SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND ENGLISH LEARNERS: CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF BENEFICIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WHILE FACILITATING INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

This article reports results from a qualitative case study representing four high school counseling programs in a large urban district in the southeastern U.S. Through the study's findings, the article aims to inform the field of school counseling, specifically by describing focused best practices while working with English learners (ELs) during the processes involved in initial high school planning sessions. Emphasis is given to school counselors' synthesis of students' academic language development needs, as well as practical applications for considering the contextual complexities of schooling in the U.S. The article highlights results points to essential considerations regarding how to best support English learners' socio-cultural and academic language development within the school counseling programs. Details regarding the participants' conceptualizations of additional beneficial knowledge and skills, while working with ELs who have very recently arrived to high school for the first time in the U.S., are also discussed. Finally, the article provides recommendations for new areas of consideration to support school counselors' practices through focused professional development. Likewise, these recommendations support actual programmatic needs while also aligning with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model.

KEYWORDS

School counselors, English learners, International Comparative Education

Student-centered pedagogy for 21st century learning is a profound catalyst for increased momentum with regard to diversity and culturally responsive education. Representative of a national trend, school counseling programs are called to respond to the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. School counselors contribute to removing potential barriers to academic success through standards-based, comprehensive, and culturally responsive program services (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012; Barden & Greene, 2015; Chen-Hayes, Miller, Baily, Getch, & Erford, 2011). More than ever, school systems and professional school counselors are focused on supporting increased student outcomes while simultaneously delivering services with professional socio-cultural competencies (ASCA, 2012; Crethar, 2010; Martin & Robinson, 2011). Therefore, the ever-changing demands of the K-12 demography oblige educators—including school counselors—to continuously reflect on the specifics related to authentically supporting practitioners.

Similarly, school educators are now guided to swiftly transform themselves, to encompass intensive considerations concerning the impacts of cross-cultural literacies, multilingualism, and the emphasis on academic language development with English learners (ELs) in the context of school (Collier & Thomas, 2014; Lee & Dallman, 2008). National and state standards for professional school counselors reveal current visions for the calling, one that is dedicated to inclusive student-centered advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and accountability (ASCA, 2012, 2010; Public Schools of North Carolina [NCDPI], 2014). Professional competencies therein are focused on globally productive student learning and academic success for ELs. Likewise, there is an emphasis on systemic change and social justice to frame guiding principles for school counselors' roles within professional school communities (Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; ASCA, 2012; NCDPI, 2014). This study showcases practicing school counselors' conceptualizations of core knowledge and demonstrated practices, which are essential for working with ELs during individual student planning sessions. Study results garner recommendations for counselor educators, expanding competencies for culturally and linguistically diverse students within professional development.

SIGNIFICANCE

The overall objective of this study was to investigate school counselors' conceptualizations of the linguistic and social complexities of recently arrived English learners upon entering high school. This study also aimed to investigate what the participants identify as beneficial knowledge for coordinating individual student planning via the initial course selection process. This multi-case study focused on school counselors who voiced conceptualizations, as well as demonstrated practices, while working with recently arrived high school ELs. The important contextual focus for the study was the individual student planning session for initial high school course selections,

which solidified authenticity of demonstrated practices. Throughout the process, substantial details emerged regarding the delivery of academically, socially, and culturally responsive services to ELs with varied levels of English language proficiency. Specifically, the research study was guided by this question:

> What do high school counselors identify as beneficial knowledge and skills with respect to individual student planning and facilitation of the course selection process with ELs?

This comprehensive qualitative analysis aimed to provide extended essential elements regarding content knowledge, social-emotional, and language development within the complex processes of facilitating students' success. Such details are vital, as they aim to inform and shape professional development programs for school counselors as current and future practitioners with ELs.

