SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND THEIR MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCE

AND AWARENESS OF THE NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT GAP: A NATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

There has been a considerable amount of research focused on the multicultural counseling

competence (MCC) of counselors, but research examining the MCC of school counselors

looking at school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap has been quite sparse.

The current study was conducted to fill this gap. One hundred and sixty five American School

Counselor Association (ASCA) members participated in the current study. The study was a web

survey where each participant was contacted through email and invited to participate by Survey

Monkey, an on-line survey tool. Survey Monkey was used to post the survey and demographic

questionnaire and collect the data. The Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training

Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R) (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004) was used to examine the

perceived MCC of school counselors. A Demographic Questionnaire was also added consisting

of questions regarding variables such as race/ethnicity, gender, school level, and school

urbanicity and questions that examined school counselors' awareness of the national

achievement gap. The results of the current study suggested that school counselors possessed a

self-perceived MCC between somewhat competent and competent. The results also suggested

that school counselors who had taken a Master's level or specialty course on multicultural

counseling possessed a higher MCC than those who had not, school counselors of Color were

found to possess a higher MCC than their White counterparts, and gender was found to have no

significant relationship with MCC. In addition, the results suggested that school counselors were

aware of the national achievement gap, believed in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap, were committed to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the gap. Finally, using the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS), the results suggested that social desirability may have played a small role in the results of the MCCTS-R.

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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

In the United States cultures, it is assumed that the Western model of behavior is superior over all other cultural practices. Other practices may be deemed abnormal and in immediate need of change (Niles, 1993). This way of thinking can affect counselors who may believe that it is not necessary to change their counseling style due to their belief that the Western model of behavior is superior. Counselors may believe that their client's issue revolves around their worldview and daily practices which the counselors believe must be changed. This way of thinking by counselors may impair their empathy to the needs of their client (Niles, 1993). The counselors' bias, lack of open mindedness, and understanding may, in turn, be a major detriment to their growth as counselors and the well being of their clients. Counselor must be aware that their idea of "normal" may not be applicable to those from diverse cultural backgrounds (Hobson & Kanitz, 1996).

The United States is in the process of major changes. Many cities and towns across the country are being populated with individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The 2006 population estimate stated that out of the 299,398,484 people residing in the United States, 14.8% were Latino, 12.8% were Black, 4.4% were Asian, and 1% was American Indian and Alaska Native (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006d). These individuals have and will continue to have children who will be enrolled in schools across the United States. In 1985 the K-12 population of Latino students was 4,323,000 which rose to 6,846,000 in 1995 and further increased to 10,230,000 in 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006b). From 1985 to 1995, the population for K-12 African American students went from 7,063,000 to 8,319,000 and further rose to 8,352,000 in 2006. In a 10 year span from 1996-2006, the K-12 Asian student population rose from 2,076,000

to 2,282,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006b). The growth of K-12 students of Color in the United States illustrates the need for school counselors' multicultural competence.

K-12 Schools and Immigration

The attitudes and willingness of school counselors to work with immigrant students can alter the effectiveness of their work with the students (Constantine & Gushue, 2003). Additionally, in 2003, immigration was found to play a role in the population growth of elementary and secondary students where 22% of K-12 students came from households with at least one foreign-born parent and 6% of these students were foreign-born. In reference to specific cultural background and households with at least one foreign-born parent, 91% of Asian students and 66% of Latino students come from households with at least one foreign-born parent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The increase of students of Color in K-12 schools mandate that school counselors possess the proper level of awareness, knowledge, and skills to assist students of Color and attend to their concerns (Constantine & Yeh, 2001). There are demands and challenges such as the physical and psychological adaptation for students who attempt to adjust to their new environment. Additional struggles facing these students may be a language barrier, parents who do not speak English, and difficulty understanding the United States educational system (Constantine & Gushue, 2003). Many of these students will have issues surrounding topics such as adjustment, racism, and/or depression and may seek counsel with a school counselor.

To substantiate the need of school counselors who are competent in multicultural counseling, this chapter begins with the background of the study which includes multicultural counseling competence, assessments of multicultural counseling competency, and achievement gap. The chapter continues with the purpose of the study followed by limitations. The chapter concludes with the conclusion and definitions sections.

Background of the Study

Culturally Skilled Counselors

Sue et al. (1982) believed that racial and ethnic differences between counselors and clients could cause a barrier between both parties and hinder the counseling process. This may be due to misunderstandings that develop due to communication discrepancies and may result in clients' feeling alienated. This alienation may cause clients' to not trust their counselor thus affecting their rapport. To assist counselors in building rapport and allowing their clients of Color to develop trust, counselors awareness of their own ethnicity, prejudices, and biases would be essential:

> If counselors can acquire a greater understanding of their own ethnicity and its overt and covert influences on their personalities and interpersonal styles, they will be better able to recognize the ways in which ethnic background influences different individuals behavior, peer interaction, values and life goals of counselors (Sue et al., 1982, p. 47).

In addition, differences between counselors and clients can have potentially negative effects on the counselor-client relationship if counselors choose not to acknowledge the different worldviews between them and their client of Color:

> In a cross-cultural counseling situation, differences between the counselor and client may potentially block, either partially or wholly, a counselor's (a) true understanding of the client's situation, difficulties or strengths; (b) ability to emphasize with and understand the world view of the client; and (c) ability to utilize culturally relevant counseling/therapy modes (Sue et al., 1982, p. 48).

Sue et al. also emphasized the importance of counselors being aware that the society they live in is multicultural and it would be a rarity for people to go a lifetime without encountering individuals from cultural backgrounds different from their own. The researchers stated that it was the duty of counselors to enhance their cultural awareness and become more sensitive to the needs of people of Color (Sue et al., 1982):

> In one way or another we are bound to interact with individuals who can be classified as "culturally different," and it is our responsibility as practicing psychologists to become more culturally aware and sensitive to our work with different populations. (Sue et al., 1982, p. 47)

To assist in counselors' enhancement of their cultural awareness, Sue et al. felt that an emphasis must be placed not just solely on the "individual" but on how the sociopolitical system has affected people of Color throughout history:

> The history and experiences of the culturally different have been the history of oppression, discrimination, and racism. . . . Feelings of powerlessness, inferiority, subordination, deprivation, anger, and rage, and overt/covert resistance to factors in interracial relationships are likely to occur and must be dealt with in the counseling/therapy context. . . . It is precisely the interaction of the cultural aspects with the sociopolitical system which creates many of the dilemmas of oppression, racism, etc. (Sue et al., 1982, p. 47)

To illustrate the importance of counselors becoming culturally skilled, Sue et al. developed cross cultural counseling competencies to assist counselors in better understanding what a culturally skilled counselor was and divided them into three levels of competencies, Beliefs/Attitudes,

Knowledge, and Skills. These are stated in detail in Appendix A, Characteristics of the Culturally Skilled Counseling Psychologist.

In 1990, Sue and Sue (1990) determined the criteria towards becoming a culturally skilled counselor and organized them along three dimensions, beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Sue & Sue, 1990):

> The culturally skilled counselor is aware of his/her own values and biases, and how they may affect minority clients (p. 167). . . . The culturally skilled counselor acknowledges and is aware of his/her own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings (p. 168). . . . The culturally skilled counselor must possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group he/she is working with (p. 169). . . . The culturally skilled counselor is aware of his/her helping style, recognizes the limitations he/she possesses, and can anticipate the impact upon the culturally different client. (p. 171)

In 1992, the 1982 cross-cultural competencies were revised and a total of 31 multicultural counseling competencies were produced which are included in Appendix B (Sue et al., 1992). The revised counseling competencies were published as "Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to the Profession." Reasons for the addition of the 31 multicultural counseling competencies stemmed from similar reasons for the creation of the 1982 cross cultural competencies. Sue et al. stated that the diversification of the United States including the increase of immigrants and the difference in the birth rates of people of Color compared to their White counterparts in the United States assisted in the need for counselors to be proactive towards increasing their multicultural competence. In terms of ethical practice, Sue et al. determined that there was a need for counselors to possess multicultural counseling competence and make it an integral aspect of the profession. This included counselors being

mindful of their own and their clients' worldviews. Sue et al. believed that for counselors to

better the counselor-client relationship with clients of Color, awareness of their own and their

clients' worldviews would be beneficial:

> For the minority client, he or she is likely to approach counseling with a great deal of
>
> healthy suspicion as to the counselor's conscious or unconscious motives in a cross-
>
> cultural context. For the White counselor or helping professional, he or she is likely to
>
> inherit the racial and cultural biases of his or her forbearers. (p. 479)

Multicultural Counseling Competence

Multicultural counseling competence can be defined as a counselor's awareness,

knowledge, and skill towards working with individuals from ethnically diverse populations (Sue

et al., 1992). The basis of the three aforementioned areas was the Multicultural Counseling

Competencies developed by AMCD Professional Standards Committee (Sue et al, 1992).

Multicultural counseling focuses on the preparation and practice that incorporate multicultural

and culture-specific awareness, knowledge and skills into counseling interactions (Arredondo,

Toporek, Brown, & Jones, 1996). Sue et al. (1992) viewed a culturally skilled counselor as an

individual who possesses knowledge and an understanding as to how racial discrimination and

stereotyping affect culturally diverse individuals.

According to Pedersen (1991), multiculturalism has been labeled by many as the "fourth

force" in counseling with the other three forces being psychodynamic, humanistic, and

behavioral. Pedersen stated, "multiculturalism is a pervasive force in modern society that

acknowledges the complexity of culture" (Pedersen, 1991, p. 6). Multiculturalism can be viewed

as a force that assists individuals in understanding the culture of others, themselves, and truly understanding that the world they live in is quite complex (Pedersen, 1991).

Counselors who do not possess sufficient training (academic course(s), workshop(s), and supervision) in multicultural counseling may lack the competence necessary to assist students of Color (Constantine, 2001; Constantine et al., 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy 2001, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, & Nielson, 1995; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, & Ottavi, 1994; Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, & Corey, 1998). Certain demographic factors have been associated with MCC. A limited number of studies important to the current study looked at the relationship between MCC and demographic factors such as ethnicity (Holcomb-McCoy, 1999; Pope-Davis et al., 1995; Sodowsky et al., 1998) and gender (Constantine & Yeh; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005) which will be furthered discussed in Chapter 2.

Ridley (1985) outlined several reasons as to why multicultural counseling should be included in mental health courses. Ridley's belief that the importance of taking a multicultural course(s) during one's graduate mental health program stemmed from the author's position that graduate programs were not preparing counselors to effectively work with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Ridley believed that it should be mandated for those in the mental health field to focus on multicultural issues. Other reasons surrounding the call for the infusion of multicultural courses were the societal changes that were and continue to occur in the United States. Ridley wanted mental health to mirror the diversity seen in our society. Ridley believed that these professionals lack the competence to best assist culturally different clients and the acquisition of this competence was based on in-depth training and proper supervision. Ridley stated, "Delivering mental health services outside of one's areas of competence constitutes an

ethical infraction" (Ridley, 1985, p. 613). Finally, Ridley determined that it was imperative for

mental health literature to correct the inaccurate and insensitive presentation of people of Color

in mental health literature:

> Theoretical and empirical information about ethnic minorities has, in many respects, been
>
> criticized by, among other things, (a) the perpetuation of false stereotypes, (b) the lack of
>
> systematic research and serious methodological flaws, (c) an overemphasis on
>
> psychopathology, (d) a failure to address the impact of social inequities and pressures on
>
> minority group behavior, (e) the inappropriate use of culturally biased instruments, (f) a
>
> neglect of attention to the competencies and strengths of ethnic minority groups, (g) the
>
> evaluation of ethnic minorities using middle-class white norms, and (h) the failure of
>
> research to contribute to the betterment of those groups being studied. (Ridley, 1985, p.
>
> 614)

Carey, Reinat, and Fontes (1990) examined the level of school counselors' perceived

need for multicultural counseling training. Carey et al. found that school counselors believed that

multicultural counseling training was a priority need and wanted to receive further training on

issues such as preventing academic dropout and assisting students in the development of higher

achievement motivation. The enhancement of communication skills with students of Color and

the ability to work better with their families was also considered a need for school counselors. In

addition, the participants of the study indicated that there was a need for school counselors to be

aware of their cultural stereotypes, biases, and values so that they could honor and respect the

uniqueness of those different from them. The researcher found that demographic factors such as

school counselors' ethnicity and school urbanicity were associated with school counselors'

perceived need for multicultural counseling training. African American and Latino school

counselors perceived a greater need for multicultural counseling training compared to their Caucasian counterparts but it must be noted that Caucasian school counselors indicated that there was between a moderate to high priority need for multicultural counseling training. In terms of school urbanicity, school counselors working in urban settings perceived a greater need for multicultural counseling training compared to rural and suburban based school counselors.

Hobson and Kanitz (1996) discussed the ethical dilemma of school counselors conducting multicultural counseling without the proper training. The researchers discussed the issue of school counselors and the ethical dilemma surrounding the usage of multicultural counseling. Hobson and Kanitz stated that school counselors who have not been properly trained in multicultural counseling are faced with the issue of working with clients of diverse backgrounds without being properly equipped with the necessary tools to work with them. To help promote a positive atmosphere in schools and to provide their students with the proper assistance, counselors need to be properly trained in multicultural counseling (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1996). Due to the increase of people of Color in the United States, counselors must become advocates for their students and integrate multicultural issues in all aspects of the school including school curriculum. As a means of increasing school counselors' advocacy, D'Andrea and Daniels (1996) stated that school counselors should consult with teachers in their schools and develop ways to initiate discussions in regards to diversity, respect, and tolerance with their students and also conduct activities focused on multicultural guidance in the classroom. It was found that when counselors do this, they assist their students' knowledge, awareness, and respect for one another. It was also found that when counselors incorporate multicultural issues that focus on cultural diversity into their curriculum, they help their students reduce their interethnic

tension thus increasing their students' cultural awareness and respect for one another (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1996).

Assessments of Multicultural Counseling Competency

The multicultural counseling competencies have assisted in the creation of a number of multicultural counseling competence instruments. The most widely used instruments include the Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R) (Lafromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez, 1991), the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge Skills Scale (MAKSS) (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991), the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) (Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994), the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale: Form B (MCAS-B) (Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett, & Sparks, 1994), and the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS) (Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Rieger, & Austin, 2002). For the current study, the Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R) (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004), the only multicultural counseling competence instrument for school counselors, was chosen. These instruments were created to address the lack of multicultural counseling assessments and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Achievement Gap

In the United States, there are a variety of cultures such as Black, Asian, Latino, and Native American who have resided in this country, but those who have held and continue to hold power within the country have been men of European decent. These individuals have held important power positions that have dictated the movement of this country. These positions have allowed Caucasian males to have power and control over factors such as politics, economics, and education. These factors can be considered the most important factors towards success in the

United States and also point to the lack of power that people of Color and women have had within the United States (Arredondo et al., 1996).

At present, an education achievement gap in the United States exists between people of Color and their Caucasian counterparts which can be viewed through several medians such as the SAT, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and high school dropout rates. The SAT is a widely used exam divided into two sections, Verbal and Mathematics, with each section's score ranging from 200-800. The SAT is designed to be an aid for the prediction of how well high school students will do once they enter college (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The scores on the SAT have been used to monitor the ethnic and racial achievement gap trends of high school students (Lee, 2002). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which will be further discussed in Chapter 2 is the only national assessment that assesses the average knowledge and test-score of U.S. students. High school dropout has been associated with several issues such as truancy (unexcused absence from school), poor grades, and disciplinary problems. Truancy has been viewed as a major warning sign of dropping out. Students who had the highest truancy rates had the poorest academic achievement rates and subsequently had high dropout rates (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001). Other factors have been associated with both truancy and high school dropouts which included family factors (i.e. parental supervision, poverty, attitude towards education), school factors (i.e. school climate issues including teachers and administrators attitudes and lack of flexibility towards meeting the diverse and cultural styles of learning of students), and economic influences (i.e. single parent homes, lack of affordable housing and childcare) (Baker et al., 2001). In addition, high school dropouts between the ages of 18 to 65 averaged an approximate income of $20,100 compared to a $29,700 average for high school graduates (Laird, Kienzl, DeBell, & Chapman, 2007).

The United States high school dropout rate for students ages 14 to 24 declined between 1980 and 2005, when the average high school student dropout rate declined from 12% to 7.9% of the high school population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Once race was taken into account, a gap between students of Color and Caucasian students was visible. Between the years of 1980 and 2005, Caucasian students dropout rate declined by approximately 3%, from 11.3% to 7.9% of the population; Black students' high school dropout rate declined by approximately 7%, from 16% to 9.2%; and Latino students' dropout rate declined by 11%, from 29.5% to 18.6% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Although the decline in high school dropout rates occurred, the disparity between students of Color and Caucasian students' dropout rates can still be seen as a factor associated with the achievement gap.

Table 1.

The U.S. Average Dropout Rate for Caucasian, Black, and Latino High School Students (age 14 to 24)

Race	Year	
	1980	2005
Caucasian	11.3%	7.9%
Black	16%	9.2%
Latino	29.5%	18.6%

As discussed prior, the SAT can also be used as a means of looking at the achievement gap. The scores of both the Verbal and Math scores narrowed considerably during the late 1980s between Black-White and Latino-White students. The narrowing of the SAT gap came to a halt in the late 1980s and 1990s and has continued to widen since (Lee, 2002). According to the

United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, the average

SAT (Scholastic Achievement Test) score from 1991-2001 for Black high school seniors ranged

from 846 (Verbal-427 & Math-419) to 859 (Verbal-433 & Math-426) and improved slightly in

2006 to 863 (Verbal 434 & Math-429). For Latino high school seniors, their SAT scores from

1991-2001 ranged from 920 (Verbal-458 & Math-462) to 925 (Verbal-460 & Math-465) and

decreased slightly in 2006 to 921 (Verbal 458 & Math-463). The 1991-2001 SAT scores for

Caucasian high school seniors ranged from 1031 (Verbal-518 & Math-513) to 1060 (Verbal-529

& Math-531) and increased slightly in 2006 to 1063 (Verbal 527 & Math-536). From 1991-2006,

the SAT score increased by 17 points for Black students, 1 for Latino students, and 32 for

Caucasian students. The gap in the 1991 SAT score between Black-White students was 185

which increased to 200 in 2006. The 1991 SAT score gap was 111 between Latino-White

students and increased to 142 in 2006 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The SAT score gap

between Black-White and Latino-White students illustrates the achievement gap that has existed

in the United States between these groups.

Table 2.

SAT Score Averages for Caucasian, Black, and Latino High School Seniors

Race	Year		
	1991	2001	2006
Caucasian	1031	1060	1063
Black	846	859	863
Latino	920	925	921

School Counselors and the Achievement Gap

To address the limited research focused on school counselors and the achievement gap, House and Hayes (2002) and Holcomb-McCoy (2007) discussed the topic. There has been a national call for school counselors to improve the education opportunities of students, but school counselors have been viewed as secondary sources in school reform and school missions to close the achievement gap between students of Color and their White counterparts (House & Hayes). School counselors' duties have been omitted in discussions surrounding school reform and from initiatives designed to assist students towards academic success. This omission has been viewed by school counselors as problematic due to the responsibilities that school counselors hold such as assisting students with their course of study. Barriers in the success of students of Color include schools that have not been proactive in their inclusion of student of Color in rigorous curriculum or supporting these students once there (House & Hayes). A barrier for school counselors who desire to assist students by enrolling them in rigorous curriculum would be that school counselors' roles are not clearly defined. School counselors' roles such as duties and expectations differ depending on states, districts, and schools. School counselors' roles are defined and assigned by administrators who may not be fully aware of the roles that school counselors should have. House and Hayes found that when school counselors allow others to define their roles, they are left with a program designed by others, an unclear mission, and an unidentified role which causes school counselors to, "function at the discretion of others rather than from a well-conceived effort that addresses the needs of all students" (p. 251). School counselors who develop and implement school counseling programs aimed at enhancing the achievement of students would be directly tying the school's mission with school counseling, thus elucidating the role of school counselors. As discussed prior, omitting school counselors

from school reform could be problematic. Responsibility for student achievement has customarily been given to educators and administrators but in actuality, responsibility must be shared by school counselors, parents, students, and the community. Positive change in the education system aimed at assisting all students would not occur if all individuals mentioned were not critical players (House & Hayes).

There are two major barriers that affect the improvement of the education opportunities for students, which can be directly connected to the duties of school counselors: low expectations and lack of multicultural competence. With respect to the former, House & Hayes (2002) reported the following:

> Low expectations, specifically the pervasive belief that socioeconomic status and color determine young people's ability to learn; and the sorting and selecting process that acts to filter out "less competent" students by denying them access to rigorous course content necessary to advancing through the curriculum. (p. 252)

Students of Color have traditionally been taught by less educated and less experienced teachers than their White counterparts (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). The experience of teachers has been linked to the achievement gap in cases where teachers with higher certification scores were found have students with higher achievement scores (Holcomb-McCoy). In contrast, teachers with lower certification scores have been found to teach in schools that have a higher percentage of Black and Latino students.

According to Holcomb-McCoy (2007), K-12 students of Color who attend low income schools face a number of challenges. These institutions generally do not provide their students with the proper educational tools for success. The lack of proper educational tools can be seen in poor academic grades, poor national test scores, and high dropout rate. To increase students'

success, intervention, support, and advocacy must come from school administrators, teachers, school counselors, and the entire community. Low educational achievement has been linked to higher unemployment rates, low wages, increased crime, and an increased reliance on social service programs such as welfare (Holcomb-McCoy). To help close the achievement gap, school counselors must be willing to attend to issues surrounding social justice; "that is, to issues of equity, equality, and possibility for all students" (Holcomb-McCoy, p. 6). "Social justice champions the belief that one can change the world and that all persons may contribute to the whole of society while striving for their own potential" (Holcomb-McCoy, p. 6).

School counselors are placed in a privileged position where they are able to have a school wide perspective of all students' academic progress through data, files, and reports thus allowing them to assess potential barriers towards each student's academic success (House & Hayes, 2002). Students are to receive educational equity which would allow each student to attain access to rich curriculum and excellent teaching. However, data has shown that this statement is not true and the achievement gap continues to exist.

