

# The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

---

Volume 3 | Number 1

Article 5

---


2011

## The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Volume 3, Number 1

Edina Renfro-Michel  
*Montclair State University*

Larry Burlew  
*Montclair State University*

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

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

---

### Recommended Citation

Renfro-Michel, E., & Burlew, L. (2011). The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Volume 3, Number 1. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 3(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/31.2011>

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by WestCollections: digitalcommons@wcsu. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision by an authorized editor of WestCollections: digitalcommons@wcsu. For more information, please contact [ir@wcsu.edu](mailto:ir@wcsu.edu).

---

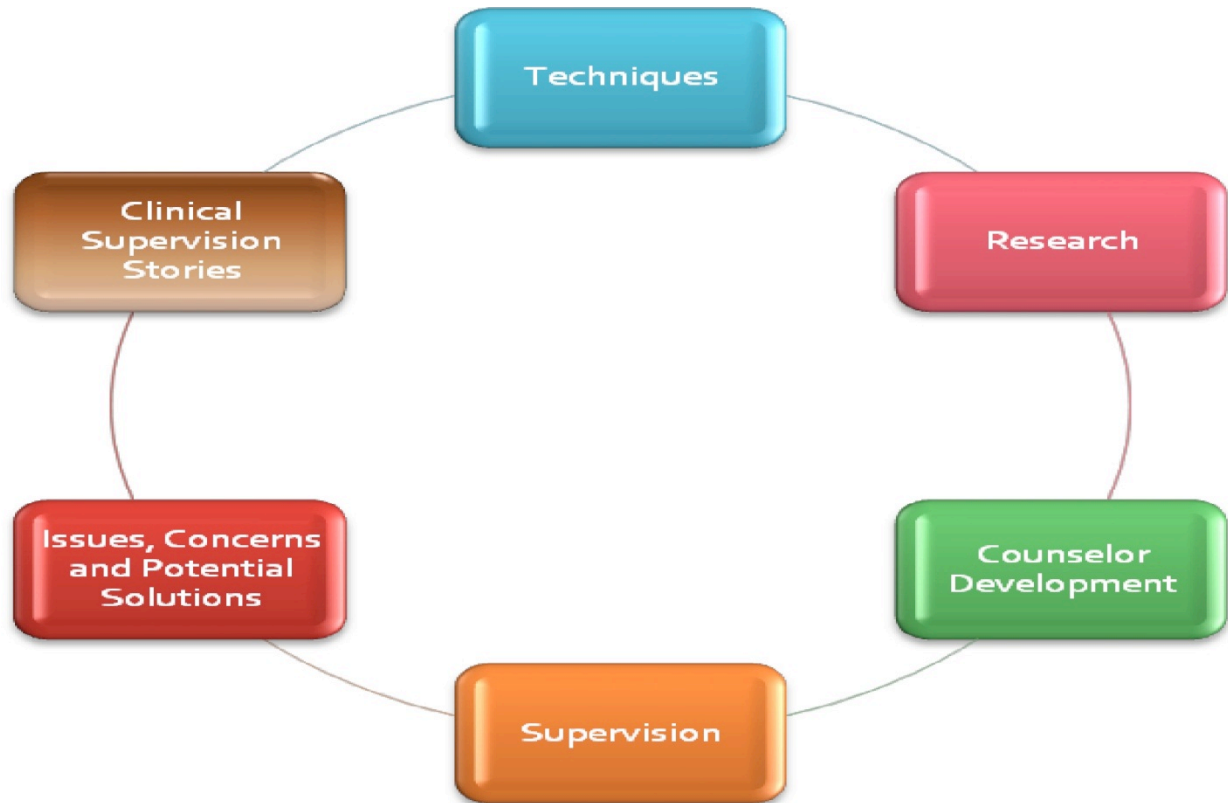
The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Volume 3, Number  
1

# The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

Volume 3, Number 1

Editors: Edina Renfro-Michel, Larry Burlew

April, 2011



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

**Editors**

Edina Renfro-Michel  
Larry D. Burlew  
Montclair State University

**Assistant Editors**

Ken Ryerson  
John Marshall  
Montclair State University

**Editorial Board**

Ford Brooks (2011)  
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania  
Bev Burnell (2011)  
Plattsburg State University  
Bill Casile (2011)  
Duquesne University  
Kim Desmond (2011)  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Kathryn Douthit (2011)  
Rochester University  
Diana Hulse (2011)  
Fairfield University  
Jelane Kennedy (2011)  
The College of Saint Rose  
Leslie Kooyman (2012)  
Montclair State University

K. Elizabeth McDonald (2011)  
Penn State University  
Jim McHenry (2011)  
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania  
(Professor Emeritus)  
John Patrick (2011)  
California University of Pennsylvania  
Catherine Roland (2011)  
Montclair State University  
Susan Seem (2011)  
SUNY Brockport  
Matt Shurts (2011)  
Montclair State University  
Jane Webber (2011)  
New Jersey City University  
Doug Weirich (2011)  
Adams Hanover Counseling Services

---

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision is an EBSCOHost affiliated journal.

**Submission Guidelines:**

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

Dr. Edina Renfro- Michel  
[renfromichee@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:renfromichee@mail.montclair.edu)

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

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

**Permissions:**

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

**Publication:**

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

**NARACES Membership:**

Benefits include:

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

Dues (paid bi-annually):

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

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

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

*Retired Professional FREE!*

Dues are collected for 2 years of membership. During even numbered years (i.e. 2008, 2010) NARACES holds its bi-annual conference. Your membership will expire the month of the conference. For your convenience, membership dues can be renewed as part of our regional conference registration fee. For more information or to join NARACES, visit us on the web at:

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

# The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

---

April 2011    Volume 3    Number 1

---

## Editorial

Edina Renfro-Michel and Larry D. Burlew

## Featured Articles

### *Conceptual and Curricular Frameworks for Infusing Social Justice in Urban School Counselor Education*

Felicia L. Wilczenski, Amy L. Cook, & Laura A. Hayden

### *Addressing the Technology Gap in Counselor Education: Identification of Characteristics in Students that Affect Learning in College Classrooms*

Issac Burt, Tiphonie Gonzalez, Jacqueline Swank, David L. Ascher  
& Laura Cunningham

### *Counselors' Job Satisfaction across Education Levels and Specialties*

Crista E. Gambrell, Mark C. Rehfuss, Elisabeth C. Suarez, & Dixie Meyer

### *The Link Between Gender and Depression in Young Adults Providing Care for Older Family Members*

Mark C. Gillen & Catherine Roland

© 2011 by the North Atlantic Regional Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.  
All rights reserved.

# Editorial

---

In our first edition as co-editors, we tried to stay true to the mission of the journal. We did this by examining the types of articles that can be submitted to include: research, techniques, counselor development, supervision, issues, and clinical supervisors' stories. The articles featured in this edition represent two of the above themes. The articles by Wilczenski et al. and Burt et al. focus on specific issues related to counselor development. The Wilczenski et al. article highlights a school counselor education program infusing social justice and advocacy throughout the program. The Burt et al. article examines the use of technology as a teaching strategy in counselor education and preparing students to use such technology. The articles by Gambrell et al. and Gillen and Roland fall under the category of research. The Gambrell et al. article is a research article focusing on professional development; the authors examine job satisfaction in different counseling specialties. The Gillen and Roland article is a research article focusing on practice implications related to gender and young adult care giving.

We thank all of our dedicated reviewers who responded quickly to everything asked of them. We also thank our wonderful Assistant Editors, Ken Ryerson and John Marshall, who spent countless hours organizing the process, helping to edit articles, and putting it all together. We also thank the NARACES Board for giving us the opportunity to share practical and research knowledge with our members by appointing us as co-editors of the *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*.

Edina Renfro-Michel, Co-editor  
Larry D. Burlew, Co-editor

# Conceptual and Curricular Frameworks for Infusing Social Justice in Urban School Counselor Education

---

Felicia L. Wilczenski, Amy L. Cook, & Laura A. Hayden

---

Conceptual and curricular frameworks are needed for school counseling education programs seeking to promote social justice in urban settings by eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps that exist for some student groups. Key areas for the application of social justice in school counseling education include: program goals, admission criteria, coursework, cultural diversity, urban experience, community engagement, and service learning. These conceptual and curricular frameworks will assist school counselor educators to infuse social justice in their program's philosophy and practices. A sample school counselor education program is presented that focuses on developing future counselors' competencies in urban settings that incorporates social justice throughout integral facets of the curriculum.

*Keywords:* School counselor education, social justice, conceptual frameworks, curricular frameworks, achievement/opportunity gaps

---

The professionals who developed the transforming school counseling initiatives (Education Trust, 2010) envisioned school counselors as agents of social justice working to eliminate the achievement and opportunity gaps that exist for low-income and minority students. A conceptual framework of socially-just education rests on fairness (in the sense of equity rather than equality) and the belief that *all* children can learn. These beliefs impel school counselors to advocate for policies and practices that will lead to equitable learning experiences for all students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). As schools and communities become more demographically diverse (Roberts, 2004), recognizing and confronting systemic inequities become key dispositions and

skills for school counselors to remove barriers that contribute to achievement discrepancies between student groups.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2002), "urban" refers to a densely populated area or cluster with a core block of at least 1000 people per square mile and surrounding blocks with at least 500 people per square mile. An urban area may encompass a city and its surrounding municipalities. In addition, the Census Bureau provides a concept of an urban area as one that involves a high degree of economic and social interaction. Therefore, urban not only refers to a city location but also to a cultural context. City life is diverse, incorporating people of different races, languages, beliefs, values, customs,



and economic strata, all living together in close proximity.

It is the diversity and complexity of urban culture that both enriches and complicates education in urban schools. In a report issued in 2000, the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that the predominant issue confronting urban school counselors is chronic academic failure. Urban schools face qualitatively different issues than schools in suburban or rural areas, and school counselor education programs need to provide learning experiences that address those differences (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Lee, 2005; Wilczenski, 2009). To be effective in urban settings, school counselors need to know the meaning of urban culture, the impact of culture on learning and schools, the nature of ethnic, racial, and inner city cultures different from their own, as well as the role of culture in socialization, interaction, and communication. They need to understand the sociopolitical context that may limit low-income students and their parents' participation in school life. They need to understand the life experiences of urban students. In order to gain a broad and deep understanding of urban communities, graduate students need to engage with those communities by being given several opportunities to work and socialize with urban youth during their school counselor training.

Through experiences in designing and implementing a school counseling program to promote social justice, it is clear that urban school counselors need something more than generic school counseling competencies. In urban settings, an effective school counselor cannot simply hold technical competencies and lack an understanding of urban culture and urban schools' bureaucratic structures and/or lack a commitment to preventing and eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps.

Competent urban school counselors must not only be skilled practitioners but also strong advocates for educational access and equity.

In order to develop competent school counselors in urban settings, it is important to understand what it means to work in an urban setting and the necessary competencies counselors must have to effect change in this setting. In preparing future professionals for the role of change agent, the conceptual and curricular frameworks of urban school counselor education need to explicitly address developing a social justice mindset and skill set. In this article, we present an example of a school counseling education program focused on developing future counselors' competencies in urban settings that incorporates social justice throughout integral facets of the curriculum. We hope to initiate a dialogue among urban counselor educators and supervisors about the specific components of a school counseling program to effectively promote social justice.

### **School Counseling Program**

A commitment to social justice is clearly stated in the University of Massachusetts Boston School Counseling Program mission statement and program goals as a guide to the conceptual and curricular frameworks. This commitment, in itself, is a challenge because there is not an agreed upon definition of social justice in the field of education (Chubbuck, 2010). Chubbuck's conceptualization of social justice, as it pertains to school counseling, would emphasize that all students, regardless of background, have the same rights, opportunities, and services and that all students can learn.

A social justice agenda to promote educational equity is embraced by the American School Counseling Association

(ASCA, 2007). School counselor education at the University of Massachusetts Boston adheres to those ASCA standards. A philosophy of social justice is infused throughout the school counseling program coursework and implemented through field experiences in urban areas.

### **Mission and Goals**

The University of Massachusetts Boston school counseling mission statement and program goals incorporate social justice as an integral component in meeting its urban mission. Excerpts from its mission statement are as follows:

The fundamental principle of the School Counseling program emphasizes social justice by cultivating a respect for the dignity and worth of all people and an appreciation of human diversity. The School Counseling Program is fully committed to train school counselors who are sensitive to multicultural differences, individual diversity, and the demands of living within an urban environment... The program views the role of a school counselor as a social change agent and the tasks of school counselor as educational, developmental, and preventive. The emphasis of the curriculum is to ensure that all our graduate students are able to maximize their unique qualities in working to help *all* students succeed in school to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps.

The school counseling program goals at the University of Massachusetts Boston, developed by program faculty, also incorporate the importance of social justice. The goals relevant to social justice in urban settings are as follows:

- Create K-20 programs that work to remove barriers to student success, thus closing the achievement and opportunity gaps;
- Increase equity in access to school counseling services and interventions leading to increased enrollment and completion of rigorous coursework;
- Organize program coordination with staff, parents/caregivers and community resources; and
- Engage in data analysis of school counseling outcomes and variables for school improvement planning;

The urban focus, mission statement, and program goals guide the conceptual and curricular frameworks of the program and set the stage for fostering a professional identity as a change agent for social justice. Skills for becoming effective social justice change agents are acquired by incorporating social justice issues into course content and class activities and then are enhanced through practice during field experiences and community-based service learning.

### **Recruitment and Admission**

The University of Massachusetts Boston school counseling program's dedication to social justice starts with recruitment and admission. Consistent with the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (2003) affirmation of higher education's commitment to diversity, we seek a diverse student cohort so that diversity is a lived experience. Applications are not only reviewed for academic aptitude and performance (GRE/MAT, GPA, recommendations), but for evidence of compatibility with the program goals and social justice mission. Applicants write a personal statement about their interest in pursuing a career in school counseling at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The interest is not to identify applicants who

have experience in urban environments with diverse populations; very few have this experience. Rather, the intent is to identify applicants who are committed to the program's mission and have a strong commitment to diversity and urban education.

Interview day consists of an individual and group interview as well as time for a writing sample. Students invited for an interview are asked to access and review the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs (2006). (Note: The Massachusetts Model is similar to the American School Counseling Association National Model [ASCA, 2003]). As the applicants wait their turn for an individual interview, they are asked to write a brief reflection on the Massachusetts Model. The purpose of the Massachusetts Model review is two-fold: (a) to give applicants a sense of the orientation of the program, and (b) to obtain a spontaneous writing sample. This activity provides an opportunity to screen applicants' interest in the model of school counseling practice promoted at the University of Massachusetts Boston and gives the admissions committee evidence of written communication skills.

During a 15-minute individual interview session, applicants are asked a series of questions and directives to judge their commitment to practicing school counseling from a social justice perspective as well as to assess their poise, professionalism, and emotional maturity.

The following questions and directives are a sample of items with an urban focus presented to applicants during the individual interview.

1. Currently, we know that a number of educational barriers prevent academic achievement for all students. Please select one barrier

about which you are most passionate. Describe the barrier and how, in your view, the barrier impacts achievement for all students.

