). The participants in this study are voluntary

school counselors-in-training who chose a university and Master's program "[w]ith an

emphasis on individual/cultural diversity and social justice" (MUU, 2018a). School

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counseling students in this program must do at least one of two field placements in an urban setting (MUU, 2018c). For these reasons, I believe this satisfies Patton's second criterion for a heuristic study.

Moustakas (1990) is widely credited as the founder of the heuristic tradition as he sought to frame his "discoveries, personal insights, and reflections" (Patton, 2015, p. 119) from his studies on loneliness (1961, 1972, 1975) and humanistic therapy (1995). It also has roots in humanistic approaches to psychology by researchers and theorists such as Maslow (1956, 1966), Rogers (1961, 1969, 1977), and Polanyi (1962, 1967). While grounded in phenomenology, heuristics differs from it in important ways. Heuristics maintains a connection to and relationship with the participants in the study, and personal meanings, essential insights produced therefrom, while phenomenology emphasizes detachment from those elements of a study. Douglass and Moustakas (1985) summarize the difference between the two traditions this way:

> Whereas phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis, in heuristics the research participants remain visible in the examination of the data and continue to be portrayed as whole persons. Phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristics retains the essence of the person in experience. (p. 43)

From its roots in phenomenology, however, heuristics retains a similar method of data analysis.

To identify the "experiential essence of the phenomenon" on which heuristic inquiry focuses, a systematic analysis process is utilized. The five step process is summarized below:

1. Immersion: After the researcher selects a topic with which she or he has direct experience that is compelling, he or she "enters into the material in timeless immersion until it is understood" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 51), interfacing with the

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information in multiple, introspective, and dialogic ways, even while sleeping and dreaming.

2. Incubation: The data are set aside allowing for "tacit knowledge within and beyond consciousness [to facilitate] illumination at a deeper, more subtle level of experience and self-knowledge" (Patton, 2015, p. 120), what Polanyi (1967) calls "indwelling", in order that the researcher's intuition may facilitate a deeper understanding upon reconnecting with the data.

3. Illumination: The deep reflection, contemplation and indwelling lead to new insights, perhaps even breakthroughs, which further crystallize the knowledge generated.

4. Explication: The contemplative, reflective process of immersion, incubation, and illumination lead to fully developed portraits of individual participants and a composite portrait of their interconnections (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher then moves "into a period of systematic identification, organization, and elaboration of core themes that fully and comprehensively depict the essential nature of the phenomenon—the essence of lived experience deeply understood" (Patton, 2015, p. 120).

5. Creative synthesis: The portraits of individual participants and the composite understanding of the data collected are combined with the researcher's "intuition, imagination, and personal knowledge of meanings and essences of the experience" and depicted in a creative format, such as a poem, song, narrative, or visual art form (Moustakas, 1990, p. 50).

The theoretical traditions of pragmatic qualitative inquiry and heuristics are the vehicle for how the research will be carried out; however, the researcher is the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 187), making the elucidation of her or his role critical.

<div align="center">**Role of Researcher**</div>

The motives for carrying out a study, along with the potential biases and blind spots, must be elucidated to position the researcher within the study (Maxwell, 2013). Creswell (2013) notes that "researchers have a personal history that situates them as inquirers" and he asserts that they "have an orientation to research and a sense of personal ethics and political stances that inform their research" (p. 51). Denzin & Lincoln (2011) call researchers the "multicultural subject" that includes the "history, traditions, and conceptions of self, ethics, and politics as the starting point of inquiry" (p. 12). Patton (2015) explains further:

> The qualitative analyst owns and is reflective about her or his own voice and perspective; a credible voice conveys authenticity and trustworthiness; complete objectivity being impossible and pure subjectivity undermining credibility, the researcher's focus becomes balance – understanding and depicting the world on all its complexity while being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness. (p. 47)

Anti-racist, culturally responsive, and social justice ideologies have driven a great deal of my practice as a school counselor. The ubiquitous absence from school counselor training of what Howard (2016) calls the "inner work of teaching for racial justice" (p. 8), a particular need for White educators "to look within ourselves and realign our deepest assumptions and perceptions regarding the racial marker that we carry, namely whiteness" (p. 8), concerns me tremendously. This is to say nothing about what Howard calls the "outer work of social transformation," actual strategies and practices that compel us to examine "the

role White educators must play in understanding, decoding, and dismantling the dynamics of White dominance" (pp. 9-10). Failure to move beyond the inner work regarding cultural awareness and racial identity development would put us "in danger of perpetuating the kind of privileged nonengagement with the real issues of social justice that has characterized Whites for far too long" (p. 9). With this study, I hope to elucidate what "inner work" is done by school counselors-in-training so they may carry out the "outer work of social transformation" (p. 9).

So how did I account for this strong position within the context of this study to ensure it does not bias the outcomes? First, I worked hard to build a rapport with my research participants in order to encourage them to share their honest and unvarnished opinions, not just for the fidelity of the data collected but also so they felt comfortable confronting me when I distorted what they said. I used member checking as a form of validity and it was my intention that participants will feel safe enough to disconfirm data that I may have gotten wrong. An important method of this rapport-building will be the conveyance of empathy toward the participants (Stake, 2010). In addition, I endeavored to gain the trust of participants in order to enhance credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of data gathered (Yin, 2009).

Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) note that researchers often affect the research setting and participants, and vice versa, what they call reflexivity. As a practicing school counselor who has supervised interns and practicum students before, and who may have spoken to a class that participants took, I must be aware this may impact the data collected from interviews and focus groups. Berger (2015) argues that reflexivity is impacted by the position

of the researcher relative to the participants in all phases of the research process: from the recruitment of participants to the drawing of and writing about conclusions. Berger notes that when the researcher shares the experience of the participants, there are advantages and disadvantages. Gaining entry, building rapport, and demonstrating empathy are advantages of sharing experiences with participants. It is also more likely the researcher will impose her or his own experiences on that of the participants, however, something that can be addressed through "the use of a log, repeated review, and seeking peer consultation" (p. 230).

The approach I plan to use is closely aligned with what Patton (2015) calls emphatic neutrality, or "understanding a person's situation and perspective without judging the person—and communicating that understanding with authenticity to build rapport, trust, and openness (p. 57, emphasis removed). This understanding must include that of a possible power dynamic between the researcher and participant as "[t]he research interview is not a dominance-free dialogue between equal partners" (Kvale, 2006, p. 484), thus I was constantly aware of and sought ways to mitigate these power imbalances. These dynamics were considered in all aspects of the study, including the study design, to be discussed next.

Design of the Study

Setting

The setting for this study is the Master of Arts in Counseling and Guidance program with an emphasis in School Counseling at a Midwestern, urban university (MUU). MUU has just under 17,000 students, 50% of whom are undergraduates, 33% graduates, and 17% who are dual enrolled high school students. Of the student body, 7% identified as Asian, 11% as

Black/African American, 7% as Hispanic/Latino/a, 12% as non-resident international students, 60% as White, and 3% identified as two or more ethnicities (MUU, 2018a).

The setting was selected due to its stated emphasis on multicultural competence, social justice, and cultural responsiveness. The program is also my alma mater and, in addition to the above, the site was chosen based on my contacts in, familiarity with, and proximity to the program and university. Creswell (2013) notes that access to and existing rapport with gatekeepers to a research site is a critical component of research design and care must be taken to maintain a strong relationship with them.

To be clear, participants in this study were placed in schools during one of their first field placements called practicum and internship. Data collection mostly took place in the School of Education building in which their classes are held. Two participants were interviewed at their schools and two were interviewed at the high school where I work. No observations of the participants took place, however, even when I interviewed them at their schools. To truly observe school counselors in their "natural setting" (Angrosino, 2005) would potentially compromise the counselor-student relationship and raise substantial logistical and ethical issues as school counselors-in-training mostly work with minors, many of whom rely on the support of school counselors for sensitive situations. How participants were selected is another important element of research design, and discussion about those topics follow.

Sampling Procedures and Participants

Participants in this study were drawn from graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling program with an emphasis in school counseling at MUU.

Specifically, they were graduate students in this program enrolled in one of the field placement courses required by the program, either the first or second practicum, or in their internship, the final field placement requirement. One participant was seeking her Educational Specialist degree as she already held a Master's degree. From this pool of possible participants, seven participants were selected. Initially, I intended to use a matched comparison, purposive sampling strategy (Patton, 2015) based on results from the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R; Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004). This survey sought to identify participants that differed significantly on their measures of multicultural competence, a key characteristic of a matched comparison sampling strategy in order "to understand what factors explain the difference" (Patton, 2015, p. 267). As it turned out, only seven participants volunteered to take the MCCTS-R, so all seven were selected to participate. The results of the MCCTS-R were used for data crystallization (Ellingson, 2009; Richardson, 1994), a validity technique to be discussed later, as will be the MCCTS-R in more detail. The MCCTS-R is included in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Qualitative research methods involve exploring the "science of the particular", collecting data about both the individual and the collective experiences (Stake, 2010, p. 13). Pragmatic qualitative methods are common in educational research (Caelli et al., 2003; Merriam, 1998), and are particularly useful when exploring pre-existing models and theories such as culturally responsive educational practices; specifically in this case, how the Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling program informs the attitudes, beliefs, and culturally

responsive practices of its students. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) describe the perpetual nature of qualitative data collection:

> Data are not collected at the "end" of the study. Rather, the collection of data in a qualitative research study is on-going. The researcher is continually observing people, events, and occurrences, often supplementing his or her observations with in-depth interviews of selected participants and the examination of various documents and records relevant to the phenomenon of interest. (p. 435)

Four sources comprised the body of data for this study: the MCCTS-R instrument, interviews, a focus group, and documents. Multiple data sources were utilized to enhance the validity of the study through a process of "crystallization", which provides "a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (Richardson, 1994, p. 92). Crystallization both "produces knowledge about a particular phenomenon through generating a deepened, complex interpretation" and features "a significant degree of reflexive consideration of the researcher's self" in the research process (Ellingson, 2014, p. 446). A more thorough definition of crystallization will be provided below when validity considerations are discussed; but first, the data sources will be described.

Multicultural Counseling Competency and Training Survey-Revised. Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board of my institution, formal permission was obtained from the coordinator of the school counseling emphasis in the MUU Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling program to recruit participants. The first step was to administer the revised version of the Multicultural Counseling Competency and Training Survey (MCCTS-R) originally developed by Holcomb-McCoy & Myers (1999) and revised by Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines (2004). It was developed using Sue and Sue's (2012) well-known framework of multicultural counseling competencies that serve as the foundation for

the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) Multicultural

Competencies and Explanatory Statements. The instrument contains 32 items that indicate

school counselor behaviors and 29 items that elicit training experiences and demographics

such as age, race, and year of graduation. Respondents are asked to assess their multicultural

competence using a 4-point Likert-type scale, where 4 = extremely competent, 3 =

competent, 2 = somewhat competent, and 1 = not competent.

Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) reported that five factors characterize the

multicultural counseling competence items on the MCCTS: Multicultural Knowledge,

Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Terminology, Knowledge of Racial Identity

Development Theories, and Multicultural Skills. The MCCTS-R was found to have strong

psychometric properties, (Cronbach's alpha = .85-.97 on various sub-scores). The measure

has been investigated in at least five, separate studies involving 973 participants (Barden &

Green, 2015; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Ivers, Johnson, Clarke, Newsome, & Berry, 2016;

Ritter & Chang, 2002). The results of the survey were originally planned to help select

participants, but ended up being used entirely for data crystallization purposes (Ellingson,

2009; Richardson, 1994) with multiple forms of data collected about those participants.

Permission to use the instrument was obtained by the author (C. Holcomb-McCoy, personal

communication, April 12, 2018).

Interviews. At least one, one-hour, semi-structured, in-depth interview was

conducted with each participant. The primary goal of these interviews was to obtain from

participants a "thick, rich description" of their experiences and to capture the "voices,

feelings, actions, and meanings" of the school counseling graduate students (Yin, 2009, p.

103). Qualitative interviews are a conversation between a researcher and a research participant to elicit information focused on specific topics (deMarrais, 2004). A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to elicit from participants "the essences or structures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13) about the school counseling graduate program. The interview guide was developed using a phenomenological orientation so that I, as the researcher, would assume "the role of learner" as the participant "is the one who has had the experience, is considered the expert on his or her experience, and can share it with the researcher" (deMarrais, 2004, p. 57). The questions were designed to extrapolate the constructed meanings for the graduates of the program in an attempt to glimpse their "inner perspectives" (Patton, 2015, p. 426).

While interviews possess many advantages in qualitative research, the most salient of which for this study discussed above, they also offer some disadvantages. First, conducting high quality interviews for the purpose of gathering qualitative data is not as easy as many believe. It requires skillful questioning and keen observation of interviewees in a nonjudgmental and empathetic manner (Weiss, 1994). Patton (2015) asserts that effective interviews are a "two-way observation" and that it is "an interaction, a relationship" (p. 427). Interviews are time intensive for participants and may compel researchers to consider some type of reciprocity for the participants' investments of time (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The intensity of interviews makes informed consent particularly important: participants deserve to know that interviews may involve sensitive topics and trigger past memories and possibly even trauma (Punch, 1986; Weiss, 1994). Finally, the data are only as accurate and complete as respondents were willing to share. Weiss (1994) notes that respondents are likely

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to edit information about which they are embarrassed or feel insecure for some reason, making the use of multiple data collections methods for the purposes of crystallization and validity checks even more important. One method to address these concerns was the use of a focus group, discussed below.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed and stored on a password-protected computer and backed up in a secure location. While Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note that a "digital recorder misses the sights, smells, impressions, and extra remarks said before and after the interview" (p. 119), the authors also note that the use of field notes can mitigate these omissions. The recordings were secured in a locked cabinet when not in use. Data collected from the interviews was used to construct an interview protocol for a focus group to check meanings through a process known as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Some sample questions from the interview protocol are provided below:

- Talk about the school counseling program at MUU. What are some of the most profound things you have learned that you think will most influence your work as a school counselor?
- When did you first become aware of diversity? What experiences did you have with people from diverse or marginalized backgrounds prior to the school counseling program?
- Can you identify a pivotal moment in your life that most profoundly affected what you believe about a counselor's responsibility to help students from marginalized backgrounds?
- What responsibility do school counselors have to engage in specific actions to help struggling students?
- What role should school counselors play in helping struggling students?
- How well has the Master's program prepared you for your practicum or internship?

The full interview protocol is included in Appendix B.

Focus group. Used originally as a means to create survey questionnaires, focus groups have been in existence since at least the 1920s. It has only been in the last couple of

decades that focus groups have been used in qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). The benefits of focus groups are plentiful, from the economical use of researcher and participant time to the value of collecting data in a social setting to offering high face validity (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In addition, Vaughn, Schumm, and Sinagub (1996) posit that focus groups can create a safer atmosphere in which participants are more likely to share honest answers than they would in an interview. Litosseliti (2003) notes that focus groups are particularly useful for "obtaining a number of *different perspectives* on the same topic, in participants' own words", "gaining information on participants' *views, attitudes, beliefs, responses, motivations and perceptions* on a topic; '*why*' people think or feel the way they do", and "examining participants' *shared understandings* of everyday life, and the *everyday use of language and culture of particular groups*" (p. 18, emphasis in original).

As with any qualitative data collection method, there are disadvantages to the use of focus groups. In many ways, these limitations are mirror images of their advantages. Just as the social and interactional nature of focus groups can enhance data collected, it can also lead to what Litosseliti (2003) calls "false consensus", agreement artificially reached due to the strong opinions of focus group members and/or leading questions from moderators. Along the same lines, Morgan (1997) notes that it can be difficult to distinguish between individual and group views stated in focus groups. In general, focus groups should only be utilized when the topic is familiar to participants, when participants share common characteristics, and when sufficient time and a skilled moderator are available (Litosseliti, 2003).

One focus group was conducted with all seven participants for just under two hours. The focus group was audio-recorded and I will moderated the focus group while taking notes on participant nonverbal communication and other observations. Litosseliti (2003) suggests the development of a "topic guide" for a focus group to maximize the opportunity to "get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (Patton, 2015, p. 475). As discussed above, the focus group topic guide was developed from the interviews conducted of the participants, what Morgan (1997) calls a theoretical focus group. Some initial data analysis of the interview data was conducted to identify themes. These themes were used, in conjunction with the research questions, to develop the topic guide for the purposes of both data saturation (Grbich, 2013) and crystallization (Litosseliti, 2003; Morgan, 1997; Patton, 2015). The topic guide was limited to fifteen questions with a few extra as time permitted.

Documents. The use of documents in qualitative research is well-established in the literature. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) note that documents such as "personal documents, official documents, and popular culture documents" can be "used in connection with, or in support of, the interviews and participant observation" (p. 133). A number of authors also note the value of using documents in data validation, whether it be triangulation (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015) or crystallization (Ellingson, 2009; Richardson, 1994). Yin (2009) states the value of documents in qualitative studies directly when he writes that "the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 103), which is primarily how they will be used in this study.

The documents I chose to analyze for this project are electronic portfolios that are the required, capstone project for graduates in the MUU Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling program (MUU, 2018d). Because these portfolios were "subject-produced" and because "the major thrust" of this study is participant interviewing", they are considered personal documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Further, they were used "as sources of rich descriptions of how the people who produced the materials think about their world" (p. 133); in this case, how school counselors-in-training regard aspects of their training, especially those related to culturally responsive school counseling.

The electronic portfolios require graduate students to write reflections on and gather artifacts to document their learning about the program's six goals and associated quality indicators, listed below:

1. Student development

2. Program implementation

3. Professional relationships

4. Leadership and advocacy

5. Ethical and professional conduct

6. Cultural competence (MUU, 2013).

A "visitor pass" to view the portfolios was issued by the portfolio author that I requested from each participant. Text from each of the focus areas for the document analysis, to be discussed below, were copied and pasted into a word processing document, then saved an stored on a password-protected computer. The document analysis focused on three, specific areas in the portfolio, described next.

First, Program Goal 1, Quality Indicator 4, Social and Cultural Diversity was analyzed for all six participants. This quality indicator requires degree candidates to demonstrate "knowledge and understanding of how social and cultural diversity affects learning and development within the context of a global society and a diverse community of families through lesson plans, guidance activities, and interactions with students" (MUU, 2013, p. 2). The second focus area was Program Goal 4, Quality Indicator 3, Student Advocacy. For this goal, degree candidates are expected to know and understand "the advocacy processes needed to address individual, institutional, and social factors that influence access, equity, and success for all students" (p. 7). The final focus on the document analysis was Program Goal 6: Cultural Competence. This goal ensures that degree candidates in this program "demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how human culture and diversity affects learning and development within the context of a global society and a diverse community of learners" (p. 9).

Data Analysis Procedures

Stake (2010) describes the process of analyzing qualitative data as analysis, or the taking apart of, along with the synthesis, or putting together of – especially in "new wholes, into new interpretations" – of the data collected (p. 134). Yin (2009) cautions that this is often the least understood and least thoroughly developed aspect of qualitative research, so the study design must account for its analytic methods from the start. Many authors caution about the perils of allowing data to pile up without ongoing analysis (Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2013; Stake, 2010; Weiss, 1994), so I heeded this advice and engaged in perpetual analysis of the data. The process used to analyze each data source is described below.

MCCTS-R Instrument Results. At the start of the study, the Multicultural Counseling Competency and Training Survey-Revised (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999) was administered to all possible participants. While initially planned as a method to select participants, the results were be analyzed and compared to participant responses in the interview and focus groups, along with the content of their portfolios. Permission to use the MCCTS-R was obtained from its developer, Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy (C. Holcomb-McCoy, personal communication, April 12, 2018). Descriptive statistics from the survey were analyzed to see how participants score on each of the instrument's three sub-scores: Multicultural Knowledge, Multicultural Awareness, and Multicultural Terminology. Examining the words spoken by participants in interviews and focus groups, evidence of their culturally responsive and competent knowledge and skills from their portfolios, using the lens of their results on the MCCTS-R, was intended to build "a rich and openly partial account of [the] phenomenon" of culturally responsive school counseling, as Ellingson (2009, p. 4) describes the value of crystallization for validity purposes.

Interviews, Focus Group, and Documents. As described above, the heuristic tradition includes a specific method of data analysis as outlined by Moustakas (1990). As the data are collected and during the analyses of them, I subjected myself to these steps. The Immersion phase was the genesis for this study. My experience at the multicultural diversity retreat and coming out as a gay man in college described in Chapter One catalyzed my journey in cultural awareness and racial identity development. Fast forward to my practice as a school counselor that focuses on addressing gaps in opportunity and attainment for students from marginalized backgrounds, I was continually able to enter "into the material in timeless

immersion until it is understood" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 51). These experiences combined

with my thorough review of and immersion in the data collected for this study as "[a]nything

and everything connected with the inquiry becomes raw material for reflection during

immersion" (Patton, 2015, p. 120).