In order to improve education, bring about school reform, and close the achievement gap, school counselors must also be collaborators, as advocated by House & Hayes (2002):

> Working with teachers and other personnel, counselors should be actively involved in the development, coordination, and implementation of support systems designed to improve the learning success for students experiencing difficulty with rigorous academic programs. . . . Working with administrators, counselors should provide ongoing support for classroom teachers to become sensitive, multicultural educators who hold their students to high standards while providing high quality instructions. . . . Working in this fashion, school counselors are school leaders who are informed about and active

participants in the school reform efforts being undertaken in their school, district, and

state. (p. 253)

According to House and Hayes (2002), students of Color need school counselors to be advocates,

mentors, and genuinely concerned for their well-being. This is due to the fact that many students

of Color come from a history of marginalization and little success has been seen in the

improvement of systems of government such as schools since the late 1980s. Instead of being

advocates and mentors for students of Color, school counselors have frequently take on the role

of gatekeepers. Studies and data illustrating the effect of the achievement gap on students of

Color will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the multicultural counseling

competence of United States school counselors and their commitment to closing the achievement

gap. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Sue, et al. (1992) three domain

model of multicultural counseling competence which were awareness, knowledge, and skills.

The awareness domain referred to counselors understanding of their attitudes and beliefs and

how they are the product of their upbringing and cultural conditioning. Knowledge referred to

counselors being knowledgeable about the worldviews of the culturally diverse. The skill domain

referred the skills that counselors must possess to work effectively with individuals from

different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (Sue et al., 1992). The Multicultural Counseling

Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R) (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, 2004),

the short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS) (Strahan & Gerbasi,

1972) and a Demographic Questionnaire were used for this study. The MCCTS-R, a revised

version of the MCCTS (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999) was used to examine the multicultural

counseling competence (MCC) of K-12 school counselors. The short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS) was used to examine K-12 school counselors' social desirability. The Demographic Questionnaire was used to investigate school counselors' commitment to closing the achievement gap.

Research Questions

The questions guiding this study are:

1) To what extent do school counselors perceive themselves as possessing MCC (***MCC perception***)?

2) Is there a significant difference between the self-perceived MCC of school counselors who had previously taken a ***multicultural course*** and those who had not?

3) Are there significant differences in the level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors' when grouped by ***demographic variables*** of race/ethnicity, gender, school level, and school urbanicity?

4) Is there a significant difference between school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap (***gap aware***) and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

5) Is there a significant difference between school counselors' ***belief*** in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

6) Is there a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to ***activities*** aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

7) Is there a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to ***duties*** aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

8) What is the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived ***social desirability*** and level of self-perceived MCC?

The study was based on Holcomb-McCoy (2001) study. The researcher conducted the study in an attempt to determine whether similar results would occur in the current study. Using the MCCTS, Holcomb-McCoy examined the perceived MCC of elementary school counselors and the results of the study indicated that school counselors perceived themselves to be multiculturally competent. In addition, the study indicated that there was a lack of significant difference in reference to perceived multicultural competence between school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course(s) compared to those who had never taken a multicultural course. The Holcomb-McCoy study will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

The Demographic Questionnaire consisted of questions that examined school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap, belief in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap, commitment to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and commitment to duties aimed at closing the achievement gap. The Demographic Questionnaire consisted of questions regarding the variables of race/ethnicity, gender, school level, and school urbanicity.

<div align="center">Definitions</div>

The following keywords, with their definitions, are pertinent to this study.

*Achievement Gap***:** Refers to the United States educational achievement gap that exists between people of Color and their Caucasian counterparts (Lee, 2002).

*African American***:** Used interchangeably with Black.

*Caucasian***:** Used interchangeably with White.

*Culture***:** All the values, traditions, and customs that people learn from their environment (Sue & Sue, 1990).

Diversity: An individual difference including age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical

ability or disability and other characteristics by which someone may prefer to self-define

(Arredondo et al., 1996).

Ethnicity: Refers to heritage passed from generation to generation among people who share the

same country of origin, history, and language (Helms, 1990).

Multicultural Awareness: Counselors' understanding of their attitudes and beliefs and how they

are the product of their upbringing and cultural conditioning (Sue et al., 1992).

Multicultural Counseling Competence: A counselor's awareness, knowledge, and skill towards

working with individuals from ethnically diverse populations (Sue et al., 1992).

Multicultural Knowledge: Counselors being knowledgeable about the worldviews of the

culturally diverse (Sue et al., 1992).

Multicultural Skill: The skills that one must possess to work effectively with individuals from

different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (Sue et al., 1992).

Multicultural social desirability: An individual stating that they, personally and socially, always

interact positively with people of Color. The individual also professes that they are

always in favor of educational and government policies that institute multicultural

diversity (Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, & Corey, 1998).

Self construal: Refers to a person's perception of themselves (thoughts, feelings, etc.) in relation

to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). There are two types of self construal, independent

and interdependent. Independent self-construal refers to individuals whose self-definition

is based on their distinctive attributes and skills and on the importance of differentiating

themselves from others. These individuals highly value self-promotion, independence,

brazenness, and individuality (Markus & Kitayama). Interdependent self-construal refers

to individuals who deeply value connectedness to other individuals, relationships, and

social contexts and feel that they are intertwined in each of their relationships (Markus &

Kitayama).

People of Color: Sociologically refer to the following four groups in the United States: African

American, Latino, Asian American, and Native Americans (Sue et al., 1992).

Educationally and within this study, people of Color will be used to refer to African

American, Latino, and Native Americans.

Race: The division of human beings based on physical characteristics such as skin color, hair,

and eyes (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1979).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The increase of people of Color in the United States coupled with the existence of the

achievement gap between students of Color, in particular Black and Latino and their White

counterparts, emphasize the importance of school counselors being competent in multicultural

counseling (Haycock, 2001). There is a need for school counselors to closely evaluate their

current counseling and treatment techniques, their current paradigms, and their assumptions and

beliefs (Sue et al., 1992). School counselors who possess the proper training, knowledge, and

skills to work with culturally different clients would be counselors who are open to learning

about students' cultural background. Competent school counselors would be knowledgeable

about how to best assist and support their culturally diverse students. School counselors will

learn about issues and concerns surrounding their clients' culture which, if not explored, may

cause a lack of rapport between counselors and students thus causing a rift between school

counselors and students (Sue et al.).

As discussed prior, school counselors who work with culturally different clients without possessing the proper training, knowledge, and skills and continue to work with their culturally different clients were unethical (Sue et al., 1992). If school counselors are not culturally competent, they may not be capable of knowing how to work with their student and may contribute to their students' difficulties at school.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two discusses the theoretical basis for this study. Chapter two begins with a summary of the history of Multicultural Counseling, and continues with a review of instruments used to assess MCC. Next, the chapter reviews the empirical literature supporting the study of MCC and school counselors. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the issues surrounding the ethnic achievement gap in U.S. schools.

History of Multicultural Counseling

The topic of multicultural counseling was neglected in the counseling profession until 1965. In 1965, the American Counseling Association (ACA), known at the time as the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA), began the necessary steps of addressing the issue of diversity and multicultural counseling by establishing the Human Rights Commission (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 1995). One of the most important duties of the commission was to advocate for the needs of culturally diverse groups. In 1969, four years after the creation of the Human Rights Commission, APGA created the National Office of Non-White Concerns. The Civil Rights movement was a catalyst for the development of these divisions within APGA. The Civil Rights movement assisted to heighten awareness of the deplorable ways that the culturally diverse were being treated in the United States. To address the feelings of marginalization that a number of Black Psychologist felt within the American Psychological Association (APA), the Association of Black Psychologist (ABPsi) was created in 1968 (Arredondo & Perez, 2006). This organization focused on the dilemmas facing Black professionals and the Black community as a whole. ABPsi's goal was to positively impact the mental health of the Black community by means of preparation, the development of programs

and services, advocacy, and training (The Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi), 2007).

Through the efforts and courage of those who started ABPsi, several other organizations such as

the National Latina/o Psychological Association, the Asian American Psychological Association,

and the Society of Indian Psychologists began to emerge in the 1970s and early 1980s

(Arredondo & Perez). These four organizations combined to form the Council of National

Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests (CNPAAEMI).

The drive to address diversity concerns continued and found its way into the American

Psychological Association (APA) conference in 1973. At this conference, the first set of ethical

guidelines focused solely on multicultural counseling was produced (Ponterotto et al., 1995). In

1977, four years after APA's conference, the Association for Counselor Education and

Supervision (ACES) followed suit and recorded their dedication to people from diverse cultural

backgrounds. In addition, ACES created their own Commission on Non-White Concerns in

1978. In 1978, APA created the Office of Cultural and Ethnic Affairs, in 1980, the Board of

Ethnic Affairs, and in 1987, the Society of Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues

(Ponterotto et al.).

In the 1970s, several publications were developed to combat ethnocentrism in the field of

counseling and psychology. Some of these publications were, *Even the Rat Was White: A*

Historical View of Psychology (Guthrie, 1976), *Psychological Testing of American Minorities:*

*Issues and Consequences (*Samuda, 1975), and *Counseling American Minorities: A Cross-*

Cultural Perspective (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1979). These publications were vital in

challenging the pervasiveness of racism within research that fallaciously claimed the intellectual

inferiority of people of Color.

In 1981, the president of APA Division 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology), Allen Ivey, deemed it necessary for the organization to discuss multicultural issues. Ivey requested that a report be produced by the Professional Standards Committee which was headed by Derald Wing Sue to attend to the multicultural issues. The committee produced the first multicultural competencies document comprising 10 competencies and a publication titled, "Position Paper: Cross-Cultural Counseling Competencies" (Sue et al., 1982).

In 1991, Thomas Parham, the president of the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), a division of ACA, decided that the 1982 cross-cultural competencies needed to be revised (Arredondo & Perez, 2006). Parham requested that the Professional Standards Committee revise the 1982 cross-cultural competencies. The Professional Standards Committee produced a total of 31 multicultural counseling competencies in the publication titled, "Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to the Profession" (Sue et al., 1992).

Literature concerning multicultural counseling competence has centered on three areas: awareness, knowledge and skills. Awareness refers to counselors understanding of their attitudes and beliefs and how they are the product of their upbringing and cultural conditioning (Sue et al., 1992).. Knowledge refers to counselors being knowledgeable about the worldviews of the culturally diverse. Skill refers to the skills that one must possess to work effectively with individuals from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (Sue et al.). It can be assumed that counselors who attain competence in the aforementioned areas will possess the essential characteristics and knowledge needed to work with people from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). The three areas were the basis of the

Multicultural Counseling Competencies developed by AMCD Professional Standards Committee (Sue et al.).

To strengthen the Multicultural Counseling Competencies and address the 31 competencies that the Professional Standards Committee produced, an additional AMCD Professional Standards Committee convened and developed 119 explanatory statements specific for the 31 competencies. The explanatory statements were published as, "Operationalization of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies" (Arredondo et al., 1996). In addition to the 31 competencies, 3 additional competencies were added, thus bringing the AMCD competency list to 34. The results of the addition can be found in *Multicultural Counseling Competencies: Individual and Organizational Development* included in Appendix B (Sue, Carter, Casas, Fouad, & Ivey,1998).

In 2002, a task force was formed comprised of APA members from both Divisions 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology) and 45 (Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues). These two Divisions convened for the purpose of developing a multicultural guideline document which was titled, "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists." This document was published in the *American Psychologist* (APA, 2003). Also, in 2002, the 31 multicultural guidelines recommended by AMCD in 1992 were endorsed by ACA (Arredondo & Perez, 2006). As the profession focused on the development of these competencies among individual practitioners and training programs, ways to track people's progress in attaining the competencies were needed.

<center>Assessments of Multicultural Counseling Competency</center>

Throughout the years, a variety of multicultural counseling competency assessment instruments have been developed. The Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R)

(Lafromboise et al., 1991), the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge Skills Scale (MAKSS) (D'Andrea et al., 1991), the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) (Sodowsky et al., 1994), the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale: Form B (MCAS-B) (Ponterotto et al., 1994), and the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS) (Ponterotto et al., 2002) are among the most widely used Multicultural Counseling Competence instruments (Dunn, Smith, & Montoya, 2006). All of the above mentioned instruments were created on the basis of the cross cultural counseling competencies which were developed by the Professional Standards Committee of Division 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. These are summarized in Tables 3 and 4 (Sue et al., 1982).

To address the scarcity of multicultural counseling competency instruments, LaFromboise et al. (1991) developed the CCCI-R. Unlike the MCI, MCAS-B, and the MCKASS, the CCCI-R is not a self-report instrument. The CCCI-R is an instrument that gives supervisors the opportunity to rate their counseling trainees across 20 unidimensional items with a 6-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 6-strongly agree) in regards to their multicultural counseling competence (LaFromboise et al.). The CCCI-R consists of three factors: Cross-Cultural Counseling Skill, Socio-Political Awareness, and Cultural Sensitivity as stated in the following:

> The first factor, Cross-Cultural Counseling Skill, consists of 10 items. The focus of this factor is on the self-awareness of counselors, counselors' ability to communicate appropriately with clients, counselors' comfort with ethnic differences between them and their clients, and counselors being cognizant of their role as counselors . . . . An example of a Cross-Cultural Counseling Skill item is, "Understands counseling process." The second factor, Socio-Political Awareness, is identified by six items. This factor focuses

on the ability of counselors to identify their strengths and weaknesses that may assist or

hinder the counseling process with clients of Color such as counselors being aware or

unaware of potential bias they may possess towards their clients. An example of a Socio-

Political Awareness item is, "Elicits variety of verbal and nonverbal responses." The

final factor, Cultural Sensitivity, consists of four items. The focus of this factor is

whether counselors possess empathy towards their clients' emotions and an

understanding of how their clients' environment may create barriers for them. An

example of a Cultural Sensitivity item is, "Demonstrates knowledge about client's

culture." (LaFromboise et al., p. 385)

The reported scores on the CCCI-R have shown evidence of construct, criterion-related, and

content validity (LaFromboise et al., 1991). The coefficient alpha of the CCCI-R was .95

(LaFromboise et al.). The inter-relater reliability was .78. Evidence of criterion validity occurred

when 86 counseling students rated a video of a counselor who was deemed to have a high level

of multicultural counseling competency by her faculty. The students rated the counselor to have

a high level of multicultural counseling competency which was consistent with the ratings of her

faculty (LaFromboise et al.).

The MAKSS is an instrument that measures the effect of various instructional approaches

based on the development of counseling trainees' multicultural counseling competence

(D'Andrea et al., 1991). The researchers observed that there had been an emphasis from the

1970s to the 1990s towards the preparation of culturally competent counselors resulting in an

increase of multicultural counseling courses in counselor education programs. Although the

number of multicultural counseling courses increased, a sparse amount of research assessing the

impact multicultural counseling courses had on graduate students had been conducted. A major

reason for this was due to lack of instruments that had been created to assess the impact. To address the scarcity, the researchers developed the MAKSS. The MAKSS contains 60 self-report items which are all scored on a Likert-type scale. The instrument uses two 4-point Likert scales. The first scale response is Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree; the second scale response is Very Limited, Limited, Good, and Very Good. The items reflect three separate subscales which are awareness, knowledge, and skills (D'Andrea et al.).

The first subscale, Awareness, pertains to the first 20 items in the MAKSS. This subscale focuses on counselors' awareness of how their personal values, biases, and stereotypes affect them and clients of Color. An example of an Awareness item is, "At this time in your life, how would you rate yourself in terms of understanding how your cultural background has influenced the way you think and act?" (D'Andrea et al., 1991, p. 149). The next 20 items make up the Knowledge subscale. The focus of the Knowledge subscale is whether counselors are knowledgeable about significant multicultural notions and problems affecting people of Color. An example of a Knowledge subscale item is, "In the early grades of formal schooling in the United States, the academic achievement of such ethnic minorities as African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans is close to parity with the achievement of White mainstream students" (D'Andrea et al., p. 149). The final 20 items make up the Skills subscale. This subscale focuses on a counselors' attainment of counseling skills relevant to multicultural issues. An example of a Skills subscale item is, "How well would you rate your ability to accurately identify culturally biased assumptions?" (D'Andrea et al., p. 150).

To assess criterion validity for the MAKSS, pre- and post-tests were given to experimental and control groups. The results indicated significant differences for the experimental group, but no significant differences for the control group (D'Andrea et al., 1991).

While the reliability and validity of scores were supportive for both the knowledge and skills subscales, the awareness subscale score indicated questionable reliability (D'Andrea et al.). The coefficient alpha for each subscale was, .90 for knowledge, .96 for skills, and .75 for awareness (D'Andrea et al.).

Sodowsky et al. (1994) questioned whether counseling psychologists possessed the multicultural counseling competence to address the changing landscape of the United States. The researchers pondered whether counseling psychologists were aware of the challenges facing legal and illegal immigrants, people of Color, and Caucasians relocating from rural areas to suburban areas. To address their questions and measure the multicultural counseling competence of counseling psychologists, Sodowsky et al. developed the MCI. The MCI is a self-report instrument that consists of 40 items scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale (4-very accurate, 3-somewhat accurate, 2 somewhat inaccurate, 1-very inaccurate). The items on the MCI reflect four separate subscales: Multicultural Counseling Skills, Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Relationship and Multicultural Counseling Knowledge (Sodowsky et al.).

The Multicultural Counseling Skills subscale consists of five multicultural counseling skill and six general counseling skills items. This subscale refers to counselors' ability to retain their clients of Color, identify and recuperate when cultural mistakes are made, and willingness to structure counseling to best serve the needs of their clients of Color. An example of the Multicultural Counseling Skills subscale is, "When working with minority clients, I am able to quickly recognize and recover from cultural mistakes or misunderstandings" (Sodowsky et al., 1994, p. 141). Next, the Multicultural Awareness subscale consists of 10 items. The focus of this subscale is for counselors to be advocates in their establishments, receptive to the needs of people of Color through interactions, understanding culture, and proactively seeking clients of

Color. An example of this subscale is, "I am involved in advocacy efforts against institutional barriers in mental health services for minority clients" (Sodowsky et al., p. 142). Multicultural Counseling Relationship consists of eight items. The Multicultural Counseling Relationship focuses on counselors' worldview, their level of comfort with their client of Color, their interaction with their client, and stereotypes of their client. An example of the Multicultural Counseling Relationship subscale is, "When working with minority clients, I find that differences between my worldviews and those of the clients impede the counseling process" (Sodowsky et al., p. 142). Finally, the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge subscale consists of 11 items. This subscale refers to counselors developing proper case conceptualization and treatment plans appropriate for their client of Color and being knowledgeable about research pertaining to clients. An example of this subscale is, "When working with minority clients, I keep in mind research findings about minority clients' preferences in counseling" (Sodowsky et al., p. 142).

Factor analyses—both confirmatory and exploratory—and tests of factor congruence offered evidence of construct validity of scores (Sodowsky et al., 1994). Sodowsky et al. reported on two separate studies in their article. The two studies resulted in a coefficient alpha of .86 for the full scale. Additionally, the coefficient alpha for each subscale was .81 for Multicultural Counseling Skills, .80 for Multicultural Awareness, .80 for Multicultural Counseling Knowledge, and .67 for Multicultural Counseling Relationship (Sodowsky et al.).

Ponterotto et al. (1994) developed the MCAS-B, a revised version of the 70-item MCAS, as a means to measure the multicultural counseling competence of counselors. It is a self-report instrument that consists of 45 items scored on a 7 point Likert-type scale. Similar to other multicultural counseling competence instruments such as the MCI and MAKSS, the MCAS-B

purpose is to measures the awareness, knowledge, and skill of counselors but unlike other instruments, the MCAS-B is comprised of two subscales: Knowledge/Skills and Awareness.

The first subscale, Knowledge/Skills, consists of 28 items that focus on counselor's general and multicultural counseling knowledge. The items regarding multicultural counseling knowledge are quite specific. An example of this would be, "I am knowledgeable of acculturation models for various ethnic minority groups" (Ponterotto et al., 1994, p. 319). The second subscale, Awareness, consists of 14 items which focus on the awareness that counselors possess in reference to multicultural issues. An example of an Awareness item is, "I feel all the recent attention directed toward multicultural issues in counseling is overdone and not really warranted" (Ponterotto et al., p. 319). Ponterotto et al. also included an additional three items that focused on social desirability. Social desirability can be defined as an individual's effort to present themselves as favorable thus allowing for social acceptance. An example of a social desirability item is, "At this point in my professional development, I feel I could benefit little from clinical supervision of my multicultural client caseload" (Ponterotto et al., p. 319). In reference to reliability, the coefficient alpha for each subscale was .93 for knowledge/skills, .93 for awareness, and .78 for the full scale coefficient alpha (Ponterotto, et al.).

The MCKAS, a revised version of the MCAS-B, was developed to respond to criticism of the MCAS-B. Criticism included disagreement with several multicultural counseling knowledge items that were determined to be outdated such as items that asked of the counselor's knowledge about specific scholars. The scholars may have been viewed as leaders in the counseling field when the MCAS was first developed but may not be considered leaders at the present time (Ponterotto et al., 2002). Another revision that occurred was the removal of the three social desirability items. The subscale Knowledge/Skills was also changed to Knowledge so that the

content of the items could accurately be reflected. The final product of the revisions was the

MCKAS, a 32 items self-report instrument scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranges from 1-

Not at all True to 7-Totally True). The items consist of 20 Knowledge items and 12 Awareness

items (Ponterotto, et al.). The first subscale, Knowledge (20-items), assesses an individual's

knowledge of multicultural counseling. An example of the Knowledge subscale is, "I check up

on my minority/cultural counseling skills by monitoring my functioning-via consultation,

supervision, and continuing education" (Ponterotto, et al., p. 178). The second factor, Awareness

(12-items), measures an individual's Eurocentric worldview. An example of the Awareness

subscale is, "I think that clients who do not discuss intimate aspects of their lives are being

resistant and defensive" (Ponterotto, et al., p. 178). The coefficient alpha for each subscale was

.85 for knowledge and .85 for awareness.

To address the dearth of literature assessing the perception professional counselors'

possess regarding their multicultural counseling competence and training, Holcomb-McCoy and

Myers (1999) developed The Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey

(MCCTS). The MCCTS consists of 61 items, 32 of which are behaviorally based statements

based on the AMCD Multicultural Competencies that assesses professional counselors' self-

perceived multicultural counseling competence. For each of these items, counselors are asked to

assess and report on three separate areas. Two of the areas are assessed using a 4-point Likert-

type scale. The three separate areas are: self perceived competence (4-Extremely Competent, 3-

Competent, 2-Somewhat Competent, 1-Not Competent), adequacy of training (4-More than

Adequate Training Received, 3-Adequate Training Received, 2-Less than Adequate Training

Received, 1-No Training Received), and the type of training received (counselors chose:

multicultural course(s) in entry-level counseling programs, core counseling courses infused with

multicultural content, informal professional development activities, formal professional development activities, advanced degree programs) (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers).

Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) utilized a factor analysis on the results of this study, which resulted in five factors underlying multicultural competence: "Knowledge (e.g. I can discuss family therapy from a cultural/ethnic perspective), Awareness (I am able to discuss how my culture has influenced the way I think), Definitions (e.g. I can define prejudice), Racial Identity Development (e.g. I can discuss the counseling implications for at least two models of minority identity development), Skills (e.g. I verbally communicate my acceptance of culturally different clients)" (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, p. 297). The Cronbach's alpha were: .92 for Knowledge, .92 for Multicultural Awareness, .79 for Definitions, .66 for Racial identity Development, and .91 for Skills.

Using the 32 items based on the AMCD Multicultural Competencies from the original MCCTS which are scored on a 4 point Likert-type scale (4-Extremely Competent, 3-Competent, 2-Somewhat Competent, & 1-Not Competent), Holcomb-McCoy developed a modified version of the survey in an unpublished manuscript discussed by Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines (2004) where she altered a portion of the wording within the survey so that the survey would reflect the language used in K-12 schools urbanicity (Holcomb-McCoy (2001) as cited in Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines). An example of the modification that occurred in the survey was the change of the term client to student in the survey. To test the validity of the survey, the revised survey was given to three school counselors who were both experienced in the field and from diverse backgrounds. The school counselors found the items in the survey to be consistent with the school counselor experience and applicable to the school urbanicity. The MCCTS-R was then given to 215 school counselors. To identify the multicultural counseling competence

components of the MCCTS-R, Holcomb-McCoy utilized a principal component analysis for the items in the MCCTS-R which revealed four factors underlying multicultural competence: Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Knowledge, Multicultural Skills, and Multicultural Terminology. To calculate the reliability coefficients of the four factors, Holcomb-McCoy used Cronbach's alpha and found alphas of .83 for Multicultural Awareness, .95 for Multicultural Knowledge, .74 for Multicultural Skills, and .97 for Multicultural Terminology which is the same as the Definitions factor in Holcomb-McCoy & Myers (1999) study.

Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines (2004) examined the MCCTS-R to identify the dimensions of the instrument. They also researched whether the multicultural counseling competence of school counselors was a unidimensional or a multifactor phenomenon. Of the 209 participants, 89% were Caucasian, 3% were African American, 2% were Asian American, 2% were Native American, and 1% were Latino. Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines results indicated that the MCCTS-R was a multifactor phenomenon comprised of three dimensions/factors: Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Knowledge, and Multicultural Terminology. Examples of the three dimensions/factors are, "I verbally communicate my acceptance of culturally different students (Multicultural Awareness); I can discuss models of White Racial Identity (Multicultural Knowledge); I can define prejudice (Multicultural Terminology)" (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, p. 159). The findings of the study indicated that the dimensions/factors of the multicultural counseling competence of school counselors were different from original MCCTS and MCCTS-R results which indicated five and four dimensions/factors respectively (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). "The difference is that the current factor analysis did not identify Knowledge of Racial Identity Development and Multicultural Skills as factors" (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines, p. 158). Cronbach's alpha of the

three factors were .85 for Multicultural Awareness, .95 for Multicultural Knowledge and .97 for

Multicultural Terminology. Of the 32 items on the MCCTS-R, 9 items (items 1-7, 14-15) were

associated with the Multicultural Awareness dimensions/factors, 19 items (items 8, 13, 16-32)

were associated with the Multicultural Knowledge dimensions/factors, and 4 items (items 9-12)

were associated with the Multicultural Terminology dimensions/factors (Holcomb-McCoy &

Day-Vines).

Table 3.

Multicultural Counseling Instruments

Instruments	Items	Scale	Subscales
CCCI-R	20	6-point Likert-type scale	Cross-Cultural Counseling Skill, Socio-Political Awareness, & Cultural Sensitivity
MAKSS	60	4-point Likert-type scales	Awareness, Knowledge, & Skills
MCI	40	4-point Likert-type scale	Multicultural Counseling Skills, Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Counseling Relationship, & Multicultural Counseling Knowledge
MCAS-B	45	7 point Likert-type scale	Knowledge/Skills & Awareness
MCKAS	32	7 point Likert-type scale	Knowledge & Awareness
MCCTS-R	32	4 point Likert-type scale	Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Knowledge, & Multicultural Terminology

Table 4.

Multicultural Counseling Instruments Coefficient Alphas

Instruments	Subscale	Coefficient Alpha
CCCI-R	Cross-Cultural Counseling Skill, Socio-Political Awareness, & Cultural Sensitivity	.95 (full scale score)
MAKSS	Awareness	.90
	Knowledge	.96
	Skills	.75
MCI	Multicultural Counseling Skills	.81
	Multicultural Awareness	.80
	Multicultural Counseling Relationship	.67
	Multicultural Counseling Knowledge	.80
MCAS-B	Knowledge/Skills	.93
	Awareness	.93
MCKAS	Knowledge	.85
	Awareness	.85
MCCTS-R	Multicultural Awareness	.85
	Multicultural Knowledge	.95
	Multicultural Terminology	.97

Although the Multicultural Counseling instruments described in the chapter are widely used and possess factors that were found by the researchers who created them to be aligned with Sue et al.'s (1992) model of multicultural counseling competence (awareness, knowledge, & skill), they may not completely support the model (Constantine, Gloria, & Ladany, 2002). Constantine et al. questioned whether the MCI, MAKSS, and MCKAS mirrored Sue et al.'s model and conducted a confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis to address this question. The instruments may lack uniformity by attempting to assess multicultural counseling competence with varying factors which may in actuality measure a different construct than they were originally intended to measure. Using a confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis, Constantine et al. found that the three instruments did not support Sue et al.'s model of multicultural counseling competence. Results of both the confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses of the MCI, MAKSS, and MCKAS showed that no uniform factor loading occurred on the examined factors by subscales (Constantine et al.). "That is, all of the Awareness subscales did not load on the Awareness factor, the Knowledge subscale did not load on the Knowledge factor, and so forth" (Constantine et al., p. 340).

The choice to use the MCCTS-R for the current study was based on the rationale that the MCCTS-R is the only instrument that has been developed to measure the perceived multicultural counseling competence of school counselors. The instrument revisions are indicative of Holcomb-McCoy & Myers (1999) and Holcomb-McCoy & Day-Vines (2004) dedication to develop an instrument that best measures the multicultural counseling competence of school counselors.

Research on Multicultural Counseling Competency

This section begins with a literature review of research that assesses the self-reported MCC of mental health professionals. This section continues with a review of the empirical research assessing the MCC of school counselors.

There has been a substantial amount of MCC research that examines the relationship between MCC and training (Constantine, 2001; Constantine et al., 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis et al., 1995; Pope-Davis et al., 1994; Sodowsky et al., 1998) where it was found that aspects of multicultural training such as multicultural coursework and multicultural counseling experience had a significant positive relationship on an individual's MCC. In addition to exploring the relationship between MCC and training, several researchers looked at the relationship between MCC and a variety of factors such as ethnicity (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers; Pope-Davis et al.; Sodowsky et al.), gender and age (Constantine & Yeh; Holcomb-McCoy). Researchers found a positive relationship between MCC and ethnicity, with people of Color reporting higher levels of MCC (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers; Pope-Davis et al.; Sodowsky et al.). On the other hand, significant relationships were not found between the demographic variables of gender and age, and MCC (Constantine & Yeh; Holcomb-McCoy). Other studies have looked at the relationship between MCC and variables such as counselors' social desirability, locus of control racial ideology and feelings of social inadequacy (Sodowsky et al.), and self-construal (Constantine & Yeh).

Assessing MCC of Mental Health Professionals

Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) examined the relationship between perceived multicultural counseling competence and counselor ethnicity of 151 professional counselors

using the MCCTS. The professional counselors represented the South, Midwest, Northeast, and Western regions of the United States. In reference to ethnicity, 66% of the professional counselors were Caucasian, 19% were African American, 6% were Latino, and 5% of the counselors specified having an Asian American or Native American background. The results indicated that as a group, professional counselors viewed themselves as multiculturally competent. The counselors' self-reported possessing an overall rating between competent and extremely competent for each of the five factors of multicultural counseling competence. Professional counselors perceived themselves more competent in the areas of multicultural skills, awareness, and definition of terms. On the other hand, professional counselors perceived themselves less competent on the multicultural knowledge and racial identity development factors. The results also indicated that compared to Caucasian counselors, counselors of Color self reported greater multicultural competence in four of the five dimensions of multicultural competence, knowledge, awareness, skills, and racial identity. Definition of terms was the only dimension of multicultural competence that was not influenced by a counselor's ethnicity. In terms of training, counselors who had both the experience of working with clients of Color and had taken multicultural coursework self reported as having higher multicultural counseling knowledge and racial identity competence.

Pope-Davis et al. (1995) examined multicultural counseling competence using the MCI with 344 graduate students in clinical and counseling psychology programs. Of the 344 graduate from across the U.S. students who participated in the study, 46% were registered in counseling psychology programs while 54% were registered in clinical psychology programs. In terms of ethnicity, 77% of the participants were Caucasian, 10% were African American, 5% were Latino, 5% were Asian American, and 1% were Native American. Pope-Davis et al. found that

counseling psychology students scored significantly higher on three of four subscales-knowledge, awareness, and skills-than clinical psychology students. There was no significant difference between groups on the relationship subscale. A potential reason for this was exposure to multicultural issues and courses. Counseling psychology students enrolled and completed an average of 1.6 multicultural courses compared to .9 multicultural courses for clinical psychology students, thus allowing counseling psychology students to be exposed to more multicultural issues than clinical psychology students. Additionally, counseling psychology students received more multicultural supervision and multicultural client hours than clinical psychology students. The results also indicated that counseling and clinical psychology students of Color reported a higher level of self-perceived multicultural competence than their Caucasian counterparts (Pope-Davis et al.). In sum, the results indicated that for both counseling and clinical psychology students, ethnicity, multicultural coursework, and training in multicultural counseling were significant predictors of responses for several of the MCI subscales while age and gender were not.

Sodowsky et al. (1998) used the self-report instrument, MCI, to assess the multicultural counseling competence of 176 university counseling center staff from universities across the nation. The researchers also assessed the counselors' social desirability, locus of control racial ideology (beliefs concerning individual vs. group responsibility for overcoming discrimination), and feelings of social inadequacy (one's social self-esteem) using various self-report instruments. Of the 176 university counseling center staff, 71% were Caucasian, 11% were Asian American, 7% were African American, and 6% were Latino. The researchers found that after multicultural social desirability and race were taken into account, counselor locus of control racial ideology and counselor attitudes of feelings of social inadequacy made significant contributions to self-

reported multicultural counseling competency. Sodowsky et al. found that the number of culturally different clients, multicultural courses, multicultural research projects, and multicultural training that a counselor received were all factors that affected the counselor's self-reported multicultural counseling competency. Sodowsky et al. also found that counselors' cultural background was a significant factor in regards to their responses. Using the MCI, the researchers reported the following:

> "Blacks had higher scores on Multicultural Relationship than Whites; Blacks, Latinos, and Asians, had higher scores on Multicultural Awareness than Whites; Latinos had a significantly higher MCI full scale score than Whites while Whites had the lowest full-scale score among all four groups" (Sodowsky et al., 1998, p. 261).

The study also indicated that due to the higher scores of people of Color on subscales such as Multicultural Relationship, Multicultural Knowledge, and Multicultural Awareness, people of Color possessed greater awareness, knowledge, and skills in regards to multicultural issues than their White counterparts. It was also found that Multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills all increased when an individual had higher levels of multicultural training.

Pope-Davis et. al. (1994) looked at the multicultural counseling competence of 141 doctoral interns who were counseling at university centers throughout the country. The sample of doctoral interns who participated in the study was comprised of 84% Caucasians and 16% Non-Caucasian. Using the MCAS, Pope-Davis et al. found that doctoral interns who had participated and completed more workshop hours, received supervision regarding a multicultural counseling situation, or had taken more multicultural counseling courses self-reported greater multicultural

skills and knowledge compared to interns who had fewer workshop hours, no supervision, and/or fewer multicultural counseling courses.

Assessing MCC with School Counselors

School counselors who are not trained in multicultural counseling may not possess the knowledge and skill to work with culturally different clients (Hobson & Kanitz, 1996). School counselors who possess the knowledge and skill to work with culturally different clients assist in the promotion of a positive atmosphere for the students in the school (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1996).

Constantine et al. (2001) examined the relationship between school counselors' multicultural courses and their multicultural counseling competence in a sample of 100 school counselors. Out of the 100 school counselors, 91% were Caucasian, 4% were African American, and 3% were Asian American. Constantine et al. used the (MCKAS) and a demographic questionnaire. The results of Constantine et al. study indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between the number of multicultural courses taken and self-reported multicultural counseling competence. The results also emphasized the importance of school counselors receiving multicultural counseling courses that emphasize multicultural counseling awareness and knowledge (Constantine et al.).

Constantine and Yeh (2001) looked at whether previous academic training in multicultural counseling and interdependent and independent self-construal predicted school counselors' self-reported multicultural counseling competence in a sample of 156 school counselors from New York City. Independent self-construal refers to individuals whose self-definition is based on their distinctive attributes and skills and on the importance of differentiating themselves from others. Interdependent self-construal refers to individuals who

deeply value connectedness to other individuals, relationships, and social contexts and feel that they are intertwined in each of their relationships. Constantine and Yeh also looked at school counselors' self-reported ability to work with people from culturally diverse populations and the effect of culture on the sense of self of the counselor in relation to others which was defined as self-construal. In terms of ethnicity, the sample of school counselors who participated in the study was comprised of 83% Caucasian, 8% African American, 8% Latino, and .6% Asian American. Constantine and Yeh utilized three instruments. The first instrument was the Cross-Cultural Counseling Competence Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R; LaFromboise et al., 1991), a 20-item, 6-point Likert type scale. The CCCI-R was developed to be used by supervisors to assess their trainees' multicultural counseling competence (Constantine & Yeh). The second instrument was the Self-Construal Scale (SCS; Singelis, 1994), a 24-item, 7-point Likert type scale. The SCS measured the self-construal, interdependent and independent, of an individual. The final instrument used was a demographic questionnaire. Constantine and Yeh results indicated that the amount of multicultural courses that a school counselor had taken and higher independent self-construal were predictive of the counselors' self-reported multicultural counseling competence. The results also showed that in comparison to gender and self-construal, female school counselors reported significantly lower interdependent self-construal than their male counterparts which was contrary to the previous study conducted by Oyserman and Packer (1996). As indicated prior, independent self-construal was predictive of the counselors' self-reported multicultural counseling competence.

Constantine (2001), after taking into account academic training, looked at whether school counselor trainees' theoretical orientation and empathy were predictors of their self-reported multicultural counseling competence. A sample of 105 school counselor trainees from the

northeast region of the United States participated in the study. The ethnic breakdown of the

school counselors was 69% Caucasian, 16% African American, 8% Asian American, and 8%

Latino. Constantine utilized three instruments. The first instrument was the MCI. The second

instrument was the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) which is a 28-item, 5-point Likert type

self-report instrument that measures an individual's empathy (Davis, 1980). The IRI consists of

four dimensions of empathy, each of which measures a distinctive component of empathy. The

first dimension, Empathic Concern, measures an individual's feelings of concern towards others.

The second dimension, Perspective Taking, measures an individual's tendency to instinctively

adopt the perspective of others. The third dimension, Fantasy, measures a person's ability to

develop an emotional identification with fictional characters in movies, books, etc. The final

dimension, Personal Distress measures an individual's own feelings of anxiety and uneasiness in

response to the distress of others. The final instrument used in the study was a demographic

questionnaire. Constantine found that possessing a higher level of multicultural counseling

training was significantly related to higher multicultural counseling competence in school

counselors. As a result of the study, Constantine suggested that it was important that school

counselor trainees are offered courses that focus on multicultural issues and multicultural

counseling. In addition, the author found that theoretical orientation and empathy were positively

correlated with self-reported multicultural counseling competence. The author suggested that

importance must be placed on school counselor trainees' being offered courses that focus on

developing their ability to understand, emotionally, the concerns of students of Color. The results

also placed an emphasis on continued multicultural counseling training and education for

practicing school counselors.

Holcomb-McCoy (2001) examined the perceived multicultural counseling competence of 76 elementary school counselors. Participants' ethnicity representation was 83% Caucasian, 13% African American, 1% Latino, and 1% Asian American. For the study, the author used a modified version of the MCCTS where she changed some wording to mirror language commonly used in school urbanicity. The results of Holcomb-McCoy study indicated that as a group, elementary school counselors perceived themselves to be multiculturally competent. The analysis of these results retained the original five factors from the MCCTS study published in 1999. The elementary school counselors' view of their multicultural counseling competence indicated that they self-reported possessing an overall rating between competent and extremely competent for each factor. Although the elementary school counselors' overall perceived multicultural counseling competence results were positive, elementary school counselors rated themselves least competent in regards to multicultural knowledge and racial identity development. On the other hand, elementary school counselors rated themselves most competent in the areas of multicultural awareness and terminology. Interestingly, Holcomb-McCoy's results indicated that there was a lack of significant difference in regards to perceived multicultural competence between school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course(s) compared to those who had never taken a multicultural course. This finding was inconsistent with previous research that found that taking a multicultural course had a significant relationship with multicultural counseling competence (Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis et al., 1994, 1995; Sodowsky et al., 1998). Holcomb-McCoy also found that school counselors' years of experience had no significant effect on their perceived multicultural competence.

Holcomb-McCoy (2005) conducted a national study looking at the perceived multicultural counseling competence of 209 professional school counselors. In addition, the researcher looked at the relationship of perceived multicultural counseling competence to several characteristics. The characteristics examined were gender, training, work setting (i.e. school vs. community setting; middle school vs. high school), and years of experience. In terms of the ethnicity of the professional school counselors, 89% were Caucasian, 3% were African American, 2% were Asian American, 2% were Native American, and 1% were Latino. The instrument used for the study was the MCCTS-R, was comprised of three factors: awareness, knowledge, and terminology. The results of the study indicated that school counselors perceived themselves to be somewhat competent in all three dimensions. Although the professional school counselors self-reported as being somewhat competent in all three dimensions, they scored slightly higher in the two domains, awareness and terminology, than the knowledge domain. In reference to training, school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course scored significantly higher in the domains of knowledge and terminology than those who had not.

Constantine and Gushue (2003) studied racism attitudes and ethnic tolerance attitudes and whether these attitudes predicted multicultural case conceptualization ability when working with immigrant students in a national sample of 139 school counselors. Of the 139 school counselors, 71% were Caucasian, 14% were African American, 8% were Latino, and 4% were Asian American. Constantine and Gushue looked at racial tolerance attitude and racism attitudes by using a case conceptualization of an immigrant student as a predictor of school counselors' multicultural counseling competence. The researchers used a survey packet comprised of four separate measures beginning with an exercise focused on school counselors' multicultural case conceptualization ability. The next measure used was the Tolerance Measure (TM) which is a

24-item, 5 point Likert type measure. The TM is an instrument that measures an individual's tolerance of other ethnic groups as well as their awareness of their own biases and values and how these factors affect their attitudes (Sutter & McCaul, 1993) as cited in Constantine & Gushue. Next, the New Racism Scale (NRS) was utilized. The NRS is a 7-item, self-report measure, which measures an individual's attitude toward Blacks (Jacobson (1985) as cited in Constantine & Gushue). The final instrument that was used was a brief demographic questionnaire. These instruments measured 139 school counselors' racial tolerance attitudes and racism attitudes. Constantine and Gushue found that school counselor's prior multicultural training was a positive predictor of school counselors' multicultural case conceptualization ability. In addition, the researchers found that school counselors who possess higher ethnic tolerance attitudes may be more cognizant of the concerns and needs of immigrant students. On the contrary, it was found that school counselors who possess higher levels of racism may be less attentive to cultural issues affecting the mental health of immigrant students, consequently negatively affecting the well-being of their students (Constantine & Gushue).

MCC research has increased during the turn of the century and MCC is now being seen as an important characteristic of counselors. The tendency of the research results indicated the importance of counselors, both school and community, receiving multicultural training. In addition, the research results indicated the relationship between counselor ethnicity and MCC. This study, using the MCCTS-R, will look at the perceived multicultural counseling competence of school counselors. The relationship between school counselors' MCC and multicultural training will be explored. Consequently, this study will examine the relationship between school counselors' MCC and variables such as ethnicity and gender.

Professional Guidelines and Professional Codes of Ethics

This section discusses professional guidelines and professional codes of ethics and standards pertaining to school counselors and professional counselors. This section will focus on the importance of counselors being aware of their values, beliefs, and attitudes which may affect their relationship with clients of Color. Additionally, the importance of counselors receiving training in MCC will be discussed.

CACREP

Studies have indicated that an emphasis should be placed on counselors receiving MCC training. Research has shown that possessing a higher level of multicultural counseling training is significantly related to higher multicultural counseling competence in counselors (Constantine, 2001; Constantine et al., 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis et al., 1994, 1995; Sodowsky et al., 1998). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the major accrediting body of the counseling profession. Programs accredited by CACREP include school counseling and the doctoral level counselor education and supervision programs. In 1994, CACREP integrated issues focused on multicultural counseling into their standards (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers). CACREP incorporated multicultural issues in the Social and Cultural Foundations, Lifestyle and Career Development, Appraisal, and Helping Relationships core areas. CACREP also required that counselor education programs be comprised of a diverse faculty and student body. Counselor education programs must, to the best of their ability, place their students in diverse internship and practicum placements so that their students can experience working in diverse institutions (CACREP, 2001). Even though not all counseling programs are CACREP accredited, the numbers of accredited programs has increased

immensely in the last decade which may be associated with the increased importance of MCC which is currently being seen as an important characteristic of counselors. In 1996, CACREP had accredited 115 institutions. Currently, there are 210 CACREP accredited institutions (CACREP, 2007).

Additionally, for programs to be accredited by CACREP, they must include a total of eight core areas in their courses. One of those core areas is Social and Cultural Diversity, which the CACREP Standards defined as follows:

Social and Cultural Diversity includes courses that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups, and communities. (Section II.K.2)

Codes of Ethics for Professional Counselors and School Counselors

There are two Codes of Ethics and Standards that are applicable to school counselors. One of the codes, ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, is specific and applicable to school counselors and the other, ACA Code of Ethics, is applicable to the wide array of counselors in the field. Each of these ethical documents discusses the importance of counselors being aware of their personal values, beliefs, and attitudes which may affect their relationship with clients from diverse backgrounds.