2. Describe what social justice means to you?

Group interviews provide an opportunity to assess interpersonal skills and group dynamics as well as further affirm a commitment to the social justice mission of the program. The group interview includes two tasks. First, applicants are asked to respond to a case study that depicts a scenario of potential inequity and development of opportunity gaps among minority and low-income students. The following is an excerpt of the case study:

You are a new high school counselor of three months. You have just received a memorandum from the Department of Education with a cover memo from the District Supervisor of Guidance about the requirements for a scholarship (\$2500 per year for four years of college) for minority and low-income students. Scholarship requirements are: four years of mathematics to include trigonometry; 4 years of science to include physics; a full year of a performing art; a 3.0 GPA; and a 1000 SAT. The GPA and SAT requirements are attainable for large numbers of students but many students will miss the requirements because they may not have a full year of a performing art or will opt not to take physics.

The guidance department at your school has weekly staff meetings and the chairperson states "This scholarship is for those motivated students who are in band or chorus and strive toward high

academic courses such as physics. The students who should get this scholarship are going to take the right courses and will not need prodding from us.” In reviewing this case study, applicants are prompted to discuss their reactions and how they might proceed if presented with this situation.

Following discussion of the case study, applicants are directed to discuss their reactions to a data set culled from several sources including the College Board, Sallie Mae, and Education Trust. For example, the following data set that the Alliance for Excellent Education presents to demonstrate national graduation rates for the 2005-06 school year could be used as a discussion prompt to assess applicants’ awareness of achievement and opportunity gaps (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

*National High School Graduation Gap:*

- 79% of Asian students graduate high school
- 76% of White students graduate high school
- 55% of Hispanic students graduate high school
- 51% of African American students graduate high school
- 50% of Native American students graduate high school

\*Note that the data presented above represents an “estimated 4-year graduation rate” (p. 1).

Applicants are rated on a 3-point scale (Below Average, Average, Above Average) along the following dimensions:

- Academic background (Prerequisite coursework, Undergraduate GPA, GRE or MAT scores)
- Purpose and support for entering the field (Letters of reference, Personal statement, Previous experience, Knowledge of the field)

- Interview (Ability to communicate clearly, ability to handle stress, understanding of UMB social justice mission, maturity and professional demeanor, overall quality of responses)
- Response to case study (Awareness/sensitivity to equity issues, strength of argument)
- Reaction to data set (Quality of content, overall impression)
- Writing sample (Content, mechanics)

### **Curriculum**

Some school counseling education programs may still be using more traditional methods of school counseling education. These methods may not be broad enough for programs preparing urban school counselors. Urban school counselors must be able to address the needs of children and adolescents in urban settings to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps. Holcomb-McCoy (2007) provided a succinct summary of the differences between a traditional versus social justice approach to school counseling. A traditional orientation includes minimal attention to mechanisms of oppression and focuses on reinforcing the status quo, whereas a social justice approach emphasizes the importance of challenging oppressive acts and changing existing practices that preclude academic achievement. At the University of Massachusetts Boston, students are required to complete assignments and readings across courses that focus on social justice issues.

The following are some examples of how the topic of social justice is integrated throughout the curriculum. In an introductory course requirement, students interview an urban school counselor to share opinions on how the field is addressing social justice issues and how the field could do more. Sample course readings include

Kozol's *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (2005) and Suskind's *A Hope in the Unseen* (rev. 2005). In a group counseling course, students observe two skilled group counselors lead a group of elementary school students in a group exercise that explores their attitudes toward racial prejudice and its effects on students' participation in school. The counselors are seen debriefing the exercise and considering alternative strategies. The students then discuss how they might approach this topic in their own practices. Social justice is also integrated through a multicultural counseling course providing an opportunity for self-appraisal, exploration, and reflection. In a counseling theory course, students are required to present and facilitate a class discussion on the topic of social justice in practice. Sample course readings to accompany this assignment include Aldarondo's *Advancing Social Justice through Clinical Practice* (2006). Additionally, in an internship course, second year students explore the role urban schools play in the cycle of poverty, crime, and substandard education that underlay social injustices through discussions, readings, and popular media.

### **Community Engagement**

Enhancing the competence and commitment of urban school counselors requires that school counselor education be structured differently from conventional coursework and field experiences. School counseling internships in urban areas need to extend beyond the school walls to include time working in human service and recreational community agencies which support families and youth. Service learning is a powerful pedagogy for social justice in school counselor education (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007; Wilczenski & Schumacher,

2008). Through a curriculum-based service learning pre-practicum, graduate students, assigned to community settings outside the school, can learn first-hand about urban contexts, provide personnel resources to human service organizations, and grapple with social justice issues they experience. The pre-practicum consists of a minimum of fifteen hours of service learning, which is completed during an introductory course in the school counseling program.

Urban community experiences can transform thinking and give school counselors-in-training the mindset they need to be agents of social change (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Lee, 2005). Transformation depends upon systematic and critical reflection with the hope that students' values and beliefs will be changed by their experiences. For example, transformation occurs by asking students to consider the following questions: How did you feel about helping in the homeless shelter? Why are so many families in this community homeless? The second question orients the student to change and is likely to raise issues of poverty and social inequities. Opportunities for this type of deep reflection are imperative so that students working in urban environments do not blame the victim or engage in deficit thinking about children and families who are economically disadvantaged (Bomer, Dworin, May, & Semingson, 2008).

Following the pre-practicum, the school counseling students move to a 100-hour practicum in a high-need urban high school in Boston. Their service and learning in this setting involves mentoring and preparing students in grades 9 through 12 for post-secondary education. The school counseling students complete a legacy project during the practicum. Working with the school counseling department, the graduate students identify a need and then work together to find a solution. For

example, in 2009, the school counseling students initiated and resourced a college information center in the high school library. This center provided much needed materials for post-secondary education planning for the high school students. As the legacy project intended, the school counseling students planned for sustainability by ensuring that the high school was on a national mailing list to receive annually updated materials.

During practicum, the school counseling students are closely supervised by University faculty who remain at the high school throughout the day while the graduate students are in attendance at the site. This unique supervisory model allows graduate students frequent access to University faculty for guidance in their work. University faculty are also able to model professional conduct and implement best practices in school counseling at the practicum site. School counseling students' attempts to solve problems encountered during the urban practicum can foster new ways of thinking and acting, framing problems systemically rather than in terms of individual deficits.

This urban practicum is a mutually advantageous partnership between the University of Massachusetts and the Boston Public Schools. Three school counselors from the Boston Public Schools shared their experiences in supervising graduate students.

School Counselor, Jill Luisi, offered her assessment of the value of the collaboration:

The partnership is the ideal way for the University of Massachusetts Boston graduate students to learn from our high school students. The relationship that forms is one of learning on both ends, for our students and for your graduate students. More specifically for our students, having that once a week

check in can prove to be invaluable. We sometimes forget that many of our students have little to no consistency in their lives, so being able to have a weekly check in is invaluable to them (personal communication, May 14, 2010).

Dan McCaul, School Counselor, shared his thoughts about the partnership:

The UMass Boston graduate students are extremely valuable to our school because they are another person for our students to connect with. The students have another adult checking in with them and monitoring their academics and social/emotional development (personal communication, May 14, 2010).

Lastly, Olie Osinubi, School Counselor, also shared her experience in collaborating with the school counseling program at the University of Massachusetts Boston:

I cannot think of any other means by which students can prepare for work in an urban school without participating in an urban practicum. In today's world many concerns and issues are universal for young people. However, some are particular to urban school children and dominate much of our time as urban educators. These issues impact students' achievement and their ability to connect with school: street violence; parentified students; students as wage earners; poverty. (personal communication, May 17, 2010).

As the culminating experience of the program, a 600-hour internship consolidates prior coursework and field experiences. Part of the capstone completed during internship requires a data-based intervention to help solve a systemic problem that may be contributing to achievement and/or opportunity gaps (e.g., a dropout prevention

program). More specifically, students conduct an intervention and measure its outcome with pre- and post-tests by comparing achievement and other relevant behavioral data (e.g., attendance). In doing so, they can measure the result of the intervention in furthering student success. Another capstone component is a presentation to school faculty on a social justice issue to support the mission of the school.

### **Student Reflection and Feedback**

In order to gain information about the school counseling students' personal views of social justice and how the program impacted those views, stimulus questions and class discussion are components of the supervisory seminars held in conjunction with field experiences. The following are sample questions for reflection and feedback.

What are optimal acts?

1. Which everyday acts by educators counteract an inequitable world and inequitable ideas about "types of people?" Which acts help kids and which acts hurt kids?
2. Which everyday acts by educators counteract opportunity/achievement gaps and which acts maintain opportunity/achievement inequities?

What are optimal beliefs?

3. Which everyday statements by educators counteract an inequitable world and inequitable ideas about "types of people?" Which statements help kids and which statements hurt kids?
4. Which everyday statements by educators counteract opportunity/achievement gaps and which statements maintain opportunity/achievement inequities?

What are optimal policies?

5. Which policies by educators counteract an inequitable world and inequitable ideas about "types of people?" Which policies help kids and which policies hurt kids?
6. Which policies by educators counteract opportunity/achievement gaps and which policies maintain opportunity/achievement inequities?

### **Program Evaluation**

Learning and program outcome data are collected regularly to ensure that students are acquiring professional knowledge and dispositions. Those data inform decisions about curricular improvements. Holcomb-McCoy's (2007) multicultural competence and social justice surveys were adapted to address the University of Massachusetts Boston's program goals and expected learning outcomes. School counseling students completed self-assessments when they entered the master's program, prior to internship, and at the conclusion of the program. This Social Justice Survey was administered in order to assess students' sense of competence in applying a social justice framework to their work in school counseling. Students rated themselves on each item for identification mastery (ability to recognize cultural or social justice issues), basic mastery (ability to engage with students around cultural or social justice issues), or teaching mastery (ability to teach others about cultural or social justice issues), and also wrote personal goals to further their knowledge and skills. Thirty-seven students completed the survey at the end of the last academic year. The school counseling goal of students' achieving at least a basic mastery across all multicultural and social justice competencies was realized for the vast majority (>80%) of those who completed the program. The following is a

sample of statements adapted from Holcomb-McCoy's (2007) Social Justice Survey and the percentage of second year school counseling students who rated themselves as achieving at least a basic mastery of the particular skill or strategy.

1. Ability to identify cultural differences (92%).
2. Ability to build trusting relationships with culturally diverse students (85%).
3. Ability to appropriately advocate for students during consultation (81%).
4. Ability to recognize when others' communication style is negatively impacting relationships with parents of culturally diverse backgrounds (86%).

During focus groups, students reflected on the importance of field work to enhance their learning and suggested expanding the service learning pre-practicum hours to allow for greater depth or breadth of experiences in community agencies that intersect with the schools. The recommendations from the students are being implemented by increasing the pre-practicum field experience requirement from 15 to 30 hours.

## **Conclusion**

This article presented conceptual and curricular frameworks for infusing a social justice philosophy throughout a school counselor education program. An essential factor for success is that the school counselor education program infuses a commitment to social justice at all levels of the curriculum: program description, mission, goals, course content, assignments, and field experiences.

Although the current school counseling program at the University of Massachusetts Boston reflects a social justice agenda, it is a fluid process continually changing to advance our ideals. The mission, goals, and courses are the foundation for encouraging students to become social change agents. The student body, community partners, and field-based projects are more variable and inevitably shift as new students, new partners, and new community needs require programmatic adjustments to maintain the commitment to social justice.

As school counselor education aims to promote social justice, the program's conceptual and curricular framework needs to encourage students to embrace a social justice perspective by developing both a mindset and skill set that will enable them to be effective change agents. We hope this discussion about the University of Massachusetts Boston's school counseling program can be of help to enhance students' knowledge and work around issues of social justice among all school counselor education programs. Given that our nation's schools are becoming increasingly diverse, the suggestions presented on how to infuse a social justice framework within school counselor education programs will be essential across all communities and not exclusively urban settings. Moreover, it is imperative that school counselors who work with students and their families are committed to social justice, including fairness of access and opportunity as well as a belief that all children can learn.



## References

- Aldarondo, E. (2006). *Advancing social justice through clinical practice*. NY: Routledge.
- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2009). *Understanding high school graduation rates in the United States*. Retrieved from [http://www.all4ed.org/files/National\\_wc.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/National_wc.pdf)
- American School Counselor Association. (2007). *School counseling standards: School counselor competencies*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counselor Association. (2003). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2003). *Diversity and democracy: The unfinished work*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Bemak, F., & Chung, R. (2005). Advocacy as a critical role for urban school counselors: Working toward equity and social justice. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 196-202.
- Bomer, R., Dworin, J.E., May, L., & Semingson, P. (2008). Miseducating teachers about the poor: A critical analysis of Ruby Payne's claims about poverty. *Teachers College Record*, Volume 110, Number 12, 2008, p. 2497-2531, ID Number: 14591. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org>
- Chubbuck, S.M. (2010). Individual and structural orientations in socially just teaching: Conceptualization, implementation, and collaborative effort. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61, 197-210. doi:10.1177/0022487109359777
- Education Trust. (2010). The new vision for school counseling: Working for social justice. Retrieved from <http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Social%20Justice.pdf>
- Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2007). *School counseling to close the achievement gap: A social justice framework for success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Lee, C.C. (2005). Urban school counseling: Context, characteristics, and competencies. *Professional School Counseling*, 8, 184-188.
- Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*. (2006). Retrieved from [http://www.masca.org/images/mamodel/final\\_ma\\_model.9.21.06.tbl-intro.pdf](http://www.masca.org/images/mamodel/final_ma_model.9.21.06.tbl-intro.pdf)
- National Center for Education Statistics (2000). *The condition of education 2000* (NCES 2000 - 062). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>
- Roberts, S. (2004). *Who we are now: The Changing Face of America in the 21st Century*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Suskind, R. (1998, updated 2005). *A hope in the unseen*. NY: Broadway Books.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2002). *Census 2000 urban and rural classification*. Retrieved from [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua\\_2k.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html)
- Wilczenski, F.L. (2009). Developing competencies for high-quality urban school counselors. *Massachusetts Counselor's Notebook*, 45(5), pp. 12-13.
- Wilczenski, F.L., & Coomey, S.M. (2007). *A practical guide to service learning: Strategies for positive development in schools*. New York: Springer Publishers.
- Wilczenski, F.L., & Schumacher, R.A., (2008). Service learning integrated into

urban school counselor preparation. *Journal of School Counseling*, 6(12). Retrieved from <http://www.jsc.montana.edu/articles/v6n12.pdf>

### Author Note

Felicia L. Wilczenski, Ed.D. is Professor of School Counseling and Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is interested in applications of service learning in K-12 schools and in graduate education.

Amy L. Cook, Ph.D. is a School Counseling faculty member in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research interests include multicultural counseling and English Language Learners.

Laura A. Hayden, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor of School Counseling in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her work focuses on student empowerment programs, school climate, and lifeskill development through physical activity among underserved youth and with international populations.

---

Please address correspondence to: Felicia L. Wilczenski, Ed.D., College of Education and Human Development, Department of Counseling and School Psychology, University of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125. Email: [Felicia.Wilczenski@umb.edu](mailto:Felicia.Wilczenski@umb.edu).

---

# Addressing the Technology Gap in Counselor Education: Identification of Characteristics in Students that Affect Learning in College Classrooms

---

Isaac Burt, Tiphonie Gonzalez, Jacqueline Swank, David L. Ascher, & Laura Cunningham

---

As advancements in technology continue to revolutionize the field of counseling, certain populations of students still encounter difficulties incorporating technology in the classroom. Non-traditional students, many who possess years of professional experience, struggle academically due to a lack of technological expertise and knowledge. Low technological expertise potentially decreases students' self-efficacy, enjoyment, and performance (Baturay & Bay, 2010). Consequently, it is imperative that counselor educators use a variety of strategies with non-traditional students struggling with technology. Thus, the purpose of this article is to propose guidelines encompassing self-efficacy, the evolution of technology and competencies required for assisting students in the classroom.

