

THE WORK OF HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS' LEADERSHIP
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
AN ANALYTIC AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

By

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My journey began many years ago when I finished my undergraduate degree and made the decision that I would some day earn a doctorate. Thirty-four years later, I have achieved that goal. The experience has been life changing for me, both personally and professionally. Throughout the recent process, I have received support from many individuals and I would like to acknowledge them at this time.

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Abstract

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With the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) adoption of the National Model, school counselors are called to align their work with educational reform initiatives and provide leadership in public schools (Dollarhide, 2003). School counseling literature supporting leadership for social justice is frequently reiterated (Hatch & Bowers, 2002; Herr, 2001, Adelman & Taylor, 2002; Bemak, 2000). There is minimal discussion or definition of leadership beyond reference to instigating change, collaborating with others, and participating in decision making. The purpose of this dissertation was to examine high school counselors' understanding of their work and their experiences of leadership for social justice. The following questions guided this study: (a) How do high school counselors perceive and experience their work? (b) How do high school counselors incorporate, respond, or contribute to school reform initiatives into their work? And (c) What are the implications of such understandings for social justice and leadership in the work of high school counselors?

Fourteen high school counselors were invited to participate in the study. The tasks of interviewing and observing participants opened to reflection on my 23 years of counseling. Analytic autoethnography facilitated a critical examination of my biases, values, and attitudes.

Three areas of primary responsibility emerged through data analysis and were labeled intervention, guidance, and administration. The areas of responsibility demarcate the scope of practice relevant to the leadership of high school counselors and were defined by six attributes labeled professional socialization, problems, role, power, authority, and rewards. Participants identified the continued influence of guidance and intervention on their professional lives. Providing students with guidance and intervention, while sometimes intertwined, often competes in the time, attention, and energy that each demands. Both guidance and intervention oriented counselors to attend to the urgent and unique in students. The function, information, and concern of administration lifted counselors' attention to school-wide issues. Participants employed insights derived from guidance and intervention to inform and support their work in administration. Being drawn into conflict and resistance over reform implementation, high school counselors discussed leadership in recognizing and revising educational policy, procedure, and practice to advance opportunities for all students.

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CHAPTER ONE

High school counselors and educational reform: An introduction

In the early twentieth century, teachers in American public schools began to take on a new role in their labor to educate students by providing guidance on work preparation and career choice (Gysbers, 2001). With this beginning in vocational counseling, the function of school counseling has grown into a profession separate from teaching possessing distinct educational and licensure requirements. Galassi and Akos (2004) summarized the profession's history stating "school counseling has evolved from a position involving a set of extra duties performed by a teacher, to an ancillary group of services provided by a specially trained professional" (p. 146).

The evolutionary development of the school counseling profession can largely be seen as a reactive process—the outcome of external social pressures and calls for specific modifications in the job duties of those occupying the position. For example, the mental health movement of the 1930's called for school counselors to adopt a more clinical approach to their interaction with students, resulting in the tasks of personal counseling being added to the occupational responsibilities and expectations (Gysbers, 2001). And later in the 1950's, Gysbers noted that college counseling was added to the duties of high school counselors as a result of the launching of Sputnik and the ensuing National Defense Education Act in 1958. Other developments, however, have occurred to address concerns emanating from within the profession. For example, the mental health model of the 1930's was revisited in the wake of the Columbine tragedy, which refocused preparation and practices of school counselors on student development and wellness (Arman, 2000). Dahir and Stone's (2007) review of the history of school counseling concludes that it appears to be a profession in search of an identity.

As part of an effort to build a stronger professional identity, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) outlined a framework for counselor competencies known as the National Standards. Furthermore, ASCA adopted the National Model, a comprehensive guidance program that reflected these standards (Dahir, 2004). A more detailed description of ASCA's National Model is provided later in this chapter. What is important to understand about ASCA's adoption of new standards and guidance model was that not only did they address questions about professional identity, ASCA's leadership was seeking to bring the profession into compliance with current educational reform given their redefinition of the role and responsibility of school counselors around school improvement (Dahir, 2004). The National Model embraces accountability and modifies the duties of counselors to include helping all students meet expectations as outlined in No Child Left Behind legislation. The model gives "primary responsibility . . . to remove systemic barriers that impede the success of all students, especially poor and minority students" (House & Martin, 1998, p. 290).

The ASCA National Model restructures the work of school counselors. The model expects school counselors to challenge existing ways of schooling children. School counselors who meet the model's guidelines act as critical agents to dispel arcane beliefs held by educators and policies enacted in schools that sift and sort students (House & Martin, 1998). The model charges counselors with identifying and dismantling systemic barriers in schools that have separated students based on race, ethnicity, social class, or a variety of other categories (Delpit, 2005). Amatea and Clark (2005) wrote that the model advances a "more proactive role both in preparing themselves to assume leadership roles in the school and in reshaping the role of expectations of administrators" (p. 26). Through utilizing data and knowing each student, ASCA's model promotes student advocacy as part of the work of counselors to ensure that

opportunities are provided for all students. Therefore, a most recent alteration in school counseling is the expectation of leadership for social justice (ASCA, 2005).

Problem and Research Questions

The profession of school counseling has evolved over time with the addition of new roles and responsibilities such as vocational advisor, mental health diagnostician, and college advisor, to name a few. Research reflects the complexity of the position, particularly at the high school level (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). Furthermore, studies indicate that it has been difficult for school counselors to participate fully in the process of educational reform because of the lack of clarity given conflicting demands and duties (Amatea & Clark, 2005). The ASCA National Model attempts to streamline professional expectations while bringing them into alignment with current reform in education. The new model places leadership and social justice at the center of school counseling, whether interacting with students, collaborating with teachers, or dialoguing with administrators to transform school policies and practices to benefit all students.

Dahir and Stone (2009) reviewed literature and conducted a study of school counselor action research to support their argument for an “accountable, data-driven school counseling program, [by which] school counselors will be seen as powerful partners and collaborators in school improvement and champions of social justice bent on narrowing the opportunity and achievement gap” (p. 18). Such work extended prior research on the profession that endeavored to identify best practice, assess student outcomes, and improve training of school counselors. Galassi and Akos (2004) criticized much of the early research on the profession as paying too little attention to the work of the counselor in the school context. Others have pointed to different weaknesses including Bangert and Baumberger’s (2005) review of designs characterizing

research published over an 11 year period in the *Journal of Counseling and Development* (JCD). They noted numerous limitations including lack of randomization, control groups, and adequate sample size; all of which are problems generally exhibited in studies conducted in the field. Bangert and Baumberger posit “that the frequency of published research in *JCD* using true and quasi-experimental designs will increase dramatically over the next few years as funding for social science research using only the most rigorous of research methods continues to increase” (p. 483). Given a reliance on nonintervention designs, much that is known about the profession comes from surveys of practitioners drawn from ASCA’s membership (e.g., Dahir, 2004; Curry & Lambie, 2007) or state employment registries (e.g., Osborn & Baggerly 2004; Sutton & Fall 1995).

In contrast to scholarship on the profession that advances quantification and deduction, Romano and Kachgal (2004) called for increased research using qualitative methods. Berrios and Lucca’s (2006) examined the discipline’s four major journals and found that 1/6 of all publications between 1997 and 2002 were based in this tradition. They called for more qualitative research as “little attention has been given to qualitative methodology in the field of counseling....The qualitative approach allows us to explore the richness of the personal experience of our profession for both the counselors and the participants who are looking for help” (p. 181). Qualitative methods are particularly relevant given Dahir’s (2007) evaluation of the National Model and her emphasis on the importance of reflection for counselors who implement leadership practices aimed at increasing student academic success. Her study built from Gysbers (2003) earlier work that found counselors were afraid to modify their work in ways that addressed accountability and advocacy.

Interestingly, such findings parallel those posited in literature on social justice and teaching. For example, Kumashiro (2002) stated, “Students, educators, and researchers, including those committed to social justice, often want certain forms of social change but resist others, sometimes knowingly, sometimes not” (p. 68). Darder (2002) solicited researchers to study how educators who embrace social justice “develop their practice in the midst of debilitating forms of opposition...generated by internalized traditional expectations of schooling linked to perpetuation of the status quo...[and] by conditioned uncritical responses” (p. 136). Paulo Freire, however, delineated the problem most clearly when he wrote, “The question is then, how to develop a kind of critical reading or critical understanding of society, even in the face of resistance by students and by the dominant class” (Shor & Freire, 1987, p.45). Translating these questions, purposes, and insights from scholarship advocating for social justice in education and merging them with issues, arguments, and agendas presented in literature on school counseling, the following researchable questions guided this study: (a) How do high school counselors perceive and experience their work? (b) How do high school counselors incorporate, respond, or contribute to school reform initiatives into their work? And (c) What are the implications of such understandings for social justice and leadership in the work of high school counselors?

Purpose of the Study

Whether or not a high school counselor has been trained for the new model, or even knows of it, embraces it, or rejects it, school counseling is experiencing change given the broader reform in public education mandated through federal, state, and district policies. Research is needed to address questions about the high school counselor as advocate of students, champion of social justice, and promoter of school leadership. Barker (2001) defines leadership is “a

process of transformative change where the ethics of individuals are integrated into the mores of a community as a means of evolutionary social development” (italics in original, p. 491). Chapter two of the dissertation provides an extensive overview of literature on leadership to provide this foundational piece of the study’s conceptual framework. The purpose of this study was to explore the above questions posited in the study’s problem through description, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered from an analytic autoethnographic study of high school counseling.

A fuller discussion of analytic autoethnography will be presented later in this chapter as well as in chapter three, which provides a complete discussion of the methodology. It is sufficient at this point to note its strength in handling reflexivity in the research process. Reflexivity can be defined as “an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their setting and informants. It entails self-conscious introspection guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through examining one’s actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others” (Anderson, 2006, p. 382). My career in high school counseling and employment as a central office administrator with duties connected to high school counselors exerted some influence in the process of gathering and analyzing data and necessitated modification of the methods stated in the dissertation’s proposal. In making the change however, I maintained the intent of providing a thorough understanding the nature and challenges of high school counselors as they participate in school leadership for social justice. As such, the study contributes to building theory relevant to the ways educators interpret and implement practices for furthering social justice in public schools.

The remainder of chapter one is concerned with outlining major features of the study. Now that the problem, research questions, and purpose of the research have been clarified,

ASCA's National Model will be presented and explained. The section that follows sketches the essential features of social justice as defined or advanced in this study. A brief overview of the research methods will then be provided. Finally, the conclusion of chapter one and statement of significance are provided in preparation for the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

ASCA's National Model

In 1995, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) began the task of redefining the role and function of the school counselor. This work began with the development of the National Standards and ended with the adoption of the National Model. The lengthy process included gathering input from the association's membership, reviewing research on school counseling, and tapping into the expertise of prominent policy makers, scholars, and practitioners. One of the key concerns for the writers of the standards was how to respond and incorporate emerging educational reform initiatives which were surfacing at this time. The rapid progression and adoption of accountability and outcome based policies, which eventually were codified through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as the No Child Left Behind Act, were noted, debated, and ultimately woven into the fabric of ASCA's reform agenda. By 2000, ASCA membership had examined and accepted the National Standards.

The National Standards contain three elements of focus for the work of school counselors: academic development, personal/social development, and career development of students. These three elements are fairly unambiguous. Counselors are expected to attend to the development of each student for each of the elements. Assisting counselors in this work, the Standard define for each element specific student competencies and indicators of competency. Using these Standards, a guidance oriented model began to form that clarified the role and

function of school counseling programs. Specifically, the Standards provided the foundation for the National Model, which rejects the status and stigma of school counselors as providing ancillary services. Rather, the National Model forwards a systemic program for school counseling as an essential part of the education process (ASCA, 2005).

The National Model attends to four components: foundation, delivery systems, management systems, and accountability. The component of foundation sets forth and brings attention to the values, beliefs, and philosophy for a school counseling program. The delivery system articulates the guidance curriculum, individual student plans, support systems, and consultation services. The management systems details agreements with administration, procedures for advisory council, data usage, action plans, among other features. Finally, the accountability component charges a school counseling program to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency through reporting results, program audits, and counselor evaluation. The National Model shifts counselors who have traditionally spent “much of their time responding to the needs of a small percentage of students” to a “program allowing school counselors to direct services to every student” (ASCA, 2005, p. 2).

Embedded in this system is a framework for the day-to-day structure of the work of school counselors. Key aspects of the model include its emphasis for providing responsive, comprehensive, and integrated services. Although some might see the model as continuing the history and trajectory of various facets of school counseling; it is its attention to the diversity and totality of tasks necessary for meeting the needs of all students that marks a noteworthy change. For example, the guidance component embraces the continuation of the historical work of the school counselor. In the context of the new model, guidance work exhibits a more organized,

intentional, and focused service, which includes bringing aligned grade level resources to all students, not just those whose needs demanded immediate time and attention.

The National Model makes explicit that the mission of the school is to educate all students, supporting them as they moved toward successful completion of their education in a specific setting (i.e., elementary, middle, junior or high school). There is renewed attention given to data and it requires a concentrated examination of course-taking patterns, graduation rates, tests scores, behaviors, and other measures of performance for all students. That is, the new model places a focus on the all with an emphasis on the individual achievement. Furthermore, the model contains an action oriented process of iterative stages involving data collection, analysis, and intervention. Was there a group of students who were advantaged or disadvantaged by the educational system? If so, what interventions could be utilized to provide more equitable access and system support to all students to ensure academic achievement for the entire student community? Has improvement been made as a result of the intervention? What needs to occur next?

This use of data or extensive employment of data analysis is new to the work of school counselors. Also new to their work is the model's explicit acceptance of counselor accountability for "assisting the school principal with identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems" and going beyond the individual student to the entire student body. The traditional "sifting and sorting" (House & Martin, 1998) role of the school counselor is eliminated. A new charge of responsibility of opening access and organizing support for all students is grounded in the model.

Finally, ASCA's National Model "encourages school counselors to become catalysts for educational change and to assume or accept a leadership role in educational reform" (2005, p.

15). School counselors are called on to provide “proactive leadership, which engages all stakeholders in the delivery of activities and services to help students achieve success in school” (p. 17). The model outlines benefits to a variety of constituents, emphasizing that students would benefit because the model “provides strategies for closing the achievement gap because some students need more...promotes a rigorous academic curriculum for every student...[and] ensures equitable access to educational opportunities” (p. 18). Students are no longer to be limited by their socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, or religion when the model is fully implemented. Social justice forms a core aspect of ASCA’s adopted model.

Social Justice

Kathleen Brown has written extensively on educational leadership for social justice. Her theorizing provided the conceptual framework for beginning the study. In one of Brown’s (2004) recent pieces, she offered an analogy of the weaving process to explore and examine the work of transformative change processes. In the context of the process, there is the loom, the educational setting, typically a school district or an individual school building. The material being woven is complex and unique, in this case, the students participating in the learning process. The horizontal process that occurs on the woof of the loom contains the strategies that educators use to serve students by understanding their unique assets; this process also clarifies the support each individual student needs to be successful in a standards-based environment. Simultaneous to the horizontal process, there is a vertical process, the warp, which is the theory, social justice that provides the philosophical foundation of the work of educators. The combining of the woof and the warp, the strategies and the belief systems, result in the woven cloth, the high achieving student, in a context of educational reform.

Brown (2004) proposed three elements that enhance and sustain professional learning necessary for this kind of “weaving.” These elements are essential to the woof, the strategies used by professionals. The elements are critical reflection, acknowledgment through rational discourse, and action through policy praxis. Each of these components are defined and discussed below. The components can, she argued, result in transformative learning or a “new way of seeing” (Brown, 2006, p. 706).

Time and opportunity for critical reflection is a critical precursor to rational discourse. Critical reflection is the foundational experience in that it requires that participants examine their own belief systems and look at alternative perspectives that exist beyond those present in the systems. In this process, an individual examines ideas and practices that have always existed and reframes them in a new and different context. Because beliefs create a filter for what is seen and heard (Delpit, 2005), the examination of beliefs and the impact of these beliefs on daily work is what provides an individual with the impetus for taking the next step.

This examination of beliefs makes it possible for leaders to move beyond the “mythical norm”(Lorde, 2001), that is, the presupposition that all values are based on the norm of the white, thin, middle class, Judeo-Christian male. Reflection provides opportunities for an individual to become aware of “oppressive structures and practices, developing tactical awareness of how they might change these, and building the confidence and ability to work for collective change” (Brown, 2004, p. 709).

The step following critical reflection is rational discourse, a means for testing the validity of one’s construction of meaning (Mezirow, 2000). Rational discourse is a focused series of conversations that results in shared understandings, potentially resulting in personal and professional growth and empowerment to implement change (Brown, 2004). It is this intentional

pattern of communication that allows the participants to understand their own belief systems and share those values with others. Freire (1993) proposed that the purpose of a dialogic relationship is “to stimulate doubt, criticism, curiosity, questioning, a taste for risk-taking, the adventure of creating” (p. 50).

Because “transformative learning . . . may be precipitated by challenging interactions with others” (Brown, 2004, p. 11), there is an essential requirement for dialogue among colleagues that is reflective and questioning simultaneously. This process enables leaders to examine existing practice and their impact on students while also looking at results from changes in practices. This dialogue then leads to action steps or the final element in the woof—creating possibilities for students where those possibilities previously did not exist.

Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of how high school counselors perceive their role as student advocate and leader for social justice. Having been a high school counselor for 23 years, I possess experience, beliefs, and perspective about the promise and problem confronting counselors in schools in carrying out their work. Before retiring in the fall of 2008, I was a central office employee responsible for high school counselors in the district where I worked. Not only did I occupy a visible role in the district, I was known to many of the counselors in the area given my involvement in the state’s professional association for school counselors.

There are significant implications of my positionality for this study. First, not only was I a researcher but I was a full participant in the collection and analysis of data. I am a member of the group that I studied and as such my sensibilities have been shaped and influenced by my experience as a high school counselor. The opportunity to collect and analyze data proceeded

with an effort to identify my biases and move my implicit and practically oriented interpretation of school counseling to being explicit, analytical, and abstract (Labree, 2008). Glesne (2006) discussed the value of researcher bias in determining what is of importance in gathering, evaluating, and writing qualitative research. She argued that when the subjectivity of the researcher is employed and made explicit rather than left hidden or ignored, the quality of the study improves. Through this research process I endeavored to examine my beliefs, values, and practices developed through the course of my preparation and professional career as a school counselor.

The position I occupied in the study led me to examine scholarship on auto-anthropology, auto-biography, and autoethnography as it provided useful and explicit direction both in understanding reasons for taking a particular course of action and specific strategies for carrying procedures. Anderson (2006) stated five characteristics of the analytic autoethnography approach including,“(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis” (p. 378). Each of these qualities can be found in the dissertation.

