

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY,  
PERCEIVED SCHOOL COUNSELOR ROLE, AND ACTUAL PRACTICE

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships that exist among school counselor self-efficacy, perceptions of the professional school counselor's role held by counselors, and actual practice. Data were collected from 192 professional school counselors that attended a statewide counselor conference. Professional school counselors responded to two researcher-designed surveys; the first was a 14-item demographic survey; the second, a 20-item by four-question survey for a total of 80 responses. A Multiple Regression Analysis was used to ascertain what relationships existed between school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor perceived role, and actual practice.

The questionnaire listed 20 different counselor and non-counselor roles, and four questions were asked of each role, to determine the degree to which school counselors identified with various roles, degree of self-efficacy in performing those roles, and how often they performed specific roles; the actual practice, and the degree to which professional development would enhance their performances in designated roles. Results indicated that there was a positive relationship between school counselors' experiencing higher self-efficacy and the actual practice in their perceived school counselor roles. As self-efficacy increased, their performance in various roles increased as well.

Recommendations were made for preparation and practice of school counselors in counselor education programs. Additionally, suggestions were made for increased collaboration between counselor education programs and the school counseling programs in local schools to promote more integration of theory into practice. Furthermore, recommendations were offered for school principals and directors of school counseling programs to better utilize the expertise of professional school counselors in the school system.

I dedicate this dissertation in memory of my dear friend and fellow Holmes Scholar, Dr. Franklyn Conroy Williams, who selflessly shared his time and knowledge, and provided me with encouragement, mentoring, and support throughout my doctoral program.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	XIII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XIV
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....	1
Current Issues Regarding the School Counselor's Role.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Delimitations and Limitations of Study.....	8
Assumptions of the Study.....	9
Significance of the Study.....	10
Theoretical Foundation.....	11
Conceptual Framework.....	11
Research Question and Research Hypotheses.....	12
Chapter Summary.....	12
CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	14
Introduction.....	14
Historical Overview of the School Counseling Role.....	14
Early Historical Foundations.....	14
The Progressive Education Movement.....	16
A Modern History of School Counseling.....	16
Role Development and the Evolution of the School Counselor.....	18
Transformation of School Counseling Role.....	19
Self-Efficacy & Social Cognitive Theory.....	19
School Counselor Self-Efficacy.....	21
Perceptions of Professional School Counselors.....	21
The School Counselor and Professional Identity.....	22
Inconsistent Names of Professional Association for School Counselors.....	23
School Counselor Professional Identity & Role Confusion.....	23
Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity.....	26
Lack of Standardized School Counselor Supervision.....	28
Influences on the Professional Standards of School Counselors.....	29
Counselor Education and School Counselor Preparation.....	31

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs ..	32
Support for Need of Study .....	32
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY .....	34
Research Question and Specific Hypotheses.....	35
Hypothesis I .....	35
Hypothesis II .....	35
Hypothesis III .....	36
Hypothesis IV .....	36
Participants.....	36
Procedures .....	39
Variables.....	40
Independent Variables .....	40
Dependent Variable .....	41
Instrumentation .....	41
Research Design .....	46
Data Analysis.....	47
Summary .....	49
CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS .....	50
Demographics of the Sample .....	51
Multiple Regression Analysis.....	53
Preliminary Analysis .....	53
Summary of Results .....	54
Hypothesis One.....	54
Hypothesis Two.....	55
Hypothesis Three .....	56
Hypothesis Four .....	57
CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION .....	59
Summary of Study .....	60
Discussion of Descriptive Statistics .....	61
Discussion Summary of Results for the Hypotheses .....	62
Conclusion.....	62
Hypothesis I .....	63
Hypothesis II .....	63
Hypothesis III .....	64
Hypothesis IV .....	64
Implications for Students .....	65
Implications for the School Counseling Profession.....	65
Implications for School Principals and Administrators .....	66
Implications for Counselor Educators .....	67
Implications for Professional School Counselors.....	68
Increasing School Counselor Self-Efficacy in Career Domain of CSGP.....	68
Study Limitations .....	70
Implications for Future Research.....	71
Conclusion.....	72
APPENDIX A SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY .....	73

APPENDIX B SCHOOL COUNSELOR ROLE SURVEY.....	75
APPENDIX C INFORMED CONSENT LETTER AND FORM .....	77
APPENDIX D IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL.....	80
APPENDIX E ASCA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS .....	86
APPENDIX F BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	89
LIST OF REFERENCES .....	104

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Gender Distribution of the Study Sample.....	37
Table 2. Racial/Ethnic Distribution.....	38
Table 3. Varimax Rotated Solution .....	45
Table 4. Categorical Demographic Characteristics of the Participating Respondents (N = 192) .....	52
Table 5. Multiple Regression Overall Model Summary.....	58

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. School Counselor Perception Model .....	25
Figure 2. School Counselor Role Survey Model.....	48

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Professional school counselors play a vital role in the social, emotional, and educational development of children. Elementary, middle, and high school levels employ school counselors as an instrumental part of the school system in order to meet the need of all students. One way this is accomplished is by professional school counselors' providing academic, career, and personal/social counseling. With advanced degrees in school and/or mental health counseling, professional school counselors are qualified to meet this challenge. The problem arises when school counselors do not function in their expected professional school counselor role but rather in other, non-professional roles, such as registration clerk, disciplinarian, or hall duty monitor. One consequence of placing professional school counselors in a non-school counselor role is that their self-efficacy may be at risk. Lower belief in one's abilities or low self-efficacy can affect one's performance in specific roles. In turn, school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs and role perceptions may affect their performance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships that exist among school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor perceived role, and actual practice.

School counselors' self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions about their role influence their actual practice of delivering comprehensive school counseling. School counselors often have an ambiguous concept of their role in the school setting. This ambiguous

concept may be attributable to how their school principal, teachers, and administrators perceive their role within the school. Professional school counselors lack uniform professional identity, which can affect their self-efficacy. School counselors' roles can be defined differently by the administration at their respective schools, thereby making the professional identity of the school counselor ambiguous

Historically, school counseling emerged from the need to expose young people to professional occupations, as a result of the transitions that took place during the Industrial Revolution. Many families migrated from farming regions to large cities to take advantage of better employment opportunities (Cobia & Henderson, 2003). The attention and focus on the need for young persons to possess the required skills to transition from school into the workplace further solidified the school counselor role (Schmidt, 2003). Jesse Davis and Frank Parsons laid the foundation for vocational and school guidance. In 1909, Frank Parsons (1909), largely credited as the father of guidance, articulated his conceptual framework of vocational development in his book, *Choosing a Vocation* (Baruth & Robinson, 1987; Wittmer, 2000). Since his work, school counselors have evolved into "specialists of human behavior providing comprehensive school guidance," but not without struggling to define their role. Over the years, this issue of role confusion has been at the center of counseling literature. The transforming and re-conceptualization of the role of school counselors has been examined for a significant number of years (Dahir, 2004; Wittmer, 2000).

Confusion and ambiguity as to the role, identity, purpose, function, and duties of the professional school counselor have dominated much of the last fifty years (Dahir, 2004). Professional school counselors (PSCs) struggle to define their professional



identity and to prioritize the multiple roles they are expected to fulfill. National attention has focused on the changing role of the school counselor, on increasing professional development and decreasing clerical and administrative duties (Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). Persistent role confusion does little to bolster school counselor professional identity or confidence in their professional school counselor roles. Implementing national standards and professionalizing the role of the school counselor increases cohesiveness within the profession (Dahir, 2004). This increased cohesiveness may have a positive affect on school counselor self-efficacy. And in turn, increased self-efficacy as a school counselor will strengthen the role definition and professional identity for which school counselors strive.

School counselors have not been able to collectively define their role. For example, the professional school counselor wears many hats based on the roles assigned by the site-based administrator. These roles consist of professional school counselor duties and non-counselor duties. Specific duties expected of professional school counselors (PSCs) include counseling—academic, career, and personal/social counseling; coordinating, a leadership role, which includes planning, delivering, and evaluating the comprehensive school guidance program (CSGP)—and consulting—parent consultation, teacher consultation, and consultation with the administration (Cobia & Henderson, 2003). Furthermore, consultation includes the role of data-driven decision maker, which entails conducting needs assessments with students, faculty, and community, and making decisions for the comprehensive school guidance plan based on this feedback, or ascertaining the direction of the CSGP based on standardized test scores.

Non-counselor roles include test administrator, which encompasses counting tests, numbering tests, administering the test to students, collecting the tests; teacher, which involves teaching the “specials” elective courses, substitute teaching; quasi-administrator, which encompasses the role of disciplinarian, dean, registrar, and supervisor; and clerk, which entails profuse paperwork, maintaining attendance records, and filing papers. School counselors engage in numerous non-counselor tasks and activities, which could be delegated to a paraprofessional or other school staff. With that said, there may be a discrepancy between the defined school counselor role and the actual school counselor practice.

### Current Issues Regarding the School Counselor's Role

The role of the school counselor has been a topic of debate and an issue of school reform in national legislation. The profession of school counseling is in transformation, in that it is attempting to acclimate to the new National Standards of Professional School Counseling.

School counselors' roles are defined by site-based administration at their respective schools, thereby diluting the professional identity of the school counselor. Society, teachers, and administrators often fail to understand the role of the school counselor (Kuranz, 2002). When schools fail to define the school counselors' role, school counselors may question their role and lack the self-efficacy and confidence required to perform their job effectively.

School counselors face many challenges in defining and transforming their role. School counselors' beliefs about self-efficacy in their role also affect their performance

of comprehensive school counseling. The beliefs that school counselors hold about their role and professional identity and how it is defined are tantamount to understanding the status of their profession (Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). Research shows that school counselors must seek out professional development, define their role, have the ability to serve all students, and incorporate technology in delivering school counseling programs (Carnavale & Desrochers, 2003; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Feller, 2003; Kuranz, 2002; Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). School counselors benefit from being uniquely qualified to deliver comprehensive school guidance, but involvement in professional development is crucial. Involvement activities include attending professional development conferences locally, nationally, and internationally and engaging in research, publication, leadership, and advocacy in the field of school counseling.

### Statement of the Problem

The school counseling literature pertaining to school counselor self-efficacy and school counselor perceived role, as it relates to performance, does not address the implications of this relationship. The construct of self-efficacy is relevant in the counselor preparation literature, but primarily focused on mental health counselor preparation (Bandura, 1997; Brown & Lent, 1996; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Harrison & Rainer, 1997; Ladany, Ellis, & Friedlander, 1999; Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997; Miller, Coombs, & Fuqua, 1999; Sharpley & Ridgway, 1993). Marginal research addresses the implications of school counselor self-efficacy. One study (Sutton & Fall, 1995) articulated the importance of school counselor self-efficacy and presented strong

findings for use of the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale to understand the role of the school counselor and improve counselor performance.

There is a need for more research supporting the positive relationship among increased school counselor self-efficacy, role perception, and performance. These factors affect the school counselors' self-efficacy and need further examination. By understanding the relationship of school counselor self-efficacy, perceived role, and actual practice, counselor educators can examine their preparation models and better connect theory and practice. Additionally, school principals and administrators can intentionally influence school counselors' self-efficacy by examining their perceptions of school counselors' roles. By doing this, principals can appropriately utilize professional school counselors by allowing them to perform the various counselor roles for which they were trained. School administrators can facilitate professional school counselors by supporting them to be more effective in contributing to the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

#### Definition of Terms

1. *Self-efficacy*: the belief about one's personal capabilities; belief that one possesses the ability, knowledge, and skills in order to perform and succeed well; that one's actions will be effective (Bandura, 1997).
2. *Professional School Counselor (PSC)*: the professional K-12 school counselor; the professional school counselor delivers comprehensive school guidance in the three domains of academic, personal/social, and career counseling; also called guidance counselor; sometimes abbreviated as PSC.

3. *Study participants*: Florida certified elementary, middle, and high school counselors.
4. *Actual practice*: the delivering of comprehensive school guidance counseling under the three domains of academic, personal/social, and career counseling.
5. *Professional identity*: the degree to which one defines, owns, and internalizes one's profession/occupation.
6. *School counselor role*: the job, duties, and functions of a school counselor.
7. *Professional development*: structured training specifically intended to enhance one's skills in a particular occupational/career domain such as school counseling, consisting of lectures, presentations, conferences, workshops, technology training, or instruction.
8. *ASCA*: American School Counselor Association, the national, professional organization for professional school counselors.
9. *Comprehensive School Guidance Program (CSGP)*: a structured school counseling program that provides all students (K-12) with knowledge and assistance in using and attaining life skills (expanded from Cobia & Henderson, 2003); it includes three domains: academic, career, and personal/social.
10. *Academic development*: the process of students' acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes that facilitate effective learning throughout the lifespan.
11. *Career development*: the process of students' acquiring knowledge of careers, skills, attitudes that facilitate their transition to college and the world of work.
12. *Social/personal development*: the process of students' learning character education acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful in school, such as

interpersonal skills, moral development (such as respect for others and self), and safety, allowing them to be assets to society.

13. *Counselor roles*: Professional School Counselor Roles that are not administrative in nature but rather specific counselor roles such as individual and group counseling, crisis counseling, parent, teacher, and administrative consultation, small group counseling and coordination.

14. *Non-counselor roles*: non-professional school counselor roles that are administrative/clerical in nature, such as lunch duty, hall duty, substitute teaching, coordination of clubs, testing, and discipline.

15. *Administrative roles*: roles that are categorized as neither professional counselor nor non-counselor roles, such as general advising, career testing, and student registration.

#### Delimitations and Limitations of Study

The study focused on professional school counselors in Florida, specifically those who attended the Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA) conference. Therefore the results may not be generalized to the national school counselor population. Secondly, the research findings are based on professional school counselor self-reports regarding role and perception of individual performance; therefore the subjects may have been motivated to present themselves as more self-efficacious than they actually are and potentially lack objectivity. Thirdly, the survey consisted of a Likert scale of 1-4, resulting in a forced choice, as a neutral median of 3 is not offered for tentative, indecisive answers. Lastly, the sample may not be representative of the views

of all Florida professional school counselors, considering that those surveyed were attending a professional development conference. This self-selection suggests that attendees are a biased group that feels strongly about professional development, hence their attendance at the annual Florida School Counselor Association conference. Many of the conference attendees were also members of the Florida Counseling Association (FCA) or the division called The Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA), further evidence of their commitment to professionalism. Therefore, the results reported regarding the importance of school counselor professional development may be skewed and non-representative of all Florida school counselors' beliefs.