*Keywords:* Technology, counselor education, self-efficacy, technology gap, non-traditional students

---

The integration of technology within traditional college classrooms has increased substantially over the last century (Baggerly, 2002). Despite this increased integration, limited research exists that explores the effect of technology on counselor education students. This lack of research leaves unanswered questions regarding the effectiveness of technology to enhance training in counselor preparation programs (Granello & Wheaton, 2003). According to Wantz et al. (2003) an achievement gap exists among counselors-in-training. Specifically, gaps between technologically advanced students and ones who lack procedural skills with computers, software, and other contemporary tools are more commonplace in today's classrooms. Web-based education, once thought of as science

fiction, is rapidly becoming the norm in graduate programs (Baturay & Bay, 2010). Commensurate with the rapidly changing technology, students have evolved dramatically as well (Ketelhut & Nelson, 2010). Terms such as multimedia technology, virtual environments and computer supported learning resonate with the modern student (Gomez, Wu, & Passerini, 2010).

However, not all students are familiar and respond to contemporary mediums of education. Bridging this technology gap is especially difficult in counseling courses, as many students are resistant to change (Kenny, 2008). Resistance to change may stem from the traditional/face-to-face methods used in counseling courses. For instance, many

students are accustomed to taking their time and writing information on topics as a lecture unravels (Greenidge & Daire, 2007). In contemporary classrooms, this physical writing component is sometimes missing. The following example illustrates the absence of physical writing and a traditional method in a classroom setting. Take the professor who completes presentations beforehand and e-mails it out before class or prints it off and gives to students during the lecture. In either scenario, a student accustomed to having hands on, personal involvement with note taking no longer has that option (Greenidge & Daire, 2007). Thus, some students feel removed physically from contemporary classroom methods and prefer traditional procedures.

Historically, differences between students existed naturally and instructors adjusted class instruction to accommodate for disparities (Stinson, 2006). However, large technological discrepancies between students adversely affect instructors, curricula and programs (Blackmore, Tantum, & Van Deurzen, 2008). For instance, instructors experience pressure from some students to incorporate technology in the classroom. Nevertheless, instructors sometimes feel uneasy gearing classes towards advanced students and potentially neglecting ones who struggle with technology (Baranchik & Cherkas, 2002).

There are a number of problematic characteristics germane to students who are resistant to technological advancements. If students begin to struggle, instructors must be able to identify problem behaviors immediately (Berger, 2004). Lewis and Coursol (2003) found five fundamental characteristics of students who struggle with technology. These types of students, operationally defined as nontraditional, have a number of identifying characteristics. Lewis and Coursol asserted that these

students come from older generations, have a rudimentary understanding of contemporary tools, refuse to use technology, are easily frustrated with technology, and possess low to moderate technical skills. Nontraditional students, for the purposes of this article, refer to individuals possessing all of the qualities stated by Lewis and Coursol.

As nontraditional students increasingly enter or reenter colleges and universities, professors must be aware of the intra-generational differences in technological abilities. Lewis and Coursol (2003) suggested instructors are overlooking struggling students in the classroom. Continuously neglecting the technology gap can potentially lead to adversely affecting the integrity of counselor education programs. In our article, we acknowledge the problem of the technology gap and discuss strategies addressing this concern within counselor education programs. Thus, the main topics of this article include the following topics: (a) the evolution of technology in the classroom, (b) self-efficacy, stress and anxiety's effects on struggling students' abilities, and (c) strategies for addressing the technology gap.

### **Evolution of Technology in the Classroom**

As Gomez et al. (2010) indicated, the classroom is a continuously changing environment. Prior to the new millennium, it was commonplace for instructors to write on chalkboards and speak from the front of a classroom as students took notes onto a sheet of paper. In contemporary classroom environments, instructors and students engage in a completely different educational experience. For instance, chalkboards are now whiteboards, and PowerPoint presentations displayed onto an overhead screen accompany educators' lectures. Students continue to take notes; however,

the medium has changed as some students utilize mobile computers (laptops) in class (Baggerly, 2002; Hayes, 1999).

Similar to the changes in instructor and student methods, technological advances have modified the environment of the classroom as well. Undergraduate and graduate courses now transcend the physical boundaries of the classroom setting (Ebner, Lienhardt, Rohs, & Meyer, 2010). For example, most programs now offer classes with an online component. A mixed mode classroom environment involves some face-to-face class sessions and some online class meetings. Ebner et al. suggested that this sort of technology allows instructors and students to take learning beyond the classroom setting. They further stated that technology (i.e. on-line classes and microblogs) support informal learning beyond the classroom. Additionally, there are educational programs entirely online, which offer limited, if any, face-to-face instruction (Hayes, 1999). Examples of these programs include those at The University of Phoenix and Capella University (Leech & Holcomb, 2004). These technologically enhanced programs/courses allow students from multiple locations to be in a class simultaneously. As a result, technological advances have increased students' opportunities to engage in educational experiences (Gomez et al., 2010). For example, Renfro-Michel, O'Halloran, and Delaney (2010) asserted technological advances actually increased students' grades and work in a counselor education course.

### **Evolution of Technology in Counselor Education**

Counselor education courses involving face-to-face classroom instruction have also benefited from a variety of technological advancements (Kenny, 2008).

From multimedia presentations to incorporating social media (e.g., movies) into classrooms, technology has enhanced beginning counselors' learning (Adams, 2006; Hayes, 2008a; Hayes, 2008b). In counselor education, technology has had a tremendous impact on the direction of experiential courses (Hayes & Robinson, 2000; Hayes, Taub, Robinson, & Sivo, 2003). For example, counseling students have benefited from live supervision via video conferences in practicum and internship classes (Flamez, Smith, Devlin, Richard, & Luther, 2008). Furthermore, technological advancements such as electronic portfolios increase counseling students' ability to obtain gainful employment. By using technology to extend beyond the physical classroom environment, counseling students have opportunities that facilitate learning experiences (Greenidge & Daire, 2007). For instance, handheld computers allow counseling students to manage clients, schedule appointments, and keep track of clients' short and long-term goals (McGlothlin, Jencius, & Page, 2008).

Technology, however, is not simply limited to increasing student learning (Hayden, Poynton, & Sabella, 2008). With increasing demands on both instructors' and students' time, communication between both parties is poor at times (Poling, 1994). In order to remedy this problem between instructors and students, email communication is an effective supplement to in-person communication (Chandras, 2000). Additionally, many students use online library search engines when collecting information for research papers, research critiques and dissertations (Onwuegbuzi & Jiao, 1998). Thus, technology has advanced learning with counselor education students in and beyond the classroom environment (Hamilton, Larsen, McDowell, & Brown, 2008).

With the advancements in technology increasing at such an intensive rate, professional groups have become involved to insure that instructors and students utilize the tools well (Baturay & Bay, 2010). The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) Technology Interest Group is one such organization that understands the importance of technology in counseling. Recently the group advocated for technological competencies in counselor education programs. In response to growing concerns regarding technology, ACES created 12 technology competencies that are expectations for both counselor educators and counselors-in-training (ACES Technology Interest Group, 2007; Chandras, 2000). In developing technological competencies, ACES acknowledges that technology affects counselor education programs in the class and in the field (i.e., practicum, internship). In order to address the needs of students, ACES (2007) suggested three primary concentrations for adapting technological advancements within counselor education programs. These concentrations compliment the teaching goals that are commonly associated with counselor educators, such as research, practice and teaching (Hayes, 2008b; Hayes & Robinson, 2000). By incorporating technological advancements, both students and instructors now have the opportunity to learn within a variety of educational settings. Thus, technology presents many new educational opportunities.

### **The Technology Gap**

Within counselor education, similar to other academic programs, there has been an increase in the use of technology in the classroom (Hayes, 2008a; Hayes, 2008b). A partial explanation behind the expansion of technology is due to the increase of younger

educators entering the field of academia (Ketelhut & Nelson, 2010). According to Hayes (1999) younger instructors have the knowledge and interest necessary to utilize contemporary methods (technology) in the classroom. Conversely, similar to non-traditional students, older educators are more likely to be hesitant with incorporating technology in the classroom (Chandras, 2000). Chandras further stated that the hesitation felt by older instructors lends credence to the notion that the technology gap is partially generational. However, despite the existence of this technological gap in counselor education, students favor the use of technology in class (Hayes et al., 2003).

Hayes and Robinson (2000) claimed that the majority of students in counseling programs greatly appreciate the usage of technology in the class. Gomez et al. (2010) corroborated Hayes and Robinson's findings, as they suggested several implications from using technology. First, they suggested that students perceive technology as adding value to their education. Second, students reported that they enjoy learning more. Third, students experienced higher-level outcomes due, in part, to their appreciation of the instructor incorporating technology into class curricula.

Taking the preceding into consideration, a number of counselor educators currently use technology regularly in the classroom. For example, Quinn, Hohenshil, and Fortune (2002) concluded that 65 percent of the counselor education programs they surveyed utilized some form of technology during class. Their study looked at 44 counselor education programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). According to Flamez et al. (2008), methods of instruction in counselor education traditionally relied on

role-plays, didactic training, and self-evaluation. Technology allocates to students novel methods that can enhance traditional methods of learning. However, not all students enjoy or endorse the use of technology in counselor education (Hayes, 2008a). For instance, some students with low technological self-efficacy feel frustration or anxiety with classes incorporating a high degree of technology (Bandura, 2009). Thus, it is imperative that counselor educators become aware of technology sources that assist in improving students' ability in the classroom (Renfro-Michel, O'Hallaran, & Delaney, 2010).

### **Anxiety and Stress**

Anxiety and stress are factors that developing counselors encounter, either academically, socially, or both (Gladding, 2009). Understanding how to deal with these factors productively and positively can enhance the therapeutic skills of counselors in training. Additionally, learning how to have a healthy balance /well-being aids in being a productive counselor and avoiding burnout (Hill, 2009). Unfortunately, a number of nontraditional students encounter undue amounts of stress due to having a lack of technological skills (Lewis & Coursol, 2003). Excessive stress potentially leads to poor performance in the classroom, workplace, and social arena (Bandura, 1997). Counselor education programs, with an emphasis on counselor wellness and strength, at times, overlook students struggling with remedial technology skills.

Although counselor education programs are excellent in enhancing or improving self-awareness, there is always room for improvement, especially in regards to technology. As stated earlier, some form of technology is incorporated into the curriculum in most programs (Quinn et al., 2002). Continuously neglecting the

development of technological skills, while simultaneously calling for those abilities in class, potentially sends mixed messages to students. For example, instructors may claim they do not place a high priority for technological skills in their classes. This claim, coupled with the hands-on nature of the profession, leads some students to feel as if it is unnecessary to improve their technological abilities (Hayden et al., 2008). Yet in class, many of the activities incorporate some knowledge of technology to enhance learning (Flamez et al., 2008). Thus, counselor educators may explicitly claim one position, while actually implementing another.

Students with low technological self-efficacy who experience mixed messages may not know how to deal effectively with them. Due to this ineffectiveness, students' sense of personal capability may decline when working with others on class activities that require technological skills. If a student's sense of personal capability lowers poor academic functioning can occur (Martin, 2004). As Baturay and Bay (2010) stated, web-based technologies are becoming more mainstream in contemporary graduate programs. Because technology is rapidly becoming the norm rather than the exception, students lacking technological skills may begin to feel inadequate. Students who suffer from feelings of inadequacy in the classroom are not only affected themselves, but others around them ( i.e., other students) are affected (Bandura, 2001). Furthermore, students with negative feelings such as inadequacy can experience a high degree of anxiety and stress (Bandura, 2005). Stress then affects students when working with others on projects that require the involvement of technology (Mckay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown & Lynn, 2003). Thus, anxiety may occur, and coupled with other factors, a student's ability to be



productive in the classroom may be impacted.

Onwuegbuzie and Jiao (1998) cited a previous study conducted by Onwuegbuzi in 1997 which explored library anxiety and the effects that it may have on students in higher education. Onwuegbuzi and Jiao (1998), stated “Students who are unable to write a research proposal adequately tend to have high levels of anxiety associated with lack of perceived competence in using the library and the mechanical equipment and lack of knowledge of the library” (p. 236). Similarly, when students with low technology self-efficacy attempt to utilize contemporary tools for research purposes, anxiety and stress may increase (Onwuegbuzi & Jiao, 1998). This increase in anxiety and stress may result in students struggling with completing educational assignments. As stated by Gomez et al. (2010), one of the reasons behind utilizing instructional technology is that it aids in facilitating learning. However, some students struggle with technology and their belief in their capability declines as well. These internal struggles with technological self-efficacy may occur repeatedly, despite the student having knowledge regarding the subject area (Bandura, 2009).

### **Effects on Student Self Efficacy**

Consequences arising from the technology gap include fellow students critically analyzing the ability of struggling students. The effects of a critical analysis by peers potentially affect students’ personal beliefs about their capability and skills (Bandura, 2008). Students’ negative self-beliefs reflect social evaluations by peers that label the struggling student as substandard (Bandura, 1989). Students who struggle receive the implied message (i.e., other students) that their efforts and struggles to understand technology are

futile. Bandura (1997) stated that social evaluations have a powerful influence on how a person assesses his or her self. Without positive social support, students struggling with technology may feel isolated and personally relegate themselves to a lower position in the classroom (i.e., always the one asking for assistance in regards to technology).

In modern classroom settings, the environment plays a critical role in the interpersonal and professional development of students. *Social Cognitive Theory* (SCT; Bandura, 1986) labeled this interactional phenomenon *reciprocal determinism*. SCT affirms that there is a triadic interaction effect between *cognition* (interpersonal thoughts), *behavior*, and *environment*. A bi-directional influence exists between the three (cognition, behavior, and environment), as each affects the other in varying magnitudes. Bandura (1997) postulated that:

Efficacious people are quick to take advantage of opportunity structures and figure out ways to circumvent institutional constraints or change them by collective action. Conversely, inefficacious people are less apt to exploit the enabling opportunities provided by the social system and are easily discouraged by institutional impediments. (p. 6)

Relating SCT to counselor education, nontraditional students may understand the concepts discussed in the classroom. However, in regards to technology, the same students, though intellectually efficient, may receive a negative label and deemed inefficacious. These students are unable to take opportunities from the triadic interactions and utilize them to their benefit. Thus, the classroom, instructor and students provide an environment that influences the student’s

self-efficacy positively or negatively (Bandura, 1997).

### **Strategies to Address the Technology Gap**

Over the last several decades, there has been a technological boom in the traditional classroom on all educational levels (Baggerly, 2002). Students as young as preschool age learn to play, work, and communicate using a computer (Ketelhut & Nelson, 2010). Therefore, when these students advance to college, they have a greater understanding of how to utilize a number of technological resources. Nontraditional students, on the other hand, did not have the opportunity to be involved in the technological boom during their school experiences (Baggerly, 2002). Nevertheless, the expectations for nontraditional students are to perform at the same level as their younger peers in courses saturated with the use of technology (Baily, 2009). In order for nontraditional students to compensate for the lack of technology experience, remediation programs need implementation in classroom settings.

The development of remediation programs with a focus on how to use technology in an educational setting can provide support for students who are struggling. These remediation courses assist instructors with identifying students who are more likely to have issues with technology, as well as with other achievement gap problems occurring in the classroom (Norman, Ault, Bentz, & Meskimen, 2001). An example of a remediation program is a basic skills class, such as using PowerPoint, creating hyperlinks, and accessing the internet.

