

SCHOOL COUNSELING SUPERVISION: A QUALITATIVE SUMMARY FROM THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL COUNSELING SITE-SUPERVISORS

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Janelle Lynn Stahl Ladbury

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**Title**

School Counseling Supervision: A Qualitative Summary from the Perspective of  
School Counseling Site-Supervisors

**By**

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Brenda Hall (Chair)

---

Dr. Jill Nelson

---

Dr. Nathan Wood

---

Dr. Duane Halbur

---

Approved:

July 2, 2012  
Date

Dr. William Martin  
Department Chair

## ABSTRACT

School counseling supervision is an area of research that has limited information available to school counselors. As a result, a qualitative study from the perspective of school counseling site-supervisors was conducted to address the following three research questions 1) What is good school counseling supervision?, 2) What exemplifies exceptional school counseling site-supervisors?, and 3) Why do school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision?

In order to best address the questions in this study, the researcher conducted individual phone interviews with ten participants working as school counseling site-supervisors throughout the United States. To increase the trustworthiness of the study the following methods were used: member checks, data saturation, triangulation, the peer review process, identification of the researcher's perspective, maximum variation, an audit trail, and participant quotations.

As a result of the study, the researcher identified seven major themes. The themes identified in the study are: 1) Good school counseling supervision facilitates professional growth and development of the school counseling intern from a developmental perspective, 2) Good school counseling supervision establishes a collaborative working relationship for the intern with the supervisor and the school's stakeholders, 3) Good school counseling supervision establishes an environment that is conducive to learning, flexible and well-defined, 4) An exceptional school counseling supervisor is aware of the developmental process of the school counseling intern, 5) An exceptional school counseling supervisor acts as an educator, counselor and consultant throughout the internship experience, 6) An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor, and 7) School counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual

development of the counseling profession and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor.

Finally, the researcher provides a summary of the research study's results identifying connections between the results, the existing literature and how this study fills current gaps. Additionally, the researcher provides a critical analysis of the study, the study's limitations and areas for future research to enhance the field of school counseling supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

I am dedicating my dissertation to my daughter, Evalynn and my nephews Kyle, Kade and Drew. May you always follow your dreams and work hard to reach them. I believe each of you can be anything you want to be and you can do anything you set your mind to.

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## INTRODUCTION

"The dream begins, most of the time, with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you on to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth." - Dan Rather (as cited by National Education Association, 2012). Counseling supervisors, like teachers, exemplify the same responsibilities of supporting future professional counselors. However, within school counseling supervision, it is not clearly defined as to when the supervisor should tug, push, or encourage movement to the next plateau or even when and how to poke with the stick of truth.

In counselor preparation programs, supervision from an experienced counselor is identified as an important component of the learning process, especially for a pre-professional or newly hired professional counselor. While supervision is a valued process, there is debate and confusion regarding supervision training, more specifically in the area of school counseling supervision. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) identifies criteria for counseling site-supervisors in the 2009 standards. However, until recently, training programs or workshops related to supervision competencies were not a requirement of the supervisor experience. Currently, supervision training is limited for site-supervisors and is not specific to school counseling supervision. Studer (2005) suggests a framework for school counseling supervisors; however, empirical evidence to support the efficacy of the framework is not provided in the guide for school counseling supervisors.

CACREP accredited master's level programs are now required to teach models, practices and processes of supervision as components of the professional orientation and ethical practices standard (CACREP, 2009). However, if school counselors are to effectively supervise students who will soon be entering the field of counseling, it is necessary for practicing school counselors

and school counseling supervisors to know more about counseling supervision as it relates specifically to the school setting. Although the school counseling CACREP standards require that supervision models be taught in counselor preparation programs, no common framework for teaching or evaluating the models exists. As a result of limited empirical school counseling supervision research, it is hard to understand what constitutes excellence in school counseling supervision.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to explore what encompasses good school counseling supervision, what exemplifies exceptional school counseling supervisors and why the identified exceptional school counseling supervisors become involved in supervision. Objectives for the study are a) to explore good school counseling supervision, b) to explore the qualities of an exceptional school counseling supervisor, and c) to identify why school counselors are involved in school counseling supervision as a supervisor.

### **Definition of Terms**

Understanding the terminology of school counseling and supervision is an essential component for this study. Throughout the paper many of the terms are used interchangeably with other words meaning the same thing. Important vocabulary to understand include: school counselor, supervisor, supervision, school counselor-in-training, and supervisee. The following information includes important key terms to the study and terms that are occasionally used interchangeably throughout the text, as well as their definitions.

Although the overall paper focuses on school counseling supervision, it also emphasizes the important role of the school counselor. A *school counselor* is an individual who has at least a master's degree in school counseling or a related field and helps students in schools with



academic, personal/social or career needs while implementing comprehensive programs to help with student success (ACA, ASCA, & NEA, 2008).

Prior to discussing school counseling supervision it is essential to understand supervision as a whole, the different types implemented, and the participating individuals. *Supervision* is the process in which knowledge, feedback and experience is provided by an experienced, practicing supervisor to a counselor-in-training. Through this interaction and feedback, supervision allows counselors to learn professional behaviors and values (Borders, 1990; Bradley & Kottler, 2001; Miller & Dollarhide, 2006).

In addition to the process of supervision, different types exist including administrative or evaluative supervision, clinical supervision and peer supervision. *Administrative or evaluative supervision* is “an ongoing process in which the supervisor oversees staff and staff communications, planning, implementation and evaluation of individuals, programs or both individuals and programs” (Page, Pietrzak, & Sutton, 2001, p. 144). In addition, *clinical supervision* “is an intensive, interpersonal focused relationship, usually one-to-one or small group, in which the supervisor helps the counselor as he or she learns to apply a wider variety of assessment and counseling methods in increasingly complex cases” (Page, et. al., 2001, p. 144). More specifically, Studer (2005) states, “clinical supervision for school counselor trainees aims to improve direct service delivery and unique skills, particularly in the areas of guidance curricula, counseling, consultation and referral” (p.355). Studer’s definition of clinical supervision also fits a broad definition of school counseling supervision, which is defined more in detail later.

Within the processes of supervision, two key people involved are the supervisee the supervisor. *Supervisees* typically are practicing school counselors or school counselors-in-

training who receive instruction, support and evaluation regarding counseling skills, consultation and various other requirements of professional school counselors (Bradley & Kottler, 2001; Muse-Burke, Ladany, & Deck, 2001). A *school counselor-in-training* is a graduate student completing a master's degree program in school counseling. In addition, the student is completing a field experience, typically referred to as a practicum or internship, and is under the supervision of a school counselor (Studer & Diambra, 2010). Throughout this study, the terms school counselor-in-training and intern are used interchangeably.

The second key individual involved in supervision is the supervisor. The *supervisor* is an individual who supervises and mentors another individual to help them develop into a skilled practitioner (Studer, 2006) and has appropriate training in supervision to help promote counseling skills, knowledge and professional identity (Dye & Borders, 1990). While supervisor is a more general term, *site-supervisor* refers to a supervisor providing an on-site supervision experience (Studer & Diambra, 2010), and in this study to a school counseling graduate student at their internship site. Within the study, supervisor and site-supervisor are used interchangeably.

### **Importance of the Study**

School counselors work every day to meet the needs of students in their school. Through a comprehensive program, school counselors provide to students responsive and support services through the delivery of academic, career and personal/social curriculum, individual planning and consultation as well as personal counseling and referral. Often times, the burden of creating and implementing a counseling program lands on the shoulders of the school counselor, without additional support or guidance from someone understanding or knowing the profession. Supervision in the school setting is an important aspect in helping school counselors with their

personal and professional development. The importance of this study is to explore school counseling supervision from the perspective of school counselors working as site-supervisors.

In addition to the exploration of school counseling supervision, the researcher hopes to learn more about why individuals become involved in supervision and what the key components of school counseling supervision include. Outcomes learned from the study could provide data useful for understanding the necessary key elements of effective supervision as well as insight about strategies and processes for a widely accepted structure for teaching school counseling supervision. The information gathered from the study has the potential to affect university programs that train school counselors and enhance supervisory roles, placement of counselors-in-training, the future of supervision for collaboration with site supervisors as well as the necessary school counselors.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study has the potential to encounter limitations. The researcher has identified the possible limitations:

- Researcher bias toward school counseling supervision based on experience as a school counselor, a school counseling supervisor and interactions with other school counselors in supervisory roles.
- Environmental factors including technology failure, interruptions in phone communication, and the inability of the researcher to view and record body language.
- The limit of useable data due to the potential difficulty to schedule follow-up interviews with participants and the completion of interview summary sheets by participants.

- The researcher's need to rely on counselor educators to refer quality participants, with each counselor educator interpreting the term exceptional differently.
- The possibility of participants trying to impress or side with the researcher providing information that may not be true to their experience.
- Accurately taking notes, interpreting data and organizing large amounts of information.
- Scheduling of potential interviews with school counselors.

### **Summary of Chapters**

In Chapter One, a brief overview of school counseling supervision and key terms were shared. Chapter Two provides a more extensive review of the research literature regarding school counseling supervision. Chapters Three, Four and Five, respectively provide the foundation for the study including the methodology, the themes, and discussion. An overview of supervision as well as a review of school counseling supervision is discussed. In addition, empirical research and lack thereof in the field of school counseling supervision is reviewed. A summary of benefits and challenges for school counseling supervision is also addressed. Furthermore, the current framework of school counseling and school counseling supervision is shared. Knowledge areas, ethical codes, supervisor credentials and supervision training models are reviewed. Finally, the essence of school counseling comprehensive programs based on the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model is highlighted.

In addition, an extensive outline of the study is included. A review of the research design as well as a description of participants and participant recruitment is identified. Procedures used during the data collection and data analysis phases of the study are outlined. Also included are the components used to address trustworthiness in the study.

Finally, the themes of the research are identified and discussed; connecting the themes to research in the literature. Also included are limitations of the study and recommendation for future research to further explore school counseling supervision.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Supervision is an essential piece of continued development for the counseling profession. Supervision allows individual counselors with less experience to have a relationship with a knowledgeable and trained individual serving as a supervisor to improve both personal and professional growth (Bradley & Kottler, 2001). In order for supervisors to be most useful to their supervisees, appropriate qualifications, knowledge, skills and training programs should be available.

Several universities across the United States have developed training programs to meet protocols set forth by CACREP regarding supervision of counselors-in-training. For instance, some universities host a site-supervisor workshop to discuss the important aspects of supervision outlined for counseling students or counselors-in-training (Getz & Schnurman-Cook, n.d.). Other universities have created manuals (Dedmond & Spriggs, 2005; Erdman, 2011; Georgia Southern University College of Education, 2008) or offer a simple webpage outlining supervision expectations. (Getz & Schnurman-Cook, n.d.; Virginia Tech School of Education Counselor Education, 2009). Murray State University in Kentucky has developed a 5-hour supervision training workshop that has received positive feedback from participants regarding the supervision topics covered and has been offered again at a regional conference (Bakes, 2007).

Even though CACREP has identified the importance of site supervisor training, there is a lack of direction for the creation of specific training competencies among counselor education programs. Part of the reason for this lack of consistency in supervision training is a result of no common set of objectives for what should be taught to the site-supervisors. The lack of direction creates inconsistencies of training programs for site-supervisors among counselor education

programs. As a result, many counseling supervisors are apprehensive, anxious or uncertain about their supervisory responsibilities.

The purpose of this study is to explore school counseling supervision from the site-supervisors perspective. The results of the study will provide further research to the counseling supervision community and will promote development of curriculum specific to site-supervisors and school counseling supervisors. In order to appreciate the importance of school counseling supervision for counselors-in-training, relatively new counselors and experienced school counselors, a review of the important supervision literature follows.

### **Overview of Counseling Supervision**

Although the overall theme is similar, the definition of counseling supervision can change from one person to another. Counselor supervision, as defined by Bradley and Kottler (2001), “is a process in which an experienced person (supervisor) with appropriate training and experience mentors and teaches a subordinate (supervisee)” (p. 4) whereas, Borders (1990) writes, “supervision is characterized by a cycle of feedback, practice, and additional feedback” (para. 4). More specifically, Miller and Dollarhide (2006) identify supervision for school counselors as “a means of teaching professional values, mores, and behaviors, helping counselors to understand the ASCA National Model and to work toward program transformation” (p.298).

In addition to the definitions of supervision, different types of supervision occur, as stated earlier. Supervision that may exist for counselors includes clinical supervision, which is supervision of counseling skills, administrative or evaluative supervision, supervision of job performance (Maguson, Norem, & Bradley, 2001; Page, et.al., 2001; Tromski-Klingshirn & Davis, 2007), and peer supervision (Borders, 1990; Page, et. al., 2001). Peer supervision is the

supervision process occurring between two colleagues or school counselors working together (Henderson, 1994; Page, et. al., 2001). Each of the types of supervision can be delivered through individual/dyadic, triadic, group or technology supported supervision (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009) by clinical supervisors, administrative supervisors or peer supervisors (Borders, 2006; Tromski-Klingshirn, 2006; Tromski-Klingshirn & Davis, 2007).

### **Counseling Supervision in Schools**

Students graduate each year from school counseling programs ready to go to work and implement a comprehensive school counseling program. Some graduates may go to small districts as a k-12 school counselor; while others may enter larger school districts where they are one of many elementary, middle or secondary school counselors. Although students are prepared to enter the profession of counseling, on-going supervision is an essential piece of continued professional growth and development of a counselor (Herlihy, Gray, & McCollum, 2002). Since post-degree supervision is not mandated (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006), some new counselors may completely lack supervision while others might be supervised by administrators or might participate in peer supervision; additionally, some may be fortunate enough to work where a school counseling coordinator or director supports and supervises new professionals (Butler & Constantine, 2006; Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Page, et.al., 2001). Those school counselors who are offered proper supervision will be better suited to abide by the ethical codes, avoid dilemmas and avoid becoming stagnate and out of touch in their practice.

In a school setting, school counselors are often supervised by building administrators or district personnel (administrative supervisors) instead of counselors trained in supervision (clinical supervisors) (Maguson, et. al., 2001). School counseling directors or coordinators would be excellent candidates to implement school counseling supervision for school counselors due to



their additional training in supervision and ability to oversee the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2008b). However, it seems as though few school districts employ these positions. According to the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2008b), the school counseling director or coordinator would “provide individual and group supervision to school counselors in practice” and “collaborate in the supervision of school counseling interns/fieldwork students” (para. 3).

### **Benefits of School Counseling Supervision**

Supervision for school counselors is an important process to help teach behaviors and professional values, to understand the ASCA National Model, to enhance counseling skills, to increase self-awareness and to integrate one’s professional and personal identity (Borders, 1990; Miller & Dollarhide, 2006). Counseling supervision can also help with school counselor development by increasing levels of counselor self-efficacy regarding “microskills, counseling process, dealing with difficult client behaviors, cultural competence and values” (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001, p. 44). School counselors may want to participate in supervision after graduation from their program to help further develop their skills, to improve their school counseling, to prepare for licensure, or to enhance self-knowledge (Page, et. al., 2001). The potential for supervision as a useful tool for school counselors to improve their work in the school system is high. Unfortunately, very little is known regarding the effects supervision has on the efficacy of school counseling. There is only speculation how supervision is most helpful to school counselors and school counselors-in-training during the supervision process.

### **Competency of Practice**

School counselors are encouraged to practice at their level of competence or training (ASCA, 2008a; Lawrence & Robinson Kurpius, 2000). In school settings, school counselors may

be asked to collaborate with teachers, parents, students, and administrators. Collaboration with personnel in a school setting can produce areas of difficulty for new counselors. Protecting a client's confidentiality is expected in the ASCA code of ethics (Standard A.2), however when working in a team setting to best help the student, a school counselor may be put in a difficult situation regarding school policy and ethical codes. Support and guidance from a supervisor could help the new counselor evaluate the situation and provide them experience to collaborate in the future with fewer difficulties (ASCA, 2008a).

Another example that supports supervision for counselors with little or no experience relates to the ever changing atmosphere of school settings and nuances of student difficulties. It is impossible for school counselors to have been trained in every possible situation they could encounter. School counselors may facilitate groups or work individually with students experiencing a wide array of difficulties including suicidal ideation, drug/alcohol abuse, problems with family or friends, failing classes, or attendance issues. A new counselor working with a supervisor who has experience or training can help the counselor work through client situations that arise on a day-to-day basis in the school.

### **Counselor Development**

As stated earlier, supervision of school counselors is an essential component for professional development of school counselors. Allowing school counselors to refine their skills, become more self-aware and reflect upon their values is crucial (Borders, 1990; Miller & Dollarhide, 2006). In addition, supervision provides school counselors with the ability to increase levels of counselor self-efficacy in areas such as cultural awareness, working with difficult behaviors of clients and individual counseling techniques (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001). Supervision also allows school counselors the capacity to further develop their skills, to improve

their school counseling, to prepare for licensure, or to improve self-knowledge during post-degree work experience (Page, et. al., 2001).

For school counselors who were not a teacher first, additional support and structure may be needed through supervision (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Studer, 2005). The operation of a school system may provide new experiences for the counselor they were not prepared for during their training program. Some of the topics a counselor new to the school system could benefit from while working with a supervisor include discussion of school policies and procedures, designing lessons and classroom management, or other time management and schedule related tasks. By working with a school counseling supervisor, counselors are able to express their concerns without the “boss” or administrative supervisor being aware of insecurities.

In addition, new counselors are expected to perform the same tasks and engage in the same responsibilities of veteran counselors (Matthes 1992, as cited in Henderson, 1994). This may include implementing a comprehensive program, evaluating program needs and other assigned duties by administration. While a veteran counselor may be used to balancing tasks, a new counselor could be overwhelmed by the amount of responsibilities necessary. Supervision helps ease isolation, eliminate tasks unrelated to counseling, and help reduce stress or feelings of being overworked (Herlihy, et al, 2002). In addition, the professional development of counselors is supported by the supervision process (Miller & Dollarhide, 2006).

Supervision of school counselors is an important aspect for continued development of the professional school counselor. The supervisory relationship provides an environment for school counselors to review, learn and grow from the current work with students. The overall outlook of supervision occurring for school counselors is disappointing; however, a research study conducted by Page, et. al., (2001) indicates some school counselors are interested in receiving

supervision. As a school counselor, it is important to advocate for the process to occur to continue providing above adequate services to students, parents, faculty, school and community in which the counselor serves.

### **Desire for Supervision**

Although several reasons exist as to why school counselors would benefit from supervision, Miller and Dollarhide (2006) write, “supervisees must be ready, willing, and able to benefit from supervision” (p. 299). In a study by Page, et. al., (2001), 70% of practicing school counselors wanted to receive supervision from other school counselors who were trained in supervision, “57% of school counselors wanted to receive clinical supervision in the future;” (p.146) while only 13% were receiving clinical supervision, 11% group supervision and 29% peer supervision. Even though the literature indicates school counselors wish to receive more clinical supervision, less than 50% of counselors actually do (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006).

### **Challenges of School Counseling Supervision**

Several factors that impact whether or not a school counselor engages in post-degree supervision include personal reasons, increasing counselor development, supervisor credentials, the supervisory relationship and understanding the need and importance of supervision (Borders, 1990; Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Miller & Dollarhide, 2006; Page, et. al., 2001). School counselors are apprehensive or unsure about establishing supervision in a school system. When school counselors primarily report to principals the supervision process may not occur as “school administrators, in particular, may continue to perceive the school counselor’s role as being focused primarily on such activities as academic advising, scheduling, psychoeducation, and group guidance” instead of clinical practice (Herlihy, et al, 2002, para. 6). In addition school counselor roles and responsibilities are often unclear; therefore they are unable to show the

importance of supervision to help improve their clinical skills (Herlihy, et al, 2002). As stated above, school administrators may not fully understand the counselor's position and may assign clerical tasks unrelated to counseling.

In addition, two other challenges in school counseling supervision include finding qualified supervisors and the ability to use supervision techniques, like taping and feedback. Often difficulties arise with audio or video taping for the purpose of supervision feedback due to permission needed from both school or district administrators and parents. The loss of this supervision modality can be detrimental to the supervision process when supervisors are unable to review cases (Herlihy, et al, 2002) and provide the feedback on a regular basis to address and strengthen the supervisee's skills (Borders, 1990). Furthermore, the ability to find these qualified counseling supervisors who are familiar with the school setting and accessible to the supervisee at the same site as the school counseling supervisor is difficult (Herlihy, et al, 2002).

