UNHEARD VOICES:
URBAN STUDENTS’ SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF
THE OHIO STATE COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
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By
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the influence of the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center on the lives of the urban high school students it serves. Specifically, this study investigated the perceptions, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of students related to the Center and its many services. The qualitative methodology included in-depth focus groups, individual interviews, and biographical questionnaires. The purposeful sample was comprised of 16 urban high school seniors (i.e., 12 females and 4 males). Four major themes emerged from participant responses: (a) the need for meaningful relationships; (b) the need for acquisition of information and skills; (c) perceptions of the Center; and (d) high educational aspirations. Findings also indicated that the Center positively influenced students in three broad domains: academic, personal/social, and career. Recommendations for practical applications and future research are included.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my Beloved Parents,

Barbara Ann and Joseph LeRoy Ockerman,

For Your

Enduring Strength, Unwavering Support, and

Unconditional Love
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The saying that it “takes a village,” could not be more appropriate with regard to my personal and professional journey. I wish to first acknowledge my parents. They have continued to amaze me by their love and sacrifice. My mother is my hero. She gives generously. She is strong. She is caring. She is smart intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. She is the fabric that holds our beautiful family together and she does so with grace. Should I ever be half the woman that she is, I will consider it a monumental feat. My father is the most creative person I know. He has always challenged me to think critically, to question what I know, to be able to articulate what I stand for, and to stand up for that which I believe. He has never doubted my ability, and his steadfast love and belief in me has taken me much farther than I thought I could go.

These two loving people created a wonderful family to whom I am so grateful. I wish to thank my older brother, Aaron. He has always been a role model to me. I appreciate his encouragement, his editing, his example, and our long runs. I am so excited to meet his first born and know that Aaron and his wife, Denise, will make wonderful parents. I am eternally grateful to my twin sister, Jennifer. She has been my pillar of strength. She is courageous and brave. I am so honored to be her twin. I thank her husband, Jason, for his understanding, his encouragement, and his political debates. Much love is extended to my little sister, Maura. More than ever, this year, Maura has
taught me. She has been supportive, caring and encouraging through all of my trials. Her belief in me is unwavering and has spurred me on in my darkest hours. Her husband, Micah, is like my brother. He is a good, strong, solid human being; one whom I am proud to know. Their love for each other gives me great hope. This year, that love created a beautiful, perfect baby boy, Jackson. He represents all that is good in this world. May my work and the work of others in this field, somehow benefit him. And as silly as this may sound, I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to my yellow lab, Indiana Maya (Indy). She has been my constant companion, has made me feel safer, is always happy to see me, and makes me put on my running shoes, even when I don’t want to.

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I wish to express my gratitude to my Research Team, Maureen, Justin and Julie. They helped make this study what it is and I greatly appreciate their time and insights. Thank you, also, Maureen, for exemplifying what it means to be a phenomenal woman. Thank you, Julie, for being an amazing co-supervisor and an even better running partner. I wish to express my thankfulness to my interns and practicum students this year. They have been incredibly patient and give me great optimism for the future of school counselors.

Lastly and importantly, I must offer up my gratitude to God for giving me strength in my weakest moments, for granting me freedom in forgiveness, and for surrounding me with the best family, friends, and mentors any woman could ever desire. I am so very blessed.
VITA

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Throughout the country, many urban school districts are not performing at an optimal level. Noguera (2003), in his book, City schools and the American dream: Reclaiming the promise of public education, asserted that “failure is the word used most frequently to describe urban public schools in the United States” (p. 3). This daunting reality is due, in part, to the high drop-out rates, poor attendance, low standardized test scores, and high rates of poverty which often plague inner city schools. In addition, urban schools often have less-qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and buildings, and facilities in disrepair (Warren, 2005).

While urban schools’ resources are being exhausted to address the basic needs of their students, they are simultaneously being held accountable by governmental mandates and high-stakes testing. Yet, research has clearly demonstrated that poverty is a major contributor to academic failure (Noguera, 2003; Payne, 2003). Ethnic minority and impoverished students, who overwhelmingly attend urban schools, have lower academic achievement rates and less success in school than their affluent White counterparts (Haycock, 2001; Ipka, 2003; Noguera, 2003;).
Keeping this in mind, Kati Haycock (2001), Director of The Education Trust, offers the following discouraging statistics:

(1) Among 18-24 year olds, 90% of White and 94% of Asians have completed high school or have earned a GED as compared to 81% of African Americans and 63% of Latinos.

(2) African Americans are half as likely as White students to earn a college degree by the age of 29; Latino students are only one-third as likely to earn a college degree (p. 7).

The fact that the achievement gap is pervasive in almost all standardized tests throughout American schools has led to unprecedented public and political concern. Most recently, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has drawn attention to the widening gulf between low-income minority youth and their higher-achieving majority peers.

Noting the accountability trend in national standards-based educational reform movements and the simultaneous widening of the achievement gap, The Education Trust, became interested in re-thinking the role of school counselors. The Education Trust asserted that “school counselors are in a critical position to focus on issues, strategies, and interventions that will assist in closing the achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their more advantaged peers” (Martin, 2002, p. 148). Thus in 1996, The Education Trust, with assistance and support from the Dewitt-Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund, launched a five-year multi-staged national initiative to transform the education and training of school counselors.
After conducting a 14 month investigation, *The Education Trust* concluded that, “there is little relationship between how counselors are trained at universities and the services they need to provide to students” (Sears, 1999, p. 49). In order to promote change in counselor education programs, *The Education Trust* solicited counselor education programs throughout the country to propose innovative counselor training grant proposals. Over 70 colleges and universities applied for the grant and ultimately the following six universities and their school district/community partnerships were funded: (a) The Ohio State University and Columbus Public Schools; (b) California State University-Northridge and L.A. Unified Schools; (c) Indiana State University and Vigo County Corporation; (d) State University of West Georgia and Clayton County Public Schools; (e) The University of Georgia and Athens-Clarke Public Schools; and (f) University of North Florida and Duval County Public Schools.

According to Sears (2000), the principal investigator of OSU’s grant, the goal of the initiative was to “develop a graduate level school counselor preparation program designed to enable school counselors to become leaders in their schools in eliminating the achievement gap between students who are low income and/or minority and their more advantaged peers” (p. 1). To this end, The Ohio State Counselor Education program created a new mission statement, revised curricular content and instruction and redesigned school counseling field experiences.

Believing that internship was no longer having the desired impact on trainees, the school counseling faculty at The Ohio State University organized the school counselor interns and practicum students into teams of three or four and placed them into
designated school sites, known as Centers, along with on-site, university supervisors (Sears, 2000). The first Center Model was located at Hope High School (HHS) beginning in the fall of 2000. (Please note that this is a pseudonym for an actual school in Columbus Public School district and is used throughout the remainder of the study.) Since that time, university students have staffed the Center providing individual, group, and classroom guidance interventions. In addition, programmatic interventions (e.g. peer tutoring, scrabble club, health and wellness initiatives, American College Test (ACT) workshops, etc.) have been implemented.

Of the six universities that received the grant, The Ohio State University is one of the few institutions to have revised their field experiences in this manner. More specifically, it is the understanding of faculty that OSU is the only Counselor Education program in the nation that systematically places practicum and internship students in Centers in urban schools. While there is anecdotal evidence that the Center is positively influencing the students in the building, to this date, there is no research which has explored this phenomenon.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how Ohio State University’s Center Model of training school counselors influences an urban school. Specifically, the researcher was interested in exploring if the interventions utilized in OSU’s Counseling and Wellness Center at Hope High School has, as experienced by students, assisted students with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in school and in their futures, and thereby influenced them in a positive manner.
1.3 Research Questions

As in all well-designed research, the research questions drive the methods. According to Feur, Towne, and Shavelson (2002), “understanding causal processes and mechanisms requires close attention to contextual factors and that capturing these complexities typically involves qualitative methods…[qualitative methods] are necessary to describe complex phenomena, generate theoretical models, and reframe questions” (p. 12). As such, the present study explored the following five research questions:

(1) What services and individuals at Hope High School have had the greatest influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development?

(2) How do students perceive the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(3) To what degree are students willing to utilize the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(4) What experiences, both positively and negatively, have had the greatest influence on students’ attitudes towards and beliefs about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(5) What changes do students see in themselves as a result of their involvement in the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

1.4 Research Methodology

The current study was designed to better understand the “complex phenomena” of the OSU Counseling Wellness Center, which involved a deeper understanding of the context and its implications. Toward this end, the researcher was interested in exploring
the perceptions of students in varying academic achievement levels about the influence of the HHS Counseling and Wellness Center in their lives. As the answers to these questions resulted in social explanations rather than statistical equations, qualitative rather than quantitative methods were best suited for this study.

1.5 Data Collection

The current study utilized two focus groups and four individual interviews. In order to better understand patterns of student use of the Center and to obtain a more balanced perspective, one of the focus groups was comprised of students who had utilized the services of the HHS Counseling and Wellness Center, and one of the focus groups was comprised of those students who had not. More specifically, as the primary researcher was also interested in students’ academic achievement, students from different academic achievement levels (i.e., a grade point average of a 2.0 and higher and a grade point average of 1.9 and below) were recruited. The focus group and individual questions concentrated on obtaining information that helped to illuminate student perceptions of the Center.

Gathering documents from the field (also referred to as material culture), helps to substantiate data garnered from focus groups and provided avenues for further study not otherwise noted in previous data collection or research. As such, efforts were made to obtain documents regarding the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center as well as other research literature which spoke to its influence at HHS.
1.6 Data Analysis

As is a common standard in qualitative research, all focus groups and individual interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. A coding or indexing system was the first step of the qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002). Schwandt (2001) defined coding as “a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments” (p. 26). This analytic procedure involved “identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 463). The researcher enlisted the expertise of a research team to assist with the coding process. Through comparing and contrasting opinions regarding codes and categories, themes were identified, and assertions were made. The final stage involved linking these categories, themes and assertions into a theoretical model which attempted to answer the research questions set forth in the present study.

In order to maximize the trustworthiness of the present study, the researcher employed several techniques including triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking (Please see Chapter 3 for a full description of these techniques.). The use of these methodological procedures ensured that the present study was credible and met the rigorous standards set forth by the field of educational research.
1.7 Operational Definitions

The operational definitions germane to the current study included:

- **American College Test (ACT):** A widely used college entrance exam.

- **Advocacy:** Actively working to remove systemic barriers to student achievement by promoting policies and procedures that serve all students (Sears, 1999).

- **Assessment and Use of Data:** Assessing and interpreting student needs, establishing measurable goals for student outcomes, assessing building barriers that impede student learning and interpreting student data for systemic school change (Sears, 1999).

- **Counseling:** A process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior (Stone & Dahir, 2006).

- **Coordination:** Organizing and managing initiatives that address student needs on an individual and school-wide basis (Sears, 1999).

- **Hope High School -OSU Counseling and Wellness Center:** In 2000, The Ohio State University (OSU) Counselor Education Program partnering with Hope High School (HHS), established a Center located at HHS staffed by three to four OSU school counseling interns, practicum students and an on-site, university supervisor.

- **I KNOW I CAN:** A non-profit organization that gives qualified Columbus Public School District students the opportunity to go to college by providing scholarships and summer enrichment programs (iknowican.org).
• **Internship:** Second-year school counseling master’s students have a 600 hour planned counseling experience in a school setting. Second-year students are required to take a three-quarter internship course, which focuses on a series of assignments designed to master school counseling competencies.

• **Leadership:** Promoting, planning, and implementing prevention programs that advance student achievement. In addition, providing data to key stakeholders which promotes school-wide change (Sears, 1999).

• **Practicum:** First-year school counseling master’s students have a 100 hour planned counseling experience in a school setting. First-year students are required to take a one-quarter practicum course during their first year. This course focuses on a series of assignments designed to orient them to the school counseling profession.

• **Project G.R.A.D. (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams):** A program which concentrates on improving the education of low-income, disadvantaged children of inner-city schools, so that they will remain in and graduate from college (projectgrad.org).

• **Resiliency:** The capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply the stress that is inherent in today’s world (Henderson, Bernard, and Sharp-light, 1999).
• **S.A.I.L. (Student Assistance and Intervention for Learning) Team**: An interdisciplinary committee in Columbus Public School District designed to assist individual student needs as well as to promote a positive school climate.

• **Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)**: A widely used college entrance exam.

• **Teaming and Collaboration**: Developing relationships with key stakeholders and concerned citizens to establish common ground in order to serve the needs of students, staff, school, and community (Stone & Dahir, 2006).

• **Transforming School Counseling Initiative**: In 1996, the *Education Trust*, with assistance and financial support from the *Dewitt-Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund*, launched a national initiative to ensure school counselors across the country were trained and ready to help all groups of students reach high academic standards (Education Trust, 2003).

• **Wrap-Around Services**: School-based family support and education programs that provide education, referral to community agencies, home visiting, peer support groups, health screening, and counseling, etc., so as to meet the holistic needs of students and their families (Dryfoos, 1998).

1.8 Assumptions

The following assumptions were held by the researcher:

1. Services provided to HHS will have a positive influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development.

2. Positive relationships with significant individuals will assist students in setting and attaining academic, personal/social, and career goals.
(3) Overall, students will believe that the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center has a positive reputation at Hope High School.

(4) Based on past literature (Sears, 2001), participants at HHS will have a limited understanding about the appropriate role of a school counselor, and will not connect the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center to the school counseling department within the school.

(5) Each participant has his or her own collection of responses related to the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center and other school services.