The next phase of heuristic inquiry is Incubation. This phase is characterized by what

Polanyi (1967) calls "indwelling", an existential intimacy with and integration of knowledge,

experiences, and perceptions that construct new knowledge. For this, specific data collected

were set aside allowing for "tacit knowledge within and beyond consciousness [to facilitate]

illumination at a deeper, more subtle level of experience and self-knowledge" (Patton, 2015,

p. 120). This leads to Explication, the next phase, during which the first two phases are

applied to the data collected for the study to more fully develop portraits of individual

participants and a composite portrait of their interconnections (Moustakas, 1990). This lens

will be used during thematic and enumerative coding, described below.

The primary method used to analyze the interview, focus group, and portfolio data

sources during the incubation and illumination phases of heuristic inquiry was a coding

process described by Saldaña (2013) as First Cycle and Second Cycle, conducted during the

illumination and explication steps of the heuristic analysis. During the First Cycle, a

descriptive coding method was utilized to assign a label or multiple labels to discrete datum,

whether they were interviewee comments, focus group comments, or text in the portfolios

(Miles et al., 2013). I read the transcripts and listened to the recordings repeatedly to

thoroughly enmesh myself in the data, then assigned "a word or short phrase that

symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based…data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3).

In the Second Cycle, I used a pattern coding method to group the descriptive codes identified in the First Cycle into a smaller number of interpretive codes. These ultimately revealed the themes among the data, first from the individual data sources of interview, focus groups, and document review, then from a cross-data-source analysis (Miles et al., 2012). These "meta-codes" pulled "together a lot of material from First Cycle coding into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 86). An enumerative approach to identify interpretive codes from which themes can be generated (Grbich, 2013; Miles et al., 2013) was then utilized. Underlying this basic data analysis technique was a critical stance as a researcher to identify power issues related to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability levels (Fay, 1987). Inherent in all research are limitations of the study, along with validity, reliability, and ethical considerations, to be discussed next.

Limitations Including Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

Limitations in qualitative research revolve around the position of the researcher at the heart of it. As Creswell (2013) notes, "All researchers bring values to a study" (p. 18) that may introduce bias throughout it. The bias I bring to this study is that school counselors must do the "inner work of teaching for racial justice" about which Howard (2016) writes, before they can do the "outer work of social transformation" (pp. 9-10). By clearly positioning myself here and earlier in this chapter and stipulating my values and assumptions, I am transparent with what bias I brought to the study.

This limitation will be addressed both by explaining the heuristic nature of the study, and by using validation techniques discussed above. While I attempted to suspend my personal biases when analyzing the data, by positioning myself in the research and as the "key instrument" (Creswell, 2013, p. 45) used in the study, the research was viewed in the context of my personal experiences I brought to it. Creswell also lists the "[c]larifying researcher biases from the outset of the study" as an important validation technique so that the reader will understand "the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that impact the inquiry" (p. 251).

Another limitation is that the data are only as credible as the participants are honest and my questioning and data crystallization techniques are rigorous. In both individual interviews and especially in the focus group setting where peer pressure was a factor, participants may have felt compelled to answer questions in ways that belied their actual beliefs and attitudes. It is well understood that school counselors must be able to work with students form diverse backgrounds, and was especially apparent to graduate students in a school counseling Master's program. Participants may have been motivated to answer in ways that gave the appearance of being culturally responsive and sensitive, even if their internal beliefs and attitudes are less so. This limitation will be addressed by utilizing multiple data sources, including the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999), for crystallization purposes (Ellingson, 2009; Richardson, 1994).

Finally, there are a number of limitations of focus groups that must be considered. First, minority opinions are often overruled in focus groups, especially when those with

opposing views are particularly forceful (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Patton (2015) notes two additional limitations of focus groups: They are best for participants that do not have deep, existing relationships and they lack confidentiality. Participants in this study knew each other pretty well as they have taken most of their classes together. While this may have been a liability, it could also have enhanced participants' comfort and, thus, their level of sharing (Vaughn et al, 1996). Through informed consent, participants will need to be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups.

Validity and Reliability

There is much discussion in the literature about the appropriateness of the terms "validity" and "reliability" as applied to qualitative research (Eisner, 1991; Ely, Anzul, Freidman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Ely et al. (1991) assert that the use of validity is a defensive technique that implies a critique from a positivist perspective and "is not congruent with or adequate to qualitative work" (p. 95). Lincoln and Guba (1985) talk about the importance of establishing the "trustworthiness" of a study by focusing on its credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Patton (2015) focuses on a study's quality and credibility, implied alternatives to more quantitative terms like reliability and validity. Most notably, Lincoln and Guba (1985) state, "Since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability), a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter" (p. 316).

As discussed above, this study utilized as its primary validation strategy data "crystallization", which provides "a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic." This method eschews the use of triangulation for validation purposes because a

triangle is a "rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object" while a crystal "combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" (Richardson, 1994, p. 92). I utilized multiple sources of data for this study, including participant interviews, a focus group conducted among all participants, the participant results on the multicultural attitudes instrument, and analysis of the portfolio required as part of the students' school counseling graduate program. In a similar but slightly different definition, Ellingston (2009) describes crystallization this way:

> Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (p. 4)

Another way that I will bring validity to my study is that I asked participants to review my findings. Known as "member checking", this process involves soliciting "participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations" by "taking data, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). Maxwell (2013) states it very directly when he writes that this technique is

> the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your biases and misunderstandings of what you observed. (pp. 126-127)

Participants were invited to review the transcripts of their individual interviews to clarify or correct anything that may have been unclear or misstated.

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Finally, the use of the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999) instrument was a method of strengthening the validity of my study. A form of "critical multiplism" (Shadish, 1993), this mixed-method form of data crystallization that flows "from a pragmatic approach to mixed-methods analysis that assumes potential compatibility and seeks to discover the degree and nature of such compatibility" (Patton, 2015, p. 663). Comparing participants' responses they give in private, one-on-one interviews, with their responses in more a more public focus group and on their portfolios that are meant to be shared with others, with their results on the MCCTS-R, allowed me to test for consistency as "inconsistencies in findings across different kinds of data can be illuminative and important" (Patton, 2015, p. 661, emphasis removed). The MCCTS-R has been investigated in at least five, separate studies involving 973 participants (Barden & Green, 2015; Chao & Nath, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Ivers, Johnson, Clarke, Newsome, & Berry, 2016; Ritter & Chang, 2002). The survey has also been cited in several other studies (e.g., Cates, Schaefle, Smaby, Maddux, & LeBeauf, 2007; Chao, 2013; Kyung, McCarthy Veach, & LeRoy, 2009; Vespia, Fitzpatrick, Fouad, Kantamneni, & Chen, 2010). While the frequency of this scale has been used in studies and mentioned in the literature is one measure of its value, the authors themselves indicate more research should be done to further validate the scale and demonstrate its reliability (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

The first, and arguably most important, ethical consideration is obtaining the informed consent of my participants. Patton (2015) summarizes what should be included in of what participants should be informed and to what they should give prior consent:

- What is the purpose of collecting the information?

- Who is the information for? How will it be used?

- What will be asked in the interview?

- How will responses be handled, including confidentiality? (p. 497).

The Informed Consent Form for this study was developed in compliance with my institution's ethical review protocol and Institutional Review Board policies and is included in Appendix D.

Because interviews are a primary data collection method in this study, there are a couple of ethical issues that are uniquely raised. First, I must be sensitive to potential power imbalances that may have resulted from a hierarchical relationship often developed between interviewers and participants. Creswell (2013) notes that this power imbalance can be ameliorated by "building trust and avoiding leading questions" (p. 60). Next, building rapport with participants can often lead them to reveal things they never intended to tell. Ensuring participants are not left too vulnerable by what they reveal in interviews is an important consideration to be made in advance (Patton, 2015; Weiss, 1994).

Another area of ethical concern is privacy and confidentiality. This will be particularly important in my study as the experiences that participants may recount during interviews could include identifying information. To avoid breaches of privacy and

confidentiality, I used Patton's (2015) Ethical Issues Checklist. In particular, I heeded

Patton's advice about confidentiality and using pseudonyms for participants. As mentioned

above, informed consent sought to clarify that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus

groups. Finally, the principles outlined in The Belmont Report (Sales & Folkman, 2000) of

respect for persons, beneficence, and justice was observed during the conduct of the study.

In addition to the Belmont Report, my institution's Social Sciences Institutional

Review Board (SSIRB) guided my actions in conducting the research. I was responsible for

being aware of and meeting the requirements for research of this type. This includes meeting

the guidelines of the SSIRB with regard to informed consent and the maintaining of

participant confidentiality, including the use of pseudonyms. This process mandated that all

electronic files were password protected, all interview materials will be secured for a

minimum of seven years with my committee chair. Interview transcripts for member

checking were transmitted electronically using the participants' password-protected,

university-provided email accounts.

A final, ethical consideration is that of reciprocity. Creswell (2013) defines

reciprocity as the "giving back to participants for their time and efforts in our projects" and

he notes that "we need to review how participants will gain from our studies" (p. 55).

Compensation of qualitative research participants is becoming more commonplace and

Patton (2015) urges researchers to consider alternatives to cash, like providing participants

with recordings or transcripts of interviews they can use for posterity. Weiss (1994)

summarizes his beliefs about reciprocity this way:

> …in most studies, the reward for the respondent is the interview itself and the
> contribution he or she can make to the study. Payment doesn't seem to make a

difference in a respondent's willingness to participate…If the interview goes well, payment is largely irrelevant to the respondent's experience, except for those who truly need the money; if it doesn't go well, payment won't make the experience better. (p. 58)

At the conclusion of the focus group, I gave each participant a $50 gift card to a local convenience store and gas station. In a follow-up email, I also emphasized the important contributions their participation made to the field of school counseling they are about to enter.

In conclusion, my hope is that the ethical principles to which I adhered elicited candid feedback from participants while protecting their confidentiality and supporting their vulnerability. Data gathered from this study with these ethical parameters have the potential to substantially inform school counselor educators about the attitudes and beliefs school counselors-in-training should cultivate to best prepare for culturally responsive practice.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study used a heuristic, critical, qualitative inquiry approach that imbued the

perspectives and experiences of the researcher as a practicing school counselor, while

examining the data collected through a critical lens. The purpose of the study was to learn

about the experiences and perspectives of school counseling graduate students in a

Midwestern, urban university, all of whom were in the final stages of their degree programs.

A pragmatic, qualitative approach was chosen both because it asks practical questions about

school counseling practice and its use of mixed methods for which this method is particularly

well-suited (Caelli et al., 2003; Patton, 2015). The study is heuristic in nature because I am

school counselor and undoubtedly will bring to the fore my own experiences, a characteristic

compatible with heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990). Finally, the approach was critical in

nature as it attempted to "raise consciousness and change the balance of power in favor of

those less powerful" (Patton, 2015, p. 692); specifically, students from LCD and

marginalized backgrounds for whom culturally responsive school counselors are obligated to

advocate.

Data collection methods used in this study included interviews, document analysis,

and a focus group. In addition, a quantitative scale was used for data validity purposes, the

Multicultural Counseling Competency and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R) developed

by Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999). Each participant was interviewed for one hour by me

and the interviews were scheduled over a period of just over one month. Each participant also

gave me access to their electronic portfolio that serves as their capstone assessment for their

graduate program, which were the documents analyzed. After all of the interviews were conducted, a nearly two-hour focus group was led by me that included all of the participants and a protocol developed from preliminary themes identified from the interview and document analyses, called a theoretical focus group (Morgan, 1997). This was the final data collection method used and the data were collected over a span of about six weeks.

The data sources were selected based on the research questions that involved learning about the experiences and perspectives of the participants. The site was chosen based on its stated "emphasis on individual/cultural diversity and social justice" (MUU, 2017), and the attitudes and beliefs of these school counselors-in-training that might inform the future training of culturally responsive school counselors. The interviews afforded me the opportunity to ask questions of each participant using a loosely structured protocol that allowed the interview to elicit differentiated data based on the participants' unique experiences. The portfolios provided me "rich descriptions of...[what my participants]…think about their world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 133), specifically how they regarded cultural responsiveness throughout aspects of their graduate program. The focus group helped me discover "something unique to the understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Morgan, 1997, p. 3).

I had met some of the participants in the past, either as a guest speaker in one of their classes in the program or at professional events for school counselors. I am also a close, professional acquaintance of the program coordinator of the MUU school counseling graduate program, and her cooperation and support of the study were invaluable. From my conversations with her I also knew just how integral social justice, racial equity, and

inclusion were to her philosophy and, thus, to the overall program. Thus, I hoped the study would discover some common attitudes and beliefs that could be used to recruit and train future culturally responsive school counselors. Initially, I admit to being somewhat skeptical of the extent to which graduate students would glean these social justice elements from the program, at least to the extent hoped for by the program coordinator. I feared my study could appear critical of the program she leads potentially comprising our relationship. This supposition changed over time as each participant demonstrated knowledge and skills reflective of the social justice aims of the program and its coordinator.

As a practicing school counselor, developing rapport with people in rather limited amounts of time is something I often experience. Building rapport with the participants was very important to me and helped them to reveal more intimate details about their experiences in the graduate program. Our shared experiences and passion for school counseling helped me establish rapport. In addition, I had the good fortune to have seven interesting, motivated, and earnest participants, so sharing about our personal and professional lives helped build rapport. At first, I was concerned they would see me as s surrogate for the program coordinator since some of the participants know about our friendship. If they did, they did not appear too concerned about it, but then they did not share information that was too critical of the program she coordinates; their feedback ended up being fairly complimentary.

The study included a number of validity and reliability checks. These methods were in pursuit of what Richardson (1994) calls "crystallization," a validity strategy that uses the analogy of examining a crystal, with its complex and multifaceted physical characteristics, to examine data from multiple angles and perspectives to produce meaning. The participants

first completed the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R), an instrument developed by Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) originally for mental health counselors, then it was revised by Holcomb-McCoy (2005) for school counselors. The survey measures school counselors' perceived multicultural competence using three factors: Multicultural Terminology, Multicultural Knowledge, and Multicultural Awareness. Results are reported within the context of each participants' scores on the measure as a constant data compatibility reference (Patton, 2015).

Another validity strategy that was used was member checking. Participants were invited to review the transcripts of their interviews so they could clarify or correct anything that they believe they may have said incorrectly or unclearly. This strategy was utilized to rule "out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants [said] and [did] and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying [the researcher's] biases and misunderstandings of what [I] observed" (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 126-127). I also encouraged participants to follow-up with me if they thought of something they either excluded or on which they were unclear from their interview.

While not a case study, data are reported within each data source for each participant with frequent compatibility checks (Patton, 2015) with data collected from the other sources. The data collection methods were chosen to allow participants to demonstrate what experiences they gained from the graduate program in distinct yet facilitative and instructive ways. The portfolio is meant to be shared with potential employers and is reviewed as a final graduation requirement (MUU, 2018d), so it represents the participants' "best foot forward," the ideal and polished version of their learning. The interviews are a cruder, more visceral

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method for learning about their experiences, both because it is the first time they are sharing them in an interactive manner regarding the topic of the study, but also due to the extemporaneous nature of interviews. In the focus group, I asked questions formed based on preliminary analyses of the portfolios and interviews that allowed me to build on what I had learned so far. This not only deepened my understanding of the participants' experiences but enhanced them as hearing the perceptions of their classmates often prompted deeper reflection and recollections. Data collected from these sources was continually compared to participant responses on the MCCTS-R for analytic and crystallization purposes.

Data collected from the qualitative sources were analyzed using two, simultaneous processes. The first is Moustakas' (1990) heuristic data analysis procedure that began with immersing myself in the data. I listened to each recording at least twice, sometimes more often. I read each participant's portfolio before conducting any enumerative or descriptive coding procedures. The transcription method I used facilitated this process as I sent an audio file to the transcriptionist, then I went back through each transcript one or two times clarifying and revising words the transcriptionist either could not perceive or understand based on my notes and recollections.

Immediately after each interview, I reviewed and revised the transcript during and after listening to the audio. I then went on to interviewing other participants, reviewing the portfolios of others, and repeated this process over the six weeks of data collection. This facilitated the next step of the heuristic data analysis procedure, incubation (Moustakas, 1990). The collective experiences and perceptions of the participants began to gather in my mind and I would be reminded of them as I interviewed another participant, reviewed another

portfolio, and finally during and after the focus group. I frequently wrote notes to which I often referred throughout the data collection and analyses processes. These were invaluable as I synthesized themes as I reported my findings. During the illumination and explication steps, I participated in First Cycle coding in which I identified over 230 descriptive codes using an enumerative process (Grbich, 2013). I then distilled the descriptive codes during Second Cycle coding into fourteen interpretive codes that eventually led to the identified themes. Throughout this process, I continually took notes that helped lead to creative synthesis that yielded, among other things the Results Word Cloud included below. Throughout the process, it was important that I was aware of my own positionality and reflexivity in the research process.

Self-Reflection

Researcher positioning is particularly important in qualitative research as we are the "key instrument" used in the study (Creswell, 2013), so stipulating my biases and dispositions is important to retain validity. I do not profess to being objective and I attempt to employ Patton's (2015) call to remain "self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness" (p. 47). I am motivated by anti-oppression, anti-racist, culturally responsive practices in my work as a school counselor and seek to center students in that practice, particularly those from linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) and marginalized backgrounds. Understanding my White, middle class, and male privilege was a pivotal step in my anti-oppression identity and believe those who wish to engage in this work must also acknowledge privileged aspects of the identity. As a gay man, I believe empathy comes from lived experiences, and LCD practitioners have much to bring to the education of children. I

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am quick to accept stories of those from CLD and marginalized backgrounds and skeptical of those from majority backgrounds.

I brought all of this to the current study, I left nothing out. The data sources and validity methods mitigated what might have been a prejudice against Michael, the only male participant who is also White, cis-gender, and heterosexual, or a lack of healthy skepticism for Tammy's experiences, a middle-aged, Nigerian immigrant who is the only participant with children she is parenting. Without these mitigation methods, I might have missed how keenly aware Michael is of his privilege and what a kind heart he has. I might have been blind to Tammy admitting her faults by perpetuating a disregard for children she learned from her upbringing in Nigeria that she continually seeks to reject. It is with this I introduce the sheroes and heroes of this study, the participants.

Research Setting and Participants

There were seven participants in the study who were all school counselors-in-training enrolled in a graduate program (six in a Master's and one in an Educational Specialist program) at a Midwestern, urban university (pseudonym: Midwestern Urban University or MUU). All were nearing the end of their respective program and were in one of two field placements: practicum or internship. Two interviews took place at the high school where I work, two at the participants' field placement sites, and three took place on the MUU campus. Participants were recruited with the help of the coordinator of the school counseling graduate program at MUU who provided access to students enrolled in one of the field experiences required by the program: practicum and internship. Initially, a purposive sampling method was planned for participant selection, but a convenience sample ended up

being the sampling method based on the number of participants who responded to my request. Next, I will introduce each participant in the order they were interviewed using their pseudonyms. Note that the language I use to describe their identities are the terms the participants used when I asked each one of them how they describe various aspects of their identity.

Aubrey is a provisionally certified school counselor that allows her to work full-time as a school counselor while finishing her degree program, which she plans to do in May 2019. She is a school counselor at a middle school in a suburban school district where there is one other school counselor. She is 27 and describes her nationality as "American Caucasian" and her race/ethnicity as Caucasian. Her first language is English and she describes her gender as female and sexual orientation as heterosexual. Aubrey considers her upbringing in a single parent household as an important to her identity, along with the fact that she is a Type I diabetic, which she includes as an aspect of her identity since it "something that is daily and constant" in her life.

Aubrey graduated from a rural high school after growing up in a suburban part of the city where MUU is located, then graduated from a large land grant institution that is a sister campus of MUU. Her Bachelor's degree is in Human Development and Family Studies and her first job was working with children in a hospital setting, preparing them for procedures, distracting them as needed, and working with their families. She also worked with terminally ill children and their families with preparations for their death. She lived in a couple of larger urban cities before returning to the metropolitan area where she grew up. She started the

graduate program just under three years after she graduated with her Bachelor's degree. I met Aubrey at my high school on a day that neither of us had school due to inclement weather.