In addition to myself, there were 14 high school counselors who participated in the study. Each high school counselor was purposefully selected. In particular, participants were chosen given their reputation as student advocate, years of experience, and length of time in the building. Some participants were trained in the ASCA National Model and some were not. Potential participants were approached directly, given an overview of the study and invited to participate. Access to the schools of counselors was not sought from gatekeepers such as district superintendents since the major method of data collection involved interviews of counselors.

Data collected through observations were minimal and focused specifically on the school counselors. Human Subjects safety protocols established by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Washington State University were followed and included several criteria. First, informed and signed consent (See Appendix A) for all participants was followed. Participants were not asked embarrassing questions nor were they asked questions that required them to divulge deviant or criminal behavior. The risks and potential harm from participating in the study was deemed minimal. Identifying information of the participants was coded such that the confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the study. The recorded interviews were deleted after transcription.

The primary method of data collection was through interviews. An initial interview protocol was developed and is presented in Appendix B. The interview questions were designed to build rapport with the interviewee. The open ended questions identified in the protocol were used to guide the interview and elicit description of the counselors' experiences and perceptions of their work in their school. Follow-up interviews occurred as needed for clarification. Follow-up interviews were conducted with selected participants given specific issues that surfaced in analyzing data.

Data were also collected through observations of counselors. Through the analysis of the interviews specific counselors were selected for observation. Counselors selected for observation were those who discussed duties, responsibilities, or interactions that I found to illuminate key issues contained in the questions identified for study. Observations were made by attending counselor department meetings or shadowing counselors as they worked with students or staff. Thus, observations of selected activities that participants felt comfortable sharing and having me present were collected as part of data collection procedures.

Furthermore, I gathered artifacts as appropriate through the observations. For example, I requested or obtained handouts, memorandum, and other such materials in the course of the observations. Archival information such as reports, school newspapers, and other like products were also identified and added to the accumulated data for study.

The analysis of data and the subsequent narrative that emerged from that analysis was a layered process that evolved over a period of months. The initial steps in this process began as I transcribed the interviews and reflected on their words and the various meanings they conveyed. The interviews evoked strong emotional responses from the participants as they revealed stories of loss, trauma, grief, or a variety of other significant issues that their clientele face on a daily basis. These stories triggered my own memories and emotional reactions given similar experiences in counseling high students. I shared my reactions with my advisor and was directed to write about my memories and put onto paper those thoughts that surfaced during the process. These written notes became a reflective journal.

Analysis involved coding of the transcribed interviews, observation field notes, collected artifacts, and reflective journal entries. The gathered data were coded to develop a conceptual framework (Bishop, 2005, p. 126). Codes were examined, sorted, and grouped together to form themes. Employing an open coding strategy provided the way for moving beyond an initial conceptual framework that explained the data partially. The final product was shared with peers and participants for clarification and accuracy. Those who examined the text provided feedback to improve its grammatical and rhetorical presentation but more importantly offered an assessment that substantiated its offered description and interpretation of their understanding of education reform for high school counselors. While the “spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity” (Fontana & Frey, 2004, p. 61) I sought to mitigate its threat through rich,

descriptive language. The result of the process supports or reaches a common, intersubjective analysis and conclusion.

Chapter Summary

The bulk of the research on counselor reform has been quantitative in nature. Noting the limitations of its descriptive information of regarding the nature of the experience, various researchers call for qualitative research on the school counselor (Colbert, Vernon-Jones, & Pransky, 2006; Dahir, 2004; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004). The findings from this analytic autoethnography promise greater understanding of how school counselors perceive their role in educational reform, specifically the nature of their work in the areas of student advocacy and social justice.

Chapter one presented the background for the study including the particulars of the problem and purpose to be addressed. This introductory chapter for the dissertation also offered an overview of the study including ASCA's National Model, Brown's notions of leadership for social justice, and main aspects of the research methods employed to address the questions identified earlier in the chapter. A more extensive review of literature on leadership is given in chapter two. Specifically, chapter two forwards the conceptual framework that resulted from the research processes of data collection and analysis. Key concepts, definitions, and arguments are explicated as they informed the study. Chapter three will fully describe the methodology utilized in the study, including a discussion on the evolution of the methods to analytic autoethnography. Chapter three examines the particulars about my experience of researcher as instrument while interviewing, transcribing, coding, and analyzing data during the study. The fourth chapter will furnish the investigation's findings. Chapter four tenders the description and interpretation of the participants' responses, including comparisons among interviewees to demonstrate, explain, and

critique the changes and challenges high school counselors confront in their exercise of leadership for social justice. The findings preserve and ponder key expectations about high school counseling as posited in ASCA's National Model. For example, the study identifies concerns over issues of reflection, rational discourse, and action through policy praxis as they are made manifest in the duties and responsibilities of these school counselors. The study provides significant clarification of the literature through its description, analysis, and interpretation about the student advocacy work of counselors for academic achievement. The final chapter of the dissertation, chapter five, presents the conclusion to the study. After reviewing major features of the study it offers the discussion of the findings and continues to elucidate its implications, limitations, and significance. Finally, suggestions for future research are furnished.

CHAPTER TWO

Conceptual Framework

Currently, school counselors are being called to provide leadership as a new part of their role outlined in American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model (Dollarhide, 2003). Throughout literature on school counseling this position receives support as the need for leadership by counselors is frequently reiterated (Hatch & Bowers, 2002; Herr, 2001, Adelman & Taylor, 2002; Bemak, 2000). Unfortunately, there is minimal discussion, even definition, of leadership beyond reference to the importance of leading change, collaborating with others, and participating in decision making. Such scholarship does little to provide any depth of understanding about such processes. Indeed, literature that argues for new ways of carrying out professional services of school counseling and yet lacks clarity promotes an agenda open to sabotage through myths, misconceptions, and misunderstandings.

The following conceptual framework is offered in part to address this oversight. It also provides the explanation and definition of the critical concepts through which I analyzed the data gathered during the study. I did not begin the investigation with this theoretical model. Abiding advice on qualitative research provided by Peshkin (1993) among many others, however, I used prior theory to encourage and sharpen the analytical processing of collected data. I employed prior scholarship to assist me in "asking better and better questions, appreciating that wisdom has many antecedents and forms, and that the quest for it is endless" (p. 28). Thus, the conceptual framework offered in this chapter is selective in its overview and summary of the literature. Rather than providing an exhaustive review of the research the chapter identifies and discusses the sources that facilitated, oriented, and defined critical terms I employed and will present in

chapter four to describe, analyze, and interpret the nature and challenges of high school counselors as they participate in school leadership seeking socially justice educational outcomes.

Leadership

Burns (1978) produced a foundational work on leadership tracing the history of the role of the leader from the biological basis to the more recent studies that reject the “Great Man or Woman” model that is so prevalent in American culture. Leadership theorists have analyzed thousands of studies that attempt to identify key characteristics or traits of leaders dating back the 1300’s, only to conclude that none of these examined variables offer any explanatory or predictive utility. Burns’ analysis provided an understanding of the movement of the leader as the individual having biological advantage (size or gender), to the leader as the individual having resource advantage (control of military forces or land), to the leader as a person who has knowledge or skill advantage in the organization. He laments and rejects the modern day manager/leader model of industrial leadership that throughout most of the twentieth century has dominated both cultural and academic discourse.

The importance of Burns’ (1978) expose cannot be understated for in it he launches a new path for leadership theory. First, he provides examples of leaders, but he goes beyond the person to the processes they used. His model as such does not deny the platform of position and role from which leadership is or can be exercised but it also does not stop with these concepts. Barker (2001) too noted that most leadership discussions focus on the leader, rather than leadership which is what Burns was advocating. The conceptual framework explores several concepts presented in the literature which build and expand on major features and implications of this emerging model of leadership. Specifically, the conceptual framework is organized in a manner that first discusses roles and problems of leadership. Next, the notions of power and

authority in leadership are clarified. Third, work that describes issues of socialization and rewards which are pertinent to an understanding of leadership are offered. The chapter closes with a summary.

Roles and Problems in Leadership

The issue for Burns (1978) and other recent scholars is that former theorists largely attended to the role of the leader in studying leadership. Burns argued to expand attention or broaden the unit of analysis to that of both leader and follower. Burns clarified this stance as he articulated the difference between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership typically involves “an exchange of valued things” (p. 19). Transactional leadership does not always involve a common purpose, even though the purposes of the involved individuals may be related. In contrast, transformational leadership is an engagement, rather than an exchange, and separate related purposes are fused to become a common purpose, involving all, leaders and followers, in a process that focuses on that common purpose. Leadership in this context is “a process of transformative change when the ethics of individuals are integrated into the mores of a community as a means of evolutionary social development” (Barker, 2001, p. 491). Burns attempted to reconstruct the concept of leadership through his introduction of the transformational leadership model (Rost, 1991). The transformational leadership model is based on the leader-follower relationship that is a dynamic process based on fluctuating levels of motivation and power in pursuit of a common goal. There is mutuality in this process that goes beyond the traditional model of the leader where one leader has the role of leading a group of one or more followers and there is no understanding of the interchange or dependence between occupants of the two roles. Instead of the leader experiencing isolation and power, there exists a sense of community and reciprocity among all group members, with the leadership experience

being one that is shared and communal. The power that had traditionally rested in one individual based on their control of resources or position or rank becomes an authority that is created from the relational nature of the experience.

This new model of leadership is relational in nature and is dependent upon the exchange of resources with resources including knowledge or information; there is a reciprocal nature to this new work and it was not only about leaders but about those with whom the leaders worked (Burns, 1978, p. 425). Fullan (2001) reinforced this notion stating, “If you want to develop leadership, you should focus on reciprocity, the mutual obligation and value of sharing knowledge among organizational members” (p. 132). Leadership in this model isn’t merely about the leader, but the relationship a leader has with other leaders and with those who are part of the organization being led. Bishop (2000) and Heifetz & Linsky (2002) collectively support this approach to leadership as applied to the educational setting. All seem to agree that the connections that reside in the relational nature of the work of the educator/leader may be more important than almost any other factor in determining results.

Leadership is not a linear process, and can be circular, cyclical, repetitive or all of the above. The flow of influence is “not two-way, but *multiple*” (Burns, 1978, p. 133). Influence is an educational process including sharing values and facts. Thus, education and leadership become “inseparable” when “both are defined as the reciprocal raising of levels of motivation rather than indoctrination or coercion” (Burns, 1978, p. 448). Because the process is transformational, the context and product become transformational as “existing structures of the system dissipate and transform into new forms or structures” with an “internal capacity to reconfigure in response to gradual or to sudden change” (Barker, 2001, p. 487).

The collective and continuous nature of leadership relies on reciprocity to build an emotional connection among leaders and followers. While the essence of the relationship may have begun or been determined by the various positions participants hold in the organization, leadership in the new model is understood as moving beyond the limitations imposed by hierarchy, structure, and role. “What is important is that we all work together to make the very best contribution to our common enterprise that we are capable of making and that each of us recognizes, appreciates, and acknowledges the importance of the contributions that others are making to our common mission” (Pellicer, 2008, p. 56). Contributions are typically singular acts but when viewed in the leadership context, they become part of the process that is ongoing. Barker (2001) cautions that leadership is too often viewed as a singular act or event that is discrete. Instead, he suggested it is rather a continuum of actions, events and participants that are elements of leadership.

Fullan (2001) further expanded the profile of the new leader, suggesting that the new leader must be “consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups—especially with people different than themselves” (p. 5). Rost (1991) added that “Leadership is a common enterprise, the essence of the relationship, the process by which they exert influence” (p. 122). Rost proposed that leaders and followers often change places and a variety of relationships make up the leadership relationship. “Followership only exists in the industrial model of leadership” (Rost, p. 109) and in this new non-industrial model, followers do leadership by influencing each other and the organization.

Barker (2001) suggested that studies of leadership might benefit from examining followers, rather than focusing on the leaders, who they are and what they do. This “reductionist” approach dissects the leader in a specific context (p. 484). He further claimed that a change in

environment (context) would also require a change in definitions. The leadership process would be examined in totality, the leader, the followers and the context, with understanding coming unique to each context.

Reinforcing these notions Gardner (1990) provided further clarity by removing the word follower from his analysis of leadership and replacing it with the word “constituent” implying a more equitable, collaborative and possibly even reciprocal relationship within the context of the work of the leader and those with whom he works. Rost (1991) expanded the relational, reciprocal nature of this new model of leadership allowing individuals to interchange the roles of leaders and followers without changing position, thus giving “followers considerable influence and mobility” (p. 109).

Foster (1989) discusses leadership in the context of a community of believers, as a communal relationship. The reciprocal nature of these relationships is described as a “conjunction of ideas where leadership is shared and transferred between leaders and followers, each only a temporary designation. . . Leaders and followers become interchangeable” (p. 49). In this discussion leadership theorists extend their definition of leadership as being about particular kinds of problems. Leadership involves the activity of identifying, understanding, and addressing problems of values. Specifically, Pellicer (2008) stated leadership is an intention effort by a group for solving problems relevant to their common needs, goals, beliefs, and values. The creation of a shared vision centers on this valued outcome or solution to problems. The result of this process can be powerful, connecting the individuals in a way that results in a “unified sense of purpose” resulting in a “force capable of transforming almost any school into the kind of place that we all know it can and should be” (Pellicer, p. 126).

Rost's (1991) work defines leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). The clause of mutual purposes captures the notion of values as defined by the participants. Bryman (1986) references influence in his discussions of leadership, noting that leadership was a "social influence process in which a person steers members of a group toward a goal" (p. 80). Again, the goal contains the understanding of what is important or valued by participants. None of the previously mentioned authors consider physical resources in these exchanges; rather the exchange is based on knowledge and information which are sources of social influence for leaders and followers.

Power and Authority in Leadership

Rost (1991) expands his understanding of influence by adding that it is "the process of using persuasion to have an impact on other people in a relationship" (p. 105); influence involves power resources, among them prestige, gender, race, status, motivation, interpersonal skills, group skills and a variety of others. The latter grouping, interpersonal skills and group skills among them, are the focus of the work of the school counselor. French and Raven (1959) clarify that influence can be intentional, but can also result from a "passive presence" and is not necessarily based on overt behaviors, either speech or actions (p. 152). French and Snyder (1959) reinforce this view by stating that influence is not always conscious.

Influence is a reciprocal, interactive process in which participants "attempt to convince other people to believe or act in certain ways" (Rost, 1993, p. 157). This is very different from coercion which has no reciprocity and relies on control, not communication, for results. Rost also provided further clarity by clarifying the influence relationship and its work that includes mutual purposes, those purposes that "reflect change and reflect what leaders and followers have come

to understand from numerous interactions as the mutual purposes of the leaders and followers” (p. 118). Sergiovanni (1992) expands the relational nature of leadership describing it as covenantal, based on a common core of shared values.

These mutual purposes must be initiated, processed and refined in the reciprocal relationships that leaders and followers (who also act as leaders) create and participate in over time. The ebb and flow of this process transcends the static, sometimes paralyzing managerial approach to leadership and the change process, allowing a more fluid and creative exchange of ideas, and a utilization of the skills of all participants in the process. This process requires reflection and creates ambiguity, but is essential in the adaptive change process, allowing people to “internalize the change itself” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 13).

Burns (1978) proposes that power goes beyond motivation and resources and is actually relational in nature (p. 12). Reward, coercive, legitimate, referent and expert powers are defined and described by French and Raven (1959). These various types of power rarely function independently and the interdependence of these powers create a complexity that continues to be examined in leadership literature. The nature of power lies in the collective and is dependent on motives, resources and the relationships of those who have those motives and resources. The individual who wields power by controlling people, things, or resources, is not a leader. The transformational leader relies on the use of power and results in an exchange of something (i.e., votes, information, objects, money, etc.)

French and Raven (1959) propose that referent power has the broadest range and is based on the relational nature of humans. Referent power, based on an identification of one individual with another, could be utilized as a foundation for influence that could then create the change that is proposed in the ASCA model.

Mitchell and Spady (1983) discuss authority and power and begin with definitions that outline the difference between the two. Based on the Greek definitions, power refers to the “*ability to make things happen*” but authority “is an expression of the *inner character* of the person who holds it and reflects the basis of his or her actions rather than their force or strength” (italics in original, p. 7). These definitions are further expanded reflecting that authority is based on influence and control “rooted in this relationship of trust” (p. 12). Relationship is essential to authority, but is not essential to power. Power relies on control of resources and authority relies on the shared experiences of people. The determination of whether a particular action is rooted in power or authority is dependent largely on the character and perception of those involved in the interaction. It is the follower who determines or experiences the action as one of authority or power. These authors further propose that power-based systems can be transformed to authority-based systems through changes in the experiences that individuals in those systems have with each other.

In a managerial model of leadership that is based on position, authority is often substituted and even confused as power. For example, Burns discusses bureaucratic authority as “a formal power that has been vested in persons by virtue of their holding certain positions” (Burns, 1978, p. 296). Authority was one dimensional and historically situated in a position that was made more legitimate by the authority that was associated with the position. The concept of authority is further clarified by French and Raven (1959) as they further define legitimate power, or that which is the source of authority; this authority is not based on the relationship of roles but is rather based on “internalized values” that have been accepted by the individuals based on cultural values, social structures or a designation by a legitimizing agent.

Socialization and Rewards of Leadership

As leadership develops, many factors can influence the roles that individuals play in the relationship, allowing an individual to move between the leader/follower roles, influencing when appropriate and implementing when appropriate. The relationship may dissolve before the changes are achieved (Rost, 1993), but that does not mean that leadership did not exist, nor that it can no longer exist. Rather, the fluid nature of the process allows for reflexivity that does not exist in a traditional managerial/leadership model. Rost (1993) notes that “Leadership can still be leadership when the relationship fails to produce results” (p. 118). Pellicer (2008) lamented that “leadership is an octopus. It’s much easier to recognize it when we see it than it is to understand it or to explain it to others” (p. 13). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) bring attention to the socialization of participants given this fluid definition of leadership “The deeper the change, the greater the amount of new learning required, the greater the resistance there will be, and thus, the greater the danger to those who lead” (p. 14). Socialization is defined by Ashforth, Sluss and Saks (2007) as the “process through which individuals acquire knowledge about and adjust to their work context (p. 448).

Fear is a natural emotion in organizational contexts in which change is underway. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) recognize fear and its connection to socialization when they stated “To change the way people see and do things is to challenge how they define themselves” (p. 27). What gets rewarded and what is valued as a reward are both issues for which study of socialization addresses. The stability that has developed over time in the role of the school counselor is being seriously challenged by the standards provided and endorsed in the ASCA National Model, potentially resulting in uncertainty for the school counselor. Even though the losses may result in adaptive changes with positive results, they are losses nonetheless. What was

previous defined as valued and rewarding potentially changes. This emotional component is largely ignored in the change process that ASCA is calling counselors to embrace.