1.9 Intended Implications of the Study

The current study examined how school counseling interns and/or practicum students who train in a Center Model foster change in an urban school district. Such information was both needed and timely. In addition, this research identifies gaps in the implementation and services rendered by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center which need to be addressed. The findings of such data could be useful to counselor educators in the development of appropriate school counseling training initiatives. In addition, practicing school counselors, directors of guidance, school administrators, teachers, and parents also could benefit from knowing ways in which school counselors can positively influence the lives of urban students through innovative training programs such as the Center Model.

Additionally, this study contributed to the limited research on this topic. The profession has long had a tenuous relationship with research. According to Sprinthall (1981), “generally, research activity has been seen as a kind of necessary evil…the actual
contribution of research to practice [is] minimal” (p. 487). Moreover, in a recent meta-analysis of fifty school counseling outcome studies, Whiston and Sexton (1998) found that only 6% of studies were classified as qualitative. Thus, the current study added to the “significant dearth of research in school counseling” (Whiston, 2002, p. 157) and helped address the paucity of qualitative studies in the field.

1.10 Limitations

As with all forms of research, the selected methodology has limitations. Qualitative research has been faulted for its dependency on the integrity of the researcher. Because the researcher is the primary instrument (Merriam, 1998), the researcher must take the necessary precautions to maintain subjectivity. In addition, some participants may not be able to accurately recall their experiences with the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center or be consciously aware of their perceptions regarding the Center. Furthermore, it is very likely that there will be varying perceptions of the same phenomenon by study participants.

The current study emphasizes experiences of urban seniors in a particular inner-city high school. Therefore, there is no attempt to generalize these findings to other populations of high school students. It is the hope of the researcher that other investigators with similar interests can utilize this study as a guideline for future work with their own population of urban youth. (Please see chapter 5 for further details related to limitations of this study).
1.11 Overview of the Chapters

The current study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, an overview of the methodology, operational definitions, assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter two provides an integrated review of the literature. The methodology, data collection and analysis, and trustworthiness criteria utilized in the study are found in Chapter three. Chapter four details the analysis process and data collection used in the study. This study concludes with Chapter five, which discusses the major findings, contributions to the canon of literature, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

“School counselors are in a critical position to focus on issues, strategies, and interventions that will assist in closing the achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their more advantaged peers” (Martin, 2002, p. 148).

The above assertion highlights a critical turning point in the profession of school counseling. No longer wanting to be associated with “…a position of perpetuating the status quo and maintaining the inequities that currently exist in our schools” (Bemak & Chung, 2005, p. 199), movements, such as The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI), are shifting toward a more proactive, data-driven role for school counselors. As a result, new ways of training and preparing school counselors have emerged. One such innovation is the Ohio State School Counseling Student Support Centers, established in Columbus Public School District. This pioneering school counseling training ground has garnered attention and praise from Columbus Public students, parents, staff, and administrators, but, to date, there is no evidence to suggest that the school counseling interns and/or practicum students who staff these Centers are making a lasting impact on the lives of the urban students they serve.
The research literature is examined in respect to four primary areas: (a) the state of urban schools; (b) the achievement gap; (c) the full-service school movement; and (d) The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI).

2.2 The State of Urban Schools

The plight and problems associated with educating urban youth have been well documented. Noguera (2003) in his book, *City schools and the American dream: Reclaiming the promise of public education*, asserted that “failure is the word used most frequently to describe urban public schools in the United States” (p. 3). This daunting reality is due, in part, to the high drop-out rates, poor attendance, low standardized test scores, and high rates of poverty which often plague urban schools. In addition, urban schools often have less-qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and buildings and facilities in disrepair (Warren, 2005).

Moreover, inner-city schools are increasingly serving large minority, immigrant, and poor student populations. Research has indicated that immigrant children are at the greatest risk for being poor and that poor children are more likely to drop out of high school, suffer from developmental delays, and become parents in their teenage years (Payne, 2003). In addition, the number of poor families in the United States continues to increase dramatically. According to Payne (2003), 6.7% of American families were living in poverty in 2000. In just one year, this percentage increased to 9.2% or 6.8 million families living at or below the poverty line ($18,104 annual income for a family of four) in 2001. Thus, public schools are expected to respond to the growing demands associated with poverty (i.e., inadequate medical care, lack of basic needs, increased crime rates,
etc. More specifically, urban public schools are expected to address these challenging issues, while simultaneously addressing a complex and changing student population. For instance, on average in the United States, the following occur every day:

1. 2,295 teenagers become pregnant; 1,106 of those teens later have abortions
2. 211 children are arrested for drug abuse
3. 437 teens are arrested for drinking and drunken driving
4. 10 children die from gunshot wounds
5. 1,512 teens dropout of school
6. 6 young people commit suicide (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1988).

In addition, school violence continues to be an escalating problem in many urban schools. Recent data, from *Youth Indicators 2005: Trends in the well-being of American youth* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005), indicated that large percentages of high school males and females have reported participating in behaviors that endangered their safety. In particular, 36.4% of Hispanic high school students, 30.9% of Black students and 28.5% of White students reported that they had ridden in a car with a driver who had been drinking. Moreover, 39.7% Black, 36.1% Hispanic and 30.5% White high school students engaged in a physical fight within the previous year.

Minden, Henry, Tolan, and Gorman-Smith (2000) studied violence amongst inner-city Latino and African American males. Using data from the *Chicago Youth Development Study* (CYDS), researchers analyzed interviews with 285 seventh grade boys and their mother or father regarding school violence and delinquency. Items from the *Self Report on Delinquency* (SDR) were used to assess illegal and problematic behaviors. In addition, items from the *Social Network Questionnaire* (SNQ) were
selected to identify social relationships with both adults and peers. Multinomial logistic regression analyses were conducted with school violence as the outcome variable. Results garnered from the study indicated that inner-city boys involved in school violence were four times more likely to be gang members with many deviant peer relationships. Researchers also reported that the Latino and African American boys in the study who exhibited violent behaviors in school were less involved in positive activities in school and reported lower network boundary density (i.e., the extent to which adults and peers in their social networks knew each other) than less violent boys. Thus, urban schools with high proportions of students involved in gangs and weak adult-student relationships, may be at greater risk for school violence.

While urban schools’ resources are being exhausted to address the safety and basic needs of their students, they are simultaneously being held accountable by governmental mandates and high-stakes testing. Yet, research has clearly demonstrated that poverty is a major contributor to academic failure (Noguera, 2003; Payne, 2003). Ethnic minority and impoverished students, who overwhelmingly attend urban schools, have lower academic achievement rates and less success in school than their affluent White counterparts (Haycock, 2001; Ipka, 2003; Noguera, 2003).

2.3 The Achievement Gap

The achievement gap can be defined as “the difference between how well low-income and minority children perform on standardized tests as compared to their peers” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 2). Or, said another way, “the gap is the difference between learning (i.e. the achievement) of poor students and their peers,
between children of color and their peers, and between schools with a high percentage of low-income families and their peers” (McGee, 2004, p. 99).

2.3.1 Current State of the Achievement Gap

The achievement gap between ethnic minority and majority youth has been a topic of much concern in education and, more recently, in national and state public policy. While the gap is narrowing in certain areas, many of the statistics are startling. For example, only 1 in 100 African American and 1 in 20 Latino seventeen-year-olds can read and interpret technical data as compared with 1 in 12 of their White counterparts; only 1 in 100 African Americans can solve multi-step word problems and elementary algebra as compared to 1 in 10 White students; only 3 in 10 African American seventeen year olds have mastered the computation of fractions, common percents, and averages, while 7 in 10 White students have mastered these skills (Ipka, 2003).

Furthermore, the gap widens between African Americans and European Americans throughout their schooling. By the end of the fourth grade, African American students are two years behind their White peers in reading and mathematics. This gap increases in the eighth grade to three years behind, and, by the twelfth grade, African Americans are four years behind White students (Ipka, 2003). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2001), by high school graduation, both Latino and African Americans have acquired reading and math skills equivalent to those of White eighth graders.
2.3.2 Trends in the Achievement Gap

Lee (2002) reviewed trends in the achievement gap over the last three decades. He noted a bifurcated pattern, with achievement gaps narrowing in the 1970s and 1980s, and widening in the 1990s. Lee (2002) pointed to an increase in student achievement of Black and Hispanic students in the 1980s as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). However, these ethnic groups faced setbacks in their gains in the 1990s. Interestingly, Lee (2002) noted that, during the 1970s and 1980s, Black students made substantial academic gains, while their White peers’ achievement level stayed flat. Conversely, in the 1990s, White students improved on NAEP measures whereas Black students made few gains. Thus, a quadratic trend of the Black-White achievement gap emerged.

Hispanic-White achievement gap patterns have been inconsistent. According to Lee (2002) most of Hispanic academic gains were made by 1982 and have been stagnant since then. As a result, Hispanic-White achievement gaps have widened since the early 1980s. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores have followed similar patterns, with a narrowing of verbal and mathematical score differences by the late 1980s. Similar to the NAEP trend, White student progress on this test stabilized while their Black and Hispanic counterparts increased. This trend ceased, however, in the early 1990s, and the gaps have widened since then. However, according to Lee (2002), this gap change is less significant than changes in NAEP performance.

Further in his analysis, Lee (2002) reviewed the upper and lower quartiles of student performance. He noted that lower-performing students benefited more in the
1970s and 1980s but higher-achieving students made greater gains in the 1990s. He posited that this trend may be a result of curricular changes, such as the move towards higher learning standards in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Interestingly, the gap in pre-school attendance has also widened, during the last three decades. In the 1970s, 25% of both African American and White children were going to pre-school. However, in 1991, a nine percent attendance gap was evidenced, with 40% of White and 31% of African American children attending pre-school. This fact has led some researchers to postulate that this discrepancy in prior formal pre-school educational experiences is a major contributor to the current achievement gap in public schools (Ipka, 2003).

Interest in preschool patterns is matched by continued concern regarding the discrepancies in completion rates of postsecondary education of poor minority youth. McMillian (2003) noted that even the highest achieving Black students (earning a 1400 or better on SATs) drop out of college at significantly higher rates than their White counterparts (18-33% as compared to 2-11% respectively). She also highlighted the gender differences among African American students. In particular, Black girls outperform Black boys, as the gains in higher education have been the result of degrees earned by women, whereas degrees earned by Black men have either remained stagnant or diminished. Trusty and House (2004) reported a racial gap in college completion. They noted that 33% of White students, 18% of Black students and only 11% of Latino students obtain a college degree by their late 20’s.
Recent research has been concerned with better understanding how these trends emerge. One such study was completed by Bali and Alvarez (2004) who conducted an investigation (N=1,147) of a racially diverse group of first through fourth graders in California public schools. Using multivariate analysis, the authors sought to study the evolution of the achievement gap in this sample. They found that an achievement gap developed but varied by racial group. Specifically, Black students had significant gaps in math test scores as compared to their White counterparts in first grade, but this gap was not evidenced for Hispanic children until second grade. Additionally, gaps widened for both groups as students aged, however the gap was more than two times as large for Black than for Hispanic students. These results persisted after controlling for school quality factors (e.g. teachers’ average years of experience) and students’ initial test scores (Bali & Alvarez, 2004).

Bali and Alvarez (2004) also examined non-school factors and found significant negative correlations between enrollment in free or reduced lunch as well as for single-parent households for Black students. Such factors played a diminishing role as students progressed for White and Hispanic students, but continued to strongly effect Black student achievement. Bali and Alvarez (2004) also found that school factors had varied effects as students progressed. In particular, higher rates of minority teachers seemed to positively influence fourth grade Black students and smaller class sizes positively impacted Hispanic students’ scores. Finally, these researchers posited that language acquisition and neighborhood may play more important roles in the Hispanic-White gap than in Black-White achievement gap. Clearly, other studies, such as the one completed
by Bali and Alvarez (2004) are needed to better understand the antecedents which contribute to the achievement gap amongst minority and poor youth.

The fact that the achievement gap is pervasive in almost all standardized tests throughout American schools has led to unprecedented public and political concern. This attention has led to investigations of other pervasive contextual barriers in the lives of ethnic minority youth which may contribute to and exacerbate the achievement gap.

2.3.3 The Socioeconomic Gap

The socioeconomic gap between the White majority and other ethnic minorities has been viewed as a major contributing factor to the achievement gap. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2005), in 2002, 32.3% of Black children under the age of eighteen and 28.6% of Hispanic children lived in poverty, as compared to 13.6% of White children. Ford and Moore (2004) asserted that poverty “is the most significant variable in the achievement gap” (p. 4). They noted that poverty can impede student learning because:

(a) efforts to secure basic needs may supercede other needs; (b) parents may have fears or feel uneasy about working with school staff; (c) there may be less structure and routine; (d) lack of money prevents parents from purchasing educational materials and from providing educationally-enhanced experiences and (e) research has demonstrated that parents may have lower academic expectations for their children (p. 5).
2.3.4 The Inequity Gap

Furthermore, poor ethnic minority students are more likely to attend schools with less resources, less-qualified teachers, higher teacher turnover, and larger class sizes (Ford & Moore, 2004; Noguera, 2003). Haycock, Jerald, and Huang (2001) enumerated on this inequity gap, by noting that 42% of teachers in high-poverty schools scored in the bottom quartile of the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)/American College Test (ACT) as compared to 28% in all other schools. Additionally, students in high-minority schools are two times as likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers. In high schools, researchers found that one-third of all math teachers did not even have a minor in mathematics. As summarized by Haycock et al. (2001), “[we] take the kids who are most dependent upon their teachers for academic learning and systematically assign them teachers with the weakest academic base” (pp. 16-17). In addition, Paul (2004) noted that very few people of color comprise the teaching corps or have pursued careers in school administration. She emphasized that only 13% of teachers are people of color, but Blacks and Hispanics make-up together 32% of the student population. Such educational inequities must be addressed, if the schooling of low-income and minority students is to improve in the future.