I met Michael on the MUU campus for the next interview. Michael has been a para-educator for seven year, primarily working with students who qualify for special education services in a suburban high school. Michael is a 32-year-old, heterosexual White male whose first language is English in his second semester of Internship, the final field placement for the graduate program. He is doing his Internship at the suburban high school where he has worked for the past seven years. He graduated from a high school in an adjacent, suburban school district with higher levels of socioeconomic and racial diversity than the one in which he currently works. He graduated from MUU with an undergraduate degree in Secondary English Education, even though he always knew he wanted to be a school counselor. He started the school counseling graduate program in 2016, just over 10 years after he graduated from high school and six years after graduating with his undergraduate degree. He is on track to graduate with his Master's degree in May 2019. Michael held a series of part-time jobs during high school and college, and currently maintains a part-time job in the retail industry while working as a para-educator.

My next interviewee is Susan, a 28-year-old, heterosexual, Caucasian female whose first language is English. Like Aubrey, she is also employed as a provisionally certified school counselor while completing her Internship at a suburban high school (coincidentally in the same school district as Aubrey). Susan is the sole participant who already holds a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from MUU from which she graduated in 2015. She began pursuing her Educational Specialist degree in 2017, and prior to that time she was

a practicing licensed professional counselor (LPC) seeing clients for therapy. She graduated from a small, exurban high school I 2008 and from a small, public university with a degree in Psychology in 2012. After working briefly in case management and as a therapist under supervision at a behavioral health practice, she began her own private practice seeing clients for therapy. She plans to graduate in May of 2019 with her Educational Specialist degree that will qualify her for full certification as a school counselor. I also interviewed Susan at my high school on a day neither of us had school due to inclement weather.

Susan's career path was fascinating to me as few people follow her path, *from* community/mental health counseling *to* school counseling; the route is typically in reverse. She explained that it was difficult to make a living in private practice, especially since she had to see most of her clients in the evenings and on weekends, which made it tough to spend time with family. She was very much influenced by working at the behavioral and mental health practice after she earned her Master's degree as she worked frequently with un- and under-insured clients, sensitizing her to the needs of those with mental illness who also lacked the financial resources to fully manage those mental illnesses. Susan was drawn to a helping profession in general because her dad and grandfather died, and her best friend died by suicide, all within the span of nine months while she was in the eighth grade. These experiences, too, will profoundly impact how she approaches school counseling.

Next was Kate, a 25-year-old, Caucasian American whose first language is English. I interviewed Kate in the urban elementary school where she is working as a provisionally certified school counselor while in her final semester of Internship. Her school district is technically suburban, but her building was annexed by the district from the neighboring

urban district in 2007 and it retains many of the same demographic characteristics as when it was in the city's major urban school district. Kate went straight through the educational levels to her Master's program: she graduated from a private, Catholic high school in 2012, from a mid-size, public institution located in a Midwestern state in 2016 with a degree in Elementary Education with an emphasis in Middle School Social Studies, then began the Master's program at MUU in the fall of 2016. She plans to graduate in the May of 2019.

As one of the youngest participants, Kate lacked some of the life experiences of the other participants; but what she lacked in experience she compensated with exuberance. She counts as a formative experience that led her to school counseling a part-time job in a before- and after-school program, in addition to working as a babysitter, lifeguard, and volunteer elementary school custodian. She also worked as a Graduate Assistant during the Master's program as a tutor coordinator and was hired for her current job after completing her practicum at a high school in the same district.

Haven is the next participant I interviewed and we met in the main library on the MUU campus. Haven is a 29-years-old female, describes her nationality as African American, race/ethnicity as Black, sexual orientation as heterosexual, whose first language is English, and she is also working as a provisionally certified school counselor while completing her final semester of Internship in an urban elementary school. When asked if there is more to her identity than the initial set of demographic questions I asked, she said that her spirituality and belief in God are important aspects of her identity. She later clarified that she wants "people to see the Christ in [her]." Haven graduated from a diverse, suburban high school in 2007, then earned a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education in 2013 from a

small, public institution in the rural part of a Midwestern state. After completing her undergraduate degree, she was a substitute teacher and worked in an after-school program, primarily working with children with autism.

Also on the campus of MUU, I interviewed Lynne next. She is a 23-year-old, White or Caucasian, heterosexual, cisgender female, whose nationality is (European) American and first language is English. She is a teacher assistant in an urban, public elementary school and is completing her second semester of Practicum, the first of two, required field placements for the school counseling graduate program. As the youngest participant, she lacked some life experience compared to the other participants, but made up for that deficiency with wisdom beyond her years. Like Kate, she went straight through the educational levels to her graduate program, graduating in 2013 from a large, rural high school in a mid-size, rural town home to a small, public university, then from MUU with an undergraduate degree in Psychology in 2017, and she began the Master's program the fall after she graduated in 2017. She expects to graduate from the program in May of 2020.

The final participant I interviewed at the urban elementary school where she is completing her final semester of Internship. Tammy is a 49-year-old, female, heterosexual, Nigerian immigrant whose first language is Pidgin English (comprised of her native Nigerian dialect and Portuguese as she grew up in a port city in Nigeria with much commerce from Portugal) who describes her race/ethnicity as African. She includes as important aspects of her identity life experiences she has had, immigrating to England from her native Nigeria after following her physician husband there for a fellowship, then following him to Qatar for a post-fellowship placement, then to the United States. She is the only participant who is

parenting children. She graduated from high school in Nigeria in 1984, then with her undergraduate degree in education from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. She earned a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Leeds in the UK. She held part-time jobs in high school, undergraduate, and while earning her Master's degree, mostly in the business field. She came to the United States in 2005, and to the metropolitan area where MUU is located in 2010 and did not work outside the home until she began the school counseling graduate program in 2015. She expects to graduate in May of 2019.

While the methodological tradition for this study is not case study and, therefore, does not call for more thorough analyses of participant backgrounds, I have chosen to do so here and will continue to position the participants at the foreground of this study due to its critical nature. Critical inquiry is about power: who possesses it (both perceived and actual), the relationship of the powerful to the powerless, and how the power imbalance leads to social injustice (Cannella, 2015; Denzin, 2016; LeCompte, 1995). While the powerless who are the primary intended beneficiaries of this study are students from LCD and marginalized backgrounds, empowering and galvanizing their future school counselors to advocate for and emancipate them through socially just and critical practice can achieve the same purpose (McLaren, 2015; Willis, 2007).

Data Sources

Findings from this study will first be reported based on the source from which they were collected. Data gathered from the MCCTS-R questionnaire, interviews, documents, and finally the focus group will be summarized and themes and sub-themes therefrom synthesized. Next, themes and sub-themes that pervaded the qualitative data sources –

interviews, documents and the focus group – will then be elucidated. Finally, the research

questions will be answered based on data collected from all sources. First, data from each

source will be summarized.

Questionnaires

The Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R)

was used for two purposes: selecting participants and for data crystallization purposes

(Ellingson, 2009; Richardson, 1994). The former purpose ended up being moot as I just had

seven potential participants respond to my recruitment methods and the participants'

responses on the MCCTS-R all fell within pre-established recruitment guidelines. Permission

was obtained from the survey's author, Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, to administer the

survey, along with guidelines for how to score and interpret it.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) contains 32, Likert-scale items using the following

scale: 4 = extremely competent, 3 = competent, 2 = somewhat competent, and 1 = not

competent. Holcomb-McCoy (2005) found three factors that characterize the multicultural

school counseling competence items on the MCCTS-R: Multicultural Terminology (e.g.,

racism, prejudice, etc.), Multicultural Knowledge (i.e. familiarity with racial identity models,

intercultural communication, cultural differences in- and outside the counseling relationship),

and Multicultural Awareness (i.e. awareness of own cultural identity and biases and their

effect on one's practice). All of the participants completed the questionnaire prior to being

selected to participate in the study. The guidelines established prior to recruitment included

selecting six participants that differed significantly on their responses in order "to understand

the factors that explain the difference" (Patton, 2015, p. 267). However, since only seven

participants responded to my recruitment methods, and because all but one participant had similar scores, all participants were selected.

Participant responses to the MCCTS-R are summarized below in Table 3. The table reports each participant score with respect to the total possible in each factor. The reader will note that the sample ($N = 7$) includes an outlier; Tammy's score is higher than the rest of the participants at a statistically significant rate ($Z = 6.3$, $p < .0001$). The mean scores are highest for Factor 1 ($M = 3.32$) as is the standard deviation ($SD = .49$) compared to the other factors. Factor 3 has the next highest mean score ($M = 3.21$) and the lowest standard deviation ($SD = .30$). Factor 2 has the lowest mean score ($M = 2.57$) and a standard deviation of .47.

Table 3

MCCTS-R Mean Scores

Participant	Z (p)	Total Mean	Factor 1: Multicultural Terminology	Factor 2: Multicultural Knowledge	Factor 3: Multicultural Awareness
Aubrey	-2.18 (.01)	2.56	3.75	3.58	3.78
Haven	-0.24 (.41)	2.81	2.75	2.68	3.11
Kate	-1.21 (0.12)	2.69	3.00	2.37	3.22
Lynne	-0.24 (0.41)	2.81	4.00	2.37	3.22
Michael	-1.21 (0.12)	2.69	3.00	2.32	3.33
Susan	-1.21 (0.12)	2.69	3.00	2.53	2.89
Tammy	6.30 (.0001)	3.66	3.75	3.58	3.78
SD			0.49	0.47	0.30

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Total	3.32	2.57	3.21

Z-score tests were performed on the results to answer two questions: (a) Were results of any participant statistically different from those of others? and, (b) Were results on any of the Factors significantly different than results for the other Factors? Results for these tests are displayed in Table 4 below and indicate that Tammy's scores were significantly higher than those for the other participants ($p < .05$). And the means for Factors 1 ($z = 2.59$, $p < .005$) and 3 ($z = 3.26$, $p < .0001$) were higher at a statistically significant rate than that for Factor 2 ($z = -1.52$, $p < .06$).

Table 4

MCCTS-R Factors 1-3 Z Scores and Confidence Intervals

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Z-Score	Confidence Interval
Factor 1: Multicultural Terminology	3.32	0.49	2.59	0.005
Factor 2: Multicultural Knowledge	2.57	0.47	-1.52	0.07
Factor 3: Multicultural Awareness	3.21	0.30	3.26	0.0006

These results appear to be compatible with the qualitative data. The level of awareness and depth of knowledge that Tammy possesses was evidence in all of the data sources. The results that indicate the scores on Factors 1 (Multicultural Terminology) and 3 (Multicultural Awareness) are in line with those from other studies that found that scores on the Multicultural Knowledge (Factor 2) category were lower (Barden & Greene, 2015; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999).

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Interviews

The approach I took for the interviews as a data source for my study was to establish rapport and attempt to understand and make meaning from the experiences of the participants (Seidman, 2013; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). Each interview lasted about one hour. Three interviews were conducted at MUU, two at the Internship sites of the participants, and two at the high school where I work. The interviews were semi-structured and I used an interview protocol to guide our conversations, but many follow-up and probing questions led our conversations in different directions. The interviews took place over about a six-week period and each participant was asked to review the transcript to identify any errors or points they wanted to clarify. None of the participants asked to do so. One of the participants emailed me a follow-up response to the one of the questions.

The top themes from the interviews differed slightly from the portfolios and focus group. First, *Early Diversity Encounters* were common among all of the participants that, upon some reflection prompted by interview questions, appeared to be instrumental in their current views on inclusion and equity. *Family Salience* is another important theme in the interviews, both the impact of families on the views of the participants as well the importance of involving students' families in school counseling practice. A final theme in the interviews that differed from the other sources was *Empathy,* the idea that the participants' experiences helped to deepen their understanding and ability to relate to their students. First, all of the participants could point to at least one, formative experience early in their lives that sensitized them to cultural differences.

The fields of developmental psychology and applied sociology have long been intrigued by the formation of open and accepting attitudes of young people and how they are formed. While it is known this is a highly complex and dynamic phenomenon, early contact with people who are culturally, linguistically, and ideologically different from us is over-represented in those with more open and accepting views (Leman & Cameron, 2017). *Early Diversity Encounters* with people from different backgrounds were experienced by each participant in this study. This theme is comprised of two interpretive codes: (a) *Different Experiences* and (b) *Cultural Exposure.* Aubrey spoke a great deal about how she learned early on from her single mother that all people have worth and that judgements based on skin color, national origin, and language spoken were unacceptable in her household. She noted,

> From a young age, my mother made sure we were accepting and respectful and placed us in situations where we interacted with diverse populations of people and learned to be accepting and work with others who are different than us.

Michael also noted how important it was that he grew up with kids who were different from him, especially as he began interacting more often with his close-minded relatives from rural areas:

> I had friends from various races, different backgrounds. It had never really occurred to me that some people didn't think that way until I started getting older and hanging out with my dad's side of the family. He's from what he calls "the country." And I remember very distinctly at one point one of my cousins asking me if I fought the black kids at my school. And I remember just being dumbfounded, like why would I do that, you know? And he was like because they're black. And it just never clicked with me until I grew up, you know? And I was like oh, he has a different worldview than I do.

Another theme that was especially evident from the interviews was the prominence of family in the worldviews of the participants. Interpretive codes of *Family Values* and *Family Involvement* comprise the *Family Salience* theme, defined as the prominent status of personal

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family experiences and the importance of including the families of students in school counseling practice. Haven talked a great deal about how facilitative the support of her family was for her and how she was driven by wanting to give that same benefit to her students. She said about working in a group home and how it influences her,

> …seeing kids that don't have the full support and voice to further better themselves. And also just also family; getting that support from family and being pushed to get your education is what I wanted to instill in other kiddos, too, that don't have that push or drive for work and family.

Sometimes what participants learned from their families became counter-examples for how they wish to live their lives and serve as cautionary tales for how they practice school counseling. Both Lynne and Kate talked about how interracial dating was either looked down upon or forbidden all together in their families. Kate recalled that one of her older cousins married a Black man. As she was leaving her grandfather's house soon thereafter, he said to her, "Find you a white one." Lynne was not allowed to accept the invitation of an African American classmate to Homecoming:

> That happened when I was 14. I was like well, why? They were like, well, they would never explicitly say that it's because a person had a different skin color or that they didn't come from a great family, but they would ground me and say, no you can't or block their number. It was really interesting in how we're just kids but there were some family attitudes that were not okay.

Perhaps the strongest counter-example of a family value is held by Tammy from her upbringing in Nigeria. She recalled how adults with whom she had contact while growing up in Nigeria treated children. She recollected,

> The culture in Nigeria is actually one thing that ... Nigerians treat kids like they don't have feelings. They just tell you what they like and you are supposed to accept it. And if you cry, they will scold you for crying.

The importance of involving the families of students for whom the participants are school counselors was ubiquitous among them. While this interpretive code was more strongly revealed in the portfolios, the participants made numerous mention of how students are likely to reach their fullest potential with the involvement of their families. The importance of involving families in students' education is a notion well-supported in the literature (e.g., Aydm, Bryan, & Duys, 2012; Howard, 2010; Milner, 2013; Noguera, 2006) and its salience in school counseling was corroborated by the sentiments of the participants in their interviews.

The final theme endemic in the interviews was *Empathy* comprised of three, interpretive codes: (a) *Diverse Backgrounds,* (b) *Respectful Regard,* and, (c) *Experiencing Differentness.* Not surprisingly with their program consisting of several mental health counseling classes, the participants demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of empathy. They went beyond superficial elements of diversity and differentness and perpetually acknowledged the importance of values, norms, historical experiences, and perspectives that are likely heavily influenced by, but not necessarily universally held, by people from particular racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. This nuanced and advanced understanding appears to embody the cognitive, attitudinal, and emotional aspects of the construct that are often disregarded (Clark, 2007).

When talking about experiences that both led her to school counseling and best prepared her for it, Susan recalled her time working in case management in a community mental health setting. She talked about how empathy for a client goes way beyond appreciating racial and ethnic differences:

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So, I mean homeless people, people who are struggling with addiction, all types of diverse backgrounds, working through their struggles, helping them, you're providing that counseling to people who otherwise would never have had it. I'd say that was probably my biggest closest experience, interacting with diverse populations.

Haven reinforced the importance of not making assumptions just because one thinks one understands various racial and ethnic cultures:

A lot of the classes try their best to say you can't just come from your background; you have to understand others' background. And even if you are a same person of color, that doesn't mean you have the same issues, the same problems, same life. I think they really put that on us a lot and challenge us, too.

Most of the participants shared experiences that helped sensitize them to what students with whom they work are going through. As the only man among the participants, Michael talked a great deal about how aware of his gender privilege he is, along with the racial, gender identity, and sexual orientation privileges he experiences as a White, heterosexual cis-gender male. He also shared that he knows what it feels like to not be able to part of a group of which one desires to be part:

Part of it might be, too, with the compassion thing is being, I was kind of a bigger kid in elementary school and I felt like I was excluded from a lot of things. And that was my first kind of realization that some kids are different than other kids. Kids will treat you differently based on that difference. You know, that's what mine happened to be. I liked playing sports, but I wasn't fast, I wasn't agile. So I wasn't a ... like, I loved to play but I may not have been the highest scorer or the fastest runner.

Kate talked a great deal about how working in an urban elementary school with students from racially diverse and mostly lower income households offered her nearly daily opportunities to remind her of the privileges she had growing in in an upper-middle class household and attending private K-12 schools. One example of this is below:

Working with a student the other day, covering their inside recess and asking him, "Oh, do you wanna play 'I Spy?'" And he's like, "What's that?" And I'm like, "Oh my gosh, you've never played I Spy." Just something just as simple as that. Like I just

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assumed that everybody has had that experience, and you haven't, because you're focusing on basic needs of life.

And Haven talks about a particular teacher in the program really helped her, as an African American woman who grew up in a lower income family, understand that most of us have privileged aspects of our identity. She said that the teacher pointed out,

"You have a car. Some people don't even have a car." And that makes me also think of my students that have to get to school that walk, or students who have to have a babysitter and their parents can't just take them. It makes me think, whoa, I am ... I take it as I'm blessed…so I guess [I have] privilege.

While similar in nature, themes found in the portfolios had a stronger focus on self-reflection on the part of the participants.

Documents

A graduation requirement for students in the school counseling graduate program at MUU is a capstone, electronic portfolio (MUU, 2018d). The portfolios require students to write reflections on and gather artifacts to corroborate their learning of the program's six goals and associated quality indicators. The participants each granted me a "visitor pass" to gain access to their portfolios and I analyzed the following sections of them: (a) Program Goal 1, Quality Indicator 4, Social and Cultural Diversity; (b) Program Goal 4, Quality Indicator 3, Student Advocacy; and, (c) Program Goal 6, Cultural Competence. After accessing these sections of each participants' portfolios, I copied and pasted the text into a word processing document to preserve a record of the documents. Elements reviewed included only text originally produced by the participants, so audio and video files and group work were excluded from the document analysis.

Two themes were perceived from the participant portfolios. First, the theme of *Self-reflection* was identified in the portfolios and this theme is comprised of the following interpretive codes: (a) *Cultural Identity Awareness;* (b) *Personal Bias Awareness and Mitigation;* (c) *Values Formation;* and, (d) *Understanding Privilege.* This theme manifests a central and critical element of the literature on culturally competent counseling that is best summarized by Sue and Sue (2016) who quote an old adage, "Counselor or therapist, know thyself" (p. 25), and this is no less important for school counselors (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011).

Evident in the portfolios was a strong conviction on the part of the participants that they must critically examine and understand their own cultural identity. Susan stated it succinctly: "Counselors must self-reflect in an authentic way to provide equitable counseling to students of various backgrounds." Five of the seven participants are White and Kate summarized a sentiment shared by most of them:

> When first prompted to write a paper over my cultural identity, I was unable to think of much to write at all. This caused me to fall into the same group of many others with similar backgrounds to mine [White, middle class] who believe that we do not have a culture. I quickly learned that everyone has a culture.

Tammy took this self-reflection a step further and noted that she must also consider how others see her when examining and understanding her cultural identity, along with continue this process throughout her life: "Essentially, I am something different to different people and being in my forties, I have been through transitions in my life that have added new identities to who I am."

Once school counselors have an understanding of their own cultural identity, it is important for examine their own biases and prejudices. This sentiment is not only prevalent

in the literature (e.g., Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Liu, Pickett, & Ivey, 2007; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011), but also from the participants' portfolios. Susan stated it very simply: "To be an effective counselor, an awareness of personal biases is necessary for self-monitoring and knowing when training and consultation is necessary." Michael makes many references to how he must continue to examine his own biases and the privilege he has that often cloud his judgement when supporting students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds. Tammy stated it in a more comprehensive manner:

> As a school counselor, I recognize the need to check my personal biases and values when working with students who are from cultural backgrounds different from mine. This is important because we have all learned faulty opinions and stereotypes about different groups which create unconscious prejudices and biases in our minds, and these can obstruct objective reasoning when working with students from diverse cultures.