Adding to this dimension of fear and potential danger is the call to action for school counselors to become leaders without adequately acknowledging the reciprocal nature of leadership. School counselors work in schools, systems that have long “worked” in certain ways. The school counselor who embraces this change without acknowledging the relational nature of the work that is done with other constituents is exposed to numerous risks. Because “adaptive work rarely falls on the shoulder of any one faction,” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 191) the school counselor must be mindful of the relational nature of this work, especially considering how difficult these changes might be for all constituents, who may not have all the information that the school counselor has.

The school counselor may lack authority in the context of their building or system and that may cause colleagues to question not only the new role of the school counselor, but even the school counselors’ “right” to reconfigure this role (Heifetz, 1994). The result may be that the “messenger” gets killed for delivering the message. The lightning rod effect of providing the message without adequate preparation for a new messenger has potential to have this negative result. Lugg and Shoho (2006) identify this danger, describing it as a “perilous voyage full of obstacles and barriers to change” (p. 202).

Through the process of socialization, there is the need for task adjustment, that is, what is the new work that needs to be done. There is also a need for organizational adjustment, that is, what are the new roles of the individuals in the context of the organization, both from the individual’s perspective and the perspective of colleagues in the organization. Organizational socialization has been a focus of interest in the recent past, but a “theory” or organizational

socialization does not currently exist (Wanous, 1992). Despite this weakness, research tends to support the findings that newcomers who are the major recipients of socialization tend to passively accept pre-set roles, thus reproducing the status quo. Research also finds that this approach mediates the tension that exists between entry training and work, thus reducing uncertainty and the anxiety that accompanies it (Miller & Jablin, 1991).

Newcomers have historically been followers in organizational socialization studies. In the new work environment, however, where a one-organization career is less common, newcomers can take on a leadership role, helping others in the organization to examine long-held beliefs and practices, and moving to new beliefs and actions that can be an active part of the change process. This is also true in organizational settings experiencing significant change and reform. As a greater emphasis is placed on collaboration in the context of the work that educators do, there is a greater opportunity for “proximal work” (Saks, 1997, p. 250) that becomes a focal point for shared communication around group functioning and performance. The mutual and continuous socialization of all can become an asset in this shared communication, providing a new lens to view beliefs and practices that may have impeded changes that would benefit all students in a system.

Research on socialization endeavors to explain the processes through which individuals acquire skills that can be continually improved upon with knowledge and practice or resist, fail, or ignore change (Wood & Bandura, 1989b). A variety of factors are necessary to support this premise, among them self-efficacy, the ability to set challenging goals, utilizing analytic strategies, and the ability to make complex decisions (Wood & Bandura, 1989b). Because socialization is “necessarily embedded within a specific context” (Saks, 1997, p. 269) there are a variety of factors that affect the socialization process. Some of these factors are attached to the

organization, some are attached to the nature of the work, and some are attached to the history and culture that are attached to both of the aforementioned. There is an emerging focus in socialization research that is attempting to identify and learn more about the mutuality of the socialization process. This work harkens back to a dynamic view of leadership where leaders are followers as they lead, challenging the historically static view of leadership and the changes it creates.

Socialization is an ongoing process that is important for established organizational members resulting in a need for a greater understanding of re-socialization. If a newcomer chooses to challenge existing norms within the workplace, the socialization process can become difficult for all involved if the veterans resist these challenges, potentially resulting in re-socialization of the established members. Because high school counselors have entered a profession where flexibility and accommodation are highly prized traits, a newcomer may defer to the expectations of the veterans. A newcomer may also choose to leave the environment, seeking a different context to utilize their skills, knowledge and abilities. Scholars have attended to these “stresses and strains inside the group, forcing new learning and adaptation” (Schein, 1990, p. 115). Professionals working in public education have changed adapted, adopted, and resisted educational reform while trying to maintain their historical roots and professional identities (Bemak, 2000).

Chapter Summary

Leadership based on position continues to be a definition accepted by many, including those who work in the field of education. The building principal is perceived as the leader and continues to be charged with a multitude of managerial tasks that are dependent on his/her decision-making as the “head” of those who work in that physical space. Teacher leadership is

emerging as a new arena in this context, but the concept of shared leadership is new to educators and there continues to be a reliance on the individual leader (the principal) who is in charge, guiding followers in a linear relationship, much like the row of ants who follow their leader to a food source in a single line, returning to their home in the same single line. The new leadership model relies on a leader that people “want to follow rather than someone they have to follow” (Pellicer, 2008, p. 22).

Rost (1991) challenges leadership theory to move beyond the “industrial leadership paradigm” (p. 180) and instead move to a “postindustrial school of leadership” (Rost, 1991, p. 181). Rost proposes he has begun the work of establishing this model but there is much work to be done and the process will be ongoing, not static. This new model could ultimately result in the transformation of the paradigms that govern society, including schools. It is well suited as a beginning model for the changing work and role of the school counselor.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Educational reform over the past two decades, particularly initiatives and policies associated with accountability and outcome based education, has provoked and compelled change in the work of high school counselors. Most notably, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) created standards for school counselors and adopted a new counseling model. Both efforts attempt to exercise some influence over the purpose, process, and product of reform related revision of the profession. The concern of the association's leadership centers on the potential impact and/or infringement on scope of practice issues, including legal and ethical considerations, given modification of counselor duties and responsibilities by administrators and policy makers at district and state levels. Studies of counseling practitioners offer an assessment of the profession and contribute to ongoing deliberation about its changing nature and future. Given the strengths and weaknesses of previous research on school counseling, as presented in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the following chapter presents the methodology employed to address the following questions: (a) How do high school counselors perceive and experience their work? (b) How does the work of high school counselors incorporate, respond, or contribute to school reform initiatives? and (c) What are the implications of such understandings for social justice and leadership in the work of high school counselors?

Chapter three is organized into several sections to facilitate discussion of the decisions and processes used for gathering and analyzing data. The chapter proceeds with a description of the analytic autoethnographic nature of the study. The section also includes and clarifies key issues relevant to issues pertinent to researcher as instrument. Next, the chapter provides a discussion of the process of participant selection. A short narrative describing each participant is

given. Third, the primary procedures of data collection including explanation of the interview protocols is offered, as well as secondary or supporting data gathered through observation and artifact. Data management and analysis issues are identified in the chapter's fourth section. The next section gives attention to research ethics. The chapter's conclusion is offered in a discussion of the study's limitations.

Analytic Autoethnography

Many proponents of qualitative research proclaim the merits of its subjective, inductive, and emergent methodology (Lutz & Ramsey, 1974; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The goodness of qualitative research, as Peshkin (1993) argued in an article by that name, arises from these characteristics. Peshkin noted that the four outcomes of qualitative investigation—description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation—each find substantive footing in the flexible, sensitive, comprehensive, intimate, selective, and contextual approach to answers about the materialistic, processual, and phenomenological worlds. Freeman et al. (2007) in rejecting efforts to set standards of evidence for qualitative inquiry stated that “Quality is constructed and maintained continuously throughout the life of a research project and includes decisions that researchers make as they interact with those they study and as they consider their analyses, interpretations, and representations of data” (p. 27) rather than being achieved through adherence to prescriptive conventions and de-contextual dictates. I share these assertions both as explanation and justification for pursuing an analytic autoethnographic study.

I must confess that I did not begin with the intent of conducting a study in which biography played such an important role. The tasks of interviewing counselors as participants and analyzing other data gathered from fieldwork in the schools, however, became a pathway that opened onto reflection including not only what participants were sharing about counseling

but on my professional experiences in counseling. The reflexive turn is not surprising given my career as a high school counselor and employment as a central office administrator possessing duties that require my working with individuals who occupy the role. The salience of my biography in data collection and analysis is probably one that I should have predicted but did not. Atkinson (2006) defined reflexivity in ethnography as “the ineluctable fact that the ethnographer is thoroughly implicated in the phenomena that he or she documents, that there can be no disengaged observation of a social scene that exists in a ‘state of nature’ independent of the observer’s presence, that interview accounts are co-constructed with informants, that ethnographic texts have their own conventions of representation.” (p. 402)

The stories participants’ shared, their problems and hopes, their perceived successes and failures evoked memories, feelings, and insights of similar and sometimes not so comparable students, events, goals, judgments, etc., given my history as a counselor. Rather than suppress or ignore the occurrence of these cognitive phenomena, I endeavored to recognize their influence and make their connection, applicability, and meaning comprehensible and explicit. Through such inquiry I was able to critique and challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions and accumulated knowledge based largely on my lived practice. Embracing the strengths of this methodology was gradual and one that proceeded given consultation with my dissertation advisor about the implications of such choice.

Analytic autoethnography facilitated a critical examination of my biases, values, and attitudes which have become deeply engrained given years of counseling high school students and working closely with parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators to support student growth and learning. Anderson (2006) defined analytic autoethnography as a study “in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in

the researcher's published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena" (p. 375). Anderson further divides these qualities into five key features: (a) complete member researcher (CMR), (b) analytic reflexivity, (c) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (d) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (e) commitment to theoretical analysis.

Each of these characteristics can now be discussed as they pertain to or are evident in the study. Before I proceed, however, I acknowledge that both the process and product of the investigation represent the effort of a novice researcher. I made mistakes of omission and commission in collecting, managing, analyzing, and writing about the assembled data. The dissertation process was one which helped me learn much about myself both personally and professionally and yet promises, I believe, to add to the literature on school counseling.

Anderson's (2006) first criteria for an analytic autoethnography is full or complete membership in the group under study. For 23 years I earned my livelihood as a high school counselor or worked closely in with those who occupied the position. Most notably, I worked as a counselor in three different high schools during my career. I found myself drawing on the memories of those experiences while designing the interview questions, conducting the interviews, and analyzing the data. I did not anticipate the saliency of my high school counseling experience as prior to beginning the study I had taken a new position as a central office administrator. Working in the central office entailed much that was similar to counseling at the building level, except that I was not assigned a specific case load. I was extensively involved in working with students and families who have been "pushed out" of the system, often acting as their last stop before they pursue a GED (i.e., General Education Diploma) in lieu of continuing with their education in the high school setting. Also noteworthy was my retirement during the

final year of the study. Despite such change, I found that I largely filtered my perceptions and continued to be perceived by others given my relationships and experiences when I employed as a high school counselor.

In addition, the intersection of my biography and the research design entailed another feature that may have reinforced or contributed to my belonging to the group, both in my perception and that of my participants. The central office administrative position I held was in the large urban district where I conducted some of my interviews. The juxtaposition of roles was difficult at times as I was tempted to step out of the role of central office administrator when at a meeting and ask questions related to my research. There were also opportunities during the interviews to probe and gather information that would have informed my administrative work. When these experiences occurred, I was reminded of the decision to keep the roles separate and the discussion with my chair about the vigilance required in doing so. Thus, while attempted to differentiate the two, I did not always succeed and I am sure many of the participants also failed to do so even though I explicitly discussed with participants the separation of my role as a researcher and my role as administrator. In my invitation to participants I purposefully stated that they were under no obligation to accept my request. Yet, in drawing attention to the separateness of these roles I made reference to my position in the district and thus inadvertently referenced my positionality.

The decision to differentiate or attend to one or the other of the roles rested on ethical considerations. As noted above, I did not want to impose on my colleagues to accept my offer of involvement based on my position in the district. I feared that comingling the two would in some way result in violation of research ethics. I also, and maybe more salient than the prior concern, feared that in doing both I was reducing my ability to perform either. As the study progressed,

however, I came to see both fears as exaggerated. Most notably, I found that the concerns evident in my employment aligned with those of my research. In many respects, my inquiry into school counseling informed my administrative efforts.

While I had worried that the counselors might not want to participate, none declined my invitation. My anxiety then extended to thoughts that school counselors would guardedly respond to my questions. What I found through the interviews was that generally individuals spoke openly with me about their setting, colleagues, role, successes, and challenges. A few individuals hesitated to describe some aspects their relationship or concerns about particular individuals with whom they worked. When I felt that an interviewee was withholding my reaction during the interviews was to provide reassurance of confidentiality. I purposefully decided not to probe specific questions when I felt that participants were being cautious. In analyzing the interviews, the decision to repeat assurance of confidentiality rather than push participants, appeared by and large to have been appropriate. Participant responses to questions in no way appeared coerced or pestered. The interviews strengthened my rapport with participants. More than a few participants invited me back at the end of the interview.

I surmise that some participant responses may have been guarded because of their fear of how I might have perceived them as a central office administrator, even though in the interview process I emphasized my role as researcher. Some participants may also have been concerned about perceptions that I might have taken away about those whom they discussed, including other counselor colleagues, teachers, or administrators. Again, reassurances that the information would remain confidential in reviewing the transcripts appeared to help ease these fears somewhat, for there were many instances in which participants shared sensitive information. The decision not to probe when participants hesitated, however, generated transcripts that at times

failed to convey a richness or depth of description about some issues. The reassurance of confidentiality encouraged or allowed interviewees to share or gloss over the particulars on sensitive topics.

I feel that my personal and professional relationships with participants were an asset going into the interview process. The process of interviewing and observing participants strengthened my association. The relationship I possessed, the position I held in the district, and my prior visibility in the professional associations helped me gain access to participants. And yet the downside of my relationship was the potential for self censoring as participants feared what I would think, say, or do based on what they shared in the interviews. Yet, my membership in the group provided a resources or foundation from which I could compare, evaluate, and interpret school counselor responses to “bring to the surface their own underlying assumptions and articulate how they basically perceive the world around them” (Schein, 2000, p. 112). Thus, in listening and analyzing data gathered through the interviews I endeavored to interpret the influence of cultural conventions implicitly and explicitly present in participants’ answers to my questions.

Atkinson and Delamont (2006) reject the tendency in autoethnographic research to treat, even celebrate, narrative as somehow in and of itself uncovering or containing an authentic voice. Denzin (2006) using provocative prose, however, pointed out the merit and value of evocative autoethnography countering to some degree the sting of those who criticize and belittle research that purports a good story rather than abstract analysis. Yet, for this dissertation I elected not to follow his or Ellis and Bocher (2006) guidance or plea to write evocative autoethnography. The analysis and conclusions adhere to theoretical concerns, for I found myself like Sparks (2000) unsettled by the notion that “a good story was not enough. Clearly, I felt the

need to add something to the story in order to signal it as scholarship rather than as literature, or something else altogether” (p. 28).

Indeed, I began the study intent on writing a dissertation that conformed or respected traditional conventions of scholarship. I strived to conduct and represent both process and product in ways that suggested or embraced research objectivity as more desirable and credible than subjectivity. In successive and sometimes frustrating discussions with my advisor, it became apparent that the invisibility that I was striving for was an impossible goal. My advisor recommended a new approach, that of including my reflections and journaling in the analysis. Initially, my presence in the narrative was less evident. Attending to the purpose of understanding the work of high school counselors through the stories, descriptions, and explanations provided by participants, myself included, I became visible in the study. This process allowed me greater freedom and ultimately led to deeper analysis of the participants’ responses. My own experiences were “incorporated into the story and considered as vital data for understanding” (Anderson, 2006, p. 384).

The process of gathering and analyzing data for the dissertation revealed the struggle in my high school counseling experience of leadership for social justice. As I reflected on my past and current work, I came to appreciate the dynamic nature of the work and recognition of the difficulty in assessing the outcome as being either that of failure or success. There are major limitations to determining the desired goal or outcome of counseling since it involves making such assessment based on the student’s needs and abilities. Even further, counselors are limited in their knowledge that a particular action in the process may or may not lead to the next step being toward a desired goal. Sometimes a backward step leads to a breakthrough such that a major insight is gained by the student, which results in more work and ultimately resolution of

the issue. In contrast to this, what might appear as a step forward rather than becoming the catalyst for change acts to stifle or suppress the need to correct a particular life trajectory.

Listening to counselors share their concerns brought to my awareness the doubts and questions I felt about related interactions with students from my past. Writing in ways that suppressed these thoughts and experiences essentially prevented me from processing what and how I was coming to understand about school counseling. Thus, there were times when I drifted toward evocative autoethnography and the pull “self-absorbed digression” (Anderson, 2006, p. 385). My advisor was helpful in this arena, bringing me back to balance in writing about the work that I believed reflected and respected what participants had shared about their hopes and fears. Insights lead toward the typology and interpretation offered in chapter four about the dissertation.

I should also point out that I shared my developing analysis not only with my advisor, but turned to other graduate students to explain and assess the nature of my research. The act of having to defend my decisions, description, and inductive reasoning in conversations with peers including my advisor revealed gaps in my writing. While such exercises were frustrating and exhilarating, sometimes even at the same time, the questions my peers asked identified areas where I was missing or had not seen some important understanding. The process of sharing what I had collected, analyzed, and written helped me to go beyond what I was seeing to what the reader could see. This enabled me to transcend “my” world to enter “the” world and be able to analyze in a more complex manner the data that I had gathered. I now appreciate Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) advice of peer review as part of triangulation. The developed description and typology presented in chapter four provide clear evidence that through this process of research I had gone beyond myself, beyond evoking attention to important concerns. The findings offered

in the following chapter provide evidence for what Anderson offers as his fifth feature of analytic autoethnography or commitment to an analytic agenda.

Anderson (2006) cautioned analytic autoethnographers about pitfalls in this research process and I recognize that I fell prey to these. At times, I became so emotionally involved in the interviews that I failed to take adequate field notes which would have enhanced the recorded words of the participants. I also did not pursue the interpretations, attitudes, and feelings of the participants to the degree that I could have or should have. Greater diligence in these areas might have resulted in richer data and more meaningful analysis of that data.

Anderson (2006) also reflected that analytic autoethnography is “somewhat unique in that it is particularly likely to be warranted by the quest for self-understanding” (p. 390). Understanding myself and how I function on the personal and professional levels were greatly enhanced by this process of gathering and analyzing data for the dissertation, especially in the areas of social justice and leadership. I left a secure position that became untenable to me because of new and clearer insights about my values generated through the dissertation. I also have become more involved in social justice causes. I am no longer content to sit on the sidelines or share my opinions about issues of equity for students. I am striving in my life to exhibit greater commitment to taking action based on my beliefs.

Participants and Setting

As a high school counselor of 23 years, I believed I had an understanding of the work that high school counselors do. During this period of time I had developed relationships with many high school counselors, both on a personal and professional level and felt they would be willing to talk with me about the work they do. Indeed, complaining and bragging about work related issues were not an insignificant part of the many opportunities or events when school counselors

gather. At the assembly of counselors for professional training provided by the district or smaller meetings of a few associates to assist in trouble shooting, I had seen or been part of discussions where feelings about the profession were shared. Even at private events in homes, shop talk was not an infrequent subject of conversation or debate.