#### Assumptions of the Study

The following are several assumptions in this study:

- There is a relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role.
- Professional development, perceived school counselor role, and professional identity have an effect on school counselor self-efficacy.
- A convenience sample of school guidance counselors will be obtainable from the statewide Florida Counseling Association (FCA) conference in St. Petersburg, Florida, November 18–20, 2004.
- School counselors will report self-efficacy, actual role, frequency of particular roles, and need for professional development to enhance performance in role.
- School counselors will answer the survey honestly.

- The sample surveyed will allow for the results to be generalized to all school counselors regarding their role.

### Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance the understanding of the relationship among the constructs of school counselor self-efficacy, role perception, and school counselor actual practice. More specifically, this study will measure the relationship of these three variables and offer valuable implications for counselor education programs, school guidance programs, practicing school counselors, and school principals and administrators. This study will have practical applications for the preparation and practice of professional school counselors.

The role, purpose, definition, and function of the school counselor have been under incessant scrutiny over the last fifty years (Dahir, 2004). The role of the school counselor has been a work in progress, undergoing myriad transformations due to influences such as external forces in society, education, legislation, and the school system. The priorities and wishes of various stakeholders (including administrators, teachers, and parents), rather than the school counselors, largely determine the school counselors' roles (Dahir, 2004). School counselors have somehow acquiesced to the changing expectations of school administrators, policymakers, and society as a whole. Without a clear definition of their role and the multiple influences that have affected their role, school counselor identity and understanding of their role remain ambiguous. As a result, National Standards for School Counselors, counselor education programs, mission statements, American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards, and



increased professional development standards have been established and designed to raise the bar of the professional school counseling profession and clearly define the role of the school counselor.

### Theoretical Foundation

Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) was the guiding theory for this research. Additionally, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) organizes career factors in three models: Interest Development Model, Choice Model, and Performance Model. For this research, the constructs of the Performance Model will be examined as it pertains to the transformation of the school counselor. This model posits that performance is affected chiefly by self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Self-efficacy, coupled with ability, directly influences performance. SCCT can be used for school counselors to examine their self-efficacy beliefs and optimize their opportunities to be successful in their profession (Brown & Lent, 1996). It is a challenge for school counselors to develop a strong sense of personal efficacy if their role is not clearly defined.

### Conceptual Framework

The rationale and theoretical framework for this study are drawn from: (1) the historical background germane to the history of role formation of the school counseling profession; (2) the evolution and transformation of the role of the school counselor; (3) self-efficacy and Social Cognitive Theory; (4) perceptions of the school counselors' role;

(5) school counselors' role conflict; and (6) the professional standards that have shaped the school counselor role.

### Research Question and Research Hypotheses

This study examines the following question: What is the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice?

The following research hypotheses were formulated to study the primary research question:

Hypothesis one: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and academic actual practice.

Hypothesis two: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and personal/social actual practice.

Hypothesis three: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and career actual practice.

Hypothesis four: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice.

### Chapter Summary

The theory and preparation as compared to the practice of school counselors in delivering comprehensive school guidance are often incongruent. The disconnect between perceived role and actual practice of school counselors is related to school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs. Higher school counselor self-efficacy beliefs invariably lead to higher performance. Therefore, it is essential to understand the school

counselors' self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived role as a school counselor. The identification of factors that contribute to higher school counselor self-efficacy beliefs will have a positive effect on their actual practice, which will benefit the academic, career, and personal/social development of students and the school system.

The chapters of this study include: Review of Literature (Chapter Two), Methodology (Chapter Three), Results (Chapter Four), and Discussion (Chapter Five). The Literature Review chapter summarized the relevant research concerning the history and transformation of the school counselor role, major influences on the role, school counselor self-efficacy, and multiple perceptions of the school counselor role.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships that exist among professional school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice. Chapter Two presents the relevant literature relating to school counseling history, role, self-efficacy, the evolution of comprehensive school counseling, and significant influences that have shaped the role of the professional school counselor. The rationale and theoretical framework for this study is drawn from: (1) the historical background germane to the school counseling profession; (2) the evolution, role development, and transformation of the school counselors' role; (3) self-efficacy and Social Cognitive Theory; (4) perceptions of the school counselors' role; (5) school counselors' role conflict; (6) and the professional standards that have shaped the school counselor role.

#### Historical Overview of the School Counseling Role

##### Early Historical Foundations

Career counseling or vocational concepts reach back to the seventeenth century when Italy's Tomasco Garzoni published a work describing various occupations and

professions available during those times (Schmidt, 2003). This was published in several languages and translated in English as *The Universal Plaza of All the Professions of the World*. Since that time, many have attempted to create a profession aimed at vocational counseling. The vocational guidance movement occurred during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Baruth & Robinson, 1987). The two people credited with developing one of the earliest systems for delivering any type of career counseling were Jesse Davis and Frank Parsons. Davis included guidance, most closely known today as character education and career counseling, as part of the Central High School curriculum in Detroit, where he worked as an 11th-grade counselor. He provided guidance and vocational counseling. He was concerned with young men learning how to contribute to society. From his efforts, vocational guidance became a part of the classroom teachers' curriculum (Baruth & Robinson, 1987).

Through the work of Frank Parsons, who founded vocational counseling, people were matched with vocations based on their personal attributes and character traits. Parson's influence and contribution to guidance counseling was not appreciated until much later (Wittmer, 2000). Parsons posited that there were three instrumental factors involved with selecting the proper vocation. These included (1) a clear self-understanding of one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, and limitations; (2) knowledge of the requirements, advantages, disadvantages, and compensation for different types of employment; (3) and an understanding of the relationship between the two (Schmidt, 2003).

## The Progressive Education Movement

The early 1900s gave rise to school reform, a focus on improving the quality of lives with a humanistic influence, targeting vocational and mental awareness of the individual. According to Baruth & Robinson (1987), the Progressive Education perspective valued what was working, meaningful, and useful for students. Iconoclastic to traditional educational methods, progressivism infused rich contexts into the classroom with role-playing, group discussion, and drama. Progressive Education was born out of the merged constructs of instrumentalism, experimentalism, and pragmatism. Progressive educators of the 1920s and 1930s referred to the school counselor as the most representative feature of the progressive movement. The school counselor was regarded as an instrumental stakeholder in shaping and influencing students' lives during the progressive movement. This era marked the beginning of the historical underpinnings of the role formation of the professional school counselor. Other significant events continued to influence the role of the school counselor. As the Progressive Education movement experienced an untimely passing, the tone was set for the birth of the humanistic era, which continued to shape the role of the school counselor and the counseling profession in general.

## A Modern History of School Counseling

It is well documented (Cobia & Henderson, 2003; Paisley & Hayes, 2003) that the Industrial Revolution was the event that prompted schools to provide vocational advising, which was done by teachers. According to Paisley & McMahon (2001), the history of the school counseling profession "was initially shaped by the social reform

movement during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and has evolved from an early focus on career and moral development to today's comprehensive, developmental, and collaborative school counseling programs" (p. 106). Societal effects that influenced vocations and families after World War II, such as the breakdown of families from divorce, standardized testing to gain entrance to college, and a changing world, generated an increased need for career guidance counseling. More emphasis was placed on psychological testing and a new focus on career guidance emerged in the school system. According to Wittmer (2002), developmental guidance intended for the school system was articulated by Mathewson in 1949, who outlined school counseling that paralleled the various child developmental stages and needs.

The launching of the Russian spaceship Sputnik in 1957 was a landmark event that greatly influenced the development and direction of school counseling. This event forced the educational system in America to evaluate what students were learning as compared to the apparent advanced academics in the Soviet Union (Baruth & Robinson, 1987; Dahir, 2004; Schmidt, 2003). It served as a wake-up call to America and the counseling profession to raise the bar of competence for American students in the areas of science and mathematics. School counselors focused on preparing more students for college as a result. Additionally, the government focused on increasing the numbers of school counselors; an increase in funding resulted in more training at the graduate level.

## Role Development and the Evolution of the School Counselor

Due to major influences, the profession of school counseling has evolved and transformed. School counseling was initially an extended role of the schoolteacher with the purpose of providing some vocational guidance in order for a student to choose a career. Comprehensive school guidance was conceptualized more definitively in the 1960s, evolving from vocational counseling to a vital, essential role in developmental career guidance. Even with that, the identity and role of the school counselor was still being conceptualized during the 1960s into the start of the 1970s. This focus of articulating the school counselors' role resulted in a significant number of articles published with this goal in mind (Ginter & Scalise, 1990). Later, from the 1970s to 1980s, the role of the school counselor changed from providing vocational guidance to providing individual development with a developmental guidance focus (Green & Keys, 2001). Most recently, school counselors utilize a comprehensive school guidance model, where all students are recipients (Galassi & Akos, 2004).

The transformation of school counseling has made accountability the optimal focus for all educational stakeholders. Teachers, students, administrators, and professional school counselors are accountable for the success or failure of all students. Professional school counselors have recently been under the scrutiny of a national agenda, which focuses on accountability (Dahir, 2004; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Myrick, 2003; Paisley & McMahon, 2001), and as a result, professional school counselors are required to justify and articulate how their role is contributing to the academic success of all students. More specifically, school counselors must be capable of exemplifying how students have achieved in all three domains of comprehensive school guidance, to



include academic, career, and personal/social areas, as a result of the school counselors' influence, presence or contribution to the overall success of the student's achievement.

### Transformation of School Counseling Role

The role of the professional school counselor has been a topic of debate and an issue of school reform in legislation. The profession of school counseling is transforming, emerging, and acclimating to the changing needs of the nation at large. The most recent school reform movement, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), of 2001, addressed an increased need for accountability in the school system, which is well documented in the school counselor research (Dahir, 2004). School counselors are not exempt from this requirement, as was mentioned before. School counselors must be accountable for delivering the National Standards for comprehensive school guidance. Moreover, professional school counselors must make the argument how well they are meeting the needs of all students (Dahir, 2004; Myrick, 2003). Furthermore, professional school counselors must advocate for all students (Paisley & McMahon, 2001) and be prepared to adopt new roles such as advocate, catalyst, and facilitator (Taylor & Adelman, 2000).

### Self-Efficacy & Social Cognitive Theory

Understanding the construct of self-efficacy as it relates to counselors and the helping profession frames its significance in this study. Self-efficacy, simply stated, is the sense of accomplishment when carrying out tasks. Exercising control over obstacles

and events that affect one's life, and believing that one possesses this ability, translates into perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The construct of self-efficacy comes from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of human development and is concerned with how one's beliefs about their knowledge, skills, and capabilities to initiate, organize, and take courses of action required to achieve specific types of performance (Bandura, 1997; Brown & Lent, 1996; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Hall, 2003; Harrison & Rainer, 1997; Ladany et al., 1999; Larson, Clark, Wesely, Koraleski, Daniels, & Smith, 1999; Leach & Stoltenberg, 1997; Miller et al., 1999; Sharpley & Ridgway, 1993; Sutton & Fall, 1995). Lent et al. (2002) articulated how self-efficacy directly influences performance in their Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), with its theoretical underpinnings largely from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) factors in three models: Interest Development Model, Choice Model, and Performance Model. For the purposes of this research, the constructs of the Performance Model were examined as it pertains to the self-efficacy and performance of the school counselor.

This model posits that performance is affected chiefly by self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 2002). Self-efficacy, coupled with ability, directly influences performance. SCCT can be used for school counselors to examine their self-efficacy beliefs and optimize their opportunities to be successful in their profession (Brown & Lent, 1996). It is a challenge for school counselors to develop a strong sense of personal efficacy if their role is not clearly defined.

## School Counselor Self-Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy and its link to school counselor performance can be illustrated when school counselors lack social and other support systems in the school, thereby affecting school counselor performance and effectiveness (Sutton & Fall, 1995). School counselors are ambiguous about their role in the school setting. Furthermore, school counselors may lack support, professional development, and the empowerment to practice professional school counseling as it is taught in graduate school. School counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about their role may affect their actual practice or performance in the delivery of comprehensive school guidance counseling. Due to school-based management, school counselors' roles are defined by the administration, namely the principal at their respective schools, thereby redefining the professional identity of the school counselor. Society, teachers, and administrators often fail to understand the role of the school counselor (Kuranz, 2002), and school climate may influence the school counselor role and self-efficacy beliefs (Sutton & Fall, 1995). It is no wonder that with schools failing to define the school counselors' role and society misunderstanding the role, school counselors naturally will question their role and lack the self-efficacy and confidence required to perform their job effectively.

## Perceptions of Professional School Counselors

The role of the professional school counselor is often misunderstood by various school professionals, such as teachers, school counselors, and principals and administrators (Agresta, 2004; Coll & Freeman, 1997; Ginter & Scalise, 1990; Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt, & Williams, 1989). Much confusion over the role of the

school counselor has been witnessed during the last century, primarily due to the profession's transforming in response to multiple influences. One such factor has been the focus of school counseling models. A mental-health focus had been instrumental in shaping the development of many school counselors in the early 20th century.

According to Kuranz (2002), this focus fueled the debate over the school counselors' purpose and role. More recently, several initiatives, including the implementation of national standards for school counselors, No Child Left Behind, The Education Trust project, and Transforming School Counselor Initiative (TSCI), have contributed to the identity of the professional school counselor.

### The School Counselor and Professional Identity

The professional identity of the professional school counselor is not clearly defined. The professional identify and role of the school counselor has been described by various names such as guidance, guidance programs, guidance personnel, counselor, school counselor, school guidance counselor (Wittmer, 2002). Several factors that have contributed to the dilemma of school counselor role confusion include counselors not being certain of their role, the professional associations for counseling failing to solidify the professional role, failure of the profession to agree on one professional name for school counselors, and lack of consistency in describing their specific functions (Schmidt, 2003). Since the inception of school counselors, there has been a significant struggle to constantly define and redefine exactly who the school counselors are and what their role should be. Brott and Myers (1999) found that the degree to which professional school counselors have developed their professional

identity largely defines their role, which directly influences the context and overall quality of the school counseling program, which ultimately affects the students.

#### Inconsistent Names of Professional Association for School Counselors

Lack of cohesiveness in naming the professional school counselor association, further influenced professional school counselors' sense of self-efficacy. The inconsistency and debate over the name of the school counseling professional association largely contributed to the school counselor role confusion. In 1983, the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) changed its name by dropping the descriptor "guidance" from the professional organization name. It was renamed the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD). In 1992, it became the American Counseling Association (ACA).