One way to address the technology gap involves creating a prosocial learning environment. Facilitating a warm, caring environment empowers students to learn and process their experiences within the

educational environment (Cornelius-White, 2005). Students who feel empowered to learn may develop a number of positive attributes. For example, students may express greater confidence in their capabilities, as well as demonstrate a willingness to learn about innovations utilized within the classroom (Schunk & Meece, 2005). Without the integration of a prosocial learning environment, students' personal beliefs and skills may deteriorate exponentially, making recovery from the technology gap a greater challenge (Mckay et al., 2003). Thus, it is critically important to have technology assessments and technology workshops readily available for students.

### **Assessments**

Assessments are a vital resource for identifying deficiencies or strengths in a specific subject or field (Creswell, 2002). Students struggling with technology have direct and indirect effects on the way their peers perform in the classroom (Bandura, 2001). However, assuming that a student has trouble with technology may not be enough to suggest entrance into a remediation program. A possible strategy to alleviate this dilemma is to provide students with an assessment or questionnaire that can gauge their level of technological competency. Hayes (1999, 2008a) cited Morrell (1992) when discussing the use of a Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) Survey for Students, to assess student aptitude concerning the use of technology in the classroom. We created an assessment specifically for counselor education students adapted directly from the twelve Technology Competencies created by the ACES Technology Interest Group (Appendix A). These assessments assist with increasing both students' and instructors'

awareness of individuals who have difficulty using technology.

## **Workshops**

Aside from remediation programs, possible interventions for students struggling with the use of technology include technology workshops and support groups. Technology workshops appeal to different types of people, ranging from senior citizens to CEOs. In these workshops, instructors introduce participants to a variety of computer applications, such as software and internet usage. Workshop strategies help students because most of the technology (software, websites and search engines) is not user friendly. For individuals who have had little experience using software in the past, this guidance is necessary (Seals, Clanton, Argawal, Doswell & Thomas, 2008). Technology workshops provide an educational learning opportunity for students to become more knowledgeable and proficient with technology. These workshops are at a number of universities, in the technology office, technical support, and student services. In some institutions, a graduate student or student-worker conducts the workshops. Counselor educators can support students by giving them extra credit for attending workshops.

## **Case Illustration**

Diana (pseudonym) is an extremely talkative 50 year old married mother of four children. She recently chose to shift careers after working 20 years as an elementary school teacher. She returned to college in hopes of attaining a master's degree in the field of mental health counseling. During her first semester, she enrolled in two classes. The classes included Introduction to Counseling and Counseling Theory. Both classes emphasized group work, culminating

in large group projects. During the first few weeks, Diana feels confronted by the differences in her current program in comparison to her college experience more than 20 years earlier. Her instructors utilized Microsoft PowerPoint as one of their main teaching tools, often emailing their presentations to students the night before class. Diana had an email account; however, she used it infrequently to communicate with others. Additionally, she found that sending and downloading attachments was a difficult task for her. Subsequently, she often found herself asking for the assistance from her children.

## **The Gap**

As Diana brainstormed with her group members, she was hesitant to become involved with anything that required designing PowerPoint presentations. She watched as peers added video and sound to presentations, as well as formatting slides so that they were aesthetically pleasing to the audience. She experimented with the program before and was able to complete basic formatting, as well as adding pictures. However, animation was something entirely new to her. She began to depend on her peers for the technical parts of the presentations and mainly contributed by providing content and research. Beyond presentations, Diana also found that she had difficulty navigating the library website when searching for journal articles and books for her research papers. She often asked for help from her children again, which she found embarrassing.

## **Anxiety and Stress**

Gradually, Diana began to withdraw from her schoolwork and became less active in class. She attended classes and took notes. However, in regards to writing papers and

participating in the development of group projects, she would do the least amount of work needed to complete the assignment. The technology was overwhelming for her and she had difficulty asking for help. She was used to being very independent and this dependency on others was frustrating and anxiety provoking for her.

### **Strategies**

Diana's counseling theory professor, Dr. Holmes (pseudonym), began to notice the difference in her work ethic. He approached her after class and inquired about the change. She explained that she was having a difficult time grasping the use of technology, which made her feel inferior to her peers. He proposed that she come to his office, during office hours, and complete a technology competency awareness questionnaire (Appendix A) to pinpoint her level of difficulty. She agreed and she completed the quiz with a score of 34 out of 80 possible points. This signified that she truly struggled with technology and was in need of assistance.

Together they reviewed the quiz and found that, although she felt confident using basic software like Microsoft Word and a variety of internet search engines, her understanding of technology did not extend beyond this basic level. Dr. Holmes suggested that Diana attend a workshop that the school provided on basic information utilizing technology in everyday life circumstances. By acknowledging and pinpointing her struggles, Diana's professor was able to provide resources for her that she needed to develop greater competence in utilizing technology. Furthermore, the instructor served as a support system to help guide her through the process of attaining her degree.

### **Discussion**

In order to prepare students to be future counselors, counselor educators must ensure that students are fully engaged in the learning process (Hayes, 2008a). If a student is experiencing low technological self-efficacy, then instructors have a responsibility to insure that students obtain the best education possible. Instructors can provide this education by supplying resources to build technological skills. If trends in the use of technology continue at the same rate as this past century, counselor education will need to continue to evolve into a more technologically driven environment (Hamilton et al., 2008). Therefore, safeguards should be in place in order to protect students who need supplementary assistance when navigating the technologically advanced classroom.

The ACES Technology Interest Network (2007) suggested technology competencies for both counselors and counselor educators. These technology competencies offer guidelines of suggested skills for future counselors and counselor educators in order to learn before entering the field. Limited research exists exploring the technology gap in the counselor education classroom. As such, counselor education needs additional research to explore the factors needed to assist struggling students. Potential areas of exploration include individual factors related to culture, generational gap, an individual's socioeconomic standing and the influence of gender roles (Castillo & Kempner, 2008). This research may assist with further identifying groups of individuals who fall within the technology gap and help these individuals obtain assistance to develop their technology competency.

## References

- Adams, C. (2006). Powerpoint, habits of mind, and classroom culture. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 38*, 389–411.
- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Technology Interest Network. (2007). *Technical competencies for counselor education: Recommended guidelines for program development*. Retrieved from [http://files.changemywebsite.com/774116/doc/2007\\_aces\\_technology\\_competencies.pdf](http://files.changemywebsite.com/774116/doc/2007_aces_technology_competencies.pdf)
- Baggerly, J. (2002). Practical technological applications to promote pedagogical principles and active learning in counselor education. *Journal of Technology in Counseling, 2*(2). Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol2\\_2/baggerly/baggerly.html](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol2_2/baggerly/baggerly.html)
- Baily, C. (2009) Reverse intergenerational learning: A missed opportunity? *AI and Society, 23*, 111-115.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of child development*. Vol. 6. *Six Theories of child development* (p. 1-60). Greenwich, CT. JAI Press.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 1-26.
- Bandura, A. (2005). Adolescent development from an agentic perspective. In F. Urdan & F. Pajares (Eds.), *Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents* (pp. 1-43). Charlotte, NC; Information Age Publishing.
- Bandura, A. (2008). An agentic perspective on positive psychology. In S.J. Lopez (Series Ed.). *Positive psychology: Exploring the best in people*. Vol.1. (p. 167-196). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company.
- Bandura, A. (2009). Social cognitive theory of mass communications. In J. Bryant and M.B. Oliver's (Eds.). *Media effects: Advancements in theory and research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 99-124). Mahwah, NJ. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Baranchik, A., & Cherkas, B., (2002). Identifying gaps in mathematics preparation that contribute to ethnic, gender, and American/foreign differences in pre-calculus performance. *The Journal of Negro Education, 71*, 253-268.
- Baturay, M.H., & Bay, O.M. (2010). The effects of problem-based learning on the classroom community perceptions and achievement of web-based education students. *Computers & Education, 55*, 43-52.
- Berger, T. (2004). Computer-based technological applications in psychotherapy training. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 6*, 301-315.
- Blackmore, C., Tantum, D., & Van Deurzen, E. (2008). Evaluation of e-learning outcomes: Experience from an online psychotherapy education programme. *Open Learning, 23*, 185–201.
- Castillo L.G., & Kempner, K.P. (2008). Online career counseling with Mexican American adolescents. *Journal of Technology in Counseling, 5*, Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/Castillo.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/Castillo.htm)
- Chandras, K. (2000). Technology-enhanced counselor training: Essential technical

- competencies. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 27, 224-227.
- Cornelius-White, J. H. D. (2005). Teaching person-centered multicultural counseling: Collaborative endeavors to transcend resistance and increase awareness. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, 44, 225-239.
- Creswell, J.W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Inc.
- Ebner, M., Lienhardt, C., Rohs, M., & Meyer, I. (2010). Microblogs in higher education: A chance to facilitate informal and process-oriented learning? *Computers & Education*, 55, 92-100.
- Flamez, B. Smith, R.L., Devlin, J.M., Ricard, R., & Luther, M.S. (2008). Learning styles and instructional preferences: A comparison of an online and traditional counseling course. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 5. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/Flamez.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/Flamez.htm)
- Gladding, S. (2009). *Counseling: A comprehensive profession* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Gomez, E.A., Wu, D., & Passerini, K. (2010). Computer-supported team based learning: The impact of motivation, enjoyment and team contributions on learning outcomes. *Computers & Education*, 55, 378-390.
- Granello, P. F., & Wheaton, J. E. 2003. Development of a CD-ROM for Computer Aided Instruction and Research. In G. R. Walz & J. W. Bloom (Eds.), *Cybercounseling and cyberlearning encore: Beginning and advanced strategies and resources* (pp. 275-286). Greensboro: ERIC Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse.
- Greenridge, W.L., & Daire, A.P. (2007). The application of gaming technology in counselor education programs. *Journal of Technology in Counseling* 4. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol4\\_1/Daire2/Daire2.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol4_1/Daire2/Daire2.htm)
- Hamilton, J., Larsen, S.M., McDowell, B.A., & Brown, S. (2008). Using online technology for student support services. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 5. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/Hamilton.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/Hamilton.htm)
- Hayden, L., Poynton, T.A., & Sabella, R.A. (2008). School counselor's use of technology within the ASCA national model's delivery system. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 5(1). Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/Hayden.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/Hayden.htm)
- Hayes, B.G. (1999). Where's the data: Is multimedia instruction effective in training counselors. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 1. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/vol1\\_1/multimedia.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/vol1_1/multimedia.htm)
- Hayes, B.G. (2008a). The use of multimedia in counselor education: A creative teaching strategy. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 3, 243- 253.
- Hayes, B.G. (2008b). Counselor education: Integration of teaching strategies. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 5. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/Hayes.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/Hayes.htm)
- Hayes, B. G., & Robinson, E. H., III (2000). Assessing counselor education student's attitudes toward computers and multimedia instruction. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, 38, 132-141.
- Hayes, B. G., Taub, G. E., Robinson, E. H., III, & Sivo, S. A. (2003). An empirical investigation of the efficacy of multimedia instruction in counseling skill development. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 42, 177-188.

- Hill, C.E. (2009). *Helping skills: Facilitating exploration, insight, and action*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Ketelhut, D.J., & Nelson, B.C. (2010). Designing for real-world scientific inquiry in virtual environments. *Educational Research*, 52, 151-167.
- Kenny, M. (2008). Using technology to educate graduate counseling students on child maltreatment. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 5. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/Kenny.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/Kenny.htm)
- Leech, L.L., & Holcomb, J.M. (2004). Leveling the playing field: The development of a distance education program in rehabilitation counseling. *Assistive Technology*, 16, 135-143.
- Lewis, J., & Coursol, D. (2003). Counselor preparation for a cyberworld: Curriculum design and development. *Cybercounseling and Cyberlearning: An Encore*, 19-34
- Martin, J. (2004). Self-regulated learning, social cognitive theory, and agency. *Educational Psychologist*, 39, 135-145.
- McGlothlin, J., Jencius, M., & Page, B. J. (2008). Self-produced counseling applications for handheld computers. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 5. Retrieved from [http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5\\_1/McGlothlin.htm](http://jtc.colstate.edu/Vol5_1/McGlothlin.htm)
- Mckay, M.M., Atkins, M.S., Hawkins, T., Brown C., & Lynn, C.J. (2003). Inner city African- American parental involvement in children's schooling: Racial socialization and social support from the parent community. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 32(1/2), 107-114.
- Morrell, P. D. (1992). The effects of computer-assisted instruction and students' achievement in high school biology. *School Science and Mathematics*, 92(4), 177-181.
- Norman, O., Ault, C.R., Bentz, B., & Meskimen, L. (2001). The Black-White "Achievement Gap" as a perennial challenge of urban science education: A sociocultural and historical overview with implications for research and practice. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 38, 1101-1114.
- Onwuegbuzi, A.J., & Jiao, Q.G. (1998). The relationship between library anxiety and learning styles among graduate students: Implications for library instruction. *Library and Information Science Research*, 20, 235-249.
- Poling, D.J. (1994). Email as an effective teaching supplement. *Educational Technology*, 34(5), 53-55.
- Quinn, A.C., Hohenshil, T.H., & Fortune, J. (2002). Utilization of technology in CACREP approved counselor education programs. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 2(2). Retrieved August 24, 2009 from <http://jtc.colstate.edu>
- Renfro-Michel, E.L., O'Halloran, K.C., & Delaney, M.E. (2010). Using technology to enhance adult learning in the counselor education classroom. *Adultspan Journal*, 9 (1), 14-25.
- Seals, C.D., Clanton, K., Argawal, R., Doswell, F., & Thomas, C.M. (2008). Lifelong learning: Becoming computer savvy at a later age. *Educational Gerontology*, 3, 1055-1069.
- Schunk, D.H. & Meece, J.L. (2005). Self-efficacy development in adolescences. In F. Urdan & F. Pajares (Eds.), *Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents* (pp. 71-96). Charlotte, NC; Information Age Publishing.
- Stinson, D.W. (2006). African American male adolescents, schooling (and mathematics): Deficiency, rejection, and achievement. *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 477-506.

Wantz, R.A., Tromski, D.M., Mortsof, C. J., Yoztheimer, G., Brill, S. & Cole, A. (2003).  
Incorporating distance learning in counselor education programs: A research study.  
*Cybercounseling and Cyberlearning: An encore*, 327-344.



## Appendix A

### Technology Competency Quiz

Developed in part from the ACES Technology Competencies for Counselor Education:  
Recommended Guidelines for Program Development (ACES Technology Interest Group, 2007)

Take the following survey of your current technology competencies, rating the following items on this scale:

1 = Not Competent

2 = Somewhat Competent

3 = Competent

4 = Extremely Competent

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 | 1. I know how to turn on the computer.  |
| 1 2 3 4 | 2. I am familiar with and can use Microsoft word.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 3. I am familiar with and can use Microsoft PowerPoint.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 4. I know how to open a pdf file.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 5. I have an email account and I am able to send, receive, and respond to emails.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 6. I can attach a file to an email.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 7. I know how to access a website link provided within a PowerPoint presentation.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 8. I can find scholarly articles through online search engines.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 9. I am familiar with counseling related listservs and know how to subscribe, participate in, and sign off of them.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 10. I can use software to develop a web page.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 11. I can use software to develop a group presentation.   |
| 1 2 3 4 | 12. I know how to use audiovisual equipment such as video recorders, audio recorders, projection equipment, video conferencing equipment, and playback units. |
| 1 2 3 4 | 13. I know how to use computerized statistical software.  |

- 1 2 3 4      14. I am familiar with and can use computerized testing, diagnostic, and career decision-making programs with clients.
- 1 2 3 4      15. I know how to help clients search for various types of counseling-related information via the internet, including information about careers, employment opportunities, educational & training opportunities, financial assistance/scholarships, treatment procedures, and social and personal information.
- 1 2 3 4      16. I know how to access and use counseling related CD-ROM databases.
- 1 2 3 4      17. I have knowledge of the legal and ethical codes which relate to counseling services via the internet.
- 1 2 3 4      18. I am familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of counseling services provided via the Internet.
- 1 2 3 4      19. I know how to use the internet for finding and using continuing education opportunities in counseling.
- 1 2 3 4      20. I know how to evaluate the quality of information obtained from the internet.