However, even when the supervisees do not know who is qualified to supervise or how to establish the relationship for a successful school counseling supervision experience, the supervisee can help eliminate the obstacles by knowing what is appropriate and what they need from the supervision experience. One key component supervisees need to know in order to help overcome the challenges of school counseling supervision is the training and knowledge the practicing school counseling supervisor possesses. Training and preparation for supervising supervisees is important (Miller & Dollarhide, 2006) since the effectiveness of supervision can be a result of supervisor abilities, which may also impact future performance of counselors (Dollarhide and Miller, 2006). In addition, the care and concern provided to beginning counselors by supervisors helps in the early development of the counselors and allows growth to occur throughout the supervision experience (Gibbs & Magnus, 2010).

Besides the challenges that impact the individual supervisee, there are challenges that impact the entire field of school counseling supervision. One of the challenges is the separation of school counseling from mental health counseling in regards to the beliefs of post-degree supervision. In school counseling, counselors are not required to receive post-degree supervision whereas counselors seeking licensure are expected to take part in supervision (Borders & Cashwell, 1992). Because supervision post-degree is not mandated, school counselors may not see supervision as “necessary for professional viability” (Dollarhide & Miller 2006, p. 247). Studies starting in the 1970s and continuing into 2000 and beyond have indicated the same statistics and concerns regarding the lack of clinical supervision for school counselors (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). Even though beginning counselors prefer counseling supervisors who have had clinical experience, as it helps create more trust and risk-taking in counseling relationships (Jordan, 2007), post-degree supervision is still not mandated.

Another challenge that impacts the field of school counseling supervision involves the interpretation of counseling profession’s ethical codes. Although the ethical codes established by the American Counseling Association (ACA), National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC), and American School Counseling Association (ASCA) are available for counselors to consult when a situation arises with a client, it does not provide the same support as supervision. Counselors who actively engage in the process of supervision have a supervisor to consult or to review the ethical codes with while making a professional judgment regarding the situation of concern.

As stated earlier, several challenges exist that prevent school counselors from participating in clinical supervision. However, the supervision process plays an important role in processing situations and could ultimately prevent ethical dilemmas from occurring. Reviewing

the ethical concerns regarding supervision of school counselors is also important to the school counselor's professional growth and development.

Additionally, students who have completed a degree from an institution accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) have participated in clinical supervision during a practicum and internship experience as required by CACREP Standards (2009). During degree, students are accustomed to the practice of receiving clinical supervision. However, once graduated and in the school setting, school counselors are no longer required to participate in counseling supervision. Counselors practicing in other settings are required to participate in at least two years clinical supervision post-degree (North Dakota Board of Counselor Examiners, 2006). The lack of supervision could create ethical dilemmas for the school counselors or deprive the school counselors of a place where they could review possible dilemmas experienced in a school setting.

### **Supervisor Training, Credentials, and Competencies**

As evidenced earlier, there is research that supports the importance of counseling supervision in schools for new school counselors. In addition, requirements within counselor education programs dictate the relevance of supervision for counselors-in-training. However, a major component missing in the research literature is what school counseling supervisors need to know in order to help school counselors. In general, additional studies are necessary to fully understand good school counseling supervision.

Although the current CACREP focus on supervision has resulted in some education programs offering supervision training, many still do not (CACREP, 2009; Studer, 2006). Therefore, when counselors are asked to be supervisors of other counselors or counselors-in-training, uncertainty about responsibilities and competence arise. Proctor (1994) indicates that

supervisors will either replicate their experience of supervision with their supervisees or model their counseling skills to counselors-in-training or new counselors because they have not had appropriate supervision training. Bradley and Whiting (2001) also write, “Experience alone cannot qualify one for supervision” (p.362). As stated in the literature, experience as a school counselor and supervision received as a supervisee does not provide enough information for school counselors to become supervisors.

Identifying qualified and competent school counseling supervisors is difficult. The 2009 CACREP Standards apply requirements for site-supervisors in schools and have required supervision to be addressed in coursework for graduate students. However, the supervision topics may not specifically pertain to school counseling and the new standards do not address the supervision needs of school counselors already working in the field. In addition, supervisors who do not have interns affiliated with CACREP university programs may not follow any established credentials, even though NBCC and state clinical licensure divisions identify specific qualifications for supervisors.

In addition to the importance of supervisor knowledge and competence, another significant aspect of supervision indicates that counseling supervisors along with counselor educators serve as gatekeepers to the profession (Bhat, 2005; Kerl & Eichler, 2005; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999). To assume this role, supervisor credentials are essential. Currently, supervisor credentials exist but are not uniformly identified. As such, inconsistencies in school counseling supervision occur. The only supervision credentials known to school counselors include those identified in the 2009 CACREP Standards for site-supervisors. Although supervisor certification and credentialing is possible through state counseling agencies or the National Board for Certified Counselors; a specific certification for a school counseling supervisor is not known to



exist. Even though ASCA recommends that there be directors or coordinators of school counseling programs, specific qualifications are not required for individuals holding these supervisory positions. Instead, ASCA recommends the coordinators hold a master's degree, meet state certification and if required by the state meet the additional leadership training for administrative or supervisory licensure (ASCA, 2008b).

Current criteria established by CACREP should be the minimum credential requirements for school counseling supervisors and site supervisors. These criteria include: “1) A minimum of a master's degree in counseling or a related profession with equivalent qualifications, including appropriate certifications and/or licenses; 2) a minimum of two years of pertinent professional experience in the program area in which the student is enrolled; 3) knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students; and 4) relevant training in counseling supervision” (CACREP, 2009, p.14).

School counselors identified as National Certified Counselors (NCC) could additionally receive a supervision credential through NBCC called the Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS). Specific criteria to receive the credential include 1) NCC status, 2) minimum of master's degree in a mental health field, 3) specialized training in clinical supervision (either a graduate course or 30 contact hours from a workshop), 4) at least three years of experience and 1,500 hours of direct client service, 5) supervision experience or an endorsement with 100 hours of clinical supervision and 20 hours of supervised supervision, and 6) a self-assessment and professional disclosure statement (National Board of Certified Counselors Center for Credentialing and Education, n.d.).

In addition to suggesting minimum credentials necessary for counseling supervisors, reviewing competencies and how to meet the competencies through training as they relate to

school counseling supervision is important. The Standards for Counseling Supervisors were identified in 1990 by the Supervision Interest Network, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES). Since the identification of the standards, key components of supervision have been outlined in several studies regarding supervision training. Dye and Borders (1990) provided an overview of the importance of counseling supervision including specialized training, supervisor credentialing, the impact the development of the standards and how the implementation could potentially have effect on the counseling profession. Furthermore, research has been based upon these standards to create a curriculum guide to train supervisors and establish supervisor competencies.

Borders, Bernard, Dye, Fong, Henderson, and Nance (1991) developed the Curriculum Guide for Training Counseling Supervisors, which identifies seven core curricular areas for counselor supervision training. Getz (1999) outlined a training process based upon the seven core supervision competencies based upon the curriculum guide for training counseling supervisors. The same seven competencies used by Getz are identified in the On-site Supervisor Orientation and Training website used by the Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech (2009). Although competencies have been identified in training programs, little has been explored regarding supervisor competence. Borders (2006) identified only one study that had been conducted regarding supervisor competence between late 1999 and 2005, even though research had been conducted outlining several other supervision concepts.

Several studies have also identified important areas of training for counseling supervisors; although most of the work is not geared specifically towards school counseling supervisors. Getz and Schnurman-Crook (n.d.) have an online training module that outlines the clinical supervision hour, supervisor role and expectations, supervisor competencies and the

supervisory relationship. Proctor (1994) focuses on supervisor and supervisee shared responsibilities in areas including counselor development, ethical standards, competencies and the well-being of the counselor. Bradley and Whiting (2001) identify three components important to supervisor training being initial planning, goals, and the training. On the other hand, Bakes (2007) identified three categories essential to supervision including education about supervision, the supervisory process and models in supervision; and also provided information during an training program to school counselors. The key areas outlined received positive feedback after the implementation of the training program to Western Kentucky school counselors (Bakes, 2007).

Although much of the information already provided does not specifically address school counseling supervision, the research literature supports the practice of supervision in the school setting and offers suggestion of training models and programs. However, few outline specific competencies and guidelines for school counseling supervision or the training programs for school counseling supervisors that are known to be used. For instance, Studer (2005) outlines a framework for school counseling site-supervisors and provides examples of different areas to focus with school counselors-in-training. Some of the key concepts identified in Studer's guide include the role of the supervisor, how to help the school counselor-in-training apply classroom concepts to school counseling and addressing supervision regarding the ASCA National Model (2005).

In addition, Henderson and Gysbers (2006), emphasize a model of supervision that is based on mutual agreement of responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisee regarding similar key concepts identified by Studer and techniques established in the literature. Identified techniques that are useful for school counseling supervisors include observation, analyzing data,

identifying goals, establishing informed consent, modeling, providing feedback, case studies, technology, audio/videotapes, role-playing, use of self-reflection or journaling (Studer, 2005; Somody, Henderson, Cook, & Zambrano, 2008; Wood & Dixon Rayle, 2006)

As identified earlier, addressing the use of ASCA National Model is an important component of school counseling supervision. In order to adequately address the comprehensive program as a part of supervision, school counseling supervisors should be knowledgeable about the ASCA National Model and its implications for school counselors as well as the identified supervision topics and techniques. To further clarify, the ASCA National Model currently has identified thirteen standards for school counselor performance, which could be addressed during school counseling supervision. In addition, the ASCA National Model has four major components essential to the development of a comprehensive school counseling program including the what (Foundation), the how (Delivery System), the when (Management Systems) and what impact did the program have on the students (Accountability) (ASCA, 2005).

School counseling supervisors should be not only familiar with the standards and programmatic pieces, but also be able to provide feedback to the school counselor or counselor-in-training regarding their work towards becoming proficient in each performance standard and ability to establish and maintain a comprehensive program. Having knowledge regarding counseling supervision, the school setting and the ASCA National Model, school counseling supervisors are putting themselves in a position to be useful to those they supervise.

### **Summary**

It is apparent a majority of school counseling supervisors have not been exposed to supervision models during graduate studies and possibly have not been educated about providing adequate school counseling supervision for supervisees. Although the new requirements set forth

by CACREP identify the need of school counseling site-supervisor competencies and dictate counseling programs must train upcoming counselors in supervision models, the content and approach to supervision training is inconsistent and there is a lack of emphasis on school supervision.

The literature on supervision supports further exploration in the school counseling supervision field. Although several authors outline important topics, techniques and types of education associated with supervision, current training programs existing fail to focus specifically on school counseling supervisor development. While counseling supervision models useful to the school counseling supervisor are identified, many school counselors do not have programmatic training beyond the national accreditation standards (CACREP) for site-supervisors.

An emphasis on supervisory credentials and the importance of the ASCA National Model are found in the literature. School counseling supervisors may not be mandated by all states; however, ASCA indicates some states require additional administrative or supervisory licenses in addition to school counseling certifications (2010b). Several ideas exist to help outline the basic responsibilities of the school counseling supervisor. In addition, identifying the major components of the ASCA National Model and combining them with the current areas of training could further lead to school counseling supervision models and competencies.

Furthermore, gaining an understanding of school counseling supervision would be able to help transform the school counseling field. Due to the lack of knowledge, competencies and data identifying school counseling supervisor credentials and the absence of guidelines for relevant training programs specific to the school setting and school counselor the need for further research is evident. In addition, practicing school counselors have indicated the importance of

receiving supervision from other counselors having knowledge in supervision. By identifying school counseling supervisors who are considered exceptional, the needs of current school counselors could be met through the education and programming of school counseling supervisors by further exploring important areas of school counseling supervision.

Through the literature review, existing gaps in current school counseling supervision requirements, competencies and training are evident. Currently, limited empirical evidence supports the existing supervision information proposed and/or currently used in the school counseling setting. This study addresses the need to clarify and explore school counseling supervision from the perspective of identified exceptional school counseling supervisors. It will also help to fill the gaps for school counseling supervisors and school counseling supervision. The results of this study will add to the literature promoting school counseling supervision as well as further clarifying important supervision training components and teaching methods.

## **METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

School counseling supervision has been evident as a topic in research literature for several years. However, very few studies provide data to support school counseling supervision or research that identifies specific guidelines for the practicing school counseling supervisor. Page, et al., (2001) identified school counselors participate in supervision. However, there are very few studies that discuss school counseling supervision beyond participatory statistics. In order to further the professional literature, the author conducted a research study to explore school counseling supervision.

In the study, the researcher sought to explore what encompasses good school counseling supervision, what exemplifies exceptional school counseling supervisors and why identified exceptional school counseling supervisors become involved in supervision. Objectives for the study were:

1. To explore good school counseling supervision.
2. To explore the qualities of an exceptional school counseling supervisor.
3. To identify why school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a supervisor.

Although the following questions were not specifically addressed during data collection, the overall research questions for the study were:

1. What is good school counseling supervision?
2. What exemplifies an exceptional school counseling supervisor?
3. Why do school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a supervisor?

## **Research Design**

The researcher used a qualitative design to explore school counseling supervision with site-supervisors and to address the objectives of the study. The researcher concluded that a qualitative methodology was the best way to gain the deepest understanding of the setting from the research participants' perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Little research exists pertaining to school counseling supervision; therefore, it made sense to utilize a basic interpretive design and to explore the topic from individual site-supervisors in the field. According to Patton (2002), "qualitative designs are naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (p. 39). Additionally, the qualitative approach emphasized "exploration, discovery, and description" of school counseling supervision (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 8). Most importantly, the basic interpretive design allowed the researcher to "uncover and interpret" meanings of how the school counseling supervisors make sense of their supervision experiences with school counseling interns (Merriam, 2009).

## **Interview Question Development**

Within school counseling supervision, the literature is limited and tends to focus on the activities rather than the process of supervision. Borders and Brown (2005) identify activities supervisors could implement during the supervision session that include review of audiotapes or videotapes, micro-training, process notes, role playing, and modeling. Studer (2006) identifies supervisory activities in a school setting to include scheduling lessons, collaboration, conceptualizing cases, evaluating supervisee progress, and professional growth. In addition, Magnuson, et. al., (2001) discuss legal and ethical issues, examining supervisee competence,



consultation, developing guidance activities and implementing a comprehensive program based on standards are important for the school counseling supervisor.

Although a variety of recommendations and activities useful in school counseling supervision are identified in the literature, there is very little written about the characteristics and process of good school counseling supervision. To broaden the focus of supervision, the researcher emphasized discovery and exploration of good school counseling supervision, rather than specific activities or guidelines for supervision sessions. The researcher's goal was to learn about the experiences of school counseling supervision from the site-supervisor's perspective, therefore the questions were more general and exploratory. The researcher consulted with the research adviser and also a qualitative research counselor educator on the development of the interview questions.

McLeod (1994) indicated that a semi-structured interview is useful to the researcher when specific topic areas are inquired about during the interview. For this study, a semi-structured interview, with an interview guide (Patton, 2002) was used to help the researcher gather rich data. Patton (2002) describes an interview guide as a "list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview" (p. 343). The interview guide was used to help the researcher minimize errors, keep the interviews consistent among participants, but remain flexible during the interview to explore topics brought up by the participant (McLeod, 1994; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The interview questions that guided the researcher in the interview were divided into three categories to meet the objectives of the study. Following is an outline of the three major question categories and their respective phone interview questions. Also see Appendix A.

Research Question Category 1: To explore good school counseling supervision.

- 1) What is “good” school counseling supervision?
- 2) Tell me about your experience as a school counseling site-supervisor.
- 3) In working with school counseling interns, how do you know when the supervisory experience is going well?
  - a. What does that experience look like?
- 4) When do you know when the experience is not going well?
  - a. What does that experience look like?
- 5) Tell me about an unsuccessful experience.
- 6) Tell me about a successful experience.
  - a. In your experience as a school counseling site-supervisor, I’m wondering if you would share with me what the greatest reward has been.
- 7) What obstacles have you experienced as a supervisor?

Research Question Category 2: To explore the qualities of an exceptional school counseling supervisor.

- 1) You were identified as an exceptional school counseling site-supervisor, I’m interested what “exceptional school counseling supervisor” means for you.
- 2) I’m interested in knowing whether or not you believe you are an “exceptional school counseling supervisor.” If yes, why? If not, why and what would need to happen for you to consider yourself an “exceptional” school counseling supervisor?
- 3) I’m curious, how did you get to the point where a counselor education faculty member would identify you as an exceptional site supervisor?

- 4) If you were to think of a colleague you would consider an exceptional school counseling supervisor, what would you want me to know about them?

Research Question Category: To identify why school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a supervisor.

- 1) Tell me about your decision to become a school counseling supervisor?
- 2) Why did you want to become a school counseling supervisor?
- 3) What benefits, if any, have you gained during your experiences?
- 4) What obstacles, if any, have you encountered during your supervision experience?

### **Participants**

Participants in the study were professional school counselors currently employed in a school setting with experience as a school counseling site-supervisor. Criteria for participation included: 1) the school counseling supervisor met the supervisory requirements outlined by the 2009 CACREP standards for site-supervisors, 2) a university counseling program placed students under the supervision of the supervisor at least once within the past five years, for either practicum or internship, 3) a counselor educator identified the supervisor based on their belief that the school counselor is an effective supervisor for school counselors-in-training, 4) supervisor met expectations outlined by the university program during the supervisory relationship (completing evaluations, conducting weekly supervision sessions, etc.), 5) the school counselor was practicing as a certified K-12 school counselor during the time of the study, 6) the school counselor had a supervisory experience, within five years of the referral, as the school counseling supervisor. The researcher used specific criteria for the study because the sampling was purposeful (Merriam, 2009). Selecting participants who had an understanding of the school counseling supervision and could provide insight to the researcher was essential in building

trustworthiness and credibility for the study. In addition, the set criteria for selecting the participants helped gather information that was rich.

### **Participant Recruitment**

The researcher began recruiting participants after approval was granted from the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) in June 2011 (Appendix B). An email introducing the study, information regarding recommending participants and participant criteria was sent to a counselor educator at each CACREP accredited institution (Appendix C). The researcher contacted CACREP accredited institutions within the United States because colleges and universities accredited by CACREP must follow specific standards to ensure quality supervision. Some of these criteria include information and training regarding site-supervisors, specific course requirements for graduate students and expectations for the graduate students during their internship experience (CACREP, 2009).

In order to gain contact information for the appropriate counselor educators, the researcher utilized the CACREP website to create a list of CACREP accredited schools with the identified CACREP counselor educator liaisons. The researcher then searched for the contact information, for each counselor educator identified on the CACREP website, by individually exploring each CACREP accredited institution's online directory.

If the counselor educator identified on the CACREP website was not the school counseling coordinator, they were asked to forward the recruiting email to the appropriate faculty member. In the email, the counselor educator was asked to respond to the researcher with at least one individual who met the participant criteria. Qualitative studies typically select participants purposefully (McLeod, 1994; Merriam, 2009; Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010), which is why criteria and recommendation for the study were implemented. After only two responses from

counselor educators were received a few weeks into the recruitment period, a second email (Appendix D) was sent to asking counselor educators to respond to the researcher about referring school counseling site-supervisors to the study. The researcher sent recruitment emails to counselor education faculty again a couple of weeks into the fall semester because the initial recruitment period was during the summer months and the counselor education referrals and participant responses were almost nonexistent.

As potential participants were referred, the researcher contacted the individuals via email stating the recommendation for the study from the counselor educator and asked if it was permissible to contact the potential participant to further discuss the study via phone (Appendix E). Many of the referred participants responded via email and communicated one or more of the following: a) a request for more information about the study, b) provided contact information to the researcher, or c) volunteered to be a participant. The researcher then sent the revised informed consent (Appendices F and G for IRB approval and informed consent) and a demographic information sheet (Appendix H) to each potential participant via email. The participants were asked to review the informed consent and complete and return the demographic information sheet, indicating they had read the informed consent and agreed to participate in the study. The researcher then scheduled phone interviews with the participants via email. When email communication did not cultivate the scheduling of phone interviews, the researcher contacted the potential participants via phone and left a message to return the call when unable to contact. The researcher attempted to make scheduling contact with potential participants a maximum of three times before ceasing contact and recruitment.

The recruitment time frame for the study spanned the course of eight months due to summer breaks for both the counselor educators and potential participants. In addition, it was a

challenge to schedule interviews with participants due to availability and time constraints for both the participant and the researcher. Participants were informed of the selection criteria used as well as the process of recommendation from university counselor education as suggested by Sheperis, et al, (2010). The participants were notified that participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

As a result of recruitment procedures, a total of eleven counselor education faculty referred twenty-eight participants. Of the twenty-eight referred participants, thirteen initially agreed to participate; however, only ten interviews were able to be completed due to the inability to schedule interviews. The majority of the referrals were female supervisors, with only three males referred to the study; however, all of the participants in the study were female. One male school counseling supervisor did initially agree to participate in the study, but did not participate in the study.