#### School Counselor Professional Identity & Role Confusion

School counselors are faced with many challenges in defining and transforming their role. The beliefs that school counselors hold about their role and professional identity and how they are defined are tantamount to understanding the status of their profession (Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). Research shows that school counselors must seek out professional development, define their role, have the ability to serve all students, and incorporate technology in delivering school counseling programs (Carnavale & Desrochers, 2003; Dahir & Stone, 2003; Feller, 2003; Kuranz, 2002; Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). Involvement in professional development is crucial for school counselors to be uniquely qualified to deliver comprehensive school guidance.

This involvement includes attending professional development conferences locally, nationally, and internationally and engaging in research, publication, leadership, and advocacy in the field of school counseling. While many have acknowledged the confusion over the roles and responsibilities of school counselors (Galassi & Akos, 2004; Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Schmidt, 2003; Sears & Haag Granello, 2002; Wittmer, 2000), school counselors have rarely collectively been involved in defining their own role. It is not uncommon for school counselors to be unsure of what their role should be, often experiencing role ambiguity (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

The role of the school counselor has changed significantly over time. Originally, school counselors provided guidance for teenagers in choosing a career path or vocation. At times, counselors acted as teachers, disciplinarians, and administrators. With so many roles, eventually the school counselor position became unclearly defined, resulting in role conflict. Over the years, the issue of role confusion has been at the center of counseling literature (Schmidt, 2003). The transformation and re-conceptualization of the role of school counselors has been examined for the last three decades (Wittmer, 2000). Even more, the role of the professional school counselor today is vastly different among schools at the same level, in the same state, even in the same county. School counselors often lack clarity of role definition. There is role confusion, role ambiguity, and role overload in defining the functions and duties of the school counselor, which all affect school counselor self-efficacy and actual practice (See Figure 1). The following diagram illustrates the relationship among school counselor perception, school counselor self-efficacy, and performance or actual practice:

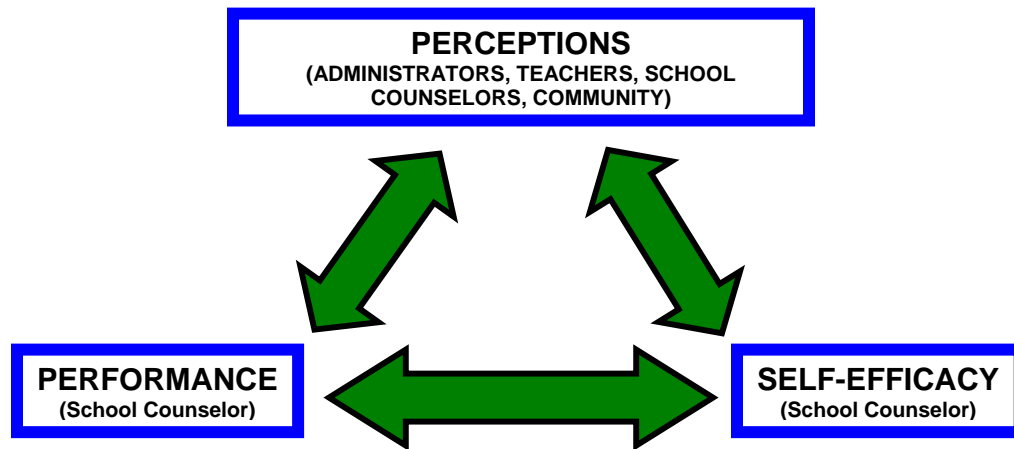


Figure 1. School Counselor Perception Model

The School Counselor Perception Model illustrates the interplay (note the bi-directionality of the arrows) of perceptions (administrators, teachers, school counselors, and community), school counselor self-efficacy, and school counselor performance (actual practice). The relationship of the three variables may be cyclical, depending on one's perspective. Perceptions about the professional school counselors' role from various stakeholders (i.e., principals, teachers, administrators), directly affect school counselors' self-efficacy perceptions. Professional school counselors' perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs about their personal capabilities to exercise control over their roles/duties have an affect on professional school counselors' performance (actual practice).

Performance has been operationalized as actual practice. Professional school counselors' actual practice, according to the National Standards and ASCA (2003),

encompasses roles related to career, academic, and personal social counseling. The school counselor self-efficacy, perceptions of their role, and actual practice relationship is cyclical, in that as self-efficacy beliefs increase, the result is an increased level of performance, or the converse, that successful performance in a role has a positive effect on one's self-efficacy perceptions. The School Counselor Perception Model illustrates that school counselors are more likely to engage in specific counseling roles when they perceive the roles as important and hold high self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to execute those roles.

#### Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

Role conflict and role ambiguity experienced by professional school counselors is well documented in the literature (Bemak, 2000; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Freeman & Coll, 1997; Lieberman, 2004; Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). Role conflict is defined as inconsistencies in expectations regarding one's occupational role. Role conflict occurs when expected job performance is conflicted, confusing, inconsistent, and ambiguous. Organizational stress occurs when individuals hold a view of their perceived ideal role but actually perform a different role (Fried, Ben-David, Tiegs, Avital, & Yeverechyahu, 1998). One study examined role conflict, role ambiguity, and role incongruity among high school guidance counselors (Freeman & Coll, 1997). These issues were examined because of school counselors' lack of clarity in their roles, performing ancillary job duties and unrelated guidance tasks, and conflicting counselor roles. Another study (Kameen, Robinson, & Rotter, 1985) examined counselors' perceptions of their roles and found that conflict existed between the actual



roles the school counselors performed, compared to what the school counselors thought were appropriate roles. School counselors often function in multiple counselor and non-counselor roles.

School counselors are pulled in multiple directions at times, based on responsive services, school administration, ancillary duties, but most importantly, school-based management and the national educational agenda dictating the role of school counselors (Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). The focus of school counseling programs may lead counselors to believe that their role is to meet the needs of students, parents, teachers, outside agencies, and communities. Counselors must "understand the need to collaborate with all multiple stakeholders" (Paisley & McMahon, 2001, p. 106).

According to Burnham & Jackson (2000), school counselors take on non-school counselor functions and duties too willingly, instead of clarifying to other school faculty what their actual role entails. Reportedly, school counselors take on many clerical duties that are not appropriate and are, furthermore, an unwise utilization of their time. Even though there are comprehensive school guidance models in place to structure school counseling programs, the school counselor role varies significantly across schools. Wide discrepancies and variations of school counselor functions exist and further research is warranted.

The problem reaches far beyond the scope of role definition. National agenda, school counselor expectations, actual practice, school-based management, and school culture all factor in the school counselor role conflict equation. There are no simple explanations to articulate why there is lack of clarity with the school counselors' role. There are myriad influences on how the school counselor role is implemented.

## Lack of Standardized School Counselor Supervision

School counselors receive either no supervision or very little (Benshoff & Paisley, 1996), because they are not required to have supervision, which would nurture professional growth and benefit the actual practice of school counseling. The need for supervision in school counseling is well documented (Agnew, Vaught, Getz, & Fortune, 2000; Cruthchfield & Borders, 1997; Gainor & Constantine, 2002; Herlihy, Gray, & McCollum, 2002; Jackson et al., 2002; Kahn, 1999; Page, Pietrzak, & Sutton, 2001; Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001; Portman, 2002; Roberts, 2001). Supervision in the field of counseling is not a new concept. Mental health counselors are required to have ongoing supervision by a licensed mental health professional until they become licensed. Conversely, the supervision requirement for professional school counselors does not parallel that standard. When supervision is provided, it is often by a school administrator, usually not a licensed certified supervisor trained in counseling and supervision (American Association of Counseling and Developmental Task Force, 1989; Roberts & Borders, 1994). Often, school counselors do not use their clinical skills as often as mental health counselors and may question their counseling prowess (Peace, 1995; Spooner & Stone, 1977). This situation poses a major problem, perhaps an ethical one as well. If school counselors are not receiving appropriate supervision, how do they identify and meet the counseling needs of students faced with myriad personal/social problems, high family conflict, and abuse?

## Influences on the Professional Standards of School Counselors

Comprehensive School Guidance Program (CSGP). The comprehensive guidance program comprises four main components aimed at enhancing the learning and achievement of all students. This comprehensive system includes management, delivery, accountability and evaluation. School counselors intentionally plan and strategize the goals of their school's comprehensive guidance program each year. Through planned interventions, the school's comprehensive guidance program meets the academic, career, and personal/social needs of all students. "The professional school counselor is a certified/licensed educator who addresses the needs of students comprehensively through the implementation of a school counseling program" (Cobia & Henderson, 2003, p. 231). Through individual counseling, large group guidance, and consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators, school counselors implement their comprehensive guidance program.

ASCA and the National Standards for School Counselors. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has published several position statements regarding the purpose and future direction of school counseling (Dahir, 2004). School counselors are now being held accountable for academic achievement and success of all students (Myrick, 2003). They must justify how their role contributes to the overall success of each student and not just the high achieving ones. School administrators are instrumental in supporting professional school counselors' implementation of the ASCA national standards, which include three broad areas: academic, career, and personal/social (Hogan, 1998). School counselors are expected to show evidence of how students perform better in the academic, career, and personal/social domains of

the school counseling program as a direct result of their services. Moreover, school counselors must justify how they are instrumental in contributing to the academic achievement of all students (Schwallie-Giddes, ter Maat, & Pak, 2003). ASCA has made several attempts to operationally define the role of the professional school counselor by publishing “role statements.” ASCA is currently redefining and updating the role duties and functions of the school counselor (Lieberman, 2004). Comprehensive and developmental guidance programs are being implemented in many states.

Accountability for academic success and measures pertaining to achievement are at the focal point of the national agenda for school counselors.

Transforming School Counselor Initiative (TSCI). The Education Trust and DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest are key players in transforming the role of the school counselor. The nationwide initiative is focused on the significant role of the school counselor. It is primarily concerned with the development and preparation of school counselors and the new “vision” for the direction of the profession (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). The Transforming the School Counselor Initiative (TSCI), The Education Trust vision, is for counselors to provide counseling, consulting, leadership and advocacy for the purpose of achieving academic success for all students (Sears & Haag Granello, 2002). Furthermore, the TSCI aims to prepare school counselors to address issues of social justice and equity that affect underrepresented students and students of color. The Transforming the School Counselor Initiative views school counselors as advocates for all students and strives to close the gap in student achievement for underrepresented students and to meet the academic, career, and personal social needs of all students (Paisley & Hayes, 2003).

The changing role of the professional school counselor is a key focus in school reform (Adelman, 2002). Transforming the role of the school counselor is a popular topic of discussion in local, state, and national school counselor conferences. It is incumbent upon the school administration, professional organizations, educational leaders, school counselors, the community, and school counselor preparation programs to collaborate on clarifying and delineating the school counselor role in order to end the ambiguity.

### Counselor Education and School Counselor Preparation

The concept of theory versus practice must be addressed. In looking at the issue of school counselor role conflict, multiple perspectives of the problem must be considered. School counselor preparation at the graduate school level may be one factor, in that not all graduate programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). A school counselor CACREP program subscribes to eight content areas and the same standards, content, and specialized training in school counseling. Some other graduate programs follow a different course. Ideally, all school counselor preparation programs would entail a commensurate program and standard of study. These programs would maintain a high academic standard and equal measure of exposure in the three domains of comprehensive school guidance (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) dictates specific minimum standards for preparing school counselors. In 2001, CACREP implemented new school counselor standards to ensure that counselor education programs are preparing students for the specialized skills required for this profession (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Aligning with the evolving direction and revamped national standards, CACREP and counselor education programs are preparing future school counselors in accordance with these changes (<http://www.cacrep.org/>). The preparation in counselor education programs shapes the identity of the school counselor. Many programs are accredited by the CACREP and follow the prescribed program of counselor preparation required. School counselors are now required to take several foundational education courses, in addition to the school counselor program of study.

#### Support for Need of Study

The role of the professional school counselor continues to be misunderstood by school counselors, parents, teachers, and administrators. In the wake of national standards, school counselor transformation, an era of accountability and No Child Left Behind, school counselors have yet to be recognized as key stakeholders in the educational system. Their role is not clearly defined and often not acknowledged as essential in the school system. According to the American School Counselor Association, school counseling programs are an instrumental component of any elementary, middle, or high school, providing academic, career, and personal/social

guidance. Over time, school counseling programs have evolved from vocational exploration to a comprehensive counseling program that focuses on the development of all students at all levels in the three domains of academic, career, and personal/social guidance. In recent years, with the national attention on achievement, school counselors have had to develop a voice, justify their roles in the schools, and exemplify their crucial role in the overall contribution to student achievement. From this focus, national models have emerged to articulate what counselors do, showing how comprehensive and developmental programs contribute to the positive development of all students. With this said, it is highly useful to examine to what degree the role of school counselor self-efficacy influences the actual practice of delivering a comprehensive school guidance program.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships that exist among professional school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice. Role conflict, role confusion, and varying role perceptions regarding the school counselors' role affect the actual practice of school counseling across several domains. School counselor self-efficacy—the school counselors' belief in their capabilities—affect their performance in delivering career, academic, and personal/social counseling. These three domains as a whole are commonly referred to as a Comprehensive School Guidance Program (CSGP). Furthermore, school counselor perceived role may affect school counselors' actual practice or performance in carrying out school counselor duties. These factors affect the school counselors' self-efficacy and need further examination. By gaining knowledge of the relationship of school counselor self-efficacy, perceived role, and actual practice, counselor educators and school administrators can appropriately prepare and place school counselors in settings where they can connect school counselor theory and actual practice and, by doing so, positively influence professional counselor self-efficacy.



### Research Question and Specific Hypotheses

This study examines the following question: What is the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice?

This study investigated four hypotheses in order to examine the relationships between school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice.

#### Hypothesis I

There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and academic actual practice.

This hypothesis examined the relationship among the dependent variable, academic actual practice, and the two independent variables, school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role.

#### Hypothesis II

There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and personal/social actual practice.

This hypothesis examined the relationship among the dependent variable, personal/social actual practice, and the two independent variables, school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role.

### Hypothesis III

There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and career actual practice.

This hypothesis examined the relationship among the dependent variable, career actual practice, and the two independent variables, school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role.

### Hypothesis IV

There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice.