The process of identifying participants began with review of the literature for guidance. Gender, experience, training, and ASCA membership were variables for which I selected participants. I held no intention of creating a representative sample. Rather, I purposefully invited participants who represented a wide spectrum of the counselors in the area. Participants in the sample were of both genders. Of the 14 interviewees selected for study, four were male. Nationally, the percentage of male to female high school counselors reflects this balance. Locally, in the large urban school district in which most of the participants were employed, six of the 30 are male. The other smaller districts also mirror this proportion. In the selection process I also endeavored to assemble a sample that possessed high school counselors whose ages and years of experience varied. I wanted several participants who had been counseling for many years and some who had been in the profession for just a few years. I also thought it would be informative to include counselors who were doing this as a second or third career. The number of years of education required for degree and certification in school counseling resulted in the youngest counselors being among those with the fewest years experience. Further, the recent adoption of the National Model by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) means that participants with fewer than nine years of experience tend to be those whose graduate training program would have included the model. An additional feature of exposure to the National Model would be membership in ASCA. Nationally, about 25% of school counselors are members of ASCA (retrieved from ASCA personnel, 8/2008). The low percentage of association

affiliation by practitioners has been attributed to its cost and exposes the weakness of reliance on study findings derived from surveys of its membership registry. The state level affiliates of ASCA are less expensive and possess greater rates of participation. I purposefully made invitation to counselors, therefore, who I knew were members of ASCA at the national level and not members of the state level affiliate. The participant selection process resulted in my invitation of 14 colleagues to participate in the study. The years of experience in school counseling, years of experience in their buildings, trained in the ASCA National Model, ASCA member, and member in the state affiliate for each of the 14 participants is presented below in Table 1.

Later reflection during and after the interviews, I came to see how my choice of these participants had been guided to include individuals who had influenced me or for whom I had been an influence. This feature of the research may have also contributed to the autoethnographic direction in which the study headed. I was unconsciously “guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through examining one’s actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others” (Anderson, 2006, p. 382). This intentionality resulted in similar starting points for the majority of the interviews in that the common ground that was shared allowed for greater freedom by the participants to reveal their successes and frustrations about their work. Instead of focusing outward, I turned inward and chose participants based on the relationships I had forged with them, anticipating the nature of our interaction would make it more likely that they would be open and honest to my queries (Creswell, 2003).

Table 1

Study Participants

Pseudonym	Experience	Building	Training	National	State
Gary	37	18	No	No	No
Jack	35	7	No	No	No
Henrietta	20	9	No	No	Yes
Alice	15	2	No	Yes	No
Pat	12	5	No	Yes	Yes
Mary	10	10	No	Yes	Yes
Scout	10	6	No	No	Yes
Ann	8	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Phil	8	1	Yes	No	No
Dennis	5	1	Yes	No	No
Valerie	3	3	Yes	No	Yes
Carol	3	3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madonna	2	2	Yes	No	Yes
Larry	1	1	Yes	No	Yes

One of the important demographic characteristics of high school counselors not present in the study given the 14 participants selected was race or ethnic classification. There were only two school counselors of color among the 30 high school counselors employed in the large urban school district. There were no high school counselors of color in the smaller suburban districts. I did not invite either of the two counselors of color to participate in the study. There was no

purposeful decision on my part to exclude counselors of color. Rather the action was more unintended as I failed to satisfactorily attend to this aspect of diversity. Given the autoethnographic direction of the study, the selection of White participants would not necessarily be viewed as problematic for I am a White woman. I do recognize, however, that the inclusion of persons of color could have provided valuable insights into how I and my fellow White counselors perceive the profession given this marker of privilege. Further, unlike the male high school counselors, if one or both counselors of color had accepted an offer to participate, I could not have kept their identity confidential. To protect their identity I would have had to alter how I reported their race or ethnicity. I believe a change of this order would have to have modified too important of an aspect of their biography. The lack of representation of persons of color denotes an important delimitation of the study's findings. The discrepancy between the number of counselors of color in these districts given the number and percentage of students of color signals an important quality and deficiency for social justice given the context of the system of public education to which I can apply the description, analysis, and interpretation offered in this study about the work of high school counselors.

All of the participants worked at high schools in a large urban area in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. The majority of the school counselors worked in the same large school district, which is one of the largest in this part of the country. The remainder of the participants worked in smaller suburban districts surrounding the large school district.

The participants worked in high schools of varying size. The smallest high school possessed an enrollment of 1400 students. The largest high school enrolled 2000 students. The majority of the students in these schools were White and middle class. Anchoring the two ends of the spectrum was one high school with 70% of its students qualified for free and reduced price

meals and 78% White, while the other had 17% free and reduced price meals with 92% of students classified as White. Student academic performance in these high schools reflected does not deviate from what has been observed in schools generally; the schools with greater proportion of students from privileged backgrounds demonstrated higher levels of achievement on state mandated accountability tests.

Participant Profiles

Gary was approaching retirement at the time of his interview, and he was the most reflective of all the participants. His career in education spanned 37 years, including teaching experience at a residential facility and a middle school. He had been a school counselor in one middle school and two high schools. The past 18 years of his career has been spent in the same high school. Gary's interview reflected his strong sense of self and a clear understanding of his role and position on the faculty, in his department, and as part of the building leadership team. Gary's emotional commitment to his work was reflected throughout his responses to the interview questions, including one response that was disrupted by his pausing in order to hold back tears when he spoke about his connection to the students with whom he worked. Gary explained that his work was challenging and that he believe, "you are only as good as the last kid you saw or the last conference you had."

Jack, another veteran with 35 years of experience, mirrored much of what was revealed in Gary's interview, though his soft-spoken manner provided a veil over the emotional layer that was more obvious in Gary's interview. Jack's professional experience was based on eight years as a middle school teacher, one year as an elementary counselor, and the rest of his career was spent at the high school level as a school counselor. He had spent the past seven years working the building he was currently assigned. Jack revealed in the interview his understanding of the

authority that he held as a school counselor, and saw himself and other counselors as essential members of the building leadership team. Gary and Jack noted their strong advocacy role, with Jack describing that work as “helping that kid to find their voice.” Jack clearly articulated his role as a change agent and reflected on the “challenges around that.” He knew leadership was not easy and that it was a process that required “an awareness of what we are doing and what it is we can improve.”

Henrietta and Alice the most senior female counselors I interviewed shared similarities. Henrietta had 20 years of experience and Alice possessed 15 years of experience. Both had a strong commitment to student advocacy. Henrietta initially worked as a drug/alcohol counselor who then moved into the high school setting, with 11 years in one building and the remainder of her experience in her current setting. Henrietta appeared to be frustrated and angry throughout the interview process, and referred to the administrative team as “they” with an adversarial tone in her voice. Henrietta’s discouragement was reflected in her final comments when she said, “I’ve been doing this job for a long time. Should I be doing something different because I feel frustrated?”

Alice did not express the level of frustration that was found in Henrietta’s interview. Student advocacy was her first priority, but she also included the adults (parents/guardians) in that advocacy process. Her comments reflected a connection to her counseling team; administrators were included but were still somewhat separate and held power that she did not feel that she had as a school counselor.

Pat, Mary and Scout, all females with 10-12 years of experience possessed many commonalities in their career paths and shared a number of similar perspectives given their responses to interview questions. All three had spent the majority of their careers in one building,

with the exception of Pat who had worked part-time in another building for several years. They reflected a strong sense of student advocacy and also believed their authority gave them a status that aligned them with the building leadership team. Their response to this authority was very different from each other, with Mary embracing it, Pat reluctant to acknowledge it, and Scout somewhat embarrassed by it.

Ann and Phil had worked as school counselors for eight years, Ann in two different buildings, following two years of working as a substitute counselor working in a variety of buildings. Prior to that, she taught high school for 10 years in one building. Ann did not perceive herself to be part of any leadership team or leadership activities, but did reflect that she was working with teaching staff, coaching them to do a better job of communicating with each other and with counselors around student progress and student needs. Student advocacy was present in her response but not a major emphasis.

Phil had worked as a school counselor in two buildings prior to his current assignment, and this was his first year in that building. While he expressed a strong sense of student advocacy, there was no specific mention of leadership in his interview, nor was there any implication of power or authority in any of his responses.

The final participants varied in years of experience. I interviewed one first year counselor, Larry. Madonna was in her second year. Valerie and Carol were both in their third year of school counseling. Dennis was in his fifth year counseling but first year in this state. Each of these participants reflected an understanding of their role as student advocate, but only one, Valerie, communicated an understanding of the authority she held as a school counselor. Valerie was a middle-aged woman in her second career. The other less experienced counselors

were much younger, all under 30 years of age. Valerie expressed her belief that “we’re the experts in certain areas” and shared that “everybody comes to the counselors.”

In summary, I found all the participants eager to tell their story and they were committed to their work with the high school-aged population. The more experienced participants provided more reflection and greater detail, possibly because of the variety provided by more years in the field. Understanding of the ASCA model was implied by all participants even though only half had received formal education or training in that model in their professional training. While all understood the model, not all had incorporated it into which they were as a professional and the work that they did.

Data Collection

The process of data collection began with identification of participants, which has been discussed above. These purposefully selected participants were chosen because of their relationship with me and because I believed they could help me gain a deeper understanding about the work of high school counselors. Access to several participants in the largest school district was initiated as part of course requirements as part of my doctoral program in Educational Leadership at Washington State University (WSU). All other participants gave permission for interviews and observations after the dissertation committee had reviewed and approved the proposal. After the committee agreed to the study, I submitted a request to the WSU Institutional Review Board to extend the initial research project and specified the modifications to the interview protocol and other aspects of the purpose and design of the study.

Prior to the interviews, participants were contacted and a time allotment of one hour was requested for interviewing. Most of the interviews were completed in the hour, but there were a few that lasted longer. Because all participants are busy professionals, the request of specific

time duration provided the participants the opportunity to determine where best to fit the interview during their day. The pilot research project prompted me to take this approach because interviews for that study were held outside of the school day in restaurants, coffee shops, or the individuals' homes. The resulting responses were difficult to hear, family interruptions disrupted the flow of some of the interviews, and the public nature of some of the settings may have affected participant willingness to respond to questions.

All high school counselors who I approached and invited to participate in the study were initially very willing to be interviewed and observed. No one rejected my request or turned me down. In my experience, school counselors tend to be supportive of each other. I also believe that the profession attracts persons who are by nature introspective and as such open to participating in activities of such nature. I also believe that participants wanted to share their knowledge and opinion with me. My research provided them an opportunity to speak and I recognized a certain trust that my work would be influenced by their voice (Wolcott, 2001). During the interviews, however, I occasionally discerned wariness on the part of a couple of participants. For example, concern was reflected in the question by one participant of asked, "Who's hearing this?" This comment came during the first interview, which causing me to be especially conscientious at the beginning of each interview to clarify my role as researcher and student, not colleague or central office administrator. The confidential nature of the interview content was also reinforced both at the beginning and end of each interview and is specified in the consent form which each signed prior to the start of the interview.

The interviews for the dissertation were conducted in the late winter of 2007 and early spring in 2008. The majority of the interviews were gathered in late winter and early spring because I felt that this was the time that school counselors had the most control over their daily

schedule. I am aware that their responses to my questions might have differed had these same questions been asked at the beginning of a school year or fall. It seems like everyone in school, has more energy and is more optimistic about work during the beginning of the school year. At the end of the school year or during spring, educators and students alike tend to struggle or exhibit signs of tiring. Since most of the interviews took place during the middle of the instructional phase of the academic calendar, it was not surprising to hear reference to both physical and emotional exhaustion in participant responses. Some interviews were held prior to a weeklong spring break. In these comments a physical tiredness of the respondents was particularly pronounced.

A semi-structured interview guide was used for the interviews (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The protocol is presented in Appendix B. This format allowed for consistency of information gathered and provided opportunities for probing when clarification was needed. Because of past or present personal or professional relationships with the participants, I was aware that this was not a neutral process. In addition, during the process of coding and writing, it became apparent that I did not probe adequately, either because the participant did not seem interested in providing further discussion to my requests for information, or because I failed to discern the importance of following up on a specific response. Familiarity with the participants, vocabulary, practices, etc., at times manifested itself through or in the assumption that I knew what was being talked about. I did know in many cases, for I was an insider, but I believe that my claims would be strengthened or that I could be more confident in what I interpreted from their interviews had I asked for clarification, examples, or used other strategies to elicit or check my understanding.

The interview protocol employed in this study was adapted from the pilot study that was a part of course requirements. The focus of the pilot study was counselors in one high school. I interviewed all counselors working in that building and interviewed the building principal too. The questions were explicit to the National Model and the challenges that I knew counselors were experiencing given leadership within the team as well as that of their administrator. I was seeking in this study to garner information about how these counselors understood their role as student advocate and function in a high school setting given the new model and the issues surrounding resistance to its implementation.

The conclusions that emerged from this study led me to further question the direction and role of the high school counselor and how the National Model was being interpreted or could be seen as manifest in counselor work in schools. My approach in the interview was that of asking the participants to tell their story, beginning with how they came to work as a high school counselor. My intent in beginning with this question was to help participants start to talk about themselves and build my rapport with them as a researcher. The protocol next contained several questions that sought more specific information about what they felt motivated their work as a counselor. I asked a question about rewards and another about challenges. In these questions I was delving into the nature of their work, their satisfaction with the work, the kind of issues manifested in their high school setting.

The next question was more explicit and asked participants to talk about their role and responsibilities. This question was followed by one attempted to return back to problems they were encountering and to describe problems or contradictions that they saw as part of their work. Through this strategy, I gave participants time to reflect on what they had earlier responded and perhaps give more thoughtful responses or elaborate on some of the ideas. It also provided

something of a check to assess the difference between what they found frustrating, which I intended to expose issues where their personal values were in play, as opposed to contradictions or problems that may or may not be emotionally charged. Participants were asked to describe their work with students, families, teachers and principals. The goal of asking these questions was to gain an understanding of the scope of their work and how their role might change with different constituencies.

In a number of cases, I followed up the interviews after they were transcribed. The questions I asked in these situations generally probed for details that I had missed. For example, asking “What did you mean when you said?” is such a probe. Although I did not stick to this particular question, it captures the essence of the ones I did.

Data were also collected through observations of counselors. Through the analysis of the interviews specific high school counselors were selected for observation. Counselors selected for observation were those who discussed duties, responsibilities, or interactions that I found to illuminate key issues contained in the questions identified for study. Observations were made by attending counselor department meetings or shadowing counselors as they worked with students or staff. Thus, observations of selected activities that participants felt comfortable sharing and having my presence were collected as part of data collection procedures. Field notes were not taken during the observation. When I exited the field I jotted down from memory the features of the observation that were salient. Included in these field notes were not only specifics about the factual events I observed, but I included my thoughts and hunches about what it was that I had seen. I elected to follow this process since I believed it would be the least intimidating for the participants as well as simulate my recall. The development of field in this manner relegated them to a secondary role in the study’s analysis and findings.

When I was in the field I gathered artifacts as appropriate. For example, I requested or obtained handouts, memorandum, and other such materials in the course of the observations. In the interviews, I asked participants if they could share copies of the various artifacts they identified. For example, one participant talked about a letter she had received from a former student. My request for a copy was kindly granted. Archival information such as reports, school newspapers, and other like products were also identified and added to the accumulated data for study.

In order to explain the final source of data collected for study I must share something of my process of analyzing data. I can now appreciate the position that many qualitative researchers forward in rejecting the separation of fact and interpretation for any process of recording experience. The task of collecting data transforms experience making it an abstraction (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Data collection is not an undertaking of merely mirroring reality in some form or fashion. Gathering data weaves into what is recorded a set of analytical challenges, assumptions, and decisions. Participants were eager to tell their stories, especially those anecdotes that reflected their work around intervention. The relationships created in this intensive work evoked strong emotional responses from the participants as they revealed stories of loss, trauma, grief, or a variety of other significant issues that their clientele faced on a daily basis.

These stories triggered my own memories and emotional responses to a variety of students with whom I had worked over the course of 23 years as a high school counselor. As stated previously, I shared with my advisor that which I noticed. I heard what participants were sharing through my experience and the direction I received was to write. I wrote so that I could read what I was remembering. I wrote so that I could see how what I was thinking and feeling

was or was not present in what my participants were telling me about their work as high school counselors. I wrote because I wanted to remember. I wrote and in writing I understood more clearly the mistakes I had made, the challenges I had helped students overcome, the significance of the educational reform both its potential for success and failure to make a difference for each child and the great responsibility of school counselors in this increasingly complex, unforgiving, one standard fits all world called high school.

Data Management and Analysis

I conducted all interviews and transcribed them. Transcriptions were kept in a locked cabinet in my office and electronic copies were stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer. Notes taken during the interviews were also stored in a locked cabinet and a research log reflecting on the interviews was also stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer. I deleted the recorded tapes.

The analysis of data and the subsequent narrative that emerged from that analysis was a layered process that evolved over a period of months. The initial coding of the interviews and analysis were simultaneous to their collection. The process of analyzing and writing challenged me as Wolcott (2001) stated to portray “real people doing and saying real things” (p. 111). He continued by pointing out that such revelation identifies not only the window through which humans see, but an important way which helps us understand. In the initial coding process, several broad themes emerged as pertaining to the various kinds of activities and duties that were present in the work of each participant. I also created categories for those experiences that participants noted as funny, sad, troubling, positive, and negative. Categories were developed around practices involving students, teachers, counselors, and administrators. All of these various codes and categorizes were sorted investigated for patterns, particularly as they pertained

to participants. The results reflected little consensus among participants about their leadership in furthering social justice as well as high levels of frustration with education reform and its impact on students.

This awareness, combined with discussions with my advisor, led me to do further reading on leadership and the interviews were then coded again. I continued to research social justice theory, leadership theory, and added a dimension of professional socialization as I examined differing responses by the participants. Advocacy became apparent as more interviews were transcribed, though I also found the role of advocate to be based more on their individual work than systems work. I read and re-read interview transcripts, coded responses on index cards, and created charts organizing those cards. As I examined the analytic materials generated by the process the importance of high school counselors as coaches became evident. Some participants stated the role of advocate explicitly, but more often this role was implied in their response, as participants described their work to support and confront challenges to students, staff, and parents/guardians.