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 80

65-80 Technology Master- you are one with technology!

55-64 Technologically savvy-you feel competent in most aspects of technology with some room for growth.

40-55 On the fence of accepting technology-you feel competent in some areas, but could benefit from additional training to enhance your competence in technology.

0-39 Technologically challenged-HELP!-you could benefit from extensive training in the use of technology.

### Author Note

Isaac Burt is an Assistant Professor at Long Island University/C.W. Post, Brookville, NY, in the department of counseling and development. Tiphonie Gonzalez and David L. Ascher are Ph.D. candidates in counselor education at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida. Jacqueline Swank is an Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama. Laura Cunningham is a Post – Doctoral Assistant at the University of Central Florida.

All correspondence regarding this article should be sent to: Isaac Burt, Department of Counseling & Development, Library, Room 320, College of Education and Information Sciences, Long Island University/C. W. Post Campus, 720 Northern Boulevard, Brookville, NY. 11548. E-mail: [Isaac.burt@liu.edu](mailto:Isaac.burt@liu.edu)

# Counselors' Job Satisfaction across Education Levels and Specialties

---

Crista E. Gambrell, Mark C. Rehfuss, Elisabeth C. Suarez, & Dixie Meyer

---

The study examined job satisfaction of counselors in various specialties and also across educational levels. The researchers administered the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Balzer et al., 1997) and the results were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of covariance to measure differences for counselors in regard to satisfaction with the work tasks, present pay, promotion opportunities, supervision, work peers, and overall career. Findings indicated that Doctorate-level counselors were more satisfied with promotion opportunities than Masters-level counselors, and counselor educators were more satisfied with promotion opportunities than mental health, school, or creative arts/other counselors. Ideas for enhancing graduate level career curricula and facilitating exploratory supervision for new counselors are discussed.

*Keywords:* Counselors, job satisfaction, career, vocational specialization, exploration

---

Counseling is a diverse and exciting profession, but by no means is it one size fits all. There are many specialties in counseling and educational tracks that students and new professionals can pursue. Before someone invests the time and energy in becoming a counselor, however, it seems important to know if the vocation will be satisfying. Job satisfaction is often related to finding one's *fit*, the phenomenon of congruence between an individual and one's work (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Finding a fit contributes to overall job satisfaction (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Erdogan & Bauer, 2005; Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004; Resick, Baltes, & Shantz, 2007). Job satisfaction continues to be relevant to study due to its historical (Crites, 1969) and present importance because work is so fundamental to people's lives (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2002; Spector, 1997). Therefore, it is necessary to frame job satisfaction within an historical perspective and to demonstrate its relevance to today's counselors.

For the purposes of this study, job satisfaction is defined as the attitude a worker has about his or her job as compared to previous experiences, current expectations, or available alternatives (Balzer et al., 1997). Job satisfaction is not just a global measure of overall contentment with one's work. There are several elements that contribute to this construct (Cross, 1973). The main ones are the work itself (Ronan, 1970; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969), present pay (Katzell, 1964), promotion opportunities (Porter, 1961), supervision (Katzell), and other people at work (Alderfer, 1967). Although these facets add to job satisfaction (Cross, 1973), the whole of job satisfaction is not necessarily equivalent to the sum of these parts (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983). To measure only global job satisfaction is to neglect major determinants of job satisfaction (Scarpello & Campbell) and therefore limits the findings for counselors. That is why instrumentation measuring the

various facets is essential to understanding job satisfaction for counselors.

Instrumentation was a primary limitation of previous similar studies examining counselor job satisfaction. Previous studies (e.g., Bane, 2006; Clemons, 1988; Morgan, 1987) measured the job satisfaction of counselors with the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weis, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967), an instrument that, although adequately valid and reliable, only provides an overall satisfaction score and fails to explain respondent satisfaction across different aspects of the job. Another limitation of similar studies pertained to their narrow sample. Whether sampling school counselors (Bane; Morgan) or focusing on psychologists who conducted psychotherapy (Delardo, 2007; Vyhmeister, 2001), the results of these studies were not generalizable to counselors of other education levels and specialties. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand counselor job satisfaction across key variables such as specializations and education levels.

Our study examined whether or not there are differences in the facets of job satisfaction among Masters-level and Doctorate-level counselors. These two groups were compared because it is still unclear how education level influences one or more of the facets of job satisfaction. Phillips and Hays (1978) found that among mental health workers who did not believe they were adequately compensated, those who possessed the minimum required level of training were as satisfied as workers with advanced training. Johnson and Johnson (2000) corroborated this with their finding that perceived over-qualification has a negative effect on job satisfaction. Clemons (1988) found that although there was a positive relationship between education level and compensation satisfaction, there

was no significant relationship between education level and general job satisfaction. Because the relationship between education level of counselors and job satisfaction is still unclear, the present study tested for differences.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2010) indicates that there are nine disciplines of study within counseling: career, college, community, gerontological, marriage and family, mental health, school, student affairs, and counselor education and supervision. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2010) currently has 14 active interest networks with new ones being created each year. Counselors creatively use their mental health training in everything from life coaching (Williams & Davis, 2007) to wellness orientations (Myers & Sweeney, 2008; Okonski, 2003) to creative arts therapies (Brown, 2008; Leventhal, 2008; Sherwood, 2008; Sommers-Flanagan, 2007), and it is apparent there are many paths to fulfilling careers in counseling. Because not much is known about the differences in counselor satisfaction across specializations, we focused our study on the following practice areas to compare: mental health counseling, school counseling, counselor education, and creative arts therapies. Therefore, our subgroups were selected because they represent the broad spectrum of specialties in counseling (ACA, 2009; CACREP, 2009; Drum & Blom, 2001).

Even though previous researchers (e.g., Bane, 2006; Clemons, 1988; Morgan, 1987; Vyhmeister, 2001) have attempted to answer the question, "How satisfied are professional counselors in their jobs?" specific insight into counselor satisfaction across education levels and specializations was not found. Satisfaction among psychologists (Delardo, 2007; Vyhmeister, 2001), school counselors (Bane, 2006;

Morgan, 1987), or counselor educators (Parr, Bradley, Lan, & Gould, 1996) by themselves has been previously examined. Many previous investigations (e.g., Bane; Clemons; Morgan) have also only measured job satisfaction as a global construct as opposed to the multifaceted phenomenon that it is (Balzer et al., 1997; Cross, 1973; Smith, Kendall et al., 1969).

The purpose of our study was to survey the job satisfaction of counselors across two key variables: education level and specialization. These are by no means intended to be comprehensive, but rather, these variables were chosen to lay the groundwork for future comparative studies. For the purposes of this study, there are two guiding assumptions about counselors and work: (a) those who are fortunate enough to be employed prefer to derive some sense of meaning from their work (Blustein, 2008), and (b) deciding how to actualize one's career potential lies largely in the individual (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2002). Our study also comes from the perspective that counselors continually gain experience in a variety of practice areas until they find the fit, which relates to job satisfaction (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Therefore, our study has the potential to assist graduate students and young professionals in learning more about employment options that are available to them as well as what variables contribute to the job satisfaction of professional counselors.

## **Hypotheses**

H<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference between Master's- and Doctorate-level counselors in counselor job satisfaction across the five Job Descriptive Index subscales when satisfaction scores have been adjusted for the number of years worked in the field.

H<sub>2</sub> There is a significant difference between mental health counselors, school counselors, counselor educators, and creative arts therapists in counselor job satisfaction across the Job Descriptive Index subscales when job satisfaction scores have been adjusted for the number of years worked in the field.

## **Method**

### **Population and Sampling**

This study had the following inclusion criteria: (a) counselors who have obtained a Master's degree or higher in counseling or a related discipline, and (b) counselors who continuously worked at least part-time in the counseling or counselor education field. The decision to use counselors who worked continuously at least part-time was determined in order to obtain a sample of professionals who were likely to possess a counselor identity. Everyone who met the first two criteria was included and statistical adjustments were made as appropriate at the end of data collection.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

In order to obtain an adequate sample size of counselors, we purchased a random list of 999 counselors from the American Counseling Association (ACA). To ensure a representative sample across each variable, a random list from the ACA was requested along with a random list from the following ACA divisions: Association for Creativity in Counseling and Association of Counselor Education and Supervision. An email request was sent to the random sample of counselors from the ACA and to five professional counseling listservs: Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET), American College Counseling

Association (ACCA) list, a School of Psychology and Counseling list, a Drama Therapy list, and the American Dance Therapy Association forum. The drama and dance therapy lists were chosen to increase chances of obtaining respondents in the creative arts therapies. The email included a description of the study and a link to the secure online instrument. The online instrument included the informed consent document, a demographic questionnaire, and the Job Descriptive Index. The link was available for seven weeks and a total of six appeals were made for participation.

### **Participants**

Counselors completed a demographic questionnaire before taking the online satisfaction survey. There were an estimated 6,230 invited participants, but that could be an overestimate given the possibility of cross-posting on multiple listservs. Out of the estimated 6,230 invited subjects, 477 completed the survey, giving a response rate of 7.66%. However, since it is important to ensure that the survey instruments were completed without omissions (Smith, Budzeika, Edwards, Johnson, & Barse, 1986) only 464 responses were deemed usable. Missing responses were assigned a distinguishing value (Smith et al.) so that in the event that a respondent completed one scale, but not another, then their completed responses could be analyzed and their missing responses excluded without throwing out the usable data all together.

Of the 464 respondents ( $N = 464$ ) in this sample, 73.3% ( $n = 340$ ) were women and 25.9% ( $n = 120$ ) were men. All subjects were over 18 years of age, were working in counseling, and had obtained at least a Master's in counseling or a related discipline. It is important to note that not all participants responded to all the

demographic questions; therefore, not all demographic characteristics totaled 464. Self-identified ethnicity of the participants included Caucasian, 86.0% ( $n = 399$ ); African-American/Black, 5.6% ( $n = 26$ ); Latino, 4.3% ( $n = 20$ ); Asian/Pacific Islander 1.5% ( $n = 7$ ); Multiracial, 1.3% ( $n = 6$ ); American Indian, .6% ( $n = 3$ ); and other, .6% ( $n = 3$ ). The highest education level obtained by the participants was a Master's degree for 58.2% ( $n = 270$ ) and a Doctorate degree for 41.2% ( $n = 191$ ). Number of years in the field ranged from less than 1 year to 45 years ( $M = 11.2$ ,  $SD = 9.53$ ).

Regarding professional demographics, the majority of participants worked full-time, 80.6% ( $n = 374$ ) and held a professional license or a school counselor certification, 77.2% ( $n = 358$ ). Participants were self-employed (9.7%,  $n = 45$ ) or employed with an educational or community organization, 87.3% ( $n = 405$ ). Specializations included mental health counselors, 47.0% ( $n = 218$ ); counselor educators, 20.9% ( $n = 97$ ); school counselors, 13.4% ( $n = 62$ ); and other, 18.7% ( $n = 87$ ). The other specializations included career, creative arts, marriage and family, college, substance abuse/addictions, and student affairs.

### **Job Descriptive Index (JDI)**

Wright, Cropanzano, and Bonett (2007) use the JDI to measure job satisfaction. Developed by Balzer et al. (2007), the JDI is a 33-item instrument that measures job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct with several principal facets (Balzer et al., 1997). The JDI is comprised of six subscales measuring facets of job satisfaction. These scales are as follows: 1) Satisfaction with work (5 items)

includes opportunities for creativity, task variety, amount of autonomy, degree of challenge, and job complexity; 2) Satisfaction with pay (5 items) refers to the attitude toward pay based on perceived difference between actual pay and expected pay; 3) Satisfaction with promotions (5 items) refers to satisfaction with company's promotion policy and the administration of that policy; 4) Satisfaction with supervision (5 items) refers to the idea that in general, the more considerate and employee-centered supervisors are the greater the levels of satisfaction; 5) Satisfaction with people on the present job (5 items) refers to the worker's degree of satisfaction with fellow employees, clients, staff, or others on the job; and 6) Satisfaction with job in general (8 items) refers to the worker's degree of satisfaction with the job in general most of the time.

The JDI provides a list of short phrases or adjectives and asks the respondent to select "Yes", "No," or "?" for Do Not Know. Half of the items are worded favorably (e.g. "creative") and the other items are worded unfavorably (e.g. "boring"). A "Yes" response to a favorably worded item indicates satisfaction, whereas a "No" response to a favorably worded item indicates dissatisfaction (Balzer et al., 1997). For the favorable items, the "Yes" receives 3 points, the "No" receives 0 points, and the "?" receives 1 point because a "Do Not Know" response is usually indicative of dissatisfaction instead of satisfaction (Balzer et al., 1997). The unfavorable items are reverse scored with "No" receiving 3 points and so forth. The scores are out of a possible 15 points for each scale (See Table 1) and the concluding total score represents the satisfaction level for that subscale only. For our study, none of the facet scores were added together for a total composite satisfaction score.

The JDI has been validated through multiple studies since 1959 (Balzer et al., 1997) and the results from these studies indicate that based on cluster analyses and factor analyses, the JDI measures were found to possess high levels of discriminant and convergent validity (Balzer et al.). This means that the JDI satisfactorily measures the specific facets of job satisfaction that it says it does. The JDI has the following alpha coefficients for its subscales (Balzer et al.): .90 for work, .86 for pay, .87 for opportunities for promotion, .91 for supervision, and .91 for coworkers. This internal reliability score range from .86 to .92 means that the JDI subscales are consistent across repeated administrations. Given the strength of its reliability and validity scores, the JDI is a reasonable measure to use when investigating job satisfaction (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002) and was an appropriate instrument for this study. Upon completion of data collection, all data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0.

## **Results**

### **Statistical Analysis MANCOVA**

Since the researchers wanted to control for the effects of concomitant variables in a multivariate design, they used a Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). A MANCOVA asks if there are statistically significant mean differences among groups on various dependent variables after adjusting for differences in one or more covariates (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Before running this type of analysis, certain assumptions had to be met. The researchers checked for normal distribution, homogeneity of variance, homogeneity of regression slopes, linearity, and multicollinearity. There were



not enough respondents in the creative arts therapy specialization or in any of the other reported specializations, so they were collapsed to an "Other" category for the statistical analysis. Once the MANCOVA assumptions were satisfied, the hypotheses were tested and the data were analyzed for group differences.