This hypothesis examined the overall relationship among the dependent variables, actual practice, which include three levels; academic, personal/social and career, and the two independent variables, school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role.

### Participants

The population for this study included elementary, middle, and high school counselors in the state of Florida who attended the annual, statewide professional counselors' conference hosted by the Florida Counseling Association (FCA). Respondents primarily belonged to the school counselor division of FCA, called the Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA). The Florida Counseling Association was formed in 1949, for the purpose of school counselors' collaborating on key counselor issues, discussing the state of the profession within Florida, and being a professional

organization. To achieve adequate power for the statistical analysis, an appropriate sample size for a study measuring three variables would be 90 school counselors, allowing for 30 surveys per variable. This is the minimum number of surveys required for adequate power

The 192 professional school counselors who contributed data to this study attended the statewide Florida Counseling Association (FCA) conference. Of the 192 respondents, 150 (79%) were female and 40 (21%) were male (see Table 1). Of this total number, 150 (80%) were White or Caucasian and 20 (10%) Black or African-American, with the remaining subjects—American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, or Latino/Hispanic—making up 10% of respondents (see Table 2).

Table 1  
Gender Distribution of the Study Sample

Gender	Number	Percentage of total
Male	40	21
Female	151	79
Missing data	1	1
Total	192	101 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Total greater than 100% due to cumulative effects of rounding

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Race	Number	Percentage of total
American Indian	2	1
Asian	1	1
African American	20	10
White/Caucasian	153	80
Hispanic/Latino	12	6
Blank	4	2
Total	192	100

The mean age of respondents was 44.8 years old, with a standard deviation of 13.86.

When answering how many years working as a counselor, respondents reported a range from 0 to 35 years, with a mean of 11.3 years of school counseling experience. Respondents reported having some teaching experience, with a mean of seven years experience in this area.

The mean caseload reported was 511 students, which parallels the national average of 500 students per professional school counselor, although the national standards for school counselors call for an ideal student/school counselor ratio of 250 to 1. Approximately 94% of the respondents surveyed were certified school counselors. Interestingly, only 40% of the school counselors reported being members of their professional association, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

## Procedures

Data collection for this study began in November 2004 at the Florida Counseling Association (FCA) Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida. Data collection was completed by January 2005 as a result of some participants mailing their surveys to the researcher. Subjects were targeted from the Florida Counseling Association conference, primarily from the Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA) division.

The primary researcher was fully responsible for distributing and collecting the surveys. Additionally, the researcher explained the Informed Consent to all subjects before proceeding with surveys. Subjects read and signed the informed consent before proceeding. Standardized survey procedures were implemented, and all participants received the same instructions for completing the survey. Furthermore, the Informed Consent clearly explained that participation was voluntary and included a signature page for all subjects to complete to ensure their full understanding of the process. Contact information including name, address, and phone number for both the researcher and the researcher's major professor were included in the Informed Consent. After written Informed Consent was obtained, the research participants were asked to voluntarily answer a school counselor survey regarding the role of the school counselor and self-efficacy around the roles of school counselor.

The national standards for school counselor duties/roles per the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) were used, in part, to develop the survey. Additionally, a demographic survey was given to ascertain information about gender, age, ethnicity, education and professional counselor association memberships. Surveys were administered at the general assembly of the FCA division, Florida School

Counselor Association. FSCA had also given permission for the surveys to be distributed the first ten minutes of every school counselor interest session. Additionally, surveys were administered at the Florida School Counselor Association's conference/display table located within close proximity to the registration area. Additionally, a conference table that was conveniently located in the exhibition area of the conference hall was set up for the researcher to obtain additional surveys from the attendees visiting the exhibits. There was little to no risk in completing the survey because it is patterned after the national school counselor standards regarding the roles and duties of school counselors in the state of Florida, with which many counselors are very familiar. Some participants may have experienced slight discomfort when reflecting on the roles they actually perform as a professional school counselor.

In this study, professional school counselors in the state of Florida were exclusively targeted. With a target goal of 200 surveys, it was determined that in order to achieve this number, 400 surveys were actually distributed at the conference. A total of 192 (N=192) surveys were returned to the researcher.

## Variables

### Independent Variables

The independent variables were selected based on the literature review and the variables' hypothesized relationship with the role and actual practice of the professional school counselor (Galassi & Akos, 2004; Kameen et al., 1987; Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Schmidt, 2003; Sears & Haag Granello, 2002; Wittmer, 2000). The independent

(predictor) variables were school counselor self-efficacy (Sutton & Fall, 1995) and school counselor perceived role (Agresta, 2004; Coll & Freeman, 1997; Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Tennyson et al., 1989).

### Dependent Variable

Actual practice, meaning the school counseling that is carried out in career, academic, and personal/social domains of the Comprehensive School Guidance Program (Gysbers, Lapan & Blair, 1999) under the national guidelines of the American School Counselor Association (Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2003). The three categories examined of the dependent variable were (1) Career Actual Practice, (2) Academic Actual Practice, and (3) Personal/Social Actual Practice (ASCA National Model, 2003; Brott & Myers, 1999; Hogan, 1998; Kuranz, 2002; Paisley & Hayes, 2003).

### Instrumentation

Two surveys were used to collect germane data regarding school counselor demographics and school counselor roles. The School Counselor Role Survey was a researcher-designed instrument, designed to look at the influence of school counselor self-efficacy and perception on school counselor actual practice. It consisted of 20 school counselor roles and non-roles, with four questions asked of each role. An initial analysis, a factor analysis, was used to determine the factor loading of the 20 school counselor role items. To determine the validity of the survey items associated with the counselor roles, a varimax rotated solution was applied to the survey items. Seventeen of the 20 items related to the school counselor roles that made up the School Counselor

Role Survey loaded into three discreet categories, with the exception of three items. The three areas included counselor roles, non-counselor roles, and administrative roles. The factor-loading analysis supported the validity of the survey items (see Table3).

The School Counselor Role Survey-SCRS, was developed by the researcher following the ASCA national standards (ASCA Article, 2003) for school counselor roles. Using Likert scaling from 1-4, a twenty-item, four- question survey was developed, with a sum total of eighty responses. Non-school counselor duties and school counselor duties comprised the twenty scale items in the survey. The four questions asked of the scale items pertained to the respondent's beliefs regarding their perceived role, self-efficacy, actual practice, and need for professional development as a school counselor.

In developing the SCRS, face validity, or logical validity was used in ascertaining what items would appropriately reflect the roles of a school counselor. Careful scrutiny was employed in making sure the items reflected only one role or single dimension, showing unidimensionality, which is required in survey research (Babbie, 2001).

Additionally, the School Counselor Demographic Survey was comprised of fourteen questions, regarding information such as counselor's years of experience, type of school, location of school, and other pertinent demographic information was given. Two questionnaires, titled the School Counselor Demographic Survey, and the School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS), were designed specifically for this study. Part one contained 14 demographic items to ascertain the significance of multiple variables on the counselors' role. These included age, race, gender, school/grade level, SES level, highest degree earned, CACREP counseling program, school certification, years counseling, teaching experience, professional memberships, counselor caseload, and



total student enrollment. Part two of the survey (SCRS), focused on a total of twenty school counselors' roles, both non-counselor duties and counselor duties. Four questions were asked regarding each of these twenty roles: How important is this role as a school counselor? To what degree do you feel competent or comfortable in this role? (school counselor self-efficacy) The four possible answers for the first two questions were: Not at all, Low, Moderate, and High. The third question read; How often do you perform this role (actual practice)? The four possible choices to answer this question included: Not at all, Occasionally, Frequently, and Usually. The last question read: To what degree would professional development enhance your performance in this role? The four choices for the last question included: Not at all, Minimally, Moderately, and Significantly. Counselor responses were rated on a (1) to (4) Likert scale, with (4) rating the highest. The twenty school counselor roles included:

Classroom presentations/guidance, individual counseling, small group counseling, career counseling, career testing, crisis counseling, academic advising, student registration, consultation with teachers, consultation with parents, consultation with administrators, coordination of testing, coordination of community services, administrative duties, disciplining students, hall duty, lunchroom duty, substitute teaching, coordination of clubs and/or groups, and promoting diversity and multicultural agendas.

A Varimax Rotated Solution (Table 3) was utilized to illustrate how the various school counselor roles loaded as factors. The Varimax Rotated Solution supported the school counselor roles versus the non-school counselor roles. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

(KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .86 indicated significant factor loading. The three factors are described as:

*Component One* illustrates the primary counselor roles which include: crisis counseling, parent consultation, individual counseling, coordination of community services, small group counseling, teacher consultation, administrative consultation, classroom presentation/large group guidance, career counseling, and promoting diversity and multicultural agendas.

*Component Two* illustrates primarily non-counselor roles, which include: lunch duty, hall duty, substitute teaching, coordination of student clubs, administrative duties, testing, and discipline.

*Component Three* illustrates administrative, non-counselor roles, which include: advising, career testing, and registration.

Table 3

## Varimax Rotated Solution

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Component 1 Counselor Roles</b>	<b>Component 2 Non-counselor roles</b>	<b>Component 3 Administrative roles</b>
<b>Crisis Counseling</b>	<b>.773</b>		
<b>Parent Consultation</b>	<b>.764</b>		
<b>Individual Counsel.</b>	<b>.748</b>		
<b>Coordination Comm.</b>	<b>.745</b>		
<b>Small Group</b>	<b>.739</b>		
<b>Teacher Consult.</b>	<b>.726</b>		
<b>Admin. Consultation</b>	<b>.713</b>		
<b>Class Presentations</b>	<b>.705</b>		
<b>Career Counseling</b>	<b>.640 *</b>		<b>.605 *</b>
<b>Diversity Awareness</b>	<b>.563 *</b>	<b>.530 *</b>	
<b>Lunch Duty</b>		<b>.854</b>	
<b>Hall Duty</b>		<b>.830</b>	
<b>Substitute Teaching</b>		<b>.810</b>	
<b>Coordination Clubs</b>		<b>.767</b>	
<b>Administrative</b>		<b>.622</b>	
<b>Testing</b>		<b>.614</b>	
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>.658 *</b>	<b>.597 *</b>	
<b>Advising</b>			<b>.796</b>
<b>Career Testing</b>			<b>.747</b>
<b>Student Registration</b>			<b>.743</b>

Some roles were not clearly delineated as counselor roles. \*Three of the roles; career testing, diversity awareness, and discipline, fell under two categories each. Career counseling factored on components 1 and 3, counseling and administrative roles. Diversity awareness and discipline both factored on components 1 and 2, counselor and non-counselor roles.

The School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS) inquired about Professional School Counselors' role perceptions and actual practice. Factor loading illustrates how various PSC roles were categorized.

The category overlaps illustrate the role ambiguity and role perceptions held by practicing Professional School Counselors. Furthermore, varying expectations and perceptions held by administrators, teachers, and PSCs determine and/or influence the professional school counselor perceived role and actual practice.

### Research Design

This study incorporated a descriptive survey research design. This type of design is used to describe the characteristics or variables in a population by obtaining information on beliefs, variables, or attitudes reported on a survey. This type of design is ideal for measuring the beliefs and attitudes of a large population (Babbie, 2001; Smith & Glass, 1987), in this case, school counselors in the state of Florida.

The sampling procedure used was convenience sampling. This type of sampling involves sampling individuals that are in close proximity to the researcher and sampling the target population until the sample size is sufficient to meet the required sample (Babbie, 2001; Smith & Glass, 1987). Again, school counselors at the statewide conference for counselors were the targeted population that was sampled until the sufficient number of surveys were collected.

## Data Analysis

The data gathered from the School Counselor Demographic Survey and the School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS) were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This study incorporated a descriptive survey research design (Babbie, 2001). A multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether the dependent variable, actual practice, was affected simultaneously by independent variables. Multiple regression was used to predict correlation among variables, so the terms *predictor* and *criterion variables* are used, rather than independent and dependent variables (Smith & Glass, 1987).

A multiple regression analysis was used in this study to investigate relationships that exist between the dependent variable—actual practice—and the independent variables—self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and professional development. To examine all three hypotheses, a multiple regression was used. In this study, the criterion variable was actual practice and the predictor variables were self-efficacy, school counselor perception, and professional development. Since the results were statistically significant, additional statistical analyses, post-hoc tests, could be performed to examine other variables. These may include demographics, such as differences in counseling at grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school).

Investigating the relationships between school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice was the focus of this study. Specifically, this study examined the interplay of the school counselors' perception of their role, their level of self-efficacy in delivering the three domains of comprehensive school guidance, and the actual practice of school counseling. The four domains making up the SCRS

are (1) school counselor perceived role, (2) school counselor perceived self-efficacy, (3) school counselor actual practice (how often school counselor engages in specific counselor duties/roles, and (4) school counselor professional development (their perception of the need for professional development to enhance their performance in specific school counselor duties/roles). The School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS) was developed to measure the relationship, if any, of these factors (see Figure 2).