RELEVANT LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Through the epistemological perspective of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978)—and informed by the research parameters and practices of Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Merrian (1998), and Strauss and Corbin (1998)—this study and its connections to language and culture are framed by national and state professional standards for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2010, 2012). Likewise, the theoretical framework encompasses the deep theoretical understanding of linguistic and sociocultural fundamentals of second language acquisition (Calderón, 2007; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Chomski, 1986; Cummins, 1981, 2000; Genesee, 2000; Krashan, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). Vygotsky's views of learning, cognition, and motivation, as well as the connectedness to collaboration, directly correlate with current standards for professional school counselors as reflective practitioners (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). This study is particularly informed by the national call to school counseling programs to actively

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
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support increased student outcomes as productive global citizens in the context of 21st century education (Albers, Hoffman, & Lundahl, 2009; ASCA, 2012). School counseling practices include an emphasis on socio-cultural well-being, diversity within experiential learning, and the facilitation of appropriate, rigorous academic pathways for *all* students (ASCA, 2005, 2012; Chen-Hayes, Miller, Baily, Getch, & Erford, 2011; NCDPI, 2014). The expansion of cultural considerations for change and empowerment with school counseling programs delineate current patterns for the profession to consider English learners with renewed awareness (Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahon, 2010).

Accordingly, the ASCA National Model for School Counselors conceptually situates school counselors at the center of transformative educational practices. The operational structure of the model incorporates the empowering themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change. The framework's quadrants of 1) Foundation; 2) Delivery; 3) Management; and 4) Accountability frame the profession for effective school counselors to demonstrate knowledge and skills for diversification within the student services. As an integral part of a comprehensive educational program, the ASCA National Model describes applicable professional competencies for counselors, demonstrating how to examine how current conditions in schools either support or hinder student success (ASCA, 2005, 2012).

With regard to ELs, school counselors' promotion of the learning process crucially depends on the notion that school counselors have an accurate understanding for *how* ELs can be best supported (Hartline & Cobia, 2012; Skiba et al., 2011). This includes understanding ELs' needs for increased academic language development (Johnson, 2009; Zadina, 2014). School counselors, as collaborative advocates and agents of change, are in the position of facilitating meaningful recommendations for ELs in the context of schools. In other words, counselors work to maximize and honor ELs' linguistic and so-

cial complexities—as well as their multilingual, talented funds of knowledge and metacognition—within the contextual considerations of schooling and the community. Counselors also manage how these crucial complexities inform teachers, school administrators, students, and parents (Hartline & Cobia, 2012; McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenterh, & Ruiz, 2014). This role is even more poignant, since lower levels of English language proficiency may often be mistaken for a lack of intelligence or assumed cognitive deficiencies (Dove, Honigsfeld, & Cohan, 2014; McGlaughlin, 1992; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Sousa, 2011).

In alignment with the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012), the North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards utilize these same principles of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change to deliver program services for academic, career, and personal/social development for all students (NCDPI, 2014, 2016). Within these standards are sub-sections focused on embracing diversity in the school community and in the world, as well as recognizing students' diversity to adapt their services accordingly. These standards frame this study, as it is based on the necessity of having strong foundational knowledge and skills related to best practices for working with ELs in North Carolina.

This study is also framed by research on second language acquisition. This body of literature encompasses the evolution of a theoretical framework for the conceptualization of language proficiency, both academic and social in nature. Cummins' (1981) distinction between two levels of language proficiency has deep implications in education, building upon and further shaping critical theory in language pedagogy (Genesee, Geva, Dressler, & Kamil, 2006). Cummins (1981) formalized the terms "Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)" and "Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)," in order to characterize the difference between the context-embedded social language used in every day contexts and the context-reduced academic language necessary to do well on high-stakes testing in school.

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

Furthermore, additional theoretical frameworks confirm that ELs require specific pedagogical and sociocultural considerations for academic success (Calderón, 2007; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Collier & Thomas, 2014; Cummins, 1981; Nieto, 2012; Vygotsky 1987). With the necessary and informed considerations regarding second language acquisition, and the social advocacy school counselors promote, ELs can gain integral support. They are afforded the benefits of authentic, student-specific academic plans that consider second language development while simultaneously supporting social/emotional development. Such a theoretical framework therefore supports this study's in-depth understanding of how school counselors conceptualize core knowledge and their own demonstrated practices while working with ELs during individual student planning.