### Testing Hypotheses

*H<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference between Master's- and Doctorate-level counselors in counselor job satisfaction across the five JDI subscales when satisfaction scores have been adjusted for the number of years worked in the field.*

Results from the MANCOVA revealed a significant main effect for education level (Wilks' Lambda = .95,  $F(6, 445) = 4.35$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial eta squared  $[\eta_p^2] = .06$ ) on the dependent variables. Tests of between subjects effects indicated that there was no significant difference between education levels *except* in the area of promotion opportunities ( $F(1, 362) = 15.36$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ). Therefore, the null was accepted for the areas of work itself ( $F(1, .32) = .06$ ,  $p = .81$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ), pay ( $F(1, 56) = 2.31$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ), supervision ( $F(1, 16) = .81$ ,  $p = .37$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ), people at work ( $F(1, .20) = .02$ ,  $p = .88$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ), and the job in general ( $F(1, 3.98) = .13$ ,  $p = .71$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ), but rejected in the area of promotion opportunities.

*H<sub>2</sub> There is a significant difference between mental health counselors, school counselors, counselor educators, and creative arts therapists in counselor job satisfaction across the JDI subscales when job satisfaction scores have been adjusted for the number of years worked in the field.*

Results from the MANCOVA revealed a significant main effect for specialization (Wilks' Lambda = .90,  $F(18, 1259) = 2.70$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial eta squared

$[\eta_p^2] = .04$ ) on the dependent variables. Tests of between subjects effects indicated that there was no significant difference between specializations *except* in the area of promotion opportunities ( $F(3, 179) = 7.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ ). Therefore, the null was accepted for the areas of work itself ( $F(3, 4) = .66$ ,  $p = .58$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ), pay ( $F(3, 46) = 1.89$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .13$ ), supervision ( $F(3, 37) = 1.86$ ,  $p = .14$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ), people at work ( $F(3, 12) = 1.40$ ,  $p = .24$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ), and the job in general ( $F(3, 11.25) = .38$ ,  $p = .77$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ), but rejected in the area of promotion opportunities.

A follow up univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005) to enhance the understanding of the findings around promotion opportunities. The results indicated the dependent variable of satisfaction with promotion opportunities was significantly affected by education level, with Doctorate-level counselors being more satisfied in this area ( $F(3, 460) = 19.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

To determine the location of the significant differences between specialization groups, a Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test was used. The results indicated that satisfaction with promotion opportunities was also significantly affected by specialization, with counselor educators being most satisfied in this area (See Table 2). The promotion scores of counselor educators were significantly different from mental health counselors, school counselors, and creative arts/other counselors at the ( $p < .01$ ) level.

### Discussion

To best understand the results of this study, it is helpful to return to the guided assumption stated in the beginning: those who are fortunate enough to be employed

prefer to derive meaning from their work (Blustein, 2008). Work can serve a basic need for survival, but it also serves as a means of self-determination (Blustein). Work as a way to self-determination means that individuals must find ways to sustain energy and motivation in their jobs even when faced with challenging career tasks (Blustein). If counselors can feel empowered to self-author their careers, this can enhance their sense of job satisfaction. Based on our results, clearly marked pathways to promotion is a way to do just that.

The results indicated that when it comes to satisfaction with promotion opportunities, counselors do, in fact, differ across education level and specialization. Doctorate-level counselors were more satisfied with promotion opportunities than Master's-level counselors, and counselor educators were more satisfied with promotion opportunities than any of the other groups of counselors (mental health, school, or creative arts/other counselors). These findings confirm the importance of advancement possibilities and their role in the job satisfaction of some individuals (Katzell, 1964; Ronan, 1970; Smith et al., 1969). A possible explanation for these results could be the importance of promotion within academia (Davis, Levitt, McGlothlin, & Hill, 2006), one example being tenure. Although tenure is not the only way to obtain promotions, it is an opportunity within higher education and a goal for which most counselor educators strive (Chapin, 2006). Because satisfaction with promotion opportunities refers to the organization's actual policy and the way it is administered, this sample of counselor educators could be satisfied because of the clearly stated expectations for advancing within their jobs. Mental health, school, or other counselors, on the other hand, might not perceive clear guidelines for promotion and what is required for advancement in their subfield.

The last major finding in the study that was not statistically significant, but valuable nonetheless, was that there were no differences in job satisfaction in terms of satisfaction with work, pay, supervision, peers and clients, and the job overall among counselors when controlling for the number of years in the field. This validated previous findings that regardless of education level or specialization counselors are equally satisfied in most areas of job satisfaction (Clemons, 1988). Counselors across education level and specialization can take heart in the fact that they can pursue whatever career or educational direction they want and may be just as satisfied as their counseling colleagues.

### **Implications for Counselors, Counselor Educators, and Supervisors**

This study has shown that counseling professionals across education level and specialization are generally the same in most areas of job satisfaction. Yet, most graduate students and new counselors are not aware of what opportunities exist for them as counselors (Busacca & Wester, 2006). In fact, 78% of surveyed counseling students from CACREP accredited programs said they were *considerably* concerned with acquiring more information about themselves and types of jobs within the field (Busacca & Wester). With the revised 2009 CACREP standards in place, today's graduate programs have an opportunity to provide counseling students with "career, avocational, educational, occupational, and labor market information resources" (CACREP, 2009, II 4b), to do career counseling with clients and also to better prepare themselves for the possibilities and challenges that await them in the profession (Blustein, 2008; Butler, 2005).

One recommendation for counselor educators is to enhance Master's-level

courses that deal with counselor development. Integrating a professional development focus throughout classes like Career Theories, Counseling Skills & Techniques, and Helping Relationships can facilitate new trainees' awareness throughout their program of how to successfully advance, how to develop their personal goals and abilities (Hansen, 2000), and how to actualize their career potential (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2002). Doctorate-level counselors can benefit from a career development focus throughout their training as well. Classes such as Instruction in Counselor Education and Supervision and Consultation assist with teaching Doctoral students to become leaders, but in-depth seminar courses on how to use one's degree and navigate one's career path would benefit advanced students as well. Through creative and interactive ways of teaching counselor career development, graduate students of all levels can broaden their exposure to the field they are entering and understanding of what contributes to job satisfaction within it.

Several exercises could encourage student exposure and reflection. One option is using the Future Career Autobiography (Reh fuss, 2009). This simple exercise encourages students to consider their futures as they identify where they hope to be in life and what they hope to be doing in five years. Such an activity motivates exploration and clarification of promotion desires and goals. Another option is to facilitate self-awareness in career classes by using weekly reflection journals. Writing their ongoing thoughts and feelings about their career goals encourages self-exploration and further clarifies how they desire self and work to intersect (Savickas, 2006). A final suggestion to enhance graduate courses is to assign counseling specific career outlook projects. By assigning projects on obtaining occupational information specific to the counseling profession, counselors in training

would become exposed to the various ways to use their counselor training, as well as how to advance in their career, a key component to job satisfaction.

In addition to strengthening graduate curriculum, counselor educators and supervisors can also provide Master's students the information for specialty selection and educational paths, and Doctoral students the ongoing support in professional identity formation and advancement opportunities. Supervision is a valuable opportunity to foster the idea that career exploration is necessary at all levels of training and counselors should gain exposure to various professional conditions as a means of finding their fit (Busacca & Wester, 2006; Niles, Anderson, & Goodnough, 1998). Supervisors should openly dialogue with their supervisees about counseling specialties, their educational requirements, and how to advance within them. Counselor educators and supervisors alike have the unique opportunity to help graduate students and new counselors identify their ultimate career goals and what it takes to thrive and be satisfied (Oster, 2006).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future researchers have an opportunity to build on our findings in the following ways: One possible direction is to explore work values. By comparing what counselors of each education level and specialization value in their jobs, light may be shed on the importance of promotion for counselor educators as compared to practitioners. Another possible research direction is examining the phenomenon of job fit across counselor specialties and education because job fit may also influence job and career satisfaction (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Resick, Baltes, & Shantz, 2007). The use of qualitative methods could also

provide a richer and deeper understanding of the relationships and factors that influence

counselor

job

satisfaction.

## References

- Alderfer, C. P. (1967). An organization syndrome. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12, 440-460. doi: 10.2307/2391314
- American Counseling Association. (2009). *Interest networks*. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org>
- Association of Counselor Education and Supervision and the National Career Development Association (Hansen, 2000). *Preparing counselors for career development in the new millennium*. Retrieved from National Career Development Association website: [http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/asset\\_manager/get\\_file/3405/commissionpaper.pdf](http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/asset_manager/get_file/3405/commissionpaper.pdf)
- Bane, T. Y. (2006). *Job satisfaction among professional middle school counselors in Virginia*. (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2006). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3238527)
- Balzer, W. K., Kihm, J. A., Smith, P. C., Irwin, J. L., Bachiochi, P. D., Robie, C., Sinar, E. F., & Parra, L. F. (1997). *Users' manual for the job descriptive index (JDI; 1997 revision) and the job in general (JIG) scales*. Bowling Green State University: Bowling Green, OH
- Blustein, D. L. (2008). The role of work in psychological health and well-being: A conceptual, historical, and public policy perspective. *American Psychologist*, 64, 228-240. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.63.4.228
- Brown, C. (2008). The importance of making art for the creative arts therapist: An artistic inquiry. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 35, 201-208. doi: 10.1016/j.aip.2008.04.002.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2009). *Occupational outlook handbook*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/OCO>
- Busacca, L. A., & Wester, K. L. (2006). Career concerns of master's-level community and school counselor trainees. *The Career Development Quarterly* 55, 179-189. Retrieved from <http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/cdquarterly>
- Butler, S. K. (2005). Collective self-esteem and burnout in professional school counselors. *Professional School Counseling* 9(1), 55-62. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=235>
- Cable, D., & DeRue, D. S. (2002). The convergent and discriminant validity of subjective fit perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(5), 875-884. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.87.5.875
- Chapin, M. H. (2006). The pursuit of promotion and tenure. *Rehabilitation Education*, 20(1), 21-30. Retrieved from <http://rehabeducators.org/publications.html>
- Clemons, C. R. (1988). *The relationships of occupational stress and certain other variables to job satisfaction of licensed professional counselors in Virginia* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 8907511)
- Cook, E. P., Heppner, M. J., & O'Brien, K. M. (2002). Career development of women of color and white women: Assumptions, conceptualization, and interventions from an ecological

- perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 50(4), 291- 305. Retrieved from <http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/cdquarterly>
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs. (2009). *Standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.cacrep.org>
- Cross, D. (1973). The worker opinion survey: A measure of shop-floor satisfaction. *Occupational Psychology*, 47(3-4), 193-208. Retrieved from <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.library.regent.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pbh&jid=J6M&site=ehost-live>
- Davis, T. E., Levitt, D. H., McGlothlin, J M., & Hill, N. R. (2006). Perceived expectations related to promotion and tenure: A national survey of CACREP program liaisons. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 46, 146-156. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org/Publications/Journals.aspx>
- Drum, D. J., & Blom, B. E. (2001). The dynamics of specialization in professional psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32, 513-521. doi: 10.1037/0735-7028.32.5.513
- Erdogan, B., & Bauer, T. N. (2005). Enhancing career benefits of employee proactive personality: The role of fit with jobs and organizations. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 859-891. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00772
- Erdogan, B., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2004). Work value congruence and intrinsic career success: The compensatory roles of leader–member exchange and perceived organizational support. *Personnel Psychology*, 57, 305-322. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2004.tb02493
- Johnson, G. J., & Johnson, W. R. (2000). Perceived overqualification and dimensions of job satisfaction: A longitudinal analysis. *The Journal of Psychology*, 134, 537-555. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/JohnsonAndJohnsonURL>
- Katzell, R. A. (1964). Personal values, job satisfaction, and job behavior. In H. Borow (Ed.) *Man in a world of work*, p. 341-363. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Kinicki A. J., McKee-Ryan, F. M., Schriesheim, C. A., & Carson, K. P. (2002). Assessing the construct validity of the job descriptive index: A review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 14-32. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.87.1.14
- Leventhal, M. (2008). Transformation and healing through dance therapy: The challenge and imperative of holding the vision. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 30(4), 4-23. doi: 10.1007/s10465-008-9049-8
- Mertler, C. A., & Vannatta, R. A. (2005). *Advanced and multivariate statistical methods* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak
- Morgan, G. B. E. (1987). *The nature and sources of job satisfaction among school counselors in the American School Counselor Association* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No.8809674)
- Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (2008). Wellness counseling: The evidence base for practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 86, 482-493. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org/publications/journals.aspx>
- Niles, S. G., Anderson, W. P., & Goodnough, G. (1998). Exploration to foster career development. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 46, 262-275. Retrieved from <http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/cdquarterly>
- Okonski, V. O. (2003). Exercise as a counseling intervention. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 25(1), 45-56. Retrieved from

<http://www.amhca.org/news/journal.aspx>

- Oster, G. D. (2006). *Life as a psychologist: Career choices and insights*. Westport, CT: Praeger
- Parr, G. D., Bradley, L. J., Lan, W. Y., & Gould, L. J. (1996). The career satisfaction of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision members. *The Journal of Employment Counseling*, 33(1), 20-28. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/ParrBreadleyLanGould>
- Phillips, E., & Hays, R. J. (1978). Job satisfaction and perceived congruence of attitude between workers and supervisors in a mental health setting. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 47(1), 55-59. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/PhillipsHays>
- Porter, L. W. (1961). A study of perceived need satisfactions in bottom and middle management jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 45, 1-10. doi: 10.1037/h0043121
- Reh fuss, M. (2009). The future career autobiography: A narrative measure of career intervention effectiveness. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 58, 82-90. Retrieved from <http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/cdquarterly>
- Resick, C. J., Baltes, B. B., & Shantz, C. W. (2007). Person-organization fit and work-related attitudes and decisions: Examining interactive effects with job fit and conscientiousness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1446-1455. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.92.5.1446
- Ronan, W. W. (1970). Individual and situational variables relating to job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology Monograph*, 54(1), 1-31. doi: 10.1037/h0028660
- Ronnestad, M. H., & Skovholt, T. M. (2003). The journey of the counselor and therapist: Research findings and perspectives on professional development. *Journal of Career Development*, 30(1), 5-44. doi: 10.1023/A:1025173508081
- Savickas, M. L. (2006). Career construction theory. In J. Greenhaus & G. Callahan (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of career development* (Vol. 1, pp. 84-88). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Scarpello, V., & Campbell, J. P. (1983). Job satisfaction: Are all the parts there? *Personnel Psychology*, 36, 577-600. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.1983.tb02236.x
- Sherwood, P. (2008). Expressive artistic therapies as mind-body medicine. *Body, Movement, and Dance in Psychotherapy*, 3(2), 81-95. doi: 10.1080/17432970802080040.
- Smith, P. C., Kendall, L. M., & Hulin, C. L. (1969). *The measurement of satisfaction in work and retirement: A strategy for the study of attitudes*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally & Company
- Sommers-Flanagan, J. (2007). The development and evolution of person-centered expressive art therapy: A conversation with Natalie Rogers. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 85, 120-125. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org/publications/journals.aspx>
- Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Weis, D. J., Dawis, R. V., England, G. W., & Lofquist, L. H. (1967). *Manual for Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire*. St. Paul, MN: Work Adjustment Project Industrial Relations Center University of Minnesota
- Williams, P., & Davis, D. C. (2007). *Therapist as life coach: An introduction for counselors and other helping professionals*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Wright, T. A., Cropanzano, R., & Bonett, D. G. (2007). The moderating role of employee positive well-being on the relation between job satisfaction and job performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(2), 93-104. doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.12.2.93

Vyhmeister, W. R. (2001). *Job satisfaction among psychologists in a managed care environment*. (Doctoral dissertation, Andrews University). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3019338)



APPENDIX

Table 1  
*Total Satisfaction Scores (N = 464)*

Subscales	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Work	464	14.14	2.38
Pay	464	6.99	5.03
Promotion	464	8.37	5.24
Supervision	464	11.53	4.54
People	464	13.42	2.98
General	464	20.00	5.51
Career	459	11.85	2.45

Scores out of a possible 15 points with the higher score indicating more satisfaction.