Tammy referenced the need for critical school counselors to examine their own values and how they may interfere with counseling students in an open and non-judgmental manner. This is another sub-theme from the portfolios that is linked to exploring one's cultural identity and being aware of biases and privileges, but differs slightly. Because of the intersectional nature of values and beliefs, they are often separate from culture based on individual characteristics (Crenshaw, 1991). There is also evidence in the literature that critical educators must consciously and perpetually examine their values and beliefs as they can inadvertently adopt those of racist and oppressive school systems. Bemak and Chung (2005) suggest that school counselors, "similar to disenfranchised students, have been in some cases inadvertent victims of the systems in which they work, adopting values and practices conducive to bringing about categorical discrepancies in achievement" (p. 197).

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None of the participants better manifest this idea than Tammy, a Nigerian immigrant who has lived on three continents, is middle-aged, the wife of a wealthy doctor who works in an inner-city school, and the only participant with children whom she is parenting. Tammy shared several stories in her interview, in the focus group, as well as in her portfolio, that demonstrate how she is learning to recognize these unconscious values and their effect on her behavior. She provided a deep reflection on this subject in the portfolio about her experience interviewing a young, White, gay male college student for a class project who held anti-immigrant views.

> I also talk about my reactions to the things he said that I did not agree with, giving me an opportunity to experience how it would feel to counsel someone with a background and views very different from mine, while still remaining open, non-judgmental and accepting with an awareness of their individuality and cultural influences.

Lynne shared in reflections included in her portfolio how surprised she was after taking the *Implicit Bias Test* (Project Implicit, 2011), first begun at Harvard University. She grew up in a community with much diversity, both racially and socioeconomically, so these biases were unconscious.

There are a few examples when participants demonstrated some values that may conflict with their ability to work with students and their families in a non-judgmental manner. These sentiments were shared in the context of them reflecting on these previously held beliefs and their progress in mitigating them. Tammy included a reflection on the documentary titled *Daddy & Papa* (Symons, 2002) and wrote,

> I talk about what assumptions I would have made if I had their children as my students, how I would be likely to have discounted their experiences in my assumption that every child has a mother and father, or in finding out that they had

two dads, I would imagine a family life much different from the real and normal childhood that the children had.

Both Kate and Haven reflected they have often been confronted by how their religious beliefs are in conflict with those of others. Haven wrote in a reflection that she is uncomfortable when talking about LGBT people and people with religious beliefs that conflict with her Christian beliefs. As a school-counselor-in-training, she noted how important it is to examine her values by participating in dialogue:

> I do not want to just nod my head anymore when it comes to those topics but I want to challenge myself to speak up. I feel if am too sensitive in not sharing my thoughts then I could miss the opportunity to learn new information.

The document analysis also revealed a strong sense that being aware of and examining one's privilege is a critical element of culturally responsive school counseling. As the only man among the participants who is also White and heterosexual, Michael acknowledged his privilege and shared a profound story about a time when he and a friend got pulled over by a police officer. Michael was driving, yet only his Latinx friend was asked to exit the vehicle so the officer could further question and search him while Michael was allowed to remain in the car. He wrote in a reflection how important the program taught him to ask himself questions about incidents like that, such as "Why didn't the officer ask me to step out? Why was the officer's first thought to check my friend and not me? Was it because of his skin color?"

Even Tammy, arguably the participant with the fewest aspects of her identity that carry privilege, asserted how important it is for her to be aware of her own privilege, including her sexual orientation and socioeconomic privilege:

When these privileged identities emerge in my practice as a school counselor, I must be aware of possible microaggressions that students and their families in these groups face, and do my best to authenticate their experience and show that I am separate from the oppressive majority.

This awareness of privilege is firmly grounded in the literature as theorists assert both how important it is for school counselors in training to understand and examine their own privilege (e.g., Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016), but also how often this training practice is excluded from school counseling graduate programs (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Militello & Janson, 2014; Smith & Geroski, 2014; Welton & Martinez, 2013).

The second theme identified from the document analysis is *Transcending Multicultural Awareness*. This theme is comprised of two interpretive codes: *Pluralistic View of Culture* and *Addressing Barriers*. It was evident in the portfolios that the participants believe that cultural competence requires a practitioner to go beyond race and ethnicity, and to both have a more expansive view of diversity as well as advocate for their students, especially those from LCD and marginalized backgrounds.

For the first interpretive code, Tammy summarized aptly what most of the participants indicated in one way or another in their portfolios:

Identity issues are not only race related, they are also related to religion, gender and sexual orientation and the students dealing with these issues should be made to feel fully accepted and treasured as the people they are. I endeavour to help my school build a culture and atmosphere of not just tolerance, but acceptance and mutual respect.

Kate called her previous view of culture, which only included race and ethnicity, the "tourist view" of one's culture, and wrote, "I now know that my beliefs, values, traditions, life experiences, and home life are all parts of who I am and what my culture is."

For the *Addressing Barriers* interpretive code, most of the participants demonstrated awareness that it is an important role of school counselors to identify and mitigate barriers for students, especially for those from LCD and marginalized backgrounds. Aubrey stated it succinctly: "Not only do school counselors need to be culturally competent, they must help advocate and promote acceptance, tolerance and kindness to all in their schools." When talking about a common responsibility for school counselors, Kate asserted the need to go beyond the surface level: "Along with trying to improve [attendance] rates, a counselor must research and learn what obstacles are in the students' way of getting to school. Advocating for these students is part of cultural competence." Advocacy was a strong theme in the portfolios, but also in all of the qualitative data sources, to be discussed next.

Focus Group

The focus group provided the opportunity for the participants to get together and reminisce a bit about the school counseling graduate program. This form of data was chosen as a data source with the hope that it would elicit data participants either forgot or felt uncomfortable sharing in interviews – a strategic advantage of focus groups in qualitative data collection (Vaugh et al., 1996) – as well as getting at the "why" of the way the participants think about culturally responsive school counseling and their graduate program (Litosseliti, 2003). The focus group protocol was developed using a theoretical approach,

informed by preliminary themes identified in the document and interview analyses (Morgan, 1997).

The focus group took place on the campus of MUU in the building where all classes for the school counseling graduate program are held, so it was familiar and comfortable for the participants. I served food and water as it was hastily rescheduled over the dinner hour due to inclement weather. One participant, Lynne, had to be about 30 minutes late, but all of the participants stayed the entirety of its one hour and forty-five minute duration. To best facilitate the audio recording, it was held in a room with a large conference table. As a school counselor, I typically try to avoid having barriers among group members, but I believed other aspects of the setting would facilitate rapport and hoped the physical barrier would not become a psychological or emotional one.

As mentioned above, the focus group protocol (Appendix C) was developed after identifying preliminary themes from the portfolios and interviews. Questions were chosen based as much on what I did *not* hear in the interviews or read in the portfolios as on what was shared in those data sources. I wanted to probe deeper about the beliefs and attitudes of participants about pertinent views they held on how just or fair the world is – an important construct in culturally responsive school counseling (Lipkus, 1991; Parikh et al., 2011) – and the ability of schools to effect meaningful change in the lives of students from marginalized backgrounds. In addition, I wanted to learn more about their views on a fixed versus growth mindset (Dweck, 2006; Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017) and a deficit- versus asset-based approach to school counseling (Valencia, 2010; Yosso, 2005).

Three themes were identified from the focus group, just one that was similar to the other data sources, but still slightly differed. The first one was *Reflective Practice* comprised of two interpretive codes: (a) *Self-reflection,* and (b) *Equity Focus.* The second theme from the focus group is *Advocacy* and is very similar to *Addressing Barriers* theme identified in the portfolios, but there were discrete differences between the two. This theme was composed of two interpretive codes: (a) *Inquisitive Approach,* and, (b) *Encouragement.* The final theme is *Growth Mindset* comprised of the interpretive codes of *Optimism* and *Persistence.* First, the participants reinforced in the focus group the importance of reflection in their work.

Nearly all of the participants mentioned the importance of being critical and reflective in their work, in one way or another. While not as big a theme in the other data sources, awareness of and consciously examining privilege held by the participants was pervasive in the focus group. Susan shared how an under-emphasis on privilege can lead those who possess it to over-emphasize their own efforts:

> I think we can't control the circumstances that we're born into, and something that bothers me when I hear it, is when people say, "I'm not privileged. I've worked hard for everything I have." I get that, but at the same time, you're automatically at an advantage because of certain characteristics that other people do not have.

When I asked the group about whether they were reluctant to share their dissenting opinions during class, Kate and Haven both shared their hesitancy to share about their religious beliefs, especially when in classes with students in the mental health and couples and family tracks of their graduate program. Tammy strongly voiced how she was not reluctant to share, because of her experience as a minority:

I'm already used to that, because I am a minority in most rooms I walk into. So, seeing that, I just recognize the fact that, "Okay, as the school counselors here, we are the minority, so, if you want something to be given in your perspective, you have to ask for it."

Related to this vigilance about the presence and relevance of power and privilege is the focus of the participants on equity. There were a number of times that participants commented on efforts they had undertaken or planned to take on that involved addressing gaps in achievement and opportunity for LCD students. Aubrey shared that she participated in the analysis of perceptual data that noted a disproportionate number of students of color at her middle school who do not have a sense of belonging at the school. Kate shared that she has noted a racial disparity in the students who are referred to her school's Problem Solving Team. In an extended commentary on that discrepancy, she said

And so just like those conversations of, if a teacher's having trouble in the classroom, it's ... okay, so what is this? What are we doing that we need to change? Instead of the kids. So just…making those hard comments that, it might not be the kid, it might be you. You need to understand something…And just having those uncomfortable, hard conversations, that's like, this is a problem. We need to figure something out.

The need for this critical lens to identify these disparities is viewed as imperative in the literature, but generally as a weakness of most school counseling programs (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011; House et al., 2002). When these disparities are identified, most of the participants indicated the need for the school counselor to address them.

The role of a school counselor as an advocate, especially for students from LCD and marginalized backgrounds, is viewed as a critical element of culturally responsive school counseling. This is the case both for students themselves, (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lewis et al., 2003), but also for their parents and teachers (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011). The *Advocacy* theme in the focus group differed slightly from a similar

one found in the interviews as the participants talked about the power of critical questioning. This was best articulated by Susan:

> I think just learning how to ask questions in a respectful manner. I have used it a lot this year. "I'm new, I don't know, I'm just going to ask." I use that a lot, because some things, you know, we have to ask these questions, because somebody has to advocate and find out if there's another way to look at something, or handle the situation. I think we're taught how to ask questions in a respectful way, and to dig deeper.

The questioning sentiment was echoed by Aubrey, Haven, and Tammy who asserted the importance of asking questions about people's backgrounds to avoid making assumptions. Haven put it in a little more of a heartfelt manner:

> …let the student take over. They know their culture. Let them explain it. I don't always want to feel like the expertise [*sic*] when it's like, "Hey, you tell me ... I'm learning, I'm in your world. You tell me your story, your book.

For a few participants, this questioning and possibly related difficult conversations had limits. Harkening back to a previously described discussion about a bit of derision between the school counseling track and the mental health and couples/family track, Aubrey confided that she was sometimes reluctant to ask questions of the professors because she was afraid the students in the other tracks would judge her naiveté. As previously mentioned, both Kate and Haven mentioned that they were reluctant to bring up their religious beliefs that seemed to differ with a plurality of the classes in which discussions took place, especially when there were mental health and couples/family students in the class. As will be discussed later, at least for a few participants, having critical conversations about race and equity issues is a challenge.

The themes about advocacy are likely best summed up by Haven, who framed this school counselor responsibility this way:

> Just support your kids. If they want to be a dinosaur, support them to be a dinosaur. If they want to be a pink unicorn, support them to be a pink unicorn. Just be in their corner. I learned that a lot from my family. Doesn't matter which road you take, just be there for each other.

This advocacy theme was employed by nearly every participant, whether talking about individual students or groups of students. Aubrey was particularly vociferous in her assertion that instilling advocacy in the program's students was a strength. She gave credit for this to the program coordinator and said she instilled this obligation firmly in students. Referring to her work in an inner-city hospital before beginning the program, she shared:

> I've done a lot of work, but that, specifically, for school counseling is kind of when it started to click of like, "This is more than just enrolling kids and talking to kids," that we can make an impact, and that's not just something we can do, it's something we should do every day.

The final theme of the focus group was *Growth Mindset,* a phrase coined by Dweck (2006) that asserts that effort-based feedback is preferable to a performance-based feedback framework in any type of learning. This theory has since been validated in fields as diverse as digital assessment (Cutumisu, 2019), elementary education (Rissanen, Kuusisto., Tuominen, & Tirri, 2019), and tourism (Lee, Park, & Jang, 2018). It was evident that this theory was also being incorporated into the school counseling graduate program at MUU, as well. Tammy addressed it directly when contrasting how she compared to her sister was treated by their parents:

> That's one thing I really got into, because I feel like that has really ... I benefited from that, mostly because I started off ... sounding promising, you know, so my parents encouraged me, and I grew up believing I could do whatever I tried, because I got that encouragement.

Susan echoed the sentiment when talking about what she learned from her mother that she tries to integrate into her school counseling practice: "When I speak to a student, or

anyone for that matter, trying to totally leave any judgment out of it, and just see the best in people, see the good in people." When sharing about the low income, single parent household in which she was raised, Lynne marveled at her mother's seemingly endless positivity: "I thought my childhood was the best. I had no idea, because my mom spoke so much positivity and affirmations to me and my sister, that we thought we were living the life."

This theme is also evident in the way most of the participants view the term "cultural competence." Susan stated her feelings very directly:

> I don't personally think that you could ever truly be culturally competent. I think that's a lifelong thing. I don't think you can ever truly reach that status. But, we certainly have gotten good training in that, I feel like, in trying to get to that point. I think that's a day-to-day, life-long thing.

When talking about what value students from LCD backgrounds bring to their schools, Kate pointed out that school counselors can learn much from them right along with their classmates:

> I was thinking what if the opportunity to learn perspective, and understanding. I have a teacher in my building who calls it accountable talk. So it's like I recognize that I have a different opinion than you, but I'm going to be able to voice what I'm saying in a respectful manner.

This theme is even more evident when all qualitative sources are taken together to form a compendium of themes, to be discussed next.

Themes Across the Qualitative Sources

From the data analysis procedures and data collected from the sources summarized above, I perceived themes corroborated and reinforced by all of the qualitative data sources. In this section, I will summarize those themes and discuss their epistemology: participant

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quotes that formed the interpretive codes from which the themes were identified. Data from all qualitative sources, including the documents, interviews, and the focus group, will be summarized and examples highlighted that corroborate the themes. These findings will then be contextualized and grounded in the literature.

There are four themes identified from the data collected: (a) *Cultural Responsiveness Imperative*; (b) *Individual Bias Awareness and Mitigation;* (c) *Advocacy;* and, (d) *Critical Practice.* Each theme will be defined below and the interpretive codes from which they were derived will also be explicated. First, the clear consensus of the importance of culturally responsive practice for school counselors will be discussed.

It is no surprise that the students in a program that publicly announces its "emphasis on individual/cultural diversity and social justice" (MUU, 2017) is close to graduating practitioners who embrace this aspect of the school counseling profession. Indeed, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the nation's largest professional organization for school counselors, makes clear the importance of this role for school counselors in their *School Counselor Competencies* (2012b), their *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (2016), and position statements on equity (2012d) and cultural diversity (2015). What is somewhat surprising is the consistency and confidence the participants demonstrated in corroborating this imperative in their portfolios, interviews, and the focus group. This theme was comprised of four interpretive codes: (a) *Cultural Diversity Awareness and Appreciation;* (b) *Equitable Practice;* (c) *Family Involvement;* and, (d) *Inclusive Cultural Competence.*

Cultural Diversity Awareness and Appreciation

The interpretive code of *Cultural Diversity Awareness and Appreciation* was gleaned from myriad references to the cultural and linguistic diversity of students and families. Participants talked about this in fluid and casual terms, almost as though they were discussing basic bodily functions like eating and sleeping. Being perpetually mindful of the cultural background and identity of their students is something that is deeply embedded in the consciousness of the participants. They easily and confidently referred to various types of cultural and racial diversity, appropriately sharing the race and/or ethnicity of students when giving illustrative examples. The largest number of references were to White people, then to African American/Black people, then to lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT) people, then to various demographic characteristics after that, including genders, religions, first language/languages spoken, and nationalities.

What is most notable about this theme is not the numerous references to the salience of cultural and racial differences, but the extent to which the participants defined diversity and differences more broadly. Aubrey stated it succinctly: "Schools should work to be culturally responsive by promoting cultural diversity, having high expectations for all students, displaying sensitivity to cultural needs and being aware that diversity goes beyond only looking language and race." Nearly all of the participants asserted an inclusive view of what comprises one's cultural identity. Kate summarized this nicely when she stated in her interview, "A multiculturally competent counselor is aware of different interventions to use with LGBT, female versus male students, students with different cultural, racial, ethnic or language backgrounds, and students with different ability and developmental levels."

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This sentiment leads to the next element of this theme, *Equitable Practice.* The participants nearly universally spoke of the importance of multicultural competence in the context of them knowing how to work with their students in culturally appropriate and responsive ways. A licensed professional counselor in addition to becoming a certified school counselor, Susan noted that "Mental health concerns manifest differently across cultures. What is considered pathological in one culture may be considered normal in others. Therefore, we must always be mindful of cultural considerations that influence the counseling process." Tammy shared how she wished that most school counselors in wealthy, mostly White, suburban school districts like that in which her children attend school, would have graduated from a program like the one at MUU to better support her culturally diverse students:

> I don't think the school counselor [at her children's school], I don't think she does anything. Because for me, for instance, they are the only black kids in ... You don't have to be obvious about it. Just knowing them, forming some kind of a relationship with them, so they don't feel like they just disappeared in the crowd.

Michael echoed this sentiment when wrote in his portfolio that it is imperative for school counselors to "appreciate every one of our students for who they are and try to meet them where they are" even if this involves "coming out of your comfort zone."

Very similar to the *Family Salience* theme in the interviews is the *Family Involvement* sub-theme. Because becoming familiar with the background of and involving families in school counseling practice is so integral to culturally responsive school counseling (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011; Sue & Sue, 2016), it was included in the broader *Cultural Responsiveness Imperative* theme. Examples of this not already shared above are numerous, but Haven states its importance plainly:

If student's feel that their counselor is trying to understand their cultural background it could bring out a positive relationship. Not only can positive relationships be established with students, but it can build positive relationships with the student's family.

In a very personal justification for why involving families in school counseling practice is so critical, Tammy shared how the presence of a school counselor could have helped her sister graduate from high school. Aubrey, Lynne, and Susan all asserted the importance of not making assumptions about and valuing the diversity of families, a sentiment embedded in the next sub-theme, *Inclusive Cultural Competence.*

Lynne likely best exemplified the idea that cultural responsiveness and competence transcend mere multicultural awareness and appreciation when she wrote in her interview:

> I understood diversity and prejudice and oppression to a degree, but then really identifying the barriers and then also combating them and trying to equal the playing field and then also understanding what that looks like and what that means to be equalizing and how that feels to the group in power and how they might respond to it. It's been very eye-opening, but really awesome.

In the focus group, Lynne added how surprising it was to her that she had not incorporated these broader themes of social justice, power, and oppression into her view of cultural awareness as she attended MUU as an undergraduate. Aubrey most colorfully stated how this inclusive view of cultural competence was reinforced in the MUU school counseling graduate program when she said that concepts like intersectionality and inclusivity have "been drilled into our heads as being an essential part of successful counseling."

The sub-themes of the *Cultural Responsiveness Imperative* theme align nicely with what the literature says about the elements of culturally responsive school counseling. According to Sue and Sue (2016), *cultural competence* in the school counseling profession is an index of three, distinct competencies: (a) awareness of one's own assumptions, values,

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and biases; (b) understanding the worldviews of culturally diverse clients; and, (c)

developing culturally appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. The first element of

this definition best aligns with the next overall theme, *Individual Bias Awareness and*

Mitigation, discussed next.