2.3.5 The Funding Gap

The funding gap is also perpetuated in high-minority, high-poverty schools. According to Carey (2004), the funding gap narrowed in the late 1990s but has reemerged in the twenty-first century. Thirty-six of the fifty states have a funding gap, with a nationwide gap between high and low poverty school districts of $1,348 per
student. In twenty-five states, the highest-poverty districts get less money than the lowest poverty districts. Illinois and New York lead the states with the largest funding gaps, totaling over $2,000 per pupil. In thirty-one states, low-minority schools receive more dollars than high-minority schools, with a national funding gap for minority students of $1,099 per student (Carey, 2004). With states possessing much fiscal responsibility for allocating federal and state funds, little consistency between states has been demonstrated. As a result, minority and poor students are often short-changed.

2.3.6 Environmental Factors

It is well established that certain environmental factors are correlated with high school completion rates (Noguera, 2003). Ethnic minority and low-income youth face multiple challenges at higher rates than their more advantaged peers. For example, ethnic minority and low-income youth have higher teenage pregnancy and homicide rates and are more likely to engage in risky behaviors as indicated by the statistics below:

1. Hispanic and Black females between the ages of 15 to 19 have birthrates of 65 to 66 live births (respectively) to every 1,000 unmarried Hispanic and Black females. This rate is three times larger than their White counterparts who have a rate of 22 live births per 1,000 unmarried White females between the ages of 15 and 19.

2. The homicide rate for Black males between the ages of 15-24 is significant, with a rate of 85.2 deaths for every 1,000 Black males in this age bracket, the highest of any ethnic group.
(3) In 2003, 24% of all Hispanic students between the ages of 16-24 dropped out of school, as compared to Black students (11%) and White students (6%). Furthermore, in 2004, only 11% of Hispanics between 25-29 years old had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher as compared to 17% of Black-non-Hispanics and 34% of White non-Hispanics in the same age cohort (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

2.3.7 Educational Aspirations

Despite these staggering statistics, most students, regardless of ethnic background, have high educational aspirations. Weiner and Hall (2004) reported that 75% of all high school students go on to postsecondary education. However, the completion rate of college is alarming, particularly for students of color and low-income students. According to Weiner and Hall (2004), 77% of students from affluent backgrounds obtain their college degree within six years, while only 54% of students from low-income families do so. Furthermore, 67% of White students graduate within six years as compared to 46% African American students and 47% Latino students.

Goldsmith (2004) also investigated the educational aspirations of students. In particular, he was interested in determining how schools’ racial mix of students and teachers influence students’ occupational and academic expectations and aspirations and their perceived level of optimism. Using the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data set of 24,599 students, Goldsmith conducted a multi-model analysis to determine if school racial composition affects students’ attitudes and their educational and occupational aspirations.
Results of this study indicated that Black and Latino youth are more likely to have higher educational aspirations than are their White peers. This finding was especially significant when students were in racially-mixed or separate-minority schools than in schools where White students were predominant. Further, analysis revealed that Black and Latino students had the highest optimism and educational aspirations in schools where minority teachers were also present. Goldsmith (2004) asserted that such findings have implications for segregated-White schools. In particular, he recommended that such schools endorse measures aimed at reducing harmful effects on Black and Latino’s students’ educational aspirations and beliefs.

Part of the explanation for the significant relationship between poverty and poor academic outcomes may lie with factors related to parents’ employment. Presser and Cox (1997) found that less educated and economically-disadvantaged mothers are more likely to work non-standard hours (shifts other than 9-5) than other women. In addition, single-mothers work longer hours than married women (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Thus, because single-mothers are more likely to be employed during nonstandard shifts and are away from home longer, they are less able to monitor their students’ time and are often unable to attend after school programming.

Numerous studies have shown a link between parental monitoring and academic achievement. Finn (1998) found that providing structure at home and active monitoring of students’ time is linked with improved academic performance. Perry (2000) reported that parental involvement in education transmitted the importance of education to children, thus enhancing self-esteem and academic achievement. Furthermore, active
participation in and attendance at school programs, parent-teacher conferences and extracurricular activities has been linked with increased school achievement (Steinberg, 1996). Unfortunately, securing parental engagement and support continues to be an obstacle for many urban schools.

Consequently, due to these financial, emotional, familial, organizational, and governmental constraints, many urban schools are struggling to provide equal educational opportunities for all students. Educational professionals, concerned citizens and public policy makers, seem to agree that the current school system is not well-positioned to address these challenges, especially for students placed “at-risk” (Merseth, Schorr, & Elmore, 2000). Additionally, it has been well-documented that children can not learn well, if they lack the basic needs of safety, nutrition, housing and health (Dryfoos, 1998; Noguera, 2003; Warren, 2005). Finally, educators in urban settings may be operating from “deficit” views of students, rather than understanding their culture and context, leading many experts to believe “the culture of schooling needs to be transformed [in urban schools]” (Warren, 2005, p. 135) and that conceptual frameworks exploring social capital need to be explored (Noguera, 2003). Calls for school-linked or school-based service integration centers which attend to medical, socio-emotional, familial and community issues via collaborative relationships with community agencies and universities have emerged as one such solution (Dryfoos, 1998; Merseth, Schorr & Elmore, 2000; Warren, 2005; Zetlin, Ramos & Valdez, 1996).
2.4 The Full-Service School Movement

Full-service schools have been called many names, including community schools, youth service centers, school-based health clinics, wellness centers, student health or service centers, and family resource centers (Dryfoos, 1998). Regardless of their designated title, these entities can be defined as:

…a school which serves as a central point of delivery, a single community hub for whatever education, health, social, human or employment services have been determined locally to be needed to support a child’s success at school and in the community…quality education is integrated with the provision of health, mental health, and social services that support and enrich the lives of children, the parents and the community (Kronick, 2002, p.14).

Proponents of the movement believe that “wrap around” services (i.e., services that address holistic needs of students) are warranted in order to facilitate student learning. Advocates of the full-service school movement cite Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, asserting that students must have their basic needs of safety, food, shelter and clothing met before any learning can begin (Kronick, 2002). Full service schools offer a plethora of services to address the basic needs of students including health screening, dental services, family and individual planning, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, recreation and sports, family welfare services, parent education, childcare and employment training. These assistance programs are intended to augment and support the educational components (ie. basic skills, individualized instruction, school-based management, and effective discipline) rendered by the schools (Dryfoos, 1998).
2.4.1 Evaluative Studies

There have been two major evaluative studies conducted regarding the efficacy of the full-service school model. *The Coalition for Community Schools*, which is comprised of 125 educational, human services, community development, government, business and philanthropic organizations and staffed by the *Institute for Educational Leadership*, commissioned an evaluation conducted by Blank, Melaville, and Shah (2003) of twenty full-service school initiatives across the country. In addition, Joy Dryfoos (2003), with support from the Carnegie Corporation, obtained evaluative information from forty-nine different full-service school initiatives.

Findings of these studies can be grouped into five overarching themes related to the improvement of student, family and community well-being. They are summarized below:

1. *Improved student learning.* Fifteen of the twenty initiatives reviewed by Blank et al (2003) reported improved grades and increased proficiency test scores. In addition, Dryfoos (2003) found thirty-six of the forty-nine programs reported increased academic achievement. She cited an exemplar model, Charles Drew Elementary School in the University of Pennsylvania’s West Philadelphia Improvement Corp, which demonstrated the greatest improvement in reading and math tests in the entire state of Pennsylvania in 1999.

improvements in school attendance and discipline referrals. The *Communities In Schools* (CIS) initiative reported 70% of students with poor attendance records prior to CIS improved their attendance following participation in their program. Eleven programs cited decreased rates of suspensions. For example, Lane Middle School in Portland, Oregon experienced a decrease in suspensions from 50 to 15 in two years.

(3) *Promotion of family engagement in schools.* Over ten of the twenty initiatives evaluated by Blank et al (2003) measured benefits to families. Improvements included increased communication between caretakers and school staff and increased attendance at school meetings. In addition, increases in parent volunteer hours and evidence of improved family functioning were present in twelve programs. For instance, 138 families in California’s Healthy Start schools reported receiving assistance with their basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing).

(4) *Positive school environment.* Of the programs evaluated by Blank et al (2003), 75% reported improvement in the school environment. Specifically, five programs reported full support from teachers and administrators, four initiatives cited public support for community partnerships and two initiatives reported a safer and more cheerful school climate.

(5) *Increased community vitality and well being.* Indicators of this outcome included increased knowledge of community resources and greater use of school buildings in seven initiatives. Moreover, strengthened community pride.
and a greater sense of security were evidenced in two of the initiatives evaluated. Additionally, five initiatives demonstrated increased access to medical and mental health services for students and families (Blank et al., 2003). Dryfoos (2003) found similar results. She cited The Success Program in Des Moines Iowa which immunized 97% of children in their schools. In addition, in Broad Acres Elementary School in Maryland, children with no insurance decreased from 38% to 10%. Dryfoos (2003) also reported eleven initiatives evidenced a decrease in substance abuse and pregnancy rates. Six initiatives also reported lower levels of violence and increased feelings of safety in the communities in which full-service schools were located.

As stated by Merseth, Schorr and Elmore (2000), “[t]hese complicated, messy, evolving interventions [full-service schools] do not lend themselves to randomized experiments that produce definitive conclusions about causation” (p. 49). Because a hallmark of full-service schools is that each school is predicated on the needs of the individual community and school in which it is located, different services are offered and unique models have been employed. Thus, trying to group each full-service school together, a number that has been estimated at over 500 (Dryfoos, 1998), is not only difficult but statistically impossible. Moreover, different funding agencies hold varying primary goals and objectives. As such, many have conducted their own evaluations and are interested in a variety of different student and community outcomes. Thus, while common themes can be determined, it is important to place conclusions in the setting and context in which they were drawn.
2.5 The Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI)

Noting the accountability trend in national standards-based educational reform movements, and the simultaneous widening of the achievement gap, *The Education Trust*, became interested in re-thinking the role of school counselors. Thus, in 1996, *The Education Trust*, with assistance and support from the *Dewitt-Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund*, launched a five-year multi-staged national initiative to transform the education and training of school counselors.

In order to promote change in counselor education programs, *The Education Trust* solicited counselor education programs throughout the country to propose innovative counselor training grant proposals. The Trust specified the following eight essential elements in the training of school counselors: (a) criteria for selecting and recruiting candidates for counselor education programs; (b) curricular content, structure and sequence of courses; (c) methods of instruction, field experiences, and practices; (d) induction process into the profession; (e) working relationships with community partners; (f) professional development for counselor educators; (g) university/school district partnerships; and (h) university/state department partnerships (Sears, 1999).

A new vision for the school counselor was developed by *The Education Trust’s* advisory board. This new vision consisted of five core functions that school counselors must master in order to be effective in schools: (a) leadership; (b) advocacy; (c) teaming and collaboration; (d) counseling and coordination; and (e) assessing and using data (Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Sears, 1999). Since TSCI’s inception there have been twenty-six companion institutions which have not received funding from *The Dewitt-*
Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund but have reconstructed their counselor education programs to coincide with TSCI principles.

In 2001, Perusse and Goodnough conducted a national survey to assess how counselor education programs were addressing The Education Trust initiatives. The authors utilized a questionnaire created by Perusse, Goodnough, and Noel (2001), designed to measure counselor educators’ perceptions of what they were teaching and what areas they deemed as important for preparing future school counselors. The instruments were mailed to the 332 counselor education programs. The authors then reviewed the 185 surveys that were returned and completed.

Perusse and Goodnough (2001) found that the highest ratings were under the leadership, assessment and use of data, and counseling and coordination domains, while the lowest ratings were related to implementing school-wide changes. With regard to TSCI’s eight essential elements, the highest rated items were infusion of multicultural concepts and field supervision, recruitment of diverse students, and securing mentors for new school counselors receiving the lowest ratings. These researchers asserted that the school profession needed to move away from being viewed strictly as mental health professionals towards interventions aimed at systemic changes. They also called for future research focused on how TSCI training directly impacts outcomes of professional school counselors, once they are in the field.

While the TSCI movement has gained momentum, its theoretical underpinnings are largely based on expert opinion rather than on empirical research. The Education Trust launched a 14-month study designed to assess the state of school counseling
preparation and practice, however, results of the study were used chiefly to formulate training programs (Martin, 2000). The efficacy of these new training programs is largely under-researched. With the exception of Young’s (2004) dissertation regarding leadership perceptions and practices of TSCI graduates, no other research endeavor has explored the training program’s impact. If such graduate-level training is going to transform the role of school counseling as it purports, it must be able to legitimize that doing so does, indeed, make a difference in the lives of minority and low-income students.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Based on national statistics, many American urban schools are failing (Green, 2002; Noguera, 2003, Warren, 2005). Educational professionals, policy makers, and concerned citizens have tried to better understand the problems associated with urban schools but, to date, have found very few solutions. The OSU Counseling and Wellness Center has attempted to address this need. As part of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative, school counselor interns, practicum students, and supervisors have staffed the Center at Hope High School, a Columbus Public School. While counseling services have been provided for the past five and a half consecutive years, research aimed at understanding the influence of the Center on the lives of urban students and staff has yet to be conducted.