Table 2

*Tukey HSD*

Specialization	Specialization	<i>M</i> difference	<i>SE</i>	Sig.
Mental health counseling	School counseling	-1.28	.71	.28
	Counselor education	-4.59*	.60	.00
	Creative arts therapy/other	-.95	.63	.43
School counseling	Mental health counseling	1.28	.71	.28
	Counselor education	-3.31*	.81	.00
	Creative arts therapy/other	.33	.82	.98
Counselor education	Mental health counseling	4.59*	.60	.00
	School counseling	3.31*	.81	.00
	Creative arts therapy/other	3.64*	.73	.00
Creative arts therapy/other	Mental health counseling	.95	.63	.43
	School counseling	-.33	.82	.98
	Counselor education	-3.64*	.73	.00

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Author Note

Crista E. Gambrell, School of Psychology and Counseling, Regent University; Mark C. Rehfuss, School of Psychology and Counseling, Regent University; Elisabeth Suarez, School of Psychology and Counseling, Regent University; Dixie Meyer, School of Psychology and Counseling, Regent University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Crista E. Gambrell, School of Psychology and Counseling, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA 23464. E-mail: [Crista\\_gambrell@yahoo.com](mailto:Crista_gambrell@yahoo.com)

# The Link Between Gender and Depression in young Adults Providing Care for Older Family Members

---

Mark C. Gillen & Catherine Roland

---

This study focused on the level of depression in young adult caregivers (age 18-40) relative to gender, employment, health and relationships. Previous research found significant relationship between gender and depression. In this study, gender was found to be a contributing factor in depression among young adult caregivers; however, not a significant factor. This information may lead to broader ways of thinking about caregiving by counselors and individuals working with older adults.

*Keywords:* Young adult, caregiving, gender, depression

---

The number of Americans living into their 90s is increasing, creating an unprecedented societal change (Dellman-Jenkins, Blankemeyer, & Pinkard, 2001; Miller, Shoemaker, Willyard & Addison, 2008). In 1900, only four percent of the population was 65 years old or older (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2002). It is probable that, by 2030, the population of older adults will be approximately 7.5 million in the United States (Administration on Aging, 2004; Hooyman & Kiyak, 2002). In addition, the overall declining birthrate has created a family structure known as the beanpole family or verticalization (Gierveld & Dykstra, 2008; Martin, 1997).

Verticalization occurs when the number of generations in a family increases due to declining mortality, and the number of members of each generation decreases due to declining birth rates (Martin, 1997). More people are living longer, thus the

responsibility of caregiving for older adults is falling to more people. Adult children and spouses used to be the sole option for performing this task, but today male and female members of the younger generations are taking on this responsibility as well.

Younger adults who take on a caregiving role, voluntarily or by virtue of necessity in the family structure, have been given a task that may seem daunting at times, causing tension, frustration and at times, depression. A broad study of over 43,000 adults over the age of 45, who responded that they were caregivers, illuminated the need for counseling and case management interventions for mid-life and older caregivers (Roth, Perkins, Wadley, Temple & Haley, 2009). Although the Roth et al. (2009) study looked at multiple strains of caregiving, and incorporated several variables, an overriding issue that continued to emerge was caregiver strain, regardless of

the amount of care or the severity of the family member's physical/cognitive issue. An earlier study demonstrated that adult caregivers, who availed themselves of counseling in some form, reported reduced strain and tension for dealing with spousal caregivers of Alzheimer's patients (Roth, Mittleman, Clay, Madan, & Haley, 2005). Men and women may differ in the seeking of counseling or intervention services, therefore making it difficult to assess the counseling needs of men who fulfill the caregiver role, and traditionally appeared more stoic as to stress and tension in their everyday lives. Counseling professionals need to take into consideration that young adult men, as well as young adult women, perform varied caregiving duties, and to that end, tailor helping strategies to that population and to their busy lives (Baker & Robertson, 2008). Providing counseling services with a focus on age, stage, and gender variables may yield a unified intervention strategy for younger caregivers that does not fit the traditional expected and experienced mode of older adults, taking care of older, older adults.

### **Care Provision, Gender, and Depression**

Providing care for an aging family member has traditionally been organized according to set role patterns and structure (Crispi, Shiaffino, & Berman, 1997; Sachs, 1997; Smith, 2004). Families were sometimes heavily influenced by gender roles; for example, Western women were considered better suited to household duties, therefore being seen as the primary providers of care for the elderly (Adams & Steinmetz, 1993; Smith, 2004). Likewise, men who are not supportive of the caregiving role of their wife contributed to a decline in marital satisfaction for both partners (Suitor & Pillemer, 1994). Therefore, conflict can occur for women

when they engage in transitions that conflict with cultural mandates (Suitor & Pillemer, 1994). This conflict is something that can be addressed within the counseling process; comfortability with role and actual caretaking responsibilities can be daunting and a supportive process, such as counseling, will help.

### **Gender**

Brody, Litvin, Hoffman, and Kleban (1995) stated that in 1982, 83% of caregivers were women. Daughters seemed to provide 70 to 80% of caregiving (Mui, 1995; Smith, 2004). Women assume the caregiving role because they view caregiving as their family role, or because siblings and other family members are unwilling to provide care (Brazil, 2008; Brody et al., 1995). Women with no siblings who lived close to the care recipient have a greater chance of becoming care providers (Marks, 1996). However, caregiving among females affects their economic status and perpetuates poverty, especially among older women (Brewer, 2001).

Females seem to feel more responsible for caregiving than males, and are more likely than men to provide transportation, check on the care recipient by phone, visit, give emotional support, provide housekeeping, and bring meals (Brazil, 2008; Miller, 2008; Mui, 1995; Neal, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Starrels, 1997). Although women provide most of the care for older relatives, men do provide some care (Miller, 2008; Stoller, 2002). Males provide stereotypical masculine instrumental tasks, those most closely associated with male roles, including yard work and household repairs (Carpenter & Miller, 2002; Stoller, 2002). In fact Burack-Weiss (1995) found that men participated in caregiving only when required, or when a female caregiver was not available.

However, in a recent study of 23,000 Australians, Burns, LeBlanc, Abernethy, & Currow, (2010) reported that younger caregivers had an almost equal proportion of female to male, something not seen or reported in the U.S Burns et al. (2010) focused on patients who were diagnosed with terminal illness and their young adult caregivers in Australia. The specific medical issues may vary in some sense, but the spirit of the article remains parallel to our study. The study was conducted on former caregivers who had lost those for whom they were doing the caregiving. Caregiving, according to the current research, is being conducted by a range of age/stages for adults, and the counseling issues may seem to be a bit different given that demographic. Where before older children and relatives participated in the caregiving for the most part, currently there is reason to believe that younger adults are as well, and those individuals bring career, family and developmental issues to the counseling process. The assistance needed would be different, in that it may be the first time young adults in this role were completely responsible for another person, for care and management. A significant finding in the Burns et al. (2010) study showed:

Young active caregivers were more likely to be a close family member. Interestingly, young people were almost also as likely to care for friends and others as did those over 30. Our data identified almost as many young males were actively caring as females; this is different from past generations when caregiving responsibilities were predominantly the purview of women. Secondary analysis of U.K. data from the 1990s confirmed the trend of increasing numbers of men

providing informal care to their spouse or partner. (p. 1232)

According to Stoller (2002), attempts by previous researchers to explain the differences in type and level of care provision between males and females were limited by definitive understanding on how learned behavior and cultural norms were developed. Social scripts are often associated with gender and reinforced socialized concepts when performing tasks (Stoller, 2002). The amount of caregiving responsibility shouldered by women may also relate to a woman's greater concern with relationships and relational connections in families (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991). Caregiving is linked with the functional description of the expressive nature of females and their connection to the domestic sphere, just as males providing care is viewed as unnatural and inconsistent (Stoller, 2002). Counseling for issues of depression and helplessness would seem to be a helpful addition to the life of the caregiver but often hospitals and families either do not consider counseling or cannot pay for it. Regardless of the reason, depression may go unchecked for a period of time, possibly making it more serious.

### **Depression**

Depression rates among adult children caregivers range from 30% to 50% (Cochrane, Goering, & Rogers, 1997; Haggan, 1998). When age and education are considered, adult children still experience greater levels of depression than non-caregivers (Strawbridge, Wallhagen, Shema, & Kaplan, 1997). As early as 1989, Gallagher, Rose, Rivera, Lovett, and Thompson found that on average 36% of all caregivers, 31% of men caregivers, and 49% of women caregivers suffer from depression.

The National Family Caregiving Association (NFCA) (2000) found that 61% of caregivers providing at least 21 hours of caregiving per week suffered from depression. Recently, it was posited that for younger caregivers, aged 15 – 30 years old, depression and sometimes debilitating grief and bereavement impacted their lives in a profound manner (Burns et al., 2010). However, new studies are needed on younger caregivers to fully understand the level of depression experienced (or not) by younger caregivers.

Depression has been the focus of caregiver studies because of concern that depressed caregivers may be less responsive to the needs of the elderly (Steffen, Futterman, & Gallagher-Thompson, 1998). Markers of depression include drug use, family strain, institutionalization of the care recipient, and discontinuation of care (Arai, Suguira, Washio, & Kudo, 2001; Gallagher et al., 1989). However, information concerning caregiver depression has been primarily limited to studies where samples included family members caring for dementia patients, spousal caregivers, and a small percentage of caregivers below 35 years of age (Whitlatch, Feinberg, & Sebesta, 1997; Zunzunegui, LlacerCentro, & Beland, 2002). The grief that comes from loss of the family member or friend, from the time they are diagnosed, is another instance where depression can emerge in a more insidious way – not necessarily being observed quickly or at times at all, especially for younger adults (Burns, et al.).

### **Caregiving Strain, Depression and Gender**

According to Smerglia, Deimling, and Schafer (2001), depression is the most widely examined indicator of caregiver or chronic strain. A commonly examined variable of depression and strain is gender,

as women are expected to provide care and maintain family obligations (Pinquart & Sorensen 2006; Suito & Pillemer, 1994). Gender differences can be viewed as related to caregiver strain, and these differences are related to social and emotional characteristics such as day-to-day life management, resource availability, and impairment between caregiving and the other parts of one's life (Mui, 1995; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2006).

In an older study, Gaynor (1990) stated that women providing for an older family member over a long period of time have a higher perceived caregiver burden. While results from studies vary, most researchers examining depression in middle-age children and spouse care providers found a significant relationship between gender and depression. However, as mentioned previously, little research has been conducted with respect to the emotional and personal efforts of caregiving responsibilities and younger adults. Therefore, the major purpose of our study was to examine the relationship between level of depression and the gender of the young adults providing care for older adult family members, even though other variables were considered.

### **Method**

The research in this study involved a correlational design utilizing a cross-sectional survey methodology. The design was based on the purpose of the study: the examination of the relationship between depression, gender, employment, physical health, and relationships in young adults providing care for older adult family members. For the purpose of this study young adult was defined as adults between the ages 18 and 40.

### **Participants**

A purposeful, heterogeneous sample of young adult caregivers of older adults was recruited at two public universities and one private college. The participants were selected according to the following criteria: (a) between 18 and 40 years old, (b) provided assistance for at least one activity of daily living (ADL) or for at least one instrumental activity of daily living (IADL), (c) assistance had been provided within the last month, (d) relatives receiving assistance were age 65 or older, and (e) caregiver did not receive pay for providing the service. There are seven ADL, the most commonly used measures of functional health, including activities of personal care such as dressing, bathing, toileting, and eating (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2002). IADL focus on a care recipient's performance within their environment and include managing money, meal preparation, making a phone call, and grocery shopping (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2002). These five participant selection criteria have been used in previous caregiver studies to determine inclusion (Barnes, Given, & Given, 1995; Clark, 2002; DeVries & Hamilton, 1997; Scharlach, Midanik, Runkle, & Soghikian, 1997).

The data were analyzed using multiple regression techniques; therefore the number of predictor variables influenced the sample size. In this research study there were four predictor variables: (a) Gender, (b) Employment, (c) Health, and (d) Relationships.

Of the 3,171 surveys sent, 170 young adults self-identified as caregivers and completed the survey. Forty-five percent ( $n = 76$ ) of the caregivers who completed the survey were 18 to 30 years old, 67% ( $n = 115$ ) were female, 61% ( $n = 104$ ) did not have children living with them, or were not parents, while 54% ( $n = 92$ ) were married or partnered. The majority of respondents, 48% ( $n = 81$ ) classified themselves as staff, not

faculty or graduate assistants, and 79% ( $n = 134$ ) had a household income of less than \$40,000 per year.

### Instrument

A survey questionnaire utilizing design techniques described by Dillman (2000) was developed for our study. The survey integrated the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), a published assessment tool, and predictor variables: (a) gender, (b) employment, (c) physical health, and (d) relationships.

The CES-D measures the respondent's levels of depressive symptomatology for the current week, and has been used to measure middle age caregiver depression (Given, Given, Stommel, & Azzouz, 1999; Radloff, 1977). Because scores for the CES-D have been standardized for the general population of the United States, it was possible to compare findings in community samples and assess clinically defined mental health states by utilizing a criterion value (Raveis, Siegel, & Sudit, 1990). Gerald (1997) stated that a score of 16 or above was the common threshold for possible depression on the CES-D. Less than 20% of the general population scored at that level.

Using the CES-D our participant caregivers evaluated 20 events that may have occurred in the last week. Examples of questions included: (a) I was bothered by things that usually do not bother me; (b) My sleep was restless; and (c) I enjoyed life. Caregivers evaluated each statement on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (*rarely or none of the time, less than 1 day*) to 3 (*most or all of the time, 5-7 days*). A total score of 16 and above on the CES-D indicated possible clinical depression. The test-retest reliability of the CES-D was .40, and the internal consistency was .80 or above (Radloff,



1977). In the current study reliability was .89.

Participant gender was revealed through the use of a categorical scale with 0 representing male and 1 representing female.

### **Procedure**

The data analysis was guided by the purpose of this study: the examination of the relationship between the level of depression in young adult caregivers, gender, employment, physical health, and relationships. Initial data analysis began with examination of the bivariate relationships between depression, gender, health, employment and relationships. This was followed up with a hierarchical multiple regression, which was well suited to predicting a dependent variable from a set of predictors, especially naturally occurring predictors (Glass & Hopkins, 1996; Hatcher & Stepanski, 1999; Stevens, 1986).

Since regression models assume that variables were measured without error, and since there were missing values in the dependent variable, depression as measured by the CES-D, a method for dealing with the missing values had to be determined. Crown (1998) stated that one method for imputing missing data was to substitute the mean value of the variable for the missing observations. This method was used to determine the missing values on the CES-D. Multicollinearity was dealt with through principal component analysis as a method for creating combinations of explanatory variables (Crown, 1998). A Varimax rotation was utilized to make factors more identifiable. To determine if the data met the assumption of bivariate normality the distribution of the dependent variable, depression, with each of the predictor variables was assessed for normal distribution and homogeneity of variance (Crown, 1998). Homogeneity of variance

was confirmed by examining Levene's statistic. Due to lack of normal distribution in the dependent variable a square root transformation was conducted, bringing the variable closer to a normal distribution. Normality of the dependent variable was confirmed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality.