### **Processes, Procedures and Trustworthiness**

#### **Demographics**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state that some demographic information is necessary to help the researcher identify and explain similarities, differences and individual perceptions of participants. Therefore, having participants provide demographic data information helped identify participant characteristics and describe the participants in the study. The following demographic questions were used to collect information from the participants:

1. How many years have you been a school counselor?
2. How many years have you been a school counseling supervisor?
3. Do you belong to any professional organizations? If so, which ones?

4. How would you classify your school? (elementary, PreK-12, K-8, middle school, high school, etc.)
5. With what grade levels do you work as a school counselor?
6. In what state do you work?
7. What is your highest degree earned? (M.S., PhD., M.Ed., Ed.S.)
8. What is your degree in?
9. What type of certification/licensure is required in your state to become a school counselor?
10. Did you graduate from a CACREP accredited program?
11. Were you trained in the ASCA National Model?
12. Were you provided coursework in supervision during your degree?
13. Do you have specific credentialing or licensing according to your state requirements to be a school counseling supervisor? If so, what is it?
14. How many individuals have you supervised? Are they interns, practicum students or other school counselors?

## **Interviews**

Data collection for this study consisted of individual participant interviews with school counseling supervisors. Individual interviews are frequently used in qualitative studies because of the ability to gather rich data from the participants (Sheperis, et al., 2010). In addition, McLeod (1994) states “The research interview is a flexible way of gathering research data that is detailed and personal” (p. 79). Qualitative studies often require detailed interviews to gather information about the participant’s experience (Sheperis, et al., 2010). The researcher determined that conducting interviews with each participant was the best way to explore the field of school

counseling supervision. Participant interviews allowed the researcher to elicit and follow-up on statements provided by the participant that may not have occurred if the study was a conducted by a survey. Additionally, interviewing made sense due to distances and time zones.

The individual interviews were scheduled at the earliest convenience for the participant. Some participants were able to complete the interview within one week of the initial contact while others scheduled out the interview ranging from two days to four weeks from the initial contact. Also, due to the length of the interview and the use of the telephone to complete the interviews, the researcher used an audio recording device to tape the interviews and took notes during the interview sessions.

The potential for face-to-face interviews was possible for some participants; however, this this did not occur due to scheduling conflicts, convenience, and consistency across the study. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) completed a qualitative study comparing phone interviews with face-to-face interviews; results did not show differences in the information collected from participants. Based on the information provided by Sturges and Hanrahan, the researcher believed it was possible to get accurate and useful information from the participants via phone interviews.

Establishing rapport with the participants is an essential part of the interview process and study; a key element for the participants to be forthcoming, truthful and honest with the researcher during the interview (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). Sheperis, et al, (2010) suggest the importance of “respect and sensitivity” in order to establish trust and openness of the participants to share information with the researcher (p. 121). As suggested by Heppner, et. al., (1999) and Sheperis, et al, (2010) and in order to build cohesiveness between the participant and the researcher, the researcher provided a professional background statement to help create a



sense of common ground and to build connections with the participants. The researcher provided this information within the informed consent to each participant including her work as a high school counselor, site-supervisor and doctoral student. Additionally, the researcher related to the participants when similar experiences had occurred or something connected the researcher and participant during the interview. For example, one participant spoke of the great experiences as a member of a state professional organization; the researcher had received their master's degree in that state, so the researcher and participant spoke briefly about the state's professional counseling organization.

In addition to the initial phone interviews, the researcher conducted interview summary checks with each participant. This procedure included sending a summary copy of the interview to each participant for review. The researcher also invited participants to participate in follow-up phone conversations to discuss the changes to the summary sheet. However, no participants engaged in a follow-up conversation, instead, email communication was used to answer participant questions when they arose. For example, one participant asked if it was permissible to change the grammar and rewrite statements in the summary sheet. Additionally, five participants responded with amendments or clarification of the summary sheet, four participants responded with "ok," "looks good to me" or "no changes" and one participant did not respond, even after a reminder email was sent.

The researcher thanked each participant and informed them they could request results of the study by sending the researcher an email. Participants learned during the initial interview that the results of the study would only be sent to the requesting participants via email and after the dissertation was defended and submitted to the graduate school. In addition, the researcher assured participants of anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study. The researcher

maintained anonymity and confidentiality by securing contact information, audio files, and other written documents throughout the research process.

### **Trustworthiness**

Merriam (2009) states, “Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields because practitioners intervene in people’s lives” (p. 209). Similar to quantitative research, qualitative research needs to have support indicating that it is a valid and reliable study, or in qualitative research, trustworthy and rigorous (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis; 2003). Additionally, Rossman and Rallis (2003) write, “for a study to be trustworthy, it must be more than reliable and valid; it must be ethical” (p.63). Finally, Patton (1999) writes, “The qualitative researcher has an obligation to be methodical in reporting sufficient details of data collection and the processes of analysis to permit others to judge the quality of the resulting product” (p.1191).

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state credibility, dependability, and transferability are methods that support the trustworthiness of a study. In the areas of credibility, dependability and transferability Merriam (2009) identifies several strategies to address the trustworthiness of a study including: “1) triangulation, 2) member checks, 3) adequate engagement in data collection, 4) researcher’s position or reflexivity, 5) peer review and examination, 6) audit trail, 7) rich, thick descriptions, and 8) maximum variation” (Merriam, 2009, p.229). The following section discusses the methods the researcher used to address the trustworthiness of the study including ways to promote credibility, dependability and transferability.

**Credibility.** Credibility is a way to address the internal validity of a qualitative study (Merriam, 2009), or as Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state credibility “refers to whether the participant’s perceptions match up with the researchers portrayal of them” (p.77). In order to do

this, the researcher must take steps to ensure that the results of the study match the participants' perceptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Patton (2002) identifies three main components that help establish the credibility of a study including "1) rigorous methods,... 2) the credibility of the researcher,... and 3) philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry" (pp.570-571). In this research study, the researcher used the following methods to ensure credibility of the study.

Triangulation, a process used in qualitative research to test for consistency of the results and to overcome "skepticism that greets singular methods, lone analysts, and single-perspective theories or models" (Patton, 1999, p. 1193). In addition Patton (1999) identifies four different ways triangulation can occur 1) methods triangulation, 2) triangulation of sources, 3) analyst triangulation and 4) theory/perspective triangulation. The researcher used analyst triangulation as part of the peer review process and triangulation of data sources for this study.

In order to address analyst triangulation, the researcher collaborated with two additional research team members, both trained in qualitative research methodology and data analysis. While one team member also worked as a school counselor and had training in school counseling supervision, the other researcher member did not. The second research team member previously worked in a secondary school setting and had interactions with school counselors, but at the time of data analysis was employed as an assistant professor at a local university. Having a data analyst outside of the counseling field helped the researcher address biases of the researcher and the other data analyst.

The researcher also used the triangulation of data sources as a way to address credibility. While the researcher conducted participant interviews over a period of four months, the researcher did not immediately follow-up with participants at the completion of the interviews. Instead, the researcher conducted a summary sheet verification process with each participant

with the elapsing time ranging from four months to six weeks between the initial interview and the summary sheet verification. According to Patton (1999), “checking for the consistency of what people say about the same thing over time” (p. 1195) is one way to address triangulation of data sources. In addition, Merriam (2009) identified adequate time during data collection an essential component to qualitative studies and to promote credibility. Although the researcher gathered similar information from the first three participants regarding school counseling supervision, the researcher continued to complete participant interviews for all participant referrals willing and available to complete the interview process. The continual engagement of the researcher during the data collection phase helped ensure credibility by trying to reach data saturation (Merriam, 2009).

The triangulation process for checking data consistency over time follows. The researcher sent individual interview summary sheets to each participant approximately six weeks after the final interview was conducted. The interview summary sheets contained all of the research questions and the guided interview questions. In addition, the participant responses were included in bullet format. The researcher removed any pausing phrases or words, such as, but not limited to “um,” “like,” “you know,” and “ah.” The researcher removed the words and phrases to help separate ideas and thoughts into bullets and to help the participant read the summary. Participant content was not altered in any way during the transition from transcript to summary sheet other than the removal of the pausing phrases or words. The interview summary sheets did not include any follow-up questions from the interview, participant responses to the follow-up questions or clarifying statements made by the researcher during the interview. Instead, the researcher asked the participants via email to clarify information, make comments or amendments, to provide additional insights since the interview and verify the information in the

individual summary sheet. In addition, the researcher provided participants the opportunity to discuss the summary sheet via a telephone follow-up conversation.

Member checks were also completed at the end of data collection. Several authors discuss the possible ways to conduct member checks, including sending interview transcripts for review, sending summaries of interviews to encourage feedback, and even a summary of the researcher's potential themes for participant review (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In addition, Heppner et al., (1999) indicates verification of data interpretations helps maintain authenticity. However, for this study, due to time, distance and convenience for the participants, the researcher sent modified versions of the transcript to the participants for review. The participants were asked to clarify or provide additional insights to the interview summary sheet via email (Appendix I). Additionally, participants who did not initially complete the member check were sent a reminder email for participation (Appendix J). The member check process was previously described in the triangulation section, since these same procedures allowed for the member check to occur as well as reviewing the data over time.

Another method used to address credibility is a “critical self-reflection by the researcher” (Merriam, 2009, p. 229). Also to help establish credibility, Patton (2002) suggested that the researcher should report any personal or professional areas that impact the study. To address this area, the researcher provided several self-reflection points, including research experience, professional experience, biases, and additional factors that may have affected the study.

The researcher has limited experience in research; although the researcher has ample experience in reading literature, understanding findings and writing papers. The researcher has previous experience designing biological and physical science experiments as well as overseeing the development of experimental studies. However, this is only the second qualitative research

study designed, implemented and analyzed by the researcher. The first study was part of a class requirement to learn the components of qualitative research. During the first qualitative study, the researcher wanted to categorize themes by number of similar responses rather than the overall themes. The researcher has since sought advice, reviewed previous research comments and implemented additional strategies to address the researcher's concrete thinking.

The researcher's professional experience is also important to understand and to address credibility. The researcher is a secondary professional school counselor. The researcher also has experience supervising school counseling interns as well as students studying in a local counseling program. The researcher occasionally had to conduct some interviews during the school work day because of availability of the participants. This often required the researcher to transition quickly between practicing professional school counselor and supervisor to research interviewer.

In addition to research experience, professional experience, and additional factors that may have affected the study, the researcher identified professional and personal biases of school counseling supervision. Researcher biases include:

- 1) All school counselors-in-training, new professional school counselors and veteran school counselors should engage in clinical supervision.
- 2) School counseling supervisors should be hired by school districts to oversee school counseling programs and hold appropriate certification, licensure or education about school counseling supervision.
- 3) Supervision styles vary from person to person and some individuals will experience exceptional school counseling experiences while others will be worthless.

- 4) School counseling supervisors should have had adequate experience as a school counselor, where they are able to feel competent in the work they do and services they provide.
- 5) School counselors should provide school counseling supervision to school counselors-in-training, whether they are practicum or internship students.
- 6) School counseling supervision is important to the advocacy, promotion and gate-keeping for the counseling profession.
- 7) Most school counselors do not participate in school counseling supervision because it is too time consuming, they do not have space and there are not any rewards for their participation.

Peer review of processes and procedures implemented during a study, especially the data analysis can also help establish credibility when a colleague reviews the raw data to assess possible findings and discusses the emerging themes (Patton, 2002; Merriam 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher established a peer review process by discussing the methodology and process of the study with the research adviser prior to the start of the study as well as during the process. In addition, the researcher consulted with a counselor education faculty member fluent in qualitative research during the research question formation, prior to IRB approval and also during the data analysis phase. In addition, the researcher submitted an addendum to IRB to add an additional member of the research team. The research member added to the team, after IRB approval (Appendix K), was trained in qualitative research, worked as a professional school counselor and supervised counselors-in-training. Information regarding the peer review process is included in the data analysis section.

**Dependability.** Data collection and analysis outlined in detail help increase dependability of the study. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state clear “detailed and thorough explanations” used in the data analysis and collection process help increase dependability along with other researchers coding the data (p. 78). In addition, Patton (2002) suggested “establishing an audit trail to verify the rigor” of the study (p. 93). Additionally, Merriam (2009) suggests the use of an audit trail to document all decisions made regarding the study and the procedures used during the data collection and analysis of the study. As a result of the suggestions by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), Patton (2002) and Merriam (2009) the researcher kept track of the processes that took place throughout the study as well as the thought process that occurred during the decision making process. In order to report the audit trail to help with the credibility of the study, the researcher has infused the information throughout the data collection and data analysis sections of this dissertation.

**Transferability.** Transferability in qualitative research is similar to external validity in quantitative study which is “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (Merriam, 2009, p.223). to address transferability in this study, the researcher utilized two factors outlined by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008). The researcher reported the results in a descriptive manner and included essential context or background information necessary to portray the point of view of the participant.

The researcher also used “rich, thick descriptions” in the presentation of data section to address credibility of the study (Merriam, 2009). In order to support each emerging theme, the researcher included participant quotations for emphasis. Additionally, participant descriptions included information from both the demographic information sheet and the participant



interviews. The participant quotations helped the researcher establish credibility through transferability to the readers.

Finally, the researcher implemented maximum variation as an additional way to promote credibility. Merriam (2009) suggested pursuing a variety of participant selection for the greatest range to apply the findings. The researcher contacted counselor education faculty at CACREP accredited institutions for two main reasons; one, to ensure school counseling site-supervisors meet a specific criteria outlined by an international accrediting body and two, to maximize the number of referrals outside of the researcher's primary location. The researcher believed it was important to receive insights and opinions from participants outside of the local universities. Conducting a national study allowed the researcher to justify the transferability of the results across the United States. In addition, maximum variation allowed the researcher to address the phenomenon of school counseling supervision from a broader perspective.

### **Data Analysis**

Frequent review of data during the data collection process is an essential component of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). The researcher continuously reviewed the data collected throughout the study. The researcher listened to and transcribed interviews, and reviewed interview notes throughout the data collection process. The researcher found that while reviewing interview transcripts, questions emerged that the researcher utilized in order to facilitate additional elaboration of information. For example, during the early interviews, the researcher did not always follow-up with the best questions to elicit additional information from the participant. The researcher made improvements to the initial phone interview follow-up questions by having awareness of the situation and to help address the overall exploration of school counseling site-supervision.

At the end of each interview, the researcher assigned participants a number based on interview order. The researcher kept contact information for each participant as well as their participant identification number in a secure location throughout the duration of the study. All information including the demographic information sheet, interview notes and transcriptions were assigned the participant number to differentiate between participants throughout the study. Participants were assigned a color and pseudonym to match their participant number during the data analysis phase. The researcher used this method to help organize and analyze data and report themes. On one occasion, the participant's real name was used; when conducting the member checks, the researcher placed the participant's real name on the summary sheet that was sent back to the participant. This was done to keep the participant from knowing their participant number and pseudonym. As soon as the researcher received participant responses on the interview summary sheet, the researcher renamed the file according to participant number.

After completing the phone interviews with the participants, the researcher transcribed each of the interviews to help with the data analysis process. The researcher was able to fully immerse in the data by transcribing, allowing an initial review of the interview to occur. The researcher attempted to transcribe each interview prior to the next interview; however, due to time limitations and occasionally having multiple interviews in one week, the researcher was unable to complete each transcription during that same time frame. Also, during the transcription process, the researcher documented thoughts or ideas that occurred while transcribing to help regain focus on the task of transcribing.

The researcher kept a running list of big picture ideas throughout the data analysis phase; ideas occasionally occurred while reviewing transcripts, while working as a school counselor and site-supervisor, following participant interviews, and thinking about the study in general. Once

the researcher completed transcribing all interviews, the researcher conducted the initial reading of each transcript. The researcher read each transcript and then on a separate piece of paper at the completion of the reading, the researcher made notations about the key points in the interview under each participant number. The researcher continued this phase until each transcript was initially read and key points were listed under each participant number.

The researcher then set the transcripts aside for a period of one week. During this break, the researcher thought about what was read and reviewed the key point information sheet. The researcher also reviewed the big idea list and added additional thoughts as they occurred. Next, the researcher reread the transcripts, this time writing key words in the margins of the transcripts that identified a concept or summarized the participant response. Also during this phase, the researcher continued processing and reflecting on the data and documented additional big ideas. At the completion of writing the keywords in the margins of the transcripts, the researcher created individual participant key word documents and a key word summation document from all the participants. The researcher continued to skim the transcripts while thinking of the key words. Again, the researcher documented big ideas.

After reviewing the key word lists, the big idea list and the key point information sheet, the researcher began to categorize information from the interviews. The researcher organized the data into six categories: intern learning, intern characteristics, supervisor learning, supervisor identity, relationships and challenges. The researcher then read through each transcript again, this time only reading participant responses. The researcher then copied the participant color-coded transcript information into the appropriate area of the spreadsheet; including the participant number and the lines of the transcript. When portions of the transcript matched multiple categories, the researcher placed the information in each suitable category. New

information gathered during the member checks was also reviewed and placed into the appropriate category. The researcher also searched for new categories; however, the information gathered during member checks did not produce any additional categories.

The researcher then reviewed each individual category and used black and white print copies of the categories to further group ideas. During the coding process, the researcher used multiple colors to code information based upon similarities. Each color code represented a similar topic. The researcher then compared the color-coded topics to previously documented big picture ideas. After multiple ways of reviewing the information, the researcher established themes from the study.

The researcher then provided a member of the research team the participant transcripts to peer review. The researcher and the team member met after a two week time period to discuss the possible themes identified by the researcher. During the consultation, the peer review team member provided thoughts, key points and feedback regarding the transcripts. The peer review team member also addressed how they analyzed the transcripts, which was congruent with qualitative practices.

Next, the researcher provided potential theme ideas with the peer reviewer. The researcher and peer review team member discussed supervision, and more specifically what constitutes school counseling supervision. In addition, the peer reviewer identified their perspectives on school counseling supervision after reading the transcripts, which are shared in chapter five. The researcher and peer reviewer discussed the potential themes and how they were related to the research questions. Both agreed that some of the themes were appropriate; but some needed further review. The researcher and the peer review team member agreed to process the information from the initial conversation and to meet at a later date to review the initial

themes again. To address potential biases of the peer reviewer, the researcher added another peer reviewer to the team after IRB approval (Appendix L). The qualifications of the second peer reviewer were identified earlier within the peer review credibility section.

After the initial peer review meeting, the researcher returned to the data for continued review and analysis. The researcher examined the key words, categories and potential themes, previously identified. The researcher finally established seven themes for further review with both peer reviewers. Table 1 provides an example of how the researcher moved from key words to categories and finally themes. The table does not provide an all-inclusive list for each area, but is provided to show the data analysis process.

Table 1

*Examples of Key Words, Categories, and Themes Identified During Data Analysis*

| Key Words     | Categories             | Theme   |
|---------------|------------------------|---|
| Communication | Intern Characteristics | Good school counseling                        |
| Collaboration | Intern Learning        | supervision establishes a                     |
| Encouragement | Relationships          | collaborative working                         |
| Feedback      |                        | relationship for the intern with              |
| Flexibility   |                        | the supervisor and the school's stakeholders. |

During the second peer consultation with the first peer reviewer, the researcher provided the new themes that were developed since their peer meeting. The researcher also shared information on how the themes were related to the initial research questions. As a result of the consultation, the researcher and the peer reviewer agreed upon on the seven major themes

identified by the researcher. Additionally, the peer reviewer and the researcher discussed potential future studies, which are shared in chapter five.

As stated previously, a second member of the research team was added for additional peer review and consultation. The second peer reviewer was also provided all of the participant transcripts as well as the participant summary sheets used during the member checks. The second peer reviewer and the researcher met to discuss the methodology as well as the data analysis. When the two met, the researcher shared the results of the data analysis process. The peer reviewer asked for some clarification on terminology because school counseling and school counseling supervision are not areas in which the peer reviewer is trained. The peer reviewer agreed with the seven themes that were identified by the researcher, which are shared in chapter four.

In addition to the review and confirmation of the identified themes, the second peer review member and the researcher also discussed the data analysis processes and procedures used throughout the study. The second peer reviewer asked several questions regarding credibility, transferability and dependability. The researcher had already established many of the procedures discussed and recommended to increase trustworthiness. One additional area for further review suggested by the peer reviewer was the interconnectedness of the research questions, conceptual framework and validity (Maxwell, 2005). This information is shared in chapter five. In addition, they identified discussion and additional potential studies, which are also presented in chapter five.