Therefore, the current study was designed to explore qualitatively how the Ohio State University Center Model of training school counselors influences an urban school. A qualitative design provided the most appropriate means for studying urban students’ perceptions of the Center Model and best answered the research questions outlined in Chapter One. This chapter describes the qualitative research design, data collection, data analysis, and triangulation methods utilized in this study.
3.2 Overview of the School Setting

3.2.1 Columbus Public Schools (CPS)

According to the Civil Rights Project at Harvard (2003), Columbus Public Schools (CPS) had the nation’s fourth lowest graduation rate of urban public schools. Researchers at Harvard reported that only 44% of Columbus students who had been ninth graders four years earlier graduated in 2003. CPS, like many other urban districts, is comprised of high minority, low socioeconomic students. More specifically, the CPS student population consists of 56.4% African American, 39.9% Non-Hispanic Whites, 2.4% Asian American, 1.1% Hispanic and .2% Native American. Half of the students are receiving government support and almost 60% qualify for free or reduced lunch (Columbus Public Schools Boilerplate Information, 2005). While a few schools, specifically alternative high schools like Columbus Alternative and Eastmoor Academy, have high standardized test scores and graduation rates, many of the high schools are failing.

3.2.3 Hope High School

Hope High School (HHS) currently has a graduation rate of 46.7%; thus of the 725 students enrolled at HHS, less than half graduate. The racial/ethnic make-up of the student body is comprised of 92.6% African-American, 5.7% White, and 1.7% other minorities (i.e., Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American). Of these students, 89% are classified as economically disadvantaged, based on the federal criteria, and 16.5% are students with disabilities. In this school, truancy is also a problem, with an attendance rate of 87% (the district goal is 93%) and the largest percentage of foster
children in the Columbus area. Additionally, high mobility continues to be a challenge for the school and its staff.

HHS has consistently had failing state report cards and has been placed on academic emergency. In the 2003-2004 academic school year, the percentage of ninth graders passing the proficiency test in the five core academic areas were: 96.2% writing, 90.0% reading, 83.7% citizenship, 72.1% science and 61.7% math. With a state mandate of 85%, only the writing and reading academic areas met this requirement. Hope High School met 2 of the 7 state indicators and failed to meet adequate yearly progress (Ohio Department of Education, 2005).

3.3 The Ohio State Wellness and Student Support Centers

As a result of the OSU’s involvement with the *Transforming School Counseling Initiative* grant, The Ohio State Counselor Education program created a new mission statement, revised curricular content and instruction and redesigned school counseling field experiences. Table 3.1 displays the before and after changes in practicum and internship field experiences as a result of TSCI.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Experiences Prior to TSCI</th>
<th>Field Experiences After TSCI</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Students’ field experiences were in both urban and suburban school settings.</td>
<td>(1) Students’ field experiences occurred only in urban school settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Students’ field experiences were blended with practicum and internship including both school and clinical counseling students.</td>
<td>(2) Students’ field experience courses were separate and include only school counseling students. This major modification has had the same effect as developing new courses in the school counseling track because the focus of the field experiences classes is on what school counselors should know and do not on counseling skills in general.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) In field experiences, students worked alone and received support in practicum and internship class.</td>
<td>(3) In field experiences, students worked in teams and receive support from each other as well as from university supervisors who work alongside the interns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) OSU School counseling Program placed students in three or more school districts for field.</td>
<td>(4) OSU School Counseling Program places students in only one school district.</td>
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Table 3.1: The Ohio State University Field Experiences as a Result of TSCI
Traditionally, school counseling master’s students worked alone during practicum and internship and received supervisory support from the assigned school counselor(s) in the building. However, school counselors often reported being too busy to provide the supervision needed (OSU Internal Document, n.d.). In addition, very few, if any, counselors in the CPS district were trained under the TSCI philosophy and therefore were not able to adequately provide the type of supervision reflective of the program changes and new standards. Believing that field experiences (i.e., internship and practicum) were no longer having the desired impact on trainees, the school counseling faculty grouped school counselor interns and practicum students into teams of three or four and placed them into designated school sites, known as Centers, along with on-site, university supervisors (Sears, 2000). The first Center Model was established at Hope High School (HHS) beginning in the fall of 2000. Table 3.2 displays program objectives for the newly developed school counselor training Centers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives for OSU Interns</th>
<th>Objectives That Address the Needs of K-12 Students Being Served in the Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Provide interns real-world experiences reflective of the TSCI model</td>
<td>(1) Help students remove or overcome external and internal barriers to their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Learn to function as a team</td>
<td>(2) Assist students in learning social-emotional competency skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Demonstrate leadership skills</td>
<td>(3) Help students acquire learning and study skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Collaborate with teachers, principals, nurses, social workers, &amp; other school counselors</td>
<td>(4) Help students acquire life skills they need to succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Interact with and utilize community resources (community mapping)</td>
<td>(5) Increase the number of students planning to go onto postsecondary institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Reach out to parents/community support systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Develop a field laboratory to practice skills to become effective school counselors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3.2: Program Objectives for Student Support Centers

On-site supervision in the Center Model ensures that school counseling interns and practicum students are effectively and efficiently supervised. Individual as well as weekly group supervisory meetings occur. During these group supervisory meetings, all Center staff members (i.e., supervisor, interns and practicum students) are present. Administrative and procedural tasks are discussed and updates and status reports are given. In addition, students present case conceptualizations, whereby they receive feedback and recommendations from their supervisor as well as from their peers. The
weekly group supervision meetings are designed to unify Center staff and to create a synergy among members. Interns and practicum students also gain experience in teaming and in working collaboratively with others.

Furthermore, assignments are designed so that OSU students learn about the school and surrounding community. For example, during practicum, students are expected to complete a community mapping project aimed at identifying community resources in the local school area. In practicum and/or internship, students write grants, develop case studies, and conduct outcome-based research studies in their schools. Instructors and on-site supervisors work in tandem to ensure that the field experience and class work compliment one another. In this way, students’ progress is monitored, and they gain a broad array of experiences aligned with the vision of transformed school counselors.

Because of the success with the HHS Center Model, in 2002, The Ohio State University Counselor Education program partnered with Aspire High School (AHS), and in 2005 with Strive High School (SHS) (Please note these are pseudonyms.). Both schools are comprised of high-poverty, high-minority students and are part of the CPS district. The Student Support Centers at AHS and SHS were established with the same mission of creating systemic change in urban schools as well as facilitating a “world class” training for pre-service school counselors.
3.3.1 Services Rendered by the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center

Interns and practicum students at HHS have provided valuable services to students. These services include but are not limited to:

(1) Individual brief solution-focused counseling regarding a variety of needs including academic achievement, anger management and behavior issues, grief, suicidal ideations, sexual identity, and social/emotional support.

(2) Small group counseling centered around several topics, including anger management (for both boys and girls), grief groups, superman groups (for boys lacking a male role model), phenomenal women (self esteem groups for girls), study skills groups, proficiency proficient groups (for seniors who have not passed their state-mandated proficiency tests), wellness groups, circle of trust for survivors of abuse, and teen parenting enrichment groups.

(3) Classroom guidance lessons on topics including study skills, positive leadership, decision-making, college awareness and financial aid, violence prevention, understanding and preventing sexual harassment, and career exploration and awareness.

Center staff members’ consistent efforts to consult and collaborate with other key members in the school have helped to ensure the Centers’ success. These collaborative efforts have led to programmatic interventions including:

(1) Prom Dress Donations: Center students, both intern and practicum, spearhead these projects aimed at providing prom dresses to students in need. They work
collaboratively to solicit donations from school staff and local community retailers.

(2) *Columbus Reads Program*: At HHS, a counselor intern and/or practicum students work with Columbus Reads to pair HHS students with elementary students for tutoring services.

(3) *Staff In-Services*: Counselor interns and practicum students organize these initiatives for teachers and staff. Topics to date have been centered around stress reduction, grief and loss, relaxation strategies, depression and suicide, and services rendered by the Centers.

(4) *Newsletters*: Staff in the Centers provide school staff with monthly newsletters detailing counseling services as well as providing valuable information about student wellness and achievement.

(5) *Supervision Assistance*: Interns and practicum students assist with the supervision of students at multiple events during the school year including the Kiwanis College Fair, Career Center Visits, and field trips to local museums.

(6) *Participation on the S.A.I.L. Team* (Student Assistance and Intervention for Learning): On-site supervisors are standing committee members that help staff address individual student needs as well as plan for preventative programs. Additionally, counselor interns join S.A.I.L. committee meetings to discuss individual student interventions.
(7) *Scrabble Club*: A counselor intern at HHS secured a $2,800 three-year renewal grant to start a scrabble club aimed at improving students’ vocabulary and math skills.

(8) *Chess Club*: A counselor intern at HHS also secured a $500 mini-grant to start a chess club to help students with critical, analytical and problem-solving skills. Both the scrabble and chess clubs are conducted during lunch so as not to disrupt student instruction time.

(9) *Planned Parenthood*: Counselor interns at HHS obtained a $1,000 mini-grant to fund guest speakers from *Planned Parenthood* to speak to students about healthy and responsible sexual and behavioral choices.

(10) *Book Club*: Counselor interns and practicum students work with the *Communities-In-Schools* liaison to host a book club for girls. The book club generates interest in reading and provides a space for students to express their views and opinions on texts which affect their lives.

A more detailed account of the services provided for the 2004-2005 academic school year at the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center can be found in Appendix A.

3.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore, using qualitative methods, how the Ohio State University Center Model of training school counselors influences an urban school. Specifically, the researcher was interested in exploring if the interventions utilized in
OSU’s Counseling and Wellness Center at HHS has, as experienced by students, assisted students with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in school and in their futures and thereby influenced them in a positive manner. Additionally, the researcher examined what services and individuals had the greatest influence on these students’ academic, personal/social, and career development.

3.5 Research Questions

The present study explored the following five research questions:

(1) What services and individuals at Hope High School have had the greatest influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development?

(2) How do students perceive the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(3) To what degree are students willing to utilize the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(4) What experiences, both positively and negatively, have had the greatest influence on students’ attitudes towards and beliefs about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(5) What changes do students see in themselves as a result of their involvement in the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

3.6 Conceptual Framework

Floyd (1996) posited that “rarely does one see the terms ‘competent,’ ‘resourceful,’ ‘aspiring,’ or ‘motivated’ used to describe their [urban youths’]
performance in schools” (p.181). Subsequently, a culture of lowered expectations, pessimism, defeatism, and blame has emerged in many urban schools. Noting this trend, educators and researchers have begun to build a large body of research surrounding resiliency-building in youth (Henderson & Milistein, 1999; Krovetz, 1999; Rak & Patterson, 1996; Sagor, 1996). In line with this movement, the current study utilized resiliency theory as its conceptual framework.

Upon review of related literature, Henderson and Milstein (1996) identified six consistent themes that are indicative of how schools, parents, and communities can encourage resiliency in children. Henderson and Milstein (1996) have conceptualized these findings into a resiliency wheel, which they posit should be built around each child. The first three components of the resiliency wheel—increasing prosocial bonding, setting clear and consistent boundaries, and teaching life skills—mitigating the impact of risk in students’ lives, thus propelling students towards resiliency. The remaining three spokes of the wheel—providing opportunities for meaningful participation, setting and communicating high expectations, and providing care and support—are resiliency-fostering components. See figure 3.1 below.
For urban schools especially, it is suggested that school counseling include more action-oriented or activist counseling (Sears, 2000). Therefore, the promotion of a resiliency-based school counseling program in an urban district, which promotes proactive engagement and strategies for overcoming adversity is concomitant with this mission. Thus, new information gained from this study, which focused on an innovative school counseling initiative in an urban school setting, is discussed in relation to resiliency theory and purposefully seeks novel ways in which resiliency can be cultivated in urban youth.
3.7 Research Design

3.7.1 Epistemology

Constructivism maintains that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world (Schwandt, 2001). Thus, constructivists are interested in how people construct meaning out of their lives (Crotty, 1998). As the present study was guided by these epistemological assumptions, the researcher was interested in understanding how participants “recognize, produce, and reproduce social actions [and]…come to share an intersubjective understanding of specific life circumstances” (Schwandt, 2001, pp. 31-32).

3.7.2 Focus Groups

The current study utilized two focus groups. A focus group is an interview with small groups of people, typically ranging in size from six to ten people with similar backgrounds (Krueger, 1994). Aligned with this, Patton (2002) asserted that they should not be confused with decision-making or problem-solving sessions. The goal is to obtain peoples’ attitudes, opinions, and perceptions in a social context as they listen to and respond to the views of others.

According to one of the foremost experts in focus groups, Richard Krueger (1994), focus groups provide more of a natural setting in which rich conversations emerge between participants. As stated by Krueger (1994), focus groups are effective because they “tap into human tendencies…attitudes and perceptions relating to concepts, products, services, or programs are developed, in part, by interaction with people” (p. 10-
Thus, focus groups create a social context which promotes self-disclosure and the sharing of ideas and opinions.

In general, focus groups have several advantages. According to Patton (2002), they are cost and time effective. One can gather information from several people at the same time at a relatively low cost. In addition, the nature of the focus group allows for interactive conversations which enhance the quality of the data and provides checks and balances amongst members. Furthermore, shared or divergent views can be readily apparent and assessed. As such, focus groups provide quick results. Toward this end, they allow the researcher to increase the sample size with considerable ease, without necessarily significantly increasing the time required (Krueger, 1994).