There were also other categories that I noted as I coded the transcripts that I associated with other patterns and themes that eventually, through discussions with my advisor, led to development of a typology of school counselor responsibility including three areas of intervention, guidance and administration as defined and contrasted using six attributes of professional socialization, problems, role, power, authority, and rewards. Specifically, I aligned the role of coach and advocate first with several categories that became the basis for naming the kinds of problems which were handled in coaching or advocating, the nature of the rewards, and how power was expressed in these situations. Later analysis would make clear the labels for these attributes as well as adding two others: socialization and authority. Several other concepts

surfaced too that I eventually rejected given lack of consistency and/or support as I compared and contrasted what I interpreted as intervention with other areas of responsibility that I was using to group codes together.

An important strategy in this process was reflecting and writing about my work and how my values and behavior related to each other. This then allowed me to critique my assumptions by probing and analyzing my participants' responses. This reflection pushed me as I gained a deeper understanding of what I was studying and I came to examine how my biases inhibited and enhanced the analytical process. Unsurprisingly, I acquired a clearer picture of the ways my beliefs and assumptions were guiding how I coded and interpreted collected data. Noting my assumptions, I could re-examine participant responses to look for other and different ways that high school counselors influence behavior than those that I had practiced or valued. This task of my analysis was the most challenging, but I continued this layered and repetitive process critiquing and organizing coded data into the emerging typology. Though sometimes confusing, the analytic process revealed multiple layers of ambiguity in the participants' responses. For example, the routine nature of the guidance work of the high school counselor revealed as much caring and support as did intervention. The participants were consistent in their responses around caring and encouragement of the students with whom they worked, always maintaining a positive future focus, whether the result was successfully completing a single course, completing high school, or being accepted at a prestigious college or university.

I found conversations with my advisor helpful, though sometimes difficult. In this process, he helped me to challenge my personal biases, while simultaneously supporting me to clarify and sharpen my insights, detail and describe the simple as well as the complex, and

recognize when I had something or when I needed to look again. Research is complex and difficult and I learned that it is not easily mastered.

Ethics

Each participant was given a brief verbal explanation of my role as a researcher pursuing a doctoral degree in educational leadership through Washington State University. I took great care not to talk specifically about leadership in these introductory remarks, as my advisor and I had numerous conversations about leadership or social justice and how I might gain more valuable information by not establishing this context for the interviews. Rather, the school counselors were asked to comment on their role, their work and their relationships with a variety of constituents, including teachers, students, parents/guardians and principals.

Each participant was told their responses would be confidential and all transcriptions were typed with pseudonyms. The chart matching pseudonyms with names was kept in a locked file and no one other than the researcher saw it.

The Washington State Institutional Review Board approved the initial study protocol in March, 2007, and an extension was granted in February, 2008. The risks of harm were minimal and no harm came to participants as a result of the study. While there were times when participants appeared a little nervous, I respected their rights and did not pester or cajole them to answer or discuss concerns that they were uncomfortable sharing. Indeed, most participants left the interviews and observations feeling like they had a better sense of their work and expressed pleasure in being included.

Limitations

The findings of the study were limited given the heavy dependence on data collected through interviews. Although efforts were made to include observations and collect artifacts, the

accumulated data were predominately those acquired by interviewing participants. One of the major reasons for the limited observational data was my decision to keep separate as much as possible my research activities from those of my professional work life. This decision limited my ability to engage in observations. Further, the process of generating field notes from participant observations negatively impacted both the quantity and quality of the transcribed field notes used during analysis. Specifically, limited notes were jotted during the observations. Researcher memory became the major mechanism for recording observations.

Another important limitation was the lack of triangulation to verify participant reports using interviews of other educators including teachers and administrators with whom the participants worked. The analysis did, however, triangulate findings across participants. Yet, the weakness of such analysis leaves questions related to misperceptions shared by participants given their common experience as counselors. The purposes of the study centered on explicating of the work of high school counselors given their perception. Thus the study fulfills such research objective. The “reality” of these individuals was individual and socially constructed, reflecting their own unique perspectives of their professional role and the work they do (Clark & Amatea, 2005, p. 133).

I selected 14 high school counselors to participate in the study. All participants were practicing professionals employed in school districts located in a large urban center of the Pacific Northwest. The sample was not intended to generate findings generalizable to the population of counselors from which they came. Rather the participants were purposefully selected given gender, experience, training, and ASCA membership. The interview and other collected data may therefore reflect educational reform concerns pertinent to high school counseling in urban districts which tend to be more responsive changing social, economic, and cultural forces.

A noteworthy limitation of the sample is identified in its lack of ethnic or racial diversity. The sample selection process delineated above provides a thorough discussion of this aspect of the research methods. In short, the inclusion of persons of color could have provided valuable insights and enriched the findings presented in upcoming chapter four.

A final concern about the sample selected for this study involves their prior relationship with me. The high school counselors included individuals who had influenced me or for whom I had been an influence. There was not specific intention to choose participants given this criterion. It was only through the analysis that and my memories that were stimulated during the interviews and observations about my professional experiences that I came to see the saliency of this component of the study. I began a reflective journal to record my members and eventually would shift the study to that of analytic autoethnography.

The limitations of analytic autoethnography were described by Anderson (2006) largely because most of analytic autoethnography is based on a variation of the “professional stranger” role (p. 390). I was a full participant given my 23 years of experience working as or with high school counselors. I attempted to mitigate some of the weaknesses or criticisms directed at autoethnographic research through grounding the data analysis and writing more in the words of my participants than data evident in my reflective journal. My positionality and voice in the study is made plain and while some may see this as a limitation, I argue that it presents strength. Explicit treatment is given to my biases and assumptions. The findings clearly facilitate the reader’s assessment and ability to determine what questions or aspects merit consideration for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The latest effort to restructure the position of school counselors began with the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) adoption of the National Standards and subsequent National Model. The profession of school counseling is in transition as administrators and counselors enact change that seeks improvement and alignment of the position to educational reform initiatives. Various scholars criticize previous research on the emerging and amended function of school counselors for methodological weaknesses that prevent clear understanding of contradictions and challenges experienced by practitioners in the field (Dahir, 2007; Galassi & Akos 2004; Gysbers, 2003). In particular, surveys of ASCA members have been the primary method for gathering data, which has generated too little description and entertains too many biases. The instruments for surveying counselors limit responses to preconceived or a priori categories and draw upon samples that are unrepresentative given the large percentage of counselors who remain unaffiliated with ASCA.

Critical questions remain about the high school counselor as advocate of students, champion of social justice, and promoter of school leadership. Specifically, I sought to address the following questions: (a) How do high school counselors perceive and experience their work? (b) How does the work of high school counselors incorporate, respond, or contribute to school reform initiatives? and (c) What are the implications of such understandings for social justice and leadership in the work of high school counselors? These are the significant questions that are explored in this analytic autoethnographic study of high school counselors.

The following chapter reports the findings generated from this study. It is organized into three sections. The first provides a description of the areas of primary responsibility of

counselors as shared in the interviews and observations of the participants. The areas of responsibility demark the scope of practice relevant to the leadership of high school counselors. Autoethnographic narrative generated by my reflection on the collected interview and observational data is also included in this section. In analyzing these responsibilities and examining in the nature of such work, an interpretation pertaining to leadership for social justice emerged and is presented in the chapter's second section. Finally, a conclusion is offered in the form of a chapter summary.

Three hats: A description of areas of responsibility of high school counselors

The process of coding data collected through interviews, observations, and reflections generated a lengthy list of beliefs, values, norms, relationships, and behaviors involved in the work of school counseling. Codes were sorted, grouped, and examined for underlying characteristics or attributes that differentiated or placed participant statements, observational notes, and autobiographical text together with like cases. Each grouping of coded data was examined for meaning, which facilitated building connections across coded categories. Three areas of primary responsibility emerged through the process and were labeled intervention, guidance, and administration. These areas were defined by six attributes labeled professional socialization, problems, role, power, authority, and rewards. The resulting typology is presented in Table 2 titled *Areas of Responsibility for School Counselors*.

The section presents a description for each of the three areas of responsibility. First, intervention will be discussed followed by guidance and administration. Description for each of the areas begins with attention to the findings as gathered and analyzed from the interviews and observations of participants. Literature presented in the conceptual framework is also threaded into this discussion as appropriate to refresh and facilitate the reader's understanding. Narrative

taken from my reflective notes for each area is included at the end of their description. With each area of responsibility described the chapter continues with the next section containing the interpretation derived from the description.

Table 2

Areas of Responsibility for School Counselors

	Intervention	Guidance	Administration
Professional socialization	Natural	Conventional	Provisional
Problems	Wellness	Commitment	Compliance
Role	Advocate/Coach	Mediator	Bureaucrat
Power	Legitimate	Referent	Expert
Authority	Caring	Collaborating	Managing
Rewards	Dependable	Trust	Unnoticed

Intervention

I began the interviews with the standard question that asked participants to share a little about themselves. I wanted to know what drew them to the profession. Many of the counselors had been classroom teachers and a number of them talked about this experience as pivotal. The participants referenced activities and events where they demonstrated what appeared to them and others as a natural talent for reflecting, trouble shooting, and engaging in problem solving with others including students, colleagues, and family members. The identification of such capacity, capability, and concern however, was particularly evident when they described their responsibility and aptitude in work relevant to intervention. Later education in master’s and certification programs as well as professional practice was credited with building upon this innate skill and knowledge.

For example, Ann shared the following, a situation where without training she wondered and was validated by an experienced counselor as helping students understand their sexuality—which in American society is a most personal aspect of identity—and for educators a most dangerous subject.

So then I became a teacher, got a job right out of college, I was 22, teaching freshmen, sophomores and juniors, specifically the juniors we were teaching the AIDS education, HIV, all that stuff. I had kids who were 17, 18, and I was like their older sister. And this was before we had tons and tons of mandated, it's really old now, but at the time, it was whatever you could throw together for HIV curriculum. So, here I was [an English teacher], not prepared to talk to girls, I had girls talking to me about sex with their boyfriends, one was pregnant. So I did my best kind of stonewalling, did my best. I remember that day, I went downstairs and I talked to Francis Moor, who was the senior counselor at that time. And I said, this is what I said, am I allowed to say that? What should I do? And she looked at me and said, You should be a high school counselor.

Jack with a less specific example, simply stated, “It’s just been one of those situations where, in my life, I’ve had a lot of people that relied on me, to share their issues with. I played that role in my family, and, uh, so it just came natural to me in that way.”

In talking about his journey to the profession, Larry shared:

I really came to counseling knowing that I wanted to do something with youth, some type of counseling setting. My undergraduate degree is in law and justice and I worked in Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration at

Shoreline which is a drug and alcohol facility, it's connected with JRA, so I really got my foot in the door, working with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy groups and that. And I really did like it.

Larry, like the other participants, did not linger long or provide much detail about his training or experience in his certification program or how he developed or refined his talents. Rather, what participants were most keen on sharing in story after story was their interest and responsibility in using such talent to intervene to help students, parents/guardians, and other educators on issues of wellness. Much of the energy for counselors centered on dealing with various fractures, obstacles, and threats to students' sexual, physical, emotional, social, familial, academic, etc., wellbeing.

When arriving at Henrietta's office for our interview, I met a student whom Henrietta had asked to wait outside of her office while we talked. Henrietta referenced this student several times during the course of the interview, weaving the student's story into her responses to me; the student was clearly on her mind throughout the course of the interview. The student had been "hearing voices," had been hospitalized for some time and, upon the student's return, Henrietta had "spent a couple of hours with her." Trouble continued for this student because her parent/guardian was not following through on necessary requirements in order to get her the additional support she needed. At the end of our interview, Henrietta talked with the student. Henrietta shared in the interview that she was not sure what next steps would be taken, but that she perceived that the student felt physically secure and emotionally safe in her office. Henrietta's efforts were focused foremost on ensuring the physical and emotional wellbeing of the student, while working through other concerns relevant to building toward a longer-term resolution.

Intervention for the wellbeing of students translated into the roles of advocate and coach as presented by participants. Counselors viewed themselves as advocating for students and their parents/guardians, but also the role of coach when functioning with teachers and colleagues. Carol, as well as several others, was explicit in naming this role. She said, “I think a counselor is an advocate for students.” She later explained what this meant as she described an experience that illustrated what she found rewarding about counseling.

I had a student who graduated two years ago who got on a bus in Maine, his mom basically said, Here’s a bus ticket, see you later. So he got on the bus and ended up here with his sister who is just a couple of years older than him. Basically this kid had the entire world against him, his parents didn’t want him, his siblings didn’t want him, and there were times that he didn’t like himself. But he came to school and he knew he had people who cared about him. He could be a goof-off, he could get in trouble and not do what he needed to do. But he had a good heart. He knew what he had to do. I nominated him for a Rotary scholarship and he got it. It was really neat and his sister came, and it was like, the only award he had ever gotten in twelve years of school. It was really neat. When he got here, I think, he had failed his first year and a half of high school, but he made it up.

Advocacy for students in the face of challenges and hardship denotes the attitude and approach that counselors shared. The high school counselor was the person a student could turn to when others (i.e., parents/guardians, friends, teachers, or pastors) were unavailable, unsafe, or unreliable. Jack shared, that advocacy was often difficult as it entailed “Working with the hard to like kids. Recognizing that I have a responsibility to them too. Or with adults that are hard to

like. Being committed to do just as good a job with them, like everybody else.” In order to advocate for a student, the relationship had to develop such that “it will come to the point where even if we don’t agree on a particular issue that I’ll listen to them and respect their point of view” (Interview Gary).

Although not stated explicitly, Ann too felt that intervention required counselors to take the role of advocate for students and coach for teachers. Ann shared a recent experience where she was working with a student who was diagnosed as bipolar.

I have a senior who was just diagnosed as bipolar. It’s been a real struggle for her. She missed several days due to the medication and probably also due to being a senior and seeing how far she could push it... This girl, she has to have every single class to graduate. So the teacher was just falling on her sword—you know, I’m not going to give you this work because you’ve been truant. So I went back and cleared a couple of days, and I told the girl you need to tell your mom what’s going on and that didn’t happen. And the teacher called the mom. Mom discovered all of the absences that her daughter had in the past month, about a week or two for this class in particular. I just went up and talked to the teacher and said “You know she’s passing every other class but this one because you’re unwilling to work with her.” I said “You know if I could give you a glimpse. You know the mom on the phone sounds like the most rational person ever.” Then after her conversation with her, the mom called her daughter, and she took the phone call in class, and the mom told her what a piece of shit she was and she wasn’t ever going to amount to anything.

The importance of coaching teachers was also reflected in Jack's comments. He discussed various ways he tried to "mentor teachers in relationships." He explained, "As a counselor you are consulting with teachers all the time, dealing with behavior problems, how to deal with a student who is having academic issues, difficulty finding success, just relationships and boundaries, so you're doing consulting with staff all the time around a variety of issues." Jack explained that he had intervened in situations where the teacher had "actually been disrespectful, unprofessional, actually mean" to the student. He noted that in these cases "sometimes I confront the teacher about it without trying to be judgmental, but to say you know, approach it, trying to be objective, not be judgmental about what they did."

The naming of judgment pointed to the presence of norms and values. What counselors were saying is that they were purposefully minimizing the negative influence of a normative interpretation in approaching or coaching their colleagues. Values were being employed by participants when working with teachers to change their behaviors, disclosing the basis on which the power of these counselors rested when engaged in intervention. Power as defined by Mitchell and Spady (1983) involves getting people to do what they might not be otherwise inclined, persuaded, and agreeable to doing. In performing intervention, participants described their power in terms French and Raven (1957) define as legitimate. Legitimate power is based on roles and the internalized norms that accompany those roles. Thus, for example, when Ann shared that coaching teachers involved "reminding them why they got into the profession" she was declaring a precise but understated power oriented strategy directed at altering teacher interaction with students.

Counselor comments also demonstrated legitimate power as evident in their work of intervention with students. Jack shared:

I was just on the phone with a student yesterday who is going to Western Washington University. I worked with her two, maybe the latter two years in high school. She was struggling with her family, alcoholic parents. She was a very, very high achiever. She really struggled a lot because of her family dynamics. I kind of supported her through those years, watching her grow and change, get healthy, be less co-dependent, more independent, and learning to navigate all the pressures of being in an alcoholic family....Well, she's struggling. She's struggling with depression right now, being away from home and her friends and not being home with all the family issues that are happening. And so I've kind of been supporting her from a distance. I finally talked her into seeking some help at the college, finally getting into some therapy there, which she did. She was very reluctant to do that. I kind of made arrangements for her to do that. I pushed it, and she did it. She called to say how great it was that I pushed her to do that. That's kind of the reason that we were in contact with each other.

Jack advocated for the student through exercising control or command by arranging therapy. Jack could "push" the student to go to therapy despite her reservations given specific norms that had been established and were apparently agreed up. The student did go to therapy. He did not get her to attend through promising her something (i.e., reward power), invoking feared of what he would do if she did not attend (i.e., coercive power), exploit her possible

attraction to him (i.e., referent power), or use specialized knowledge (i.e., expert power). His description most closely aligns with an expectation that given his role as counselor that if he made the arrangement she would attend. In this particular case, but also evident in many of the examples shared in the interviews, legitimate power was a weak source of social influence. If things had not gone well in therapy it might have resulted in her dissolving the relationship or reduction in his ability to alter her behavior.

Of course, counselors seek other ways for influencing behavior other than through the expression of power. Power, as noted above can easily destroy social bonds or when used indiscriminately can wreak havoc on relationships. Authority is another source of social control identified and discussed by theorists. Gary explained how he faced suspension given an act of insubordination that revolved on protecting his authority with students.

Probably the low or high point was when I refused to do snowball patrol at Suburban High. The assistant principal came in and tossed a note pad and a pen on my desk and said lunch time, I want you to write down the names of anybody you see throwing a snowball and give me a list and we'll suspend them. I wouldn't do it."

He went on to share the reason for his action, "I stated my position, not very aggressively, I'm not willing to compromise the relationships I have. A lot of those kids are the on the edge kids how could they come back in and see me?" His comments revealed a concern that the students who needed his help would reject him or his offers of help if he participated in the patrol. Clearly, what Gary was protecting was the credibility he had established in the eyes of the students. Authority was a particularly important mechanism of control for counselors. It was seen as essential for facilitating student talk; for getting students to open up and establishing

rapport were critical components of their role as advocate. When examining the basis of counselor authority in the interviews, the concept of care surfaced as primary.

These counselors advocated for students because they cared for and about them. More than one participant commented on the significance of care in their work. More than one felt that for too many students more care was needed. That there were students for whom too few cared and that sometimes they felt they were it.

I just got a sheet today, one of my favorite kids, (sigh). He got suspended, great. I like him. I believe in him....It's frustrating, but it's rewarding, to have those kids know that somebody believes in them even though they screw up. There's going to be someone who cares when they come back.