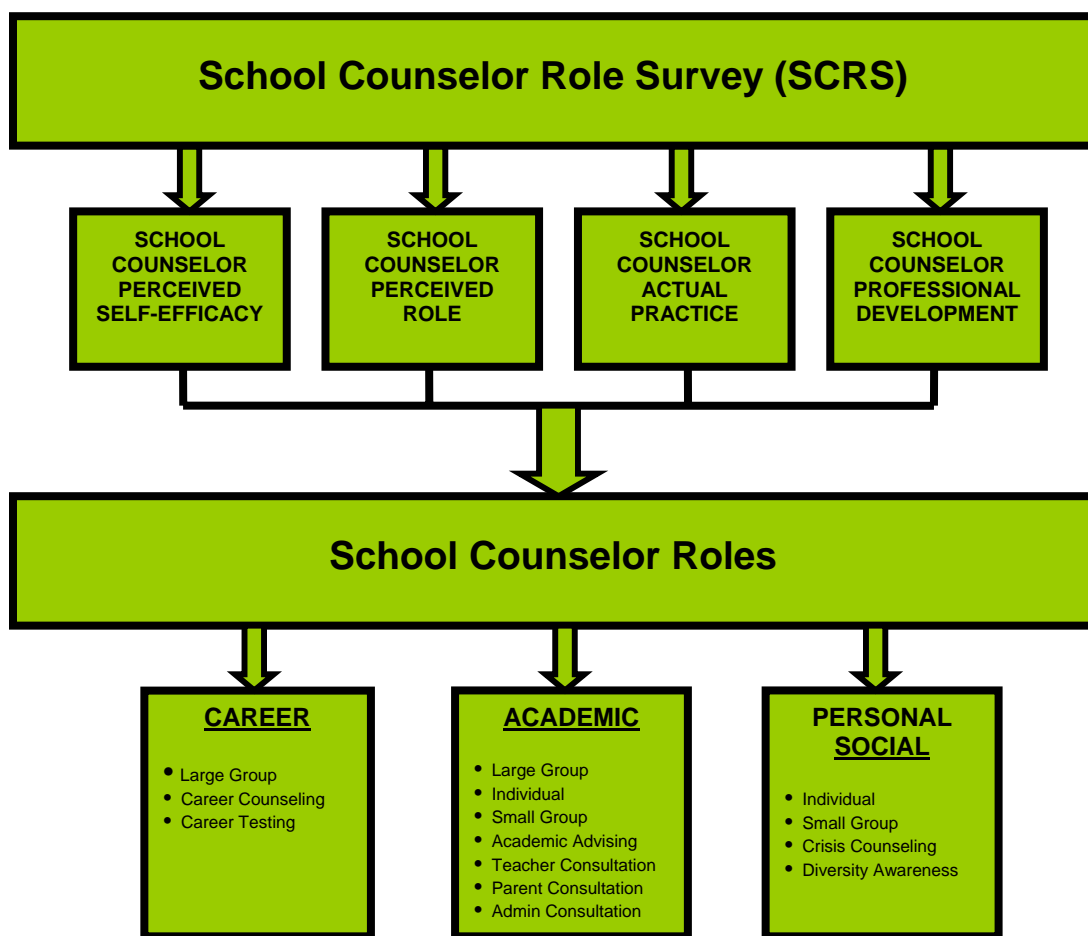


Figure 2. School Counselor Role Survey Model

The model illustrates the four variables used to structure the School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS). School counselor perceived role, school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor actual practice, and professional development guided the four questions asked of the various school counselor roles. Specific roles, counselor and non-counselor roles conceptualized by the researcher (see Table 3 for a summary of roles) are examined in the study and listed under the career, academic, and personal/social domains. These roles/interventions included under the career, academic, and personal/social domains are not the standard ASCA roles. They were extrapolated from the literature and are not included in the ASCA National Standards for Professional School Counselors. (See appendices for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards for Professional School Counselors.) The non-counselor roles, as well, were extrapolated from the literature review and personal experience and are not a part of the ASCA National Standards.

### Summary

This chapter presented the statement of the problem, the target sample, and a description of the methodology followed for the study. Specifically, it described the design of study, data collection procedure, description of the sample, description of the Florida School Counselor Role Survey, Florida School Counselor Demographic Survey, and data analysis procedure used to examine the results. Chapter Four will present the results from the analysis of data, which will be a multiple regression statistical test.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This study investigated the relationships that exist among school counselor self-efficacy, role perceptions held by school counselors, and what they do, or actual practice. Several factors, including role ambiguity, role confusion, perceived school counselor role, and self-efficacy, have an influence on how professional school counselors perform. School counselor self-efficacy beliefs are concerned with how they assess their ability to handle their job duties in various situations in the school system. Self-efficacy beliefs, perceived by professional school counselors, can affect the degree to which they engage in specific counselor roles. People tend to engage in activities that they feel more confident performing (Bandura, 1997); hence, school counselors will engage in counselor roles to a greater extent if they feel confident and self-efficacious in those roles. These factors may affect the school counselors' actual practice of delivering academic, career, and personal/social counseling.

The statistical procedures implemented to analyze the data are presented in this chapter. In the first section, the demographics of the sample are described. The second section of the chapter provides the results from the statistical analysis. The statistical results, as they related to the research question and hypotheses of the study, are articulated.



### Demographics of the Sample

The sample consisted primarily of school counselors in the state of Florida who attended the statewide Florida Counseling Association (FCA) conference. One-hundred-sixty-eight counselors responded and completed the survey at the conference. Several counselors in the sample asked to take a few surveys with them for other counselors at their respective schools who could not attend the conference. These counselors explained that only one to two representative counselors from their schools had permission to attend the conference due to concerns of school counselor coverage. They expressed an interest in their colleagues' completing the survey and asked if it could be mailed to the researcher. Their requests for surveys were met by the researcher's handing several surveys to them and giving them a business card with an address for them to be mailed directly to the University of Central Florida. Of the surveys to be mailed in, 24 were returned to the researcher for a total of 192 surveys collected for the final sample.

Of the 192 respondents, 150 (79%) were female, and 40 (21%) were male, and two respondents left this question blank. Of this total number, 150 (80%) were White or Caucasian, 20 (10%) Black or African-American, with the remaining subjects—American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, or Latino/Hispanic—making up the remaining 10% of respondents. Table 4 represents the rest of the salient demographic characteristics: gender, educational level, CACREP accreditation, school counselor certification, American School Counselor Association (ASCA) membership, school socio-economic status/area, and school level.

Table 4

## Categorical Demographic Characteristics of the Participating Respondents (N = 192)

Variable	Subgroup	N	% of Total
<u>Gender</u>	Male	40	21
	Female	150	79
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>	American Indian	2	1
	Asian	1	.5
	Black/Af.American	19	10
	White	153	80
	Hispanic/Latino	12	6
<u>Education</u>	Bachelor's	3	2
	Master's	145	76
	Specialist	25	13
	Doctoral	15	8
<u>CACREP</u>	Yes	128	67
	No	34	18
	Unknown	28	15
<u>Certified Coun</u>	Yes	179	94
	No	11	5
<u>ASCA member</u>	Yes	77	40
	No	107	56
<u>School area</u>	Urban	61	32
	Suburban	95	50
	Rural	30	16
<u>School level</u>	Elementary	84	44
	Middle	28	15
	High	71	37

The mean age of respondents was 44.8 years old, with a standard deviation of 13.86. When answering how many years working as a counselor, respondents reported a range from 0 to 35 years, with a mean of 11.3 years of school counseling experience. Respondents reported having some teaching experience, with a mean of seven years experience in this area.

The mean caseload reported was 511 students, which parallels the national average of 500, although the national standards for school counselors call for an ideal student/school counselor ratio of 250 to 1. Approximately 94% (n=179) of the

respondents surveyed were certified school counselors. Interestingly, only 40% (n=77) of the school counselors reported being members of their professional association, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

Forty-four percent of the sample was elementary school counselors (n=84), 15% were middle school counselors (n=28), and 37% were high school counselors (n=71). In reviewing the type of socioeconomic level worked, 32% (n=61) reported an urban area, nearly 50% (n=95) reported working in a suburban area, while only 16% (n=30), reported working in a rural area.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed in this study to investigate relationships that exist between the dependent variable, actual practice, and the independent variables: self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and professional development. In this study, the criterion variable is actual practice and the predictor variables are self-efficacy, school counselor perception, and professional development. The desired sample size for computing a multiple regression using four variables is 50 per variable, for a total sample of approximately 200. In this study, the sample size of 192 sufficed.

### Preliminary Analysis

A preliminary analysis procedure using case wise diagnostics was initiated in order to scrutinize the data for normal distribution, outliers, missing data, and linearity. To ensure the normality assumption—that the values were normally distributed—a

histogram was created, which illustrated a normal distribution of the data. To examine outliers, or extreme values, a residual analysis was applied in order to detect any biases that would adversely affect the final outcome. The residual values were plotted for each case and reported. For Academic Actual Practice, all cases were examined and one case, number ten (10), was an outlier. The analysis was re-run, which improved the statistics by 2%. Under further examination, a second outlier, case number one-hundred forty (140), was removed, consequently increasing the R-squared to .27. The residuals plot illustrated no outliers for Career and Personal/Social Actual Practice. The plot suggested no major violations of assumptions. The analysis of missing data and subjects involved the employment of estimator imputation. The missing data was replaced with the average value of the data from the same field. Lastly, in examining the data for linearity, a scatterplot was employed, which illustrated a linear relationship between the variables.

### Summary of Results

Research Question: What is the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice? In order to answer the research question, the following hypotheses were investigated:

#### Hypothesis One

This hypothesis stated that there is no relationship between school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and academic actual practice. The multiple regression analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between the

dependent variable, school counselor academic actual practice, and the predictor variables, school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role ( $F=19.1$ ,  $df=3,172$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Factor 1: Academic Domain of Actual Practice. The overall model is significant in predicting the academic actual practice, meaning that school counselor self-efficacy has influenced professional school counselors' actual practice in performing academic roles. For academic actual practice, the model accounted for 25% of the variance. It was significant at the .001 value. Table 5 includes the academic actual practice regression.

The multiple regression equation for Academic Actual Practice is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ACADEMIC ACTUAL PRACTICE} &= 3.209 + .076 (\text{ACADEMIC PERCEIVED ROLE}) \\ &+ .145 (\text{ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY}) \\ &+ .064 (\text{ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT}) \end{aligned}$$

### Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis stated that there is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and career actual practice. The multiple regression analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable—school counselor career actual practice—and the predictor variables—school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role ( $F=13.52$ ,  $df=3,175$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Factor 2: Career Domain of Actual Practice. The overall career model is significant in predicting the Career actual practice, meaning that school counselor self-efficacy has a positive influence on counselors' actual practice. Table 5 includes the career actual

practice regression. For Career actual practice, the model accounted for 19% of the variance. It was significant at the .001 level. The higher self-efficacy beliefs held about career counseling roles, the higher the extent to which counselors engage in career counseling.

The multiple regression equation for Career Actual Practice is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{CAREER ACTUAL PRACTICE} &= 2.31 + .111 (\text{CAREER PERCEIVED ROLE}) \\ &+ .173 (\text{CAREER SELF-EFFICACY}) \\ &+ .041 (\text{CAREER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT}) \end{aligned}$$

### Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis stated that there is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and personal/social actual practice. The multiple regression analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable, school counselor personal/social actual practice, and the predictor variables, school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role ( $F=30.41$ ,  $df=2,174$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Factor 3: Personal/Social Domain of Actual Practice. Personal social self-efficacy, personal/social perceived importance, and personal/social professional development together predict Personal Social actual practice. These three variables, as a model, predict personal/social actual practice. The overall model is significant in predicting the Personal Social actual practice, or in other words, self-efficacy has an influence or is related to how often counselors engage/practice in counselor roles in the personal social domain. Table 5 represents the personal/social actual practice regression. This is

the amount of variance accounted for by the three variables in the model (self-efficacy, perceived importance, and professional development) and accounts for 34% ( $R^2 = .34$ ) of the overall variance in the personal/social actual practice domain of the comprehensive school guidance program model. The overall model was significant ( $F=30.41$ ,  $df=2,174$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The regression equation for Personal Social actual practice is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PERSONAL SOCIAL ACTUAL PRACTICE} &= 2.83 \\ &+ .233 (\text{PERSONAL SOCIAL SELF EFFICACY}) \\ &+ .139 (\text{PERSONAL SOCIAL PERCEIVED ROLE}) \\ &+ .046 (\text{PERSONAL SOCIAL PROFESSIONAL} \\ &\quad \text{DEVELOPMENT}) \end{aligned}$$

#### Hypothesis Four

This hypothesis stated there is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice. The multiple regression analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable—actual practice—and the predictor variables—school counselor self-efficacy and perceived school counselor role ( $F=25.96$ ,  $df=3,172$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Table 5 represents the overall summary of the model.

#### Factor 4: Overall Model. Self-Efficacy, School Counselor Perceived Role, and Overall Actual Practice

The Overall Model accounted for 31% ( $R^2 = .31$ ) of the variance between each variable.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ACTUAL PRACTICE OVERALL MODEL} &= 2.49 + .101 (\text{PERCEIVED ROLE}) \\ &+ .105 (\text{SELF-EFFICACY}) \\ &+ .030 (\text{PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT}) \end{aligned}$$

Table 5

Multiple Regression Overall Model Summary

Overall Model	R	F	df
Academic	*.500	19.1	3;172
Career	*.434	13.524	3;175
Personal/Social	*.586	30.41	2;174
Overall Model	*.558	25.96	3;172



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

This study investigated the relationships among school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor perceived role, and actual practice. This chapter presents a summary of the study, the results, discussion, and implications for school principals and counselor educators in preparation and practice of professional school counselors. Finally, this chapter will present the areas of future research that were discovered as a result. Specifically, the findings based on the hypotheses will be discussed.

The following research hypotheses were formulated to study the primary research question:

Hypothesis one: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and academic actual practice.

Hypothesis two: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and personal/social actual practice.

Hypothesis three: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and career actual practice.

Hypothesis four: There is no relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice.

## Summary of Study

Professional school counselors, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have served many roles and have been an integral part of the educational system in America. The actual practice of school counseling often differs from school counselors' perceived roles, which, in turn, influences school counselor self-efficacy. This study sought to ascertain the relationships of the school counselors' role perceptions, self-efficacy, and actual practice. Simply stated the research question asked "To what degree do professional school counselors engage in school counselor roles that they perceive to be appropriate roles, and moreover, to what degree does school counselor self-efficacy affect school counselor performance or actual practice?"

The population for this study included elementary, middle, and high school counselors in the state of Florida who attended the annual, statewide professional counselors' conference hosted by the Florida Counseling Association (FCA) or who were colleagues of attendees. Respondents primarily belonged to the school counselor division of FCA, called the Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA).

The School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS) was developed by the researcher to investigate the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor perceived role and actual practice. In a convenience sample, subjects for the survey answered the following questions: How important is this role as a school counselor? To what degree do you feel competent or comfortable in this role (school counselor self-efficacy)? How often do you perform this role (actual practice)? To what degree would professional development enhance your performance in this role? Twenty professional school counselor roles and non-counselor roles were included on the survey. The

twenty roles were categorized primarily in counselor versus non-counselor roles using a factor loading procedure, a Varimax Rotated Solution (see Table 3). The researcher ascertained the specific categories based on the grouping of roles and what the roles had in common. They clearly loaded on counselor roles and non-counselor roles, as defined by the researcher.

### Discussion of Descriptive Statistics

The age of the survey participants ranged from 24 to 65 years old. The mean age was 44 years old, with a standard deviation of 14. Respondents reported a significant range in years of school counseling experience, with a mean of 11 years, ranging from 0 years experience to 35-years experience. Many reported having some teaching experience, with a mean of 7 years experience in this area. The sample primarily consisted of White females (79%). The remaining respondents were Black (19%), followed by Latino, Asian, and American Indian, making up 10% of the sample population.