Like all forms of data collection, focus groups also pose some challenges. First, confidentiality is difficult to guarantee, thus deeply personal or controversial issues should not be discussed. In addition, it is a necessary prerequisite that the moderator have group process skills in order to effectively move the conversation forward and to ensure that no one member monopolizes or dominates the group. Furthermore, the logistics of assembling groups may be difficult due to varied schedules. Transcribing the data can also pose challenges due to the flow of conversation, interruptions, and different voice inflections and volumes. Finally, in analyzing the data, researchers must take special care not to lift remarks out of sequence or context in order to ensure the integrity of the comments (Krueger, 1994; Lunt, 1996; Patton, 2002).
3.7.3 Interviewing

The present study utilized standardized open-ended interviews. This form of interview requires a thoughtful and planned approach which ensures each interviewee is asked the same questions (with modifications for each subgroup) but allows for further exploration through the use of probing questions (Fontana & Fry, 2000). Allowing for open-ended questions ensures that the recursive process of questioning can occur; that is, new questions will constantly emerge from newly acquired data (Pelto & Pelto, 1996).

Patton (2002) summarized the four main reasons and benefits of utilizing the standardized open-ended interview method: (a) the exact instrument used in the interview is available for others to use and for those examining the findings of the study; (b) variation among interviews is minimized and consistency is present; (c) the interview is focused and thus time is used efficiently; and (d) analysis is more seamless as responses can be more readily compared. As such, the standardized open-ended interview method was well-suited for the current study.

However, interviewing is not without its own limitations. First, it is labor intensive and involves much time and energy creating well-grounded interview protocols, coordinating and conducting interviews, transcribing tapes and analyzing transcriptions (Seidman, 1998). In addition, “the quality of the information obtained during the interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” (Patton, 2002, p. 341). Thus, it is incumbent upon the researcher to be conscientious in representing participants’ statements and to allow for ample time to complete the interview process in a responsible and ethical manner.
The ontological perspective in the constructivist paradigm—from which this study is predicated—is the belief that “people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties which [the primary researcher’s] research questions are designed to explore” (Mason, 1996, p. 39). Furthermore, the author’s epistemological position assumed that it is necessary to use dialectical methods characterized by interpersonal transactions in order to better understand how the participants make meaning of their experiences. Thus utilizing focus groups and individual interviews was in line with the fundamental paradigmatic underpinnings of this study.

3.8 Sampling Methods

As asserted by Patton (2002), one of the largest differences between qualitative and quantitative research is their varying approaches to sampling procedures. Whereas quantitative research typically seeks random sampling to produce results that can be generalized to the larger population (central limit theorem), qualitative research focuses on purposeful sampling. In more detail, purposeful sampling, as discussed by Patton (2002), is comprised of “information-rich cases…from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (p. 230). Thus, the result of such sampling methods is a depth of understanding rather than statistical techniques designed to ensure results can be generalized to a certain population.

Thus, there is a constant, yet necessary, struggle associated with trading off breadth for depth. As such, there are no set rules for sample size in qualitative research. According to Patton (1990), “sample size depends on what you want to know, the
purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources” (p. 184). Creswell (1998) suggested that the number of participants in phenomenological qualitative studies typically range from five to twenty-five. He asserted that in studies involving in-depth interviews, ten participants represent a logical and realistic size. However, Patton (1990) is quick to warn qualitative researchers from fixating on a set number of participants:

What should happen is that purposeful samples be judged on the basis of the purpose and rationale of each study and the sampling strategy used to achieve the study’s purpose. The sample, like all other aspects of qualitative inquiry, must be judged in contexts—the same principle that undergirds analysis and presentation of qualitative data. (p. 185)

3.8.1 Selection of Sample

This study utilized a purposeful sample. The researcher obtained a list of possible participants from the HHS Counseling and Wellness Center’s Director. Senior students were asked to participate on the basis of age, grade point average, and participation in the Center criteria. Specifically, the researcher sought a sample of students who were 18 years or older, had varying academic success (had grade point averages of 2.0 or higher or 1.9 and lower), and students who had utilized the Center and those who had not. Students who agreed to participate signed an informed consent, were free to withdraw their consent to participate and could discontinue their participation in the study at any time without consequence. As recommended by Krueger (1994), students were provided lunch as an incentive for participation.
In order to better understand patterns of student use of the Center and to obtain a more balanced perspective, one of the focus groups was comprised of students who have utilized the services of the HHS Counseling and Wellness Center and one of the focus groups was comprised those who had not. Senior students were targeted for several reasons. More specifically, they added to the credibility of the study because they had access to the Center for a total of three and a half years and thus had the most opportunities to experience the services rendered by the Center. Seniors who were over eighteen years old were recruited. Because of their age, they were no longer considered minors and therefore consent and permission to tape was facilitated more easily and allowed for a more seamless process. As the researcher was also interested in academic achievement, seniors from different academic achievement levels (high to above average (2.0 G.P.A. and higher), and below average (1.9 G.P.A.) were recruited.

Although, Krueger (1994) had once endorsed ten to twelve participants for each focus group, his current recommendation in his newest edition of *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*, advocates for five to seven members. Krueger (1994) explained this notable difference in sample size by asserting, “smaller groups of 5, 6, or 7 participants not only offer more opportunity for individuals to talk but are considerably more practical to set up and manage”(p. xi). Following his recommendation, each of the focus groups were comprised of six participants.

Of the sixteen students who initially met the criteria of being eighteen years of age and earning a grade point average (GPA) of 1.9 or below, nine of them had ceased coming to school, according to their teachers (four of which had officially withdrawn).
Therefore, of the seven remaining students, four agreed to participate in the study. Although a focus group was originally set-up, the attendance of these students was also sporadic. Their intermittent attendance made it necessary to conduct individual interviews. Therefore, the two focus groups conducted were comprised of twelve students who had a GPA of 2.0 or above. Six of whom had participated in Center activities, and six of whom who had not. The participants are detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chosen Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tameeka</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.407</td>
<td>HAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.443</td>
<td>HAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>HAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PepperAnn</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.286</td>
<td>HAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2.323</td>
<td>HAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.253</td>
<td>HAC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Students Who Have Used the Center with 2.0 G.P.A.s and Above (HAC)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chosen Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Channel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>HNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loretta</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.085</td>
<td>HNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.442</td>
<td>HNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nae</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.641</td>
<td>HNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.846</td>
<td>HNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.616</td>
<td>HNC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Students Who Have Not Used The Center with 2.0 G.P.A.s and Above (HNC)

The focus groups were conducted at HHS. Focus groups are increasingly taking place on location (Krueger, 1994), because they offer the ability to observe and access to participants is heightened. In the present case, conducting focus groups at the school and during lunch allowed for the elimination of transportation problems and interruption to class instruction was kept at a minimum. The HAC group was held in the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center, and the HNC group was held in the home economics classroom. Both rooms offered a large space, with comfortable chairs, ample lighting, and a door, which was closed during the focus groups to ensure confidentiality.

Focus group questions concentrated on obtaining information that helped illuminate student perceptions of the Center (please see Appendix B). Questions for
students who had utilized the Center were focused on their perceptions of the services rendered by the Center and whether these services were deemed important and meaningful by the students. Focus groups with students who had not utilized the Center explored reasons for non-use. For both groups, the researcher explored student views related to the reputation of the Center in the school. Furthermore, all participants completed an in-depth biographical questionnaire (please see Appendix C). The questionnaire helped to triangulate data and garner demographic information.

3.8.2 Interviews

As noted previously, throughout the course of data collection, it became necessary to interview students with lower GPAs (1.9 and below) individually, due to their irregular attendance. All interviews took place in the Center and were audio-taped. Focus Group protocols were also used with the individual students to ensure consistency in gathering information. Of the four students who were interviewed, two had participated in Center activities and two had not. The participants are detailed below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chosen Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.865</td>
<td>BHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeek</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.914</td>
<td>BHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartavias</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.837</td>
<td>BNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keisha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.964</td>
<td>BNC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Students with GPAs of 1.9 or Below Who had Participated (BHC) in the Center and Who Had Not Participated (BNC)

All focus group and individual interviews were audiotaped, and a hired professional transcribed the audiotapes. The focus groups lasted approximately one hour, and each individual interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. Additionally, each participant was asked to complete the biographical questionnaire prior to beginning the interview process. The primary goal of the biographical questionnaire was help the researcher ascertain descriptive details of the participant’s life, including age, race, gender, grade point average, parent’s educational level, number of years in the school and within the Columbus Public School District system, as well as their initial views regarding the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center. In addition, students were asked to write their responses on color-coded note cards, which were collected at the conclusion of the focus groups and individual interview sessions. The note cards helped
to triangulate the data as well as provided additional information which may have not been discussed during the focus groups and interviews.

3.9 Data Analysis

As standard in qualitative research, all focus groups and interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim (Darlington & Scott, 2002). Following the listening of the focus group and individual tapes and an in-depth review of the transcripts, the researcher began the analytic process as outlined below. In qualitative research, developing a coding or indexing system is the first step of analysis (Patton, 2002). For example, Schwandt (2001) defined coding as “a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments” (p. 26). This analytic procedure, as discussed below, involves “identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 463). Coding for participants reflected the focus group in which they participated (i.e. HAC for students who had participated in the center and HNC for those who had not). Individuals who were interviewed chose pseudonyms and were assigned codes based on their GPA and their participation in the Center (i.e., BAC for students with below average GPAs who had participated in the Center and BNC for students with below average GPAs for those who had not). Toward this end, the researcher recruited a highly qualified research team, consisting of members who were familiar with the field of school counseling and TSCI principles. The on-site supervisor of the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center and co-instructor of the OSU’s master-level school counseling internship and practicum courses was a contributing member of the team. In addition, two doctoral
students trained in qualitative methods and who presently co-supervise the OSU Student Support Centers were also research team members. (Please see Appendix D for additional information about the research team).

The team helped to identify and verify emerging categories and themes. Darlington and Scott (2002) posited that working in a research team “obliges researchers to be more explicit about their assumptions and particular understandings of qualitative research…team research makes the research process more apparent” (pp. 146-147). As the team began to identify “recurring regularities” (Patton, 2002, p. 465) in the text, categories evolved. (Please see Appendix E for the coding sheet utilized in this process). The process of creating these categories is “largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study’s purpose, the investigator’s orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves” (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). Through comparing and contrasting opinions regarding codes and categories, main themes were identified and linked.

This method, called the *constant comparative method*, is based on the grounded theory approach (Schwandt, 2001). Grounded theory refers to collecting and analyzing data concurrently for the purpose of developing categories, conceptual links, and ultimately theories related to the phenomena under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this process, categories were compared with each other to sharpen each concept. Then, tentative theories were formed regarding plausible relationships or links between emerging categories and themes. This process was informed through theoretical
sampling, which involved comparing additional data to the emerging theoretical constructs. This practice continued until theoretical saturation was reached and redundancy occurred (Schwandt, 2001). Once this task was accomplished, direct excerpts from the transcripts were used to illustrate major themes and make assertions about their meanings. The final stage involved linking these categories, themes and assertions into a theoretical model which attempted to answer the research questions set forth in the present study.

3.9.1 Establishing Trustworthiness

A primary concern when presenting research findings is to ensure that the results are valid. A concerned reader often asks, “How do I know these results are true?” In traditional quantitative research, statistical procedures attempt to ensure reliability, validity, and objectivity of the data presented. In qualitative research, statistical procedures are ineffective in working primarily with constructed meanings and social context. In lieu of statistical significance, qualitative researchers judge their findings through establishing trustworthiness (Patton, 2002). Toward this end, trustworthiness is defined as “that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that made it noteworthy to audiences” (Schwant, 2001, p. 258).

Trustworthiness of a study is dependent upon the researcher’s ability to demonstrate credibility (i.e., assurance that there is a fit between the respondents’ and the researchers’ views), transferability (i.e., the ability to generalize information from the case studied to other similar cases), dependability (i.e., the process is logical, traceable
and documented) and confirmability (i.e., information is presented objectively and in clear, discernable ways) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001). In order to maximize these trustworthiness criteria in the present study, the researcher employed several techniques as outlined in the following sections.

3.9.2 Credibility

Credibility of a study is largely predicated on a technique called triangulation. Triangulation involves the utilization of multiple sources and methods to gather and analyze and the data. In addition, triangulation “serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen” (Stake, 2000, p. 444). The present study employed three types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation and methodological triangulation.

a. Data Triangulation. The researcher interviewed the following sources to gain information:

i. HHS students who have utilized the Center

ii. HHS students who have not utilized the Center

iii. HHS students of varying academic achievement levels (above a 2.0 G.P.A. and 1.9 G.P.A. and below)

b. Methodological Triangulation: The researcher employed multiple methods to gain information:

i. Focus Group Interviews and Transcripts

ii. Individual Interviews and Transcripts
iii. Note cards written and collected during the Individual Interviews and Focus Groups

iv. Biographical Questionnaires

c. Investigator Triangulation: The researcher enlisted the following techniques to ensure investigator triangulation:

i. Research Team. The researcher recruited highly qualified persons who were knowledgeable with the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center and the *Transforming School Counseling Initiative* to assist in the data analysis process.

ii. Peer Debriefing. Peer debriefing involved enlisting the support of a skilled colleague to discuss evolving suppositions and findings of the study. This allowed the researcher to clarify her thoughts, to probe any researcher biases, and to challenge presumptions or interpretations throughout the study.

iii. Member Checking. The researcher employed *member checking* by asking study participants to review focus group and individual interview transcripts to ensure adequate representation of their ideas and comments. In addition, students verified the major findings and emerging themes in the study.

3.9.3 Transferability

Transferability is the ability to generalize a case to similar cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to establish this criterion, the researcher used the techniques of *thick description* and *reflexive journaling*. The researcher provided a “thick description” of the study (i.e., recording circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, etc.),
which will enable another interested party to reach a conclusion about whether a transfer to a similar case can be contemplated as a possibility.