METHODS

This qualitative multi-case study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) was designed to explore school counselors' conceptualizations of beneficial core knowledge and their own practical display of professional competencies to address the linguistic and social complexities related to schooling and support for ELs' academic and social/emotional success. Specifically, the study's design (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 2006) contextually examined individual student planning with first-generation immigrant ELs upon their arrival to U.S. schools.

The qualitative data analysis was carried out using open axial coding, which allowed the data to be organized into thematic categories with thick description. From the results, we can consider school counselors' observed practices as well as their conceptualizations regarding beneficial knowledge and skills related to the linguistic and social complexities of ELs (Geertz, 2001; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Context

The study's participants came from an urban school district in North Carolina that provides student services for some of the largest numbers of ELs in the state—the majority of whom are immigrants from Mexico, Central, and South America. A significant number enter the district during high school (NCDPI, 2015). The four participating school counselors worked in four different high schools, which provided a district-level scope to the study. This context was particularly relevant: the wide range of diversity within this population of ELs mirrors the state-wide population, which ranges from ELs who bring with them comprehensive academic backgrounds demonstrating academic success and high levels of native language literacy, to others who are refugees from myriad war-torn nations in Africa and Southeast Asia. The Title III/ESL director of the district examined in this study confirmed that these refugee students often come to school with gaps in prior formal educational experiences (personal communication, 2010, 2016). In addition to the academic and linguistic support the district provides through ESL services at all of the nearly 200 K-12 schools, the district has implemented the ASCA National Model to provide comprehensive school counseling services (NCDPI, 2015).

Data Collection and Analysis

This multi-case study included participants from four high school counselors who currently serve ELs in a large, urban district in North Carolina. Data triangulation included the use of in-depth observations, interviews as theoretically-informed interpretations of observations, and archival artifacts such as students' schools records and transcripts from outside the U.S. (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Piantanida, Tananis, & Grubs, 2004). The study's design aimed to discover potential trends and innovative ways to create action in the field of professional school counseling and

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

counselor education (Houser, 2014; Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001).

Open and axial coding was used to analyze the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Wolcott, 1994). Constant comparative analysis was carried out to inductively identify and thematically categorize the emergent data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The coding was used to refine the identified common themes and subsequent themes and patterns in the data gathered from the interview transcripts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The overarching and subsequent themes were derived from the qualitative process for reduction, analysis, and interpretation of the findings. Thus determined, these codes facilitated conceptualizing the identifying the knowledge and skills that are beneficial to working with ELs (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Data Sources

Data sources for triangulation (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) were drawn from two 90-minute interviews, one observation while fa-