The American Counseling Association developed Codes of Ethics to illuminate the ethical responsibilities of professional counselors. ACA acknowledges the importance of

diversity as well as the importance of a cross-cultural approach as a means to support the distinctiveness of all people (ACA, 2005).

There are several sections of the Codes of Ethics that speak directly to multicultural counseling competence. First, the Code of Ethics A.4.b states, "Counselors are aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors and avoid imposing values that are inconsistent with counseling goals. Counselors respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants" (ACA, 2005, p. 4).

The second section that addresses multicultural counseling competence is A.2.c, which advocates the following professional behaviors:

> Counselors communicate information in ways that are both developmentally and culturally appropriate. Counselors use clear and understandable language when discussing issues related to informed consent. When clients have difficulty understanding the language used by counselors, they provide necessary services to ensure comprehension by clients. (ACA, 2005, p. 4)

In other words, this section of the Code of Ethics focuses on the need for counselors to communicate information to their clients in a manner that is developmentally and culturally appropriate. Counselors must be capable of using clear and comprehensible speech when they discuss such topics as informed consent. A counselor must also know how to handle situations where a client is not able to understand the language that they use. A counselor must know how to provide services such as an interpreter if it is necessary.

Finally, ACA Code of Ethics B.1.a states that, "Counselors maintain awareness and sensitivity regarding cultural means of confidentiality and privacy. Counselors respect differing views toward disclosure of information. Counselors hold ongoing discussions with clients as to

how, when, and with whom information is to be shared" (ACA, 2005, p. 7). In short, counselors must be aware and sensitive to how their client comprehends the meaning of confidentiality and privacy. Code B.1.a also discusses the importance of counselors being aware of the different views their client may have towards disclosure of information and whether the information may be shared outside the counseling office. When counselors discuss the topics of confidentiality and disclosure to their client, they must make sure that their client truly understands the stipulations surrounding the topics such as mandated reporting.

Next, the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors will be discussed. The Ethical Standards for School Counselors were developed by The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) as a guide for the ethical practices of school counselors (ASCA, 2004). The Ethical Standards offer self and peer evaluation in reference to the responsibilities school counselors have to the school counseling profession, students, parents, coworkers, administrators, and society. School counselors are supporters, advocates, and advisors who are to collaborate with their colleagues and administrators to produce educational equity for their students. To achieve this goal, school counselors must adhere to a number of well-defined principles:

> Each person has the right to be respected, be treated with dignity and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations regardless of ethnic/racial status, age, economic status, special needs, English as a second language or other language group, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance (ASCA, 2004, Preamble Section ¶ 2). . . .

Each person has the right to receive the information and support needed to move toward

self-direction and self-direction and affirmation within one's group identities, with

special care being given to students who have historically not received adequate

educational services: students of Color, low socio-economic students, students with

disabilities and students with nondominant language backgrounds (ASCA, 2004,

Preamble Section ¶ 3). . . .

Each person has the right to privacy and thereby the right to expect the counselor-student

relationship to comply with all laws, policies and ethical standards pertaining to

confidentiality in the school setting (ASCA, 2004, Preamble Section ¶ 5).

Moreover, there are several ASCA Ethical Standards specific to multicultural counseling

competence. The first section, A.1, "Responsibilities to Students," delineates the qualities and

behaviors of the competent school counselor:

Has a primary obligation to the student, who is to be treated with respect as a unique

individual (ASCA, 2004, A.1., ¶ 1). . . . Is concerned with the educational, academic,

career, personal and social needs and encourages the maximum development of every

student (ASCA, A.1., ¶ 2). . . . Respects the student's values and beliefs and does not

impose the counselor's personal values (ASCA, A.1., ¶ 3). . . . Is knowledgeable of laws,

regulations and policies relating to students and strives to protects and inform students

regarding their rights (ASCA, A.1., ¶ 4).

In summary, this section of ASCA's Ethical Standards advises school counselors to treat all

students with respect and value their individuality. School counselors are not to impose their own

values on students and are to respect all students' beliefs and values. The code also states that

school counselors should be cognizant of the scholastic, occupational, personal, and communal needs of students.

The second section, A.3, "Counseling Plans," states that the school counselor should engage in the following activities:

> Provides students with a comprehensive school counseling program that includes a strong emphasis on working jointly with all students to develop academic and career goals (ASCA, 2004, A.3., ¶ 1). . . . Advocates for counseling plans supporting students right to choose from the wide array of options when they leave secondary education. Such plans will be regularly reviewed to update students regarding critical information they need to make informed decisions (ASCA, A.3., ¶ 2).

This section focuses on the importance of school counselors working in cooperation with students to develop goals specific to their academics and career. School counselors should also be advocates for students by providing them with a plethora of options when they leave high school.

The next section that is specific to multicultural counseling competence is B.1, "Parents Rights and Responsibilities," which states that school counselors should be mindful of the following guidelines:

> Respects the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians for their children and endeavors to establish, as appropriate, a collaborative relationship with parents/guardians to facilitate the student's maximum development (ASCA, 2004, B.1., ¶ 1).…Adheres to laws, local guidelines and ethical standards of practice when assisting parents/guardians experiencing family difficulties that interfere with the student's effectiveness and welfare (ASCA, B.1., ¶ 2). . . . Respect the confidentiality of parents/guardians (ASCA, B.1., ¶

3). . . . Is sensitive to diversity among families and recognizes that all parents/guardians,

custodial and noncustodial, are vested with certain rights and responsibilities for the

welfare of their children by virtue of their role and according to law. (ASCA, B.1., ¶ 4)

This section emphasizes the importance of school counselors being aware of the diversity within

families and the importance of creating a collaborative relationship with the parents/guardians of

students which will assist with the development of each student. School counselors also have a

duty to their place of employment as well as the community surrounding the school. Section D.1,

"Responsibilities to the School" refers to school counselors being cognizant of the best interest

of their students by supporting and protecting their students against infringements towards their

education. School counselors are to protect students and staff by notifying officials about

situations that may be unsettling or harmful towards the school's mission, staff, and the school

itself. Most importantly, school counselors should be cognizant of the following guidelines:

Accept employment only for positions for which he/she is qualified for by education,

training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials and

appropriate professional experience (ASCA, 2004, D.1., ¶ 5). . . . Assists in developing:

(1) curricular and environmental conditions appropriate for the school and community,

(2) educational procedures and programs to meet students' developmental needs and (3) a

systematic evaluation process for comprehensive, developmental, standards-based school

counseling programs, services and personnel. The counselor is guided by the findings of

the evaluation data in planning programs and services. (ASCA, D.1., ¶ 7)

In reference to school counselors' duties to the community, code D.2, "Responsibility to the

Community," discusses school counselors collaborating with organizations and members of the

community. By collaborating, school counselors deliver an all-encompassing school counseling program and thus are working towards the best interest of students.

A school counselor must be able to take responsibility for their personal values, beliefs and actions. Section E.2, "Diversity," speaks to this particular topic. The issue of diversity is an important issue especially for multicultural counseling competence. Code E.2 clearly specifies the attributes and attitudes of a school counselor who is committed to diversity:

> Expands and develops awareness of his/her own attitudes and beliefs affecting cultural values and biases and strives to attain cultural competence (ASCA, 2004, E.2., ¶ 2). . . . Possesses knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affects her/him personally and professionally (ASCA, E.2., ¶ 2). . . . Acquires educational, consultation and training experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness in working with diverse populations: ethnic/racial status, age, economic status, special needs, ESL or ELL, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance. (ASCA, E.2., ¶ 3)

Counselors should aspire to embrace diversity and be willing to engage in a cross-cultural approach which will help to support the value, self-esteem, and uniqueness of their clients. Counselors are to work towards understanding their clients' cultural backgrounds and in doing so explore their own cultural identity (Herlihy & Corey, 2006; Sue et al., 1992). In order to meet these ethical standards, a counselor needs to take the time to become knowledgeable and understanding of how issues such as racism, prejudice, subjugation, and stereotyping affect them, their work, and their clients, which includes the same expectations as MCC (Sue et. al.).

Professional Guidelines for School Counselors

Due to the changing landscape of the United States and the demographic increase of

people of Color in the United States it would be naive to think that a school counselor would

never come in contact with a student from a diverse background in their school. Traditionally, a

large number of school counselors have spent a majority of their time addressing the needs of a

minute percentage of the student population, normally those who are low achievers and high risk

or those who excel academically (House & Hayes, 2002). The American School Counselor

Association (ASCA) National Model addresses this particular situation by calling school

counselors to a state of advocacy, collaboration, leadership, and systematic change (ASCA,

2003). A school counseling program that is deemed successful is a program that promotes

collaboration with school counselors, students, parents, teachers, and administration (ASCA). By

promoting and executing this collaboration, school counselors can acquire a leadership role and

begin the process of effecting systematic change within their schools. According to the ASCA

National Model, school counselor duties comprise of four separate levels, foundation, delivery

systems, management system, and accountability.

In the foundation level, school counselors develop a working relationship with other

administrators by consulting with them when they create their philosophy, mission statement,

and the focus of their program. The philosophy is a set of principles that each individual

involved in the implementation of the program comes to a consensus upon and uses for guidance

when they are executing the counseling program. A philosophy statement should include a belief

system about the ability of every student to succeed, address developmental needs of students

while focusing on primary prevention, address the school counselors advocacy role, identify

individuals who will be involved in delivering program activities, specify who will have the duty

of planning and managing the program, utilizing data as a means to drive program decisions, define the evaluation process of the program, and the inclusion of ethical guidelines (ASCA, 2003). A mission statement describes the counseling program's purpose, direction, and vision. The mission statement's focus should be on serving every student in the school and on the school counselor's role as an advocate for the equity of every student.

In the delivery level, school counselors develop ways in which they will deliver the program to students. The delivery level is comprised of four components, school guidance curriculum (Classroom instruction, group activities, parent workshops), individual student planning (Individual or small group appraisal and individual or small group appraisal advisement), responsive services (Consultation and individual or small group appraisal counseling), and system support (Professional development, consultation, collaboration, and program management) (ASCA, 2003). In the management systems level, school counselors and other administrators review and discuss the needs of their students according to their data analysis. Then school counselors develop a plan of action according to the needs of their students. This level also focuses on closing the achievement gap between students. The final level is the accountability level which comprises of the school counselor performance evaluation and the program audit where school counselors analyze all element of their program.

<center>Demographics</center>

In 2006, the United States population was estimated at 299,398,484 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006d). Of the 299,398,484, 80.2% were Caucasian (66.4% were non-Latino Caucasians), 14.8 were Latino, 12.8% were Black, 4.4% were Asian, and 1% were American Indian and Alaska Native. Constantine et al., (2001) stated that children of Color will be considered the majority, 60%, of the school aged children population of the United States within the next 50 years. As

stated prior, the United States is in a period of change. The 2000 United States Census recorded that there were 35 million African Americans; 32 million Latinos; 11 million Asians/Pacific Islanders; and 2 million Indians/Eskimos in the United States (US Census Bureau, 2000). By the year 2010, the African American population is projected to increase from 35 million to 40 million, a 14% increase; the Latino population is projected to increase from 32 million to 43 million, a 34% increase; the Asian/Pacific Islander population is projected to increase from 11 million to 15 million, a 36% increase; the Indian/Eskimo population is projected to increase to nearly 3 million, a 50% increase (Baruth & Manning, 2003). By the year 2050 in the United States, the Caucasian population will be 50% of the entire population; the Latino population will be 25% of the entire population; the African American population will be 15% of the entire population; the Asian/Pacific Islander population will be 9% of the entire population; and the Indians/Eskimos population will be 1% of the entire population (Herlihy & Corey, 2006). These demographics illustrate the increase of people of Color in the United States in the near future and emphasize the importance of school counselors possessing cultural awareness. A counselor who possesses multicultural counseling competence will be aware of the cultural background of their clients thus realizing that each of their clients has had experiences that are significant to them and thus cannot be counseled through a single scope (Herlihy & Corey).

Achievement Gap, NCLB & SOLs

The achievement gap in the United States has existed for a number of years between people of Color mainly Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans and their Caucasian counterparts but this was not always the case. Reasons associated with the achievement gaps have been poor parenting, poor student-teacher relationships, poor student-school counselor relationships, and poor student-principal relationships (Haycock, 2001).

Lee (2002) examined the causes of the achievement gap between Black-White and Latino-White students from 1970-1988. To examine the achievement gap, the researcher utilized the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which is the only national assessment that assesses the average knowledge and test-score of U.S. students in various academic subject areas such as mathematics, reading, writing, and science. The NAEP is carried out by the Commissioner of Education Statistics who is the head of the National Center for Education Statistics which is located within the United States Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The National Assessment Governing Board, comprised of 26 members including governors, state and school officials, educators, business associates, and the general public, put in place guidelines to develop the framework for the NAEP subject assessments. One reason for the narrowing of the achievement gap during the 1970s and 1980s was changes in the family conditions such as socioeconomic status. During this period, the Black-White poverty gap narrowed. At present, the poverty gap has widened between Whites and Blacks. Another reason for the narrowing of the achievement gap was attributed to school desegregation in the 1960s and compensatory education program which awarded Black students with additional resources (Lee). In the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement fought to uphold the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and force schools to desegregate and for Blacks to live in a world of equality.

A life changing case occurred in 1954, through the landmark ruling *Brown v. Board of Education*, where the Supreme Court overturned the prior *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling and deemed that educational facilities were in actuality not equal and thus changed the landscape of education. This decision forced segregated schools to disbar, making schools less segregated, which contributed to the narrowing of the achievement gap. From 1969 to 1987, the time frame when the achievement gap began narrowing, the percentage of Black students attending schools

that were comprised predominantly of people of Color dropped 14% (77% to 63%) but increased

to 69% in 1997 (Lee, 2002). Also, with desegregation, there was a change in the way Black

students enrolled in courses and a change in the size of classes (Grissmer, Flanagan, &

Williamson, 1998). Black students were beginning to be provided with more challenging and

demanding courses and were the beneficiaries of reduced class sizes. This led to more attention

from teachers thus heightening their academic achievement. Smaller class sizes meant better

student-teacher ratios which occurred from the 1960s to the 1980s but began to change after

1988 which was when Black students scores began their decline, especially in reading (Grissmer

et al.). In addition, the expenditures allocated to elementary and secondary students rose 60%

from 1970 to 1986 but from 1986-1997, the expenditures increased by only 17% (Lee).

Teachers' level of education has also been associated with both the narrowing and

widening of the achievement gap. During the 1970s-1980s, teachers' level of education

improved. From 1971-1986, teachers possessing Master's degrees increased by 24% but from

1986-1996 the increase was only 4% (Lee, 2002). Currently:

> In every subject area, students in high poverty schools are more likely than other students
>
> to be taught by teachers without even a minor in the subject they teach. . . . In math and
>
> science, only about half the teachers in schools with 90 percent or greater minority
>
> enrollments meet even their states' minimum requirements to teach those subject areas.
>
> (Haycock, 2001, p. 10)

Finally, the high school dropout rate for Blacks was decreasing in the 1970s and 1980s,

thus narrowing the dropout gap between them and their White counterparts. This took a turn for

the worse for Blacks in the 1990s when the dropout rate was calculated to be 1.5 to 2 times

higher than White students (Lee, 2002). For Latino students, the dropout rate has stayed consistent since the 1970s and has been calculated to be four times higher than Whites (Lee).

In 1999, at the conclusion of high school, it was found that 1 in 100 Blacks and 1 in 50 Latino 17-year-olds were able to read and comprehend texts that were deemed specialized as compared to approximately 1 in 12 Whites (Haycock, 2001). For Blacks, 1 in 100 and approximately 1 in 30 Latinos were able to do elementary algebra with ease compared to approximately 1 in 10 Whites. In addition, 3 in 10 Blacks and 4 in 10 Latinos were able to master the usage and calculation of percents, fractions, and averages as compared to 7 in 10 Whites. Generally, at the conclusion of high school, both Blacks and Latinos have the math and reading skills of White 8th graders (Haycock).

The Education Trust looked at the NAEP scores of students in reading and mathematics subject areas which are included in Tables 5 and 6. The scores of the NAEP reading and mathematics are reported on a 0-500 scale and student's scores are divided into three levels: basic, proficient, and advanced.

Table 5

2005 NAEP Reading Level of 4th Grade Students

	Reading Level		
Race	Advanced or Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Caucasian	40%	35%	25%
Black	13%	29%	59%
Latino	15%	29%	56%

Table 6

2005 Mathematics Level of 4th Grade Students

| Race | Reading Level | | |
	Advanced or Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Caucasian	37%	42%	21%
Black	9%	33%	58%
Latino	13%	38%	50%

As shown above, in 2005 only 13% of Black 4th grade students were reading at proficient or advanced levels and 29% were reading at the basic level (The Education Trust, 2006). In addition, 59% of Black 4th graders were not even able to read at the basic level. Latino 4th grade students presented similar numbers whereby only 15% were reading at proficient or advanced levels, 29% were reading at the basic level and 56% were not even able to read at the basic level. To illustrate the current achievement gap it is important to compare the Black and Latino students with their White 4th grade counterparts where 40% were reading at proficient or advanced levels, 35% were reading at the basic level and 25% were not able to read at the basic level. Black and Latino students' mathematics achievement showed a similar pattern as their reading achievement. In 2005, a dismal 9% of Black 8th grade students were performing at proficient or advanced mathematics levels, 33% were performing at the basic level, and 58% of these students' mathematics skills were below the basic level. Latino 8th grade students performed slightly better, with 13% performing at proficient or advanced mathematics levels, 38% performing at the basic level, and 50% of these students mathematics skills were below the basic level (The Education Trust). In comparison, 37% of White 8th grade students were performing at proficient or advanced mathematics levels, 42% were performing at the basic

level, and 21% of these students' mathematics skills were below the basic level. The comparison of the 1992 and 2007 NAEP reading scores and 1990 and 2007 math scores of 4th and 8th grade Black and Latino students showed a slight improvement and decline in several of the categories which are included in Figures 1 and 2. The 2007 NAEP 4th grade reading scores for Black students indicated that there was a 27 point difference between Black-White students compared to a 32 point difference in 1992 which was the lowest the scores has ever been (U.S. Department of Education, 2007a, 2007b). For 4th grade Latino students, the 2007 difference was 27 points compared to a 26 point difference in 1992 which was just a 1 point improvement. For 8th grade students, the 1992-2007 score difference between Black and Whites decreased slightly by only 3 points, from 30 to 27. From 1992-2007, there was just a 1 point improvement for Latino-White 8th grade students' reading score difference, from 26 to 25. In reference to math score difference for Black-White 4th grades, the 2007 math score was 32 compared to 26, a 6 point difference. For 4th grade Latino-White students, the 1990 and 2007 difference was 1 point, 33 to 32. Black-White 8th grade students 1990 and 2007 score difference increased by 1 point, from 20 points to 21. There was a similar result for Latino-White 8th grade students where the point difference increased by 2 points, from 24 to 26. The 2007 NAEP scores show that there has been a slight improvement in the achievement gap for Black-White and Latino-White 4th and 8th grade students' 1992 scores in terms of reading but a decline for 8th grade students' math scores since 1990. These results illustrate that the achievement gap between these groups is still significant (U.S. Department of Education, 2007a, 2007b).