Individual Bias Awareness and Mitigation

This next theme perceived among all of the qualitative data sources includes two sub-

themes: (a) *Values and Bias Awareness,* and (b) *Values and Bias Mitigation.* Reifying one's

values and possibly corresponding biases about those who hold different values is imperative

for culturally responsive school counselors (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-

McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011). This practice was broadly reflected

in the participants' reflections in all three data sources. Michael gave a specific example of

how this is important when reflecting on his work with a teenage, Black male whose mother

used an anonymous sperm donor for his conception. His mother is White and the student was

exploring his Black identity, which was the reason he was referred to Michael for counseling.

About his preparation for and work with the student, Michael reflected about the importance

of him

> …being honest about myself and disclosing with Lucas that I, while striving to
> always learn about culture and continue my pluralistic growth, am not perfect and am
> a work in progress. In addition to having an honest conversation about my privilege, I
> would want to make sure that I am in the community attending events of culture and
> furthering my knowledge of various cultures and backgrounds.

Kate shared values she learned from her family that appear to have instilled an

unintentional bias that she shared a couple of times. She shared how surprised she was when

one student did not know how to play "I spy with my little eye" (shared above) and another

had never rolled dice before she taught him to do so. Rather than perceive this as an example of differing family customs and traditions, she expressed sympathy that these students had not before had these experiences.

The first step in ameliorating cultural biases is awareness of them that starts with contemplation of one's own values that lead to them (Sue & Sue, 2016). That assertion is the basis for the first interpretive code for the *Individual Bias Awareness and Mitigation* theme, but it is the latter part that is most challenging. How can a school counselor continually and with fidelity continue to be aware of and confront biases? The first suggestion from the participants was voiced by Susan when she said in her interview, "I think probably that counseling relationship is what I started to closely understand what people of different cultures dealt with on an, on an intimate basis." Because the participants spend so much time in their program learning about and understanding how to use counseling interventions that lead to a deeper understanding of their clients, this is an important first step of becoming aware of and mitigating biases: putting a face on their prejudice. Lynne is gaining experience with this in her teacher assistant role at an urban charter school. She talks about how her approach of allowing students to retain power and control is often at odds with the teachers who simply want her to use a firm, strict, and authoritative method that is more in line with their approach and that of many of the school's African American parents. Seeing these students crying, which is often the reason they are brought to her, sensitizes her to their perspectives. This promotion of the student's best interests exemplifies the next theme, *Advocacy.*

Advocacy

Another theme with a close cousin to two of the data sources is defined by Holcomb-McCoy (2007) "as action taken by counselors to facilitate the removal of external and institutional barriers for students' well-being" (p. 40). Holcomb-McCoy conceptualizes advocacy on a spectrum, with counselor-led actions on one end and student empowerment on the other end. The focus for the participants appears to be on the counselor end of that spectrum, a criticism that will be discussed later. The sub-themes for the *Advocacy* theme are *Barrier Awareness* and *Empathy-driven Interventions.* On the interpretive code of awareness of barriers for students from LCD and marginalized backgrounds, Tammy aptly summarizes a sentiment held by most of the participants:

> As a school counselor, it is important that I am mindful of diversity issues in school. There is hardly a school in America today which does not have a percentage of minority students. I am working in a population with a large percentage of ethnic minorities, I am aware of the feelings of the children from ethnic minorities, and also advocate for them within the school system. This involves making the staff more aware of the issues the minority students are facing, and helping them address their own biases.

Aubrey highlighted a common barrier for LCD students: low expectations (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Kuranz & Pérusse, 2012). She emphasized the importance of school counselors promoting high expectations for all students, while "displaying sensitivity to cultural needs and being aware that diversity goes beyond only looking language and race."

Similar to the previous theme where awareness of one's biased views is the start, but taking action to mitigate them is entirely another, developing plans to address identified barriers is a unique challenge. At the core of these interventions is empathy for their experience, something Haven affirmed: "Empathy to have a perspective for student's

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viewpoint is a part of advocacy because we only see how we can help and not the issues of

the student." As stated earlier, the participants' conceptualization of advocacy appears to be

on the adult-/counselor-led side of the spectrum put forth by Holcomb-McCoy (2007) that

seeks as an ideal what she calls "student empowerment." Lynne offers one counter-example

to this when she shared the following in the focus group:

> I think, also, teaching students, giving them those tools and that power back to them.
> What you can do, because yes, I can try to keep you protected in this little bubble, but
> when you walk out those doors, it's a very different bubble you live in. You're going
> to need these tools, sadly, probably your whole entire life.

The most common conceptualization of what advocacy means in a school counseling

context, corroborated in one or another by all of the participants, was voiced by Michael in

the introduction to this section of his portfolio:

> Being an advocate can take on many forms, but ultimately it means that you are going
> to bat for students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders when their voices wouldn't
> normally be heard. This could mean that you need to explain to a teacher that a
> student's behavior is a result of a culture norm that the teacher may not understand
> about a student.

The participants did assert the need for empathy-driven interventions that advocate the

position of LCD students in a variety of ways, including in assessment methods, basic needs,

as well as classroom support. This comprehensive approach is embedded in the final theme.

Critical Practice

Critical Practice is the final theme identified after my analysis of the qualitative data

sources. Comprised of the sub-themes of *Reflective Practice* and *Growth Orientation,* this

theme is really a compilation and synthesis of all of them to this point. As discussed above,

reflection is viewed as a critical element of culturally responsive school counseling (Hipolito-

Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011) and

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in the counseling field in general (Sue & Sue, 2016). This imperative was reflected by all the participants throughout the data sources. There are numerous examples of the participants emphasizing the importance of taking time to reflect, whether it be on one's cultural identity, values, biases, and on one's practice. Examples of these manifestations of reflection have already been shared.

What I was more interested in are examples participants shared that illustrated their ability to critically examine any one of those aforementioned domains and recognize the impact on one's thinking or even actually make a change to their practice. For example, Michael shared that he somewhat eschews allegiance to a particular religious tradition based on his wife's negative experiences with them. Tammy shared that, despite her criticisms of how Nigerian adults view children, she found herself replicating those patterns with her own children. Kate shared that what she learned in the MUU school counseling graduate program prompted her to examine the demographics of students referred to the school's intervention team. Aubrey shared the critical lens she used to examine her school's otherwise fairly positive climate survey data. Lynne reflected on a teacher whom she believes is "burned out" and not serving well the needs of a student with multiple disabilities and her desire to do something about it. These are examples of authentically critical practice in that they involve what is absent, as well as conceptions of power (Cannella, 2015; Denzin, 2016; LeCompte, 1995).

Despite the favorable portrait of the MUU school counseling graduate program I believe these data portray, the participants were all humble about what they do *not* know and how much they have left to learn about cultural competence. The idea that school counselors

must never make assumptions and always ask questions is a great skill to ensure this perpetual humility. Haven stated in her portfolio that "school counselors must seek guidance constantly in knowing students' cultural backgrounds that students can help them learn by asking questions," and more examples of this inquisitive approach are included above. Susan stated in both her interview and in the focus group that she does not believe that one can ever truly be culturally competent, as included in longer form above. Kate echoed this sentiment when she introduced the Cultural Competence section of her portfolio:

> Cultural competence is not something counselors achieve and can check off their "graduation to-do list." Cultural competence is an on-going journey throughout the span of a counselor's professional career.

The *Critical Practice* theme represents a compilation of all the previous ones, a discovery I will discuss further in the Conclusion. A synthesis of these themes is also seen when answering the research questions.

Answering the Research Questions

The research questions for the study are listed below:

1) What attitudes and beliefs about culturally responsive school counseling are held by students in the school counseling program?

    a) What changes do they report about their attitudes and beliefs as a result of their experiences with the school counseling preparation program?

    b) What culturally responsive practices do they plan to use in their work as school counselors?

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2) What are the perceptions of graduate students of the culturally responsive training in the school counselor education program and their preparedness for working with diverse clients in their practicum and internship settings?

    a) To what extent would graduate students say what they have learned about culturally responsive school counseling has been integrated throughout the program?

    b) What components of the culturally responsive training in their school counselor education programs are vital for working with diverse clients?

Data that serve as responses to each question will be shared below.

Research Question 1: Attitudes and Beliefs of Culturally Responsive School Counselors

The first question pertains to the unit of analysis for this study: the attitudes and beliefs held by school counselors, particularly about culturally responsive school counseling. The sub-questions pertain to how those attitudes and beliefs were changed, if at all, by the school counseling graduate program and what practices do they then wish to carry with them into their school counseling jobs. First, what are the attitudes and beliefs of the participants endemic among the data sources regarding culturally responsive school counseling?

Beliefs Beget Attitudes. Because the accumulation of beliefs are thought to comprise attitudes (Fishbein, 1963), this results summary will begin with beliefs. Beliefs are defined for this study as mentally held premises about the world that are thought to be true. Distinct but related to knowledge, beliefs are not objectively verifiable facts as is knowledge, but they are subjective probabilities that a given object possesses a certain attribute that are informed by observations, information gleaned from sources with a range of credibility to and intimacy

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with the subject, and inferences made from both (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). There are four

beliefs that pervade the data collected from participants: (a) All children deserve and are able

to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment; (b) Family is formatively

significant; (c) The world is fundamentally unjust; and, (d) Children are the experts of their

experiences. Evidence of some of the most representative experiences and quotes from each

participant across the qualitative data sources for each belief is provided in Table 5 below.

For each artifact, a source is identified, and the key is displayed below the table.

Table 5

Evidence of Belief Statements

All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.	**Family is formatively significant.**	**The world is fundamentally unjust.**	**Children are the experts of their own experiences.**
Aubrey			
(Exp) Working with terminally ill children after college graduation in urban areas.	*(Port)* "As school counselors, we will meet… families…from all walks of life, with varying backgrounds and cultures and it is our job to be prepared to meet each of them at their level and allow to feel safe, welcomed and supported	*(Int)* "I guess I'd never understood or grasped that concept of like how it is like systematically different things are so against some cultures and some races and some people that like there's all kinds of things that are barriers to them and I don't think I'd ever grasped that concept until [MUU]."	*(FG)* "I know sometimes with kids it's hard to get them to get at what you're getting at, unless you just flat out ask them."
Haven			

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All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.	Family is formatively significant.	The world is fundamentally unjust.	Children are the experts of their own experiences.
(Exp) Not being able to pass the certification exam to become a certified teacher	*(Int)* "I would have to say it was the work experiences; definitely working in the group homes, seeing kids that don't have the full support and voice to further better themselves."	*(Port, when discussing an article on the school-to-prison pipeline)* "This information makes me think about my nephews and future sons to be aware about the injustice in the school systems."	*(FG)* "I'm learning, I'm in your world. You tell me your story, your book."

Kate

(Exp) Providing extraordinary attention to a kid with behavior challenges in the after-school program in which she worked during high school.	*(Int)* "In my conversations with kids, and it's been very eye-opening that not everybody's family is super supportive….And I'm like, "Oh my God."	*(FG)* "There is a boy in the class who was from Syria. And so…little comments that he would make…like, 'I don't know why everybody's complaining, life is so good here.' And it's that perspective, that ability to open those other kids' eyes. Like, 'Why are you complaining?'"	*(Port)* "Most of the time I am either beginning the conversation, or engaging in the conversation from the opposite side as my parents, and slowly but surely starting to make them understand the imbalance between our lives and gay, transgender, black, or poor people."

Lynne

(Port) "…imagine an environment where all students are free to develop alongside their culture without harmful stereotypes or attitudes."	*(FG)* "…the power of positivity, I grew up in a home with a single mother for 10 years, and there were several times where we probably should have gotten DFS called on us…and I thought my childhood	*(Exp)* Realizing all can be prejudiced, including her parents who would not allow her to date an African American guy in high school.	*(Int)* Talked about addressing power and control issues at her site, moving away from an authoritative to a more supportive behavior management model,

All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.	Family is formatively significant.	The world is fundamentally unjust.	Children are the experts of their own experiences.
	was the best. I had no idea, because my mom spoke so much positivity and affirmations to me and my sister, that we thought we were living the life."		to empower students.

Michael

All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.	Family is formatively significant.	The world is fundamentally unjust.	Children are the experts of their own experiences.
(Int) "Yeah, I just always kind of grew up knowing you treat people the way you want to be treated and you're going to get that in return. That's always kind of been my philosophy…"	*(Port)* "I distinctly remember this one time growing up where one of my cousins asked me if I ever beat up any of the Black kids in my class. This blew me away, because it have never crossed my mind to even do that."	*(FG)* "I think some people just get dealt a shitty hand, and it has nothing to do with what they deserve. People can't help the hand they're dealt in life. Some people start at the top, and some people start at the bottom, and no one deserves to be in any certain place."	*(Exp)* A White, heterosexual, cis-gender male shared his feelings of inadequacy as a bigger, awkward child and longing to be a better athlete.

Susan

All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.	Family is formatively significant.	The world is fundamentally unjust.	Children are the experts of their own experiences.
(Exp) Her dad, grandfather, and best friend died within 9 months of each other while in middle school, her best friend by suicide.	*(Port)* "I believe that if children feel loved by their parents, they have a better chance of healthy adjustment despite the dynamic of their family. It is a beautiful thing that families can be defined in more than one way now. It does not have to be a mother, a father."	*(FG)* "…[it] bothers me when I hear it, is when people say, "I'm not privileged. I've worked hard for everything I have." I get that, but at the same time, you're automatically at an advantage because of certain characteristics that	*(Port)* "By understanding that each person's developmental journey is their own, I would consider differences as a value."

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All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.	Family is formatively significant.	The world is fundamentally unjust.	Children are the experts of their own experiences.
		other people do not have."	
Tammy			
(Port) "We are all born into different cultures and religions and although we notice differences, at the core we all share the same basic need for love and acceptance and as school counselors it is important that we always remember that we are uniquely placed to be the source of that love and acceptance in the school and…we can engage the rest of the school community in that common goal to create an atmosphere of belonging, love, acceptance and serenity."	*(Exp)* She unconsciously adopted the disregard and disrespect for children that she absorbed from her family that caught herself applying to her own children.	*(Int)* "So when I think back growing up, I recognized that [her sister] had that disadvantage and she never really believed in herself. And because of that, she never actually did finish high school. She never believed in herself.	*(FG)* "[the school counselor's] role is to help teachers to see that the perspectives of [LCD] kids are important…looking at my kids, for instance, I feel like they bring something different. They bring a whole different experience, that if they are encouraged to share, will be something additional…their class will learn about."

Key: Exp = experience(s) the participant had that contributed to this belief; *Int* = quote from the interview; *Port* = text from the portfolio; *FG* = quote from the focus group

These beliefs appear to corroborate most of what is found in the literature about important premises for culturally responsive, socially just, and racially equitable practices in education. Evidence in the literature for each belief are provided below.

All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful

environment. Too often, a deficit-based approach is used when working with students from

LCD backgrounds. Valencia (1997) defines deficit thinking as "1) a mind-set molded by the

fusion of ideology and science; 2) a dynamic form of social thought allegedly accounting for

between-group behaviors; and, 3) an actual way of thinking to combat problems (for

example, imputational; top-down approach; paternalistic)" (p. xi). When children learn in an

asset-based learning environment, replete with high expectations and compensatory supports,

that views their cultural and linguistic backgrounds as capital rather than liabilities, all

children can learn at the same level (Valencia, 2015; Yosso, 2005).

    Family is formatively significant. Nieto (2013) writes about the socio-political

factors that influence education and categorizes them as societal barriers, deleterious and

inequitable school conditions, and ideological barriers. Children are not born in a vacuum, so

the societal conditions that oppress certain groups of people from historical injustices such as

slavery, forced migration, discriminatory mortgage lending practices, mass incarceration,

ruinous drug policies and insidious law enforcement practices all profoundly impact children.

School counselors must build bridges between the school and students' home lives, both to

understand the circumstances in which a child is raised but also, and most importantly, to

provide adequate supports to ameliorate any disadvantages (Aydm et al., 2012; Holcomb-

McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011).

    The world is fundamentally unjust. The idea that the world is fundamentally just and

fair, what Lipkus (1991) dubbed "Belief in a Just World" (BJW), has been found to be a

significant predictor of whether school counselors adopt social justice practices (Parikh et al.,

2011). Those who adopt this view tend to not endorse social justice practices and those who are aware of injustices and inequities in the world and regard the world as fundamentally unfair are more likely to adopt them. This is significant because more middle class people tend to endorse the BJW perspective (Van Soest, 1996), and a plurality of school counselors come from middle class backgrounds (Herr & Erford, 2011). This group of participants reacted fairly resolutely when this prompt was directly given to them in the focus group: "In general, people get what they deserve and deserve what they get." While there was a little equivocation on this matter (to be discussed more in Chapter 5), the group mostly rejected this assertion.

It is evident from the data that this view developed over time for a majority of the participants. This will be discussed later in response to the research question about how the attitudes and beliefs of the participants changed as a result of their school counseling graduation program, but it is worth noting here that, while this belief is significant when it comes to culturally responsive practices, it is something that can be taught and not necessarily a belief with which a future school counselor must be innately imbued (Parikh et al., 2011).

Children are the experts of their experiences. A leading theorist on culturally relevant teaching practices, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2013) includes as one the most important elements therein building a robust relationship with students. About building this strong relationship with students, she writes that doing so "honors the students' sense of humanity and dignity" and "[s]elf-worth and self-concept is promoted in a very basic way, by acknowledging the individual's worthiness to be a part of a supportive and loving group" (p.

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82). To make assumptions about and impose one's own views about a student's identity fundamentally violates these principles, therefore corroborating the belief among the participants that they should be experts on themselves.

This belief is further bolstered by Haberman's (2010) call to replace what he calls the "pedagogy of poverty" – rote memorization, worksheets, bland and uninteresting assignments requiring mere recall – with a more rigorous and engaging pedagogy typically reserved for more academically advanced – and disproportionately White and middle class – students. Haberman contends this starts with the attitudes and beliefs of teachers, that their students from LCD and marginalized backgrounds are capable of higher-level work. This leads to the next discussion, how these beliefs form relevant participant attitudes.

Attitudes. The definition of attitudes used for this study is a set of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts that characterize one's disposition or judgement toward a given object. As discussed above, beliefs are thought to significantly influence attitudes (Fishbein, 1963), so those attitudes most relevant to the identified beliefs were chosen to be highlighted here. Because attitudes are a function of the object to which one's disposition or judgement is directed (Fishbein &Ajzen, 2010; Phillipp, 2007), it is important to isolate the most common referents evident in the data. There are three themes for these "objects" or "referents" perceived from the qualitative data sources: (a) *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students;* (b) *Culturally Competent Practices;* and, (c) *Efficacy of School Counseling.* These referents were the most commonly discussed objects of the thoughts, emotions, feelings, behaviors, and beliefs of the participants, all of the "ingredients" of attitudes (Di Martino, 2016; Fishbein &Ajzen, 2010; Phillipp, 2007). Overall, favorable attitudes were found

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toward these referents and data from all of the sources are summarized in Table 6 below to

corroborate these findings.

Table 6

Selected Attitudes Held by Participants and Corroborating Evidence

Data Source	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students	Culturally Competent Practices	Efficacy of School Counseling
Survey (MCCTS-R)	All participants had mean scores on each Factor in the "Somewhat competent (more training needed) range. Mean scores on the Multicultural Terminology and Multicultural Awareness Factors were all in the "Competent (Able to perform competently)" range.		
Interviews	*Aubrey:* "...it makes you really care about diversity and to see kids in a different light beyond just like a kid…but like [kids at her middle school] African American kids and we have kids like from truly Africa and like what can we do to make them feel at home here and feel like they belong and have a voice?"	*Michael:* "I just want to make sure I'm saying the right thing and I'm being respectful…it is a sensitive subject… especially for me...I am a white male who hasn't really seen a lot of oppression…So it's like sometimes I almost feel like I have to fight extra hard to make sure my clients and students understand that I'm being as open minded as I can be."	*Aubrey*: [The program coordinator] has that passion and I think she instills that in every person that walks through that school counseling program, walks out with that drive of like, every kid matters. And I'm going to make sure every kid, no matter what background they are, can reach their goals, whether whatever that goal be."
Documents (Portfolios)	*Kate:* "I learned that no matter if someone is straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or anything else everyone has a purpose and	*Susan:* "Self-exploration is necessary regarding social justice issues just as it is cultural issues. Both of these topics require counselor	*Tammy*: "[School counselors can] change beliefs and attitudes about student success and abilities, systemic

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Data Source	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students	Culturally Competent Practices	Efficacy of School Counseling
	everyone has different talents."	attention, exploration and self-monitoring."	interventions against injustice towards individual students, educating legislators, schools board members, parents, teachers and administrators about the school counseling program or in advocating for social action in the wider context of the community."
Focus Group	*Tammy:* "To me... it's like they live in two worlds, whereas, the [non-CLD students] only know one. So, they move from one world into the other, and if they're encouraged to share that, that's a lot. They have a lot that they can give. They just need the encouragement to share it.	*Haven*: "…going into the community of where our students live, and just as a staff…walk around…the community and just see where my kids live, what do they have to go through, where are they going to the stores, what resources are around them? [MUU] classes kind of mentioned that, know your students' community, know where they're coming from.	*Lynne:* "I had never really heard even the term social justice until [the graduate program and its coordinator]…really showed you, 'This is what's happening, and this is how we can effect change.'"