cilitating course selections with an EL, and the use of existing student artifacts with four high school counselors (see Table 1). The ELs with whom the participating counselors interacted came from varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds and were enrolling in US schools for the first time (see Table 2). This context is important, as it confirms the scope of ELs with whom school counselors facilitate individual student planning. Additionally, the participating counselors had all been recently educated within the Southeastern United States in an area of demographical diversity and change (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002, 2004, 2010, 2015). In the interviews, participants articulated the individual student planning process with ELs and made connections with aspects from the prior phases of the interviews, including preparation in graduate school and current knowledge and skills related to working with ELs. A thick descriptive narration was drawn from these interviews, giving prominence to crafting in-depth meaning of the experiences (Geertz, 2001; Seidman, 2006; Vygotsky, 1987).
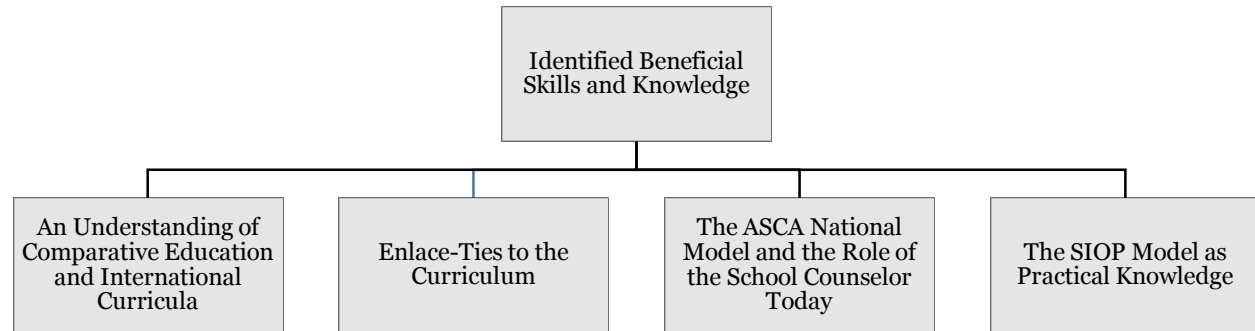
Table 1. School counselor participant group

	Female	Male	Total
Recent Graduate	4	0	4
NC Licensure	4	0	4
Monolingual	4	0	4

Table 2. English learner participant group for contextual scope

Country of Origin	Classified as English Learner	First Enrollment in U.S. Schools	Language Other than English Spoken at Home
Nepal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vietnam	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cuba	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Salvador	Yes	Yes	Yes

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

Figure 1. Thematic data for identified beneficial skills and knowledge

FINDINGS

The collected data were thematically categorized into a broad over-arching theme—identified beneficial skills and knowledge—with narrower subsequent themes: (a) an understanding of comparative education and international curricula; (b) the ASCA National Model and the role of the school counselor today; (c) enlace-ties to the curriculum; and (d) the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model as practical knowledge (see Figure 1).

Identified Beneficial Skills and Knowledge

Participating school counselors had very clear ideas about what skills and knowledge they themselves identified as necessary and beneficial while working with ELs. Through the interview and observation processes, they were able to identify skills and knowledge within their current knowledge base on how to work with ELs. The following segment of the research findings features some of the significant participant responses.

An Understanding of Comparative Education and International Curricula

One poignant aspect of the interview questions and observations was the idea that school counselors need to comprehend ELs' experiences, both linguistically and academically in school, prior to their arrival to U.S. schools. Counselors also need to understand the social complexities of navigating through the system of a school day in the U.S., and how the process may be similar or completely dissimilar to students' background knowledge—since culture, schematic backdrops, and context greatly impact the learning process (Bernak, Williams, & Chung, 2015; Calderón, 2007; Walqui, 2000a, 2000b). A resounding similarity in the counselors' responses was the need for understanding international school systems and how they may or may not match up to U.S. high school, both socially and linguistically. Here is what one counselor had to say about working with Vietnamese English learners:

> *School Counselor 1:* I have some challenges with [working with] the students that come from Vietnam. Because the way they do schooling is so different than the way we do it here. So, trying to find a schedule that works for them so they're not repeating things they shouldn't be repeating, and 'cause if they say they've had chemistry every year, do they really? How does that equate to ours? So, trying to figure that out, so a lot of times it's a little bit of, of trial and error. Like—we got a new kid from Vietnam, all right, well he said he's studied calculus. Well, we can't really put him in calculus because that's an AP class and we can't really do that, so we put him in pre-calculus and even though he's a little further ahead, at least he's catching on to the way it's taught in this country and he said he was in chemistry for

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

the last three years; well, we put him in chemistry and that didn't work. Like he really didn't understand. It was more like applied chemistry but he—the student—had a cousin here so he brought his chemistry book from Vietnam to show the chemistry teacher. So, she's like okay this is better. So, it's trial and error.

This counselor expressed similar ideas while working with a new EL from El Salvador:

School Counselor 1: Did you finish any years in high school? Did you finish ninth grade or just eighth grade?