(Interview, Madonna)

Yet, saying that they cared for all students was simpler than feeling or acting in ways that demonstrated care. Madonna shared:

Well, honestly, there is a couple that I don't like. I know, when they come in, I'm very cognizant. I have to be aware that I can't let them know that for whatever reason, you know. I try to always smile and say hi, like you would anybody.... I think about them a lot. They're just not nice, they're just not nice people. They don't care about others. They don't care about how they make other people feel. However, I do think that part of my job is....those kids need the same acceptance. Maybe somebody accepts them....Maybe I can be someone they can hold on to."

Madonna explained her influence on students through caring for them, even if such authority was limited to staying in school.

Counselors expressed the reward of intervention as arising from the sense of personal satisfaction that they experienced. Counselors, however, described a predicament with intervention in that “You don’t really get verification until sometimes after the fact” (Interview, Mary). All of the participants could point to students on whose behalf they had intervened and who had at some later time contacted them to thank them, but there were a far larger number of cases where no thanks was given at all. Thus, several participants discussed that in order for them to keep advocating for students they had to believe their intervention was or would impact students. They noted that it was hard to see the benefits daily of their work. Scout explained:

Hearing that student say, you know, you really changed my way of thinking. Or to see the student you didn’t have much hope for and you work with them, and you work with them, and ... they don’t come to school, when they do come, they skip or they goof off in class and then you know, you work with them and you talk with them about what they want in life and the discrepancy between what they tell you what they want in life and what they are showing....it’s usually a very long road, but I see them start to come around.

Carol reflected on her strategy for validation to carry out this work, “I may not have the right answer, but I’ll try to find the right answer, something. I do what I say I’m going to do. I’m where I need to be when I say I’m going to be there. I think people can rely on me, they know I’ll follow through.” She and her colleague exposed an internal compass; their motivation to keep going was very much about the recognition that their dependableness and patience counted.

Many of the responses by participants to my interview questions evoked memories from my 23 years of work as a counselor. Indeed, as I listened to their stories and as I analyzed the

transcriptions I endeavored to record my reactions both the feelings of acceptance and rejection of what had been shared. I wanted to understand my reactions and memories to reduce the threat that unobserved biases posed to the findings. As I coded and organized the autoethnographic data, I came to see the significance of intervention throughout my career. There are many stories I could share, yet one particular episode stood out in these data—my work of mentoring and advocating for Patrick. The account of my interaction with Patrick offered below contributes to the above description on intervention in that it shows how the various attributes identified come together or are expressed in or through a single case.

I first met Patrick when I began working in a newly opened high school, the second high school in the school district. The counselor caseload was high—I was responsible for serving almost 600 students. The new high school had a large open area that housed all the students during the two lunch periods. Because many of these students were new to me, I spent as much time as possible in the commons area before and after school and during the lunch periods. I attempted to get to know students, learning their names, their grades and something personal about them that would help me remember them in future encounters.

I remember taking note of one male student who almost always ate alone at one end of the large, open room. Because most other students ate in pairs or groups, I made an effort to stop and say hello to him as often as possible. I learned that his name was Patrick and that he was an eleventh grade student. Patrick seemed reserved, almost shy, and often answered my queries with one or two word responses. His physical isolation was enhanced by his reluctance to engage in conversation with me; I occasionally saw him with one other female student, but the majority of the time he was alone, eating, reading a book or staring out the window at the meadow across the street from the campus.

In mid-October, Patrick appeared at my office door, asking if he could talk with me. I encouraged him to come in, and he did, but he didn't say anything for a few minutes. He was surprisingly comfortable with the silence, just sitting, with the occasional rubbing of hands the only indication of nervousness. He suddenly blurted out, "I have to get out of this place. I won't survive if I have to stay here." My immediate thoughts went to suicidal ideation, not atypical among adolescents, and I attempted to get more information from him. If he were considering harming himself, I needed to get information from him immediately in order to determine what level of intervention must be used. Patrick reassured me that he wasn't considering harming himself, but that he did not feel safe, emotionally or physically.

What Patrick was sharing or maybe it was how he was sharing had a familiar ring to me. The difficulty Patrick was having articulating his reasons for not feel safe reminded me of talks I'd had with my brother. My brother grew up gay in a very small, rural school and he and I had many conversations about how to be supportive to gay and lesbian students. I remembered my brother stating that sharing personal experiences often led to others opening up about their orientation. So I took a risk and shared with Patrick that my brother felt the same way in his high school, but that he had survived the experience and was leading a fulfilling life as a young gay male adult. Patrick seemed interested or did not recoil at what I had said. So I asked him if I could ask him a question. He said, "yes," and I asked if he was gay and he said, "yes." The muscles in his face relaxed, his dropped his hands to his side and he leaned back in his chair, exhaling loudly. He appeared to be relieved that he could talk about what was causing him to feel so anxious.

Patrick went on to share that because the size of the school was so much smaller than the old high school, his presence was noticed by many of the more conservative students. Many of

them had expressed strong feelings about their belief systems. I knew one of the students he was talking about, as Joe had been explicitly directed to remove a Confederate flag from his vehicle. That student, and others, had been making comments to Patrick, calling him names and insinuating that he did not “belong” at that high school. Patrick had been called a “fag” and other demeaning labels.

In that conversation and ensuing conversations, Patrick revealed a lifetime of loneliness and isolation, dominated by the fear that his sexual orientation would be discovered. Patrick did clarify that he was not currently considering suicide, but he did feel strongly that he could no longer endure the harassment he was receiving at the high school. We established a timeline that required him to check in with me daily and I left him with the final thought of considering opting for a college program that would give him high school credits and college credits simultaneously and would be a possibility for him at the end of the current semester. When he learned that there was something available for him beyond the repressive environment he currently found himself in, he smiled.

I continued to see Patrick on a daily basis as he checked in with me during the lunch period or stopping by between classes. During our conversations about the college program, I learned more about his feelings of loneliness and of the burden he carried of living a double life, always trying to be “straight” so that his family would not discover his secret. Through the care that I exhibited for him, Patrick revealed more of his secret life to me including his making poor choices around drug use and sexual contact with older men. Patrick spent a great deal of time with me, either in my office, or in the commons area. We talked about making better choices and I worked with him as he applied to the college program and he happily exited the building at the end of the first semester. He returned for the graduation ceremony at the end of the following

school year, his senior year. He thanked me for providing him a way to escape the oppressive experience of high school, for him an experience that felt dangerous to his physical and emotional well being.

In reflecting about this experience, I recognize the importance of the caring nature of my interaction and how that built my rapport and authority with him. I helped Patrick through the remaining months at the high school by being dependable and providing him a physical refuge in my office and an emotional haven through our conversations. I don't recall consciously exercising legitimate power, although I think that first question comes closest as I probably would not have abandoned my intuition about what was troubling Patrick if he had responded negatively.

I did not tally the total amount of time I spent with Patrick, but it was more than I was able to give to most students. I am aware that all students did not have the same access to me that Patrick did. In addition, the time that I spent with Patrick meant time away from other students and responsibilities, the day-to-day work that was required from me at that time. I could not abandon that work, and it was always completed, but the quality of the work may have suffered because of the time, energy and effort I focused on Patrick.

In reflecting on this experience, I am also called to remember the young man, Joe, who had harassed Patrick. I had difficulty communicating with this young man, Joe, difficulty relating to him. In retrospect, I recognize that I could not get past my negative feelings about his perspective on gays and lesbians. He was a struggling student academically and his only successes were in the athletic arena. He used his physical prowess to maintain his status in the school and when his grades dropped so low that he became ineligible to compete, he began skipping classes and his grades dropped lower. He eventually dropped out of school and began

working as a manual laborer. I have not maintained contact with him and have no idea where he is living or what he is doing. I did not advocate for Joe with the administrators who were disciplining him around attendance and behavior issues. I did not seek options or opportunities that might have helped him continue his education in another setting. I realize that Joe's academic struggles left him no less oppressed than did Patrick's. Had I advocated for Joe, had I exercised care, the outcome could have been different for him, possibly even the attainment of a high school diploma.

Guidance

The second area of responsibility identified in the study demarks a set of professional norms and values relevant to guidance. The work of guidance encompasses duties and proficiencies traditionally understood as defining counseling. Indeed, several counselors talk about their decision to enter the profession given their experiences both as students and/or later as adults working in schools or related organizations that provided educational or social services to youth (e.g., schools, camps, church groups, rehabilitation centers, and hospitals). What stood out in these comments was the manner in which participants had come to realize the contribution of these services and recognize their identification with performing such duties. Participants described being attracted to the work of guidance in school counseling given a lengthy period of exposure and thus induction to this area of responsibility. An important aspect of their orientation pertained to their experience and understanding as recipients of such labor. A couple of interviewees, such as Scout, shared that their personal experiences with counselors in some cases left something to be desired.

I started out in education, taught for 8 years, had my bachelor's degree in both special education and elementary education. I enjoyed working with

students but got to the point where I really wanted to be out of the classroom. I remembered my high school counselor and how unhelpful he was and felt like kids needed better than that, to do better than my high school counselor. And wanted to work with an older group of kids, because my experience in education was with elementary grades. And so I went back to school and got my master's. (Interview Scout)

Pat too shared her decision for becoming a counselor as arising out of an extended period of contact and socialization to the role. She stated, "I had known for a long time that I wanted to be a school counselor, even in high school, my high school counselors who are still there remember asking me what I wanted to do and they remember me telling them that I wanted their job." And she also noted:

I wanted to be a high school counselor and serve all those people in the middle. I remember thinking, I could do a better job of that . . . And to this day I really struggle with that because I realize that it's harder to make time to work with that group because you are working with the at risk [students] and the ones you need to talk to about meeting requirements, or family issues, or the ones who are college bound and their needs, all those kids who are just getting by...they get served, but you know, they're perceived as the kids with less needs.

Pat's comments delineate something of the difference between guidance and intervention. Intervention with its focus on wellness entails services directed largely toward at risk students, while guidance reflects interactions with students that encompass issues and needs arising out of

wavering commitment and establishing plans for future action and living (e.g., curricular, program, college, or career).

Whether discussing helping students stay on track, coping with minor problems, or figuring a way forward, high school counselors described their role as being largely that of mediator. For example, when a student had come to Scout and requested that she be allowed to drop a class, Scout noted that she went to the teacher and talked with her before proceeding. With information and insights from the teacher, Scout then met with the student and “worked out ways that she could be more productive in that class.” The student stayed in the class and experienced success because of Scout’s “encouraging her to stay in there, giving her the tools to work with.” Although counselors did not state an explicit reason for adopting the role of mediator, the function for such an approach was apparent as ultimately, guidance calls for a significant degree of sharing information and seeking participation including counselors, students, teachers, administrators, and in some situations, the parents/guardians or other concerned parties.

A more important outcome arising from the adoption of this role, however, could be seen as pertinent to the manner in which it protected a fundamental principle of working with high school students. Counselors were nearly uniform in speaking to a primary objective of their profession as encouraging the growth and development of the students with whom they worked. The role of mediator appeared to respect this principle of guidance as it maintained or facilitated the evolving independence, judgment, and decision making on the part of the student. Mary shared the following as an example of such effort:

I guess one just real recently, was, I have a ninth grader who failed four classes first semester. We had a parent conference first semester pretty

early on because he wasn't doing work, not a behavior problem, just not motivated. The second semester came around and a teacher had said I don't want him back in class until we can have a conference and until I know what his commitment is going to be to the class. I had lots of conversations with the student about just what it takes to be, really even the minimum amount of what it would take to even get work done. He just doesn't care. We asked him just to do a simple contract; this is what I'll do in class, this is the grade I'm going to maintain, this is how I'm going to maintain it. We asked him to do a simple contract and to make a commitment....We wanted him to write it himself because we thought it would be more meaningful, rather than us saying this is what you should do. And he did come up with a contract that he would be in class and that he would do his work...[However,] I could not get him to see...the bigger picture. That's just a frustration, because, my vision and his vision don't match up.... He doesn't even necessarily think he has to graduate from high school.

She continued by explaining how given all the effort with this student, his parents, and teacher that she felt nothing had changed "until Tuesday. I just said I'm working harder than you're working. The teacher's been working harder than he's been working. I told him I was done."

Mary's language can be interpreted as a warning to the student about the seriousness of the situation. Even in our interview, her disappointment remained palpable. The declaration exposed her intention of modifying their relationship and of adjusting her approach to counseling

given the apparent failure of previous strategies and efforts of guidance. Thus, the story illuminated the conviction and priority Mary possessed for supporting student decision making. Her actions exhibited her reluctance to take action that would trespass such purpose. This story also pointed to the possibility of guidance being transformed into intervention. And yet Mary's pronouncement represented one more attempt at rousing this student's commitment to his education. Mary was not sure what was going to happen next but concluded, "I think part of that was a little good for him, too. He hadn't seen that frustration." Her comments suggest that she still retained hope that his sensibilities and strength of their relationship could yet turn things around.

The concern of counselors for supporting student maturation was also evident in several references made in the interviews that disparaged parents/guardians for being too controlling and preventing their children from learning from experience. Jack stated:

You do a lot of work with parents. Early on from ninth grade, a lot of it is you are helping them to learn to navigate the system, parenting, to allow their kids to grow up, allow their kids to make their own decisions, be responsible and be accountable. So part of it early on is helping parents understand their children are developing into adults and they need to learn independence and self-reliance.

Jack understood the behavior of parents/guardians as rooted in their desire "to protect their kids." He recounted how the other day he had met with a parent who had "early on wanted the school to do everything for her son, and make things work, or she wanted to do it for him. I worked with her and tried to help her see her son needed to develop some independence and autonomy." He did not share the specifics of his interaction in helping this mother. Rather Jack

spoke in generalities of offering parents/guardians in such situations advice on parenting, information about adolescence, and strategies for coping. Other, however, offered elaboration that revealed to the importance, use, and protection of referent power.

Counselors pointed at their exercise of referent power when confronting problems of commitment and other issues germane to guidance and their role of mediator. French and Raven (1959) define referent power as based on feelings of identification, attraction, and likeness. Referent power was evident not only in participant comments about their responsibility for providing guidance for students, but also with interacting with staff and parents/guardians. In building this source of power, Ann shared:

I will say to a teacher, you know, you looked stressed, how are you?
Especially after a conference, I'll say I really appreciate that, but, I don't know you that well, hmmm, is there something else going on? Sometimes they'll share and other times they won't....And that's what I've noticed about my conversations with [the principal], when I go and vent to her, she tries to fix it for me instead of giving me a like situation where it makes me feel comfortable. When I go in to [names other counselors], they always give me a like situation to make me feel normal. So I try to do that with teachers. And I'm often reminding teachers that I used to be a teacher.

Ann was not alone in sharing her intentionality of building rapport in such a manner.

Jack also discussed referent power. His comments, however, noted problems that arise when referent power is threatened or absent. "I have to deal with adults that continue to allow their own issues to get in the way of their being effective with students...that make it difficult for

them to be in a place where they can be helpful to kids.” He explained further in a manner that left little doubt about his meaning. “There’s a minority of adults who don’t necessarily get excited about kids and can be very judgmental and can get things out of perspective. It’s hard to deal with them, when you have young men and women who are pretty dependent on them.” Expressing or holding harsh opinions about students, Jack felt, was obstructive or destructive. The possession of empathy was consequential to this work of facilitating student success at “figuring out who they are and getting the kind of feedback from adults that I think is really crucial for them in this stage of their life.”

The insights shared by these high school counselors also referenced the collaborative nature of their authority in providing guidance. Madonna shared, “I think what it comes down to is just wanting the kids to be successful, wanting them to find the right places and helping them to get there. Helping with the journey.” She explained further, “I think for every kid [success] is different. You know, for student A that walks in the door success might be getting into a great college, going to Brown or Columbia, or wherever that is for them. For another kid, success might be graduating from high school and being the first person in their family to have that diploma.” Leaving the definition of success open to a contextual or situational interpretation included, centered, and emphasized the needs, abilities, and values of students. Madonna also defined her role as mediator as assisting students to find “where they feel like they might belong. Whether that’s a physical place, or whether that’s a state of mind of acceptance of who they are.”

Collaboration provided the mechanism or afforded the foundation for their authority. Their ability to communicate and clarify misunderstandings between various parties as such was paramount. Pat described her role as “being part of a team, being a support to the teachers, administrators, parents, a support to the staff.” Counselors described various struggles given this

arrangement. Larry shared that sometimes he “gets caught in the middle.” Carol also acknowledged that “a lot of the times you are the middle man, you are the buffer” between the student and parents/guardians, between the student and teachers, or between the parents/guardians and teachers. Valerie noted the time it took to build collaborative relationships with students or teachers “As I’m here longer, more and more teachers come to me for advice, answer questions that they have, so that takes a while.” Carol stressed the importance of “daily communication with teachers.” Reflecting on a negative experience, Carol noted that she “learned to get out of my office and have a face to face conversation.” She suggested that whatever the difficulty, her approach to this work began with the premise that all involved were “working for the same objective.”

Counselors discussed not only the difficulties or challenges of collaboration in carrying out guidance, but its rewards.

I love it when a student comes in and something has gone the way they wanted it to. I loved it this year when a student got into Columbia, he had been dreaming about it forever, he called me on my cell phone, are you in your office, he came down and told me he’d gotten the e-mail. It was just so fun. That was great. Or when a kid is having a problem with a friend, and you talk that through with them, and they go out and talk to that friend, and they come back and say it worked! (Interview, Madonna).

Madonna’s enjoyment included not just observing the outcomes of guidance, but the work involved in performing these duties. Ann explained the following about her approach to guidance, which supported this understanding.

I love talking with kids about their future. I could do that all day. The college process is really fun. I'm really in my seniors' faces in October, asking them what are you doing? This is what you should be doing! Let's get started. I have a couple kids that I came in on the weekend and helped them fill out their FAFSA....Just coming in and using our internet, to get on and do their application for the University of Washington, so all those things are a lot of fun. I just want kids to plan.

Dennis reflected that he "really likes to help students, see, how the decisions they're making now are going to affect their career, their family, you know anything, hopes and dreams that they always had growing up."

The rewards of guidance, however, were not perceived as limited to their work with students.

I enjoy helping teachers too. Helping teachers find ways to work better with kids so they can be more successful. Or helping parents, giving them ideas that are either, because of how they were brought up or because I have a different type of education than they do, different resources that I know about that they don't know about. I can hook them up with that. I really enjoy working with the parents to find out ways to help kids be more successful. (Interview Scout)

Yet rewards did not necessarily flow from observing some change. For example Alice stated, "It's rewarding to work with parents who want to help. I especially like working with non-traditional families, I am humbled by what they go through."