The average caseload held by survey respondents was approximately 500 students, which parallels the national average of most school counselor ratios, though the national standards for school counselors suggest half that amount, preferably 250:1. The majority of the respondents surveyed were certified school counselors, although fewer than half of the professional school counselors reported being members of their professional association, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The sample represented professional school counselors who had attended the statewide

counselor conference hosted by the Florida Counseling Association (FCA) and several of their non-attending colleagues.

### Discussion Summary of Results for the Hypotheses

Four null hypotheses were developed in order to ascertain what relationships, if any, existed among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice. Actual practice was operationalized using three domains: academic counseling, career counseling, and personal/social counseling. The first hypothesis investigated the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor perceived role, and academic actual practice. It proposed that there would not be a relationship among the counselors' self-efficacy, role perceptions, and the actual practice of academic counseling. The second hypothesis examined if there was a relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived role, and the actual practice of doing career counseling. The third hypothesis investigated what, if any, relationship existed among the school counselors' self-efficacy, personal/social role perceptions, and the actual practice of personal/social counseling. The fourth hypothesis sought to investigate the overall relationship of school counselor self-efficacy, perceived role, and actual practice under all three domains: academic, career, and personal/social roles.

### Conclusion

A multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether the dependent variable—actual practice—was affected simultaneously by independent variables.

Specifically, the intent of this study was to investigate what relationships, if any, exist between the dependent variable—actual practice—and the independent variables—self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and professional development. To examine all three hypotheses, a multiple regression was used. In this study, the criterion variable was actual practice, and the predictor variables were self-efficacy, school counselor perception, and professional development.

### Hypothesis I

Academic self-efficacy, academic perceived importance, and academic professional development together predict Academic Actual Practice. The model reflecting the overall strength of the relationship between the dependent variable actual practice and the independent variables was statistically significant at the .001 level ( $F=19.1$ ,  $df=3,172$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The overall model for actual practice suggests that school counselor self-efficacy influences school counselor actual practice in performing academic counseling roles.

### Hypothesis II

Career self-efficacy, career perceived importance, and career actual practice development together predict Career Actual Practice. The model reflecting the overall strength of the relationship between the dependent variable—career actual practice—and the independent variables—career self-efficacy, career perceived importance, and career professional development—was statistically significant at the .001 level ( $F=13.52$ ,  $df=3,175$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The overall model for career actual practice suggests that

school counselor self-efficacy influences school counselor actual practice in performing career counseling roles.

### Hypothesis III

Personal social self-efficacy, personal/social perceived importance, and personal/social professional development together predict Personal Social Actual Practice. These three variables, as a model, predict personal/social actual practice. The overall model is significant in predicting the Personal Social actual practice, or, in other words, self-efficacy has an influence on or is related to how often counselors practice these counselor roles in the personal/social domain. The amount of variance accounted for by the three variables in the model (self-efficacy, perceived importance, and professional development) accounted for 34% of the overall variance in the personal/social actual practice domain. The model illustrates that personal social self-efficacy is a reliable and statistically significant predictor of personal/social actual practice. This finding is consistent with the Social Cognitive Career theory of Lent et al. (2002), which states that higher self-efficacy beliefs lead to a higher extent of engagement in or performance of various personal/social counselor roles. Professional development was not significant in predicting actual practice in this domain.

### Hypothesis IV

Actual practice was the dependent variable in all three domains. All three variables predicted actual practice. This finding is statistical evidence that there is a

relationship to support all three hypotheses. Perceived importance to school counselor roles was statistically significant across all three analyses.

### Implications for Students

Students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels would benefit from school counselors with higher self-efficacy. Students who participated in a Comprehensive School Guidance Program, where school counselors were performing professional school counselor roles, would reap the benefits of specific counseling interventions under the academic, career, and personal/social domains. Many students struggle with personal/social problems, which, in turn, affect their academic prowess, ultimately affecting their career paths. If counselors would be able to fully participate in the Comprehensive School Guidance Program as professional counselors, feeling self-efficacious in their roles, the students would be the beneficiaries, resulting in an overall well-rounded school experience. Students may show increased participation in all academic, career, and personal social activities organized by the counseling department. This could have implications for increased academic, career, and personal/social achievement.

### Implications for the School Counseling Profession

The implications for professional school counselors regarding their self-efficacy, perceived roles and actual practice are significant. The study supports, to a significant degree, the relationship of school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice. This relationship suggests that the role of the school counselor

be examined more closely and that it requires further research in order to professionalize and standardize the role. National standards, ACSA, TSCI, CACREP, along with local, national, and state professional organizations must be aligned with one another as the research suggests. Professional development is crucial for school counselors to stay current on the national influences on the counseling profession, learning best practices, and to contribute to the direction of the profession.

### Implications for School Principals and Administrators

The results of this study point to several implications for principals and administrators. First, if school principals and administrators appreciated that school counselors' self-efficacy is reportedly higher when they engage in school counselor roles to a higher extent, school leaders would more appropriately utilize the expertise of Professional School Counselors. Principals would be able to ascertain what roles were appropriate and inappropriate for professional school counselors. Since school principals and administrators largely determine the role of the professional school counselor, it is important for them to know the National Standards for school counselors (ASCA National Model, 2003) and the Transforming the School Counseling Initiative standards, which would further assist them in placing school counselors more efficaciously (Perusse et al., 2004). Furthermore, principals' increasing their knowledge of the professional school counselors' roles would allow them to organize more effective comprehensive school counseling programs and better utilize the professional school counselors' skills. School administrators would recognize the direct result of a Comprehensive School Guidance Program, in that fewer students would be given



discipline referrals, causing fewer out of school suspensions (OSS) and fewer in-school suspensions (ISS).

### Implications for Counselor Educators

Counselor educators are responsible for connecting theory and practice for future professional school counselors. This responsibility means preparing future school counselors so that they can easily transition into the school system and perform their duties effectively and efficaciously. Counselor preparation programs need to continue collaborating with school administrators, teachers, and other multidisciplinary school faculty in order to raise the awareness of the transforming school counselor role and to deliver a comprehensive curriculum that will better meet the needs of the changing role of the school counselor (Sears & Haag Granello, 2002).

Further suggestions by Sears and Haag Granello (2002) call for the increased integration of theory and practice by allowing more hands-on field experiences for graduate students. Increased collaboration with the school system on multiple levels would benefit the preparation of counselors, in that the programs would appreciate the actual practice of school counseling and stay up to date on the transformation of the role of school counselors. This collaborative effort would encourage more feedback from the schools as to the preparedness of the interns. Ultimately, the disconnect between theory and practice would narrow. Additionally, if schools and universities increased their collaboration with practicing school counselors and the counselor education programs, the connection of theory and practice would be more seamless and cohesive and would benefit all school counseling stakeholders.

### Implications for Professional School Counselors

This study confirmed that higher school counselor self-efficacy results in school counselors' engaging in professional school counselor roles to a higher degree. If school counselors were uniformly performing professional school counselor roles, they would have a significant impact on the overall success of a Comprehensive School Guidance Program (CSGP). In the era of accountability, there would be implications for all students faring well as a result of more school counselors performing school counselor roles.

### Increasing School Counselor Self-Efficacy in Career Domain of CSGP

Based on this study, school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs predict their performance in career counseling roles. Because career development is a critical aspect of school guidance and begins with children in elementary school, this is an area of professional development for school counselors. The implications for school counselors' increasing their efficacy in career counseling have numerous implications for student achievement, outcome, and overall success. School counselors play a vital role in guiding students on the appropriate career path and shaping their future (Kuranz, 2002). Clearly, there is a need to increase school counselors' knowledge of career counseling and emerging career theories to better meet students career needs (Beale, 2001). It seems clear that the work of school counselors has an impact on students' future career decisions. Delivering effective career counseling influences the climate and culture of the school in addition to the achievement of students. Elementary, middle, and high school counselors, according to the American School Counselor

Association and National Standards for School Counseling, are required to deliver career guidance. School counselors can increase their career self-efficacy and performance by engaging in more career counseling and increasing their knowledge of emerging career theories. This increase in self-efficacy and performance would directly benefit the Comprehensive School Guidance Program, which in turn affects the students.

Based on this study, professional school counselors' self-efficacy in delivering personal/social counseling increases when their engagement in these types of counseling roles increases. One intervention categorized under the personal/social domain in the study was promoting diversity and multicultural agendas. This role is not included in the ASCA National Standards. Ironically, the descriptive statistics offer implications for diversity training based on the reported race and gender of the counselors that participated in the study. Statistically, the majority of the professional school counselors are represented by white, middle-aged females across all three school levels. This distribution could impact the self-efficacy of the counselors, since they may be ethnically, culturally, and racially different from the students they advise. Implications for increasing school counselors' awareness and competence in multicultural competence are recognized as an area of professional development (Constantine, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato, 2004). This suggests that counselor education programs require significantly more training in multicultural competence (Dixon Rayle & Myers, 2004; Taylor & Adelman, 2000). Although ASCA presents position statements articulating the

inclusion of multicultural awareness and the need for counselors to be culturally competent, there is still more work to be done.

The multiculturally competent school counselor is one that is well versed in issues concerning the various minority groups, largely the Latino, African-American, and Asian populations. The three major Latino groups in America are Cuban Americans, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. To work effectively with these rapidly increasing minority groups, the culturally skilled professional school counselor must raise the bar of their multicultural competence. These special populations represent different economic, social, historical, and racial perspectives that must be considered when counseling these students. By increasing professional school counselors' training and professional development in diversity and multicultural issues, school counselor self-efficacy may increase, thereby causing school counselors to engage in more personal/social counseling involving multicultural agendas. Implications for increased multicultural and diversity training in counselor education programs exist as well.

### Study Limitations

Every measure was taken to explain the purpose of the study and the informed consent. Because of the nature of surveys with subjects self-reporting their perceptions, self-efficacy beliefs, and actual performance, subjectivity of answers is inevitable. The study focused on professional school counselors in Florida, specifically those who attended the Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA) conference and some of their colleagues. Therefore the results may not be generalized to the national school counselor population. Again, the research findings are based on professional school

counselor self-report regarding role and perception of individual performance; therefore the subjects may have been motivated to present themselves as more self-efficacious than they actually are, and their reporting potentially lacks objectivity. Essentially, the answers are relative to each individual's experience. The results reported regarding the importance of school counselor professional development may be skewed and non-representative of all Florida school counselors' beliefs, based on the fact that these counselors apparently value professional development.

### Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study support the conclusion that the level of school counselor self-efficacy does, in fact, influence the extent to which professional school counselors perform roles under the academic, career, and personal/social domains.

Over time, it would be interesting to see if there are any differences in what the three different levels (elementary, middle, high) do in actual practice as a result of increasing school counselor self-efficacy. A longitudinal study could examine school counselor self-efficacy, perceived role, and actual practice across the various school levels. Implications for specific developmental interventions could be discovered as a result.

Another implication from this study would be the development of a specific school counselor self-efficacy instrument using factor analysis findings. This instrument could serve several purposes. First, the instrument could measure school counselor self-efficacy at different developmental stages of counselors' careers to inform practice and professional development needs. Second, the school counselor self-efficacy instrument

could be a standard evaluation tool using the 20 counselor/non-counselor roles that loaded under the three categories. This instrument could be used for school counselors in training and for on-going training purposes. Furthermore, principals and school administrators could utilize the instrument to assist them in training needs and assigning appropriate duties to professional school counselors.

### Conclusion

Professional school counselors in Florida who attended the Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA) conference completed the School Counselor Role Survey (SCRS) to report their beliefs concerning their role perceptions, self-efficacy level, and their actual role. Specifically, the study investigated what, if any, relationship existed among school counselor efficacy, perceived school counselor role, and actual practice of academic, career, and personal/social counseling.

Implications for this study include, but are not limited to, preparation and practice of school counselors in counselor education programs, practicing professional school counselors, and principals and school administrators. Specifically, suggestions were presented for increased collaboration between counselor education programs and the school counseling programs in local schools to promote more integration of theory into practice. Additionally, recommendations were offered for school principals and directors of school counseling programs to better utilize the expertise of professional school counselors in the school system.

APPENDIX A  
SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

## School Counselor Demographic Questionnaire

(Indicate answers for 1 - 14 by marking the appropriate box with an X or writing in the answer.)

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

2. What is your racial/ethnic background?

- African American
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Caucasian
- Asian or Pacific Islander

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your educational level?

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Specialist
- Doctoral

5. Was your counseling program CACREP accredited?

- Yes
- No

6. What year did you graduate from your school counseling program? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please check each certification you possess:

- Certified School Counselor
- Certified Teacher
- National Board Certified Counselor
- Registered Mental Health Counselor
- Registered Marriage and Family Therapist
- Licensed Mental Health Counselor
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

8. Are you a member of American School Counselor Association (ASCA)?

- Yes
- No

9. How long have you been a Professional School Counselor? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How many years of teaching experience did you have before becoming a counselor? \_\_\_\_\_

11. In which type of area is your school located?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

12. In which school level do you work?

- Elementary
- Middle
- High

13. Approximately how many students are attending your school?  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Approximately how many students are assigned to each counselor?  
\_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX B  
SCHOOL COUNSELOR ROLE SURVEY

<p>Please Answer Each of The Four Questions Regarding The Professional School Counselor's Role.</p> <p>Please Read Each Statement, Circling Your Responses.</p> <p><b>Start Here</b></p>	<p><i>How important is this role as a school counselor?</i></p> <p>1. Not at all 2. Low 3. Moderate 4. High</p>	<p><i>To what degree do you feel competent or comfortable in this role?</i></p> <p>1. Not at all 2. Low 3. Moderate 4. High</p>	<p><i>How often do you perform this role?</i></p> <p>1. Not at all 2. Occasionally 3. Frequently 4. Usually</p>	<p><i>To what degree would professional development enhance your performance in this role?</i></p> <p>1. Not at all 2. Minimally 3. Moderately 4. Significantly</p>
Classroom Presentations/Guidance	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Individual Counseling	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Small Group Counseling	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Career Counseling	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Career Testing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Crisis Counseling	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Academic Advising	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Student Registration	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Consultation w/Teachers	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Consultation w/Parents	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Consultation w/Administrators	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Coordination of Testing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Coordination of Community Services	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Administrative Duties	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Disciplining Students	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Hall Duty	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Lunchroom Duty	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Substitute Teaching	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Coordination of Student Clubs and/or Groups	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Promoting Diversity and Multicultural Agendas	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Thank you for participating in the survey.