Translator: [Translates in Spanish.]

Student And Mother: [No answer; looks of confusion on their faces.]

School Counselor 1: Can you explain the system, the years of school in El Salvador?

Translator: [In Spanish, asks the family to explain school structure in El Salvador and explains our system here and explains that he seems to be in ninth grade in our system.]

Mother: [In Spanish] Well, there are 12 grades and after ninth grade they go to a different school—[to her son] what is that called?

Student: It's called the bachillerato—it's very important.

Another participant observation was carried out while working with a new EL from Nepal and the refugee relocation representative. The counselor asked students and families for detailed information connected to understanding how the system from which they come matches up to her school's system. In one instance, they said the following:

School Counselor 2: [To the accompanying refugee relocation representative] It says here he has been in school for six years. So when they [he and his sister] were in school this year, the grade that they were in was sixth grade?

Refugee Relocation Representative: Yes.

School Counselor 2: I wondered though what that means because it says here [on the intake paperwork] they started first grade when they were seven, on the paperwork we have.

Refugee Relocation Representative: Okay, well they told me, I asked them if there were any sort of gaps in their education.

School Counselor 2: Right, well and with the age they are, it's hard unless they just do their education differently where they were [in Nepal].

Refugee Relocation Representative: Well, some of it is different because there have been, like I have lots of clients who are 18 or 19 and they do want to go to school because they were only in the tenth grade. I have had a lot of that happen.

A third participating counselor had parallel indications in her responses. She explained:

The first thing I do is always get a background on what they've had so it can help me figure out what classes they've had and what they still need, and then I always make sure that they know about our courses of study [diplomas] and what kind of system we have versus what kind of system where they came from. And then I try and talk to them a little bit about what courses we offer especially with the College Prep stuff. I try and go into a little bit more detail and explain to them what that means and what those classes are. So, that's pretty much how I work it out—the background is the most important thing for me and [that starts with] making sure I know how to match things up. It just depends [on the student].

As with the other participants, the observation of this school counselor working with a new EL from Cuba thematically confirms the connection to what she identified as being beneficial. In this excerpt, for instance:

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

School Counselor 3: When did she [the student] finish tenth grade?

Translator: In June. [Speaks in Spanish to the family.]

School Counselor 3: Okay, so June was the last month she was in school and she hasn't been in school since then?

Translator: Yes—almost a year it will be a year in June.

School Counselor 3: Are they aware of how our school works and how we start and when we end?

Translator: Well actually I was trying to explain that to them—I believe we start here in September right.

School Counselor 3: We start at the end of August. This is our last full month of classes, and we start our final exams in the beginning of June, and we have this much time left in classes until we start with the testing.

Translator: [Speaks in Spanish to the family, and the student asks about her grade level.] Which grade will she be in now?

School Counselor 3: Eleventh [grade], because she finished tenth grade in Cuba she would be starting in eleventh. Now I would be putting her in any core classes like main classes right now. I noticed based on her scores that her English is, she's kind of learning English so I would try to put her in some classes that would try to help her learn English while she's here, but I wouldn't put her in any major classes just because it's so late in the semester.

Translator: [Speaks in Spanish to the family.] And how about the credits? She's worried about that because of what she has from Cuba and if she starts here in eleventh grade she's worried about having enough time to finish [high school]. Will that affect her in some way?

School Counselor 3: Actually everything that she's taken in Cuba—the classes she had in Cuba—will count as a credit. Each of the classes she took and completed. I'm assuming the grading is about the same. Is the 100 the highest grade she can get?

Translator: Yes.

A third participating school counselor had parallel indications in her responses. She said:

I guess if they've had any courses somewhere else and that would be valuable and then how long they've been out of school and in school, what kind of grades they've had since the grading system is usually so different and then ours and their scores just to know where to place them, I know that it's not always exactly. They may move them around from there, but it at least gives you a starting point.