## **PRESENTATION OF DATA**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the research study was to explore school counseling supervision through the supervision experiences of school counseling site-supervisors. The researcher hoped that information gained could help train site-supervisors working with school counseling interns and provide research based information to the field of school counseling supervision. The information presented in this section was gathered from ten participant phone interviews and participant responses from the individual interview summary sheet. The study resulted in seven major themes. Three themes address the first research question “What is good school counseling supervision?”, three themes relate to the second research question “What exemplifies an exceptional school counseling supervisor?”, and finally, one theme addresses the third research question “Why do school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a supervisor?”. The seven major themes in the study listed respectively to the research questions addressed are:

- Good school counseling supervision facilitates professional growth and development of the school counseling intern from a developmental perspective.
- Good school counseling supervision establishes a collaborative working relationship for the intern with the supervisor and the school’s stakeholders.
- Good school counseling supervision establishes an environment that is conducive to learning, flexible and well-defined.
- An exceptional school counseling supervisor is aware of the developmental process of the school counseling intern.

- An exceptional school counseling supervisor acts as an educator, counselor and consultant throughout the internship experience.
- An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor.
- School counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual development of the counseling profession and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor.

The major themes that emerged from the study as well as a description of each participant are presented in this chapter.

### **Participants**

The study included ten participants who completed individual phone interviews. Of the ten participants, only nine of the participants actually met the criteria established by the researcher. All of the participants in the study were female with varying degrees of experience as a school counselor and as a school counseling site-supervisor. See Table 2 for participant demographic information. The interview of the participant who did not entirely meet the criteria was in process when the researcher realized the participant did not actually qualify for the study. Instead of abruptly stopping the interview, the researcher continued and completed the interview. The participant who did not meet the criteria was a counselor educator. However, some of the information gathered during the counselor educator phone interview supported the major themes of the other nine participants and was later included in the data analysis after initial themes emerged.



Table 2

*Participant Demographic Information*

| Participant | Degree Earned  | CACREP Graduate                | Years of Experience                          |                             | Employment               |   | Region of Employment (Time Zones) | State Licensure or Certification for School Counselors   |
|-------------|--|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
|             |  |                                | School Counselor                             | Supervisor                  | School Setting           | Grade Level of Students   |                                   |  |
| Candy       | M.S. in Counseling and Human Resource Development                    | Yes                            | 10   | 6                           | High School              | 9-12  | Mountain                          | School Service Specialist Certificate in School Counseling to be identified as a Professional School Counselor |
| Shirley     | Masters in School Counseling Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction | Yes                            | 24<br>18 at elementary<br>5 at middle school | 7                           | Middle School grades 6-8 | Primarily 6 <sup>th</sup> grade, but also work with ½ of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade due to counselor reduction | Eastern                           | Certification in School Counseling, requires a master's degree in school counseling                            |
| Kate        | Master's in school counseling  | Yes                            | 20   | 14                          | Elementary               | K-5   | Eastern                           | Master's degree, K-12 certification, Praxis in School Counseling   |
| Trista      | M.Ed. Counseling   | Yes                            | 13   | 10                          | Middle School            | 6, 7, & 8   | Central                           | School Counselor Credential  |
| Chasity     | Ph.D. Counselor Education  | No for Master's, Yes for Ph.D. | 3.5  | 8 years at higher education | Higher Education         | Graduate  | Central                           | Certification of School Counselor  |
| Cynthia     | M.Ed in counseling   | Yes                            | 17   | 16                          | Intermediate 5 & 6       | 5 & 6   | Eastern                           | Education License School Counselor Credential Praxis   |
| Kayla       | M.Ed. Guidance and Counseling  | Yes                            | 8  | 1                           | Elementary               | K-5   | Central                           | Teaching License and Master's degree in Counseling   |
| Evalynn     | M.Ed. School Counseling  | Unsure                         | 20   | At least 15                 | Elementary               | K-5   | Central                           | School Counseling Certificate  |
| Emilee      | Master's degree Elementary Counseling                                | Yes                            | 16   | 8                           | Elementary               | 1-5   | Central                           | Professional School Counseling Certificate   |
| Chelsey     | Master's K-12 Guidance and Counseling                                | Yes                            | 8  | 3                           | Elementary               | K-5   | Central                           | Professional School Counselor Credential   |

Table 2

*Participant Demographic Information (continued)*

| Participant | ASCA National Model Training  | Supervision Coursework   |   | Number of Individuals Supervised | State Requirements for supervision licensure or certification   | Professional Organization Affiliation |   |   |
|-------------|---|--|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
|             |   | During Degree  | Post-Degree   |                                  |   | National                              | State   | Other   |
| Candy       | Yes   | No   | Unknown   | 8 interns                        | No state requirement. Only requirement is a minimum of three years school counseling experience.      | ACA                                   | X   | Local Counseling Chapter                        |
| Shirley     | The ASCA National Model did not exist at time of master's degree completion | Not during master's degree, curriculum supervision was provided during doctorate | Participation in three day training to mentor beginning school counselors | No Response                      | No state requirement. Attendance at school counseling symposium offered each year by local university | ASCA                                  | School Counselor Association                                      | None  |
| Kate        | Yes   | No   | Unknown   | 3 practicum<br>8 interns         | No state requirement. One day training available through local university to meet CACREP requirements | None                                  | None  | None  |
| Trista      | Yes, but post-degree  | No   | Unknown   | Approximately 5 or 6             | No, unsure  | None                                  | Counseling Association, School Counseling Association             | None  |
| Chasity     | No  | Master's No<br>Ph.D. Yes   | Unknown   | Over 50                          | No Response   | ACA, ACES, ASCA, ACAC                 | ACES, Counseling Association                                      | Play Therapy, CSI, additional local origination |
| Cynthia     | Yes   | No   | Unknown   | Over 20                          | Only for LPC  | ACA<br>ASCA                           | School Counselor Association                                      | None  |
| Kayla       | Yes   | No   | Unknown   | 1 intern<br>2 practicum          | Unknown   | None                                  | School Counselor Association, Counseling Association              | State and Local Educational Association         |
| Evalynn     | Not during degree, but since  | No   | Yes   | Approximately 20-25              | No  | ASCA                                  | Counseling Association, School Counseling Association, State ACES | State and Local Educational Association         |
| Emilee      | Not during degree, but current training                                     | No   | Yes   | 4 interns<br>1 practicum         | No Response   | None                                  | School Counseling Association, Counseling Association             | None  |
| Chelsey     | Yes   | No   | Only in supervision of student teachers                                   | 3 interns<br>1 practicum         | No  | None                                  | School Counseling Association, Counseling Association             | None  |

## **Individual Descriptions of Participants**

Participant descriptions were completed approximately six weeks after the last interview was conducted. The researcher reviewed the demographic information sheets, interview notes, interview transcripts and listened to the audio recordings of the interview to create the participant descriptions. Although participant descriptions may have best been completed immediately following the interview, the time lapse allowed the researcher to focus more broadly on the participants while creating the descriptions rather than limiting the focus to their feelings as a result of the interview. The participants in the study are introduced in the order of their interviews. The following pseudonyms were used for each of the participants. Candy, Shirley, Kate, Trista, Chasity, Cynthia, Kayla, Evalynn, Emilee, and Chelsey graciously agreed to share their experiences as school counseling supervisors with the researcher.

Candy was the first participant interviewed. She was very willing to help out with the study and provided phone contact information immediately to the researcher. Candy has been working as a school counselor for ten years and has been a school counseling site-supervisor for six years. She works in a Midwestern high school with grades nine through twelve. Candy is involved in her state's professional counseling organization, the specific region of her state organization and ACA. She has also been trained in the ASCA National Model. She has also worked in her district to establish guidelines for accepting internship placements, so successful experiences occur for the intern and the supervisor. During the interview, Candy was very genuine and passionate about helping interns be successful.

Shirley, the second participant, has been working as a school counselor for twenty-four years and as a school counseling site-supervisor for seven years. Most of Shirley's experience was at an elementary school, but the past five years she has been at a middle school with grades

six through eight in the Southeastern United States. Shirley also holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction. During the interview, Shirley clarified questions to make sure she was answering the questions the way the researcher intended. Shirley was also very willing to complete any follow-up information for the study. Shirley immediately responded with her responses to the member check. In addition, Shirley is also involved in her state school counseling professional organization and the American School Counseling Association.

Kate is a Nationally Certified Counselor, (NCC) and has been working as a school counselor for twenty years. She does not currently belong to any professional counseling organizations. She works as an elementary counselor in the Southeastern part of the United States with grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Kate has also been trained in the ASCA National model and has been a school counseling site-supervisor for fourteen years. Kate was very thoughtful in her responses, and was very calm during the interview process. She clarified questions, had concrete responses and spoke passionately about the experiences. Kate is a very proactive site-supervisor working with the counselors on difficulties. She acknowledged that good school counselors, both those with many years of experience and some of her interns receive support after the internship.

Trista was the fourth participant in the study and has worked as a school counselor for thirteen years and has been a school counseling site-supervisor for ten. Trista works in a Midwestern middle school serving grades six, seven and eight. She is involved in the state counseling organization and the state school counseling organization. Trista was not initially trained in the ASCA National Model, but during her counseling career has received training. Trista was very hesitant in the interview to take ownership of the supervision experiences provided to interns. She was very adamant that the reason interns received such a great

experience at their school was due to the teamwork and collaboration with her and her colleagues.

Chasity works as a counselor educator in the Southern part of the United States. She was a self-referral to the study and worked as a school counselor for three and a half years. She works at a post-secondary institution and has supervised interns for four of her eight years during higher education work experience. Chasity is involved in several professional organizations including ACA, ACES, ACAC, ASCA, and four state-based organizations, holding some leadership positions in the organization. Although Chasity is involved in many professional organizations, she has not received training in the ASCA National Model. Chasity also holds LPC supervisor certification for her state. Chasity was very matter of fact in her responses and appeared to have a strong desire that interns understand ethics, self-awareness, and respect their supervisor feedback.

Cynthia, the sixth participant, works as an intermediate school counselor in the Southeast United States. She serves grades five and six. She has been a school counselor for seventeen years, supervising interns all but one year. She is involved in ACA, ASCA and her state school counseling association. She also meets the state requirements to be an LPC supervisor and has been trained in the ASCA National Model. Cynthia was very enthusiastic during the interview, with her voice fluctuating in her responses. She seemed to be very excited to talk about her experiences with the interns. Cynthia also used different voices when providing example statements of interns, helping to differentiate between experiences with interns.

Kayla has been working as an elementary school counselor for eight years in a Midwestern elementary school serving kindergarten through fifth grade. She is only in her first year as a school counseling site-supervisor. Kayla has been trained in the ASCA National model

and belongs to several state organizations, both counseling and educational. She seemed to have a large amount of energy during the interview. She spoke excitedly and extremely fast. Kayla's voice also fluctuated when providing intern example statements. Although this was only her first year as a school counseling site-supervisor, she spoke passionately about the experience.

Evalynn has been working as a school counselor for twenty years and has been a site-supervisor for at least fifteen. She belongs to ASCA, the state counseling, state school counseling and state supervision chapters. In addition, she belongs to two educational professional organizations. Evalynn works as an elementary school counselor in the Midwest and serves kindergarten through grade five. Evalynn was soft-spoken and seemed genuine about her counseling position and her site-supervision responsibilities. Although, she was not initially trained in the ASCA National Model, she has received training since completing her degree. Evalynn also acknowledged her difficulties with supervision and appeared to be extremely self-aware of her abilities.

Emilee, participant nine, has been a school counselor for sixteen years and works in a Midwestern elementary school serving grades one through five. She has been supervising for eight years. Emilee is also involved in the state counseling association and the state school counseling organization. Emilee was aware of the ASCA National Model during her school, was not trained in it, but is completing training. Emilee appeared to speak freely and candidly throughout the interview, often laughing and seeming like she was enjoying herself. Emilee also seemed honest in her responses and did not hold back in her thoughts or responses.

Chelsey was the last participant interviewed in the study. She has been working as a school counselor for eight years and has been a school counseling supervisor for three years. Chelsey works at a Midwestern elementary school serving kindergarten through fifth grade. She

belongs to the state counseling association and the state school counseling association and has been trained in the ASCA National Model. Chelsey seemed to have lots of energy during the interview. She responded energetically to the questions and spoke quickly, although Chelsey also seemed to think through her responses by taking breaks and pausing briefly before providing her responses. Chelsey seemed to speak truthfully about her interactions with the interns sharing frustrations, difficulties and successes.

### **Themes**

Based on participant interviews and data analysis, seven major themes emerged from the research project. The themes, in no particular order of importance, will be addressed individually throughout this section. In order to best help readers understand the themes and to address the credibility of the study, quotations from the participants are used as support. The interviews provided the researcher with the ability to record and capture information verbatim from each participant. In addition, the individual interview summary sheets allowed the participant to clarify and add information from the initial interview. Each of the participants provided valuable insight about their supervision experience during the process of the study.

The seven themes of the study emerged as a result of the data analysis procedures outlined in the methodology section. Furthermore, direct quotations from the participants and the implementation of the peer review process, in which the data analysis procedures and themes were discussed, support the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The following section provides the seven themes from the study.

**Theme 1: Good school counseling supervision facilitates professional growth and development of the school counseling intern from a developmental perspective.**

Graduate students training to become school counselors typically receive at least 42-credit hours of coursework prior to participating in an internship experience (CACREP, 2009). Although the students are provided with a wealth of knowledge and some hands-on experience throughout their coursework, receiving practical experience is necessary in order to implement and refine the skills, knowledge and techniques learned during the preparation program. According to CACREP (2009), students must participate in a 600 hour internship experience prior to receiving a school counseling degree because, at the completion of the coursework, students still need the practical experience to be prepared and ready to work as a professional school counselor.

Providing school counseling supervision that facilitates the professional growth and development of the school counseling intern at a developmentally appropriate level and time is essential. Each of the participants shared the need for interns to have learning experiences throughout the internship that were composed of one or more of the following: different aspects of the school counseling comprehensive program, exposure to the elements of the school setting and more specifically working with the individual students. However, the following quotes place emphasis on the learning experiences being at the appropriate developmental timeline for the intern, in order to foster the professional growth of the school counseling intern.

Um (pause) For me when I'm, I'm working with a, a um, intern, um (pause) I kind of frame it in, when they first come in it is observing, watching, learning, from me, as I'm doing my job and processing with them as they have questions or as they are seeing what I'm doing. Then it is starting to turn over from, um, as they get acclimated just to kind of



start to give them a small taste of some of the pieces of what a school counselor does. So if its individuals, if its groups, slowly acclimating them to a point to whereby towards the end of their internship, to where they are actually at a point to where they are going to be on their own. It will be like there are two in the building. So it's like a, it's like a gradual release kind of model, where there is continual processing, um (pause) always a time where we can talk about what they are going through, talk about any questions that they might have, but it, I guess, like truly, like I guess the best way I can describe it as is it's like a gradual release. (Evalynn)

Viewing interns from a developmental perspective is an essential component in helping the intern move towards a professional school counselor. This idea provides more support, guidance and direction to the intern at the beginning of their experience and then backs off to allow them to start developing into a competent counseling intern who is ready to become a professional school counselor.

What is good counseling supervision, I believe it is um (pause) letting the um intern, I would say um probably providing support um (pause) at the beginning so that they have the support network they need to try out their skills and gradually be able to pull back the level of support to the point where they develop confidence that um (pause) they can make um (pause) you know appropriate decisions and use appropriate, appropriate skills. So I would say starting with a high level of support and gradually weaning back to the point where they can, you know to the point where, where they are capable. (Kate)

In relation to providing supervision that allows the counseling intern to develop the necessary skills at a developmentally appropriate level, providing feedback and the time to

process the information is also essential. One participant addresses the need for the supervisor to assess the intern's abilities and provide supervision accordingly.

(Pause) having a supervisor that's um (pause) able to understand the developmental stages I think of beginning school counselor and um...you know able to adjust supervision accordingly. I think it is somebody [supervisor] that doesn't give you all the answers when you [intern] need and gives you [intern] the answers sometimes when you don't need them and somebody with a strong um (pause) I think somebody with a lot of experience is helpful as well. (Cynthia)

Although the majority of the supervision literature addresses the field of supervision as a whole, the key components of supervision models available are also useful in the field of school counseling. As identified by Evalynn, Kate, Trista and Cynthia, supervision of a school counseling intern provides the supervisee with the support and feedback as needed and at an appropriate time frame.

**Theme 2: Good school counseling supervision establishes a collaborative working relationship for the intern with the supervisor and the school's stakeholders.**

Creating the supervisory relationship is an important aspect of counseling supervision. In fact, Studer (2006) spends an entire chapter on "Setting up the supervisory relationship". Furthermore, relationships with other stakeholders in the school including students, teachers, and parents are just as important as the relationships school counseling interns have with their supervisors. Many of the participants in the study identified the intern's collaborative working relationships as an important component of good school counseling supervision.

The establishment a collaborative relationship between the supervisor and the intern allows the two to interact in a way that allows the supervision process to occur. Providing the

intern support when needed, and the feedback to improve as well as the knowledge that the profession is a continual learning process is an essential component of school counseling supervision. One participant shared an occurrence of good school counseling supervision.

Um. I think that, it really comes out in the relationship that we form in our time together and that they feel comfortable with me, they truly can ask questions or um feel comfortable with me possibly correcting them as needed or helping them change it for the next time to be better um and, and also to show them that's exactly what I do, that it's not doing anything wrong. We all learn everyday on this job and um (pause) So I think when you kind of have that rapport with that intern student that, that kind of tells you when supervision is going good. (Chelsey)

Just as school counseling supervision is a developmental process, creating new relationships is as well. The following quote provides additional support of a collaborative working relationship between the school counseling intern and the supervisor.

I think if there's, you know, and some of it is kind of a sense, you know, not necessarily something you could create on a scale or anything, but, but that feeling that the intern feels comfortable with you, feels like they are able to bring some of their concerns and you know, if I feel like our conversations are detailed and that the intern is bringing me concerns and I met with the intern that kept saying oh, things are great, things are fine, I don't really have any questions, I would feel like our communication line, either they are, our communication isn't open for some reason, either they are not seeing some of these questions, which is a concern or they are feeling like they can only tell me positive things, so I think that would be one thing, that open communication and um (pause) also, the, the intern being able to respond to some of the feedback that I would be giving them

too, whether they, they could ask more questions, or share their concerns or questions about my feedback. (Kayla)

In addition to seeing the development of a collaborative working relationship between the supervisor and the intern, the following quotes provide additional evidence of relationships established between the intern and supervisor as well as the students.

Ah (pause) I think part of it is when the students relate well in the school setting, when the students relate with the intern and feel like they are coming in and asking for that specific person [intern] and then I also think by the supervisory when I watch doing their classroom guidance and they are able to take honest feedback and then you see them actually making the changes from the feedback. (Candy)

It's also important to note that the relationships do not just happen overnight. It takes work to build a trusting relationship with students. One of the participants shared the time and energy their intern put in to establish a working relationship with students.

(Pause) Hmm (pause) I think when there, when we've established rapport, a rapport between ourselves and we can discuss things, we can agree to disagree, I don't feel that a student [intern] necessarily has to do everything the way that I do it. Um...when they are brainstorming and creating lessons for the kids that will be motivating and you know a little bit entertaining as well as educational and when the kids, I mean I had this intern last year and when he would walk the hallways, the kids were responding to him in the hallways and that says to me that he is connecting with them and he would be out there before school and after school working on making that relationship, which I thought was very impressive. (Emilee)

Not only are the relationships important between the supervisor and the intern as well as the students in the school, good school counseling supervision helps foster the development of working relationships with the teachers in the school. One participant identified how they help interns transition and build relationships within the school.

Well when our students [interns] first come in, um, they write a letter to the staff or an email introducing themselves. We, we also have a faculty meeting you know introduce the person and I personally introduce them to many of the people. I go with them when they do guidance lessons at first so that um, I'm available in the classroom if an issue comes up or just to offer support. Um (pause) so our, our teachers have been very welcoming of the new people coming in or the interns coming in. (Kate)

Finally, good school counseling supervision allows the intern to establish relationships with all stakeholders in the school, including parents. One participant provides information that emphasizes the relationship between the intern, supervisor, staff and parents.