### **Results**

#### **Depression**

In response to the question, "Do young adults who provide care for older adult family members have higher levels of depression than the general population," the answer was determined by examining the caregivers' scores on the CES-D. A score of 16 or above on the CES-D is commonly considered the threshold for possible depression (Radloff, 1977). Twenty percent of the general population scores at, or above, this level (Gerald, 1997; Given, et al., 1999). In this sample of caregivers 34.1% ( $n = 58$ ) scored 16 or higher, and 22.2% ( $n = 36$ ) scored 20 or above, indicating probable clinical depression.

#### **Depression and Gender**

Bivariate analysis tests were performed to determine whether the means between groups in the sample were statistically different. This analysis examined the levels of depression between groups not controlling for other variables by testing at a much more stringent level of .001 (Stevens, 1986). ANOVAs did not reveal significant effects for gender of the caregiver.

Depression correlated significantly with gender of the caregiver ( $r = .17$ ). There were also significant correlations detected

between caregiver health and gender ( $r = -.19$ ), and education and gender ( $r = -.17$ ).

In the hierarchical multiple regression model, with variables based on previous research, depression scores were regressed on the linear combination of four levels of variables: (a) gender of the caregiver, (b) living arrangement, family support, length of time providing care, value of caregiving, and number of children in the home, (c) health, and (d) employment impact, education, and income. The equation containing all of these variables, level four, accounted for 31% of the variance of depression,  $F(10, 156) = 6.94$ ,  $p < .001$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .26$ . However, in model one, when all independent variables except caregiver gender were deleted from the model there was an  $R^2$  change of .030 ( $F = 5.03$ ),  $p = .03$ , indicating that, as a group, the independent variables made a significant difference. Gender did account for 3% of the variance of depression in model one, and 7% when combined with length of time providing care in model two. Beta weights were reviewed for each model. Caregiver gender displayed significant beta weights in model one, .17 ( $p = .026$ ), and model two, .16 ( $p = .032$ ). The summary of the regression model is shown in Table 1 (see Appendix).

## Discussion

### Depression

There has been a paucity of studies focused on young adults providing care for older adult family members, including information on levels of depression among this population. While depression rates for the general population are only about 20% it has been estimated that depression rates are 30% to 50% among middle-age adult children caring for parents (Gerald, 1997; Haggan, 1998). Steffen et al. (1998) found

that 30% of caregivers who suffered from chronic stress also suffered depression. Gallagher et al. (1989) found that on average 36% of all caregivers suffered from depression. Because the levels of depression in young adult care providers was relatively unknown, one of the important findings of the current study was that 34.1% ( $n = 58$ ) of the young adult caregivers surveyed scored 16 or higher on the CES-D, indicating possible clinical depression, and 22.2% ( $n = 36$ ) scored 20 or above, indicating probable clinical depression.

### Gender and Depression

In the current study 67% ( $n = 115$ ) of the caregivers surveyed were female, slightly below the percentages reported in other studies. Historically, caregiver gender has been reported as a significant predictor of depression in caregivers (Brewer, 2001; Gallicchio et al., 2002; Given et al., 1999; Martin, 1997). However, analysis in the current study did not reveal a significant difference between levels of depression in male and female caregivers, although female caregivers did have higher mean scores on the CES-D than did male caregivers. The results of this study require researchers to reconsider gender as a predictor for depression among young adult caregivers.

### Limitations

This study was an initial attempt to gather data on a previously little studied population of care providers using a non-random heterogeneous sample. Previous studies of care providers utilized easily accessible samples, often care providers connected with care facilities. The current study was designed to access young adults in the general population performing some level of care for an older family member. The participants were employees of

universities who had agreed to support the research, provided some level of care for an older adult family member, and who met the age definition. It is impossible to determine if caregivers who chose to participate were different from caregivers who declined.

The two universities and one college that participated were from the Midwestern section of the United States. The sample might not be representative of other areas of the country relative to geography, socioeconomic status, urban vs. suburban or rural, or to other cultures or countries. The effects of socioeconomic status were addressed by contacting participants who were employed at all levels within the institutions, which may have been a limitation; in order to better understand the impact of the predictor variables on depression, a study that incorporates private and public sector employees seems warranted.

### **Implications for Counseling**

With limited quantitative studies of young adult care providers in the United States available, determination of a problem was a necessary first step. This study was a step in providing pertinent, useful information for counselors and caregivers. Researchers interested in aging, adult development across the life span and gender issues in a developmental arena should continue to seek knowledge on imaginative techniques and interventions for counselors to assist clients and families. Caregiving, although not at all a new role in society, has broadened to include populations of younger adults who have had no training or information and, at times, no prior warning on how this activity may affect their lives, families, careers, and emotional well-being.

One of the most important conclusions of the current study is the recognition that young adult caregivers do

suffer from depression at rates comparable to middle-age caregivers, as substantiated by the recent Australian study (Burns et al., 2010). This may mean that young adults who provide care to older adults are emotionally taxed at a greater rate than their cohorts. The call for counselors to learn more about the caregiving instances among their existing clients, and the fear and pre-grieving that caregivers might be feeling would be areas for concern within the counseling process.

Our results illustrate a more even range of depression between younger male and female caregivers, which may significantly alter perceptions within the counseling venue. Previously, counseling professionals accepted more generally that, since women traditionally provided more care, they would suffer more depressive symptoms, and perhaps be more depressed throughout life. We now can look at the possibility that men and women suffer depression more similarly; the counseling process can embrace this by employing imaginative strategies and interventions, such as groups with both males and females, in-home-interventions with full family present, and other creative functions to address caregiving stress and depression in younger adults.

Since young adult male and female care providers suffer from depression at levels above the population in general, counselors might utilize the information provided by this study to understand the extra burden of being a young adult caregiver. We are beginning to look at the life span issues associated with caretaking for younger adults; perhaps increased depth of empathy will be achieved by counselors and counselors-in-training who aspire to work with a familial, caregiving population. Further research is needed in this broad area. Normalization is an important counseling tool, and providing normalization

information requires that counselors have more than anecdotal information, as well as

data-based

research

studies.

## References

- Adams, B., & Steinmetz, S. (1993). Family theory and methods in classics. In P. G. Boss, W. J. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. R. Schumm, & S. K. Steinmetz, (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 71-94). New York: NY: Plenum.
- Administration on Aging. (2004). *Profile of older Americans 2004*. Retrieved February 6, 2011, from <http://www.aog.gov/prof/Statistics/profile/2004/2.asp>.
- Arai, Y., Suguira, M., Washio, M., & Kudo, K. (2001). Caregiver depression predicts early discontinuation of care for disable elderly at home. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, *55*, 379-382.
- Baker, K. L., & Robertson, N. (2009). Coping with caring for someone with dementia: Reviewing the literature about men. *Aging & Mental Health*, *12*, 413-423.
- Barnes, C. L., Given, B. A., & Given, C. W. (1995). Parent caregivers: A comparison of employed and not employed daughters. *Social Work*, *40*, 375-380.
- Brazil, K., Thabane, L., Foster, G., & Bedard, M. (2009). Gender differences among Canadian spousal caregivers at the end of life. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, *17*, 159-166.
- Brewer, L. (2001). Gender socialization and the cultural construction of elder caregivers. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *15*, 217-236.
- Brody, E., Litvin, S., Hoffman, C., & Kleban, M. (1995). Marital status of caregiving daughters and co-residence with dependent parents. *The Gerontologist*, *35*, 75-85.
- Burack-Weiss, A. (1995). The caregiver's memoir: A new look at family support. *Social Work*, *40*, 391-397.
- Burns, C. M., LeBlanc, T. W., Abernethy, A., & Currow, D. (2010). Young caregivers in the end-of-life setting: A population-based profile of an emerging group. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, *13*, 1225-1236.
- Carpenter, E. H., & Miller, B. H. (2002). Psychosocial challenges and rewards experienced by caregiving men: A review of the literature and an empirical case example. In B. J. Kramer & E. H. Thompson (Eds.), *Men as caregivers: Theory, research, and service implications* (pp. 99-126). New York: Springer.
- Clark, P. (2002). Effects of individual and family hardiness on caregiver depression and fatigue. *Research in Nursing & Health*, *25*, 37-48.
- Cochrane, J., Goering, P., & Rogers, J. (1997). The mental health of informal caregivers in Ontario: An epidemiological survey. *American Journal of Public Health*, *87*, 2002-2007.
- Crispi, E., Schiaffino, K., & Berman, W. (1997). The contribution of attachment to burden in adult children of institutionalized parents with dementia. *The Gerontologist*, *37*, 52-60.
- Crown, W. H. (1998). *Statistical models for the social and behavioral sciences*. London: Praeger.
- DeVries, H., & Hamilton, D. (1997). Patterns of coping preferences for male and female caregivers of frail older adults. *Psychology and Aging*, *12*, 263-267.
- Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. New

- York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gallagher, D., Rose, J., Rivera, P., Lovett, S., & Thompson, L. (1989). Prevalence of depression in family caregivers. *The Gerontologist*, 29, 449-456.
- Galicchio, L., Siddiqi, N., Langenberg, P., & Baumgarten, M. (2002). Gender differences in burden and depression among informal caregivers of demented elders in the community. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 17, 154-163.
- Gaynor, S. (1990). The long haul: The effects of home care on caregivers. *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 22, 208-212.
- Gerald, L. B. (1997). Mental health outcomes among women in caregiving roles: Elder care versus child care. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 58 (09), 3737. (UMI No. 9807877)
- Gierveld, J.D., & Dykstra, P.A. (2008). Virtue is its own reward? Support-giving in the family and loneliness in middle and old age. *Ageing and Society*, 28, 271-272.
- Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Given, C., Given, B., Stommel, M., & Azzouz, F. (1999). The impact of new demands for assistance on caregiver depression: Tests using an inception cohort. *The Gerontologist*, 39, 76-85.
- Glass, G. V., & Hopkins, K. D. (1996). *Statistical methods in education and psychology* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Goldenberg, I., & Goldenberg, H. (2000). *Family therapy: An overview*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Haggan, P. (1998). Counseling adult children of aging parents. *Educational Gerontology*, 24, 333-348.
- Hatcher, L., & Stepanski, E. J. (1999). *A step-by-step approach to using the SAS system for univariate and multivariate statistics*. Cary NC: SAS Institute.
- Hooymann, N., & Kiyak, H. A. (2002). *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Jordan, J.V., Kaplan, A., Miller, J. B., Stiver, I., & Surrey, J. L. (1991). *Women's growth in connection*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Marks, N. (1996). Caregiving across the lifespan: National prevalence and predictors. *Family relations*, 45, 27-36.
- Martin, C. (1997). Caregiving burden: Race and gender effects (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1997). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 58, 1111.
- Miller, K.I., Harrison, M. J., Willyard, J., & Addison, P. (2008). Providing care for elderly parents: A structural approach to family caregiver identity. *Journal of Family Communication*, 8, 19-43.
- Mui, A. C. (1995). Caring for frail elderly parents: A comparison of adult sons and daughters. *The Gerontologist*, 35, 86-95.
- Neal, M. B., Ingersoll-Dayton, B., & Starrels, M. (1997). Gender and relationship differences in caregiving patterns and consequences among employed caregivers. *The Gerontologist*, 37, 804-816.
- National Family Caregiving Association (2000, October). *Caregiver survey-2000*, Kensington, MD: Author.
- Pinquart, M., & Sorensen, S. (2006). Gender differences in caregiver stressors, social resources,

- and health: An updated Meta-Analysis. *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 61B, 33-45.
- Radloff, L. S. (1977). The CES-D scale: A self-report depression scale for research on the general population. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 1, 385-401.
- Raveis, V., Siegel, K., & Sudit, M. (1990). Psychological impact of caregiving on the caregiver: Critical review of research methodologies. In D. E. Biegel & A. Blum (Eds.), *Aging and caregiving: Theory, research, and policy* (pp. 53-75). London: Sage.
- Roth, D. L., Perkins, M., Wadley, V. G., Temple, E., & Haley, W. E. (2009). Family caregiving and emotional strain: Associations with quality of life in a large national sample of middle-aged and older adults. *Quality of Life Research*, 18, 679-688.
- Roth, D., Mittelman, M., Clay, O., Madan, A., & Haley, W.E. (2005). Changes in social support as mediators of the impact of a psychosocial intervention for spouse caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease. *Psychology and Aging*, 20, 634-644.
- Sachs, P. (1997). Short-term treatment for families of older adults with neurological impairments. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 25, 345-356.
- Scharlach, A, Midanik, L., Runkle, M. C., & Soghikian, K. (1997). Health practices of adults with elder care responsibilities. *Preventive Medicine: An International Journal Devoted to Practice and Theory*, 26, 155-161.
- Smerglia, V., Deimling, G., & Schafer, M. (2001). The impact of race on decision-making satisfaction and caregiver depression: A path analytic model. *Journal of Mental Health and Aging*, 7, 301-316.
- Steffen, A., Futterman, A., & Gallagher-Thompson, D. (1998). Depressed caregivers: Comparative outcomes of two interventions. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 19, 3-15.
- Stevens, J. (1986). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Stoller, E. P. (2002). Theoretical perspectives on caregiving men. In Kramer, B. J., & Thompson, E. H. (Eds.), *Men as caregivers: Theory, research, and service implications* (pp. 51-68). New York: Springer.
- Strawbridge, W., Wallhagen, M., Shema, S., & Kaplan, G. (1997). New burdens or more of the same? Comparing grandparent, spouse, and adult-child caregivers. *The Gerontologist*, 37, 505-510.
- Suitor, J., & Pillemer, K. (1994). Family caregiving and marital satisfaction: Findings from a 1-year panel study of women caring for parents with dementia. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 56, 681-691.
- Whitlatch, C., Feinberg, L. F., & Sebesta, D. S. (1997). Depression and health in family caregivers. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 9, 222-243.
- Zunzunegui, M., LlacerCentro, A., & Beland, F. (2002). The role of social and psychological resources in the evolution of depression in caregivers. *Canadian Journal of Aging*, 21, 357-369.

Appendix

Table 1  
*Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Young Adult Caregiver Depression (N = 170)*

Variable	Unstandardized		Standardized $\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	B	SE B			
Step 1					
(Constant)	10.30	1.24		8.28	.000**
Caregiver Gender	3.24	1.51	.16	2.13	.034*
Step 2					
(Constant)	8.2	4.82		1.7	.091
Caregiver Gender	3.22	1.52	.16	2.11	.036*
Children	-.15	.44	-.03	-.35	.73
Length of time caregiving	1.96	.92	.17	2.14	.034*
Living arrangement	-1.33	2.22	-.05	-.6	.55
Family support	3.27	2.36	.11	1.38	.17
Value	-.35	.79	-.03	-.44	.66

Note. \*  $R^2 = .027$ ;  $R^2 = .021$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .027$  for step 1;  $R^2 = .074$ ;  $R^2 = .039$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .047$  for Step 2.  

$p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .001$



### Author Note

Mark Gillen is an Associate Professor and Department Chair, at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, in the department of counseling and school psychology. Catherine B. Roland is a Professor of Counseling, and Director of the PhD program in Counselor Education in the Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership, at Montclair State University in Montclair, NJ.

All correspondence regarding this article should be sent to:

Dr. Mark Gillen, Counseling and School Psychology Dept.  
University of Wisconsin-River Falls  
410 S. Third  
231 WEB  
River Falls, WI 54022  
Tel.: [\(715\) 425-3890](tel:7154253890)