Favorable attitudes toward LCD students and culturally competent practices are supported in the literature as important for meaningfully addressing gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment. This is evident in research about how important it is to approach culturally responsive practices from an asset-based rather than a deficit-based approach

(Valencia, 2015), as well as regarding LCD students as bringing important "cultural capital" to schools (Yosso, 2005). It is also critical that practitioners feel efficacious when it comes to mitigating these gaps and that incremental strides are acknowledged and celebrated (Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Nieto, 2013).

The vehicle chosen by the MUU graduate program for school counselors to contribute to the task of closing gaps in achievement, opportunity, and attainment is the comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP; MUU, 2013). When implemented with fidelity, CSCP demonstrate the capacity to positively influence student outcomes (Carey et al., 2012a, 2012b; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Whiston & Quinby, 2009; Whiston et al., 2011; Wilkerson et al., 2013). School counselors play a unique role in advocating for and supporting LCD students and those from marginalized backgrounds, as well (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lee, 1995; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Parikh et al., 2011; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). That the participants displayed favorable attitudes toward the efficacy of school counseling is also relevant. Unfortunately, this is mitigated by the fact that LCD and lower incomes are disproportionately unlikely to have access to comprehensive school counseling programs (Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009; Johnson, Rochkind, Ott, & DuPont, 2010; McDonough, 2005). Next, how the graduate program changed the participants' attitudes and beliefs about culturally responsive school counseling will be discussed.

Research Question 1a: What changes do the participants report about their attitudes and beliefs as a result of their experiences with the school counseling preparation program?

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The attitudes and beliefs with which the participants entered the MUU school counseling graduate program changed in some important ways. These changes are summarized in the following themes: (a) *Cultural Identity and Biases Awareness,* and, (b) *Social Justice Lens.* First, it is evident that the program prompted the participants to examine their own cultural identities and become aware and their values and corresponding biases.

Most of the participants talked in one way or another about the importance of reflecting on one's cultural identity and that the MUU school counseling program required them to do so. Haven talked extensively about how important it was for her to identify just how important her religious faith is to her, but just how prone to discrediting conflicting religious beliefs she also was prior to the program. After the personal reflections and group discussions that were part of the program, she noted that she can now "identity why [she does] not like talking about religion or spirituality with others" and is now more "open to change and growth because [she does] not want to miss the chance for others to be honest with [her]." She continues:

> If people can tell that I am uncomfortable with change and growth then I believe it could be a barrier for people discussing their own truths with me. For instance, if a person can see that I am not open to changing and growth about religion, then they might not want to discuss it with me.

Tammy shared that she is now more conscious of why it is inappropriate to ask a children to translate for their parents; the program taught her the power dynamic this creates that disrespects and undermines the parents.

Aubrey reflected that she can sometimes be triggered by intense discussions about fathers since she did not grow up with hers in her life. She stated in her interview that the MUU school counseling graduate program encourages "you from the get go to evaluate your

biases and your behaviors and why do you have those biases and how do those impact your counseling relationship and how you view certain kids or certain parents." Tammy reflected a great deal about how the program helped her become aware of her internalized homophobia and transphobia and Michael stated that he was prompted to reflect a great deal on his White, cis-male, heterosexual privilege. The reflection on one's cultural identity and biases is an important aspect of culturally responsive school counseling (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Liu, Pickett, & Ivey, 2007; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011).

This leads to the next theme, the deepening of the participants' understanding of cultural competence. It is one thing to recognize differences among students the participants serve in their practicum and internship sites and to be comfortable talking about those differences. It is entirely another to then begin to see disparities in how those students are treated by their colleagues, both individually and groups. Another change to the attitudes and beliefs of the participants as a result of their school counseling graduate program is the installation of an awareness of social justice in their approaches. While a drive to mitigate these social injustices is something they are still working on in their fairly nascent school counseling practice (to be discussed more in Chapter 5), the first step of awareness of the problem is evident.

Susan pointed out that it is often through self-examination that one's eyes are opened to inequities that exist around you. She wrote in her portfolio, "Self-exploration is necessary regarding social justice issues just as it is cultural issues. Both of these topics require counselor attention, exploration and self-monitoring." Lynne stated in her interview how the program not only helped expand her definition of diversity, but also made her aware of

systems in place to advantage some and disadvantage others: "I think moving just beyond that and going and talking about gender and talking about class because class has a lot to do with things that are different systematic barriers." Instilling this drive to seek social justice through school counseling practice is something that is both very important for school counseling graduate programs but also sorely lacking in them (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Smith & Geroski, 2014). Just specific practices the participants learned from the program that will aid them in this endeavor is the topic of the next research question.

Research Question 1b: What culturally responsive practices do they plan to use in their work as school counselors?

There are many specific strategies that the participants mentioned as ones they learned in the program that will aid them in their culturally responsive school counseling practice. These include implementing restorative justice practices, utilizing respectful questioning skills, employing a student-centered approach, and using various methods for getting to know students and their families. What unified all of them is the orientation they plan to adopt as a school counselor, *School Counselor as Advocate.* This is the only theme for this research question as the data are saturated with references to advocacy. This includes both advocacy for individual as well as for groups of students.

Haven states it very plainly when she wrote in her portfolio, I think it is important for school counselors to advocate for students who are hard to handle in the classroom because I believe a label sticks with them throughout school." Tammy reinforced this point by talking about how school counselors are trained to approach problem behaviors more holistically

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than teachers and provided an example in which she used meditation techniques with a very hyperactive student who is now better able to calm himself down. In addition, advocating for LCD students was resoundingly regarded as important, summarized by Michael below:

Some of your student body will be in the minority and feel that they do not have a voice in the school or even their own community. It is up to us to speak for those who feel they cannot speak for themselves.

This advocacy often requires school counselors to play a leadership role in the school, especially when advocating for groups of students. Susan stated that, "School counselors take on [a leadership] role…by identifying student needs and helping to address barriers to success." Kate talked about her role on the Problem-Solving Team to which students with extraordinary needs are referred and the importance of addressing racial and other disproportionalities of those referrals. While this was not an element of the school counseling program that was addressed as much as I thought it should be (to be discussed more in Chapter 5), it was present in a minority of data collected.

While advocacy is seen as an important element of culturally responsive school counselor competencies (ASCA, 2012b) and is even an ethical responsibility for school counselors (ASCA, 2016), the ideal manifestation of this is to empower students to confront barriers on their own (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Lewis et al., 2003). As discussed above and will be discussed more in Chapter 5, the data collected from this study indicated a nascent view of advocacy, one that positions the adult/counselor as the primary driver for addressing barriers rather than

empowering students to do so themselves. This is one of the areas in which participants may need additional training, the research question to be discussed next.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of graduate students of the culturally responsive training in the school counselor education program and their preparedness for working with diverse clients in their practicum and internship settings?

Students in the MUU school counseling graduate program are required to complete at least one of their four combined semesters of practicum and internship in an urban setting (MUU, 2018c). Four of the seven participants were in an urban setting for their practicum or internship at the time of the study. Overall, the participants perceived favorably the culturally responsive training they received in the graduate program and felt prepared to work with students from LCD backgrounds. Tammy stated that she wishes the counselors in her children's wealthy, suburban school district graduated from a program like the one at MUU so they would be more motivated to provide equitable support for her children who are among only a handful of other children of color at their schools.

There is one stark exception to this praise, and that is a sentiment held by most of the participants that the program had coursework that tended to overlook what school counselors could expect in their practice in favor of what those seeking mental health and couples and family counseling licensure will experience. This was particularly the case for their Methods of Counseling class that included students pursuing licensure in mental health, couples and family, along with certification in school counseling. In the focus group, Aubrey hesitantly referred to the school counseling students as a "minority status," although she quickly corrected herself understanding that term has graver implications. But Kate jumped in and

said, "'Okay, well I want to ask the question how does this apply to school counseling?' But all of the rest of the class are going to be like, 'Why? Waste of my time.'" Lynne said that she sometimes got resentful of students in mental health and couples/family tracks whom professors in those heterogeneous classes seemed to favor. Even Susan, who graduated from the MUU counseling program with a Master's degree in the mental health track and who is now returning to that program pursuing an Educational Specialist degree in the school counseling track agreed that the examples used in the Methods course should more often include school counseling situations.

With regard to what the participants learned that prepared them specifically to work with diverse clients, they were mostly favorable, as well. With the exceptions mentioned above about specific client situations in their Methods courses not including enough children and adolescent and school-based examples, they felt fairly well-prepared in this realm. Lynne summarized a sentiment shared by a few participants about how the "counseling micro-skills" are helpful in working with all students, but especially those with whose backgrounds one is unfamiliar. These "micro-skills" include reflection of meaning ("It sounds like you are trying to say that…") and reflection of feeling ("Are you saying that incident made you really angry?), along with questions to introduce an idea to provoke deeper reflection ("I wonder if that situation was hard for you because of your previous experience with…"). Lynne and Kate both expressed a desire to have had more intensive training in specific techniques, such as art and play therapy. What they did learn about culturally responsive practices and working with diverse clients, however, appeared to have been fairly well-integrated throughout the entire school counseling graduate program.

Research Questions 2a: To what extent would graduate students say what they have learned about culturally responsive school counseling has been integrated throughout the program?

Tammy summarized in her interview a sentiment held by all of the participants:

And even from the beginning, even Introduction to Professional Counseling as well, that was like my first class. Even in that class we talked about diversity, and she even brought in a counselor who is gay to talk about how to help students who maybe be questioning and things like that. So yeah, I think in every class at least it was mentioned at some point.

The participants generally felt that the culturally responsive elements were at least mentioned in all of their coursework and these elements were addressed in some form or another in their field placements (practicum and internship). The focus appeared to be on broadly applicable principles, one that can be used at a variety of levels (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school) and in a variety of settings (e.g., urban, suburban, exurban, rural schools). Lynne summarized this when she said in her interview, "It just seems that a lot, in general, all of the courses have emphasized principles that are supposed to teach but also a flexibility in how it might look given different cultural backgrounds." Throughout the program, as well, participants gained valuable knowledge and skills that will assist them in working with diverse clients.

Research Question 2b: What components of the culturally responsive training in their school counselor education programs are vital for working with diverse clients?

Responses for this question fell into three themes: (a) *Advocacy,* (b) *Reflective Practice;* and, (c) *Growth Mindset.* For the *Advocacy* theme, nearly all of the participants

mentioned the unique role that school counselors play in schools, a proposition described aptly by Tammy:

> Because everybody else in the school say ... let's say the counselors weren't there. Everybody else in the school has ... their priority something else teaching or managing the place or stuff like that. The counselor is the only person that is there to think about your well-being.

Whether it is "going to bat" for students and possibly explaining to a teacher the cultural antecedents to behavior they perceive as aberrant (shared by Michael), or advocating for professional development for teachers to help them become aware of their biases (posited by Aubrey, Kate, Susan, and Lynne), the participants all endorsed the important advocacy role they learned from the program they plan to apply to their school counseling practice.

The demands of the school counselor job are already evident to the participants. Haven and Kate both expressed strong regrets about how long it can sometimes take for them to see students who request assistance from them. Aubrey lamented in the focus group that she does not get to know her "middle kids that sometimes maybe even need the most love." Taking time to reflect on how school counselors spend their time is a very important way to assure full implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012a). Lynne takes time once a week to reflect on how she spent her time in the past week, what aspects she may have neglected, then plans for how to address those deficits in the coming week. Susan wrote in her portfolio that "counselors must self-reflect in an authentic way to provide equitable counseling to students of various backgrounds."

This conception of reflection demonstrates another emerging understanding of the importance of self-reflection that is more broadly defined in the literature as the reifying of a critical consciousness, both for students to become aware of injustices and systemic

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oppression of which they are possibly victims and/or perpetrators (Freire, 1989; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007), as well as for school counselors and what role they may be playing perpetuating these inequities and systems that oppress some and privilege others (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Singh et al., 2010). This will also be discussed more in Chapter 5.

Finally, a theme identified among all the data sources and participants that pertains to the components of the graduate program the participants plan to use with their diverse clients is a *Growth Mindset,* both for their conceptualization of their culturally competent practice as well as for students' own learning. Discussed in more detail above when summarizing themes from the focus group, none of the participants view themselves as "culturally competent." They acknowledge that this is a life-long process that has just begun with their school counseling graduate program. Michael wrote in his portfolio that the program is "just the start of [his] culturally competent education" and that school counselors must "always be learning about the population and the changes that it brings." With the inevitable changes in population that schools will continually undergo, this is indeed a perpetual responsibility.

The same is true for the participants' views of student growth and potential. When I asked about whether people get what they deserve and deserve what they get in the focus group, Lynne was the first to respond:

> That's just such a fixed mentality. I think if we don't have any ability to change what we get, then it's a really depressing thought, and how are we going to help people change, and if they need to change, or if the systems around them need to change?

During this portion of the focus group, Tammy mentioned her sister again and how she believes she had more potential than her parents gave her credit for. With the proper

encouragement, she believes her sister could have been as successful as she is. In response to some ambivalence on the part of some participants on this question of fairness (to be discussed more in Chapter 5), Aubrey tentatively but firmly interjected:

> But, to think of…all the things they can't control working against [kids and people from marginalized backgrounds]…to say they 'get what they deserve'…that goes back to the whole, 'Pull yourself up by your boot straps'…when, if you actually break it down, there's so many things working against them…And so, I think when you think of, especially kids…or anyone that faces oppression...I just can't wrap my head around of being like, 'Yeah, they get what they deserve.' I tried, and to just give up on them, when I think of all the things fighting against them.

Aubrey's treatise above comes the closest to what the literature says about what beliefs should be held by educators who can and will make the biggest different in the lives of LCD students and those from marginalized backgrounds: all students deserve an equitable education (Gay, 2010; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Nieto, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results from my heuristic, critical, qualitative study that sought to explore attitudes and beliefs of school counseling graduate students about culturally responsive school counseling. First, results from the survey instrument used for the study, the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R) were shared. Then, themes from each qualitative data source – interviews of each participant, a document review of their capstone portfolios, and a focus group with all the participants – were elucidated. After that, themes from all the data sources were reported, with data that answered the research questions presented at the end of the chapter.

As I concluded the data analysis process, I was struck by the realization that the final theme of the qualitative sources, *Critical Practice,* is really a compilation of all of the

previous ones. It made me curious about how the themes and sub-themes would appear in a word cloud, a visual representation of the frequency of various terms. The data synthesis represents a recursive process of data analysis, refinement of themes, and the final step in the heuristic data analysis process put forth by Moustakas (1990), creative synthesis. The word cloud is displayed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Theme Word Cloud

This visual representation of the themes found throughout the data sources illustrates where the program is in its adoption of a more pluralistic and transformative approach. McLaren and Ryoo (2012) advocate for what they call critical multiculturalism, the combination of multicultural education and critical theory that emphasizes the need "to transform the very social, cultural, and institutional relations that create meaning with an explicit political agenda" (p. 497). In Chapter 5, what the data say about where the program is on its way to a critical multicultural level will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of this heuristic, critical, qualitative study was to explore the attitudes and beliefs of school counseling graduate students to discover what they learned from their graduate program about culturally responsive school counseling (CRSC), school counseling to address the achievement and opportunity gaps for linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students. My interest in the study began with Denzin's (2016) call in mind for critical qualitative research to transcend a mere interpretation of the world and foreground an intention to change it. While the extent to which this study will change the world is debatable, its intent was to play a small part in doing so for linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students and students from marginalized backgrounds.

Throughout the study, I found myself thinking about the experiences and words of the participants, mulling what they said in my head, jotting down notes, returning to the recordings and transcripts, and nearly obsessing over the data collected. While I did not fully understand it from the start, I believe I engaged in elements of the heuristic inquiry process that Moustakas (2015) asserted facilitates "self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery," a recognition of "whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness—to receive it, accept it, support it, and dwell inside it" (p. 278). After the data analysis process the connection that Moustakas posited exists "between what is out there (in its appearance and reality) and what is within me (in reflective thought, feeling, and awareness)" (p. 278) was reified. I heard and saw myself and my own experiences in what the participants shared about working with LCD students and those from marginalized backgrounds and my conclusions

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reflect my "intuition, imagination, and personal knowledge of the meanings and essences of the experiences" (p. 283).

Pragmatic inquiry was an appropriate vehicle for this research, as well. Because some a priori evidence exists in the literature about CRSC but the phenomenon is not yet thoroughly grounded, this was an appropriate methodological choice (Sandelowski, 2000). Further, my partial understanding and familiarity with the phenomenon made this an appropriate choice (Percy et al., 2015), along with the fact I am a novice researcher (Kennedy, 2016). Because pragmatic inquiry afforded me the flexibility to explore this phenomenon organically and emergently and because "the focus of the study is on understanding an experience or an event" (Caelli et al, 2003, p. 4), this method was advantageous.

This chapter will summarize the major findings of the study, discuss implications for school counselors and school counselor educators, provide recommendations based on the results, and offer suggestions for future research. First, the major findings for the study will be elucidated.

Primary Findings

Chapter 4 summarized the findings from this study. There were four themes found among all of the qualitative data sources: (a) *Cultural Responsiveness Imperative,* (b) *Individual Bias Awareness and Mitigation,* (c) *Advocacy,* and (c) *Critical Practice.* Four beliefs were prevalent in the participants' data: (a) All children deserve and are able to learn in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment; (b) Family is formatively significant; (c) The world is fundamentally unjust; and, (d) Children are the experts of their experiences.

Three subjects, drawn from these themes, tell the story of the findings: The importance of beliefs and attitudes in CRSC, the role school counselors play as advocates for LCD students, and the imperative of CRSC practices. In the next section, these major findings are discussed along with the implications for school counselors and the educators responsible for their graduate training. First, beliefs and attitudes are discussed, which were the units of analyses for the study. In other words, beliefs and attitudes in culturally responsive school counseling formed the core foundation of my inquiry and I wanted to have something to say about these at the end of the study (Patton (2015). They played a significant role in the participants' decisions to advocate for LCD students and the imperative of CRSC practices.

Beliefs and Attitudes Matter

Deconstructing data collected in this study and constructing into themes made identifying salient beliefs and attitudes a feasible task. Seeing the themes in the word cloud presented in Chapter 4 (Figure 3) made it even clearer what attitudes and beliefs the participants held in order to maintain their interest in and passion for CRSC. And as Kuranz and Pérusse (2012) asserted, "the school counselor's beliefs are the engine powering the school counseling program" (p. 32). Just as important to the beliefs are the attitudes that school counselors hold toward the work of addressing bias and barriers for LCD students and students from marginalized backgrounds. According to Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010)'s reasoned action approach, one's beliefs, combined with one's attitude toward a given behavior, often lead to changes in behavior. Without both a belief in the importance and urgency of this work, combined with efficacious attitudes that school counselors can effect

change, policymakers, educators, and other relevant stakeholders cannot expect modifications in behaviors that perpetuate gaps in achievement for LCD students.

This study found that the building blocks of this model for transformation are present. Apparent in the data is that the participants *believe* this work is important. As a few of the participants pointed out, most people do not enter a profession like counseling without a base level of empathy and compassion for others. Whether they possess the attitude that school counselors can effect this change is less clear. They certainly endorse the importance of the work and the unique role school counselors can play in bringing about changes to inequitable and biased practices in schools; however, the participants appeared ambivalent about to what extent school counselors can make a meaningful impact on the problem.

For example, when I asked in the focus group whether schools can play a meaningful role in addressing systemic barriers that lead to gaps in achievement for LCD students, the participants were quick to mention impediments to that work. One participant mentioned funding disparities in higher needs schools, another mentioned the lack of culturally relevant teacher training, and yet another told the story of a burned out special education teacher who lacks optimism about helping one of her students make progress. Apparent from the participants' perspectives is they understand the importance of culturally responsive schools, but they may need some more concrete examples of the role school counselors can and have played in creating them. More on this will be discussed in Recommendations following the Primary Findings.