Um (pause) I guess there's a couple of different ways that it is going well, if the person is able to work with the students and establish a rapport in a working relationship with students um...at the same thing as far as working with me in other staff in the school, working with other teachers and sitting in on parent conferences and talking with teachers about students um (pause) that's if you know when it's working well, if their kind of a good fit for what is happening, if it's not working well then you sit down and talk about it. (Shirley)

As stated earlier, creating the supervisory relationship is an important component to supervision. Additionally, the participants in the study identified the significance of the school

counseling intern establishing relationships during their experience, not only with the school counseling site-supervisor, but also with the school's stakeholders.

**Theme 3: Good school counseling supervision establishes an environment that is conducive to learning, flexible yet well-defined.**

The internship experience for school counselors-in-training is the culminating learning experience for graduate students studying to become professional school counselors. In fact, CACREP (2009) identifies the internship as “professional practice, which includes practicum and internship, provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision” (p.15). Good school counseling supervision establishes the environment that allows the application and development to occur for the school counseling intern. In addition to the professional practice, supervision helps define expectations while remaining flexible. The following section provides examples of learning that occurs during a school counseling internship when the environment is conducive to learning, flexible and well-defined.

I think if there's, you know, and some of it is kind of a sense, you know, not necessarily something you could create on a scale or anything, but, but that feeling that the intern feels comfortable with you, feels like they are able to bring some of their concerns and you know, if I feel like our conversations are detailed and that the intern is bringing me concerns and I met with the intern that kept saying oh, things are great, things are fine, I don't really have any questions, I would feel like our communication line, either they are, our communication isn't open for some reason, either they are not seeing some of these questions, which is a concern or they are feeling like they can only tell me positive things, so I think that would be one thing, that open communication and um (pause) also, the, the intern being able to respond to some of the feedback that I would be giving them

too, whether they, they could ask more questions, or share their concerns or questions about my feedback. (Kayla)

School counseling supervision creates a learning environment where the supervisor is open to helping the intern improve as well as aware of obstacles that might be holding the intern back. Additionally, good school counseling supervision provides learning experiences for the intern including the opportunity to acquire knowledge of the school counseling comprehensive program.

In a school setting, um (pause) well in [state supervisor works], um (pause) [state supervisor works] they um, a school counselor does not have to have any school education background. So, um, a lot of times the counselors come in, the interns come in, um (pause) you know pretty well versed in counseling (pause) doctrine and skills and that sort of thing, but many of them struggle with, if they haven't had any type of education background, ah (pause) like classroom guidance and going into classrooms and doing lessons and knowing how to manage behavior and um other topics that come up. I would say that in school counseling learning to balance um (pause) the, a program, a complete program; learning how to schedule like um, and how to keep a balance between group counseling, individual counseling, guidance, and consultation with parents and just basically the overall paperwork and everything that goes with that too. Learning how to achieve a balance is really critical in a school setting. (Kate)

In addition to helping the school counseling intern learn the ASCA National Model and implementing a comprehensive counseling program, it is important for the school counseling intern to learn other important facets of school counseling, including working with minors, ethical considerations and multicultural competencies.

Hmm (pause) good school counseling supervision, well aside from the obvious from knowing how to meet all the requirements of supervision as we see it through, our state requirement for training or supervision which covers all the areas of multi-cultural, ethics, um methods of or techniques of, even the paperwork portion and wellness all those issues that we talk about just in supervision are important, but I think the added caveat for school counseling is to understand the school system. Ah the, the ethics that are that are a part of that working with minors, working with parents, and working with school officials that are added to that, in a different way that you don't see in community settings. So I would say, I would say understanding that portion of it as well. (Chasity)

The learning curve for the school counseling intern can be steep including understanding the comprehensive program, working with minors, understanding the school system and policies. Therefore, allowing flexibility throughout the experience can be beneficial to the intern. One participant identifies the need for flexibility during the learning experience. In order for the intern to learn the classroom guidance lesson as well as classroom management skills, Emilee provided the intern with the option to choose which grade level was most comfortable.

I talk to them about what they think they would be most comfortable with, because some people are more upper oriented and then there are those who like the little kids. So I will start them where they feel more comfortable, because I feel like that is a good starting place and then work in to the more uncomfortable situations. (Emilee)

Another method of providing flexibility that is conducive to learning is allowing the intern the opportunity to develop new components of the comprehensive program to further enhance or meet the stakeholders' needs.



I just, this past school year, last fall, I was supervising somebody who was finishing their degree. So um, she was with us for the whole fall semester from the beginning of school until December and she um was pretty heavily involved in meeting with students individually and um, we co-, we did a couple of um small group counseling sessions, a couple different groups together um and she went into the classroom and did lessons um and we did what we call a reality store which is like a career planning simulation and she actually designed all of that, and we kind of collaborated on a lot of different things on what she was bringing what I already had in place here, she helped quite bit with the um (pause) transition of the 5th graders coming in to sixth grade cause there is a series of different activities that we do. (Shirley)

While Shirley worked with an intern to develop a new program component in the career domain, Kate collaborated with her intern to address the needs of a specific classroom to implement a new component to address the personal social domain.

Um (pause) you know, one year, one year I know, one of the interns worked with me and the counselors, or the teachers had um (pause) said when they did, they were having was just that the students had a hard time with manners and all types of manners and asked if we could do something on that topic and um you know, I was able to work with her on a whole unit for the whole school, like a school wide project that, that involved lessons it involved actually a meal where the kids were able to sit down and show what they learned and a presentation for parents where parents were invited and the kids did like a songs and um (pause) poems and that sort of thing so it was also a PR experience for our school, but, um (pause) it you know things like that, where you do a whole unit um (pause) and involve that many different facets to it um (pause) you, you really need two

people to be able to pull it off, so, so it was you know (pause) that was something we were able to work together on and accomplish (pause) and I don't think I would have been able to pull something off like that off at that level without another person you know, working with me on that. (Kate)

The school counseling internship can be seen as the culminating experience for school counselors-in-training. Providing an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, well-defined, yet flexible can provide the intern with an opportunity to implement the knowledge learned during coursework in a practical application.

**Theme 4: An exceptional school counseling supervisor is aware of the developmental process of the school counseling intern.**

As stated earlier, the learning curve for a school counseling intern is steep. Although the counselor in training has completed several prerequisite courses that provide them with the basic foundation, the school counseling intern still needs the professional practice to apply their knowledge base. Practical application of knowledge may not come easily for all individuals; therefore, having a supervisor who is aware of the developmental process will best help the counseling interns improve throughout the internship experience. Several developmental models of supervision exist (Studer, 2006); however, a specific model for school counseling does not exist. School counselors, with varying years of experience, who were identified as being exceptional school counseling supervisors, possessed an awareness of the developmental stages of a school counseling intern.

Good counseling supervision is a balance between providing the intern a structure with specific basic expectations and the allowing them the freedom to express their own individual style. As the supervisor, I believe it is necessary for me to observe the intern's

beginning experiences with individual counseling as well as group experiences. As the intern gains experience my role would include less observation and more collaboration related to lesson plans, questions about classroom management, and brainstorming ways to help individual students. (Emilee)

In addition to viewing the internship experience as a developmental process for the intern, a supervisor who is aware of the individual person and where they are in the developmental process is also an important component.

(Pause) I've had (pause) because I've supervised so many students, practicing school counselors my site, sometimes I have people that start out with me and they, they don't know anything, all they've done is coursework and so, they're scared and they need a lot of structure and they need a lot of input and they just need to practice of being in there with a client and then I have others, even if they haven't had a lot of experience per say in a school, they bring a maturity and an awareness of people that, um (pause) even at the beginning of the program they don't need as much of support and direct supervision and you can, I can back off just a little bit and just let them sit a little bit more with the questions rather than giving them all the answers to begin with. (Cynthia)

In addition to providing an environment that allows practical application of intern knowledge to occur, interns being supervised by school counselors having an awareness of the developmental process receive an experience that is individualized to meet their current needs. School counseling supervisors who provide experiences at a developmentally appropriate time frame for school counseling interns are not only helping the intern, but are also taking into consideration the implications of the work provided by the intern to the students in the school.

**Theme 5: An exceptional school counseling supervisor acts as an educator, counselor and consultant throughout the internship experience.**

As identified earlier, school counselors are responsible for several components of a comprehensive counseling program. Additionally, school counselors need to be able to work with a variety of students, parents, teachers and administrators. Furthermore, the ever changing world continues to bring new challenges and issues to the field. Similar to the school counselor, interns need additional support, guidance and direction to address the stakeholders' needs. The participants in this study responded to school counselors-in-training during their supervisory experience by wearing a variety of hats in order to best meet and address the intern's needs. At times the supervisor would respond as an educator and teach the intern information, whether it be school policy or program components, sometimes the counselor would collaborate and consult with the intern to problem solve and occasionally, the supervisor would listen to concerns the school counselor-in-training was experiencing. In addition, the supervisors acted as evaluators, providing feedback for improvement. The information supporting the development of theme five reminded the researcher of Bernard's Discrimination Model of Supervision and is discussed further in Chapter 5. The following will address each role in the subsequent order counselor, teacher, consultant and evaluator.

One participant identified that an intern needed personal counseling, but was aware that the situation was possibly bigger than what she could do and instead consulted the university supervisor.

It was somebody who just had zero boundaries, um (pause) they, they could not follow directions and I mean in the most simple um (pause) you know the thing about working in a school that are different from working anywhere else, when you're a community

agency person, you have a client come in and you see them and they leave and then you have a client come in and you see them and you might, you know talk with a few other people and consult, but in a school, you're really working within a family and you have to understand the dynamics of that family to be able to do counseling and this particular person could not begin to understand. Um (pause) I guess I think there was a mental health issue with a student and um (pause) she (pause) she just started saying things that were not accurate to parents and she had had a background in education as a teacher and I think she thought she knew a lot more than she did and ah. When I called the university supervisor after two weeks, she validated what I had been feeling by things that she had been hearing on her end and I kind of thought I was, just had never had anybody like that and I just kept thinking what, what's wrong (sigh) and while I didn't figure what was wrong, I definitely heard yeah, something is wrong. You're right, you're not, you're not imagining it, so um (pause) she ended up being asked to leave the graduate program um and didn't become a school counselor, so it wasn't it wasn't fought, it wasn't a supervision issue it was a somebody who probably shouldn't have been admitted to a graduate program to begin with. (Cynthia)

As seen earlier within theme one, several of the participants portrayed the role of teacher, by following a developmental perspective when integrating the school counseling interns into the experience. Many of the participants first allowed the intern to observe and then practice. One participant was even aware of the areas the intern needed additional assistance.

Um (pause) as far as um (pause) well as far as my experience as a school site supervisor (pause) um (pause) So far, I've had really good interns come in and, and been very knowledgeable and of course you know several of them have struggled in a specific area.

You know depending on the person, sometimes it's a confidence that they really can do it, sometimes it's the um (pause) like I said the classroom guidance piece, the ability to um (pause) you know manage classroom behavior while presenting lessons, but I've had a really positive experience with all of the interns that have um, served with me, they have been very high quality, um (pause) it's, it's gone really well. (Kate)

Although the teaching is limited because many of the interns come in with the foundational knowledge necessary to be successful, it does still occasionally occur. However, rather than teaching new information or re-teaching concepts, many of the participants provided examples of consulting as a major component of the supervisor's role.

I had to, I was supervising a um (pause) elementary school counseling in [different state]. This has been about twelve years ago, twelve or thirteen years ago and um (long pause) the person I was supervising was already a teacher at the school and then decided she wanted to get her master's in counseling and then was kind of, it was a difficult situation cause she pushed her way into being supervised at the school that she actually working at and it was a lot of conflict in interest. So that was kind of a difficult position and her skills were not very good as far as by a counseling students and she, she kind of went about things a little inappropriately and I had to talk to her supervisor at the college level, so that, that was an uncomfortable experience (Shirley)

One participant discusses the importance of consulting before things spiral out of control, or to at least address the situation to help the counseling intern with appropriate decision making.

You know just being proactive with it [experience not going well], yeah, you know the communication really is critical and um (pause) and I think just making that availability, that if there is an issue that comes up and, and we can sit down and talk about it whether

it's you know daily, or, once a week or, and you know, that's, that's hard sometimes because, you know, for instance in my situation, um...I'm one counselor in about 600 kids and by the time, you know is hard to manage as far as having the availability to sit down and discuss exactly what is going on and that sort of thing and there, there have been times where back in retrospect in which had we spent a little more time, you know going through some issues, but um....I think the communication is really critical. (Kate)

Occasionally, supervisors are simultaneously acting as both a consultant and an evaluator in situations. An example is shared by one participant.

The intern and I had numerous conversations regarding her skills and when she inappropriately addressed topics with students. (Shirley)

The three roles identified in the discrimination model of supervision can easily be implemented within school counseling supervision. Although an emphasis is placed on consultant, information supporting the roles of teacher and counselor also exist. In addition, the role of evaluator can also be identified throughout a school counseling supervision experience.

**Theme 6: An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor.**

According to the 2010 ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors Standard E.1.d., school counselors should “strive through personal initiative to stay abreast of current research and to maintain professional competence in advocacy, teaming and collaboration, culturally competent counseling and school counseling program coordination, knowledge and use of technology, leadership, and equity assessment using.”

A key component identified by all but one of the participants was learning that occurred for them as school counselors while in the position of school counseling site-supervisor. The

following statements from the participants not only support the theme identified in this study, but also relate to the ASCA ethical code school counselors are encouraged to integrate into their professional practice.

Several of the participants identified going back to the basics of counseling as a useful learning experience gained while serving as a site-supervisor for an intern.

Oh, I've actually learned some really nice skills, I think being reminded of your counseling skills is really a great piece too when you are having interns coming in because they are, even though I know that sometimes that clinical piece can be so frustrating when they are so clinically minded, they really do also bring some nice refreshers for me to the table, um and remind me of some, of the counseling, the clinical (emphasized) the clinical perspective, some of those clinical skills that you can um (pause) that I can sometimes get a little lax on. (Evalynn)

While Evalynn identified counseling skills as something specific she learned, Emilee identified the ability to look at situations through an additional lens as well as providing areas for overall growth to occur as a beneficial component to her participation as a site-supervisor.

And just getting the different looks, you know it's like oh I never thought of it that way, oh that was brilliant, so you know you gain insights, it keeps us from becoming stagnant because you do have to be more on your toes when you have one. (Emilee)

In addition to the basic counseling skills and being self-aware of one's own work as a school counselor, reviewing information that is pertinent to the students in which the site-supervisor works with was also identified as useful. More specifically, Candy addresses the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and theories of counseling as important concepts revisited while working with school counseling interns.



Um (pause) I think um (pause) a lot of it is just going back to the basics, every time I've had an intern come in and they are fresh out, out of school they talk a lot about their theories and so it makes me want to go back and refresh theories. Also refresh with the diagnostic part in school counseling, I don't use that so much, but um, I think it is important to keep refreshed on the new diagnostic things that are coming out and keeping up on the DSM and those kinds of things and so I think it is just that refresher part that um (pause) more than anything. (Candy)

Furthermore, Trista discussed the importance of reviewing all of the material learned while in her master's program, in addition to the new information that exists, as being a beneficial reward for hosting an intern.

Oh definitely a lot of benefits with, they'll [intern] come in here and there is some new stuff that they'll tell us about that you know, when you're not in those classes anymore and they will start talking about something that you haven't thought about for 10 years, but may, now that you know your practice, be beneficial with you and students. (Trista)

In addition to refreshing information learned during the site-supervisors time in the graduate program, several participants identified the new and current research being provided to them, by the interns, as helpful information to stay current in the field. One participant stated,

Um (pause) I think the greatest reward is that you have chance to, well a couple of things, for one, when I did my master's it was quite a while ago (laugh) so when you get people coming right out of the university and its current and they are up on all the current research, what's happening in the field of counseling from an academic standpoint, so it's good to share information with them and ideas and so um from that part of its very rewarding. (Shirley)

Another participant appreciated the newness of ideas that the school counseling interns provided her during their internship experience. Additionally, she also indicates that this field is a continual learning process for everyone, not only for herself, but for all school counselors.

Um, I always get new ideas from new people coming in, from the interns and I tell them, this is a learning experience for me also and um (pause) what I hope to happen is you bring in new ideas and so you keep me abreast of new trims and um (pause) new ideas umm (pause) to try and um and in turn I support and, and help you through this experience also. (Kate)

An awareness of the daily routines and reasons as to why school counselors do what they do was one way a participant was able to continually review and enhance her own work as a professional.

But I think another rewarding experience is when you get questions from the practicum student or the intern it makes you think about and refine your beliefs and your ideas of school counseling because sometimes you just kind of go day to day and do the things you need to do, but when you have an intern asking you questions about why you do something a certain way, it allows you to examine your skills and your beliefs, I think that's another great reward. (Kayla)

Finally, one participant identified the helpfulness of the interns providing or explicitly teaching them new information that exists in the school counseling field, whether through their experience in the counseling classroom or via individual research they have done.

Um (pause) I, I have learned from, from each one of my interns and even my practicum student. They each had a different strength and many times they were because of what they were doing in their classes. It was wonderful for me to hear what they were doing in

their classes with their um, professors, it helps me be current as well. Um, I also valued a lot of the research that they were doing and they would bring resources or things that they had found you know on the ASCA website or things I don't always have time to do. They were, they were doing it as part of some of their coursework, so we also learned from each other and they shared resources with me that were relevant to what we were working on together, maybe in a small group or classroom lesson and so I do feel that, that they have brought things to me too. Um (pause) through their work and, and just learning, learning from each of their strengths too. (Chelsey)

Being aware of one's own skills and limitations is an essential component in the counseling field. The information provided shows how school counselors working as school counseling supervisors actively engage in self-awareness and reflection to improve upon their work as a professional school counselor.

**Theme 7: School counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual development of the counseling profession and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor.**

As evident by theme six, several of the participants identified learning from the intern as an aspect that occurs during the supervision process. In addition to the professional growth identified in theme six, engaging in professional development, knowing one's own professional identity and assisting in the continual development of the school counseling profession are reasons why school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision. In addition, the 2010 ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors indicate the importance of professional competence via responsibilities to self. Two standards that specifically relate to this theme include:

- 1) Standard E.1.e. Ensure a variety of regular opportunities for participating in and facilitating professional development for self and other educators and school counselors through continuing education opportunities annually including: attendance at professional school counseling conferences; reading *Professional School Counseling* journal articles; facilitating workshops for education staff on issues school counselors are uniquely positioned to provide.
- 2) Standard E.1.f. Enhance personal self-awareness, professional effectiveness and ethical practice by regularly attending presentations on ethical decision-making. Effective school counselors will seek supervision when ethical or professional questions arise in their practice (ASCA, 2010a).

Professional growth of the school counselor serving as the school counseling site-supervisor is a relevant reason as to why school counselors become involved in supervising interns. As noted in the previous section, several of the school counseling site-supervisors have gained valuable knowledge, skills and resources as a part of supervision experience. One supervisor specifically stated the reason she became involved in school counseling supervision was because the learning occurred both ways.

Um, I think, from hearing from some of the other, some of my other colleagues who had been supervisors, some of the things that they shared about you know learning, that the learning truly went both ways. (Kayla)

Additionally, the professional development of the supervisor can be learning both what should be done and also what should not be done. An excellent example of the continual learning process to occur for the school counselor is when the participant identified learning simultaneously with the intern during the supervision experience.

Um (pause) I think, I'm a better school counselor, I think, I think I learn when they learn, I think um (pause) you know it's rare to have a supervisee that's working hard, that I don't learn something from, now sometimes it's not always what I should do, but sometimes it's what I shouldn't do, it's a reminder oh yeah, this is why you don't do that, or um (pause) this is this is been in stung in the butt for you too or an appreciation so um (pause) pretty much every time I finish, I think that there's something that I've learned, so I definitely grow as a professional and what a great networking. (Cynthia)

For many of the participants, learning was an essential component as to why they participated in school counseling supervision as site-supervisors. However, for many of the participants, the need to help with the further development of the counseling profession or to give back to the profession was also a strong component in the decision making process. For the following participant, both the learning and helping with the development of the profession are evident.

Um, ah, I want to give back. It really came down to that, and even early on because I've been doing this for a long time. Even early on, I wanted to give back and to continue to learn and to continue to be reminded and so that is why I did it. (Evalynn)

Another participant identified that in addition to helping the interns learn what is necessary to promote the field of school counseling, they should justify the work that is currently done by school counselors.