4th Grade Students NAEP Average Reading Scores

8th Grade Students NAEP Average Reading Scores
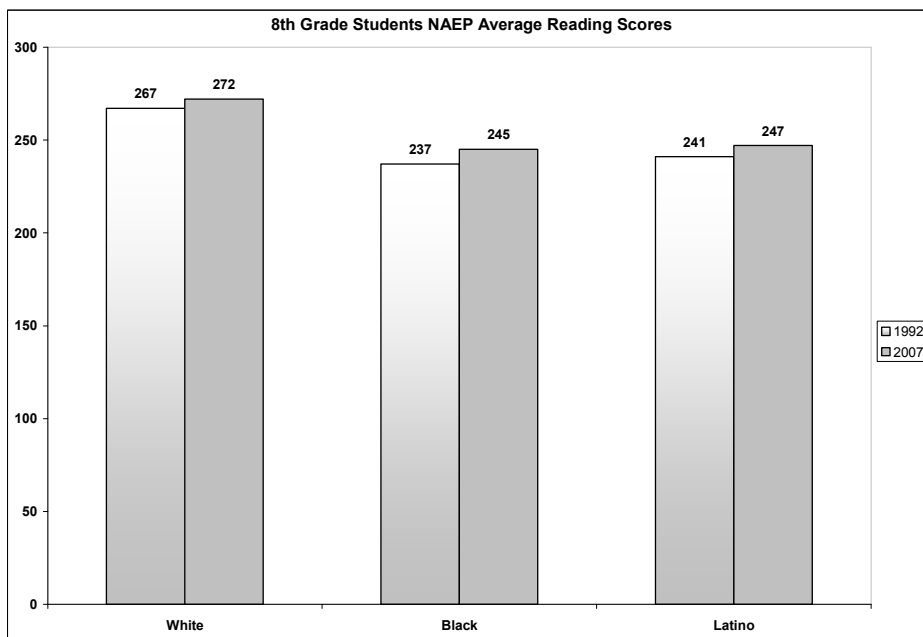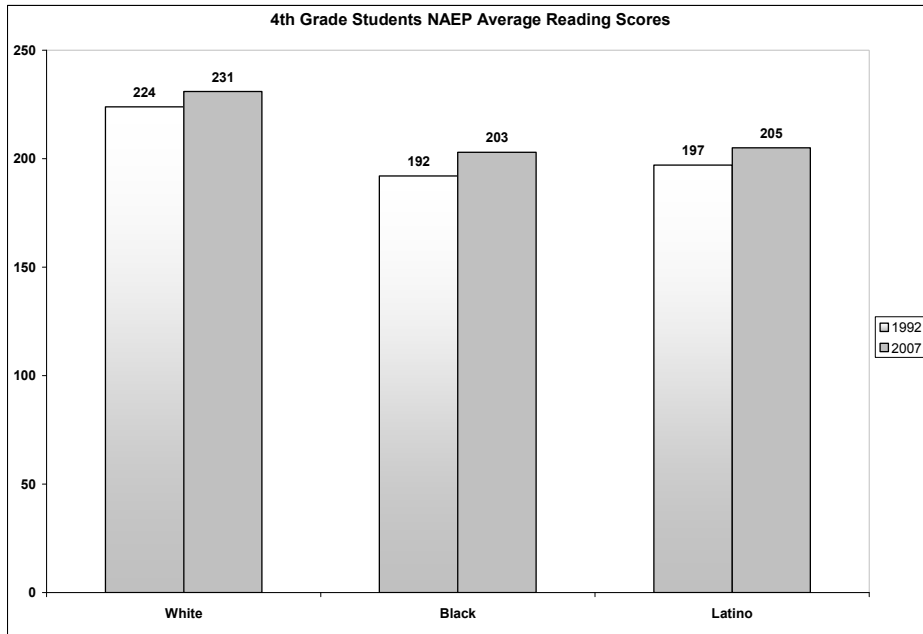
Figure 1. 4th and 8th Grade Students NAEP Average Reading Scores

4th Grade Students NAEP Average Mathematics Scores

White: 220 (1990), 248 (2007)
Black: 188 (1990), 222 (2007)
Latino: 200 (1990), 227 (2007)

8th Grade Students NAEP Average Mathematics Scores

White: 270 (1990), 291 (2007)
Black: 237 (1990), 260 (2007)
Latino: 246 (1990), 265 (2007)
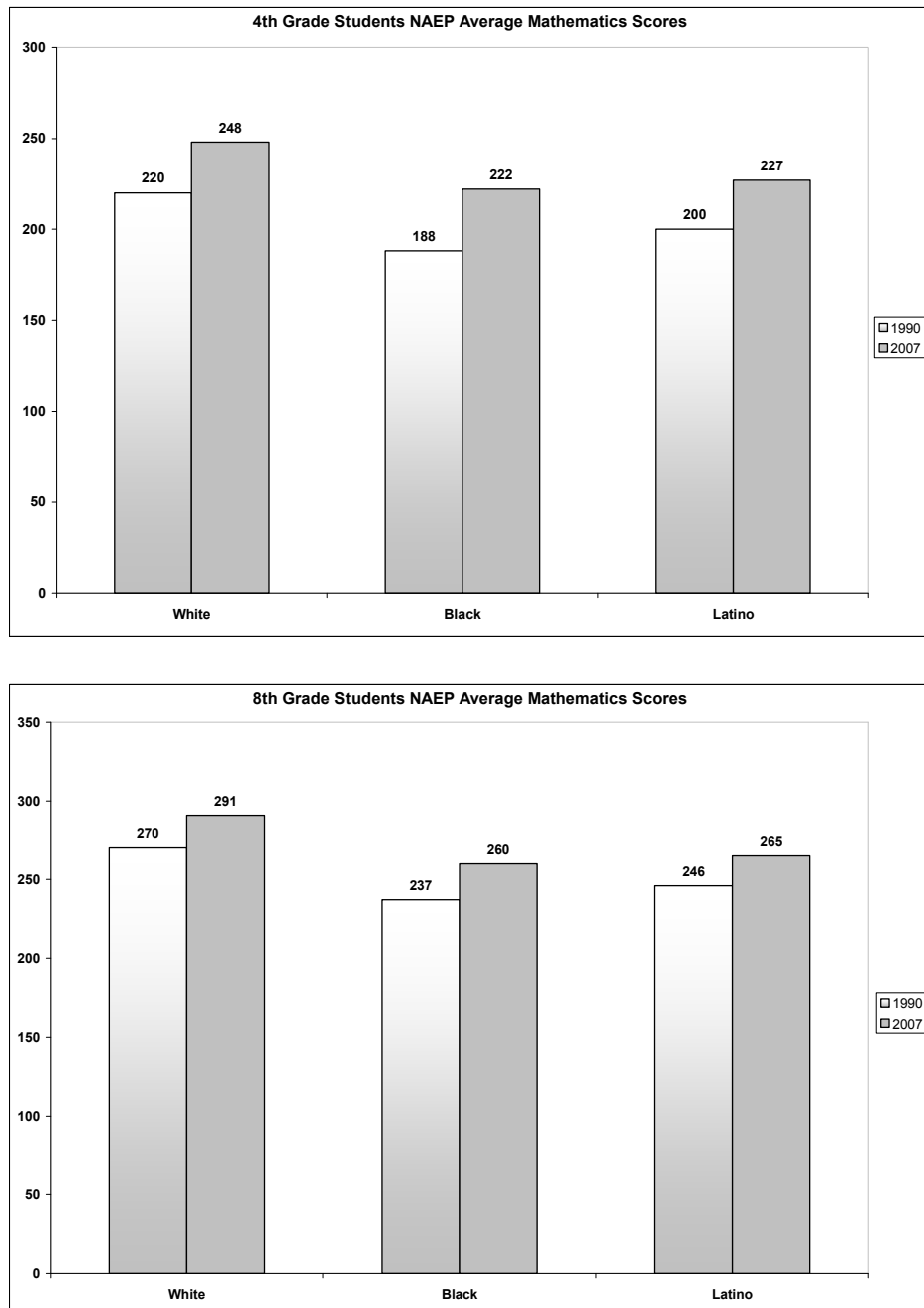
Figure 2. 4th and 8th Grade Students NAEP Average Mathematics Scores

      In reference to high school graduation, there has been a slight increase in the attainment

of a high school diploma for White, Black, Asian, and Latino students, ages 18 to 24. Between

1999 and 2006, the percentage of Black high school graduates increased by one percent (from

84% to 85%), the percentage of Latino graduates increased by eight percent (from 63% to 71%),

the percentage of non-Latino Whites increased by two percent (from 91% to 93%), and in 2006 the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander graduates was 96% (U.S. Department of Education, 2008c). It is important to discuss the high school graduation data and how it relates to the achievement gap. First, although there has been an increase in the graduation rate for Latinos, the percentage (71%) is still low. The graduation gap between Latinos and Blacks versus Whites and Asians is undeniably large and a cause for concern. Second, the graduation rate of 85% for Blacks was relatively high and was an 8% difference from their White counterparts but it is important to note that at the end of high school, Blacks have the math and reading skills of White 8th graders (Haycock, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a). This illustrates that the attainment of a high school diploma does not equate to academic comprehension nor help to secure an educational future. This can be seen in the attainment of a bachelor's degree. From 1999-2006, the college graduation rate for Latinos (11% to 12%) and Blacks (15% to 19%) has been dismal compared to Whites (26% to 28%) and Asians (42% to 50%) (U.S. Census Bureau).

It must be noted that in addition to the factors stated prior, there were several other factors that played a role in the attainment of a high school diploma such as income level, birthplace, and generational status. The disparity in the attainment of a high school diploma can be seen in terms of income level. In 2005, the percentage of low-income United States students (the lowest 20% of United State family incomes) graduated at a rate of 75% compared to the national average of 88% (The Education Trust, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2008c). The low income graduation rate was reported by 26 states and varied by state with Alaska being the lowest at 48% and North Carolina being the highest at 94% (The Education Trust). In terms of birthplace and generational status, the graduation rate for Latinos has remained low at 71% in comparison with Black, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander high school graduates, once birthplace

and generation status were taken into consideration, the disparity could be seen more in-depth (U.S. Department of Education).

In 2006, Latino students born outside of the United States graduated at a rate of 58% compared to non-Latino students who graduate at a rate of 90%. First generation Latino students graduated at a rate of 82% compared to non-Latino first generation students who graduated at a rate of 95%. In addition, second generation Latino students graduated at a rate of 84% compared to non-Latino first generation students who graduated at a rate of 91%. Once birthplace and generation status were taken into consideration, it became apparent that Latino students who were first and second generation graduated at an average rate of 83% which was a 25% difference from Latino students born outside the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2008c). This indicates that the disparity between Latino students and their counterparts may actually be smaller than initially stated once factors such as birthplace and generational status come into play.

To help close the achievement gap between groups of students, especially the achievement gap between people of Color and their White counterparts, the 'No Child Left Behind Act' (NCLB) was proposed by President George W. Bush three days after he took office in 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). According to President Bush, too many students in need were being left behind academically even though approximately $200 billion in Federal spending had gone towards elementary and secondary education (U.S. Department of Education). The NCLB Act was created to make certain that every child had an equal, just, and significant opportunity to attain high quality education and to also reach the level of proficiency on demanding State academic standards and assessments (U.S. Department of Education). The NCLB Act placed an emphasis on accountability for schools, school districts, and each state.

NCLB required states to put into operation statewide accountability systems. These systems are based on state standards in mathematics and reading. In regards to assessment, adequate yearly progress (AYP) is evaluated through a meticulous testing schedule. To meet AYP, a school must show improvement in achievement among subgroups in the school. These subgroups can be defined by socioeconomic status, disability, race, ethnicity, English proficiency, and migrant status. By assessing each subgroup, each state is required to acknowledge the differences in achievement in each subgroup. Once a school and school district falls short of making AYP in regards to statewide proficiency, sanctions may be imposed. These sanctions include funding cuts, replacement of staff believed to have assisted in the failure, and requiring an increase in academic support services. Schools that continue to fall short, may be restructured, privatized, or may be taken over by their state. Schools that meet the objectives of the AYP or narrow achievement gaps will qualify for their State Academic Achievement Awards (U.S. Department of Education).

An example of how the NCLB Act is managed would be the Standards of Learning (SOL) in Virginia. The SOL are used by the Virginia Department of Education as a means of defining the goals and objectives of the core curriculum taught at the K-12 grade levels (Virginia Department of Education, 2006). The SOL gives the Virginia Department of Education the ability to measure student and school performance. Students are tested in four areas deemed to be core academic areas. These areas are mathematics, English (reading and writing), science, and history/social studies.

For elementary and middle school, student performance on the SOL does not necessarily impact the student in the same fashion as it does the school. Student performance affects the accreditation status of a school and whether the school attains, maintains, or loses their

accreditation status. Whether an elementary or middle school student passes or fails the SOL does not affect their movement to the next grade. In actuality, it alerts teachers and parents/guardians about the strengths and weaknesses of the student. For high school students, the SOL has a very different impact on their academic future. Passing the end-of course (EOC) SOL is required for a student to receive their high school diploma. The EOC SOL is taken after each SOL course and passing determines whether a student will receive a verified unit of credit. To graduate from high school and receive a standard diploma, students must accumulate the standard units required by the State of Virginia. To receive a standard diploma, students must earn at least 22 standards units of credit and at least 6 verified units (Virginia Department of Education, 2006).

High school students' performance on the SOL also affects their schools accreditation status. Virginia schools are rated on four different levels. These levels are fully accredited, accredited with warning, accreditation denied, and conditionally accredited. For elementary, middle, and high schools to achieve the level of full accreditation, the students, on average, must achieve pass rates determined by the Virginia Department of Education in all four core academic areas (Virginia Department of Education, 2006). For middle and high schools to achieve the level of full accreditation, their students must achieve pass rates of 70 percent or higher in all four core academic areas (Virginia Department of Education). For elementary schools to achieve the level of full accreditation, students in grades 3 to 5 must achieve a pass rate of 75 percent or higher in English and 70 percent or higher in mathematics. Students in grades 4-5 must achieve pass rates of 70 percent or higher in science and history/social studies while students in grade 3 must achieve pass rates of 50 in these same core areas. Schools are deemed accredited with warning when their pass rates fall below the pass rates required to be fully accredited. Schools

that are denied accreditation are schools that fall below the pass rates required to be fully accredited for three consecutive years (Virginia Department of Education). These schools are required by the Board of Education to take the proper steps, determined by the Board of Education, if they are to receive accreditation once again. These schools may also be reconstituted, meaning that the local school board will specifically address issues that caused the school to be denied accreditation such as developing or changing instructional programs or the reformation of the student or staff population. The reconstitution will allow the school to be conditionally accredited until its next evaluation. Schools that are deemed conditionally accredited are schools that are new or schools that are reconstituted. The new schools will be given this status for one year while waiting for a performance evaluation of their students on the SOL tests. The reconstituted schools will revert back to accreditation denied status if they fail to meet full accreditation requirements by the time determined by the Board of Education (Virginia Department of Education).

At present, there are 1,843 Virginia K-12 schools. Of the 1,843, 1,686 are fully accredited, 102 are accredited with warning, 5 have been denied accreditation, 20 new schools are conditionally accredited, 28 are conditionally accredited, and 2 are to be determined (Virginia Department of Education, 2007b). It is important to highlight the 5 schools that have been denied accreditation. As illustrated prior, to be denied accreditation can be extremely problematic for students, schools, and communities. Schools that are denied accreditation have to go through a number of trials to once again receive the level of full accreditation which may never be achieved. The 5 schools that have been denied accreditation are all located in Petersburg City, a highly populated Black community comprised of 78% Blacks, 20% Whites (18% non-Latino Whites), 2% Latino, and 1% Asian with only a total of 8 K-12 schools

(Virginia Department of Education; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006c). It is quite problematic and speaks to the current state of the widening achievement gap when all 5 schools that have been denied accreditation in Virginia are located in a highly populated Black community.

Summary

As previously stated, multicultural counseling competence (MCC) was a topic that was neglected by many in the counseling profession until 1965. Since then, discussion surrounding MCC has increased and has become an important aspect of several organizations such as CACREP, ASCA, and ACA. Each of these organizations has emphasized the importance of diversity and MCC in various ways including the integration of multicultural issues into core academic areas, calling for programs to have diverse students and faculty, and the development of Ethical Codes and Standards.

Evidence of the increased importance surrounding MCC can also be seen through the research conducted on the topic. Supporting this statement has been the richness of empirical research confirming the positive relationship between MCC and several significant factors including training and ethnicity (Constantine, 2001; Constantine et al., 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis et al., 1994, 1995; Sodowsky et al., 1998).

The next chapter discusses the methods used in this study to investigate: (a) the multicultural counseling competence of school counselors (b) the relationship of MCC and training, ethnicity and gender (c) the current state of the achievement gap in the United States.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Three includes the purpose of this study, research questions, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, rationale for the usage of the MCCTS-R as a full scale score, and data analysis procedures. The purpose of this study was to investigate the multicultural counseling competence of United States school counselors and their commitment to closing the achievement gap. Previous researchers have found that counselors from various fields of counseling and psychology and from a variety of regions within the United States were competent in multicultural counseling (Constantine, 2001; Constantine et al., 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis, Reynolds et al., 1995; Pope-Davis et al., 1994; Sodowsky et al., 1998). As stated in the previous chapter, these researchers found that aspects of multicultural training such as multicultural coursework and multicultural counseling experience had a significant positive relationship on an individual's MCC. Most importantly, researchers found that the school counselors possessed MCC (Constantine; Constantine et al.; Constantine & Gushue; Constantine & Yeh; Holcomb-McCoy 2001, 2005). In addition, all of the studies except for Holcomb-McCoy (2001) indicated that there was a positive relationship in regards to perceived multicultural competence for school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course(s) compared to those who had never taken a multicultural course.

To research whether United States school counselors are multiculturally competent and committed to closing the achievement gap, the current study examined eight specific research questions, as follows:

1) To what extent do school counselors perceive themselves as possessing MCC (***MCC***
   perception)?

2) Is there a significant difference between the self-perceived MCC of school counselors
   who had previously taken a multicultural course and those who had not (***multicultural***
   training)?

3) Are there significant differences in the level of self-perceived MCC of school
   counselors' when grouped by ***demographic variables*** of race/ethnicity, gender, school
   level, and school urbanicity?

4) Is there a significant difference between school counselors' awareness of the national
   achievement gap (***gap aware***) and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

5) Is there a significant difference between school counselors' ***belief*** in the importance of
   being aware of the national achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school
   counselors?

6) Is there a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to
   activities aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of
   school counselors?

7) Is there a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to
   duties aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school
   counselors?

8) What is the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived ***social***
   desirability and level of self-perceived MCC?

Participants

The participants for this study were members of the American School Counselor

Association (ASCA). The population solicited from the ASCA membership list were K-12

school counselors who provided their e-mail addresses. ASCA is an organization that supports

school counselors with its focus on professionalism and ethical practice. This population did not

represent all school counselors but was chosen because ASCA is the largest professional

organization for school counselors. At present, of the 1,667 ASCA members identified as K-12

school counselors, 1,427 provided their e-mail addresses. All of these members were contacted

to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used in this study: The Multicultural Counseling Competence

and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R), the short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social

Desirability Scale (M-C SDS), and a Demographic Questionnaire. The three instruments can be

found in Appendixes C, D, and E respectively. The MCCTS-R assesses the self-perceived

multicultural counseling competence of professional school counselors in terms of Multicultural

Awareness, Multicultural Knowledge and Multicultural Terminology (Holcomb-McCoy & Day-

Vines, 2004). The MCCTS-R has been revised several times and was discussed in the prior

chapter.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

To address the potential limitation of social desirability, specifically participants feeling

the need to appear competent in multicultural counseling, a social desirability scale was used in

this study. The social desirability scale that was chosen was a short form of the Marlowe-Crowne

Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS) (Appendix D) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) developed by

Strahan and Gerbasi (1972). The original M-C SDS consists of 33 items scored using a true/false

scale. It was developed as a means of measuring individuals' levels of social desirability and is

normally used in concurrence with self-report instruments as a way to control for participants

social desirability responses (Crowne & Marlowe). Due to the length of the original SDS several

short versions were developed and are described by Reynolds (1982) and Strahan and Gerbasi.

Strahan and Gerbasi developed three SDS short forms. The first and second SDS short forms

consist of 10 items each and the third SDS short form consists of 20 items which is a

combination of the first and second short forms. Reynolds also developed three short forms of

the M-C SDS which consist of 11, 12, and 13 items. Fischer and Fick (1993) compared several

social desirability scales which included the original M-C SDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960),

three short form versions of the M-C SDS developed by Strahan and Gerbasi, and three short

form versions developed by Reynolds. Using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Fischer and Fick

found that Strahan and Gerbasi's first 10 item SDS short form was the best instrument to use

when measuring social desirability due to its high internal consistency which is .88 and high

correlation to the original Marlowe-Crowne SDS which is .96. Based on these results, the M-C

SDS short form developed by Strahan and Gerbasi was chosen for the current study.

Demographic Questionnaire

The third instrument was a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix E) which was used to

obtain information regarding school counselors' experience, including whether school counselors

had prior multicultural course(s), were aware of the national achievement gap, and participated

in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. Information was also obtained in reference to

school counselors' work environment which included school level (elementary, middle, high

schools) and school urbanicity (primarily rural, primarily urban, primarily suburban). Finally, identifiers regarding personal information of race/ethnicity and gender were obtained.

Procedures

For this study, data were collected electronically by web survey. The researcher's membership in ASCA granted access to the organization's membership directory where members who designated K-12 as their work setting and provided their e-mail addresses were selected for this study. Email survey distribution was chosen for cost efficiency, reduced time for the survey implementation, data entry ease, and larger sample size as suggested by Dillman (2000). To assist in the increase of the response rate participants were provided with a prenotice e-mail which alerted them to the study, the time required to finish the survey and questionnaire, and provided the participants with a notice that they would be receiving a request for their participation in the study, as suggested by Dillman (2000). Due to ASCA policy, only the email addresses of the participants were provided. This did not allow the researcher the ability to provide the participants with token financial incentives through the mail. Promised incentives were also not used. This type of incentive has been found to have no effect on response rates due to the alteration of the terms of exchange to economic instead of social (Dillman). After IRB approval was received, the researcher utilized Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com), an on-line survey tool, to post the survey and demographic questionnaire and collect the data. In addition, the statistical software program, The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 16), was used to analyze the data.

In the initial e-mail (Appendix F), the participants were notified about the purpose of the study, invited to participate in the study, and informed that their confidentiality will be kept throughout the study as suggested by Dillman (2000). Three days after the prenotice e-mail was

sent, a second e-mail (Appendix G) was sent which invited participation in the study, included a hyperlink to Survey Monkey, and stated that response to the survey and questionnaire indicated informed consent. Survey Monkey was used to post the survey and questionnaire and also used to collect data. A week after the second e-mail contact, a third e-mail (Appendix H) thanking those who had completed the survey and questionnaire, and reminding those who had not, was sent. Three weeks after the initial contact e-mail, a fourth e-mail (Appendix I) was sent to participants who had not yet participated in the study stating that their survey and questionnaire had not been received and that their participation was important to the success of this study as suggested by Dillman.

MCCTS-R: Full Scale Score Rationale

A factor analysis was not conducted on the MCCTS-R due to the small sample size of 165. Guilford (1954) stated that to conduct a factor analysis, a study should have at least 200 subjects. Comrey and Lee (1992) stated that for adequate sample sizes in factor analysis: 100 = poor, 200 = fair, 300 = good, 500 = very good, 1,000 or more = excellent. In addition, Everitt (1975) researched subject to variable ratio and found that a study should have a ratio of at least 10:1. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1995) also researched subject to variable ratio and suggested a ratio of 20:1. Although a factor analysis was not conducted, the instability of MCC factors was highlighted by Constantine et al. (2002). As discussed in Chapter 2, Constantine et al. stated that even though multicultural counseling instruments are used extensively by researchers and possess factors found to align with Sue et al.'s (1992) model of multicultural counseling competence (awareness, knowledge, & skill), they may not entirely support the model (Constantine et al.). Constantine et al. questioned whether instruments such as the MCI, MAKSS, and MCKAS, which are considered to mirror Sue et al.'s model, truly support it.

To address the question, the researchers conducted confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses and found that the instruments may lack uniformity due to their attempts to assess multicultural counseling competence with varying factors. It was found that these factors may measure constructs that they were not originally intended to measure. Additional results of the confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses indicated that the three instruments (MCI, MAKSS, and MCKAS) did not support Sue et al.'s model of multicultural counseling competence and that no uniform factor loading occurred on the examined factors by subscales and may indeed be two factors instead of three (Constantine et al., 2002). Although Sue et al.'s model (awareness, knowledge, and skill) and instrument (MCI, MAKSS, and MCKAS) items appear to be appropriate, the results of Constantine et al.'s study indicate that the academic profession is not conclusive about what factors entail MCC. Also, due to the fact that the researcher did not analyze anything that would predictably impact any one of the factors differentially, it was decided to use the scale as a full scale score only for analyses procedures.

<div align="center">Data Analyses</div>

Research Question 1: MCC Perception

In order to answer data related to the first research question which was designed to examine what extent school counselors perceive themselves as possessing MCC (***MCC perception***), the mean, standard deviation, and the range of scores of the MCCTS-R full scale score were calculated. Results of the MCCTS-R full scale score was measured with a Likert-type scale of 1 to 4 with 1= Not Competent, 2= Somewhat Competent, 3= Competent, and 4= Extremely Competent.