APPENDIX C  
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER AND FORM

November 22, 2004

Dear Florida School Counselor,

I am a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Central Florida. I am conducting a research study on the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived ideal role and actual practice. You are being asked to participate in a survey designed to measure school counselor self-efficacy and school counselor role perception. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. Participation is anonymous. I will not ask for your name or identifying information. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer and you may discontinue participation or withdraw your data at any time without consequence. There is no anticipated risk or no direct benefit to participants. Unfortunately, I am unable to compensate you for your time, but sincerely appreciate your cooperation in this research project.

If you have any questions about the survey, you may contact me at (407) 595-2410. My major advisor is Dr. Edward H. Robinson, III and he can be reached at (407) 823-2401. If you have any questions or concerns regarding research participants' rights, you may contact:

University of Central Florida  
Office of Research Institutional Review Board  
Orlando Tech Center  
12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207  
Orlando, Florida 32826  
(407) 823-2901

Please sign and return the informed consent form. An additional copy is enclosed for your records. Your signature grants me permission to report the findings in my dissertation as a part of the study. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mitcham-Smith, M.A

Florida School Counselor Role Survey  
Informed Consent Signature Page  
November 2004

I have read and understand this consent form. I voluntarily agree to participate in the survey and I have received a copy of this description.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX D  
IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

---

From: Barbara Ward  
To: Michelle Mitcham-Smith  
Date: Monday - November 15, 2004  
Subject: IRB Need

---

The Chairman approved your project "Investigating the Relationships..." but asks that I have you send me an email stating that you will get conference authority permission before distributing the surveys. We already talked about this but just state it in the email. The most recent FedEx box will be here tomorrow and I think your hard copy will be in it so I'll wait to do your approval letter until tomorrow, but rest assured you are okay to go. Just send me the email.

Barbara Ward, CIM  
UCF IRB/IACUC Coordinator  
12443 Research Pkwy, Suite 301  
Orlando Tech Center  
Orlando, FL 32826-3252  
Campus mail: Office of Research  
32816-0150  
407-823-2901, Fax: 407-823-3299  
email: [bkward@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:bkward@mail.ucf.edu) or  
[webmail irb@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:webmail_irb@mail.ucf.edu); [iacuc@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:iacuc@mail.ucf.edu)



**ORIGINAL**

Office of Research

November 15, 2004

Michelle Mitcham-Smith  
University of Central Florida  
College of Education  
Department of Counselor Education  
Orlando, FL 32816-1250

Dear Ms. Mitcham-Smith:

With reference to your protocol entitled, "Investigating the Relationships that Exist among School Counselor Self-Efficacy, Perceived School Counselor Role, and Actual Practice" I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur. Further, should there be a need to extend this protocol, a renewal form must be submitted for approval at least one month prior to the anniversary date of the most recent approval and is the responsibility of the investigator (UCF).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

*Barbara Ward*

Barbara Ward, CIM  
IRB Coordinator

Copies: IRB File





THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

*IRB Committee Approval Form*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): Michelle Micham-Smith IRB #: 04-2213  
PROJECT TITLE: Investigating the relationships

Committee Members:

- Full Board
- Contingent Approval  
Dated: \_\_\_\_\_
- Final Approval  
Dated: \_\_\_\_\_
- Expiration  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Dr. Theodore Angelopoulos: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Ratna Chakrabarti: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Karen Dennis: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Barbara Fritzsche (alt): \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Robert Kennedy: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Gene Lee: \_\_\_\_\_
- Ms. Gail McKinney: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Debra Reinhart (alt): \_\_\_\_\_
- Dr. Valerie Sims: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair**

- Expedited Approval  
Dated: 13 Nov 2004  
Cite how qualifies for expedited review: #7  
less than minimal risk.
- Exempt  
Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cite how qualifies for exempt status: \_\_\_\_\_

IRB Co-Chairs:

Signed:   
Dr. Sophia Dziegielewska

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jacqueline Byers

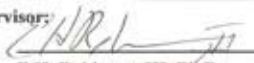
- Expiration  
Date: 12 Nov 2005

NOTES FROM IRB CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): not a vulnerable population and not sensitive information. Researcher will confirm that she will have permission from conference planners prior to distributing the survey. Once done approved.

The complete IRB packet must be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of the month for consideration at that monthly IRB meeting. Please see page 6 of this manual for detailed instructions on completing this form.

1. Title of Project: Investigating the Relationships That Exist Among School Counselor Self-Efficacy, Perceived School Counselor Role, and Actual Practice

2. Principal Investigator(s):  
 Signature:  Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: Michelle Mitcham-Smith Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr. (circle one) Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr. (circle one)  
 Degree: M.A. Mental Health/School Counseling Degree: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: Doctoral Candidate Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department: Counselor Education Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
 College: College of Education College: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: mmitcham@mail.ucf.edu E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: 407-595-2410 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Facsimile: 407-249-0061 Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Telephone: 407-282-1002 Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Supervisor:  
 Signature:  Degree: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: E.H. Robinson, III, Ph.D. Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr. (circle one) Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department: Counselor Education Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_  
 College: Education E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Dates of Proposed Project (cannot be retroactive): From: 11/18/04 To: 5/30/05

5. Source of Funding for the Project: (project title, agency, and account number) N/A

6. Scientific Purpose of the Investigation: This research will investigate the relationship among school counselor self-efficacy, perceived school role, and actual practice. Furthermore, the research will offer implications for school principals and administrators for better utilizing school counselors and also to refine and define the role of the school counselor. Furthermore, this research will offer implications for how counselor education programs educate, train, and supervise school counselors in training.

7. Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language: (the UCFIRB needs to know what will be done with or to the research participants) The purpose of this research project is to gain knowledge about the school counselor's level of self-efficacy in performing their various roles as a school counselor. After written Informal Consent is obtained, the research participants will be asked to voluntarily answer a school counselor survey regarding the role of the school counselor and self-efficacy around the roles of school counselor. The national standards for school counselor duties/roles per the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), were used to develop the survey. Additionally, a demographic survey will be given to ascertain information about gender, age, ethnicity, education and professional counselor association memberships. In order to obtain this data, the surveys will be administered at the Florida Counselor Association's 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on November 18, 19, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, in St. Petersburg, Florida at the St. Petersburg Hilton. Surveys will be administered at the general assembly, primarily. If an inadequate number of surveys are obtained through this method, a conference table conveniently located in the exhibition area of the conference hall will be set up for researcher to obtain additional surveys from the attendees visiting the exhibits. There is minimal to no risk in completing this survey because it is patterned after the national school counselor standards regarding the roles and duties of school counselors in the state of Florida.

8. Potential Benefits and Anticipated Risks. (Risks include physical, psychological, or economic harm. Describe the steps taken to protect participant. Participants may experience minimal discomfort when thinking about their perceived school counselor role and actual practice. However, no physical, psychological, or economic risk is anticipated. Potential benefits include a clearer consideration of school counselor role and the research will add to the body of knowledge pertaining to school counselor self-efficacy.

9. Describe how participants will be recruited, the number and age of the participants, and proposed compensation (if any): Participants will be school counselors, over the age of 18, all holding Master's degrees or above and will be recruited through Florida Counselor Association's 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on November 18, 19, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, in St. Petersburg, Florida. Please refer to number seven for protocol.

10. Describe the informed consent process: (include a copy of the informed consent document)

See attached.

I approve this protocol for submission to the UCFIRB. W. Michael D. W. [Signature] 11-2-04  
Department Chair/Director Date

Cooperating Department (if more than one Dept. involved) \_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair/Director Date

APPENDIX E

ASCA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

## ASCA's National Standards Academic for School Counseling Programs

### **Academic Domain**

#### Standard A

Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

#### Standard B

Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.

#### Standard C

Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

### **Career Domain**

#### Standard A

Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

#### Standard B

Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.

#### Standard C

Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

## **Personal/Social Domain**

### Standard A

Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

### Standard B

Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

### Standard C

Students will understand safety and survival skills.

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APPENDIX F  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

MICHELLE A. MITCHAM-SMITH

**EDUCATION**

**Doctor of Philosophy – Counselor Education**

May 2005

Doctoral Candidate - May 2004

University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

CACREP accredited

Dissertation Title: "Relationships Among School Counselor Self-Efficacy, Perceived School Counselor Role, and Actual Practice"

Dissertation Chair: Edward H. Robinson, III, Ph.D.

Dissertation Co-Chair: Andrew P. Daire, Ph.D., LMHC, NCC

**Master of Arts – Mental Health Counseling & School Counseling** 1999

Webster University, Orlando, Florida

**Bachelor of Science – Psychology**

1993

University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

**Associate of Arts – General Education**

1992

Valencia Community College, Orlando, Florida

**LICENSING AND CERTIFICATIONS**

Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern– State of Florida-IMH 2968

Florida Bar – Family Law Section, Affiliate Member, Florida Bar No. 215048

Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator – CFM certification #15542F

Certified Parenting Coordinator

Florida Certified School Guidance Counselor (2001-2004)

Florida Certified Teacher in Psychology 6-12 (2001-2004)

Prepare/Enrich Certified for Couples Counseling, ID # 1203902, Life Innovations, Inc.

CFARS – Children’s Functional Assessment Rating Scale

Florida Department of Children and Families HIPPA Series: Behavioral Confidentiality and Privacy for the Behavioral Healthcare providers Training.



## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Assistant Professor**

Fall 2005

University of South Florida Tampa, FL  
Psychological and Social Foundations  
College of Education/Counselor Education

### **Adjunct Instructor & Graduate Teaching Associate/Assistant** 2002 - 2005

University of Central Florida Orlando, FL  
Taught/co-taught graduate level counseling courses  
Techniques of Counseling, Practicum, Group Counseling  
Undergraduate Career Development  
Supervision of interns

### **Graduate Research Assistant**

2004

University of Central Florida  
Character Education Grant-CSRCE

- School Counseling Summer Institute Coordinator
- Invited and organized presenters
- Coordinated marketing and advertisement
- Secured presenter for day-long Learning Institute
- Liaison for school counseling presenters
- Social Events/Hospitality Coordinator
- Planned main event banquet
- Planned all breakfast, lunch and snack fare
- Planned private luncheon for keynote speaker & 12 guests
- Collaborated with three hospitality caterers/vendors
- Hospitality Committee for CSRCE-Consortium for Social Responsibility and Character in Education

### **Court-Appointed Parenting Coordinator**

2003-present

State of Florida-Ninth Judicial Circuit Court Orlando, FL  
Court Care Center for Divorcing Families

- Developing effective strategies for shared parenting plan in high conflict divorce
- Couples co-parenting sessions with high-conflict divorced/divorcing couples
- Ensuring execution of parenting plan specified in Court's order
- Providing guidance and close oversight of parenting issues
- Mediating parental conflict
- Educating parents regarding loyalty binds
- Arbitrator-deciding on issues when parents reach an impasse.
- Modifying parenting plan when consensus cannot be reached to reduce conflict
- Teaching parents conflict resolution techniques and communication skills
- Reporting to Judges on parental noncompliance with shared parenting plan

- Testifying in court for non-compliance issues
- Consulting with attorneys, Guardians ad Litem, psychologists, counselors
- Working with parents and significant others to act in the best interest of the child(ren).
- Teaching parents to re-align their relationship in order to be effective Co-Parents.
- Creating a WIN-WIN situation for the children, in order to avoid being “caught in the middle” of parents’ disputes.

**Domestic Violence Family Mediator** 2003 – 2004

State of Florida-Ninth Judicial Circuit Court Orlando, FL

- Family Mediator for Domestic Violence Injunction Hearings
- Facilitated visitation arrangement issues through a cooperative process
- Reviewed mediated agreement with both parties (shuttle mediation)
- Reported parties’ agreement to the Judge

**Program Coordinator/Graduate Research Assistant** 2003

Summit Behavioral Healthcare Associates, Inc.

Risk to Resiliency -“Just For Girls”/Juvenile Justice Grant Program

Community Education Partners-North CEP

- Supervised of Master’s interns
- Recruited of interns
- Coordinated counseling & program services
- Completed assessments & biopsychosocials
- Individual & Group counseling with at-risk adolescent girls

**Graduate Assistant** January- June 2003

Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences

University of Central Florida

- Social Events Director
- Hospitality Committee for CSRCE-Consortium for Social Responsibility and Character in Education – June 16-18, 2003
- Responsibilities included consulting, collaborating and coordinating the receptions, luncheons and breakfasts with various event planners.
- Assisted with the selection of the professional athlete guest panel for the Character in Sports presentation.
- Reported to Dr. Grant Hayes, Program Coordinator-CSRCE 2003

**Therapist**  
Intervention Services

January –October 2003

Maitland, Florida

- In-home and in-school psychotherapy with adolescents at risk
- Psychosocials, assessment, treatment planning; weekly progress notes
- Family counseling and interventions
- Referrals to agencies and specialists

**Professional School Counselor**

July 2000 – July 2002

Colonial High School

Orlando, Florida

- Delivered Comprehensive School Guidance Program
- Leaders of Counselors (LOC) Consultant-East Region Orange County
- Individual and Group counseling
- Career counseling
- Academic advisement
- College representative liaison
- Conducted parent teacher conferences in English and some Spanish (51% Latino population)
- Promoted multicultural awareness due to minority-majority population
- Test Administrator-PSAT, ACT, SAT, FCAT, AP Exams
- Participated in IEP – Individual Educational Plan meetings
- Reported to Dr. Paul Flores
- Principal - Dr. Paul V. Mitchell

**Teacher – Fourth Grade**

1999 - 2000

Orange Center Elementary School

Orlando, Florida

- Urban Teacher Residency Program (6 graduate hrs. -UCF)
- Taught fourth grade curriculum in urban school
- Developed lesson plans
- Facilitated “Success For All” reading program
- Parent – teacher conferences
- Attended annual Urban Education Conference
- Training with Marva Collins for the Urban Teacher Residency Program
- Intern elementary guidance counselor Fall 1999

**Case Manager – Medicaid Accounts**

March – September 1999

NCO/Winter Park Hospital

Winter Park, Florida

- Case management of OB Access Medicaid Clinic
- Disability (SSI) claims liaison

**Mental Health Counselor Intern**

March – July 1999

Winter Park Memorial Hospital Psychiatric Care Center  
Winter Park, Florida

- Individual counseling
- Facilitated group psychotherapy
- Co-facilitated Expressive Arts therapy groups
- Completed biopsychosocials, chemical dependency assessments, discharge planning, clinical progress notes
- Dictated assessments and biopsychosocials
- Member of psychiatric multidisciplinary treatment team