Um (pause) I, I just think that its crucial (emphasized) that once you are in the field that you um, you have a responsibility to help train other people coming into the field to keep the field going in the direction that it is and um (pause) we, we have a difficult time as school counselors as it is trying to get out and justify our positions sometimes and so

helping to train interns to be a part of their professional organization and um (pause) training to also give back to the organization is why we have such strong wonderful school counselors in [state counselor works]. (Candy)

One participant reflected back on how her supervisor helped her to gain the confidence needed to be a successful school counselor and how all interns or future counselors should have experiences that help develop the profession.

um (pause) I think, I think I remember how instrumental the supervisor was who worked with me and how he gave, he helped me find my confidence and my abilities and was very supportive and you know I just know how critical that time period is (pause) for a counselor going in to the counseling profession you know to to be able to build confidence and to be able to ask questions and try new things and and um (pause) so you know, I just feel like that's an area that I can help somebody with (Kate)

Another participant identified not only helping the upcoming counselors in the field, but also allowing them to see that the school counseling field has both ups and downs, ensuring the student has the appropriate experiences to be successful when they go into the field.

Um (pause) I think basically, to, to help upcoming counselors, to to help them in their experience and um, I think the school I work at offers a lot of a lot of you know, great challenges and experiences for someone coming new to the profession and I also kind of shows you what it may like, may be like, there's always good and bad, there's always challenges um (pause) and I think, I think my school and what I can offer is a good opportunity for, for interns. (Chelsey)

Finally, participants engaged in school counseling supervision as the site-supervisor to help maintain their professional identity as a school counselor. The following quotation is from a participant who shared she wants to make sure people are prepared to go into the field.

um (pause) I believe I do a pretty good job with um, helping new counselors coming into the field and why, because, I think it's important to, for mentors or people in the field to take the time to show new counselors coming in what it's really going to be like and um (pause) in sharing my expertise and my procedures in what I do with somebody new coming in (pause) because when they leave me they are usually at a site by themselves, most of the time and they have to start their program pretty much from scratch, so um, if you can give them some tools to take with them after coming from their internship, that they can take and start in their new position, when they get hired, I think that, I think that's one reason why they keep getting referred to me (Shirley)

Another participant emphasized how giving back to the profession was engrained in her professional identity as a school counselor.

So I just remember learning when I went to school that part of being a counselor is giving back to the profession and that stuck with me and so I wanted to make sure that we could give back to other people that are in the profession. (Trista)

The following quote is from a participant who sees her role as a supervisor as part of her professional identity. In addition to being a school counselor, she really identifies with helping others become school counselors.

I think I just wanted, when I had the opportunity and they asked me, my first thought was, I can't wait to give somebody what I wasn't able to get. I want to give somebody the experience that I would have liked to have had when I was in practicum, here I'll listen to

your transcripts, here I'll sit in on a session, here this is a book that helps me. I mean, I had none of that (laughs). So I think that was my first impetus and then I love (exaggerated out) what I do, it's fun for me to have somebody watch and then ask questions and then say, ok, you try (pause) and to sit and watch them and say, how was that and I just, I just like that part and I would be, if I couldn't supervise anymore and I was just a school counselor, I would probably be a little sad (pause) because it's a, it's a part of what I love to do about my job. (Cynthia)

School counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual development of the counseling profession and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor. One participant sums up theme seven.

Um (pause) well, you know, it's that old, you know somebody did it for me and if we don't take our turn at it, how are people supposed to have the opportunity? And you know, it also nice to know, it also does expose us to new ideas that are out there and, and just a fresh new look at how to do something too, but it's mostly, we have the responsibility to support our colleagues and our future colleagues and that's the only way they can get the experience, so.

.....Mmmm (pause) well I think it does validate what I'm doing, too you know, you think "oh yeah, ok, I guess I do do that" because when they, when you're having discussions with them and they give me positive feedback it's like oh yeah I guess I never thought of that, you just get so, busy being in the job, you don't give yourself the affirmation so, that's fun. (Emilee)

The information provided previously not only supports the existence of the theme seven, it also addresses school counseling ethical standards. Additionally, the participants identified



areas of professional growth that occur for them while supervising interns. They also shared how they help further the development of the counseling field. Finally, the participants identified what their professional identity is as a school counselor as a result of supervising school counseling interns.

### **Summary of Results**

The following themes were identified as a result of the research study:

- Good school counseling supervision facilitates professional growth and development of the school counseling intern from a developmental perspective.
- Good school counseling supervision establishes a collaborative working relationship for the intern with the supervisor and the school's stakeholders.
- Good school counseling supervision establishes an environment that is conducive to learning, flexible and well-defined.
- An exceptional school counseling supervisor is aware of the developmental process of the school counseling intern.
- An exceptional school counseling supervisor acts as an educator, counselor and consultant throughout the internship experience.
- An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor.
- School counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual development of the counseling profession and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor.

As identified by the themes good school counseling supervision is conducted in a developmental manner that facilitates learning, takes place in an environment that is well-

defined, yet flexible and creates collaborative working relationships for the intern. In addition, this good school counseling supervision is conducted by school counselors who are aware of the developmental needs of school counseling interns, are aware of their own professional identity and continued growth of the counseling field and are self-aware and reflective of their own work. Finally, the supervisors conducting the school counseling supervision rotate roles throughout the supervision experience acting as an educator, counselor or consultant when appropriate.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research study was to explore what encompasses good school counseling supervision, what exemplifies exceptional school counseling supervisors and why identified exceptional school counseling supervisors become involved in supervision. Although limited research exists for school counseling supervision, this research study illustrates what current supervision practice is within the participant population. Several themes emerged from the data collection and data analysis processes and there were expected and unexpected outcomes for each research question. The following is a discussion of each of the research themes, how they relate to the research questions and research literature, how the themes relate to each other, a critical analysis from the researcher, and finally ideas for future clarification and studies.

### **Summary of Research Design**

The research study encompassed several components including the goals of the study, the conceptual framework, research questions, methodology and ways to promote validity. Although much of this information was previously shared in the methodology chapter, a concept map illustrated in Figure 1 is useful in visualizing how each component of the research design related to the others throughout the process of the study. The use of a concept map is promoted by Maxwell (2005) to help conceptualize the different components and relationships of a research design. The solid lines signify purposeful relationships among the components whereas the one dotted line indicates a potential existence of a relationship between the goals and methods of the study that was not purposeful. As a result of this unexpected connection, the participants may have gained information about their own work as a school counseling supervisor; even though it

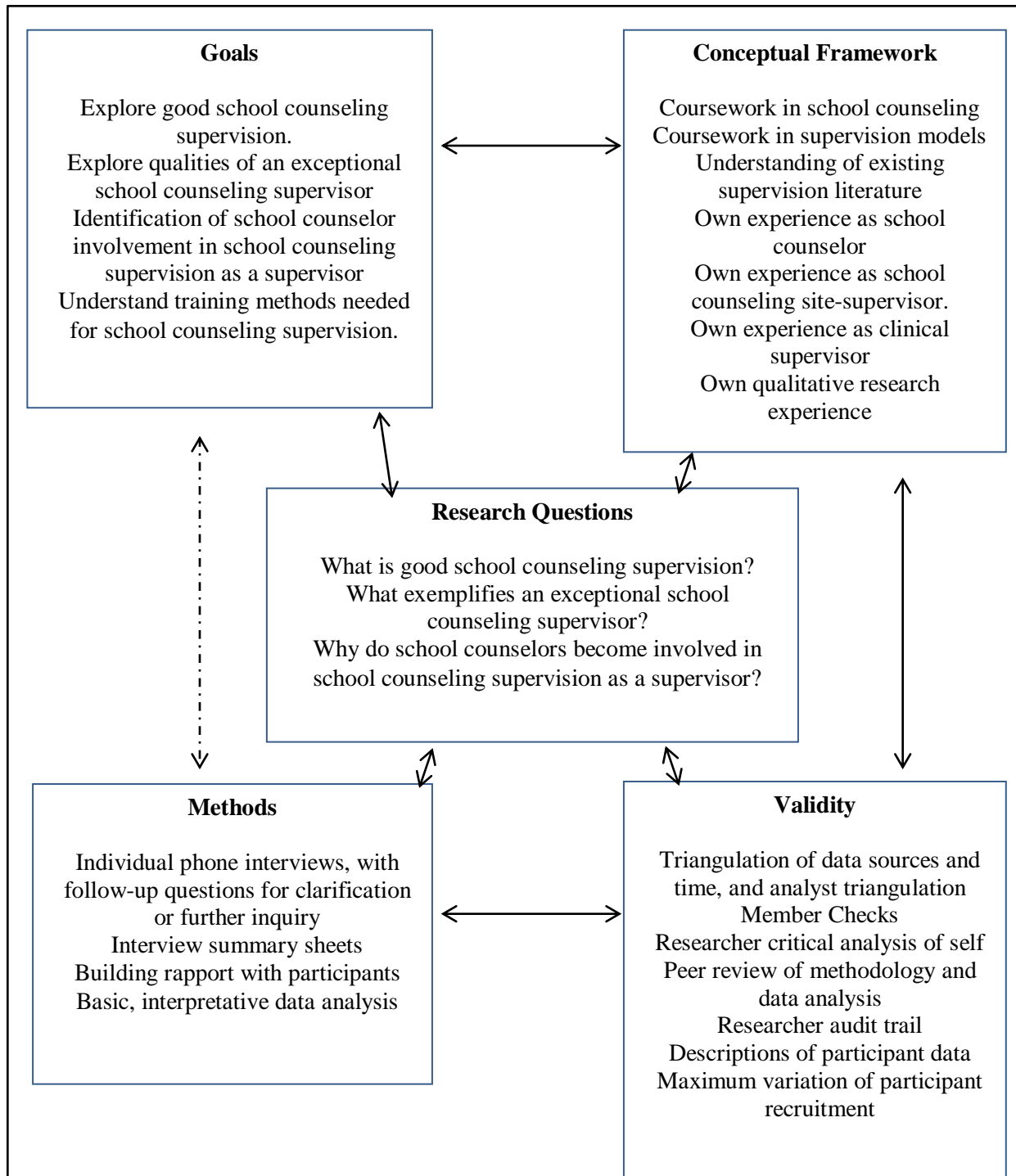


Figure 1. Research design concept map illustrating relationships between the different research components; solid lines indicate purposeful connections while dotted lines indicate relationships that emerged during the study.

Adapted from Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, Inc.

was not the intention of the researcher for that connection to occur. The researcher used the methods specifically to address the goals of the study.

### **Summary of Results**

The results of this study provided several thought provoking points in relation to school counseling supervision. This section of the paper summarizes important concepts that were discovered or reviewed during the process including the relationship between the participants, the field of school counseling supervision and the methodology. Furthermore, a summary of the emerging themes and the literature that supports their existence is shared. In addition, the researcher has provided information that illustrates the relationships between the themes and the research questions.

### **Good School Counseling Supervision**

As identified earlier in the disquisition, supervision is a defined process to improve skills and knowledge; however, limited information regarding supervision within the school setting exists. In reviewing the current literature, information offers suggestions about supervision, but is missing a clear vision of what constitutes school counseling supervision. Studer (2006) provides information about school counseling and various supervision models, but does not necessarily integrate the two concepts to the full extent by including every aspect of both supervision and school counseling.

As a result of the study, three important themes related to the specifics of good school counseling supervision emerged. These results reflect current practices of the participants within the study. The following section includes a discussion for each theme. The themes are:

- 1) Good school counseling facilitates professional growth and development of school counseling interns from a developmental perspective.

- 2) Good school counseling supervision establishes a collaborative working relationship for the intern with the supervisor and the schools' stakeholders.
- 3) Good school counseling supervision establishes an environment that is conducive to learning, flexible and well-defined.

The first theme that emerged regarding good school counseling supervision was "Good school counseling facilitates professional growth and development of school counseling interns from a developmental perspective." While school counseling supervision has had relatively limited research, counseling supervision has existed for decades. Models of counselor supervision are used in a clinical setting, including developmental models (Leddick, 1994; Smith, 2009). Additionally, according to Dollarhide and Miller, (2006) several authors have identified school counseling supervision models with a major emphasis placed on the awareness of the developmental stages of counselors-in-training. Although school counseling supervision occurs in a different setting than clinical supervision, the idea of a developmental supervision model being applied to school counselors or school counselors-in-training is a beneficial tool. Dollarhide and Miller (2006) identified that within some school counseling supervision models, an "awareness of the developmental issues of trainees provides supervisors with an understanding of the constructivist process inherent in the development of a professional identity" (p.246). As a result of this study, the identified theme supports the current literature regarding developmental models of supervision.

The second theme that emerged identifies the role of supervision for helping to establish collaborative working relationships for the intern with the supervisor and the school's stakeholders. Muse-Burke, et. al., (2001) provide a chapter in the Bradley and Ladany book on the supervisory relationship. Some of these important relationship components identified are: 1)

establishing the supervisory relationship, 2) forming a strong relationship, and 3) influential factors for the relationship. In addition, the ASCA National Model emphasizes the collaborative effort that should occur between school counselors and the stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive program becomes an integral part of the school's overall mission (ASCA, 2005). The importance of this theme emerging from the participants signifies the prominence of supervision helping the school counseling interns understand the need for collaborative working relationships with all in the school system and community.

Finally, good school counseling supervision establishes an environment that is conducive to learning and flexible yet well-defined. According to CACREP (2009) each school counseling graduate student must participate in a professional practice to receive the hands-on application of the coursework prior to commission of the graduate degree. This professional practice experience is conducted in the form of a practicum or internship experience. One additional requirement is that the experience be supervised. In order for a graduate student to continue to learn and develop professionally, an environment that is supportive of learning is necessary. In addition, the nature of the school setting is unpredictable in a predictable routine; therefore, the supervision experience needs to remain flexible, while still meeting course and university requirements.

The three themes that emerged to address the first research question provide new information that was not previously known. Although the researcher has been trained in supervision, works as a school counselor and provides site-supervision, the emphasis on helping the intern build relationships with all of the school's stakeholders was an important finding. Previously, the researcher would have placed the priority of relationships for the intern on the supervisory relationship as well as the relationship between the intern and the students. However,

the participants in the study identified the necessity for the intern to have similar working relationships with staff, administration and parents, all of which are an important component of the professional practice.

Based on the information that is known in the literature and the themes that emerged from the study, the research question “What is good school counseling supervision?” has been addressed. Information gained may not be all-inclusive, but the themes definitely provide a foundation for further exploration and comparison to current school counseling supervision models as well as identifying the differences and similarities of clinical and school counseling supervision.

### **Exceptional School Counseling Site-Supervisors**

Three major themes emerged addressing the research question, “What exemplifies an exceptional school counseling site-supervisor?” The themes are:

- 1) An exceptional school counseling supervisor is aware of the developmental process of the school counseling intern.
- 2) An exceptional school counseling supervisor acts as an educator, counselor and consultant throughout the internship experience.
- 3) An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor.

As identified in the discussion section of good school counseling supervision, having an awareness of the developmental process for interns is an important component. Likewise, the school counseling site-supervisors within this study were aware of the developmental processes that were necessary in helping the intern flourish during the internship experience. Several of the participants discussed the developmental process that should occur during the supervision



experience for the interns. One of the participants, Evalynn, kept referring to the developmental process as a gradual release, while Kate discussed providing a high level of support and then weaning off.

In addition to knowing and understanding the developmental perspective of the intern, another essential component identified was the supervisors' understanding of their interaction with the intern. School counseling supervisors must realize they need to change how they interact with the intern throughout the supervision experience including interactions where teaching, counseling and consulting occur. According to Bernard's Discrimination Model of Supervision, the supervisor will respond to the supervisee in different capacities including teacher, counselor and consultant, based on the situation being addressed (Bradley, et. al., 2001). This model of supervision supports one of the themes exemplified by the exceptional school counseling site-supervisors within this study: "An exceptional school counseling supervisor acts as an educator, counselor and consultant throughout the internship experience."

The final theme that emerged to address the second research question was "An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor." While this may not be externally transferable to other school counseling site-supervisors, the participants within this study support this theme. Several of the participants discussed the learning that occurred for them during their experience as a school counseling site-supervisor. While some supervisors identified ways they could improve their own skills as a result of working with interns, others identified learning that occurred as a result of situations that did not necessarily go according to plan. As a result of this study, the school counselors participating in site-supervision are improving their professional practice, which is an ethical standard identified by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2010a). Although

the experiences outlined by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2010a) suggest school counselors should participate in experiences to improve their own work (i.e. participating in workshops or reading scholarly journals), the participants in this study indicate professional growth can also occur as a part of supervising.

The themes that emerged addressing the second research question provided new information to the researcher regarding exceptional school counseling site-supervisors that was not previously known. The researcher believed that the exceptional school counseling supervisor focused mainly on the intern and the process of supervision. However, one important theme that emerged during the study was that the exceptional school counseling site-supervisor was reflective in their work as a school counselor. When reflecting on the theme, it is not surprising; however, it was an unexpected result that provided new information.

### **School Counselor Participation as School Counseling Site-Supervisors**

One theme emerged with the exploration of the final research question, “Why do school counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a supervisor?”

- 1) School counselors become involved in school counseling supervision as a part of their professional growth, continual development of the counseling profession and to maintain the professional identity of a school counselor.

According to the ASCA ethical codes, school counselors have a professional responsibility to themselves to further their own knowledge and growth in the counseling field. The theme “An exceptional school counseling supervisor is self-aware and reflective in their own work as a school counselor” was addressed in the previous section as support to the second research question. However, the information overlaps with the final theme of the study regarding school counselors’ participation in school counseling supervision. While the theme supports

what makes a school counselor an exceptional site-supervisor, it simultaneously identifies why individuals become involved in school counseling supervision.

In addition to their own professional growth, school counselors are encouraged to be advocates for the profession (CACREP, 2009). The participants in this study provided structure and support for the continual growth and development of the profession. In fact, Trista stated,

“I wanted to make sure that we could give back to other people that are in the profession and also, I wanted to make sure that (laughing slightly) that we could have a really good pool of counselors that were trained here because I wanted our area to get them not just [school district of participant] but [neighboring school district], cause we work so close with them too.”

Furthermore, Magnuson, et. al., (2001) write, “seasoned school counselors who are skilled supervisors can become a powerful influence and a valuable resource for new counselors” (p.216).

Finally, the participants within this study became involved in school counseling supervision to maintain their own professional identity. While there is no known research information to support a school counselor serving as a school counseling supervisor to maintain one’s own professional identify, the process of supervision does help establish one’s professional identity (Borders, 1990; Miller & Dollarhide, 2006).

The final emerging theme for the study provided new insights the researcher had not previously thought of, including support of one’s own professional identity and professional growth and experience. The researcher had previously believed school counseling site-supervisors provide supervision to help further the field of school counseling. Additionally, the researcher was surprised by this theme because of their own professional experience. While the

researcher is heavily involved in professional organizations, supervision of school counseling interns and furthering one's own knowledge, not all school counselors possess the same values. This new information that was gained from the final theme may help encourage additional school counselors to participate in school counseling supervision as a site-supervisor.

While limited information exists regarding why school counselors become involved in school counseling site-supervision, the participants within this study provide useful information to the field of school counseling supervision. The work of the participants not only addresses the final research question in this study, but also supports the ethical codes identified by ASCA. Although this information may not be transferable to the general population, it would be a good goal to promote in the overall picture of school counseling supervision.

In reviewing each individual theme, it is hard to do so without acknowledging the connectedness that exists between the three research questions. The overall picture is that good school counseling supervision supports the occurrence learning for the intern with support from the supervisor including collaborative working relationships, a learning environment as well as viewing the experience from a developmental perspective. The key points identified in each theme are supported in the research literature. Furthermore, the themes were directly connected to the individual research questions.

## **Discussion**

Reviewing the current school counseling supervision literature, conducting the research study and analyzing the results has been an exhilarating experience for the researcher. While the final themes of the study appear to answer the research questions addressed, additional thoughts and ideas regarding school counseling supervision have emerged. The following section

identifies the ideas that have occurred for the researcher throughout the entire process of this dissertation study, in no particular order.

### **Supervision: School versus Clinical**

Differentiating between clinical supervision and school counseling supervision is a difficult task. The existing literature identifies components of each. In addition, similarities or overlapping ideas exist. However, as a part of this research study, even though the identification of good school counseling supervision was explored with a group of school counseling site-supervisors, the underlining question of what constitutes school counseling supervision and how it relates to clinical supervision still exists.