Research Question 2: Multicultural Training

In order to answer the second research question, whether there was a significant difference between the self-perceived MCC of school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course and those who had not (***multicultural training)***, a t-test was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by school counselors who took or did not take a multicultural course(s). The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and whether or not the school counselor had taken a multicultural course(s) was the independent variable.

Research Question 3: Demographic Variables

To answer the third research question, whether there was a significant difference between the level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors and ***demographic variables*** of race/ethnicity, gender, school level, and school urbanicity, a t-test was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by race/ethnicity (White and People of Color) and gender (male and female). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by school level (elementary, middle, high schools) and school urbanicity (primarily rural, primarily urban, and primarily suburban) of school counselors. The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and race/ethnicity, age, gender, school level, and school urbanicity were the independent variables.

Research Question 4: National Achievement Gap-Aware

To answer the fourth research question, whether there was a significant difference between school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap (***gap aware***) and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by awareness of the national

achievement gap of school counselors (There is an achievement gap, There is not an achievement gap, and I am unaware of data regarding the national achievement gap). The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and awareness of the national achievement gap was the independent variable.

Research Question 5: National Achievement Gap-Belief

To answer the fifth research question, whether there was a significant difference between school counselors' *belief* in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by the belief in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap (Yes [it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap], No [it is not important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap], and Unsure [unsure whether it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap]). The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and belief in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap was the independent variable.

Research Question 6: National Achievement Gap-Activities

To answer the sixth research question, whether there was a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to *activities* aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by commitment to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (Do not participate, Participate seldom (less than once a month), Participate occasionally (once a month), and Participate regularly (two or more

times a month). The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and commitment to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap was the independent variable.

Research Question 7: National Achievement Gap-Duties

To answer the seventh question, whether there was a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to *duties* aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by commitment to duties aimed at closing the achievement gap (Yes [it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap], No [it is not the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap], Unsure [unsure whether it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap]). The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and commitment to duties aimed at closing the achievement gap was the independent variable.

Research Question 8

In order to answer the final research question which was designed to examine the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived social desirability and level of self-perceived MCC, the results of the M-C SDS were calculated with a portion of the M-C SDS reverse scored. The M-C SDS short form was scored with a Likert-type scale of 1 to 2. The scale was analyzed using SPSS 16 by coding a response of true with 1 and coding a response of false with 2 for five questions (i.e. I like to gossip at times; There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone; I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget; At times I have really insisted on having things my own way; There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things). The second set of five questions were reverse coded with 1 signifying a

response of false and 2 signifying a response of true (i.e. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake; I'm always trying to practice what I preach; I never resent being asked to return a favor; I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own; I have never deliberately said something that hurts someone's feelings). Next, the mean of the M-C SDS was calculated. A high score on the M-C SDS would indicate a high level of social desirability. Finally, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was computed on the score of the M-C SDS short form and MCCTS-R total score.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The purpose of this study was to investigate the multicultural counseling competence (MCC) of American School Counselor Association (ASCA) school counselors and their awareness of the national achievement gap. Data was collected electronically for this study by utilizing Survey Monkey to post the web based survey and questionnaire. The survey, MCCTS-R, was used to assess the MCC of school counselors, and the questionnaire was used to obtain information regarding school counselors' experience, work environment, and personal information.

The range of scores, mean, and standard deviation of the MCCTS-R full scale was calculated to determine the MCC of school counselors. One-way ANOVAs and t-tests were used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by characteristics pertaining to school counselors' experience, work environment, and personal information. Finally, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was computed on the score of the M-C SDS short form and MCCTS-R total score to examine the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived social desirability and level of self-perceived MCC.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

Chapter Four presents the results from the current study which was designed to analyze the multicultural counseling competence and awareness of the national achievement gap of ASCA members. To conduct the analysis, data from the MCCTS-R, M-C SDS short form, and the Demographic Questionnaire were collected and analyzed using The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, Version 16). The chapter begins with the handling of cell sizes and missing data. The chapter continues with participants' response rate and demographics (gender and race/ethnicity) and concludes with the results of the research questions guiding this study:

1) To what extent do school counselors perceive themselves as possessing MCC (**MCC perception**)?

2) Is there a significant difference between the self-perceived MCC of school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course and those who had not (**multicultural training)**?

3) Are there significant differences in the level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors' when grouped by **demographic variables** of race/ethnicity, gender, school level, and school urbanicity?

4) Is there a significant difference between school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap (**gap aware**) and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

5) Is there a significant difference between school counselors' **belief** in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

6) Is there a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to *activities* aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

7) Is there a significant difference between school counselors self-reported commitment to *duties* aimed at closing the achievement gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors?

8) What is the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived *social desirability* and level of self-perceived MCC?

Cell Size Limitations

Due to the small sample size of the current study, cell size limitation occurred. Cells are produced through a combination of independent and dependent variables (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). For example, in the current study a total of 139 female and 23 male school counselors participated and the cells formed are female school counselors (139) and male school counselors (23). A cell size of 20 was considered large enough to perform an analysis of variance and was also the preferred minimum cell size (Urdan, 2001). In addition, the calculation of small cell sizes causes a loss in statistical power (Peat & Barton, 2005; Urdan). In the upcoming presentation of the results in the current chapter, if a cell possesses a size lower than 20, an analysis of variance was not calculated as suggested by Urdan and Peat and Barton. Instead, only descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and range) were calculated.

Handling of Missing Data

Currently, there are several techniques that can be used to address missing data but according to Roth and Switzer (1995) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), the choice of technique lacks importance when missing data amounts to a low percentage of 5% or less. These authors

suggested that using any technique that addressed missing data with surveys that had 5% or less of the data missing would produce similar results as the original data set. Utilizing their suggestions, the researcher chose to retain surveys that had 5% or less of the items missing. Thus, if participants omitted more than 2 items on the current study's survey which contained a total of 51-items, their surveys were deemed unusable. In the present study, the researcher chose to use mean substitution as the technique to address missing data on the MCCTS-R. "Mean substitution replaces the missing value with the mean for the variable from all individuals completing that variable" (Downey & King, 1998, p. 176). Mean substitution can only be used with interval level and ordinal level such as a Likert-type scale as suggested by Fox-Wasylyshyn and El-Masri (2005). Mean substitution was to be used with multi-item instruments that utilize a Likert-type scale which meant that it could only be used with the MCCTS-R and not with the M-C SDS which utilized a true/false scale (nominal) and the Demographic Questionnaire which comprised of the national achievement gap and demographic questions where each item measured a separate variable (Downey & King). To analyze research questions pertaining to the M-C SDS and the Demographic Questionnaire, the researcher utilized pairwise deletion which allowed the researcher to analyze the data of only participants who responded to the M-C SDS and Demographic Questionnaire items. Pairwise deletion helped to retain data by utilizing incomplete surveys, unlike listwise deletion which deletes all incomplete surveys (Carter, 2006). "Pairwise deletion retains more data by deleting cases on a statistic by statistic basis" (Roth, Switzer, & Switzer, 1999, p. 212). Using the traditional methods of mean substitution and pairwise deletion to handle the current study's missing data allowed the researcher to retain 165 surveys.

Participants Response Rate

The participants in the study were members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) who provided their email addresses to the organization. As a member, the researcher was able to gain access to the participants' email addresses, 1427 individuals were contacted through email. After the initial email, the researcher received 95 bounced back emails and emails informing the researcher that some potential participants were not practicing school counselors, which left the final contact list at 1332 individuals. One hundred and seventy eight surveys were returned to the researcher. Thirteen surveys had more than 5% of the items omitted and were deemed unusable, which left the final total of useable surveys at 165. With the reception of 178 surveys, the response rate was approximately 13% but after subtracting the 13 surveys with too many omitted items, the response rate was approximately 12%.

Participants Demographics

Of the 165 participants, 139 (84%) were female, 23 (14%), were male, and 3 (2%) participants did not respond to the question asking their gender. In terms of race/ethnicity, 127 (77%) participants were European American (White), 36 (22%) were people of Color, and 2 (1%) participants did not respond regarding race/ethnicity. A further look at the participants of Color indicated that 17 (10%) were Hispanic/Latino, 12 (7%) were African American, 3 (2%) were Bi-racial, 3 (2%) were Asian, and 1 (<1%) was Native American. In addition, when the gender and race/ethnicity of the participants were examined, the researcher found that 104 (63%) were White female counselors, 20 (12%) were White male counselors, 33 (20%) were female counselors of Color, and 3 (2%) were male counselors of Color. In reference to school counselors' school urbanicity, 65 (39%) indicated a primarily suburban setting, 53 (32%) indicated a primarily rural setting, 46 (28%) indicated a primarily urban setting, and 1 (<1%)

participant did not respond. Finally, participants were asked to indicate their school level. Fifty (30%) indicated High School, 31 (19%) indicated Elementary, 22 (13%) indicated Middle, 60 (36%) indicated Other, and 2 (1%) participants did not respond. The ethnic backgrounds of the current study's school counselor participants' are included in Table 7 and are compared to the demographics of previous studies that looked at the multicultural counseling competence of school counselors.

Table 7

Percentage of School Counselors Ethnic Backgrounds

Study	Caucasian	Black	Latino	Asian	Native American	Bi-Racial
1	91%	4%		3%		
2	83%	8%		.6%		
3	69%	16%	8%	8%		
4	83%	13%	1%	1%		
5	71%	14%	8%	4%		
6	89%	3%	1%	2%	2%	
7	77%	7%	10%	2%	<1%	2%

Study 1: Constantine et al. (2001)
Study 2: Constantine & Yeh (2001)
Study 3: Constantine (2001)
Study 4: Holcomb-McCoy (2001)
Study 5: Constantine & Gushue (2003)
Study 6: Holcomb-McCoy (2005)
Study 7: Current Study

Analysis

Research Question 1: MCC Perception

To analyze the multicultural counseling competence of this sample, the mean and standard deviation of the MCCTS-R was calculated. The MCCTS-R total score of the 165 school counselors who participated in the current study was measured with a Likert-type scale of 1-4 with 1=Not Competent, 2=Somewhat Competent, 3=Competent, and 4=Extremely Competent. The mean score on the MCCTS-R for the school counselors' was 2.9 with a standard deviation of .51. The mean score of 2.9 (SD= .51, Range= 1.68-4) indicates that the school counselors who participated in this study possess a self-perceived MCC between somewhat competent and competent.

Research Question 2: Multicultural Training

To examine whether a significant difference existed in the self-perceived MCC of school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course and those who had not (***multicultural training)***, a t-test was used to test differences among the full scale score of the MCCTS-R by school counselors who had taken or had not taken a multicultural course(s). Of the 165 participants, 143 (87%) indicated that they had taken a master's level or specialty course on multicultural counseling, 20 (12%) indicated that they had not, and 2 (1%) did not respond. To examine whether there was a significant difference between the MCCTS-R total score of the participants, a t-test was computed with the MCCTS-R total score as the dependent variable and multicultural training as the independent variable. The results of the t-test indicated that there was a significant difference in MCC between those with multicultural training and those without, school counselors who have taken a multicultural or specialty course (n= 143, Mean= 2.96, SD= .50, Range= 1.68-4), school counselors who have not taken a multicultural or specialty course

(n= 20, Mean= 2.62, SD= .47, Range= 1.97-3.53), t (161)= 2.86, ($p < .05$). Analysis of

multicultural training indicated that school counselors in this sample who had taken a

multicultural or specialty course reported a significantly higher MCC than school counselors

who had not taken a multicultural or specialty course.

Research Question 3: Race/Ethnicity

A t-test was used to examine whether there was a significant difference in MCC between

school counselors in terms of race/ethnicity (White and people of Color). Of the 165 participants,

127 (77%) school counselors indicated that were White, 36 (22%) indicated that they were

counselors of Color, and 2 (1%) did not respond. The MCCTS-R total score was the dependent

variable and school counselors' race/ethnicity (European American [white] and people of Color)

was the independent variable. The results of the t-test indicated that there was a significant

difference in MCC between White school counselors and counselors of Color, White school

counselors (n= 127, Mean = 2.85, SD = .52, Range= 1.68-4), School counselors of Color (n= 36,

Mean= 3.15, SD= .41, Range= 2.22-4), t (161) = 3.25, ($p < .01$). The results indicated that school

counselors of Color reported a significantly higher multicultural counseling competence (MCC)

than White school counselors in this sample.

Research Question 3: Gender

To examine whether a significant difference existed between school counselors' gender

and MCC, a t-test was utilized with gender as the independent variable and MCCTS-R as the

dependent variable. Of the 165 participants, 139 (84%) were female school counselors, 23 (14%)

were male counselors, and 3 (2%) did not respond. The results indicated that there was not a

significant difference in MCC between male and female school counselors in this sample, female

school counselors (n= 139, Mean = 2.93, SD = .50, Range: 1.68-4), male school counselors (n= 23, Mean = 2.90, SD = .51, Range= 2.03-3.97), t (160) = .33, ($p > .05$).

Research Question 3: School Urbanicity

To examine whether there was a significant difference between MCC and school counselors' school urbanicity (primarily rural, primarily urban, and primarily suburban), a one-way analysis of variance was calculated. The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and school urbanicity was the independent variable. Of the 165 participants, 65 (39%) indicated a primarily suburban setting, 53 (32%) indicated a primarily rural setting, 46 (28%) indicated a primarily urban setting, and 1 (<1%) did not respond. The results of the one-way analysis of variance indicated that there was not a significant difference in regards to the school urbanicity of school counselors, primarily rural (n= 53, Mean = 2.80, SD = .48, Range= 1.68-3.97), primarily urban (n= 46, Mean = 3.02, SD = .51, Range= 1.78-4), primarily suburban (n= 65, Mean = 2.93, SD = .51, Range= 1.72-4), F (2, 161) = 2.57, ($p > .05$).

Research Questions 4 and 5: National Achievement Gap-Aware and Belief

To examine school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap (There is an achievement gap, There is not an achievement gap, and I am unaware of data regarding the national achievement gap), a one-way analysis of variance was originally planned to be utilized to examine whether a significant difference existed between the MCCTS-R total score (dependent variable) and school counselors awareness of the national achievement gap, but due to disproportionate cell sizes, the descriptive statistics of the MCCTS-R were calculated. Of the 165 participants, 144 (87%) indicated that There is an achievement gap, 4 (2%) indicated that There is not an achievement gap, 16 (10%) indicated that they are unaware of data regarding the national achievement gap, and 1 (<1%) did not respond. Descriptive statistics indicated, There is

an achievement gap (n= 144, Mean = 2.93, SD = .50, Range= 1.68-4), There is not an achievement gap (n= 4, Mean = 3.34, SD = .82, Range= 2.28-4), and I am unaware of data regarding the national achievement gap (n= 16, Mean = 2.71, SD = .53, Range= 1.97-3.72). The results suggest that a majority of the school counselors in the current study were aware of the national achievement gap (n= 144, 87%).

To analyze school counselors belief in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap, school counselors were asked to indicated Yes (it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap), No (it is not important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap), or Unsure (unsure whether it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap). Of the 165 participants, 163 (99%) indicated Yes (it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap), 0 indicated No (it is not important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap), and 2 (1%) indicated Unsure (unsure whether it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap). Due to 163 (99%) school counselors indicating Yes (it is important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap), a one-way analysis of variance was not used to examine whether there was a significant difference between MCC and school counselors' belief in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap. Instead, descriptive statistics of the school counselors MCCTS-R score was calculated, Yes (n= 163, Mean = 2.93, SD = .51, Range= 1.68-4); Unsure (n= 2, Mean = 2.34, SD = .18, Range= 2.22-2.47).

Research Questions 6 and 7: National Achievement Gap-Activities and Duties

To examine whether there was a significant difference between MCC and school counselors' participation in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, a one-way analysis

of variance was computed. The MCCTS-R was the dependent variable and school counselors participation in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap was the independent variable. Of the 165 participants, 39 (24%) indicated that they Do not participate, 33 (20%) indicated that they Participate seldom (less than once a month), 35 (21%) indicated that they Participate occasionally (once a month), and 54 (33%) indicated that they Participate regularly (two or more times a month) in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and 4 (2%) did not respond. The results of the one-way analysis of variance indicated that there was a significant difference in reference to school counselors' participation in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, Do not participate (n= 39 , Mean = 2.74, SD = .55, Range= 1.68-3.97), Participate seldom (less than once a month) (n= 33, Mean = 2.87, SD = .51, Range= 2-4), Participate occasionally (once a month) (n= 35, Mean = 2.98, SD = .33, Range= 2.31-3.47), Participate regularly (two or more times a month) (n= 54, Mean = 3.06, SD = .53, Range= 1.94-4), F (3, 157) = 3.56, ($p <$ .05).

The results of the one-way analysis of variance indicated that a significant difference between some of the independent variable groups existed. To determine where the significant difference existed, a Tukey HSD (a post hoc test), was utilized to look at all pairwise differences among the means of the groups. The results of the analysis suggested that only 2 groups were found to be statistically significant. A significant difference was found between the means of school counselors who do not participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (n= 39, Mean = 2.74, SD = .55, Range= 1.68-3.97) and school counselors who participate regularly in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (n= 54, Mean = 3.06, SD = .53, Range= 1.94-4). The results indicated that school counselors in this sample who participated regularly in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap reported a significantly higher MCC than school

counselors who did not participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. The results indicated that school counselors in this sample who participated regularly in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap reported a significantly higher MCC than school counselors who did not participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap.

A one-way analysis of variance was initially to be used to examine whether there was a significant difference between the MCC of school counselors and the belief that it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (Yes [it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap], No [it is not the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap], Unsure [unsure whether it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap]) but due to the cell size limitations, the descriptive statistics of the MCCTS-R were calculated. Descriptive statistics indicated, Yes (it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap) (n= 146, Mean = 2.93, SD = .49, Range= 1.68-4), No (it is not the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap) (n= 4, Mean= 3.24, SD= .91, Range= 2.01-3.97), Unsure (unsure whether it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap) (n= 15, Mean= 2.71, SD= .54, Range= 2-3.62). The results showed that a majority of school counselors who participated in this study indicated that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (n= 146, 88%).

Research Question 8: Social Desirability

To examine the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived social desirability and level of self-perceived MCC, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was

computed on the score of the M-C SDS short form (Mean= 1.5, SD= .23, Range= 1-2) and

MCCTS-R total score (Mean= 2.9, SD= .51, Range= 1.68-4). Of the 165 participants, 162 (98%)

completed every item on the M-C SDS and 3 (2%) did not complete every item. The results of

the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation indicated that there was a significant relationship (r =

.20, p < .05) between the M-C SDS and MCCTS-R. The results suggest that a small amount of

variance to the MCCTS-R results can be attributed to social desirability.

Summary

Results from the study indicated that the school counselors who participated in this study

possessed a self-perceived MCC between somewhat competent and competent. In terms of

multicultural training, results indicated that participants who had taken a multicultural or

specialty course reported a significantly higher MCC than school counselors who had not taken a

multicultural or specialty course. In the analysis of demographic variables (race/ethnicity,

gender, school urbanicity) and whether a significant difference existed between the individual

variables and MCC for school counselors in the current sample, race/ethnicity was the only

variable where results indicated a significant difference. School counselors of Color reported a

significantly higher MCC than White school counselors. The analysis of the questions pertaining

to the national achievement gap (awareness of the national achievement gap [*gap aware*]; *belief*

in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap; commitment to *activities*

aimed at closing the achievement gap; commitment to *duties* aimed at closing the achievement

gap) and whether a significant difference existed between the questions and MCC yielded results

that indicated that a significant difference existed between MCC and one of the national

achievement gap questions (school counselors' commitment to *activities* aimed at closing the

achievement gap). Results indicated that the participants in this study who participated regularly

in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap reported a significantly higher MCC than school counselors who did not participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. Finally, results of whether a significant relationship existed between school counselors' social desirability and MCC indicated that there was a significant relationship. The results suggest that a small amount of variance to the MCCTS-R results can be attributed to social desirability.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the results of the current study. The chapter begins with an explanation of the findings where school counselors' multicultural counseling competence and awareness of the national achievement gap were examined. The chapter continues with a discussion of the limitations of the current study. Next, implications for school counselors and implications for future research will be discussed. Finally, a summary of the results will be discussed.

MCC Perception

The first research question was designed to examine whether school counselors possessed multicultural counseling competence (MCC). As stated in Chapter 1, MCC refers to a counselor's awareness, knowledge, and skill towards working with individuals from ethnically diverse populations (Sue et al., 1992). Using the MCCTS-R, the MCC of school counselors who participated in the current study was examined. The results indicated that school counselors possessed a self-perceived mean MCC score between somewhat competent and competent (Mean= 2.9, SD= .51, Range= 1.68-4). These results were similar to Holcomb-McCoy (2001) (Knowledge Mean = 2.52, SD = .78; Awareness = 3.44, SD = .61; Terminology = 3.48, SD = 1.04; Racial Identity Development = 2.16, SD = .83; Skills = 3.39, SD = .63), Holcomb-McCoy (2005) (Factors Multicultural Knowledge Mean = 2.46, SD = .81; Factors Multicultural Awareness M = 3.37, SD = .62; Factors Multicultural Terminology M = 3.41, SD = .62), and Constantine and Yeh (2001) (Mean = 5.01, SD = .50) studies where the MCCTS (4 point Likert-type scale), MCCTS-R (4 point Likert-type scale), and CCCI-R (6-point Likert-type scale) were used respectively to examine the MCC of school counselors.

The results of the current study were also similar to Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) (Knowledge Mean = 2.70, SD = .91; Awareness = 3.38, SD = .67; Definition of Terms = 3.43, SD = .64; Racial Identity = 2.33, SD = 1.01; Skills = 3.27, SD = .73) and Pope-Davis et al.(1995) (Skill Mean = 3.29, SD = .35; Awareness Mean = 2.54, SD = .56; Knowledge Mean = 3.11, SD = .45; Relationship = 2.99, SD = .44) where the MCCTS (4-point Likert-type scale) and MCI (4-point Likert-type scale) were used respectively to examine the MCC of professional counselors. The results of Holcomb-McCoy (2001, 2005) and Constantine & Yeh indicated that school counselors perceived themselves as possessing MCC. In addition, the results of Holcomb-McCoy and Myers and Pope-Davis et al. indicated that professional counselors perceived themselves as possessing MCC. Although the sample size of the current study was small, the findings were encouraging with school counselors in the current study perceiving themselves as possessing a MCC between somewhat competent and competent. It can be assumed that the school counselors perceived themselves as culturally competent as suggested by Sue et al. (1992). As stated prior, the findings were encouraging but the results must be interpreted cautiously and not be assumed that the school counselors practice strategies and interventions that are culturally appropriate as suggested by Holcomb-McCoy (2001). The findings must also be interpreted cautiously due to the small sample size and the possibility that social desirability may have played a role in the results of the MCCTS-R.