Ultimately, we can conclude from the thematically coded data that school counselors need to understand the academic and social complexities of navigating through the system of a school day in the U.S., and how doing so is similar or dissimilar to students' background knowledge. We can also note that school counselors tend to find it beneficial to understand what ELs have done linguistically and academically within international curricula, prior to their arrival in U.S. schools.

Ties to the Curriculum

The four participating counselors expressed consistencies related to the concept of deliberate and meaningful collaboration within a community of educational practice. There were nuances within the study that some overall connections between the school counselors and the classroom curricula are necessary and beneficial (Militello, Rallis, & Goldring, 2009). In order for school counselors to accurately guide students through the course selection process and assist with strategic positioning in specific courses, they themselves find it essential to

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

know what kind of curricular information students will be exposed to during their classroom experiences and how this information will be presented.

This overall understanding serves as points of curricular reference for school counselors and students, while simultaneously providing rationalization to the school community for the course selections. Such comprehension among school counselors is also potential progress for essential programmatic equity for diverse minority groups of students such as ELs (Delpit, 2006; Kozol, 1991; Michie, 1999; Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheurick, 2009; Spring, 2007). School Counselor 1's prior reference to knowing the difference between a chemistry class and an applied chemistry class while working with her Vietnamese student is a notable example of this comprehension. There were more specific examples of this impression throughout the participants' responses to the related protocol questions. For instance, as one counselor stated:

> School counseling is such a different field from that [psychological counseling]. I think it should be part, it should be separate and it should be part of the education department. Which, I guess we're all kind of lumped together but it should be practical for understanding classrooms. Like you learn teaching methods. What are the best teaching methods and best methods to use with my kids. That would be helpful for me to know so I can help with placing students in their classes.

School Counselor 2 affirmed a parallel response:

> It is so important to have a true understanding of what [classes] your school has to offer and your [the counselor] part in that program. And knowing that it is part of our job [as facilitators] so that we can really understand how to help students and teachers, giving them useful tools to help them in class. For me, working with [ELs], I would like more information about teaching [curriculum]. Teachers come to me and ask them about how to teach these kids and what do I say? I can have ideas in my mind but there are actual [technical terms and] words that

teachers will recognize that I could have used that would help them maybe understand what I was trying to say more clearly. I get some help. I get some "modifications" information from some former ESL people and that was important. I am more able to give that to teachers but when I first started, I didn't really understand it so that was kind of embarrassing. I just don't understand a lot about teachers' approaches and I don't know how that would get incorporated in to a counseling program, but we definitely need more preparation with this. In a way we have to remember that we serve the staff too and they're looking for advice from me and it's all part of it. Especially when you're talking about the [ELs] or any special population of students. All these [classroom] modifications and interventions are important and I think we need to know more about how to tell teachers how to use them.

School Counselor 3, much like her colleagues also expressed her identification of this essential knowledge of the curriculum and the counselor's connection to the classroom:

> Well, I would like to learn more about classes to just increase my knowledge, about best placement for [ELs], the placements they've had in the past versus what they still need and what they will get here in school. So, really we [school counselors] just need to continue to grow and get this experience. I would say we need to know what classes we offer and who teaches them here [names her school] because that to me is an important piece, especially if the students come in late in the year. For example, I know if I have somebody really new to the country and doesn't know any English and doesn't have a whole lot of experience, I know certain classes will work and their teachers will be great with them. So a lot of it is just getting to know the student a little bit and then knowing where they're going to feel comfortable and what teacher is going to work

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

the best with them. That to me is really important to have.

School Counselor 4 expressed this connection as a beneficial canon of knowledge and critical information:

> It's nice when our ESL teachers and other teachers, usually at the beginning of the year do a little brief meeting with us [the counselors] to tell us about the classes here and what we need to be looking for when we place students. And they'll usually give us some [reference] sheets to help guide us, which is helpful.