A similar conversation also arose during the peer review process. When speaking with one peer review member who is employed as a school counselor and is trained in both supervision and qualitative research, the researcher and peer reviewer debated as to whether or not school counseling supervision is similar to or different than clinical supervision. Although the researcher is hopeful that the clinical supervision component is taking place within the school setting, within this study an emphasis was placed on what the experiences or the activities (i.e. individual, classroom guidance, group counseling) the school counseling intern should be exposed to throughout the school counseling supervision experience. The participants, however, did not exclude the importance of the developmental process or inclusion of feedback throughout the process. This debate seems to be a common dilemma in school counseling supervision.

As stated earlier in the disquisition, clinical supervision is clinical supervision is supervision of counseling skills (Maguson, Norem, & Bradley, 2001; Page, et.al., 2001; Tromski-Klingshirn & Davis, 2007). The clinical supervision aspect is rarely addressed during school counseling supervision; however, providing opportunities for interns to take part in

different aspects of the school counseling program is typically identified. Even though the focus in this study continued to be on delivery methods of the comprehensive program including both classroom guidance and individual counseling, several of the participants still identified providing feedback to the interns as an important component to school counseling supervision, which is often be seen as more clinical. Although, the feedback did not always necessarily address the counseling skills of the school counseling intern during the experience.

The researcher still struggles with the idea of differentiating between providing a good school counseling internship experience versus providing good school counseling supervision. Many of the participants shared information about good school counseling supervision experiences including the intern's growth and development as well as the different delivery methods and domains essential to implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. However, it remains undetermined as to whether or not providing such experiences indicate that good school counseling supervision is occurring. For example, providing a learning experience such as an opportunity to conduct classroom guidance lessons does not necessarily indicate learning occurs for the intern unless supervision of the experience also takes place.

Although the previous information was not something the researcher initially sought to find, the results of both the peer review process and the study emphasize the exploration of school versus clinical supervision as another important question for further investigation. Additionally, one might also explore the underlying essence of school counseling supervision, in addition to the differences from clinical supervision.

### **Supervision Models**

Supervision models provide a framework for supervisors to base their supervision practices. While several different supervision models exist, two models support the identified

themes in this study: the discrimination model and the integrated developmental model (IDM). Janine Bernard developed the discrimination model of supervision (Bradley, Gould, & Parr, 2001; Studer, 2006). The major components of this supervision model include teacher, counselor and consultant. Studer (2006) identifies the evaluator as one additional component to this approach. The participants in this study identified experiences in which they portrayed one of the three roles identified by Bernard. Furthermore, the supervisors seemed more comfortable with consultant role than the two other roles, with limited reference to the counseling role. Although the participants did not state that they acted as a counselor or teacher to some of their supervisees, the information shared indicates they occasionally acted as a counselor or teacher to the supervisee. Additionally, the participants in this study indicated that the evaluator was most difficult.

The information shared regarding the discrimination model of supervision supports the development of theme five. The researcher was not specifically looking for the components of educator, consultant and counselor while analyzing the data; however, once the researcher realized the very aspects of each of those roles existed for the exceptional site-supervisor, the researcher started contemplating the importance of the discrimination model within the theme. With the continual review of transcripts, notes and key words, the researcher started synthesizing the information further. The researcher then realized the components that were being shared by the participants aligned with the supervisory roles outlined in the discrimination model of supervision and therefore used the terms educator, instead of teacher, consultant and counselor.

Supervision from a developmental perspective illustrates the growth of an inexperienced counselor through stages to a master counselor (Whiting, Bradley & Planny, 2001) While several developmental theories of supervision exist; the integrated developmental model (IDM) of

supervision supports the examples provided by the participants in this study. Whiting, Bradley and Planny (2001) stated that Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth (1998) identify three major components of the IDM supervision model including domains, structures and levels. Although each of the components is essential for the supervision model, the participants of the study most frequently described their interns in regards to the structures and levels of the IDM supervision model. For example, in relation to structures, participants often made reference to supervision going well when the intern was motivated or was not a permanent object in their office. In this study, while the participants had an understanding of a developmental perspective, several of the supervisors would like the interns to start out at a higher level of functioning than what might be typically seen by a starting intern. Supervisors who have training in supervision or exposure to supervision models, specifically the IDM for a developmental perspective may have a better supervision experience and may be more helpful to the interning school counselor.

### **Exceptional Supervisors**

The individuals providing the supervision experiences were referred to this study as being exceptional school counseling site-supervisors. The participants were identified by a specific set of criteria. One of the criteria being that the counselor educator referring the participant believed that the school counselor was an exceptional site-supervisor. However, within the study, the researcher chose not to define the term exceptional to the participants or the counselor educators making the referrals.

The main reason for clarification was as a result of the peer review process. During the peer review process the researcher was questioned as to why the term exceptional was used. The researcher wanted the top school counseling supervisors currently practicing in the field to be referred to the study, not just those who are average or those seeking help to meet student needs



without providing appropriate supervision. For future studies the researcher could clarify the term exceptional as part of the referral process. In fact, the term exceptional could be described as better than average (Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2012). Defining the term exceptional would help maintain a more objective referral process in the study, however, the term average is still subjective.

Upon reflection, the researcher felt that she should have provided some common definition of exceptional to those who referred the participants and those who participated. There are two major reasons for this conclusion. The first reason is a result of the interactions between the researcher and the participants, while the second is a result of the peer review process. Although the participants were identified as exceptional school counseling site-supervisors, each of the participants had difficulty accepting the “label” because it was not defined for them. The participants had an extremely difficult time personalizing exceptional; the following provides examples. Kate stated, “I'm not the one who called myself exceptional” while Evalynn said, “I would really be ok with like "good", "great" maybe a little, but Ooo, exceptional, it feels, it feels a little big.”

Even though it was difficult for the participants to accept being identified as exceptional, when asked to identify a colleague that they considered exceptional and provide information about that colleague, the participants did not have any difficulty identifying qualities and characteristics. In fact, after one participant described a colleague who could be considered an exceptional school counseling site-supervisor, the researcher confronted the participant asking, “Would you say that you have those same qualities?” Cynthia responded with hesitance, “Yeah, I consider myself a genuine person (long pause and light-heartedly states) I know, I'm exceptional.”

In addition to clarifying the term exceptional, understanding what the current research literature identifies as minimum qualifications for a school counseling site-supervisor is important. The definition of a supervisor was previously shared in the dissertation including several different types of supervisors that exist. One component that is absent from the school counseling supervision literature is recommended competencies for school counseling supervisors. However, minimum recommendations necessary for a counselor to become a school counseling supervisor are identified. Although this study did not address competencies of the school counseling supervisor, it did explore the identified exceptional school counseling site-supervisor who meets the minimum CACREP recommendations to participate in site-supervision as well as the other established participant criteria.

According to Bradley and Kottler (2001), “counseling experience and an accumulation of academic credits must be viewed as insufficient qualifications, by themselves, for supervisors of counselors” (p.6). Additionally, Holloway and Neufeldt (1995) indicate that a key component to validate supervision practice is given based on one’s supervision methodology practice (as cited by Bradley & Kottler, 2001). Although the literature disputes the participants within this study as being qualified, the information gained from the identified exceptional participants cannot be overlooked.

It is interesting to note that the experiences and training of study participants were different from those identified in the literature (CACREP, 2009; Bradley & Kottler, 2001). Additionally, the recommendations and qualifications for supervisors identified in the literature do not address the term exceptional. However, the themes of this study do identify the specific characteristics, knowledge base and qualities of the participants who were identified as exceptional site-supervisors. While the information that emerged from this study may not be

externally transferable to other school counseling site-supervisors, the internal transferability exists that these site-supervisors possessed an awareness of the developmental process for school counseling interns, the supervisors were self-aware and reflective in their own work and actively changed supervisory roles to meet the needs of their interns.

### **Transferability**

Although the information from this study is not necessarily externally transferable, the information gained has an internal transferability. Understanding each participant's demographic information, their involvement during the study as well as their follow-through with member checks is an important aspect of the study when reviewing the transferability of the results.

The participants within the study ranged in experience as a school counselor and as school counseling supervisors. Participants worked as few as 3.5 years and as many as 24 years as a school counselor. In addition, noting that the information shared regarding good school counseling supervision across participants was very similar and possessed internal transferability even though the range of supervision experience spanned from one year to sixteen with as few as three supervisees to more than twenty-five. Individual demographic information is located in chapter 4, Table 2. When the researcher reviewed the demographic information, it was surprising how similar some of the responses were for both new counselors and veterans; additionally, within the supervision experience.

In the research study, each participant responded differently to the invitation to participate. In addition, the amount of information that was provided by each participant during the individual phone interview varied in length and detail. In relation to the member checks that were conducted, some participants responded with everything being good, some corrected grammar, while others followed instructions to provide additional insights or clarification of

interviews. Although not all participants followed through according to instructions for the member checks, the time that elapsed from the initial interview without any changes helps support the trustworthiness of the study. Even though the researcher had the potential to include follow-up clarification conversations with each participant after the completion of member checks, these conversations did not occur because the participants were very clear in their responses to the summary sheets.

The participants varied greatly in experiences, responses, training and even locations. However, it is exciting to see the consistency among participants supporting the themes of this study, surrounding school counseling supervision.

### **Counselor Education Faculty**

The researcher seeks additional study regarding the role of counselor educators in terms of school counseling supervision. For this study, counselor education faculty members were asked to refer exceptional school counseling supervisors as potential participants. Even though specific criteria were established for the referral process, the researcher questions how verification of exceptional supervision is determined. In addition to the role for this study, the researcher wonders what the school counselor educators' responsibility is in regards to the training and preparation of not only school counselors, but also school counseling supervisors. The following discusses these two major areas of exploration that have emerged for the researcher as a result of the study.

The researcher is not clear as to why each counselor educator recommended the participant to the study. As outlined in the criteria, the recommendation was a result of the counselor educator's interns receiving good supervision. However, one could wonder if the participants were identified by the counselor educators because of the learning opportunities and

experiences provided, rather than good school counseling supervision. This concern emphasizes the need to know what is being addressed in school counseling supervision. Another important aspect to consider for further clarification is differentiating between an exceptional school counseling site-supervisor and an exceptional school counselor. On what basis did the counselor educators who referred individuals to this study feel confident in the site-supervisor's ability to provide adequate supervision to the interns being placed? Additionally, some participants could have been referred not only because of the supervision provided, but also because of the experiences given during the internship experience. The researcher believes that each of the participants is an excellent school counseling supervisor based upon the comprehensive programs that are implemented in their school settings; however, questions whether *all* of the participants were providing adequate school counseling supervision in addition to the experiences.

Another area for exploration involves the responsibilities of the counselor educator to emphasize the importance of supervision, both during degree and post-degree as well as being the supervisor and the supervisee. Magnuson, et. al., (2001) write, "Counselor educators have many opportunities to promote supervision across the professional lifespan" (p.213).

Additionally, they write, "counselor educators can engage other stakeholders by providing training and supervision-of-supervision to exemplary school counselors who, in turn, will become supervisors in schools" (p.213). Furthermore, the CACREP standards revised in 2009 now incorporate additional expectations for supervision models to be addressed during the master's degree level.

Although the information supporting the importance of school counseling supervision is identified and ways to promote it have been outlined, understanding why school counselors

become involved as a school counseling supervisor was addressed for further exploration in this study. The participants within this study did not identify components of their master's training programs as being the essential driving force for their participation as a school counseling site-supervisor. Instead, it was their interaction with their supervisors who encouraged them to give back to the profession. The information provided by the participants is a different experience than what the researcher had during her master's degree. The researcher also questions whether or not supervision is viewed differently in school counseling programs than of those for clinical mental health.

The researcher also believes in giving back to the profession by participating in school counseling supervision and encouraging the development of future school counselors as well as recognizing these components as part of one's professional identity. Each of these components can be further emphasized by counselor education faculty during graduate training programs for school counselors.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of the study include the researcher's perspective, environmental factors and other aspects encountered during the research study including time and recruitment procedures. The researcher's perspective might have impacted the data analysis phase based on experience as a school counselor, a school counseling supervisor, coursework in supervision, and interactions with other school counselors in supervisory roles; however, the researcher attempted to address the biases through procedures to promote trustworthiness of the study.

The researcher implemented procedures to promote the trustworthiness of the study; it was difficult for her to ignore her knowledge of school counseling and counseling supervision. Having supervision knowledge and training, the researcher was able to see a distinction in the

data regarding counseling supervision models. Therefore, when analyzing the data, the researcher viewed it mainly from her own position (Merriam, 2009); that is through a supervision lens. This allowed the researcher to see in a more powerful way, the distinctions made by the participants regarding both the Discrimination Model of Supervision and the IDM supervision model. The impact of the review through the supervision lens not only impacted findings, it also provided additional insights regarding the necessity of exposing school counselors to the theories of supervision.

Environmental factors may have also had an impact on the study. Occasionally, the researcher's phone would cut out and the researcher had to clarify statements or have the participant restate the response; this disrupted the cohesion and communication during the interview process. In addition, occasional sounds impacted the interview, including bells and intercom announcements, which made the transcription process difficult to ensure the accuracy of each word.

Time and recruitment procedures may also be limitations to the study. One factor regarding time includes writing the participant descriptions approximately six weeks after the completion of all interviews. The researcher might have been able to further describe the participant in the moment of the interview; however, without additional body language, providing participant descriptions was difficult. The researcher did try to address this possible limitation by listening to the audio recording of the interview while constructing the participant description as well as using written materials and email communication.

The potential timing of the interviews may have skewed a participant's reflection of their supervision experiences if the participant was serving as a site-supervisor during the time of the interview. The participant may not have been able to remove themselves from the current

experience to discuss supervision in general. Furthermore, the research study was to focus mainly on supervision with interns; however, occasionally the participant would discuss practicum students. Another limitation was related to the timing of the interview. Because several of the interviews were conducted during the school workday, the researcher had to switch from working as a school counselor and transition to researcher. This change also occurred for participants and may have impacted focus on the interview.

Finally, referral of participants and environmental factors may have impacted the results of the study. The researcher relied on counselor educators to refer quality participants, which may have impacted the study, although specific criteria were provided to the counselor educators. Furthermore, accurate note-taking during the interviews was a limitation along with the inability of the researcher to view and record body language. Although the researcher tried to address as many of the limitations as possible, it is not possible to rule out these factors from impacting the study.

### **Recommendation for Further Research**

As evidenced by the critical review of supervision, further review and study of what defines school counseling supervision as well as what constitutes school counseling supervision is an essential component necessary for training school counseling supervisors as well as furthering the field of school counseling supervision. Furthermore, exploring whether or not school counseling supervision is similar to clinical supervision would be interesting to review.

In addition to defining school counseling supervision and what it entails, one area of school counseling supervision that was consistently addressed was that of feedback. Several of the participants discussed the need for feedback to occur with the interns. However, several of the participants also had difficulties with how to appropriately deliver the feedback as they did



not have the necessary training or coursework to guide them in their evaluation process. Providing effective procedures and responses for school counseling site-supervisors to use with interns via coursework or training programs is an additional area for future research.

Another potential area for future research is determining whether or not there is a difference between exceptional school counselors and exceptional school counseling site-supervisors. While this study focused on exceptional site-supervisors, some of the characteristics and qualities of the participants exemplified the potential for being considered exceptional school counselors including their self-awareness and desire to improve self as a counselor.

### **Conclusion**

This research study is relevant to the field of school counseling supervision because it helps identify good school counseling supervision from the perspective of individuals working in the field. The themes identified share information about what can be provided to interns during the experience. Additionally, the study provides information to counselor education faculty. Information identified provides support for the need for supervision training, not only for individuals already in the field, but also for current graduate students. School counseling graduate students not only need to be informed of the models of supervision that exist, but also need to be encouraged to possess a professional identity that encompasses the work of school counseling supervision.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

1. What is “good” school counseling supervision?
2. Tell me about your experience as a school counseling site-supervisor.
3. In working with school counseling interns, how do you know when the supervisory experience is going well?
4. What does that experience look like?
5. When do you know when the experience is not going well?
6. What does that experience look like?
7. Tell me about an unsuccessful experience.
8. Tell me about a successful experience.
9. In your experience as a school counseling site-supervisor, I’m wondering if you would share with me what the greatest reward has been.
10. What obstacles have you experienced as a supervisor?
11. You were identified as an exceptional school counseling site-supervisor, I’m interested what “exceptional school counseling supervisor” means for you.
12. I’m interested in knowing whether or not you believe you are an “exceptional school counseling supervisor.” If yes, why? If not, why and what would need to happen for you to consider yourself an “exceptional” school counseling supervisor?
13. I’m curious, how did you get to the point where a counselor education faculty member would identify you as an exceptional site supervisor?
14. If you were to think of a colleague you would consider an exceptional school counseling supervisor, what would you want me to know about them?
15. Tell me about your decision to become a school counseling supervisor?

16. Why did you want to become a school counseling supervisor?
17. What benefits, if any, have you gained during your experiences?
18. What obstacles, if any, have you encountered during your supervision experience?

## APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**NDSU**

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

*Institutional Review Board*

*Office of the Vice President for Research, Creative Activities and Technology Transfer*

*NDSU Dept. 4000*

*1735 NDSU Research Park Drive*

*Research 1, P.O. Box 6050*

*Fargo, ND 58108-6050*

701.231.8995

Fax 701.231.8098

Federalwide Assurance #FWA00002439

Monday, June 20, 2011

Dr. Brenda Hall  
School of Education  
SGC C115

**Re:** IRB Certification of Human Research Project:

**“School counseling supervision: A qualitative summary from the perspective of school counseling site-supervisors”**

**Protocol #HE11302**

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury**

Study site(s): **varied**

Funding: **n/a**

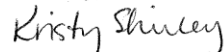
It has been determined that this human subjects research project qualifies for exempt status (category # 2) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on the protocol form received 6/10/2011 and consent/information sheet received 6/10/2011.

Please also note the following:

- This determination of exemption expires 3 years from this date. If you wish to continue the research after 6/19/2014, the IRB must re-certify the protocol prior to this date.
- The project must be conducted as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, pre-approval is to be obtained from the IRB, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to subjects. A *Protocol Amendment Request Form* is available on the IRB website.
- Prompt, written notification must be made to the IRB of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported in writing to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB policies.

Thank you for complying with NDSU IRB procedures; best wishes for success with your project.

Sincerely,



Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

NDSU is an EO/AA university.

**APPENDIX C: COUNSELOR EDUCATION FACULTY REFERRAL RECRUITMENT  
EMAIL**

To: Counselor Educator at CACREP Institution

From: Janelle Stahl Ladbury

Subject: Help requested for recruiting dissertation study participants

Dear Counselor Educator,

My name is Janelle Stahl Ladbury and I am seeking your help in recruiting participants for my dissertation study. If you would be so kind, please forward the following email to faculty who work directly with school counseling internship/practicum students and site supervisors. If you serve in that position, please read the following message below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

North Dakota State University Doctoral Candidate

Dear School Counseling Counselor Educator,

I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying participants to complete a dissertation study regarding school counseling supervision. I am seeking participants who work with master's level graduate students from CACREP accredited colleges and universities in the role of school counseling site-supervisor. If you would be willing to recommend at least one school counseling supervisor who meets the additional criteria below, please respond to me with the site-supervisors contact information via email. Individuals referred will be informed of your recommendation during an initial invitation email. Your contribution in helping refer participants is greatly appreciated.

Criteria for participant referral includes:

1. Your verification the school counseling supervisor meets current supervisory requirements outlined by CACREP.
2. Your university counseling program has placed students under the supervision of the supervisor in the past five years.
3. You believe the supervisor is an exceptional school counseling supervisor.
4. The supervisor meets expectations outlined by the university program during the supervisory relationship (completing evaluations, conducting weekly supervision sessions, etc).
5. The school counselor is currently practicing as a certified K-12 school counselor.
6. The school counselor has had a supervisory experience within the past five years as the school counseling supervisor.

Requested Contact Information:

1. Name
2. School of Employment
3. State of Employment
4. Email Address
5. Address
6. Phone Number

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

North Dakota State University Doctoral Candidate

**APPENDIX D: COUNSELOR EDUCATION FACULTY REFERRAL RECRUITMENT  
EMAIL: SECOND REQUEST**

To: Counselor Educator at CACREP Institution

From: Janelle Stahl Ladbury

Subject: Request for help with recruiting dissertation participants (2<sup>nd</sup> request)

Dear Counselor Educator,

My name is Janelle Stahl Ladbury and I am seeking your help in recruiting participants for my dissertation study. If you would be so kind, please forward the following email to faculty who work directly with school counseling internship/practicum students and site supervisors. If you serve in that position, please read the following message below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

North Dakota State University Doctoral Candidate

Dear School Counseling Counselor Educator,

I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying participants to complete a dissertation study regarding school counseling supervision. I am seeking participants who work with master's level graduate students from CACREP accredited colleges and universities in the role of school counseling site-supervisor. If you would be willing to recommend at least one school counseling supervisor who meets the additional criteria below, please respond to me with the site-supervisors contact information via email. Individuals referred will be informed of your recommendation during an initial invitation email. Your contribution in helping refer participants is greatly appreciated.