Reflexive journaling is a method of articulating and documenting personal beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. This reflective journal assisted in systematically keeping “in check” researcher predispositions. The journal also provided a record of introspection and understanding on the part of the author.

3.9.4 Dependability

In order to establish the criterion of dependability, one must demonstrate that the process was logical, traceable, and documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflexive journaling helped to assist with this endeavor. Another method involved establishing an audit trail. Listed below are the components of the researcher’s audit trail:

a. Raw Data (i.e., audiotapes, field notes, interview records, documents of the field, biographical questionnaire results)

b. Data Reduction and Analysis (i.e., write ups of field notes, summaries, working hypotheses, concepts and hunches)

c. Data Reconstruction and Synthesis (i.e., themes, definitions, relationships, interpretations, inferences, connections to existing literature and integration of concepts, relationships and interpretations)

d. Process Notes (i.e., methodological notes including procedures, strategies, decisions and rationale, documentation regarding trustworthiness including peer debriefing, member checking, etc.)
e. *Intentions and Disposition* (i.e., proposal, personal notes and reflections, 
   expectations and predictions)

f. *Instrument Development* (i.e., protocols, biographical questionnaires)

3.9.5 *Confirmability*

In order to meet the criterion of confirmability, the researcher must demonstrate 
that the information in the present study was presented objectively and in clear, 
discernable ways (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to do so the techniques of 
triangulation and reflexive journaling were utilized as discussed above. The use of the 
above methodological procedures ensured that the present study met the trustworthiness 
criteria (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) (Lincoln & 
Guba, 1985) and thus met the rigorous standards set forth by the field of educational 
research.

3.10 Researcher Subjectivity

As noted previously, the researcher is the primary research instrument through 
which data is collected (Merriam, 1998). Thus, personal beliefs and experiences shaped 
views of this subject. As such, the researcher was self-reflective in her own subjectivity, 
disclosing her biases openly in her research (Peshkin, 1988). In addition, she balanced 
disclosing her subjectivity and recounting unnecessary biographical information. This 
process of reflexivity surrounding her personal investment and biases relinquished the 
“God’s-eye view” and situated the research in a historical, cultural, and personal context 
(Gergen & Gegen, 2000).
Furthermore, as a qualitative researcher using dialectical methods, she needed to adhere to the ethical principle of self-disclosure, noting that her personal qualities “have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe and misconstrue…a research project” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 211). Thus, it was imperative that the researcher “work the hyphen” of Self-Other and its subsequent ethical pitfalls. In this way, she was better able to understand whose story was being told and interpreted and how her own orientations may have intervened with this process (Jones, 2002).

The researcher has been a graduate student in the Counselor Education Program at The Ohio State University for four and a half years. In her master’s program, she was a practicum student at HHS and an intern at AHS. As a doctoral student, she has supervised students at AHS and SHS and has participated in numerous discussions and meetings regarding the field experiences of OSU Counselor Education students. In addition, she has co-taught internship class for the past three consecutive years. Understanding how these experiences have shaped and colored her views was imperative for ensuring the creditability and integrity of this study.

In order to assist with this process, the researcher used journaling as a method of articulating and documenting personal beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. By engaging in the methodological procedures elucidated previously, and by reflecting on her own biases and presuppositions, the researcher is confident that the intertwining of self and subject was monitored and that a clear perspective was maintained throughout the entirety of this research process.
3.11 Summary of Chapter

This chapter includes a description of the research setting, the research questions, the conceptual framework of the study, the research design, sample selection, data collection, data analysis, and methods for ensuring trustworthiness. The following chapter presents the major findings of the current study.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter presents the major findings of the current study, based on in-depth focus groups, individual interviews, written responses completed by participants, and biographical questionnaires. A summary of demographic information is also included and an overall thematic analysis of the data is presented. As previously noted, the purpose of this study was to explore how the Ohio State University Center Model of training school counselors influences an urban school. Specifically, the researcher was interested in exploring if the interventions utilized in OSU’s Counseling and Wellness Center at HHS has influenced students in a positive manner and assisted them with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in school and in their future. Again, the present study explored the following five research questions:

(1) What services and individuals at Hope High School have had the greatest influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development?

(2) How do students perceive the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(3) To what degree are students willing to utilize the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?
(4) What experiences, both positively and negatively, have had the greatest influence on students’ attitudes towards and beliefs about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(5) What changes do students see in themselves as a result of their involvement in the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

This section outlines the demographic characteristics of participants. Specifically, the following demographics are delineated: gender, age, race/ethnicity, GPA, grade retained, number of years at HHS, future plans, and parent/guardian’s highest level of education. One hundred percent of the sample qualified for free and reduced lunch, indicating that they met the criteria for being at or below federal poverty guidelines. (A detailed profile of each participant can be found in Appendix H).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Distribution of Frequencies and Percentages of HHS Participants by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age
Table 4.1 shows that, although the primary researcher attempted to recruit equal numbers of female and male students, three quarters of the participants were female. In addition, the majority of participants were African American (87.5%), with 12.5% (or two participants) self-identifying as Caucasian. This percentage is consistent with the sample population, as the student body at HHS is comprised of 92.6% African American, 5.7% Caucasian and 1.7% other (i.e., Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American). The majority of participants (87.5%) were 18-years-old (the average age of seniors). Two participants were considered over-age for twelfth grade (i.e., ages 19 and 20).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Grade Point Average (GPA)</th>
<th>Retained a Grade</th>
<th>Number of Years at HHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2.0 or higher</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.9 or lower</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>81.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Distribution of Frequencies and Percentages of HHS Participants by Grade Point Average, Retained a Grade, and Years at HHS

Table 4.2 indicates that most participants (75%) had a GPA of 2.0 (a C average) or above. Interestingly, over one third (37.5%) of the students had been retained a grade throughout their educational experience. The majority of students (81.25%) had attended
HHS all four years of their high school career. The researcher limited her sample to seniors who had been at HHS for at least two years, so that exposure to the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center was maximized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Some HS</th>
<th>GED</th>
<th>HS Diploma</th>
<th>Some Col</th>
<th>Assoc Degree</th>
<th>Bach Degree</th>
<th>More than Bach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Student GPA</td>
<td>2.316</td>
<td>1.865</td>
<td>2.368</td>
<td>2.662</td>
<td>2.770</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Distribution of Frequencies and Percentages of HHS Participants’ Primary Parent or Guardian’s Highest Level of Education Attained

The above table indicates that just over one-third (31.25%) of the participants’ primary parent or guardian completed some high school and that the same percentage earned a high school diploma. In addition, 12.5% of primary parents or guardians attended some college, and 18.75% completed an associate’s degree (or 2 year post-high school program). With the exception of the GED category, the primary caregivers’ education level was positively correlated with student GPA. It is interesting to note that
none of the participants’ primary parent or guardian had earned a bachelor’s or advanced college degree.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Frequencies and Percentages of HHS Participants by Future Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Community College</th>
<th>Nursing School</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 indicates that the majority of HHS participants (62.5%) had plans to attend college and that an additional 25% expect to attend some form of post-secondary education (either a community college or nursing school). One student indicated that he had enlisted into the Armed Services, and one student noted that he was going directly into the workforce (in basic construction) upon graduation. The finding that 87.5% of participants expressed a desire to earn some form of post-high school education is particularly noteworthy, given that the only one-third (31.25%) of their primary parent or guardians did so, with 0% of their parent/guardians completing a four-year or advanced
college degree. A more detailed discussion related to the high educational aspirations of these young men and women can be found in section 4.13 of this chapter.

4.2 Participation in Center

The biographical questionnaire asked students who had participated in the Center the reasons for their use (i.e., personal, academic, career/college or participation in the scrabble club), the services they received (i.e., individual counseling, group counseling, career/college counseling, or participation in the scrabble club), and how they rated these services (not good, good, very good, or excellent). Responses to these questions are displayed in Figures 4.1-4.3 below.
As displayed in Figure 4.1, personal and career/college-related issues were the most prevalent reasons for seeking Center services. In addition, two students (of the eight who had participated in Center services) came to the Center for academic concerns and two participated in the scrabble club during lunch.
Figure 4.2 Services Rendered at the Center

Figure 4.2 displays Center services rendered to participants in the study. The majority of students received individual counseling and career/college-related services. Participants also cited group counseling and participation in games (scrabble, checkers, chess).
As noted in Figure 4.3, the students who utilized the services in the Center rated them favorably. None of the students rated the services as “not good.” In fact, of the eight students interviewed who had utilized the services, seven (87.5%) of them rated the services as “very good” or “excellent.”

4.3 Emerging Themes

After extensive review of the focus group and individual interview transcripts, the researcher began the analysis process. The first step was to assign codes, or “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information
compiled during a study” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 56). In order to systematically organize the analytic process, a codebook was developed from existing research literature. (Please see Appendix G). It included descriptions of each code as well as examples of each (Ryan and Bernard, 2000).

The research team convened to identify and verify emerging categories and themes. Members were given a copy of all transcripts to read, prior to the research team meetings. Each member then coded the transcripts individually, utilizing the pre-existing code book. During the research team meetings, each line of the transcripts was read aloud. Members then debated which codes most accurately represented the sentiment expressed until a unanimous decision was reached (Schwandt, 2001). Through comparing and contrasting opinions regarding codes and categories, main themes were identified and linked. Tentative theories were formed regarding plausible relationships or links between emerging categories and themes. This practice continued until theoretical saturation was reached and redundancy occurred (Schwandt, 2001). Throughout the entire analytic process, a 100% inter-rater agreement among the research team was required. The final research team meeting involved linking these categories, themes and assertions into a theoretical model which attempted to answer the research questions set forth in the present study.

4.4 Resiliency as a Conceptual Framework

As discussed in Chapter three, the results of this study are conceptualized within a resiliency framework. Henderson and Milstein (1996) posited that families, communities,
and school can provide for students, six essential elements. Combined, these six components form the Resiliency Wheel. See Figure 4.4 below.

Resiliency Wheel

Figure 4.4: The Resiliency Wheel (Henderson & Milstein, 1996)

Within this context, listed below are the themes and subthemes (and their corresponding codes), which are discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter. Direct excerpts from the transcripts are used to illustrate these major themes. Please note the names used are pseudonyms chosen by participants.

(1) The Need to Form Meaningful Relationships

Throughout the interview process, students consistently articulated the need for meaningful relationships with individuals whom they regarded as helpful or
additive to their lives. Family (FAM) and friends (FRIEN) were mentioned frequently. In addition, students sought relationships with individuals who: (a) were role models or mentors (MENT) and (b) were a “parent” in the school. This notion encompassed someone who could (a) help keep them on track (KOT) or give them an extra push; (b) provide support for personal issues and listen (LIS); and (c) could offer them help, valuable information or resources (RESO).

(2) The Need for Information and the Development of Skills

Students articulated the need for assistance with learning. Specifically, they expressed the need for tutoring or study skill development (TUT) and assistance with class scheduling, internship hours and graduation requirements (SCH). Moreover, students also desired assistance with the skills necessary to navigate the world of work and post-secondary options, college-planning (COL) and career/job planning (JOB).

(3) Perceptions of the Center

This section connects directly to responses related to how students viewed the reputation of the Center within the school and how it corresponded (or did not correspond) to their articulated needs. Subthemes included: (a) The Center as a safe place in the school where students could go (CPGO) to escape the daily pressures associated with the school climate and avoid trouble; a reprieve from daily stressors; (b) Students articulated that they had gained a skill or had a better sense of self due to participation in Center activities (SKILL/AWAR); (c) Students felt a sense of belonging, or connection with the Center (CON); (d)
Some student responses suggested students knew or had heard of the Center, but did not know the services it offered, or had misperceptions about the Center and its purpose (CKNO).

(4) High Educational Aspirations

High educational aspirations were a resounding theme prevalent throughout each interview conducted. Students believed they would attend college and/or have a successful future. Salient subthemes included: (a) responses related to self motivation, goal orientation, ambition and/or internal locus of control (SM), and (b) a hope for a better future (HFF).

4.5 The Need to Form Meaningful Relationships

Multiple studies have found strong familial support and connections with positive adult role models contribute to resilience in children (Henderson & Milistein, 1999; Krovetz, 1999; Rak & Patterson, 1996; Sagor, 1996). According to Nan Henderson (2000), increasing bonding or fostering connections with a pro-social person is one of the six main building blocks of resiliency. She stated: “[i]t is based on evidence that children with strong positive bonds are far less involved in risk behaviors than those without these bonds” (p. 4). Furthermore, she asserted that providing caring and support is the most critical of the elements which promote resiliency. According to Henderson (2000), it is virtually impossible for students to overcome adverse situations without the presence of a trusting relationship.
4.6 Family and Friend Influence

4.6.1 Family Influence

Researchers have found a supportive home and strong family values contribute to the resiliency of youth (Floyd, 1996; Ford, 1994). Furthermore, Rak and Patterson (1996) noted that a network of supportive kin can act as a buffer to stress in resilient students’ lives. Based on the present study’s findings, familial ties positively influenced students:

All my life, I’ve seen my brother and sister get out of high school… it motivated me to do it, so I’ve got to get up out of here and my little brother is watching me so he’s got to get out of here too….Because if he sees me graduate, he might try to be like me. So I’m like a role model. At least he could say my brother did get out of high school or something like that…probably go to college [Zeek, African American, 1.914 G.P.A.]

My mom, if it weren’t for her I would’ve dropped out 3 years ago…because I’m the first born and just want to complete it [school] for her [Mike, African American, 2.816 G.P.A.].