Multicultural Training

Research Question 2 was designed to examine whether there was a significant difference between the self-perceived MCC of school counselors who had previously taken a multicultural course and those who had not. The findings were consistent with previous research that found that individuals who had taken a Master's level or specialty course on multicultural counseling

possessed a higher MCC than those who had not. Moreover, as described in Chapter 1, counselors who do not possess sufficient training (e.g., academic course(s), workshop(s), and supervision) in multicultural counseling may lack the competence necessary to assist students of Color (Constantine, 2001; Constantine et al., 2001; Constantine & Gushue, 2003; Constantine & Yeh, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pope-Davis et al, 1994, 1995; Sodowsky et al., 1998). The findings suggest that taking a Master's level multicultural course may help school counselors increase their MCC. In addition, the findings also suggest that exposure to such a course may help to increase school counselors' awareness, knowledge, and skill in regards to working with a diverse population.

Demographic Variables

Research Question 3 was designed to examine whether a significant difference existed between the demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, and school urbanicity and the MCC of school counselors. Of the three demographic variables that were examined, only one variable was found to indicate a significant difference between MCC. The results were similar to Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) and Holcomb-McCoy (2005) where gender was found to not have a significant relationship with MCC. The current study suggests that gender does not play a role in school counselors MCC.

With respect to school urbanicity, the results indicated no significant difference in the school urbanicity of counselors. Thus, similar to gender results, this suggests that school urbanicity did not play a role in the MCC of school counselors. The results also indicated that a significant difference existed between MCC and race/ethnicity, where school counselors of Color reported a significantly higher MCC than White school counselors. These results were similar to Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999), Pope-Davis et al. (1995) and Sodowsky et al. (1998), where

a positive relationship was found between MCC and race/ethnicity; people of Color reported a higher level of MCC than their White counterparts. As reported by Pope-Davis et al., "The different experiences of Whites and persons of Color are indeed relevant to their self-perceived multicultural counseling competencies . . . . To the extent that the experiences of students of Color logically should make for greater multicultural counseling competency" (p. 327). Holcomb-McCoy and Myers also found that race/ethnicity played an important role in a professional counselors' MCC. Holcomb-McCoy and Myers and Sodowsky et al. all asserted that the daily contact that people of Color have had with other people of Color throughout their lives and how they have lived multicultural lives assisted them in possessing a higher level of MCC than their White counterparts.

<div align="center">National Achievement Gap-Aware</div>

Research Question 4 was designed to examine whether there was a significant difference between school counselors' awareness of the national achievement gap (gap aware) and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors, but due to disproportionate cell sizes, descriptive statistics were the only method of analysis used. The results indicated that 144 (87%) of the school counselors who participated in the current study were aware of the existence of an achievement gap between K-12 Black and Latino students and their White counterparts while 4 (2%) indicated that there was not an achievement gap, and 16 (10%) indicated that they were unaware of data regarding the national achievement gap. The results suggest that a substantial amount of the school counselors were aware of the national achievement gap and potentially the effects it has on students of Color, most importantly Black and Latino K-12 students. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, an achievement gap in the United States exists in the K-12 educational levels between students of Color and their White counterparts. The achievement gap

can be viewed through several sources such as the SAT and the National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP) whereby the scores on both the NAEP and SAT showed that both

Black and Latino K-12 students were performing at an academic level well below their White

counterparts. Awareness of such disparities may be the first step towards working to close the

national achievement gap. Lupton (2005) believed that all students deserved to have equal access

to similar, quality education, but students of Color and those from low socioeconomic

backgrounds have traditionally not received the same education as students from more

advantaged backgrounds. Bemak and Chung (2008) and Bryan (2005) determined that the key to

reducing the achievement gap between students of Color and their White counterparts was to

redefine the school counselors' role by raising awareness. Following awareness of the

achievement gap, school counselors were called to be multiculturally competent, advocates for

social justice, advocates for students of Color, and organizational/social change agents (Bemak

& Chung; Bryan; House & Hayes, 2002). House and Hayes believed that school counselors

needed to be advocates and mentors for students of Color. Bemak and Chung believed that to be

an advocate, an individual was required to fight injustices by working towards improving

unequal conditions that exist in the lives of those in need and by their actions improving the lives

of the individual or groups.

National Achievement Gap-Belief

Research Question 5 was designed to examine whether there was a significant difference

between school counselors' belief in the importance of being aware of the national achievement

gap and level of self-perceived MCC of school counselors. Due to disproportionate cell sizes

where nearly all of the school counselor participants believed that it was important for school

counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap an ANOVA was not appropriate,

descriptive statistics of the school counselors MCCTS-R score was calculated. One hundred and sixty three (99%) of the school counselors believed that it was important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap while no school counselors indicated that it was not important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap. Only 2 (1%) school counselors indicated that they were unsure whether it was important for school counselors to be aware of the national achievement gap. Although, the sample size is small, it is a promising sign that nearly all the school counselors believed in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap. As stated prior, Bemak and Chung (2008), Bryan (2005), and House and Hayes (2002) believed that the first step to assisting in closing the achievement gap was awareness of the achievement gap, awareness of the factors affecting students of Color, and advocacy. Hipolito-Delgado and Lee (2007) discussed the importance of school counselors possessing multicultural competency and creating school counseling programs based on social justice, collaboration, and the empowerment of marginalized students. Hipolito-Delgado and Lee believed that school counselors must be knowledgeable about factors such as oppression and racism that have continued to affect the achievement gap in relation to students of Color. By possessing multicultural competency and knowledge about such factors, school counselors can begin the process of becoming change agents and work for equality and social justice for all students. School counselors are also called to focus solely on their duties and to avoid administrative tasks as well as tasks that do not deal with the school counselor's role. By doing this, school counselors can work to meet the needs of all students, especially marginalized students, thus allowing them to work to close the achievement gap. School counselors who allow their roles to be defined by others such as school administrators who may not fully comprehend the role and duties of school counselors may be left with school counseling programs that do not

fully attend to the needs of all students, especially disadvantaged students (House & Hayes). To begin the process of becoming an advocate for students of Color, school counselors must first become aware and knowledgeable about the factors affecting students of Color and believe that they can be change agents in assisting to close the achievement gap (Bemak & Chung).

National Achievement Gap-Activities

Research Question 6 was designed to examine whether there was a significant difference between MCC and school counselors' participation in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. The results indicated that school counselors who participated regularly in gap-closing activities reported a significantly higher MCC than school counselors who did not participate, and possibly due to their level of MCC, assisted in their awareness of the need to participate regularly in these activities. Another possible reason for the positive correlation between school counselors who regularly participated in such activities and a higher MCC level may be due to the fact that they had previously engaged in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. It is also important to note that a considerable number of school counselors in the current sample participated in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. Specifically, 122 school counselors (74%) reported participating in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap compared to 39 (24%) who did not.

A potential confounding variable may have occurred between school counselors of Color and participation in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. The analyses for this study did not examine the combined relationship of counselors of Color and those with high MCC among those who participated regularly in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. The data suggesting that both being a counselor of Color and regularly participating in gap-closing activities are related to high MCC might indicate that it is primarily counselors of Color who

participate in these activities. This question deserves further analysis. As stated prior, Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999) and Sodowsky et al. (1998) asserted that the daily contact that people of Color have had with other people of Color throughout their lives and how they have lived multicultural lives assisted them in possessing a higher level of MCC than their White counterparts. Daily contact with people of Color and living a multicultural life may have assisted school counselors of Color in engaging in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap.

Bemak and Chung (2008) believed that school counselors needed to actively work on closing the achievement gap due to the continued increase of people of Color in the United States. Supportive school counselors who work actively to reinforce the importance of academics to students of Color and emphasize their ability to learn were found to be important to the academic success of students of Color (Howard, 2003). Bemak and Chung also believed that although school counselors were aware of the increased growth of students of Color and the achievement gap, a large number of them were not actively working to close the achievement gap. Contrary to Bemak and Chung's belief, the results of the current study showed that a significant number of the school counselors in the current study (n=122, 74%) participated in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap.

National Achievement Gap-Duties

Research Question 7 was designed to examine whether there was a significant difference between the MCC of school counselors and the belief that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. Due to cell size limitations, only descriptive statistics of the MCCTS-R could be calculated. The results indicated that a majority of school counselors who participated in the current study indicated that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (n= 146, 88%) while

a small number (n= 4, 2%) believed that it was not the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. Bryan (2005) asserted that "School counselors are advocates who work with school personnel, family, and community members to remove systematic barriers to student success, especially for students who have been disenfranchised due to racism and discrimination" (p. 223). A majority of the school counselors in the current study believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (n=146, 88%), but the number of school counselors who believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap was different than the number of school counselors who actually participated in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (n=122, 74%). The difference may have been due to fewer school counselors willing to embrace their new role as muticulturally competent advocates and change agents and were not willing to implement and/or participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap (Bemak & Chung, 2008). When activities are designed to give every student equal access educationally and the resources needed to close the achievement gap, educational equality can be achieved for all students (Bemak & Chung). School counselors have access to all students' files and reports thus allowing them to gain insight and awareness into each student's needs and potential barriers towards their success academically (House & Hayes, 2002). House and Hayes believed that each student deserves the right to receive equitable education and access to exceptional curriculum and teaching. Recall that 74% of the school counselors in the current study participated in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and 88% believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in these activities. Therefore, this researcher hopes that the number of school counselors participating in activities will mirror the number of

school counselors believing that it is the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap in future studies.

<div align="center">Social Desirability</div>

The final research question was designed to examine the relationship between school counselors' level of self perceived social desirability and level of self-perceived MCC. Using a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the results of the analysis indicated that there was a significant relationship between the M-C SDS and MCCTS-R. Unlike Ponterotto et al. (2002), where social desirability was found to not have a significant relationship to self-perceived MCC, the results of the current study found a significant relationship between social desirability and self-perceived MCC. The correlation between the M-C SDS and MCCTS-R ($r = .20$, $p < .05$) suggest that a small amount of variance of the MCCTS-R results can be attributed to social desirability. Sodowsky et al. (1998) stated that multicultural social desirability "refers to one professing that one personally and socially always interacts positively with minorities and that at the institutional level, one always favors government and educational policies that institute expanded MC diversity" (p. 256). Moreover, the researchers asserted that multicultural social desirability occurs when individuals would like to appear as though they interact positively with people of Color and agree with initiatives focused on diversity. However, with the low correlation between social desirability and self-perceived MCC, it can be assumed that the results of the MCCTS-R were not based solely on social desirability but some variance to the MCCTS-R results can be attributed to social desirability.

Limitations

Participants

The first limitation in the study was that the sample comprised of only ASCA members. It can be postulated that school counselors who choose to be ASCA members may be different from those who choose not to be members, as suggested by Holcomb-McCoy (2005). Researchers have also investigated why some school counselors join professional organizations such as ASCA, while others do not. Bauman (2008), for example, reported that school counselors who joined professional organizations attended graduate school programs that emphasized the importance of joining professional organizations, worked at schools where their colleagues were members of professional organizations, believed that professional organizations assisted in advancing the school counseling field, and/or believed that as a professional, it was important to join professional organizations.

A second limitation was that the study's participants were not representative of the ASCA school counselor population. Even though the demographics of ASCA members are currently unavailable through ASCA, the researcher utilized a study that looked at the MCC and self-efficacy of school counselors where the research participants were members of ASCA (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, in press). Due to the high response rate and large sample size of the participants in the study (n=860), the researcher determined that the study was the best representation of ASCA members and used the study as a way to look at whether the sample of the current study represented the ASCA demographics. The researcher utilized demographic variable information from the study which showed that the characteristics of the current study's sample were not representative of the ASCA school counselor population (Bodenhorn et. al.). The current study yielded a higher percentage of counselors of Color which was 22% compared

to 11% for Bodenhorn et. al.'s study and a lower percentage of White counselors, 77% compared

to 89% for Bodenhorn et. al.'s study. In addition, due to the low response rate of 12% and the

lack of the current study's representation of the ASCA school counselor population, the results

of the current study cannot be generalized to the ASCA school counselor population or the entire

school counselor population as suggested by Halpern and Asch (2003).

Web Survey/Nonresponse Bias/Response Rate

Another limitation was that the study was a web survey. There are positives associated

with web surveys, such as the accessibility it can give to a wide array of individuals, the speed

that the surveys can be collected, and the low cost (Couper, 2000; Kaplowitz, Hadlock, &

Levine, 2004; Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). There are, however, also negative aspects with

hosting a web survey, which can elevate the nonresponse bias. These include the potential of the

survey email getting treated as spam, the exclusion of individuals who do not use the internet on

a regular basis such as ASCA members who did not list their email addresses or have working

email addresses, and internet security (Kaplowitz et al.). Nonresponse bias occurs when potential

participants in a study are not able or willing to participate in the study (Couper). "Response rate

is important in survey research, because low response rate has the potential of introducing non-

response bias, and thus resulting in misleading information about the issues covered in a survey"

(Shih & Fan, 2008, 36). Other reasons associated with nonresponse bias may be technical

difficulties such as poor internet connection or difficulty understanding how to complete the on-

line web survey compared to the simple use of a pen or pencil with mail surveys (Couper).

There was also a concern associated with the U.S. population being over-surveyed

(Groves, Cialdini & Couper, 1992). The increased usage of the internet in this country has

resulted in the growth of survey research which, in turn, has resulted in a larger number of

people receiving unsolicited web surveys (Groves et al.). This has the potential to negatively impact the rate of response if individuals approach a new survey opportunity with a "been there, done that" attitude (Sheehan, 2001) and do not respond.

Another issue that may have arisen and contributed to nonresponse was concerns about confidentiality. Internet security has been viewed as a potential cause for nonresponse. Individuals may be concerned that their responses on surveys of sensitive topics may not truly be confidential and in turn, result in participants' hesitation to complete the survey thus increasing nonrepsonse (Couper, 2000; Kaplowitz et al., 2004). Nonresponse was also found to occur when participants thought that a survey's research topic was uninteresting or irrelevant (Groves et al., 2006). Nonresponse has also been associated with negative rewards; in other words, participants might not engage in a survey if it could engender unpleasant thoughts and memories about the topic. According to Groves, et al., "When the topic of the survey is relevant to the sample person but generates negative thoughts, unpleasant memories, or reminders of embarrassing personal failings, then the topic may suppress participation despite its personal relevance" (p. 174).

The current study yielded a low response rate of 12%. Fricker and Schonlau (2002) found that when web surveys were the only mode used in a study, the response rates ranged between poor and moderate. Couper, Blair, and Triplett (1999), Schaefer and Dillman (1998), and Fricker and Schonlau found that, in general, web surveys yielded lower response rates than traditional methods such as mail. Shih & Fan (2008) found that the average response rate for web surveys was 33% (SD= 22, Range= 5-85) compared to 53% (SD= 21, Range= 11-85) for mail surveys, representing a 20% difference. The reasons for web survey low response rates are currently not clear but possible reasons will be discussed. Fricker and Schonlau found that when participants had the choice of web or mail survey, they generally chose mail. "One explanation for these

differences in response rates may be the fact that less time and attention have been devoted to developing and testing motivating tools to increase web survey response compared to the time spent studying tools employed in mail surveys" (Kaplowitz et al., 2004, p. 94). Researchers such as Dillman (1978, 2000) have spent a number of years researching the most successful methods that researchers can use to help increase response rate through traditional methods such as telephone and mail surveys. Couper (2000) found that usage of such methods as Dillman's (2000) "tailored design method" was not necessarily successful when used with web surveys.

Self-Report Data

One of the major issues in regards to self-report studies would be social desirability (Ponterotto et al., 2002; Sodowsky et al., 1998). Self report studies can have a negative effect on participants who may choose to appear knowledgeable about the contents of a study when they lack true comprehension of what is being studied (Ponterotto et al.; Sodowsky et al.). As stated previously, the current researcher examined the relationship between school counselors' level of social desirability and level of MCC where it was found that social desirability may have played a factor in the results of the MCCTS-R. Due to this, the results of the current study must be interpreted knowing that a small amount of variance to the MCCTS-R results can be attributed to social desirability.

Implications for School Counselors

The results of the current study suggested that the school counselors participants were aware of the national achievement gap, believed in the importance of awareness, were committed to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in these activities. To help to close the achievement gap, Lupton (2005) believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the

achievement gap through collaboration with educators in devising ways to implement better mental health, academic counseling, and academic programs focused on assisting students of Color and helping to close the achievement gap.

Bryan (2005) called for school counselors to become collaborators and advocates and to assist in closing the achievement gap. As collaborators, school counselors can bring school administrators, teachers, other counselors, and parents together to work towards developing a partnership so that all members could develop programs focused on bettering the lives of students (Bryan). Bryan defined collaboration as, "a process for reaching goals that cannot be reached alone but are reached through shared vision, responsibility, and resources, parity, joint work, mutual expertise, and shared outcomes in accomplishing the goals" (p. 223). Successful collaboration can be reached when all parties believe in a common goal and equally respect one another.

According to Bemak and Chung (2008), there were several reasons why school counselors may choose to not participate in helping to close the achievement gap. First, school counselors may be afraid of being disliked by their peers and also fear being ostracized when their new role may be deemed controversial. "The fear of social and professional rejection is, indeed, a strong inhibitor in becoming a multicultural/social justice advocate and organizational change agent" (Bemak & Chung, 2008, p. 375). School counselors may also feel powerless to effect change in their schools and communities thus inhibiting their ability to assist in closing the achievement gap. Another reason would be that school counselors are afraid of losing their jobs. School counselors who work as advocates for change have at times been seen as threats due to their proactive process of raising awareness regarding equal educational opportunity for students of Color and their continued work to close the achievement gap (Bemak & Chung, 2008). It is

also important to note that not all school counselors are allowed to create and implement

activities and programs focused on closing the achievement gap due to several reasons such as

lack of multicultural competence within themselves and/or a defined role that does not

encompass autonomy (i.e. testing, paperwork, teaching) (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Bryan, 2005).

A way to combat the fears described above would be for school counselors to work as

collaborators (Bryan, 2005). School counselors who collaborate with other school employees,

community leaders, and students' families take an important and necessary step towards closing

the achievement gap due to their familiarity with the community, and most importantly with

community leaders and students' families (Bemak & Chung, 2005). As Bryan asserted in the

following two passages:

> Such partnerships provide students with caring and supportive relationships, offer them
>
> opportunities for meaningful involvement in their school and community environments,
>
> offer after-school enrichment activities, incorporate high expectations regarding student
>
> performance and success, and enhance students' sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem.
>
> (p. 224). . . . Partnerships among the school, home, and community increase students'
>
> chances of success by removing some of the stressors and systematic barriers to academic
>
> and personal success, especially for poor and minority students. (p. 225)

As a way to increase awareness of the achievement gap, school counselors can benefit

from staff development training and seminars where school counselors and/or multiculturally

competent educators can help school administrators, teachers, and other school counselors

examine their biases, beliefs, and stereotypes about people of Color (Bemak & Chung, 2005;

Bryan, 2005). This can be used as a way of assisting school administrators, teachers, and school

counselors to better understand their own negative views that may affect their work and

interaction with students of Color and accept worldviews different from their own thus beginning the process of becoming culturally competent (Bemak & Chung; Bryan).

Portes (2004) called for school counselors to be proactive in their work of closing the achievement gap by working with at-risk youth through activities focused on academic support, academic development, and college preparation programs. For at-risk youth, Portes stated that through the efforts of school counselors, an Individualized Development Plan (IDP) must be developed for each youth as a means of monitoring the academic support that the students are receiving. By doing this, school counselors can collaborate with school administrators and teachers to ensure that each student was receiving the correct amount of academic support.

Implications for Counselor Education

The results of the current study brought to light several implications for counselor education. The results suggest that the school counselors who participated in the current study possessed MCC but social desirability may have played a factor in the results of the MCCTS-R. Counselor education programs must be aware of the potential risk of multicultural social desirability such as counselor education students stating that they always have positive interactions with people of Color, and how they are in favor of institutional policies that focus on diversity issues and favor people of Color, when in actuality they do not have positive interactions with people of Color nor are in favor of the institutional policies (Sodowsky et al., 1998). Infusing multicultural counseling throughout counselor education programs instead of simply addressing the topic in a single class may assist in addressing the issue of multicultural social desirability and increasing counselor education students' MCC as suggested by Pope-Davis & Coleman, 1997.

Counselor education programs must also have an increased role in helping to close the

achievement gap by making students aware of the national achievement gap, helping them to understand the importance of such awareness, emphasizing the importance of being committed to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and assisting them to understand that it is their duty as school counselors to participate in these activities. As stated in Chapter Two, by the year 2050 in the United States, the Caucasian population will be 50% of the entire population; the Latino population will be 25% of the entire population; the African American population will be 15% of the entire population; the Asian/Pacific Islander population will be 9% of the entire population; and the Indians/Eskimos population will be 1% of the entire population (Herlihy & Corey, 2006). Constantine et al., (2001) stated that children of Color will be considered the majority, 60%, of the school aged children population of the United States within the next 50 years. These demographics illustrate the growth of people of Color in the United States and the potential migration of people of Color to locations that initially had a minuscule population of people of Color, thus emphasizing the importance of school counselors possessing MCC. Counselor education programs need to prepare their students for the upcoming change.

Holcomb-McCoy (2007) reported that most school counselors were aware and concerned about closing the achievement gap and were assisting students of Color to succeed academically. "One missing link, however, is that many school counselors are not trained to assist students to overcome societal, familial, and educational barriers" (Holcomb-McCoy, p. 3). Holcomb-McCoy also asserted that school counselors and educators who lacked multicultural competence were at risk of negatively impacting the achievement of students of color due to their lack of multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skill. In short, receiving multicultural training is crucial to beginning the process of understanding the academic barriers that exist for students of Color.