Criteria for participant referral includes:

1. Your verification the school counseling supervisor meets current supervisory requirements outlined by CACREP.
2. Your university counseling program has placed students under the supervision of the supervisor in the past five years.
3. You believe the supervisor is an exceptional school counseling supervisor.
4. The supervisor meets expectations outlined by the university program during the supervisory relationship (completing evaluations, conducting weekly supervision sessions, etc).
5. The school counselor is currently practicing as a certified K-12 school counselor.
6. The school counselor has had a supervisory experience within the past five years as the school counseling supervisor.

Requested Contact Information:

1. Name
2. School of Employment
3. State of Employment
4. Email Address
5. Address
6. Phone Number

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

North Dakota State University Doctoral Candidate

**APPENDIX E: RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPANT EMAIL INVITATION**

Dear [enter School Counseling Supervisor name],

You are invited to participate in a dissertation study exploring the work of school counseling supervisors. You have been referred to the study by [enter counselor educator name] based upon their recommendation and additional criteria.

The purpose of the study is to explore school counseling supervision. The study will consist of an in-depth interview (face-to-face, via phone or Skype), your review of the interview summary and a follow-up conversation after reviewing the interview summary.

I am writing to ask if it would be permissible to contact you to further discuss the study and your possible participation. If you are interested in learning more about the study and/or are interested in participating, please contact me via email at [Janelle.Stahl.1@ndsu.edu](mailto:Janelle.Stahl.1@ndsu.edu) to schedule a time for a brief conversation about the study.

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

North Dakota State University Doctoral Candidate

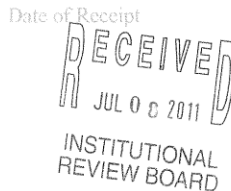


**APPENDIX F: IRB PROTOCOL AMENDMENT: INFORMED CONSENT REVISIONS**

**Institutional Review Board**

...for the protection of human participants in research

North Dakota State University  
Sponsored Programs Administration  
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive  
NDSU Dept #4000  
PO Box 6050  
 Fargo, ND 58108-6050 231-8995(ph) 231-8098(fax)



**Protocol Amendment Request Form**

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Reference: SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments.

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include, but are not limited to changes in: investigators or research team members, purpose/scope of research, recruitment procedures, compensation scheme, participant population, research setting, interventions involving participants, data collection procedures, or surveys, measures or other data forms.

**Protocol Information:**

Protocol #: HE11302 Title: School counseling supervision: A qualitative summary from the perspective of school counseling site-supervisors

Review category:  Exempt  Expedited  Full board

Principal investigator: Brenda Hall Email address:  
Dept: School of Education

Co-investigator: Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury Email address:  
Dept: School of Education

Principal investigator signature, Date: Brenda A. Hall July 8, 2011

**Description of proposed changes:**

- 1. Date of proposed implementation of change(s)\*: **ASAP**  
*\* Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.*
- 2. Describe proposed change(s), including justification:  
**The originally approved consent form did not ask participants for consent to be audio recorded; however, the protocol indicated that this would occur. This information has now been added to the consent form**
- 3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co- investigator?  
 No  
 Yes: *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-investigator.*

**Note: If the change is limited to addition/change in research team members, skip the rest of this form.**

4. Will the change(s) increase any risks, or present new risks (*physical, economic, psychological, or sociological*) to participants?  
 No  
 Yes: *In the appropriate section of the protocol form, describe new or altered risks and how they will be minimized.*
5. Does the proposed change involve the addition of a vulnerable group of participants?  
Children:  no  yes – include the *Children in Research* attachment form  
Prisoners:  no  yes – include the *Prisoners in Research* attachment form  
Cognitively impaired individuals:  no  yes\*  
Economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals:  no  yes\*
- \*Provide additional information where applicable in the revised protocol form.*
6. Does the proposed change involve a request to waive some or all the elements of informed consent or documentation of consent?  
 no  
 yes – include the *Informed Consent Waiver or Alteration Request* attachment form
7. Does the proposed change involve a new research site?  
 no  
 yes – include a letter of permission/cooperation, IRB approval, or grant application or contract



**If information in your previously approved protocol has changed, or additional information is being added, incorporate the changes into relevant section(s) of the protocol. Highlight (e.g. print and highlight the hard copy, or indicate changes using all caps, asterisks, etc) the changed section(s) and attach a copy of the revised protocol to this form. (If the changes are limited to addition/change in research team members, a revised protocol form is not needed.)**

**Impact for Participants (future, current, or prior):**

1. Will the change(s) alter information on previously approved versions of the recruitment materials, informed consent, or other documents, or require new documents?  
 No  
 Yes - attach revised/new document(s)
2. Could the change(s) affect the willingness of *currently* enrolled participants to continue in the research?  
 No  
 Yes - describe procedures that will be used to inform current participants, and re-consent, if necessary:

3. Will the change(s) have any impact to *previously* enrolled participants?

No

Yes - describe impact, and any procedures that will be taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

-----FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY-----

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Request is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved   |                       |
| Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt, category#: <u>2</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited method, category # <u>    </u> <input type="checkbox"/> Convened meeting, date: <u>    </u> |                       |
| IRB Signature: <u>Kristy Shiley</u>  | Date: <u>7/8/2011</u> |
| Comments:  |                       |

Protocols previously declared exempt: (Allow 5 working days) If the proposed change does not alter the exemption status, the change may be administratively reviewed by qualified IRB staff, chair, or designee. If the change(s) would alter this status, Expedited or Full Board review will be required.

Protocols previously reviewed by the expedited method: (Allow 10 working days) Most changes may also be reviewed by the expedited method, unless the change would increase risks to more than minimal, and/or alter the eligibility of the project for expedited review.

Protocols previously reviewed by the full board: Minor changes (not involving more than minimal risks, or not significantly altering the research goals or design) may be reviewed by the expedited method (allow 10 working days). Those changes determined by the IRB to be more than minor will require review by the full board (due 10 working days prior to next scheduled meeting).

## APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT

**NDSU**      **North Dakota State University**

Department of Education

SGC C 121

NDSU Dept. 2625

PO Box 6050

Fargo, ND 58108-6050

701.231.7415

### **School counseling supervision: A qualitative summary from the perspective of school counseling site-supervisors.**

Dear School Counseling Site Supervisor:

My name is Janelle Stahl Ladbury. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education, Human Development and Education: Counselor Education at North Dakota State University. I also am employed as a high school professional school counselor and have participated in site-supervision with supervisees.

I am conducting a research project to explore school counseling supervision and experiences of exceptional school counseling site-supervisors. It is my hope, that with this research, we will learn more about school counseling supervision and how to better help school counseling supervisors.

Because you have been recommended and referred by a school counseling counselor educator based on specific criteria, you are invited to take part in this research project. Your participation is entirely your choice, and you may change your mind or quit participating at any time, with no penalty to you.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known risks. There are no known risks.

By taking part in this research, you may benefit by exploring what you do that has been helpful to school counseling supervisee during your supervisory experience(s). However, you may not get any benefit from being in this study. Benefits to others are likely to include helping school counseling supervisors know and understand what is useful to school counseling supervisees during their supervision experience.

It should take between 45-60 minutes to complete the interview about school counseling supervision. In addition, you will be asked to review a summary from the interview and participate in a follow-up conversation to clarify information in the summary. Please complete the enclosed demographic information sheet and return to me at the time of the interview. By completing the demographic information sheet and returning it at the time of the interview, you are indicating you have read the informed consent and agree to participate in the research study. To schedule the face-to-face or phone interview, please contact me at [Janelle.Stahl.1@ndsu.edu](mailto:Janelle.Stahl.1@ndsu.edu) or [researcher phone number]. You will not receive any compensation for your participation.

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. The interview will be audio-recorded for data collection purposes and destroyed at the end of the entire study. The audio recordings will be stored in a secure location during the study. Any identifying information in the audio recording will be changed to protect your identity, including the use of a pseudonym. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study, we will write about the combined information that we have gathered.

You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of the study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

If you have any questions about this project, please call me at [researcher phone number], or call my advisor Dr. Brenda Hall at [Brenda.Hall@ndsu.edu](mailto:Brenda.Hall@ndsu.edu) or [advisor phone number].

You have rights as a research participant. If you have questions about your rights or complaints about this research, you may talk to the researcher or contact the NDSU Human Research Protection Program at 701.231.8908, [ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu), or by mail at: NDSU HRPP Office, NDSU Dept 4000, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050.

Thank you for your taking part in this research. If you wish to receive a copy of the results, please email the researcher after the interview to request the results.

## **APPENDIX H: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET**

1. How many years have you been a school counselor?
2. How many years have you been a school counseling supervisor?
3. Do you belong to any professional organizations? If so, which ones?
4. How would you classify your school? (elementary, PreK-12, K-8, middle school, high school, etc.)
5. With what grade levels do you work as a school counselor?
6. In what state do you work?
7. What is your highest degree earned? (M.S., PhD., M.Ed., Ed.S.)
8. What is your degree in?
9. What type of certification/licensure is required in your state to become a school counselor?
10. Did you graduate from a CACREP accredited program?
11. Were you trained in the ASCA National Model?
12. Were you provided coursework in supervision during your degree?
13. Do you have specific credentialing or licensing according to your state requirements to be a school counseling supervisor? If so, what is it?
14. How many individuals have you supervised? Are they interns, practicum students or other school counselors?

## **APPENDIX I: MEMBER CHECK PARTICIPATION EMAIL**

To: Dissertation Study Participant

From: Janelle Stahl Ladbury

Subject: Request for follow-up to dissertation study

Dear [Insert Participant Name]

Thank you for participating in my dissertation research study to explore school counseling supervision. As part of the process, I am conducting member checks which will help with the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. I would appreciate your help again in reviewing, clarifying and verifying information gathered during the initial interview.

Please find enclosed a copy of the informed consent, which indicates IRB approval for conducting the member checks and also a summary sheet from your interview. The summary sheet includes the research questions, interview questions and your responses in a bulleted format. If you choose to participate in the member check, please take the time to review the summary sheet and make comments or amendments to the information. Feel free to expand on any of your previous responses whether it is to clarify or provide additional insights you have thought about since the initial interview.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could use a different color font or the track changes/comment field while making notations. If you would prefer to discuss the summary via phone, I would be more than happy to schedule a time to talk with you.

Again, thank you for taking the time to help with my study. If you choose to not take part in the member check, please return an email immediately to prevent follow-up email reminders. If you could return the summary sheet to me by March 15, with your comments, I would greatly appreciate it.



Respectfully,

Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury

Professional School Counselor

NDSU Doctoral Candidate

**APPENDIX J: MEMBER CHECK PARTICIPATION EMAIL: SECOND REQUEST**

To: Dissertation Study Participant

From: Janelle Stahl Ladbury

Subject: Reminder Email: Request for follow-up to dissertation study

Hi [Insert Participant Name],

This is just a reminder to follow-up with the summary sheet by this Thursday, March 15.

If you choose not to do the follow-up summary, please respond and let me know. The instructions for the summary sheet are found below in the email I sent on Feb. 28.

Thanks again for your help with my study. If you are interested in participating in a follow-up phone conversation, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Janelle

# APPENDIX K: IRB PROTOCOL ADMENDMENT: ADDITION OF FIRST PEER REVIEWER

## Institutional Review Board

...for the protection of human participants in research

North Dakota State University  
Sponsored Programs Administration  
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive  
NDSU Dept #4000  
PO Box 6050  
 Fargo, ND 58108-6050 231-8995(ph) 231-8098(fax)

Date of Receipt

RECEIVED  
MAR 07 2012

INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARD

### Protocol Amendment Request Form

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Reference: SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments.

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include, but are not limited to changes in: investigators or research team members, purpose/scope of research, recruitment procedures, compensation scheme, participant population, research setting, interventions involving participants, data collection procedures, or surveys, measures or other data forms.


#### Protocol Information:

Protocol #: **HE11302** Title: **School counseling supervision: A qualitative summary from the perspective of school counseling site-supervisors.**

Review category:  Exempt  Expedited  Full board

Principal investigator: **Brenda Hall** Email address: **Brenda.Hall@ndsu.edu**  
Dept: **School of Education**

Co-investigator: **Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury** Email address: **janelle.stahl.1@my.ndsu.edu**  
Dept: **School of Education**

Principal investigator signature, Date: Brenda Hall 3/6/2012 

*In lieu of a written signature, submission via the Principal Investigator's NDSU email constitutes an acceptable electronic signature.*

#### Description of proposed changes:

1. Date of proposed implementation of change(s)\*: **ASAP, immediately following IRB approval**  
\* Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.
2. Describe proposed change(s), including justification:  
**In order to address trustworthiness of the study, the research team would like to add another member to the research team for peer review of the raw data and discussion of the findings. The new team members role would be to review interview transcripts and other data gathered during the study and consult with the co-investigator surrounding the findings.**

#### Adding research team member:

Protocol Amendment Request Form  
NDSU Institutional Review Board  
Form revised July 2011

Page 1 of 3  
Last printed 03/07/2012 10:45:00 AM

Chasity Odden Heide

Data Analysis & Peer Review

*Am - 3/12/12 CITI*

3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co- investigator?  
 No  
 Yes: *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-investigator.*

**Note: If the change is limited to addition/change in research team members, skip the rest of this form.**

4. Will the change(s) increase any risks, or present new risks (*physical, economic, psychological, or sociological*) to participants?  
 No  
 Yes: *In the appropriate section of the protocol form, describe new or altered risks and how they will be minimized.*
5. Does the proposed change involve the addition of a vulnerable group of participants?  
Children:  no  yes – include the *Children in Research* attachment form  
Prisoners:  no  yes – include the *Prisoners in Research* attachment form  
Cognitively impaired individuals:  no  yes\*  
Economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals:  no  yes\*

*\*Provide additional information where applicable in the revised protocol form.*

6. Does the proposed change involve a request to waive some or all the elements of informed consent or documentation of consent?  
 no  
 yes – include the *Informed Consent Waiver or Alteration Request* attachment form
7. Does the proposed change involve a new research site?  
 no  
 yes – include a letter of permission/cooperation, IRB approval, or grant application or contract



**If information in your previously approved protocol has changed, or additional information is being added, incorporate the changes into relevant section(s) of the protocol. Highlight (e.g. print and highlight the hard copy, or indicate changes using all caps, asterisks, etc) the changed section(s) and attach a copy of the revised protocol to this form. (If the changes are limited to addition/change in research team members, a revised protocol form is not needed.)**

#### Impact for Participants (future, current, or prior):

1. Will the change(s) alter information on previously approved versions of the recruitment materials, informed consent, or other documents, or require new documents?  
 No  
 Yes - attach revised/new document(s)

2. Could the change(s) affect the willingness of *currently* enrolled participants to continue in the research?  
 No  
 Yes - describe procedures that will be used to inform current participants, and re-consent, if necessary:
3. Will the change(s) have any impact to *previously* enrolled participants?  
 No  
 Yes - describe impact, and any procedures that will be taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

-----FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY-----

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Request is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved |  |
| Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt, category#: <u>2</u>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited method, category # ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Convened meeting, date: ____ |
| IRB Signature: <u>Kristy Shuley</u>  | Date: <u>3/13/2012</u>   |
| Comments:  |  |

Protocols previously declared exempt: (Allow 5 working days) If the proposed change does not alter the exemption status, the change may be administratively reviewed by qualified IRB staff, chair, or designee. If the change(s) would alter this status, Expedited or Full Board review will be required.

Protocols previously reviewed by the expedited method: (Allow 10 working days) Most changes may also be reviewed by the expedited method, unless the change would increase risks to more than minimal, and/or alter the eligibility of the project for expedited review.

Protocols previously reviewed by the full board: Minor changes (not involving more than minimal risks, or not significantly altering the research goals or design) may be reviewed by the expedited method (allow 10 working days). Those changes determined by the IRB to be more than minor will require review by the full board (due 10 working days prior to next scheduled meeting).

# APPENDIX L: IRB PROTOCOL AMENDMENT: ADDITION OF SECOND PEER REVIEWER

## Institutional Review Board

...for the protection of human participants in research

North Dakota State University  
Sponsored Programs Administration  
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive  
NDSU Dept #4000  
PO Box 6050  
 Fargo, ND 58108-6050 231-8995(ph) 231-8098(fax)

Date of Receipt  
**RECEIVED**  
MAR 22 2012  
INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARD

### Protocol Amendment Request Form

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Reference: [SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments](#).

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include, but are not limited to changes in: investigators or research team members, purpose/scope of research, recruitment procedures, compensation scheme, participant population, research setting, interventions involving participants, data collection procedures, or surveys, measures or other data forms.

#### Protocol Information:

Protocol #: **HE11302** Title: **School counseling supervision: A qualitative summary from the perspective of school counseling site-supervisors.**

Review category:  Exempt  Expedited  Full board

Principal investigator: **Brenda Hall** Email address: **Brenda.Hall@ndsu.edu**  
Dept: **School of Education**

Co-investigator: **Janelle L. Stahl Ladbury** Email address: **janelle.stahl.1@my.ndsu.edu**  
Dept: **School of Education**

Principal investigator signature, Date: Brenda Hall 3/22/12 via email (e)

*In lieu of a written signature, submission via the Principal Investigator's NDSU email constitutes an acceptable electronic signature.*

#### Description of proposed changes:

1. Date of proposed implementation of change(s)\*: **ASAP, immediately following IRB approval**  
*\* Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.*
2. Describe proposed change(s), including justification:  
**In order to address trustworthiness of the study, the researcher team would like to add another member to the research team for peer review of the raw data and discussion of the findings. The new team member's role would be to review interview transcripts and other data gathered during the study and consult with the co-investigator surrounding the findings. The new team member is trained in qualitative research and has no training in supervision or school counseling.**

Dr. David Tack, Data Analysis and Peer Review

*NIH-2/10/11  
non-MDSC  
Collaborator.*

3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co- investigator?  
 No  
 Yes: *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-investigator.*

**Note: If the change is limited to addition/change in research team members, skip the rest of this form.**

4. Will the change(s) increase any risks, or present new risks (*physical, economic, psychological, or sociological*) to participants?  
 No  
 Yes: *In the appropriate section of the protocol form, describe new or altered risks and how they will be minimized.*
5. Does the proposed change involve the addition of a vulnerable group of participants?  
Children:  no  yes – include the *Children in Research* attachment form  
Prisoners:  no  yes – include the *Prisoners in Research* attachment form  
Cognitively impaired individuals:  no  yes\*  
Economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals:  no  yes\*

*\*Provide additional information where applicable in the revised protocol form.*

6. Does the proposed change involve a request to waive some or all the elements of informed consent or documentation of consent?  
 no  
 yes – include the *Informed Consent Waiver or Alteration Request* attachment form
7. Does the proposed change involve a new research site?  
 no  
 yes – include a letter of permission/cooperation, IRB approval, or grant application or contract



**If information in your previously approved protocol has changed, or additional information is being added, incorporate the changes into relevant section(s) of the protocol. Highlight (e.g. print and highlight the hard copy, or indicate changes using all caps, asterisks, etc) the changed section(s) and attach a copy of the revised protocol to this form. (If the changes are limited to addition/change in research team members, a revised protocol form is not needed.)**

**Impact for Participants (future, current, or prior):**

1. Will the change(s) alter information on previously approved versions of the recruitment materials, informed consent, or other documents, or require new documents?  
 No  
 Yes - attach revised/new document(s)

2. Could the change(s) affect the willingness of *currently* enrolled participants to continue in the research?  
 No  
 Yes - describe procedures that will be used to inform current participants, and re-consent, if necessary:
3. Will the change(s) have any impact to *previously* enrolled participants?  
 No  
 Yes - describe impact, and any procedures that will be taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

-----FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY-----

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Request is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved   |                               |
| Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt, category#: <u>2</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited method, category # <u>    </u> <input type="checkbox"/> Convened meeting, date: <u>    </u> |                               |
| IRB Signature: <u><i>Arnsty Shirley</i></u>  | Date: <u><i>3/20/2012</i></u> |
| Comments:  |                               |

Protocols previously declared exempt: (Allow 5 working days) If the proposed change does not alter the exemption status, the change may be administratively reviewed by qualified IRB staff, chair, or designee. If the change(s) would alter this status, Expedited or Full Board review will be required.

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