4.6.2 Friend Influence

When asked who they would go to if facing a problem (i.e., personal, academic, or career), nine of the sixteen students mentioned a friend. In Arnett’s (2001) review of the literature, evidence suggested that friend influence is not only important in “encouraging adolescents to participate in risk behavior but also in discouraging risk behavior, as well as in supporting them emotionally…” (p. 234). Comments from Bartavias and PepperAnn supported Arnett’s (2001) assertion:
My friends…they say just come to school, pretty much it’s nothing out there for me but trouble… I can talk to them about things that I can’t talk to my parents about and we’ve been knowing each other ever since 2nd or 3rd grade and we just communicate well [Bartavias, African American, 1.837 G.P.A.].

I would go to my friend [if I were having a personal problem] because she understands… I usually solve my problems with friends…[PepperAnn, African American, 2.289 G.P.A.].

Consistent with current literature, participants in this study articulated strong familial and peer relationships. They discussed the need to live up to their family’s high expectations, and the notion that their friends supported them in this endeavor. Thus, both family and friends played significant supportive roles in the lives of these students.

4.7 The Need for Role Models and Mentors

Many students actively sought out role models and mentors. Students expressed a need for individuals with whom they could relate and aspire to be. This was especially true for the young men in the study. With this in mind, extensive research has indicated a need for positive male role models for African American adolescent males, due to the lack of such models in their lives (Cunnigham, 1999, Ford, 1995; Lee, 1997). Cunnigham (1999) stated that, as Black youth experiment with identity formation, African American adults must be available to help them interpret their behaviors and form strong gender roles. Lee and Bailey (1997) were also strong supporters of this notion, as evidenced by their statement: “…only an adult African American man…can model the attitudes and behaviors of successful African American manhood” (p. 131). Furthermore, Werner (1999) found that resilient boys tended to need structure and rules and “a male who serves as model of identification” (p. 15).
Zeek and Thomas both expressed mentoring relationships with African American men:

He [history teacher] seems more down to earth, he came from the same background as me, from the ghetto but made it better for himself by being the first person in his family to go to college. We have more of a connection than I would to most of the other people [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A.].

Mr. XX, the principal…. he doesn’t tolerate somebody messing with other people or things like that. He’s really no nonsense, but he helps other than just punish [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A.].

I would go to Mr. XX, the principal and Mr. XXX, he’s the vice-principal…Because I can talk to both of them. Mr. XX, I’m real cool with him, like if I ever had a problem, I’d either go to him or Mr. XXX, I can really talk to them [Zeek, African American, 1.914 G.P.A.].

4.8 The Need for a “Parent in the School”

In Floyd’s (1996) qualitative study of twenty African American seniors, she found interactions with positive adult figures played a significant role in fostering resiliency. Students discussed beneficial relationships with teachers, counselors, and coaches. The current study supported Floyd’s (1996) finding. Participants spoke frequently of needing an adult in the school with whom they could communicate, who understood them and who provided advice or an extra push. Some students articulated the notion of desiring a parental figure very clearly:

I think students should be able to depend on their [school] counselors to provide them with the necessities they need for school… In other words, a [school] counselor should be referred to as a parent in the school [Leah, African American, 3.442 G.P.A].

My principal, Mr. XX. He’s like a dad to me, he’s a father figure, I can talk to him about everything and anything. He’s cool to be around [Bartavias, African American, 1.837 G.P.A.].
I would go to Miss XX [senior counselor/test coordinator]… because she’s been taking care of me since I was a freshman [Mike, African American, 2.816 G.P.A.].

Other students wanted someone to simply help keep them on track:

[Students] need to talk to their counselors, like start them in the right place…Like put them on the right track. Put them in the right place [Zeek, African American, 1.914 G.P.A.].

Just the extra push, out of school, just to help the students with any other needs… or if they need, just simple help like, ask questions about their home…they should be able to get help…[Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A.].

Keisha (African American, 1.964 G.P.A.) also discussed needing someone who could point her in the right direction, as displayed from the following excerpt:

I would probably go to Miss XX [for a personal problem]…She is an administrator, I think the senior administrator. I would go to her because she knows a lot about that kind of stuff and she can direct you to the people that can help you with your problem.

Many of the students simply needed an adult who understood and cared for them.

Bartavias, an African American male with a 1.837 G.P.A., expressed the following sentiment regarding one of his teachers:

You can talk to her on any level. She’ll give you feedback on how she feels about any situation and what’s going on.

Tameeka, an African American female with a 3.407 grade point average stated that students needed someone to:

…feel comfortable with to help them with their issues, someone who can give them advice for problems.
Other students concurred by stating that:

[Students need] help with understanding some of the things they might go through… help them get through some of the hard times [Nae, African American, 2.641 G.P.A.].

[Students need]…someone who will be there for them, understanding, and make them feel comfortable [PepperAnn, African American, 2.289 G.P.A.].

I think students need help with really bad personal problems. [Marie, Caucasian, 2.024 G.P.A.]

Moreover, students indicated they needed someone in the school who would just listen to them and offer support. For example, Keisha (African American, 1.964 G.P.A.) commented:

Like if you see a kid that’s having a problem, they might need somebody to just sit down and talk to them and just be a listening ear for certain individuals. That’s all people need sometimes.

William Glasser (1998) asserted that students who have incorporated people within their school into their “quality world” (i.e., a place where people store their best perceptions of people and things that make them feel especially good) are more likely to attend and participate in school. It was evident in this study that many students had incorporated individuals into their “quality worlds” and thus these connections made a meaningful difference for them.

4.9 The Need for Acquisition of Information and Development of Life Skills

School personnel can help adequately prepare students for their futures by providing them with important information, linking them with resources, and advocating for rigorous coursework. Trusty and Niles (2003) found that adding just one Carnegie unit in intensive math doubles the likelihood of college completion. However, fewer than
half of African American and Latino students take Algebra I, as compared to two-thirds of their White counterparts (Education Trust, 2003). Thus, many ethnic minority students are under-prepared, when they enter college.

Henderson, Benard, and Sharp (1999) discussed teaching life skills (i.e., problem-solving, decision-making, organization, study skills, and future planning) as a main strategy for mitigating the impact of risk for youth. They asserted competencies such as these are necessary for successful completion of high school and beyond. The participants in the current study were hungry for information and assistance related to school and their futures. As discussed below, many participants articulated a need for guidance with academic and career planning.

4.9.1 The Need for Academic Assistance

Students in the present study expressed a clear need for assistance with effective learning strategies, help in obtaining tutors, assistance with class scheduling, and meeting graduation requirements. For example, when asked what school counselors could do to assist them, students replied:

Help with study habits…making good grades [Tameeka, African American, 3.407 G.P.A.].

I think that students need from their school counselors help. They need for their counselors to be on their case about their grades, scholarships, and their college choices. They need for their counselors to help them understand something that they need help with. They need for their counselors to help them understand their classes and things of that nature [Nae, African American, 2.641 G.P.A.].

Talk about organization…talk about good study habits [Nicole, African American, 2.616 G.P.A.].
What we need is help with what we need to graduate and stuff like that… it would be nice if I had more tutors… more time to do assignments, more studying time [Mike, African American, 2.816 G.P.A.].

Help getting their grades right… after school tutoring… basically just studying more, because it gets hard sometimes… [Bartavias, African American, 1.837 G.P.A.].

It is apparent that the participants, in this study, desired assistance with academic skills and believed that school counselors should assist them with this important endeavor.

4.9.2 The Need for Career and Future Planning

Eighty-seven percent of the seniors in this study expressed a desire to obtain some form of post-high school education. Thus, the priority for many of these students was assistance with future educational planning. This finding is in concordance with current research literature. As asserted by Moore (2006), many urban students, particularly African American males, are inadequately exposed to career related services or programs.

Moreover, as articulated by Keisha (African American, 1.914 G.P.A.), information of this nature is critical early in a student’s high school career:

Before they start the freshman year, they should be done, over the summer before ninth grade, they should know exactly what classes they’re going to need, what classes that will help them that’s like extracurricular, they should know about their requirements, that’s what they need to know, the requirements for the colleges they want to go to. Like what classes that the colleges, not necessarily require but they would appreciate it or you would be better off getting in to that college if you took this class. They should know about the ACT and SAT as freshmen. I think they need to have scholarships and things like that prepared for them as freshmen so that they can get a jump start instead of waiting until they are a junior or senior.
Other students agreed, stating:

I think they [freshman] need to know what tests they need to graduate because I think most of them don’t know and by their junior year they aren’t going to graduate because they weren’t prepared for that test...talk about if they plan on attending college, with the ACT and SAT in mind... [Channel, African American, 3.36 G.P.A.].

Like, instead of letting them [students] know about the ACT or SAT late, come in early and learn about it so when they become a sophomore or junior, it’s not a surprise. It’s already in your head that it’s very important, so it will in turn help more freshmen get prepared for college at an earlier age... [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A.].

With regard to what students felt they needed as seniors, Channel, an African American female with a 3.36 G.P.A., articulated the need for assistance with college planning and obtaining financial aid:

I think we need basically, if they [seniors] haven’t taken the ACT, they need to get on it and they [school counselors] should help us in ways to strategize on how to get good grades on it and when you talk about ways to actually pay for college, it’s nice to go to college, but you also have to pay for college, money doesn’t just fall out of the sky.

Zeek and Keisha both concurred stating:

Seniors, they keep taking the ACT and SAT to try to advance their scores. Still taking trips to colleges, filling out applications, trying to get grants, scholarships, anything possible that can help them better themselves when they leave high school [Zeek, African American, 1.914 G.P.A.].

We need more scholarship information, more college information as far as college requirements and college deadline. We need somebody to push us. Like I told Mr. XX [principal], we need a class, instead of seniors having study hall, there should be a class that is just for filling out college applications or filling out scholarships and writing essays and it needs to be a teacher in there that’s going to help them with their college applications and essays and someone in there to help them with their FAFSA. There needs to be a block [class] just for that [Keisha, 1.964 G.P.A.].
The students in this study understood the need for effective study skills and academic assistance. Many of them desired help with planning for college entrance exams and obtaining financial aid. Importantly, students wanted this information early in their high school careers so that they could plan accordingly.

4.10 The Center’s Role in Providing Assistance

All of the students who had received assistance from the Center stated they would return for services should they need them. As displayed in Figure 4.3, 87.5% of the students rated the services they received as “excellent” or “very good.” In addition, 100% of students who had participated in the Center stated they would recommend services to their friends. Additionally, five of the eight students (62.5%) who had participated in the Center referenced Center staff as individuals within the school whom they would turn to for help. As discussed extensively below, the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center played a significant role in the lives of HHS students.

4.11 Perceptions of the Center

As one of the main objectives of this study was to determine if the Center was influential for students at HHS, many questions were directed toward answering this overarching question. As such, several themes emerged regarding student perceptions of
the Center. These themes included: (a) the Center as a place to go and feel connected; (b) the Center as place to receive counseling interventions to gain skills or self-awareness; (c) the Center as a place that offered help and was welcoming; and (d) the Center as an unknown or misperceived entity within the school.

4.11.1 The Center as a Place to Go

Many students who utilized the Center viewed it as a safe haven from the daily stressors in their lives. Although interviewed separately, both Thomas and Zeek had very similar thoughts about the Center, and how it assisted them in this manner:

It [the Center] gets me away from everybody. I just like to be, I don’t really like to be around all these people, I just like to chill….You don’t have to hear anybody’s mouth [in the Center], you can just chill. That’s all. I like chilling…[Zeek, African American, 1.914 G.P.A].

[The Center is a place]…to get away, pretty much because if you didn’t want to deal with the regular people that you deal with at lunch. It was a different group of people here, a different atmosphere, it wasn’t all rowdy. It was more laid back [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A].

In particular, both Zeek and Thomas saw the Center as place that would help them stay out of trouble as articulated in their responses:

It helped me like if I knew that I was going to get in a fight or something, if I was to stay in the wellness center, then nothing would happen. It’s like carefree in here [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A].

I try to stay away from everybody I can. I try to stay by myself. I don’t really like messing with too many people up here [in the school]. …To be honest, half the people up here, I don’t want to say this, but half the people up here is fake. I don’t want to mess with anybody. They’re two-faced….I experience it mostly everyday….I’m just saying like, it’s just people fake and they run off at the mouth, the same things just don’t change. [Did the Center help you with this?] Yeah, by getting away…it’s a nice place to chill [Zeek, African American, 1.914 G.P.A].
Other students saw the Center as a place where they could become connected with other students and Center staff. For example,

They [Center staff] let me meet other kids that was having the same problem I was having [Pepper Ann, African American, 2.289 G.P.A.].

…They’ve [Center staff] helped me with my problems and I recommend it to a friend that they’re going to help them with their problems… they’ll have something to relate to and they’ll be nice to them. Just be there for them [Missy, Caucasian, 2.323 G.P.A.].

4.11.2 The Center as a Place to Foster New Skills and Self-Awareness

Many students viewed the Center as a place where they gained new skills through counseling interventions. The excerpts below illustrate this theme:

If it wasn’t for the wellness center, I’d probably let things build up inside. Before I started talking to them if somebody said something to me, I’d hold it in instead of talking about it with them and I had a breakdown because of it. I’m just glad they were there to help me [Missy, Caucasian, 2.323 G.P.A.].

I would say they helped me with career goals, goals planning for the future [Million, African American, 2.253 G.P.A.].

They helped me with personal problems, school, and my career goals [Noel, African American, 2.443 G.P.A.].

[The Center helped me]… with right things to do and wrong things to do in life and then how to come out in situations that you’re having a hard time with [Tameeka, African American, 3.407 G.P.A.].