**Medical Disability Adjudicator** 1996 - 1999

State of Florida / Office of Disability Determinations  
Orlando, Florida

- Adjudicated mental and physical SSI disability claims
- Researched, developed, analyzed, and rendered independent medical decisions for mental/physical disability claims
- Compiled cohesive analyses of objective medical findings for mental and physical disability claims
- Consulted with psychologists and physicians
- Rendered transferability of skills assessments using the DOT

**Public Assistance Specialist**

State of Florida / Department of Children & Families 1994 – 1996  
Orlando, Florida

- Public assistance case management
- Conducted initial application interviews in English and Spanish
- Rendered eligibility for Medicaid, Public Assistance and food stamps
- Made referrals to other social service agencies
- Documented suspected fraud and referred to investigations department

**Therapeutic Case Manager**

Grand Avenue Elementary School January-September 1994  
Center for Drug-Free Living  
Orlando, Florida

- Provided early intervention services to at-risk families in urban area
- Implemented therapeutic care plans and interventions for substance exposed infants & children, and victims of domestic violence
- Family Support Planning services organized with
- Multi-disciplinary treatment team

**OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Parenting Leadership Seminar Facilitator** Spring 2003

“How to Raise Respectful Children in a Disrespectful World”  
Blessed Trinity Catholic Church Orlando, FL  
Religious Education

- Facilitated (2) six-week parenting skills seminars

**CARE Team Trainer/Facilitator**

2001-2004

Blessed Trinity Catholic Church

- Taught effective communication skills to outreach volunteers
- Facilitated recognition of defense mechanisms

**TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**MHS 2230: CAREER PLANNING, University of Central Florida, Fall 2004**

- Instructed undergraduate students for three (3) hours per week over sixteen week semester
- Instructed in career development theories
- Career decision-making process facilitated.
- Evaluated students on career projects, presentations, resumes
- Introduced career assessments and internet interest inventories

**MHS 6401: TECHNIQUES OF COUNSELING, University of Central Florida, Fall 2003**

- Instructed counselor education and educational leadership students for three(3)hours per week over a sixteen (16) week period
- Utilized a micro-level approach to teaching counseling skills, techniques, and interventions
- Covered topics such as: opening skills, reflecting skills, confrontation, goal setting, assessment, referrals, case conceptualization, and multicultural issues in counseling
- Graduate level course

**MHS 6401: TECHNIQUES OF COUNSELING, University of Central Florida Spring 2004**

- Instructed counselor education and educational leadership students for three (3) hours per week over a sixteen (16) week period
- Utilized a micro-level approach to teaching counseling skills, techniques, and interventions
- Covered topics such as: opening skills, reflecting skills, confrontation, goal setting, assessment, referrals, case conceptualization, and multicultural issues in counseling
- Graduate level course

**MHS 6800: PRACTICUM: COUNSELOR EDUCATION,  
University of Central Florida, Fall 2003**

- Conducted weekly group co-supervision of counseling interns
- Conducted weekly individual supervision and consultation with counseling interns
- Prepared weekly supervision summary reports and plans
- Participated in weekly consultation with practicum supervisors regarding supervision activities
- Co-taught with Andrew P. Daire, Ph.D.
- Graduate level course

**MHS 6500: GROUP COUNSELING, University of Central Florida  
Fall 2002**

- Facilitated experiential self awareness group
- Introduced group process components
- Co-led weekly group with doctoral student
- Reported to instructor of record

**PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS**

Mitcham-Smith, M., Daire, A., Johnson, N., Greenidge, W. (April 2005). The Role of the Mental Health Professional in Court Related Family Issues: Family Mediation and Parent Coordination, *American Counseling Association Annual Conference*, Atlanta, GA. (60-minute session)

Mitcham-Smith, M. (January 2005). Initiatives that Work: Holmes Scholars, Alumni, and Local Stakeholders Partner for Success, *Presentation at 9<sup>th</sup> Holmes Partnership Annual Conference*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mitcham-Smith, M., (October 2004). Divorcing Couples: Resolution of Family Conflict Through Mediation and Parenting Coordination, *European Branch of the American Counseling Association (EB-ACA)*, Sonthofen, Germany (2 - two hour presentations)

Daire, A. , Johnson, N. Mitcham-Smith, M., (September 2004). Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Grants: Innovative Partnership Opportunities with the For-Profit Business Sector. *Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) Annual Conference*, Athens, Georgia

Mitcham-Smith, M., Johnson, N., (September 2004) How to Create Your Voice as a School Counselor, *Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) Annual Conference*, Athens, Georgia

Mitcham-Smith, M., (June 2004). Divorce: Resolution of Family Conflict Through Mediation and Parenting Coordination (MHS6440) *Couples Counseling Graduate Course Presentation*  
Professor Mark E. Young, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL.

Mitcham-Smith, M., (June 2004). *Invited Presenter: Mediating Family Conflict Through Mediation and Parenting Coordination Florida Marriage & Family Institute*, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL.

Mitcham-Smith, M., Nason, M., (June 2004) An Examination of the Factors that Influence the Role of School Counselors *University of Central Florida's 2004 Summer Counseling Institute*, Orlando, FL.

*Mitcham-Smith, M., Livingston, T., Daire, A. (April 2004). Translating Dementia Caregiver Models into Clinical Practice American Counseling Association (ACA) Annual Conference, Kansas City, MO.*

*Johnson, J., Mitcham-Smith, M., (April 2004) De-Stressing the Work Environment Through Culturally Responsive Leadership American Counseling Association (ACA) Annual Conference, Kansas City, MO.*

Mitcham-Smith, M., (March 2004) Visions of Work...Past, Present and Future: Holmes Scholars' Work with Partner Schools. . *Professional Development Schools National Conference, Orlando, Florida, March 2004.*

Mitcham-Smith, M., (January 2004) Visions of Work...Past, Present and Future: Holmes Scholars' Work with Partner Schools. *Presentation at 8<sup>th</sup> Holmes Partnership Annual Conference, San Diego, California,*

Mitcham-Smith, M. (December 2003) "Name It, Claim It, and Tame It: Defining Who You Are" *Community Education Partnership (CEP) North Campus Alternative School (Motivational Speaker for Transitioning At-Risk Adolescent Girls) Orlando, FL*

Mitcham-Smith, M. (October 2003) Effective Counseling for At-Risk Adolescent Girls: Implications for Mental Health and School Counselors. *European Branch of the American Counseling Association (EB-ACA), Willingen, Germany*

Mitcham-Smith, M. (October 2003) School Counselor's Role in Increasing Minority Representation in Gifted, Honors and Advanced Placement Programs. *European Branch of the American Counseling Association (EB-ACA), Willingen, Germany*

Mitcham-Smith, M., Hansen, S. (October 2003) Resiliency Attitudes and Anxiety in Counselors *European Branch of the American Counseling Association (EB-ACA), Willingen, Germany*

Mitcham-Smith, M. (April 2003) The Theory of Carl Rogers: Class Presentation for Theories in Counseling course University of Central Florida

Williams, F., Mitcham-Smith, M., (July 2003) Issues of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students: Implications for School Counselors American School Counselor Association (ASCA) 2003 Annual Conference – St. Louis, MO

Williams, F., Mitcham-Smith, M., (March 2003) Issues of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students: Implications for School Counselors. *American Counseling Association (ACA) Annual Conference Anaheim, CA.*

Four Generations of Holmes Scholars Collaborating With Partner Schools to Impact Teacher and Student Learning. (March 2003). *Professional Development Schools National Conference Orlando, Florida,*

Advancing Student Learning through University/School Collaboratives and Interventions. *Presentation at the 7<sup>th</sup> Holmes Partnership Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., February, 2003.*

Mitcham-Smith, M. (November 2001) The Meaning of Spirituality *Keynote Speaker Presentation to the Ministry of Mother's Sharing at Blessed Trinity Catholic Church, Orlando, FL*

Mitcham-Smith, M. (March 2002) The Role of the School Guidance Counselor -Special Populations. *Barry University – Orlando, FL*

Lunchtime Roundtable Session (March 2003), *National Professional Development Schools (PDS) Conference/The Holmes Partnership Southeast Regional Conference Orlando, Florida*



## **COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

- Dean-Appointed Student Member, Chair Search Committee, College of Education, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, 2004-2005
- Board Member, Professional Development Chair, Florida School Counselor Association, (FSCA), A Division of the Florida Counseling Association, (FCA), 2005
- Member, Admissions Committee, Counselor Education Ph.D. Program, University of Central Florida, Orlando, 2003- 2004
- Member, Admissions Committee, Counselor Education Master's Degree Programs, University of Central Florida, Orlando, 2002- 2004
- Member, Holmes Scholars Search Committee, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, 2004-2005
- President, Chi Sigma Iota, Upsilon Chi Chapter, (International Honor Society for Counselors) University of Central Florida, 2004 - 2005
- Mentor- (MPIE) Minority Programs in Education, University of Central Florida 2004-2005
- Member, Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education (UNITE)
- Equity and Social Justice Task Force (2002-2004)
- Facilitator – Girl Power Self-Esteem group- Conway Middle School-Spring 2003
- Facilitator for Ministry of Mother's Sharing (MOMS) 2001
- Blessed Trinity Catholic Church
- CARE Team Trainer/Facilitator 2001-2004
- Effective communication skills
- Recognizing defense mechanisms

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS**

### **American Counseling Association (ACA)**

Student Member

### **American School Counselor Association (ASCA)**

Student Member

### **Florida Counseling Association (FCA)**

### **Florida School Counselor Association (FSCA)**

### **American Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD)**

Student Member - 2001

### **Counseling Association for Humanistic Education & Development (C-AHEAD)**

Student Member - 2003

### **Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)**

Student Member - 2003

**International Marriage & Family Counselors Association (IMFCA)**

Student Member – 2003

**The Holmes Partnership**

Educational Renewal Network of Colleges, Universities,  
and Community Organizations

Holmes Scholar - 2002

**American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)**

Student Member – 2003

**Chi Sigma Iota – Upsilon Chi (University of Central Florida)**

Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International

Student Member - 2002

President Elect - 2003

President – 2004-2005

**Pi Lambda Theta**

International Honor Society and Professional Association in Education

2003-2004

**Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR)**

2003-present

**The Florida Bar – Family Law Section**

Affiliate Member – Florida Bar No. 215048

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Conventions, Institutes, Conferences, and Workshops Attended:**

**American Counseling Association (52nd) Annual Conference**

Atlanta, Georgia April 2005

**The Holmes Partnership Ninth Annual Conference**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania January 20-23, 2005

**European Branch of the American Counseling Association (EB-ACA)**

Sonthofen, Germany, October 2004

**Southern Association for Counselor Education & Supervision (SACES)  
Conference**

University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia September 2004

**Cooperative Parenting Institute (CPI)  
Advanced Parent Coordinator Training (7 hours)**  
Sponsored by Ninth Judicial Court-CME's Rollins College  
by Susan Boyan, M.Ed., LMFT  
Orlando, Florida August 7, 2004

**American Counseling Association (51<sup>st</sup>) Annual Conference**  
Kansas City, Missouri April 1-4, 2004

**John Gottman Training for Couples Counseling** by Dr. Mary Hicks  
University of Central Florida March 2004

**2004 Professional Development Schools National Conference  
Regional Holmes Partnership**  
Orlando, Florida March 4-6, 2004

**Parenting Coordination Training** (20-Hour Certification Course) by Dr. Debra Carter  
at University of South Florida College of Public Health, February 2004

**The Holmes Partnership Eighth Annual Conference**  
San Diego, California, January 14-16, 2004

**Association for Conflict Resolution 2003 Annual Conference**  
Theme: A Mosaic of Possibilities  
Orlando, Florida, October 15-18

**Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision 2003 Conference**  
Theme: On the Right Track with SACES: Linking Future Challenges With Opportunities  
Chattanooga, Tennessee, September 5-6, 2003

**Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers (CFAWL) - July 2003**

**Holmes Scholars Summer Leadership Institute**  
Graduate School of Education and Human Development  
George Washington University  
Washington, D. C.  
June 15-20, 2003

**American Counseling Association (ACA) 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
Theme: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence  
Anaheim, California, March 21-25, 2003

**Chi Sigma Iota Leadership Training (ACA) 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
Anaheim, California, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2003

**2003 Professional Development Schools National Conference**

Theme: Making A Difference – The PDS Impact on Education  
Orlando, Florida, March 6-9, 2003

**The Holmes Partnership Seventh Annual Conference**

Theme: Advancing Student Learning Through Research: Policies And Practices In Partnership  
Washington, D.C., February 21-23, 2003

**2002 Summer Institute for School and Mental Health Counseling**

College of Education, University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida, June 17-19, 2002

**American Counseling Association (ACA) 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

Theme: Unity Through Diversity  
New Orleans, Louisiana, March 22-26, 2002

**First Annual Urban Education Conference**

Theme: Where Are We Today?  
Atlanta, Georgia, March 16 – 19, 2000

**Orange County Public Schools Staff Development**

Theme: Bridging the Millennium with Quality Teaching  
Orlando, Florida, February 22, 2000

**Urban Teacher Residency Graduate Seminar** 1999 – 2000

University of Central Florida  
Professor Martha Lue

**RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**

*Manuscripts Under Review/In Progress:*

Mitcham-Smith, M., Johnson, N., Hayes, G., *School counselors' critical role in increasing minority representation in gifted education.*

Mitcham-Smith, M., Thompson, I., *Counseling latinos: raising the bar of multicultural competence-implications for professional school counselors.*

Mitcham-Smith, M., Johnson, N., Hayes, G., *Career counseling: examining self-efficacy in school counselors.*

Daire, A. & Mitcham-Smith, M., *Translating dementia caregiving models into clinical practice.*

Daire, A. & Mitcham-Smith, M., Kimemia, M., *Marital satisfaction in couples with disabled children.*

## **HONORS**

**Chi Sigma Iota – Upsilon Chi (University of Central Florida)**

Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International  
Member – 2002

**Holmes Scholar**, University of Central Florida/Orlando Science Center

## LIST OF REFERENCES

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- The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs. (2003). *Professional School Counseling, 6*(3), 165–169.
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