As multiculturally competent individuals, school counselors must be aware of historical factors, such as discrimination and school segregation, so that they can be more effective advocates for students of Color (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). These students may feel as though they are not intelligent enough to succeed or that society does not want them to succeed. Such historical discrimination may affect students negatively and cause them to feel as though they cannot be successful academically, as well as later on in life. School counselors must be knowledgeable of such issues and willing to address them when they arise (Holcomb-McCoy).

<div align="center">Implications for Future Research</div>

Several implications are apparent for future research. First, to minimize nonresponse, a mail survey or a mixed-mode strategy should be conducted (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002; Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). A mail survey or a mixed-mode strategy was not used in the current study due to the cost of these techniques. Email survey distribution was chosen for cost efficiency, reduced time for the survey implementation, data entry ease, and larger sample size as suggested by Dillman (2000). Using only a mail survey has been found to yield a higher response rate than a web survey. However, when an email method was used, followed by a web survey in conjunction with traditional methods (i.e., a mailed survey), it was found to increase survey participation (Schaefer & Dillman). Another option is the web-mail mixed mode, which is defined as a survey option where participants are given the option of choosing either web survey mode or mail survey mode to respond to a survey (Shih & Fan, 2007).When a web-mail mixed mode option was given to survey participants, Shih and Fan found that the response rate was 46% (SD= 21, Range= 10-90) with a 27% (SD= 17) response rate for mail surveys and 19% (SD= 22) response rate for web survey, which is an 8% difference.

A second recommendation is that the study should be conducted with a larger school counselor population that would be representative of the national school counselor population. The larger population would assist in the analysis of school counselors and allow the data results to be generalized to the national school counselor population. A larger population was not used in the current study due to the researcher's ASCA membership, as well as his belief that although the ASCA population did not represent all school counselors, ASCA was the largest professional organization for school counselors and provided the researcher access to the email addresses of ASCA members. In addition, results related to research questions 4, 5, and 7 would be able to be analyzed with an ANOVA if the sample and cell sizes were larger. The study would also be conducted with school counselors who are not only members of ASCA. This would allow for a more inclusive study. Finally, with a larger sample size, a factor analysis can be conducted to further examine the validity of the MCCTS-R.

Following up this study using qualitative methods would be a beneficial endeavor. "The great contribution of qualitative research is the culturally specific and contextually rich data it produces" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005, p. iv). A qualitative study would give the researcher an opportunity to explore school counselors' experience with multicultural counseling, their relationship with students of Color, and their views about the national achievement gap thus allowing for further insight into school counselors perspectives (Mack et al.).

<center>Summary</center>

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the multicultural counseling competence of United States school counselors and their commitment to closing the achievement gap. The study, although conducted with a small sample size, provided additional information

regarding the MCC of school counselors. The results suggested that school counselors report possessing MCC. The results also suggested that school counselors who had taken a Master's level or specialty course on multicultural counseling possessed a higher MCC than those who had not. These results were similar to studies conducted by Constantine (2001), Constantine et al. (2001), Constantine and Gushue (2003), Constantine and Yeh (2001), Holcomb-McCoy (2005), Holcomb-McCoy and Myers (1999), Pope-Davis et al. (1995), Pope-Davis et al. (1994), and Sodowsky et al. (1998), where the researchers also found a positive relationship between MCC and multicultural course(s). The results also suggested that a significant difference existed between MCC and race/ethnicity. Although the school counselor participants self-reported as possessing MCC, when race/ethnicity was examined school counselors of Color reported possessing a higher MCC than their White counterparts. These results were similar to Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, Pope-Davis et al., and Sodowsky et al., where a positive relationship was found between MCC and race/ethnicity.

Although, the researcher was unable to examine the relationship between school counselors MCC and three out of four national achievement gap questions, the results suggested that the school counselors who participated in the current study were aware of the national achievement gap, believed in the importance of being aware of the national achievement gap, were committed to activities aimed at closing the achievement gap, and believed that it was the duty of school counselors to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap. The results of the current study shed a positive light in terms of school counselors' level of MCC and their commitment to closing the achievement gap. Although the results must be interpreted cautiously, they suggest that the school counselor participants possessed a competent level of

MCC to assist student of Color, were aware of the national achievement gap, and were

committed to participating in activities aimed at closing the achievement gap.

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APPENDIX A.

Characteristics of the Culturally Skilled Counseling Psychologist

Belief/Attitudes (Awareness)	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist is one who has moved from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to his/her own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences
	A culturally skilled counseling psychologist is aware of his/her own values and biases and how they may affect minority clients
	A culturally skilled counseling psychologist is one who is comfortable with differences that exist between he counselor and client in terms of race and beliefs
	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist is sensitive to circumstances (personal biases, stage of ethnic identity, sociopolitical influences, etc.) which may dictate referral of the minority client to a member of his/her own race/culture
Knowledge	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist will have a good understanding of the sociopolitical system's operation in the United States with respect to its treatment of minorities
	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist must possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group he/she is working with
	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist must have a clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of counseling and therapy
	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist is aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services
Skills	At the skills level, the culturally skilled psychologist must be able to generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses
	The culturally skilled counseling psychologist must be able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and "appropriately
	The culturally skilled psychologist is able to exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of his/her client when appropriate

(Sue et al., 1982, p. 49)

APPENDIX B.

Multicultural Counseling Competencies: Counselor Awareness of Own Assumptions, Values,

and Biases

Belief/Attitudes (Awareness)	The culturally skilled counselor has moved from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to their own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences
	Culturally skilled counselors are aware of how their own cultural background and experiences, attitudes, and values and biases influence psychological processes
	Culturally skilled counselors are able to recognize the limits of their competencies and expertise
	Culturally skilled counselors are comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs
Knowledge	Culturally skilled counselors have specific knowledge about their own racial and cultural heritage and how it personally and professionally affects their definitions and biases of normality-abnormality and the process of counseling
	Culturally skilled counselors possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect them personally and in their work. This allows them to acknowledge their own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. Although this standard applies to all groups, for White counselors it may mean that they understand how they may have directly or indirectly benefited from individual, institutional, and cultural racism (White identity development models).
	Culturally skilled counselors possess knowledge about their social impact upon others. They are knowledgeable about communication style differences, how their style may clash or facilitate the counseling process with minority clients, and how to anticipate the impact it may have on others.
Skills	Culturally skilled counselors seek out educational, consultative, and training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations. Being able to recognize the limits of their competencies, they (a) seek consultation, (b) seek further training or education, (c) refer out to more qualified individuals or resources, or (d) engage in a combination of these.

	Culturally skilled counselors are constantly seeking to understand themselves as racial and cultural beings and are actively seeking a nonracist identity.
Understanding The Worldview Of The Culturally Different Client	
Belief/Attitudes (Awareness)	Culturally skilled counselors are aware of their negative emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to their clients in counseling. They are willing to contrast their own beliefs and attitudes with those of their culturally different clients in a nonjudgmental fashion
	Culturally skilled counselors are aware of their stereotypes and preconceived notions that they may hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.
Knowledge	Culturally skilled counselors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group that they are working with. They are aware of the life experiences, cultural heritage, and historical background of their culturally different clients. This particular competency is strongly linked to the "minority identity development models" available in the literature.
	Culturally skilled counselors understand how race, culture, ethnicity, and so forth may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help-seeking behavior, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counseling approaches.
	Culturally skilled counselors understand and have knowledge about sociopolitical influences that impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities. Immigration issues, poverty, racism, stereotyping, and powerlessness all leave major scars that may influence the counseling process.
Skills	Culturally skilled counselors should familiarize themselves with relevant research and the latest findings regarding mental health and mental disorders of various ethnic and racial groups. They should actively seek out educational experiences that enrich their knowledge, understanding, and cross-cultural skills.
	Culturally skilled counselors become actively involved with minority individuals outside the counseling setting (community events, social and political functions, celebrations, friendships, neighborhood groups, and so forth) so that their perspective of minorities is more than an academic or helping exercise.

Developing Appropriate Intervention strategies And Techniques	
Belief/Attitudes (Awareness)	Culturally skilled counselors respect clients' religious and/ or spiritual beliefs and values about physical and mental functioning.
	Culturally skilled counselors respect indigenous helping practices and respect minority community intrinsic help-giving networks.
	Culturally skilled counselors value bilingualism and do not view another language as an impediment to counseling (monolingualism may be the culprit).
Knowledge	Culturally skilled counselors have a clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of counseling and therapy (culture bound, class bound, and monolingual) and how they may clash with the cultural values of various minority groups.
	Culturally skilled counselors are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services.
	Culturally skilled counselors have knowledge of the potential bias in assessment instruments and use procedures and interpret findings keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the clients.
	Culturally skilled counselors have knowledge of minority family structures, hierarchies, values, and beliefs. They are knowledgeable about the community characteristics and the resources in the community as well as the family.
	Culturally skilled counselors should be aware of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the population being served.
	The culturally skilled psychologist or counselor has knowledge of models of minority and majority identity, and understands how these models relate to the counseling relationship and the counseling process.
Skills	Culturally skilled counselors are able to engage in a variety of verbal and nonverbal helping responses. They are able to *send* and *receive* both *verbal* and *nonverbal* messages *accurately* and *appropriately*. They are not tied down to only one method or approach to helping but recognize that helping styles and approaches may be culture bound. When they sense that their helping style is limited and potentially inappropriate, they can anticipate and ameliorate its negative impact.
	Culturally skilled counselors are able to exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of their clients. They can help clients determine whether a

	"problem" stems from racism or bias in others (the concept of healthy paranoia) so that clients do not inappropriately blame themselves.
	Culturally skilled counselors are not averse to seeking consultation with traditional healers or religious and spiritual leaders and practitioners in the treatment of culturally different clients when appropriate.
	Culturally skilled counselors take responsibility for interacting in the language requested by the client; this may mean appropriate referral to outside resources. A serious problem arises when the linguistic skills of the counselor do not match the language of the client. This being the case, counselors should (a) seek a translator with cultural knowledge and appropriate professional background or (b) refer to a knowledgeable and competent bilingual counselor
	Culturally skilled counselors have training and expertise in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments. They not only understand the technical aspects of the instruments but are also aware of the cultural limitations. This allows them to use test instruments for the welfare of the diverse clients.
	Culturally skilled counselors should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices, and discriminatory practices. They should be cognizant of sociopolitical contexts in conducting evaluations and providing interventions, and should develop sensitivity to issues of oppression, sexism, and racism.
	Culturally skilled counselors take responsibility in educating their clients to the processes of psychological intervention, such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and the counselor's orientation.
	The culturally skilled psychologist or counselor can tailor his or her relationship building strategies, intervention plans, and referral considerations to the particular stage of identity development of the client, while taking into account his or her own level of racial identity development.
	Culturally skilled counselors are able to engage in psychoeducational or systems intervention roles, in addition to their clinical ones. Although the conventional counseling and clinical roles are valuable, other roles such as the consultant, advocate, adviser, teacher, facilitator of indigenous healing, and so on may prove more culturally appropriate

(Sue et al., 1992, p. 482; Sue et al., 1998, pp. 41, 42)

APPENDIX C.

Study Questionnaire

Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised (MCCTS-R) (used with

permission of Drs. Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines)

<u>Directions</u>: Listed below are competency statements based on AMCD's Multicultural Counseling

Competencies and Explanatory Statements. Please read each competency statement and evaluate

your competence in your abilities using the following 4-point scale.

1 - Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)
2 - Somewhat competent (More training needed)
3 - Competent (Able to perform competently)
4 - Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)

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1. My ability to discuss my own ethnic/cultural heritage.   1   2   3   4

2. My ability to be aware of how my cultural background and   1   2   3   4
experiences have influenced my attitudes about
psychological processes.

3. My ability to discuss how my culture has influenced the way I think.   1   2   3   4

4. My ability to recognize when my attitudes, beliefs, and values are   1   2   3   4
interfering with providing the best services to my students.

5. My ability to verbally communicate my acceptance of students from   1   2   3   4
a culture different from mine.

6. My ability to communicate nonverbally my acceptance of culturally   1   2   3   4
different students.

7. My ability to discuss my family's perspective regarding   1   2   3   4
acceptable and non-acceptable codes-of-conduct.

8.   My ability to discuss models of White Racial Identity Development.   1   2   3   4

9.   My ability to define racism.   1   2   3   4

10.   My ability to define prejudice.   1   2   3   4

11.   My ability to define discrimination.   1   2   3   4

12.   My ability to define stereotype.   1   2   3   4

13.   My ability to identify the cultural bases of my communication style.   1   2   3   4

1   -   Not competent (Not able to perform at this time)
2   -   Somewhat competent (More training needed)
3   -   Competent (Able to perform competently)
4   -   Extremely competent (Able to perform at a high level)

14.   My ability to identify my negative and positive emotional reactions   1   2   3   4
toward persons of other racial and ethnic groups.

15.   My ability to identify my reactions that are based on stereotypical beliefs   1   2   3   4
about different ethnic groups.

16.   My ability to give examples of how stereotypical   1   2   3   4
beliefs about culturally different persons impact the
counseling relationship.

17.   My ability to articulate the possible differences between the   1   2   3   4
nonverbal behavior of the five major ethnic groups
(i.e., African/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native
American, European/White).

18.   My ability to articulate the possible differences between the   1   2   3   4
verbal behavior of the five major ethnic groups.

19.   My ability to discuss the counseling implications for at least   1   2   3   4

two models of racial/ethnic identity development.

20.   My ability to discuss within-group differences among ethnic   1   2   3   4
groups (e.g., low SES Puerto Rican student vs. high
SES Puerto Rican student).

21.   My ability to discuss how culture affects a student's vocational choices.   1   2   3   4

22.   My ability to discuss how culture affects the help-seeking behaviors   1   2   3   4
of students.

23.   My ability to discuss how culture affects the manifestations of   1   2   3   4
psychological disorders.

24.   My ability to describe the degree to which a counseling approach   1   2   3   4
is appropriate for a specific group of people.

25.   My ability to explain how factors such as poverty, and powerlessness   1   2   3   4
have influenced the current conditions of at least two ethnic
groups.

26.   My ability to discuss research regarding mental health issues among   1   2   3   4
culturally/ethnically different populations.

27.   My ability to discuss how the counseling process may conflict with   1   2   3   4
the cultural values of at least two ethnic groups.

28.   My ability to list at least three barriers that prevent ethnic minority   1   2   3   4
students from using counseling services.

29.   My ability to discuss the potential bias of two assessment instruments   1   2   3   4
frequently used in the schools.

30.   My ability to discuss family counseling from a cultural/ethnic   1   2   3   4

perspective.

31. My ability to anticipate when my helping style is inappropriate for a culturally different student.   1   2   3   4

32. My ability to help students determine whether a problem stems from racism or biases in others.   1   2   3   4

APPENDIX D:

Study Questionnaire. Short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS)

(used with permission of Drs. Strahan and Gerbasi)

Directions: Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits.

Read each item and decide whether the statement is *true* or *false* as it pertains to you personally.

1   -   True
2   -   False

_____

1.	I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	1	2
2.	I'm always trying to practice what I preach.	1	2
3.	I never resent being asked to return a favor.	1	2
4.	I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different. from my own.	1	2
5.	I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.	1	2
6.	I like to gossip at times.	1	2
7.	There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	1	2
8.	I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.	1	2
9.	At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.	1	2
10.	There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.	1	2

APPENDIX E:

Study Questionnaire. Demographic Questionnaire

<u>Directions</u>: Please answer the following questions by choosing the appropriate letter corresponding to your answer

1. Based on your awareness of the National Achievement Gap, select the statement that best depicts the achievement gap between K-12 Black and Latino students and their White counterparts.

    a. There is an Achievement Gap
    b. There is not an Achievement Gap
    c. I am unaware of data regarding the National Achievement Gap

2. Assuming an Achievement Gap exists, in your opinion, would it be important for school counselors to be aware of the National Achievement Gap. Select one.

    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Unsure

3. How often do you participate in activities in your school or community aimed at closing the achievement gap? Select one.

    a. Do not participate
    b. Participate seldom (less than once a month)
    c. Participate occasionally (once a month)
    d. Participate regularly (two or more times a month)

4. If you participate in activities in your school or community aimed at closing the achievement gap, please provide examples of activities you are involved in?

5. Do you believe that it is the duty of a school counselor to participate in activities aimed at closing the achievement? Select one.

a. Yes
b. No
c. Unsure

6. Have you taken a master's level or specialty course on multicultural counseling?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Demographic Information:

7. What was your level of school employment last year?

   a. Elementary
   b. Middle
   c. High
   d. Other (specify grades) _____

8. Which setting best describes your school?
   a. Primarily rural
   b. Primarily urban
   c. Primarily suburban

9. Please indicate your gender by circling the appropriate description:
   a. Female
   b. Male

10. Please indicate your ethnicity by circling the appropriate description:
    a. African American
    b. Asian American
    c. European American (white)
    d. Hispanic/Latino
    e. Native American
    f. Bi-Racial

APPENDIX F:

Initial Email

Dear School Counselor,

Greetings, I am a Doctoral candidate in Counselor Education at Virginia Tech who is working on my dissertation. In a few days, you will receive an email about a survey for an important research project that examines School Counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap. Your selection for this study was based upon a random sample of ASCA members working in K-12 schools. Your participation in the approximately 20 minute online questionnaire would be greatly appreciated.

I am writing to you in advance so that you may gain early awareness of the upcoming survey. Through the involvement of considerate school counselors such as yourself, this research project will be a success. Finally, I would like to verify the email address that I have used to contact you. Please let me know if you would prefer that I use a different email address.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, please contact me, Osaro E. Airen, by email at oairen@vt.edu.

Thank you very much for taking time out of you busy schedule to complete the survey as well as the time you spend assisting and supporting our students.

Sincerely,

Osaro Airen
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education
Virginia Tech

APPENDIX G:

Second Email

Dear School Counselor,

 I am writing to ask for your help in a study that examines School Counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap.

Results from the study will be used to determine the status of multicultural counseling competencies and understanding about an achievement gap among school counselors in 2008. These results will assist me in understanding the impact that school counselors have in our educational system, which will help me develop professional advocacy and development programs.

Your selection for this study was based upon a random sample of ASCA members working in K-12 schools. All data will be kept confidential and will not be reported in a manner that allows you to be identified. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Passwords are used so that I can keep track of who has responded, which allows me to monitor follow-up contacts. Participating in this study is voluntary, and this survey is expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may choose not to answer any question or stop at any time.

Below are the directions for completing the online survey on school counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap:

You can access the survey by copying and pasting the following internet address in your web browser:

(Internet address)

Next, you will need the following ID and PASSWORD to access the survey:
ID NUMBER: (ID NUMBER)
PASSWORD: (Password)

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. I can be reached at 951-315-2375.

Thank you very much for taking time out of you busy schedule to complete the survey as well as the time you spend assisting and supporting our students.

Sincerely,

Osaro Airen
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education
Virginia Tech

APPENDIX H:

Third Email

Dear School Counselor,

Last week a questionnaire seeking your participation in a study that examines School Counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap was e-mailed to you. Your selection for this study was based upon a random sample of ASCA members working in K-12 schools. If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to me, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please find the time to do so today. I am especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking school counselors such as yourself to share your experiences that we can begin the process of better understanding the effect that school counseling programs are having on our educational system.

In case the previous e-mail has been deleted, the original e-mail regarding access to the survey has been attached.

Please feel free to contact me at (951) 315-2375 or oairen@vt.edu if you have any further questions. Thank you once again for your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Osaro Airen

Doctoral Candidate

Counselor Education

Virginia Tech

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ORIGINAL E-MAIL

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Dear School Counselor,

 I am writing to ask for your help in a study that examines School Counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap.

Results from the study will be used to determine the status of multicultural counseling competencies and understanding about an achievement gap among school counselors in 2008. These results will help me understand the impact that school counselors have in our educational system, which will help me develop professional advocacy and development programs.

Your selection for this study was based upon a random sample of ASCA members working in K-12 schools. All data will be kept confidential and will not be reported in a manner that allows you to be identified. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Passwords are used so that I can keep track of who has responded, which allows me to monitor follow-up contacts. Participating in this study is voluntary, and this survey is expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may choose not to answer any question or stop at any time.

Below are the directions for completing the online survey on school counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap:

You can access the survey by copying and pasting the following internet address in your web browser:

(Internet address)

Next, you will need the following ID and PASSWORD to access the survey:
ID NUMBER: (ID NUMBER)
PASSWORD: (Password)

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. I can be reached at 951-315-2375.

Thank you very much for taking time out of you busy schedule to complete the survey as well as the time you spend assisting and supporting our students.

Sincerely,

Osaro Airen
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education
Virginia Tech

APPENDIX I:

Fourth Email

Dear School Counselor,

About three weeks ago I e-mailed a questionnaire to you that asked for you participation in a study that examines School Counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap. I know that as a school counselor, you are very busy but if you would set aside 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire, it would be greatly appreciated.

I am also writing again because of the importance that your questionnaire has for helping to get accurate results. Although I sent questionnaires to school counselors living throughout the United States, it is only by hearing from nearly everyone that I can be sure that the results are truly representative.

In case the previous e-mail containing instructions for accessing the survey has been deleted, the original e-mail has been attached.

Please feel free to contact me at (951) 315-2375 or oairen@vt.edu if you have any further questions. Thank you once again for your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Osaro Airen

Doctoral Candidate

Counselor Education

Virginia Tech

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ORIGINAL E-MAIL

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Dear School Counselor,

I am writing to ask for your help in a study that examines School Counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap.

Results from the study will be used to determine the status of multicultural counseling competencies and understanding about an achievement gap among school counselors in 2008. These results will help me understand the impact that school counselors have in our educational system, which will help me develop professional advocacy and development programs.

Your selection for this study was based upon a random sample of ASCA members working in K-12 schools. All data will be kept confidential and will not be reported in a manner that allows you to be identified. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Passwords are used so that I can keep track of who has responded, which allows me to monitor follow-up contacts. Participating in this study is voluntary, and this survey is expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may choose not to answer any question or stop at any time.

Below are the directions for completing the online survey on school counselors' Multicultural Counseling Competence and their understanding about an achievement gap:

You can access the survey by copying and pasting the following internet address in your web browser:

(Internet address)

Next, you will need the following ID and PASSWORD to access the survey:
ID NUMBER: (ID NUMBER)
PASSWORD: (Password)

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. I can be reached at 951-315-2375.

Thank you very much for taking time out of you busy schedule to complete the survey as well as the time you spend assisting and supporting our students.

Sincerely,

Osaro Airen
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education
Virginia Tech