Carol summed up her feelings about the rewards of guidance, sharing “I think I love to see the kids through, just how they change from ninth grade to twelfth grade. You know, they let you into their life and it’s not always good, it’s painful for them, it’s painful for their families. Just that they trust me enough, that’s rewarding.” Named by Carol, but reflected in the many of others’ comments, was trust. Counselors’ spoke of trust as the prize which made this work worthwhile whether attributed as a part of the guidance process or evident in its possible outcomes.

Guidance remains a strong emphasis in the work of the high school counselor and many schools still title their counselors “guidance counselors.” In my own work as a high school counselor, I would utilize every encounter to provide direction to students, whether it was a casual hallway conversation, a conference with a student and a teacher, or a focused conversation about college applications, military enlistment or enrolling in an apprenticeship program.

One of my most vivid memories of my career as a high school counselor is an example of guidance work that I did not do well. I was working at a largely middle-class, upper middle-class high school, serving mostly White students who came from intact families. One of the students with whom I worked came from a single-parent, low-income family and she struggled academically in school. Supports for Kelly were inadequate as she not only needed academic help, she could also have also benefited from support from social service agencies. I failed to consider that when working with her and I continued to talk with her about her failing grades, without considering what other factors might be impeding her success in high school. Kelly became pregnant and I recommended that she go to an alternative program. Kelly eventually did leave the school and I heard from her almost ten years later. A letter to me remains in my artifacts as it highlights the work I did not do. In the letter, she stated, “I feel sorry that other

have to have you as a counsilor (sic).” Kelly ultimately had her baby, a son, and completed her high school diploma. She sent me a copy of her high school completion certificate, and added that she sent her letter to me so that I would know the impact I had on her. Her chide “for not believing in me” is something that I held onto in my work. I hoped it would prevent me from making a similar mistake.

My experience with Kelly became the impetus for even more focused conversations with students in the coming years. Steve was another student with whom I worked who struggled academically. He spent a great deal of time in my office at both his teachers’ and parents’ requests. Steve was disruptive, disrespectful, and inattentive in class. His lack of motivation and failure to actively participate in class resulted in low grades. On more than one occasion I deliberately and aggressively took him to task for not using his talents and abilities. Steve possessed high test scores and his areas of interest in career assessments, finally challenging him to reflect on the potential waste that his behaviors were creating. This waste was evident in teacher time, energy and effort, his parents’ time, energy and effort, and the potential that he had to be more and do more than was evident in the current classroom setting. Unfortunately, there were no significant changes in his academic performance, but he did graduate and entered the realm of higher education. I was surprised when Steve returned almost three years later prior to the winter break, suddenly appearing at my door. He shared with me that my comments to him created a challenge in his own mind that he would someday return and show me how capable he was. He was performing successfully in his third year of an engineering program at a large university and was enjoying his studies. He wanted me to know that the memory I had of him while in high school had changed drastically and he had made a conscious decision to prove me wrong.

Administration

The third and final area of responsibility, which was evident primarily in the interview data, centered on administration. The scarcity of its reference in my observations and reflective journal reflects several issues, which I will briefly discuss. First, the time I spent making observations was limited. Second, the sensitive nature of some of this work as well as the mundane quality of its other efforts, I believe, contributed to participants electing to focus their activities during my visits to those of intervention and guidance. Third, my autoethnographic journaling contained little of this responsibility, I presume, since it is a responsibility that arose from the recent alignment of counseling with administration. Although there were many experiences over my career in which I worked closely with administrators, my interactions exhibited or possessed only a part of the characteristics delineated below. Given this deficiency, unlike the descriptions of intervention and guidance above, I will not offer excerpts from my journal to flesh out a comprehensive example illustrating the various characteristics as they tie together.

School counselors identified in the interviews an emerging responsibility that originated from their membership on the school leadership team. Participants discussed the changing perception of counseling as aligned with administration. Mary reflected that her “principal really sees our whole counseling team as part of the ad team. He is really involved, has involved me personally in a lot of the decisions, on programs, and he expects us to take a lead role in the design team for the KEPS. We all meet with all of our administrators every Friday, and I meet with administrators every Monday morning, and that gives us a chance for everybody to talk about issues that may be coming up, or concerns.”

Specifically, they noted that they were being asked to handle various concerns and duties arising out of changes in graduation, curricular, and accountability requirements defined in state law and the ensuing policies and procedures enacted in their districts. A major component of the work pertained to social justice and equity for students. Participants shared that much of the supervisory and managerial tasks associated with these requirements had fallen to them. Counselors presented the responsibility as an extension of guidance, yet it clearly encompassed a different set of challenges and opportunities for working with students and staff than that evident for either guidance or intervention.

For starters, participants pointed to school reform as instituting a very explicit and restrictive set of course requirements that students needed in order to graduate. Counselors also described additional qualifications for student graduation including passing state mandated tests, production of a culminating project, and preparation of a post-high school plan. Finding themselves charged with the oversight of student progress in accomplishing these demands, several participants including Jack, noted such duties “really don’t have anything to do with a counselor’s training but they’re part of a system and a job and they’re not really why you got into the business.” Participant comments emphasized not only the newness of this area of responsibility but the multitude of adjustments and on-going restructuring within their schools for dealing with them. Madonna shared, “It’s almost like this year they [administrators] have a better sense of what our role is. It felt like last year, well maybe this year too, that we were being asked to do things that were outside of our area.” She provided several specific examples of times when she submitted and performed the work requested and other times when she refused. Lacking formal preparation, stable structures, and clear procedures the socialization for this responsibility exhibited characteristics that can be defined as provisional and contested. Many of

the counselors were to some degree still attempting to make sense, integrate, and balance its duties and functions with those of intervention and guidance.

According to participants, a significant amount of attention, time, and energy is devoted to ensuring that bureaucratic directives are being carried out and achieved. Counselors shared concerns about the nature of this work and the effects of accountability on students. A troubling contradiction noted by several participants, including Ann for example, was the “disservice” being done by these policies to some students. She stated that she saw “more kids dropping out, more just stop coming” since the enactment of the new requirements.

Phil echoed these sentiments, stating “I’ve had more kids this year, drop out, and I think it’s because of the WASL . . . I’ve had more than I’ve ever had in my career.” Something, they said, needed to be done and counselors were brought onto the leadership team to respond to the problem. Yet, few previously held duties or functions of the position were shifted or dropped to make room for the additional work. Gary, the most veteran of those interviewed, stated “I’m working as hard as ever, at my most efficient, [and] I can’t get everything done.” He was not alone in feeling overwhelmed as in most high schools the counseling department had been charged with developing “Student Learning Plans for every kid who hasn’t met standard” and he freely shared that “it gets frustrating because something gets left out.” Henrietta echoed these sentiments as she stated there are “so many different things, tracking them, it gets overwhelming.”

A necessary part of ensuring student compliance to the new standards entailed gathering, organizing, and reporting data. The problem confronting counselors centered on disorder and disorganization of schools which obstructed collection of accurate data. Various pieces of information have to be collected from different sources. Acquired data therefore needed to be

confirmed as current since there are multiple records arising from numerous opportunities afforded for students to demonstrate proficiency on state tests, complete coursework, or file plans. Adding to the complexity is the sheer volume of data and individuals. Many participants used the word “tracking” to describe the primary task of making sure students were where they were supposed to be, that is enrolled in the appropriate course that would fulfill graduation requirements. In addition to class placement, Jack referred to “monitoring student scores on WASL, sending scores to the state for out of state testing approval.” And for a specific example, Pat shared that she “entered 400 schedules myself, sitting here, which I felt like I need to do because I wanted to cross reference against their transcript.” All participants express experiencing a great deal of pressure from these new requirements. Compliance, participants complained, was becoming a full time job, usurping their resources for the meaningful work of helping students.

Participant opinions differed about the role of counselor as bureaucrat, which was seen as arising out of administration. Dennis, new to the profession, advocated a position of high accountability for ensuring student compliance to requirements and procedures stating, “I don’t want to be the reason they fail. You know, when they get there, it’s oops. There’s not room for error. There’s no room for error.” Mary, who was more seasoned in the profession, at the other extreme felt that students “know their credits, they can read their transcript, they can relate that to opportunities they have after high school.” Such divergence connected to various issues, which probably had less to do with the amount of professional experience and more to do with idiosyncrasies of their school context and how organizational responses to changes were being processed. For example, during the year of the study, the state brought forth new mandates that changed the math requirements for graduation. Ann expressed her frustration with the “state

building the plane while we're flying it, all these new rules." The role of bureaucrat was denoted by a perception that they lacked ownership over this area of responsibility. Henrietta stated this explicitly when she said, it "would be okay if they [administration] wouldn't tell us to do it, if they would say what have you done in the past and what can we do to help?" Jack shared that his principal appeared to involve counselors in the decisions about their role as he "considers us [high school counselors] part of his leadership team as much as his assistant principals, relies a lot on us, to help him to help us as a team to decide on policy and procedure." Despite this involvement, Jack reflected in his interview that "one of the other things that continues to be challenging to me, is the fact, I think that in school counseling you're involved in initiating change in the system. There's a lot of challenges around that. It's really hard to understand a lot of the reasons why. It's really hard to try to change the way we do things." While his comment exposes a high level of participation instigating change, it highlights his confusion or skepticism about the need for reform and the ensuing difficulties with doing things differently.

The ambiguity derived from the lack of ownership and provisional nature of socialization did not appear to restrict the expression of power for this area of responsibility. Indeed, the nature of the interactions with students around compliance with requirements such as the WASL were presented as "pretty cut and dried" according to Gary, who also reflected that "it would be nice if you could use some of that to build relationships [with students]" but that typically does not happen in that context. Although some of the participants desired greater student responsibility for tracking their performance as presented earlier, most noted that the frequency of policy changes and new opportunities required a level of familiarity and knowledge about the system that they themselves struggled to stay on top of.

The presence of rules and the subsequent need for interpretation, however, demarked the foundation for the expression of expert power. Henrietta noted that “there are some kids in the senior class who would have jumped out if I hadn’t fought for them” and “I know I can get them on the right track, at least inform them of the right track.” The responsibility of administration brought about by educational reform provided a platform for a more assertive counseling than that expressed either intervention or guidance. Counselors described their expertise in terms of gate keeping. As bureaucrats, they possessed the knowledge needed to interpret rules, secure resources, and realize requirements necessary for students to achieve the desired high school diploma. The mark of expert power was found the one-way communication with students, teachers, and parents/guardians. For example, Larry shared an experience with a teacher who accused him of making inappropriate changes in student schedules. Larry stated, “I approached it strictly from my job as a counselor and what it was for the students.... I just tried to explain where my role was, that this was a school-wide decision. It wasn’t my personal choice to change classes around.” No student schedules were changed despite teacher objections. Without noting specifics, Mary shared that counselors “have just kind of put ourselves out there as pretty easy targets” in exerting such power. Pat remarked, “It’s kind of turned out like that where we have been closely aligned with our administration, given leadership roles . . . I find myself juggling that in the middle a lot and that’s a struggle for me.” She continued, “I am not a boss. . . I’m not paid to take that kind of heat from the staff,” even though the counselors in her building have agreed to “take on those kinds of things, because it’s best for kids.”

Closely connected to expert power was evidence of authority grounded in management. Phil shared the following situation he had just dealt with, which illustrated the scope of authority conveyed to counselors in managing decisions related to student credits and courses.

I had a parent call me right before spring break, it was that Friday afternoon and I was already out at practice. The message was[about a student] come[ing] back for a fifth year... I just want to make sure everything's ready to go. And I thought, well, that's kind of odd, so I called the boy down today. He wasn't on my radar for a reason, he has 20.5 credits. He's on track to graduate. I stopped and thought maybe I'm looking at the wrong kid, so I pulled his transcript and sure enough, he's got his social studies, and he completes his senior project and he's done. I talked with him about social studies, and he said, "I'm in the AP class and that counts, doesn't it?" Well, of course it does. I asked him, "Why are you doing this?" And he said, "I want to raise my GPA for college." I said, "You're not going to raise a 2.7 much in your ninth and tenth semester, so what's going on here?" And he said, "It's an arrangement that my stepmother and I made." Well, as it turns out, she wants him, I believe, to stay in school because there's some social security dollars tied to him being a student, and if he graduates, those social security dollars dry up.

Phil brought the situation to the attention of his administration and he was proceeding with inquiry into the legalities of matter. Without answers to his questions he did not know what was next, but clearly he was a principal player in gathering and determining the outcome.

Mary described the area of responsibility for administration as one of management noting that this work does "have a lot to do with a kid graduating from high school." Later in the interview, however, she remarked that it "gets in the way of the conversations" that are more

meaningful and authentic. Mary was not alone noting the conflict between the required work (that which is legally mandated) and the authentic work (helping students plan for their futures and providing interventions often precipitated by crisis). Jack shared his belief that this new work was essential “in order for the system to run.” And yet, Mary clearly stated a sentiment shared by others, “I guess I have to believe that what we’re doing is impacting students, but sometimes it’s hard.” The nature of the rewards for doing administration was plagued by an uncertainty.

When listening to participants share their stories, I felt something different or unfamiliar. I read and reread the transcript and pondered what the nature of my work had entailed and what changes I could distinguish, as well as what similarities were evident. My analysis of the interviews, observations, and reflective journals allowed me to clarify, portray, and verify my feelings. The administrative work of high school counselors is heavily influenced by the standards based education reforms, which began to emerge in the early part of this decade. Educational accountability and its mantra of social justice around ensuring all students meet standard now defines a key aspect of the work of counselors as demonstrated by the prominent placement of these tenets in ASCA’s National Model. Accountability is one of its four components.

Guidance work provided the historical foundation or development of counseling as previously discussed. Over the years, this work became a major focus of high school counselors along with the addition of intervention. My experience reflected these aspects of counseling as most of my days were spent struggling with how to meet the needs of the numerous students on my caseload while juggling the various student emergencies that no matter how hard I worked I could not control or prevent happening. The interventions varied based on the need, age, ability,

gender, parents/guardians, etc., of the students with whom I worked, but there was always a sense of urgency that over-rode daily guidance responsibilities. These interventions took more or less time depending on the student's situation, the resources required for support, and the involvement of the parent or guardian in the process.

I can say with some confidence that when I began counseling, my work reflected a pattern of activity infused or influenced largely by random events. Action from one moment to the next, while having some connection and over arching direction, tended to drift and meander given what was immediate. Talking with students as they came to me or as I happened to meet with them formally or informally invariably lead to some student, issue, or task requiring attention. This work changed with an effort in the 1990's to create a focused plan to reach every student in my caseload. By so doing counseling programs implemented a critical feature that would align, function, and support school administration's emerging attention to exercising instructional leadership. The administrative responsibility of counselors began taking shape and building momentum. No Child Left Behind, which was passed in 2002, with its accountability mandate reinforced or reaffirmed the purposefulness of such heading.

Educational accountability mandated that all students must meet standard on state adopted tests and delineated higher expectations of students in earning the high school diploma. Specifically, credit expectations changed, along with additional requirements of adequate test scores, and several non-credit requirements, including a five year plan outlining what the student intend to do after graduation and the culminating or senior project that provides a reflective presentation by students on their educational experience. The number of components and their interrelatedness require planning and monitoring of each student, but just as importantly they necessitate system oversight in order that educational offerings appropriately reflect the kind of

courses, services, and information students need to meet these requirements. I did not have to manage student test scores, analyze data to identify and develop remedial courses for students to gain skills so they could improve their test scores, or “track” any of the non-credit requirement expectations.

In examining the responses of participants I became aware that I had limited exposure to the role of bureaucrat that was being incorporated and defined in administration. I listened to their stories hearing their frustration and tales of success, but my connection was limited. In reviewing my journal entries, the experiences that I wrote about that reflected some of these concerns, practices, and activities present in the description of administration were secondary to those problems, behaviors, and rewards that aligned with guidance or intervention. It is for this reason that I do not provide personal examples of administration as I did with the previous two areas of responsibility.

Leadership for Social Justice: An Interpretation

All participants came to high school counseling because they liked working with young adults. The paths varied for the participants interviewed, some coming through previous work in mental health treatment settings, drug/alcohol treatment programs, or juvenile incarceration institutions. Some came to high school counseling from teaching, while the majority did not have any teaching experience. All expressed a strong desire to work with young adults, supporting them as they travel through the emotional years between 14 and 19, with the hope that all will earn a high school diploma and go on to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

The original mandate for school counseling—guidance— continues to exert a profound influence on the professional lives of the study’s participants. Guidance initially consisted of providing recommendations and supporting students in selecting appropriate career goals

(Gysbers, 2001). Additional duties have been added. Specifically, this work has evolved over time and counselors discussed how they are now heavily involved in recruiting and eliminating students as they select courses, with particular emphasis being given to math and science careers. High school counselors are key players in what has become high stakes placement of students in appropriate and required classes to meet state and national standards and college admissions requirements, which have been added to the historical expectation of meeting high school graduation requirements. The connection between guidance and administration represents a shift in focus on such issues from working with individual students to attending to programmatic concerns. High school counselors have a thorough understanding of the master schedule and the choices students can make that will meet the high expectations and mandates. They also are well positioned to assess, modify, and plan the schedule and other school services that will best fulfill student need, which is expertise that is being drawn upon in carrying out their administrative responsibility.

The work of guidance largely takes place through daily practices including intentional, scheduled, and focused appointments, but also might be part of a passing hallway conversation with a student or a chat in the cafeteria at lunch time. Early in my career I provided guidance to a student, Bob, with whom I talked almost daily in a hallway or cafeteria conversations. I met Bob at the beginning of his ninth grade year as he embarked on his high school experience. Bob was small and not very athletic. He enrolled in the debate class to utilize his verbal skills. Our conversations were cyclical as we approached the weekend and debate contests, Bob would talk about his preparation and his anticipation of the contests, especially if they involved travel away from the city where he resided. Bob shared with me his desire to accomplish something and he felt his debate experience would provide a platform to accomplish this goal. Mondays would

usually find Bob and me examining his performance in the most recent debate contests, and his reflections on whatever new environment he had participated in. He expressed a desire to travel beyond what he felt were the narrow confines of his current home. He also talked about the thrill of winning, saying that this experience was one of the best things that had ever happened to him.

Bob remained enrolled in debate through his high school years earning numerous awards, while also seeking out challenging course offerings that I encouraged him to pursue. As I guided Bob through this process, he and I talked about his willingness to be challenged academically and he often admitted that he did not want to work that hard. He usually did follow the recommendations I made and completed high school, graduating with honors and going on to complete a bachelor's degree and a law degree and has been a practicing attorney for over twenty years in a large metropolitan area. The incremental conversations built into a whole story that provided support to Bob as he traveled through the high school experience, leading him to a successful future as a lawyer.

Sally, another student in a different school setting, met with me fairly regularly in a more formal manner. She was actively involved in a variety of activities in high school, including cheerleading her senior year. Her busy schedule did not prevent her from asking me if she could come in before class or after school so we could talk about her plans for her future. Sally's intensity in our discussions lent a serious tone that almost became urgent at times. She was focused on her future and hoped to do great things.