The conclusions that were identified within this subsequent theme indicate counselors' essential need for curricular connections to the classroom in order to fully facilitate the course selection process during individual student planning sessions with ELs.

The ASCA National Model and the Role of the School Counselor

For this portion of the study, it is important to note that the school district where this study was conducted uses the ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that within the collected data, participants' responses were generally connected to the model's structure and its elements within the framework. School Counselor 1 was in a unique situation, as she was the sole school counselor for her small school, authenticating the scope of school counselor programs in the district. She described her connection to the ASCA framework:

> I do student planning and some direct service tied to the national model. I love it. Like at the beginning of the year I do large classroom guidance. I go in to the English classes I go talk to my kids about transcripts and all that stuff and I love doing that. I love actually after looking at the reports cards talking to the [students who have] failures and working with them individually for planning.

School Counselor 2's circumstances were somewhat different as part of a larger school counseling department. She explained her thoughts on working with the ASCA framework:

> Well, a lot of what we do can be tied to the ASCA model in some way, and with [ELs]. Like graduation checklists we're doing that for the academic component to make sure they're on track to graduate or if they're not passing, we meet with them to go over an action plan, then that's us meeting with the students. And helping them to be more aware of academics and ways they can improve. Registration for new students, and it's academic [to register in school]. The meeting with students who are in demand for us could be for many reasons. It could be academic, post-secondary plans, a crisis, a dropout or breaking up with their boyfriend, they're suicidal, someone close to them die, the range is so broad. Those things meet the many aspects with ASCA. Underclassman awards, that's positive and pointing out good things, all part of that. Emails and parent conferences are all good communication—including staff and teachers, things like that as part of ASCA.

School Counselor 3, while brief, also acknowledged the ASCA framework and the role of the school counselor today as beneficial for understanding:

> I would say that with the student counseling and appointments, even though it's more academic, it still falls in to ASCA and confidentiality and basically everything I do. I follow a lot of what the model says about working with all students.

The SIOP Model – as Practical Knowledge

Each of the four participants was asked to discuss their knowledge of the SIOP Model—a lesson design and delivery framework for academic language development with ELs (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2016). The participants were guided by state and national standards for school counseling along with the framework of the ASCA National Model

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

(ASCA, 2012). They collaborated with teachers and administrators working with other pedagogical frameworks and standards. The participants unanimously professed the pertinence of a knowledge base regarding the SIOP Model for overall connections to the school curriculum and its benefits for ELs; success (Bemak, 2000; Dahir & Stone, 2012; Parsons, 2009). This included the counselors' knowledge of how the framework operates, as well as how classrooms working with the SIOP framework shelter instruction to have unique and beneficial pedagogical practices, ultimately shaping individual student planning. The counselors identified the need to understand and consider the pedagogical and social complexities of navigating through the system of a school day in the U.S., and how that was similar or dissimilar to students' background knowledge. Such an awareness is important, since each of the four participants' schools utilized the SIOP Model as part of their comprehensive ESL program services. The counselors shared specific examples of their overall understanding of the model. For instance, School Counselor 1 shared her basic and practical identifications regarding the beneficial knowledge and skills related to the SIOP Model:

> What I know about SIOP is that it works well when you've got the [ELs] in there with regular students [non-ELs] and they kind of work together and I think that's a wonderful idea because the students will learn and the other kids will learn from the [ELs].

School Counselor 2 also identified the practical knowledge of the SIOP Model structure and framework as beneficial, part of her current knowledge base on working with ELs:

> *Researcher:* How do you think SIOP would help with the challenges you face while working with English learners?
>
> *School Counselor 2:* Oh, it would totally help. Because then you have a teacher who is trained in teaching [ELs] and native speakers [of English] so the students are still going to have the opportunity to be exposed to infor-

mation with an academic level from their peers. But the SIOP model is going to be more visual, more hands-on, more group-based, a better approach for non-native speakers and the native speakers will benefit from it as well. [With SIOP, all students] become more engaged. There is a lot of positive feedback [interaction] from both sides of the population. And then, you're taking the burden off the other teachers who haven't been trained who don't know what to do with kids who don't speak English. They [the teachers] have ideas in mind, but not many skills in teaching non-native speakers.