This major finding has a number of implications for school counselor educators. There is a paucity of evidence in the literature about attitudes and beliefs of school

counsels and how they impact their practice (Parikh et al., 2011). This study bolsters what little exists in the literature about the importance of attitudes and beliefs amenable to LCD students and students from marginalized background if school counselors wish to meaningfully address the achievement and opportunity gaps. Whether it is the connection of school counselor beliefs to their actions (Grimmett & Paisely, 2008), the insidious effects of negative beliefs on the practice of school counselors, especially when working with students from backgrounds different from them (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Sue & Sue, 2016), along with the necessity of specific beliefs that predispose school counselors to social justice (Parikh et al., 2011), the salience of attitudes and beliefs is apparent. School counselor educators can influence their beliefs through information and experiences. Changed beliefs lead to altered attitudes that then can lead to changes in behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Another implication for school counselor educators is the importance of assessing attitudes and beliefs of school counselors-in-training (SCIT). An analysis of the data helped to identify several beliefs that can serve as foundational elements for training school counselors and the bridge to socially just practices: (a) all students can and deserve to learn in safe and supportive environments; (b) the significance of family in one's development; (c) fundamental injustices exist in the world; and (d) children themselves are the best sources of information regarding their lives. Combined with what is already known from the literature about beliefs and attitudes that predispose school counselors to seek justice in their schools, discussed above, these beliefs can be a powerful framework for school counselor educators to use to embed throughout the program of SCIT.

What is also evident when examining the data collected from this study is that the participants understand the important role that school counselors play in advocating for students, especially those from LCD and marginalized backgrounds. Some form of the word "advocate" was the fourth-highest descriptive code found in the data and the second-highest interpretive code that resulted in a dominant theme for the entire study.

School Counselors as Advocates

Participants in this study keenly understood the important role school counselors play in schools to advocate for students, especially those who are vulnerable in some way or another. In addition to advocating for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, several participants mentioned how important it is, specifically, to advocate for students with extraordinary behaviors. While students from LCD and marginalized backgrounds are often over-represented in this population, it is often too easy to dismiss the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors that may serve as antecedents to the difficult-to-manage behaviors (Ladson-Billings, 2007). Findings in Chapter 4 were presented that clearly demonstrated how aware participants are of the school counselor's role to identify barriers and work with stakeholders to address them.

Advocacy in the school counseling literature typically centers on two areas: one is culturally competent consulting that school counselors must utilize when they are advocating on behalf of students from different cultures than theirs (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Stephens & Lindsey, 2011). The other is student empowerment or "self-advocacy skills" (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Lewis et al., 2003) that involves helping students identify barriers in their own lives and equipping them with knowledge, skills, and

resources to address those barriers on their own. This should include the incorporation of curriculum somewhere in the school that focuses on social inequalities, leadership development, LGBTQ and ethnic studies, and social justice training (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). This curriculum should also be extended to parents and guardians due to age and legal restrictions for minors (Chen-Hayes et al., 2011).

Participants in this study appear to grasp the first element of advocacy very well. There were myriad references in the data that illustrated their humility about needing to consult with others as well as the importance of working on behalf of students. What appears to be missing is the second notion: empowering students with the resources they need to address barriers themselves. Holcomb-McCoy (2007) puts this barrier mitigation on a scale with advocacy – others addressing barriers on behalf of students – on one end of the scale and student empowerment – "the counselor helping the student achieve goals with the ultimate outcome being to enable the student to act independently in the future" (p. 40) – on the other end, with the latter being the ideal.

There are a number of implications of this finding to the work of school counselor educators. A more holistic definition of advocacy appeared to be needed among participants in this study. In general, school counseling programs lack a focus on these self-empowerment and self-advocacy skills, yet they are vitally important (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Lewis et al., 2003). Empowering students to identify barriers and develop plans to mitigate them on their own are powerful ways to enhance the outcomes for LCD students (Militello & Janson, 2014; Perna et al., 2008; Schoener & McKenzie, 2016; Welton & Martinez, 2013) as well as for low-income, first-generation

college students of any cultural or linguistic background (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Savitz-Romer, 2012).

Teaching others to recognize power and privilege and the associated societal effects and implications for oneself is deeply rooted in Freire's (1970, 1980) concept of conscientization that involved "an epistemological position: man looking for knowing" and is a "test of environment, a test of reality" (Freire, 1980, p. 74). Holcomb-McCoy (2007) further posited that student empowerment must begin with instilling in students a critical consciousness, the realization they lack power and means to acquire it. This forms the basis for another recommendation, discussed below. First, more about the need for CRSC found conclusively from data gathered for this study.

Culturally Responsive School Counseling

My review of the literature indicates that culturally responsive school counseling (CRSC) contains three elements: (a) multicultural counseling; (b) social justice-focused counseling; and, (c) culturally proficient consultation and advocacy. Multicultural counseling included four components: (a) cultural awareness and beliefs, (b) social justice implications of counseling (c) culturally competent counseling skills, and, (d) racial/cultural identity development (Sue & Sue, 2016). Three of these elements appear to be solidly addressed in the MUU school counseling graduate program. Themes found in the data include *Cultural Diversity Awareness and Appreciation, Individual Bias Awareness and Mitigation,* and *Equitable and Reflective Practice.* Although a few of the participants talked specifically about racial and cultural identity development, whether their own or that for their clients, this component appears to have the least emphasis in the program.

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As discussed above, the participants also avidly embrace the role of school counselors as advocates and acknowledge the importance of consultation in their work. A particular theme within this broader context is how the participants regard their students as experts on their own experiences; indeed, that was one of the beliefs that pervaded all the data sources. These aspects of CRSC also appeared to be strengths of the school counseling graduate program. What seemed to be missing was a focus on the social justice aspects of school counseling.

What sets the social justice aspects of counseling apart from the other elements of CRSC is the centering of power and privilege and the role they play in schools and in society. A sub-theme in the portfolios was *Understanding Privilege* and it was apparent that most of the participants accepted that they have both privileged and oppressed aspects of their identities. Four of the participants in this study mentioned privilege directly, mostly referring to their own privilege and how important it was for them to understand its existence. One of the participants seemed to dismiss the idea that she is "privileged" preferring instead to substitute it with "blessed" indicating a bit of a misunderstanding of the broader concept. The terms "power" and "oppression" were barely mentioned by the participants at all, indicating a need to more robustly infuse those concepts into the program. This will be discussed further in my recommendations formed as a result of this study.

Related to this is the important role culturally responsive school counselors play in facilitating conversations around social justice issues in schools. Reflecting on one's own values, biases, and cultural identity is indeed important. Understanding the culture and backgrounds of students whom one is counseling is also essential. But systems will not

change when individuals do not advocate on a broader level for equity and inclusion. What capacity do the participants have to facilitate critical and courageous conversations around power, privilege, and social justice? In fact, a few of the participants appeared reluctant to engage in similar conversations even among their counseling classmates. Two of the participants openly admitted that they withheld their religious beliefs that appeared to contradict those of classmates during class discussions and several admitted that they refrained from asking questions during classes because they feared derision between the school counseling students and those from the mental health and couples/family tracks in their graduate program.

I must add a couple caveats here. First, this is a very small sample size to be making any broad assertions about the school counseling graduate program at MUU. Not only is the sample size very small, but it is also a purposive sample, not necessarily representing the themes that a majority of graduates from the program would convey about the program. Further, it must be stipulated that the participants are very early on in their school counseling careers; in fact, three have not even yet begun them. A great deal of the apparent deficiencies I am pointing out may very well be ameliorated once the participants have completed a few more years as fully certified school counselors and become more facile with the basic responsibilities thereof. Moreover, there are likely seasoned school counselors who do not possess the skills I am suggesting are important, so these observations are not meant to be an indictment on the program, but merely reflections of what appear to be present with respect to my review of the literature on CRSC.

Next, I will outline some recommendations that I have based on the data gathered from this study.

Recommendations

The major findings discussed above form the basis for the recommendations I offer in this section. While a common set of attitudes and beliefs appear to exist among the participants in this study that lead them to wholly endorse the importance of culturally responsive school counseling, efficacious attitudes that school counselors can effect change appear absent. A firm commitment to advocating on behalf of LCD students is apparent from the findings, but a drive to empower students to advocate on their own behalf is missing. Finally, an awareness and appreciation of diversity and commitment to understanding one's own cultural identity and biases are evident in the findings, but pledges to identify and deconstruct the systemic barriers to equity are rare. First, I offer a model of school counseling for social justice.

School Counseling for Social Justice

As recently as 2007, multicultural school counseling was thought to consist of three dimensions: awareness, knowledge, and skills (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). While since that time social justice practices have been more deliberately and comprehensively infused in school counselor education programs, there is work left to be done in this area (Holcomb-McCoy & Gonzalez, 2016; Martin & Robinson, 2011). Further, recent school counselor graduates are being inducted and mentored by veteran school counselors for whom these practices are unfamiliar and perhaps even divergent from their values (Herr & Erford, 2011). For recent school counselor graduates to be adequately prepared for the task of bringing

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social justice practices to their schools, they will need a strong desire and robust set of knowledge and skills to do so.

My recommendations use this as a pivot point. First, I recommend school counselor education programs incorporate a more robust and enduring model for social justice-infused school counseling practices. This begins with the development of, then a perpetual commitment to cultivating, a critical consciousness. Then, school counselor educators must build the self-efficacy of school counselors in the area of social justice and racial equity to infuse an efficacious attitude about the probabilities of success. Finally, a stronger focus on leadership in school counseling programs will build an enduring vehicle for these changes to be promoted by school counselors.

To carry out this work, I propose a model for school counseling with a focus on social justice. The model, called School Counseling for Social Justice and depicted in Figure 4, illustrates the recursive nature of infusing social justice into one's practice. The model is based on data gathered from this study, Singh et al.'s (2010) grounded theory study with school counselors focused on social justice, along with elements from my own practice. Singh et al. found seven themes that pervaded the practice of socially just school counselors: (a) using political savvy to navigate power structures; (b) consciousness raising; (c) initiating difficult dialogues; (d) building intentional relationships; (e) teaching students self-advocacy skills; (f) using data for marketing; and, (g) educating others about the school counselor role of advocate.

The model is to be conceptualized with a beginning point that occurs in school counselors' graduate training program that must include strong training in multicultural

competence, reflection on one's own cultural identity and values, and awareness and mitigation of biases precipitating the raising of a critical consciousness. This process encapsulates the Critical Consciousness element of the model. Knowledge and skills are also built during the school counseling graduate program about the remaining elements of the cycle: Advocacy and Reflection and Planning. From there, the cycle repeats throughout one's service as a school counselor, and is the focus of the following discussion.

School Counseling for Social Justice

Data integration

Reflection & Planning
· Demographic trends
· Stakeholder composition
· Macro-level data analysis

Core Beliefs
· Growth mindset
· Pragmatism
· Persistence
· Empathy

Critical Consciousness
· Multicultural awareness
· Values and beliefs examination
· Cultural identity development

Data analysis

Data analysis

Advocacy
· Comprehensive school counseling program
· Consultation and family engagement
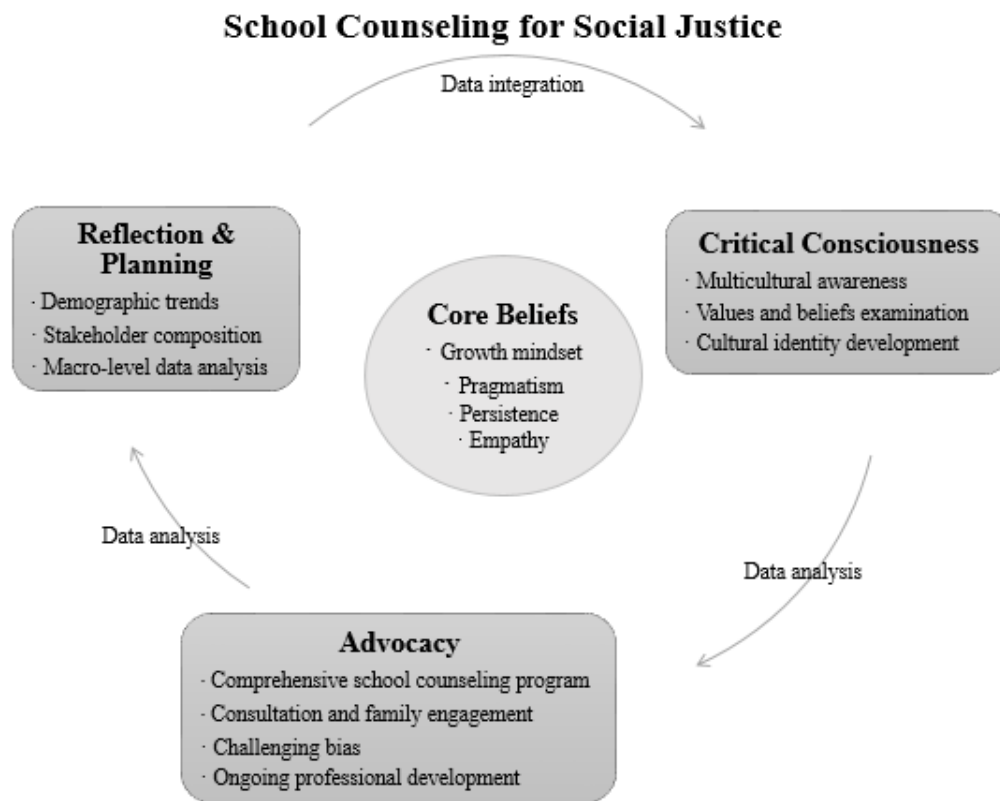· Challenging bias
· Ongoing professional development

Figure 4: School Counseling for Social Justice Model

The analysis of data to inform the practice of school counselors is imperative for many reasons, including to document the effectiveness of school counselor practice and

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advocate for the comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012; Hatch, 2014; Whiston & Quinby, 2011). Analyzing and responding to data is also important to inform the equity and inclusion work of school counselors (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2011; Martin & Robinson, 2011). Throughout the cycle, analyzing and using data to inform the equity and inclusion practices of school counselors is included in the model, reflected in Figure 4.

Once school counselors revisit and update their multicultural knowledge and skills and reexamine their cultural identity, values, and resulting biases – all of which comprise the Critical Consciousness component of the model – they must examine data related to their school and community to identify trends and changes. Once they do so, they can more effectively carry out the next function in the School Counseling for Social Justice Model, Advocacy. This advocacy includes advocating for the full implementation of the comprehensive school counseling program that has been found to yield more equitable outcomes for students from LCD and marginalized backgrounds (Carey et al., 2012a, 2012b; Lapan et al., 2012; Lapan, Whitcomb, & Aleman, 2012). School counselors must also advocate for equitable practice through consultation with others, including students' families and especially when the cultural, linguistic, and/or socioeconomic background of the school counselor differs from the student. This practice often uncovers bias on the part of individuals and possibly even a broader system, such as access to test preparation resources only available after school that is a barrier for students who lack transportation, for which school counselors will need to advocate to address. Ongoing professional development in

social justice and racial equity is critical for all in the school, and school counselors must continually advocate to administrators to keep this a priority.

The cycle continues with another round of data analysis to identify shorter term trends or inequitable results, such as formative assessments preparing students for summative, standardized tests at the end of the school year. For example, much research showed the value of students taking upper-level classes and earning college credit (e.g., Militello & Janson, 2014; Perna et al., 2008; Schoener & McKenzie, 2016; Tyson, 2013: Welton & Martinez, 2013): how prepared are students, especially from LCD and marginalized backgrounds, to perform on summative assessments at a level required to actually earn the college credit? Arranging for tutoring sessions and providing access to other preparation materials might be a shorter term equity practice on which school counselors can have a socially just and racially equitable impact.

At the end of the school year must then come a time of Reflection and Planning: reflection on the previous school year and planning for the next 1-5 years. All school counseling programs should have measurable outcomes that they evaluate from year-to-year and reflecting on the progress toward those goals is an important part of a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012a). These data, along with demographic trends (e.g., attendance boundary shifts, new housing developments opening up over the summer, etc.), stakeholder make-up (i.e., incoming building administrators with new priorities, new faculty and staff who can possibly contribute to the social justice efforts of the program, etc.), and other macro-level data (e.g., disaggregated results from AP and other standardized tests, demographic make-up of students enrolled in rigorous courses for the next school year, etc.)

should then be reviewed to develop a plan. These data are then integrated into a reflection on the Critical Consciousness of each school counselor, and the cycle repeats.

At the core of this model are a set of beliefs that must inform and shape all of the elements in the model. These beliefs are drawn largely from those found to be important from this study: a growth mindset, both about students and their potential but also about an individual school counselor's capacity and need for continuous learning and reflection; and, empathy that must pervade the work of school counselors, both for the students with whom we work but also the families and colleagues whom are all in different places in their social justice journeys. I have added two beliefs drawn less from the data collected and more from the literature and my own practice, pragmatism and persistence.

The work of school counseling for social justice can often be isolating and lonely. Always being "that person" who brings up inequitable or biased practices, the counselor who can "never just leave well enough alone," the one who always has to bring up "those issues," can lead to derision among colleagues and to lonely lunches. Persistence is indeed important to continue to pursue the goals of social justice in schools, both for individual students with whose experiences school counselors are intimately familiar and that can often profoundly weigh on our consciences, but also for groups of students who lack access to equity. This theme was moderately present in this study, but is a stronger one when data are gathered from more seasoned school counselors focused on social justice (Singh et al., 2010).

Also, more present in data gathered from more seasoned school counselors is a healthy balance of optimism and realism. Pragmatism is necessary to keep space for the self-care and self-compassion necessary for this work. If one gets too caught up in the unjust and

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inequitable practices with which they are surrounded – both locally in one's school and community but also more globally – the work can get very dispiriting. I endeavor to follow the advice of Kozol (2012) who wrote something he once heard: "Look for battles big enough to matter but…small enough to win some realistic victories" (p. 204). While I stipulate that this view reifies the privilege I have as a White, cis-male born into and currently living in a middle class household, it is included in this model due to the number of practicing school counselors who come from similar backgrounds (Erford, 2007). Hence, the driver for this model is the inculcation of a critical consciousness.

Critical Consciousness. A concept originally posited by Freire (1970, 1980), "conscientization" is "an epistemological position: man looking for knowing" and is a "test of environment, a test of reality" (Freire, 1980, p. 74). This concept has been translated to critical consciousness that involves for school counselors an awareness of concepts like power, privilege, and oppression; systems (especially education) in which those forces are prevalent; a call toward social action to mitigate these forces; and, to become an ally to those from marginalized backgrounds (Parker & Fukuyama, 2006). Developing a critical consciousness compels practitioners to engage in critical self-reflection that involves understanding one's own privileged and non-privileged identities, biases, cultural identity, and systems in which one operates where they may be perpetuating oppression (Hipolito & Delgado, 2007; Milner, 2007). There are a number of models for how to include this critical consciousness development in a school counselor education program, including through the use of eco-webbing (Williams, McMahon, & Goodman, 2015) and using an ecological model of school counseling (McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, & Ruiz, 2014).

In addition to embedding in the school counseling graduate program the importance of developing a critical consciousness as one enters the profession, it must also be indoctrinated that a critical consciousness is never "completed." A critical consciousness is much more a way of being than an end state and requires periodic and sometimes profound revisions based on life circumstances and events. The awakening for me when I first understood the importance of a critical consciousness was early in my undergraduate training when I identified as a White, heterosexual, man. After I came out as gay a couple years later, it was necessary to reflect on how the world was different to me with a marginalized element of my identity. The need for ongoing reflection and introspection must be emphasized early in the program and is the first step in the School Counseling for Social Justice Model described above and illustrated in Figure 4. For SCIT to believe they can be successful in their efforts to bring about socially just outcomes, they must be convinced their actions can work.

Social Justice Efficacy. While beliefs amenable to CRSC that are grounded in the literature were found in the data gathered from the participants in this study, the necessary efficacy – a "can-do attitude," if you will – was not as present as it may need to be to overcome the numerous barriers culturally responsive school counselors face. As Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston (2008) wrote, this construct is important for school counselors "because it could predict professional school counselors' perceptions of their capability to perform specific tasks and their likelihood to overcome obstacles that might prevent them from achieving or competing those tasks in schools" (p. 166). While participants in this study are just starting their school counseling practice, it is important that

they are at least equipped with success stories of how this work can lead to equitable outcomes for students.