Sally had strong academic skills and was also very personable and these attributes provided a platform for her to use as a base for her future goals. She came to me after spending a week in an Advanced Placement United States History class and we talked about a conflict she was experiencing. While she eagerly anticipated the intellectual challenge this course would

provide, she admitted to me that she could not stand the teacher—he was sarcastic and critical. We discussed the different types of learning she would experience in this class, both academic and how to get along with others, and she ultimately made the decision to drop the course and take a regular United States History course. She excelled in the course and came back at the end of the year, thanking me for helping her to make that decision.

Through the course of our discussions, she recognized that her love of learning called her to the profession of teaching, and she later became a high school English teacher. Ironically, her first position was in the same school that I was last employed as a high school counselor, thus, we became colleagues. Also ironically, one of our colleagues was the Advanced Placement United States History teacher whose course she had dropped. She acknowledged to me that he did have much to offer students, but she did not regret the decision that she made. Our relationship continued to be one of my providing her support as a new teacher and she and I remain in contact, sharing life and professional experiences and reminding each other of our shared journey.

The work of guidance as I experienced it fitted into a regular pattern of providing to students information on course requirements for high school graduation, college admissions, and information on skills needed for specific career areas. There is a noticeable change in the tenor of guidance given educational reform. The pitch of guidance work is heightened given increased intensity and frequency. Guidance has become high pressure with a serious ante. For example, new graduation requirements implemented in 2008 generate extra pressure on high school students and the high school counselors who monitor their progress. Students need guidance to support them in reaching the minimal goal of a high school diploma let alone the more desired goal of entry to college.

The nature of the intervention has changed and also exhibits its own evolving challenges. The extraordinary nature of working to intervene on the behalf of a student in need adds a measure of interest and energy to the world of high school counselors. When intervention is required, full commitment, attention, and talents of the counselor are called upon. When I worked with Patrick, I had to put aside other tasks on the list of “to dos” and give him the support he needed. Other students were disadvantaged by this choice because, even with a smaller caseload, there remained many other students, including Joe, who also needed my time, interest, and expertise. With the increasing number of nontraditional and underserved students enrolled in schools there are more students for whom high school counselors frequently represent the first and in some cases primary point of contact dealing with problems related to poverty, drugs, gangs, and sex. Already stretched counseling resources are pressed further as counselors work to offer intervention on the behalf of those most vulnerable and at risk not only in school but society.

Providing students with intervention and guidance services, while some times intertwined, often times identify purposes that are more in competition with each other in terms of the time, attention, and energy that each demands. Today, there are too many students with too many needs and too few counselors to adequately address all the pressing issues through the case model of counseling. The stories participants shared revealed both intervention and guidance as labor intensive as counselors largely performed such work on a student by student basis. The nature of the problems, roles, power, authority, and rewards for both guidance and intervention oriented counselors to attend to what was urgent and unique. For example, the majority of the participants discussed intervention in terms of individual students. Those examples are numerous and varied including Dennis’s providing laundry detergent and a school washing machine so that

a student could launder his clothing and continue coming to school. Ann shared her experience of spending time on the weekend with a student, helping him to complete the FAFSA (financial aid) form so that he could qualify for financial aid and pursue a college education, the first person in his family to do so. Carol described the student who had been put on a bus by his mother, traveling over 3000 miles to live with a sister he hardly knew. This student eventually received an award from a local service group based on her nomination.

Counselors carried out their responsibilities in the areas of intervention and guidance recognizing that students “come to school not as blank slates, but as individuals who are already invested in their thoughts, beliefs and desires” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 73). The specific knowledge about students garnered through intervention and guidance provided these counselors with “knowledge of children’s lives outside of school” and this knowledge helped them to “recognize their [students’] strengths” (Delpit, 1992, p. 242). High school counselors were thus uniquely positioned to advocate for students based on a strength model rather than the deficit model that is so prevalent in education. Further, knowing the students, their families, their cultures, and their contexts expanded these high school counselors’ experiential base and enabled them to promote a more inclusive and democratic school environment.

Indeed, several of the study’s participants talked about how they took insights given their work of intervention to inform and support their efforts in administration and its emphasis on social justice. Most importantly, counselors understood the need for change in educational practice. Jack shared,

I think that in school counseling you’re involved in initiating change in the system, and there’s a lot of challenges around that. It’s really hard, to understand a lot of the reasons why, it’s really hard to change the way we do things. Teachers are very reluctant, and I understand that

because of the demands that are on them. But our system needs to continue to evolve. We need to continue to evaluate and have an awareness of what we are doing and what it is we can improve.

Thus, high school counselors were inevitably drawn into the conflict and resistance over reform implementation.

The movement of schools toward greater equity of resources and access for all students evoked strong emotional responses, with high school counselors becoming targets. Pat summarized her understanding of the implications when counselors implement even embrace the goal of social justice in administration:

I feel like they, it's kind of unfortunately, it's become an us versus them sort of thing...given leadership roles, and, for me, personally, that's a struggle. I'm not a teacher, and I'm not an administrator...I find myself juggling that in the middle a lot and that's a struggle for me.

High school counselors were reluctant but often desiring to practice leadership in their schools through creating and supporting school reform to serve all students. The exercise of leadership evident in administration involved new experiences, forming moments to recognize and revise how policy, procedure, and practice advance or hinder educational opportunities for all students.

Chapter Summary

High school counselors communicated passion and commitment to their work in their interviews. With the advent of the ASCA model, their roles and accompanying responsibilities have expanded from the traditional intervention and guidance areas to that of administration. This new work is a result of the alignment of the work of the high school counselor with current

education reform efforts; high school counselors are asked to move beyond the individual student and look at the systems that serve those students, utilizing data for that examination. Included in that examination is a new lens for the high school counselor, that of social justice.

The participants in this study shared their stories, reflecting their work in all three areas. Their work in administration with a focus on social justice is emerging, with the majority of the participants lacking an awareness of this new role. The few participants who were doing this work were not always aware of their new role.

The process of the research study may have prompted the participants to further reflect on their work, going beyond that reflection that was asked in the research process. This reflection may provide avenues for the participants to expand their vision of this new work and ways for them to do this work.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

School counseling has evolved into a profession separate from teaching, with its own education requirements, regulations for certification and licensure, and associations. The recent adoption of the National Standards by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) aligned the profession with national and state educational reform initiatives and provided the framework for school counseling programs known as the National Model. This model seeks to restructure and clarify the duties and function of school counselors. Research reflected the complexity of the position, particularly at the high school level (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). The new model places leadership and social justice at the center of the high school counselors' work, whether interacting with students, collaborating with teachers, or dialoguing with administrators. Using an analytic autoethnographic research methodology, the purposes of this study were to describe, analyze, and interpret collected data to address three questions: (a) How do high school counselors perceive and experience their work? (b) How do high school counselors incorporate, respond, or contribute to school reform initiatives into their work? And (c) What are the implications of such understandings for social justice and leadership in the work of high school counselors? As such, the study contributed to understanding on the ways educators interpreted and implemented practices for furthering social justice in public schools.

Chapter one presented the background for the study and described the problem, purpose and research questions. The ASCA standards and model were introduced as well as Brown's notions of leadership for social justice. Chapter two reviewed literature and then depicted the investigation's conceptual framework, clarifying and defining major terms, theories, and

traditions which guided the collection and analysis of data. Chapter three contained a detailed discussion of the research methodology, examining the process of interviewing, transcribing, coding and analyzing data. Fourteen high school counselors in a variety of settings in large metropolitan area in the Pacific Northwest were interviewed. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The study began in January, 2008 and ended in June, 2008. in The product reflected the autoethnographic journey of the researcher. Chapter four offered description and interpretation of the participants' responses. The chapter identified concerns over issues of reflection, rational discourse, and action through policy praxis. Chapter five, the current chapter, concludes the dissertation by discussing and reviewing key findings. In addition, the chapter identifies implications, and significance of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

Discussion

Three areas of primary responsibility labeled intervention, guidance, and administration were identified. Each responsibility was described in a manner that explained how the participants in the study perceived and experienced their work. These responsibilities were defined by specific characteristics on six attributes labeled professional socialization, problems, role, power, authority, and rewards.

Participants shared that they felt a natural progression in their socialization for doing the work of intervention as high school counselors. High school counselors are trained to respond to immediate and urgent student needs and believed their education and experience built on their innate talents and skills. The conventional norms that have historically existed in high school settings provide the framework for the traditional guidance work of the high school counselor. It is in the area of administration that socialization emerged as a provisional process. Socialization

is dependent upon counselor colleagues and administrator and teacher responses. The ambiguity that is associated with change process was clearly evident here as high school counselors strove to adapt to this new role and the new work that accompanies it.

In intervention, the role of advocate or coach appeared to be one that the majority of high school counselors in the study felt comfortable with, whether it was working with students, teacher colleagues, or parents/guardians. The interviews reflected a strong commitment on the part of the participants to this work. Ann stated the comprehensive nature of this work, “A counselor advocates for kids, but also coaches administrators and teachers and secretaries. And coaching, I mean, mentoring, too, just reminding them why we’re here, that whole relationship piece.”

The traditional guidance role requires work on the part of the high school counselor as a mediator. High school counselors must bridge relationships between students and teachers, students and parents/guardians, and teachers and parents/guardians. Jack reflected on this work with parents/guardians, “You do a lot of work with parents...A lot of it is you are helping them to learn to navigate the system...You are able to share with them as their kids grow up.” Ann reflected, “What makes me sad is teachers haven’t been trained to work with kids who haven’t had an AP class before. And kids who have limited resources.”

The category of administration appeared to create frustration for some of the participants as they take on the role of bureaucrat, specifically with tracking new graduation requirements. As state and district requirements change responding to education reform, high school counselors are asked to interpret these changes to students and their parents/guardians, the “first communicator,” as described by Ann. High school counselors are also called upon to deliver messages that are not always clear and concise, and sometimes the message changes in mid-

sentence. Ann described this sometimes chaotic process as the “state building the plane while we’re flying it.”

Power and authority were explained by participants in ways that suggested that they did not always clearly understand the efficacy and influence they possessed. The legitimate power that high school counselors have was paired with the authority that comes from their attention to building caring relationships. Both legitimate power and caring were evident in the stories participants shared about their work on intervention.

The high school counselors identified the salience of referent power for getting things in providing guidance for students. They also noted the limitations for their authority and centered it on their collaborative skills. Working with college admission counselors, military recruiters, etc., were relationships that helped counselors in negotiating and translating requirements for students.

Expert power flows from the responsibility of administration which high school counselors are now expected to perform given the higher expectations for students that educational reform has produced. Many participants referenced the concept of “tracking” how and when students meet these higher expectations. The authority that accompanies this role was connected to the social value of management. Although, many of the participants did not necessarily welcome either source of influence; for they were perceived by some as burdensome. Pat reflected that “It’s your responsibility. You don’t want to leave it to someone else. If there’s a mistake, it’s your fault.” However, in her next comment, Pat noted that “I do like my job (laughs). I can’t imagine doing anything else.”

This reflects the inherent conflict in the different areas of responsibility for high school counselors. The caring and supportive nature of their work has been altered by the higher

expectations for all students that education reform has created. The social justice dimension of this work moves the high school counselor beyond working with individual students doing intervention and guidance work, to systemic work evident in management and leadership. The rewards that accompany the intervention and guidance areas were revealed by all participants in the stories they told of relationships with students and the successes, and sometimes failures, they shared with those students. The rewards associated with the administration category were not discerned by the participants; this role did not produce a reward that was visible to the participants.

The study also sought to address the question of how high school counselors incorporated, responded, or contributed to school reform initiatives in their work. The findings suggest that high school counselors strongly support and advocate for their students, but they do so in an environment of changing rules and high expectations with sometimes inadequate support. The importance of student advocacy is clear. However, the study's participants identified challenges including heaving student caseload and concerns about their power and authority on the part of high school counselors are two impediments to this systemic change. Other barriers to systemic change are a lack of training in leadership skills for high school counselors and confusion about what leadership is. The ASCA model (ASCA, 2005) does not provide support in either of these areas.

Power and authority were explained by participants in ways that suggested that they did not always clearly understand the efficacy and influence they possessed. Indeed, they have had little, if any, formal training about these key managerial skills. The ASCA model (ASCA, 2005) references leadership but its definition is not aligned with any formal leadership theory. There

are abundant interpretations of what leadership is both inside and outside the field of education. Clarity around this might be helpful in future counselor preparation programs.

As I conducted the interviews and subsequently transcribed and coded them, I became increasingly aware of my own experiences as a high school counselor. Those experiences created a filter through which I viewed the responses of the participants. I often found myself relating what they were speaking about to my own personal and professional experiences as a high school counselor. Those experiences were gained in the pre-reform era but they maintained merit as I found significant comparisons. I also became aware that many of the individuals with whom I had worked and some of those I had interviewed had perceived the ASCA model as the answer to the confusion around high school counselor role and function.

As I examined participant responses I learned that this was not the case. A lack of clarity around understanding what leadership was, significant changes in workload because of education reform and the urgency that student interventions require all contribute to continued confusion about high school counselor role and function. While some participants understood the concept of system change with an emphasis on social justice, those individuals implied this understanding in their responses. Explicit statements about systemic change to benefit all students were not evident in participant responses.

The ASCA model (ASCA, 2005) attempts to bring coherence to the role of the school counselor, but should not be perceived as “the” answer to the historical struggle for identity that school counselors have experienced. There continues to be a lack of understanding of the areas of responsibility; the intensity of the intervention work also contributes in that the high demands of this work often leaves high school counselors out of time at the end of a work day.

Implications, Significance and Recommendations

Very little qualitative research has been done in this arena; the stories that high school counselors have communicated provide a dimension to the quantitative data that is found in the majority of the current studies. The research identified a lack of understanding on the part of high school counselors of what leadership was, and the implications of power and authority in a leadership role. The research also examined the three areas of responsibility that dominate the daily work of a high school counselor, the traditional work of intervention and guidance and the new work of administration. As education reform continues to move forward, a deeper understanding of this new work can enhance the understanding of the high school counselor by those who do the work and by their colleagues.

As practical significance, the interview process may have introduced high school counselors to the reflective nature of their work, or provided opportunities for those who already reflected on their work to do so in a deeper, more meaningful way. This reflection may then have facilitated or encouraged next steps of rational discourse and action, or some other transformative process.

Further practical significance may be that school systems pursue a thoughtful and purposeful examination of the counselor role in a distributed leadership model. The pursuit of this examination may result in a greater intentionality of all educators, not just high school counselors, to examine their work in the context of social justice. This could include professional development opportunities for high school counselors in the areas of leadership and social justice.

Finally, the ASCA model could more clearly define leadership and social justice in the context of the work of the school counselor and be more explicit in how that work supports all students.

Substantively, the research provides a framework for a deeper examination of the work of high school counselors beyond that of sifting and sorting, moving into a social justice environment that honored each individual student. The study presents clear examination and reinterpretation of structures that impeded or supported the work of the high school counselor. Further investigation of organizational structures that support and impede school counselor leadership are encouraged. For example, the notion of distributed leadership is particularly salient given the division of labor in schools and expertise of counselors.

The results of this study enhance the quantitative work that has already been done, and expands the results of previous studies that rely on responses from members of professional associations. In addition, the results may be used to further guide the work of the individual high school counselor as education reform changes continue into the coming years.

The focus of this research was largely on participant responses to a guided set of interview questions. Future research might include observations of participants over a long period of time, including professional discussions with other high school counselors both in and outside of their buildings. Other observations might include participants working with administrators and teachers and follow-up interviews with those participants and teachers. These processes may lead to a deeper understanding of the role of the high school counselor and how they function in each of the areas of responsibility.

Next, future research could focus on pre-service high school counselors and their understanding of their roles in the areas of responsibility pre-internship and post-internship. The

majority of the participants interviewed were far removed from their professional preparation programs. This new data might help shape counselor preparation programs and enhance the skills that newly trained high school counselors would bring to the buildings in which they worked.

Finally, future research would benefit from a focus on one building and its implementation of the ASCA model. This study, beginning with the implementation might produce qualitative data around personal and professional barriers that the high school counselors and their colleagues perceive and/or create.

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Appendix A

Educator Participant Consent Form

Date, 2008

NAME, TITLE

NAME OF SCHOOL

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear TITLE, LAST NAME,

My name is Mona Griffin and I am currently a doctoral student in the Department of Leadership and Counseling Psychology at Washington State University. I am writing to request permission to study the work of school counselors in the context of education reform. The purpose of the study is to better understand the counselor response to education reform and the adaptive changes that accompany this reform.

This study has been reviewed and approved by (NAME OF SUPERINTENDENT OR CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR). I am seeking your permission to interview and observe you. The interview will be audio-taped, transcribed and then erased. The interview session will be approximately one hour in length and conducted in a location mutually agreed upon by all parties. I may ask to shadow you for a couple of hours as you go through your school day as agreeable by you.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. There is no anticipated risk of embarrassment or harm as a result of your participation in the study. Your

identity will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms. A master list of identifying participants with their pseudonyms will be stored separately from the data in a secure, locked location. At the conclusion of the study, the master list will be destroyed. Researchers and dissertation committee members may be given access to collected data for verifiable research purposes only.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have about the project. I can be reached at (509) 354-7296. I am willing to share the results of the study upon its completion.

Sincerely,

Ramona H. Griffin

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Counselor Participants

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself—how you came to work as a school counselor, an overview of your career in school counseling.
2. What motivates you as a school counselor?
3. What do you find most rewarding about working as a school counselor?
4. What do you find least rewarding (most frustrating?) about working as a school counselor?
5. Describe your role and responsibilities as a school counselor at (building name).
6. What successes/supports at (building name) do you experience when working with students?
7. What problems or contradictions at (building name) do you experience when working with students?
8. Tell me about the work you are doing with

Students

Families

Teachers

Other counselors

9. Describe how you work with your principal.
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Advanced Qualitative Research Class

1. Background information—tell me about yourself, how long have you worked as an educator, how long have you worked as a counselor (principal) how long have you worked in this building?
2. Please describe your understanding of the role of the school counselor in a high school setting. Please describe your understanding of the function of the school counselor in a high school setting.
3. Question asked only of counselors: Please describe how that role and function has been different under the principals with whom you have worked in the past.
4. Question asked only of the principal: Please describe how the role and function of the school counselor is different from the middle level to the high school level.
5. Do you have classroom teaching experience? If so, what was your perception of the role and function of the school counselor prior to entering the profession?
6. What leadership role(s) do the counselors in this building play currently? If the leadership role exists or existed, has that leadership role been different under different principals?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?