> *Researcher:* How do you think SIOP training would help with the teachers and students?
>
> *School Counselor 1:* I think it would help if they would really utilize it and be open to learning it [SIOP]. But, you'd have to have the right teachers who are willing to be involved and willing to take that on. If you gave SIOP to the entire staff, you're going to have some who turn their nose up at it. They're happy with their teaching styles [the way they are] and they don't want to get in to anything else, any extra work. That's unfortunate, but it's reality. There will be teachers who aren't open to it and then there will be others who will like it and see it as innovative and they'll want to get on board. Those are the teachers we want to send our [ELs] to anyway.

Summary

The participants' responses to the interview questions are thematically connected to the research questions of the study, with an emphasis on school counselors' identifications of beneficial knowledge and skills with respect to individual student planning sessions with ELs. Observations of the participants as they conducted individual student planning sessions also helped to enhance and solidify the emergent theme and sub-themes.

DISCUSSION

The research interview responses and excerpts from the observation sessions, when directly connected to the research question, help us bring clarity related to attributes of school counseling and working with ELs. We can notice specifics within the participating high school counselors' conceptualizations of beneficial knowledge and skills with respect to individual student planning and facilitation of the course selection process with ELs. These findings strengthen and extend the current literature regarding the role of the school counselor for the 21st century to give specific details from practitioners' perspectives. These professionals, as advocates for collaborative educational transformation, are crucially positioned to support ELs' academic and social success (Albers, Hoffman, & Lundahl, 2009; Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; ASCA, 2012; House, Martin, & Ward, 2002; NCDPI, 2014). The findings also allow us to clarify imperative targets to continue new perspectives on the complexities that school counselors face while working with ELs. The study results also provide direction for new and revised pathways with regard to school counselors' further understandings about the principles of second language acquisition. Likewise, this investigation and its results offer a collective conceptualization for guiding professional development and a framework for collaborative discourse with specific attention to facets of EL student education (Blankstein, 2012; Ravitch, 2006; Shellenburg & Grothaus, 2011). The framework includes students' academic backgrounds, language proficiencies, and socio-cultural contexts for learning to build an enhanced platform for pedagogical change (Collier & Thomas, 2014; Parsons, 2009; World-class Instructional Design & Assessment [WIDA], 2007, 2012,).

The essentials related to effective professional development for school counselors include some critical elements related to ELs. First, professional development programs need to support second language acquisition principles as they connect to students' prior education and international curricula. This includes how they tie to U.S. school curricula for a combination of conceptual learning. Second, school counselor professional development should delineate and decode meaning of these elements within the school counseling program structure. Specific alignments should outline how to collaborate about international curricula and students' prior learning with myriad stakeholders. Doing so facilitates direct pedagogical connections via the SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2016), as well as numerous other variations for language support in the classroom. These concepts are crucial for academic language development and can be supported by school counseling programs via the ASCA National Model framework. (ASCA, 2012; Chamot, & O'Malley, 1994; O'Malley, & Chamot, 1989; WIDA, 2012).

Ultimately, this study points to the need for professional development for school counselors. This will continue to create innovative ways for intensified emphasis on shaping the parameters and experiences with second language acquisition principles. Professional development programs, including short-term and long-term structures, must support practitioners' comprehensive demonstration of a true sense of readiness to work with ELs. Linking district, state, and national professional development, as well as institutions of higher education working with school counselors, would systematically coordinate school counseling and academic language development services. With these innovative changes in place, ELs' academic, linguistic, and social/emotional development will become increasingly comprehensive and authentic in focus.

Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Language Teaching and Research
Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
Available online at go.ncsu.edu/dialogues

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Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
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Vol. 1, Issue 1, (2017), 44–59
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