Infusing these examples more frequently and robustly into the school counseling graduate program is another recommendation. Most importantly, demonstrating on a consistent basis that rarely is the work of a single school counselor responsible for changes in entire systems, but the efforts taken on behalf of culturally responsive school counselors generally contribute to incremental steps toward those aims. While there is indeed a correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and the ambitiousness of goals selected and attained (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008), rarely are these ambitious goals set without first having experienced more rudimentary successes. Encouraging SCIT to start small, learn how to navigate systems and politics, and to remain focused on the full implementation of CSCP, is an important process to emphasize in school counselor training programs.

As discussed above, attitudes and beliefs alone do not address gaps in achievement and opportunity for students; it is the *behavior* of school counselors that actually effects change. The beliefs about student potential and identity, along with those about justice in the world, are important precursors to form an amenable attitude toward engaging in culturally responsive practices. But without what Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) call "outcome expectancies" – the extent to which one believes a given behavior will yield positive consequences for them – combined with a belief that necessary actions are within the control of the individual – behavior is not affected. School counselors-in-training not only believe all LCD students are worth their efforts, possess a favorable attitude about effecting change for them, but also that their actions *can make a difference.* This social justice self-efficacy also

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undergirds the School Counseling for Social Justice model as its recursive nature is aimed at that purpose. This work also requires having difficult conversations, convincing colleagues and peers of its significance, and facilitating efforts to achieve its aims.

School Counselors as Social Justice Leaders

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, leadership is an important component of a comprehensive school counseling program and, thus, school counselor education and training programs (ASCA, 2012a, 2014b, 2017c) and school counselors are ethically obligated to "Work as advocates and leaders in the school to create equity-based school counseling programs that help close any achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps that deny all students the chance to pursue their educational goals" (ASCA, 2016, p. 6). Gysbers and Henderson (2012) contended that, as the school counseling profession seeks to move from an outdated "guidance" model to a transformational component of schools, leadership skills serve as the "point of departure" for this journey (p. 30).

Many of the mandates in a culturally responsive school counseling program require school counselors to demonstrate leadership (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Mason, 2010) and are manifested in the themes from this study. To effectively address inequitable practices in a school, school counselors will need to work collaboratively with leaders at the building and district levels. Despite these realities, the participants did not as clearly as I had hoped articulate this important role for school counselors. Arguably one of the most professionally advanced participants did provide a notable exception to this and a sentiment that I had hoped would be more broadly held when she noted in her portfolio that school counselors must act as leaders "by identifying student needs and helping to address barriers to success."

In this section, I summarize my recommendation that the leadership responsibility of school counselors be framed entirely in the context of social justice. While it is indeed important for school counselors to be leaders in the full implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012a; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), in analyzing and responding to data about various student outcomes (Hatch, 2014), and in most, school-wide initiatives in general (Mason & McMahon, 2009), all of these realms require a critical lens, one tuned to identify inequitable outcomes and practices.

Combining the social justice and leadership aspects of the role of school counselors is not new. Most recently, Ratts and Greenleaf (2018) recommended doing so "because it addresses the difficult realities of what marginalized student groups are experiencing in America's school" (p. 2; emphasis removed). They argued that, in an increasingly hostile climate to those not in the majority, and with the resurgence of White supremacist and anti-Semitic groups, and ongoing antipathy toward LGBTQ people, framing the school counselor leadership role in terms of advocacy for these marginalized student groups is even more imperative. What is unique about this recommendation is that it is a call to school counselor educators to overhaul school counseling graduate program curriculum on leadership in the school counseling profession to have all of its elements foreground and center social justice, equity, and inclusion, so they are less of an ancillary aspects of it.

There are a couple of examples from data collected in this study that illustrate the difference in perspective about leadership that I posit. As mentioned above, most of the participants frame the role of advocacy for school counselors as one that compels them to advocate *on behalf* of students, rather than *empowering* them to advocate *for themselves.* If

the role of leader for school counselors was one of *social justice leader* rather than a less specific form of leadership, informed by a critical consciousness and catalyzed by social justice self-efficacy, I believe more of the participants would have endorsed the latter form of advocacy. Further and as previously mentioned, the terms "power" and "oppression" are barely mentioned by the participants at all, indicating a need to more robustly infuse those concepts into the program. Social justice-focused systems foreground the role of power that leads to privilege and oppression and their impact on individual and groups of students, then most importantly to the call to lead change efforts to mitigate these conditions and resulting gaps in achievement and opportunity for LCD students.

Another example of this social justice leadership I propose for the school counseling profession is the role school counselors must play in facilitating important conversations about inclusion and equity, what Singleton (2015) calls "courageous conversations." Not only did participants in this study seem to shy away from and avoid difficult conversations, a few even suggested school counselors should impart this avoidance inclination to students. For substantial, enduring, second order change (Levy, 1986) to occur, dialogue must be established that fleshes out deeply held biases that will prevent closing gaps in achievement and opportunity for LCD students. No other professionals in a school setting possess greater training and experience in facilitating these difficult conversations than school counselors and embracing a social justice leadership approach will place them in appropriate positions to do so.

This section elucidated two recommendations I make drawn from this study. First, I proposed a model for school counseling focused on social justice, one that involves a

recursive process of critical consciousness development and reexamination, advocacy for the comprehensive school counseling program and its equity-focused elements, and ongoing reflection and planning. This process is driven by micro- and macro-level data that are continually analyzed, and is pervaded by the core beliefs of growth mindset, empathy, pragmatism, and persistence. Second, I proposed reframing the leadership role of school counselors to be entirely focused on social justice. Next, I propose areas of future study.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are a number of suggestions for future research that arose from this study. These suggestions center on the units of analysis for the study, attitudes and beliefs, and mitigate some of the limitations of this study as well as propose to further explore its recommendations. First, suggestions that involve attitudes and beliefs.

This study took a firmly exploratory approach to identifying attitudes and beliefs that are important for culturally responsive school counselors as it presupposed that the graduate students at MUU would possess those dispositions. Future studies may take these beliefs, as they were grounded in prior literature, and more deliberately explore specific beliefs or a set of beliefs. For example, Parikh et al. (2011) took Belief in a Just World and assessed its prevalence among a sample of school counselors, comparing it to various characteristics of the sample, using a quantitative approach. A future study might take this belief, along with self-efficacy beliefs quantitatively explored by Holcomb-McCoy and her colleagues (2008), and perhaps even others identified from this study and design a qualitative study to explore manifestations or even gradients of these in various samples, including practicing school counselors.

This leads to another suggestion for future study, which would involve a sample of already-practicing school counselors, perhaps 3-5 years into their service. Aligned with Singh et al. (2010)'s study that proposed a grounded theory from practicing school counselors focused on social justice, a similar protocol to this study could identify common attitudes and beliefs among a more experienced group of school counselors. A related, exploratory or perhaps even a narrative inquiry might seek to form a more expansive set of attitudes and beliefs necessary for culturally responsive school counseling from existing literature.

Finally, this study offered recommendations that provide opportunities for future inquiry. How do other models of social justice-focused school counseling compare to the one I proposed? From literature and practice, what did I leave out? Future research in this area is important as school counseling and social justice are dynamic topics; integrating them yields infinitely more complex and vibrant possibilities. For empiric validity and viability, more study of this model is needed.

The other recommendation offered was to reframe the leadership aspect of school counseling practice as one entirely focused on social justice. This aligns with recommendations made by Ratts and Greenleaf (2018), but neither their study nor this one explored this recommendation in practice. What are the experiences of school counselors who lead programs that use this or a similar model? What do school counselors who conceptualize their practice as social justice leaders experience in their schools and communities? What barriers exist for school counselors who wish to reframe their view of leadership to one focused on social justice? There are many qualitative and quantitative

research questions to be answered with further study. As with most empirical work, this study generates as many questions as it answers.

Final Thoughts

"On the way here, I got pulled over" (Mr. Henderson, personal communication, October 15, 1997).

As I began this dissertation, so shall I end it. It was with these words that I began my journey to develop and perpetually revisit a critical consciousness, a ceaseless penchant for equity and social justice, and, just over twenty years later, a dissertation study that manifested these priorities. These were the words spoken by Mr. Henderson (pseudonym) who led the diversity retreat I attended as an undergraduate student, a Black man who said he was pulled over by a police officer for no apparent reason on his way to the retreat who opened my eyes to the injustice happening all around me. It was at this retreat that I became aware of and began to confront the privilege I have as a White, middle-class, cis-male.I believe this experience both facilitated – because it introduced me and brought me closer to people from marginalized backgrounds for me to better empathize and understand them – but also delayed my coming out as gay – because I became acutely aware of the heterosexual privilege I would forfeit by doing so.

This journey has led me to read, experience, meet, immerse, question, contemplate, agonize, study, inquire, perseverate, struggle, ad nauseum. I conceptualize equity and inclusion work as putting on a thick, chunky pair of eyeglasses: it is unpleasant, both for the wearer and observer, but yields a clearer focus on inequity and injustices with which I am surrounded. The fact that I can choose whether or not to wear them is privilege manifested;

the more marginalized identities one has, the less one gets to choose whether to wear the thick, chunky equity eyeglasses.

I am immensely grateful to my participants: Aubrey, Haven, Kate, Lynne, Michael, Susan and Tammy. While these are their pseudonyms, they deserve to be featured prominently in any reflection in which I engage as they gave up time and shared parts of themselves that helped this study yield even more profound results. To label what I learned from them as "data" seems pedestrian and inadequate, like comparing what can be found in a trash pile to what can be extracted from a gold mine. At the same time, I suppose, often what can be found in either can be just as valuable depending on the circumstances. A precious family heirloom found among discarded trash might be even more valued than gold.

The principal findings in this study – the importance of culturally responsive school counseling, the imperative to examine and mitigate one's own biases, the call to advocate for students, and the need for critical, reflective practice – all tell a favorable story of the school counseling graduate program at MUU. While there are improvements to be made, findings that the participants had shared beliefs about the value of all students, the formative significance of families, the ubiquitous presence of injustice, and centering students as their own experts paints an auspicious picture of a school counselor preparation program.

What I learned from this study will indeed inform my own practice. I am beginning to view "the chunky equity eyeglasses" described above less as a choice and more of an ethical and moral obligation to wear. Further, it is my ethical and moral obligation to mass produce these chunky eyeglasses and distribute them to my school counselor and educator colleagues so we can collectively bring about meaningful change to narrow gaps in achievement,

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opportunity, and attainment for students from culturally and linguistically diverse and

marginalized backgrounds, the *raison d'être* of this study and for the glasses themselves.

Appendix A:
MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCE
AND TRAINING SURVEY-REVISED (MCCTS-R)

<u>**Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised**</u>
Multicultural Counseling Competence Component
(School Counselor Version)

Developed by Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy, Ph.D.

<u>Directions</u>: Listed below are competency statements based on AMCD's Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Explanatory Statements. Please read each competency statement and evaluate your multicultural competence using the following 4-point scale.

1 **-** **Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)**
2 **-** **Somewhat competent (More training needed)**
3 **-** **Competent (Able to perform competently)**
4 **-** **Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)**

1.	I can discuss my own ethnic/cultural heritage.	1	2	3	4
2.	I am aware of how my cultural background and experiences have influenced my attitudes about psychological processes.	1	2	3	4
3.	I am able to discuss how my culture has influenced the way I think.	1	2	3	4
4.	I can recognize when my attitudes, beliefs, and values are interfering with providing the best services to my students.	1	2	3	4
5.	I verbally communicate my acceptance of culturally different students.	1	2	3	4
6.	I nonverbally communicate my acceptance of culturally different students.	1	2	3	4
7.	I can discuss my family's perspective regarding acceptable and non-acceptable codes-of-conduct.	1	2	3	4
8.	I can discuss models of White Racial Identity Development.	1	2	3	4
9.	I can define racism.	1	2	3	4
10.	I can define prejudice.	1	2	3	4
11.	I can define discrimination.	1	2	3	4
12.	I can define stereotype.	1	2	3	4
13.	I can identify the cultural bases of my communication style.	1	2	3	4
14.	I can identify my negative and positive emotional reactions toward persons of other racial and ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4

1 - Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)
2 - Somewhat competent (More training needed)
3 - Competent (Able to perform competently)
4 - Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)

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15. I can identify my reactions that are based on stereotypical beliefs about different ethnic groups. 1 2 3 4

16. I can give examples of how stereotypical beliefs about culturally different persons impact the counseling relationship. 1 2 3 4

17. I can articulate the possible differences between the nonverbal behavior of the five major ethnic groups (i.e., African/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, European/White). 1 2 3 4

18. I can articulate the possible differences between the verbal behavior of the five major ethnic groups. 1 2 3 4

19. I can discuss the counseling implications for at least two models of racial/ethnic identity development. 1 2 3 4

20. I can discuss within-group differences among ethnic groups (e.g., low SES Puerto Rican student vs. high SES Puerto Rican student). 1 2 3 4

21. I can discuss how culture affects a student's vocational choices. 1 2 3 4

22. I can discuss how culture affects the help-seeking behaviors of students. 1 2 3 4

23. I can discuss how culture affects the manifestations of psychological disorders. 1 2 3 4

24. I can describe the degree to which a counseling approach is appropriate for a specific group of people. 1 2 3 4

25. I can explain how factors such as poverty, and powerlessness have influenced the current conditions of at least two ethnic groups. 1 2 3 4

26. I can discuss research regarding mental health issues among culturally/ethnically different populations. 1 2 3 4

27. I can discuss how the counseling process may conflict with the cultural values of at least two ethnic groups. 1 2 3 4

1 - Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)
2 - Somewhat competent (More training needed)
3 - Competent (Able to perform competently)
4 - Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)

28.	I can list at least three barriers that prevent ethnic minority students from using counseling services.	1	2	3	4
29.	I can discuss the potential bias of two assessment instruments frequently used in the schools.	1	2	3	4
30.	I can discuss family counseling from a cultural/ethnic perspective.	1	2	3	4
31.	I can anticipate when my helping style is inappropriate for a culturally different student.	1	2	3	4
32.	I can help students determine whether a problem stems from racism or biases in others.	1	2	3	4

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix B:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Talk about your background. What are some experiences you had growing up that most profoundly impacted how you approach school counseling?

Talk about the school counseling program at UMKC. What are some of the most profound things you have learned that you think will most influence your work as a school counselor?

When did you first become aware of diversity? What experiences did you have with people from diverse or marginalized backgrounds prior to the school counseling program?

Can you identify a pivotal moment in your life that most profoundly affected what you believe about a counselor's responsibility to help students from marginalized backgrounds?

What responsibility do school counselors have to engage in specific actions to help struggling students?

What role should school counselors play in helping struggling students?

How well has the Master's program prepared you for your practicum or internship?

What do you wish you would have known or had experience with prior to your practicum or internship experience?

Appendix C:
FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

School Counseling for the Achievement Gap: Attitudes and Beliefs of School Counseling Graduate Students about Culturally Responsive School Counseling Focus Group Protocol

Let's begin by introducing yourself using your pseudonym and talk about how you chose it.

Talk about what practicum or internship site a little – what is going well, what challenges are you experiencing?

Additional warm-ups, if needed:
Family was a theme of what I learned from you all so far in your interviews and portfolios: both the importance of working with your students' families as well as what you have learned from your own families. Sometimes were positive examples, attributes and values that you believe are constructive; other times, they are counter-examples – things you try hard NOT to do. Talk a little about what are some of the most important lessons you learned from family members and how that relates to your school counseling practice.

Most if not all of you mentioned Deb at least once during your interview. Talk about some of the most important lessons you have learned from her that will most affect your SC practice (or has already).

When ready:
In your interview, some of you were able to identify a pivotal moment in your life that most profoundly affected what you believe about a counselor's responsibility to help students from marginalized backgrounds. For many of you, this was one of your first experiences when you became aware of diversity and its importance. Talk briefly about that moment and how you think it shaped your views about school counseling.

Respond to this statement: In general, people get what they deserve and deserve what they get.

What does it take for a school counselor to be culturally competent? What would someone observing a culturally competent school counselor see, hear, and experience?

What do students from culturally and linguistically diverse and marginalized backgrounds bring to their classrooms, classmates, and schools?

What do you believe about the ability of schools to help all students learn? With all the systemic barriers that affect schools and implicit biases of educators, how big of an impact can schools have on all students' learning and chances for success, especially students from marginalized backgrounds?

Focus Group Protocol (con't)

How, if at all, do you think your Master of Arts in School Counseling program has affected how you think about school counseling for students from culturally and linguistically diverse students?

What are some of the things you have learned in this program that you think can help you work more effectively with students from culturally and linguistically diverse students and students from marginalized backgrounds?

If time permits:
What responsibility do school counselors have to engage in specific actions to help struggling students? How can and should school counselors do this?

Talk more about the school counseling program at UMKC. What are some of the most profound things you have learned that you think will most influence your work as a school counselor?

What parts of your program do you think are most important to train school counselors to work effectively with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

What practices, strategies, activities, or other things have you learned in this program that you plan to use as a practicing school counselor?

Appendix D:
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Prospective Research Study Participant:

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Loyce Caruthers. The purpose of this study is explore the attitudes and beliefs of graduate students in a school counseling program, specifically those that pertain to culturally responsive elements of their training. While the study will be run by her, Andrew Schuerman is the co-investigator and doctoral candidate and will run most aspects of it on her behalf.

The study team is asking you to take part in this research study because you are a graduate student in a school counseling program. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher will go over this consent form with you. Ask him/her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect: the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Subjects sought for this study are graduate students in a school counseling program and must either be in practicum or internship class during the semester they are recruited. This study seeks seven (7) subjects and if you agree to participate in this study you will share your experiences in all of the following ways in the order listed:
- Take an inventory called the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised;
- Be interviewed in person by the researcher at the School of Education building (or in a mutually agreeable, public place) for about one (1) hour;
- Participate in a face-to-face focus group with all the subjects led by the researcher at the School of Education building that will last about two (2) hours;
- Consent to allow the researcher to review their electronic, capstone portfolio (specifically, Program Goal 1, Quality Indicator 4; Program Goal 4, Quality Indicator 3; and, Program Goal 6); and,
- Agree to participate in a follow-up interview over the phone or email (if necessary) to provide clarification.

This study will add to the growing research that emphasizes the importance of attitudes and beliefs when it comes to working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and will inform school counselor educators how better to prepare school counselors-in-training for this work.

The interview and the focus group will be audio-recorded using a digital recorder. If you agree to take part in this study, you may be involved in this study for up to two (2) months, the likely amount of time it will take to schedule the interview and the focus group and longest time it would take for the researcher to contact subjects for follow-up questions. You

will have the opportunity to review the transcript of the interview to ensure that your words accurately convey your meaning.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to answer questions asked by the researcher. If you wish to withdraw, you may contact either the principal investigator (Dr. Caruthers) or the co-investigator (Andrew Schuerman) at any time by email or phone.

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. Your confidentiality is the only known risk and the researchers ask that you keep the information shared by other participants during the focus group confidential; however, it is important to note that the researchers cannot guarantee this will occur. The alternative is not to take part in the study.

There are no direct benefits for you should you decide to participate in this study. Some possible indirect benefits include contributing to the school counseling profession, particularly the education and training aspects, as well as benefits associated with reflecting upon one's experiences in a graduate program. There are no monetary costs to subjects who participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be given a $50 gift card to QuikTrip. You will be given this gift card after participating in the interview, focus group, and granting access to the co-investigator to your portfolio.

While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

The recordings will be immediately transferred to the password-protected computer of the researcher, then deleted from the digital recorder. If you decide to participate, you will choose a pseudonym and this will be used in the recordings as well as when the results are reported in the researcher's dissertation and in subsequent, published work. The recordings will be maintained on a password protected hard drive for seven (7) years in a locked office, then deleted. The co-investigator is a mandated reporter, so any information shared that involves possible child abuse or neglect will be reported to the proper authorities.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City appreciates people who help it gain knowledge by being in research studies. It is not the University's policy to pay for or provide medical

treatment for persons who are in studies. If you think you have been harmed because you were in this study, please call the researcher, Dr. Loyce Caruthers, at 816-235-1044.

You should contact the Office of UMKC's Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may call the researcher Dr. Loyce Caruthers at 816-235-1044 or Andrew Schuerman at 816-309-2591, if you have any questions about this study. You may also call them if any problems come up.

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to be in the study or decide to stop participating, your decision will not affect any care or benefits you are entitled to.

You have read this Consent Form or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by calling Dr. Loyce Caruthers at 816-235-1044. By signing this consent form, you volunteer and consent to take part in this research study. Study staff will give you a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Dr. Loyce Caruthers
Principal Investigator

Andrew Schuerman
Co-Investigator

_____   _____
Signature (Volunteer Subject)   Date

_____
Printed Name (Volunteer Subject)

_____   _____
Volunteer Subject Preferred Email Address   Volunteer Subject Phone Number

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

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VITA

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