I think I would be a lot more sad or upset, not as confident with who I am without them [Marie, Caucasian, 2.024 G.P.A.].

I got better at chess. I learned to communicate with a different group of people that I’ve never talked to. I learned to be more relaxed [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A.].

Students also expressed that they had gained self-awareness by participating in Center services.
They helped me with personal problems and they helped me realize things that I didn’t know about myself [Missy, Caucasian, 2.323 G.P.A].

I have confidence in myself and I worked very hard to get where I want to be. I think the Center helped me do that [Million, African American, 2.253 G.P.A.].

I think it helped me blossom into a young lady because it gave me a better view and outlook on life [Tameeka, African American, 3.407 G.P.A].

4.11.3 The Center as a Place to Receive Help and Feel Welcomed

One hundred percent of the students who had utilized the Center stated they would recommend Center services to their friends. Many perceived the Center as a welcoming place that offered help to students. The following excerpts illustrate this theme:

Yeah, I would recommend it to my friends…you could just come in here and play a few games and you also would be able to talk to one of the counselors because I’ve seen a lot of the counselors before, it was during school, and they would pull somebody in and talk to them or see what was wrong with them or see if there was anything they could help them with. …There’s a lot of good things that happen in here. All the counselors are very helpful, everybody likes them, everybody knew them well. They would make sure they would come up, if they never seen you before, they would come over and talk to you and try to get to know you and make you feel welcome [Thomas, African American, 1.865 G.P.A].

I would say yes [I would recommend the Center to friends] because they can help them with their problems and they also helped me [Million, African American, 2.253 G.P.A.].

[I would recommend the Center to friends]… because they should feel they can go somewhere to get help if they need it [Tameeka, African American, 3.407 G.P.A].

I recommend it to my friends for support and help because they’ll need it. They will find help here [Noel, African American, 2.443 G.P.A].
4.11.4 *The Center as an Unfamiliar or Misperceived Entity Within the School*

Interestingly, all of the students who had not participated in the Center stated that they knew of its existence. However, many of them were either unclear or confused about the services the Center offered. The responses below illuminate this sentiment:

I just thought it was a program designed for the OSU students to come here and help them in the counseling field. I don’t know, I just didn’t think it was for the students here to get really involved with [Leah, African American, 3.442 G.P.A.].

…I heard of it but I don’t know what you all do in there [Mike, African American, 2.816].

I never been up there to see what it was because I thought it was for people who needed anger management, who needed to be talked to about their problems [Nae, African American, 2.641 G.P.A.].

I heard about it, but I didn’t know nothing about it or what you all do in there or anything [Nicole, African American, 2.616 G.P.A.].

Yeah, I heard about it. I just never knew what it was or what it was about or how it affected our school [Keisha, African American, 1.964 G.P.A.].

…. I know about the OSU counselors, but I didn’t know any details about it… just that they come and talk to you or whatever [Bartavias, African American, 1.837 G.P.A.].

I didn’t know who was all in there. .The only thing I know is that y’all help students in some way [Loretta, African Amerian, 3.085 G.P.A.].

Throughout the course of the interviews, it became apparent that students perceived the Center as a place to go if one was having problems, rather than a place where one could seek and find solutions. Tameeka, an African American, with a 3.407 G.P.A., described this mind-set well:

I don’t think people see it in a positive light because I remember when I had gotten my pass and it said go to the OSU room, I’m like why are they calling me down here, ain’t nothing wrong with me, I don’t have no issues, so but then when
I got here, it wasn’t nothing like that. A lot of people have the wrong perception about what they think it is because they’ve never been in here.

4.12 The Center and the Promotion of Resiliency

Many of the themes related to the Center can be aligned within the resiliency framework. See Figure 4.5 below.

Figure 4.5: Center Themes and Corresponding Resiliency Components

- **Theme:**
  - 1. Center as a Place to Go
  - 2. Center as a Place to Receive Help & Feel Connected
  - 3. Center as a Place to Foster New Skills & Self Awareness

- **Corresponding Resiliency Components:**
  - 1. Caring & Supportive Environment
  - 2. Prosocial Bonding
  - 3. Meaningful Participation
  - 4. Teaching Life Skills
It seems evident that the Center is an entity which aligns with the mission of promoting resiliency. Students found the Center to be a caring and supportive environment where they felt connected with other students and Center staff. The Center also provided opportunities for meaningful participation. This seemed especially true for students who participated in the Scrabble and game clubs during lunch. Additionally, students attributed new skills and self-awareness to the counseling interventions they received in the Center (i.e., teaching life skills). Thus, the Center helped to reinforce, nurture, and expand upon the strengths of HHS students.

4.13 High Educational Aspirations

As reported earlier, the overwhelming majority of participants (87.5%) expressed a desire to attain some form of post-high school education, despite the fact that only one-third (31.25%) of their primary parent/guardian pursued higher education. In addition, none of the participants’ primary caregivers completed a four year or advanced college degree. These high educational aspirations are consistent with current literature.

Weiner and Hall (2004) reported that 75% of all high school students, regardless of ethnic background, go on to post-secondary education. However, the completion rate of college is alarming, particularly for students of color from low-income homes. According to Weiner and Hall (2004), 77% of students from affluent backgrounds obtain their college degree within six years, while only 54% of students from low-income families do so. Furthermore, 67% of White students graduate within six years as compared to 46% of African American students and 47% of Latino students.
Goldsmith (2004) also investigated the educational aspirations of students and found that Black and Latino youth are more likely to have higher educational aspirations than are their White peers. This finding was especially significant when students were in racially-mixed or separate-minority schools than in schools where White students were the predominant group. HHS is currently comprised of predominately African American students (92.6%), and thus supports this assertion. Further analysis by Goldsmith (2004) revealed that Black and Latino students had the highest optimism and educational aspirations in schools where minority teachers were also present. Currently, the racial make-up of the staff is approximately 50% African American and 50% Caucasian. As noted previously, the young men have especially benefited from relationships with African American males (both teachers and administrators) in the building.

The researcher found many examples of students who articulated high educational aspirations. These perceptions encompassed the idea that they were destined for better futures and that they had learned to rely on themselves to assist with this process. Floyd (1996) found that resilient Black students exhibited both optimism and perseverance. In concordance with these findings, Ford (1994) noted that resilient Black youth often have self direction, a positive self image and feelings of empowerment. This idea of an internal locus of control is expressed well by Channel, an African American female with a 3.36 G.P.A.:

I feel like I never had a problem that I needed someone’s help with. I’m the type of person that I do it myself, that’s how I feel about it. I don’t need anyone else in my business. If I want their opinion, I’ll ask them for it. I can hold my own.
When asked what kept him coming to school, Bartavias, an African American with a 1.837 G.P.A., echoed Channel’s self-sufficient attitude:

> Just me knowing that there’s nothing out there for me but trouble. I just have to keep myself occupied and know that I have talent. I know I’m capable of doing a lot of things.

Leah, Tameeka, and PepperAnn also responded in a similar fashion, demonstrating self-motivation and determination:

> I would have to say my ambition and my goals keep me coming to school. I know that I want to be a very successful business woman and in order for that to happen, I must be dedicated to my schoolwork [Leah, African American, 3.442 G.P.A].

> [I come to school because] My ability to want to learn more and further myself [PepperAnn, African American, 2.289 G.P.A.].

> [I come to school because] I have the desire for a better future [Tameeka, African American, 3.407 G.P.A.].

Missy articulated that her self-ambition came from wanting a better life than what she experienced growing up:

> [I come to school because of]…The knowledge of a better future because I’ve seen my dad struggle to pay bills and he never graduated high school and I don’t want that for myself [Missy, Caucasian, 2.323 G.P.A.].

It became evident, throughout the course of the study, that all of the participants regardless of their GPA, exhibited resilient qualities. In a school that only graduates 46.7% of its students, the seniors in the present study found a way to survive, and in several instances, thrive within HHS. Many of the students have sought out services (i.e., personal, academic, and career) from knowledgeable individuals within the building.
Others have turned to people in their lives (i.e., family and friends) and individuals within the school (i.e., teachers, school counselors, administrators, and OSU staff) to help better their chances of success. Their desire for meaningful relationships and life skills as well their articulation of a strong self concept, compliments the current literature regarding resiliency (Krovetz, 1999; Henderson & Milistein, 1996; 1999; Rak & Patterson, 1996; Sagor, 1996). Based on the data, it is clear that all of the urban students in this study have demonstrated that they are, indeed, resilient.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the influence of the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center on the lives of the urban students it serves. Through the conceptual framework of resiliency, this study investigated the perceptions, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of students related to the Center and its services. With this in mind, qualitative methodology included in-depth focus groups, individual interviews, and biographical questionnaires. The purposeful sample was comprised of 16 urban high school seniors, including twelve females (ten of which were African American and two were Caucasian) and four African American males. Twelve of the participants had grade point averages of 2.0 or greater; four had earned a 1.9 GPA or below.

The following four major themes emerged from participant responses: (a) the need for meaningful relationships; (b) the need for acquisition of information and skills; (c) perceptions of the Center; and (d) high educational aspirations. The following section discusses how each of the research questions set forth in the present study were answered in relationship to these overarching themes.
5.1.1 Research Question 1

*What services and individuals at Hope High School have had the greatest influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development?*

Findings from the focus groups, individual interviews, and biographical questionnaires indicated that students purposefully sought both services and individuals to assist them with academic, personal/social and career needs. The most frequent responses related to services centered around personal needs. Students mentioned both specific and general services in these domains. Particularly, one-on-one counseling, anger management groups, the Respect Group (i.e., a group designed to foster girls’ self-esteem), the scrabble club, and G.E.W.E.L.S. (Girls Empowered With Exceptional Leadership Skills) were mentioned. Interestingly, the Center at HHS was responsible for providing all of these services, with the exception of G.E.W.E.L.S. Clearly, Center services were deemed meaningful by study participants.

Moreover, participants spoke frequently of needing someone to talk to, to listen, and to understand them. They desired role models and mentors. Participants also spoke of wanting a “parent in the school”—someone who would keep them on track, give them an extra push, and provide guidance and support. Throughout the course of the individual interviews and focus groups transcripts, several individuals were mentioned as meeting this need. Specifically, the principal of HHS was referred to as a “father figure” and “someone I can really talk to.” The school counselors in the building were also discussed in relation to providing personal support. Specifically, the senior counselor/test coordinator was referenced. For example, Mike, one of the participants, stated: “she’s
been taking care of me since I was a freshman.” Other individuals students turned to for personal assistance, included the librarian and the internship coordinator.

Participants, who had utilized the Center, also referenced Center staff as individuals they valued within the school. Several students stated they found the staff to be “helpful,” “welcoming,” and adults they could “relate to.” The Center, as a physical space, was also referenced in a positive manner. Students felt they could go to the Center to “get away,” “feel welcomed,” “feel connected,” and “get help.” It was evident that both the Center staff and the Center itself helped to meet students’ personal needs.

With regard to academic assistance, students reported needing resources and information pertaining to study skills, tutors, class scheduling, and meeting graduation requirements. Teachers were mentioned most often as individuals within the building who could assist with academic needs. School counselors were referenced often in relation to seeking assistance with class scheduling and graduation requirements. The internship coordinator was also referenced, as students complete 120 hours of internship credit to graduate.

The priority for many of the seniors in this study was assistance with future educational planning. References to assistance with college applications, college entrance exams, financial aid, and college essays were plentiful. Students also stressed the need to receive this information early within their educational careers. Several individuals were mentioned as people who could provide this information including teachers, the senior counselor/test coordinator, the eleventh and twelfth grade counselor, the Project Grad coordinator in the building, and Center staff. However, students could not identify a
particular intervention or service that assisted them with endeavor. In fact, one student suggested a class specifically designed to assist students with college and future planning, as she perceived this need was not being adequately met. While there appears to be a great need and desire for career and future planning at HHS, there is clearly a paucity of such services.

5.1.2 Research Question 2

How do students perceive the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

The researcher identified the following four emerging themes related to perceptions of the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center: (a) The Center as a safe place in the school where students could escape the daily pressures associated with the school climate and avoid trouble; (b) The Center as a place to gain skills or acquire a better sense of self due to counseling interventions; (c) The Center as a place to receive help which fostered feelings of belonging and connection; (d) The Center as an unknown or misperceived entity within the school. The differences between the perceptions of the eight students who had participated in the Center and the eight who had not seemed to revolve around students’ ideas and beliefs related to the Center’s purpose. Those who had participated in Center services viewed the Center as a place that was welcoming and helped students find solutions to their academic, personal/social, and career needs. In addition, all of the students who had utilized the services rated them favorably (see Figure 4.3) and would recommend it to their friends.
The students who had not utilized the services seemed unclear as to how the Center could assist them. Many of these students thought that the Center was only for students “with problems,” such as anger management. They also were aware that students “played games” in the Center but were uncertain about the details related to when or for what purpose. However, these students also stated that they thought the Center was helpful for those who participated in it. For example, Channel, one of the participants, stated: “I’m sure they have a good reputation from the students who actually attend because I always see people in there and they always come back.” However, there seemed to be a disconnect as to how Center staff could assist these students personally. These ambivalent feelings about the Center affected student use as further discussed in the next section.

5.1.3 Research Question 3

To what degree are students willing to utilize the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

The overarching answer to research question three was “[t]o the extent to which students knew about and understood what the Center had to offer.” As previously stated, the students who participated in the Center had overwhelmingly positive impressions about their experiences. Again, most said that they would recommend the Center to their friends and viewed the Center as a place to receive help, gain skills and self-awareness, and a place to get away or “just chill.”

However, the students who had not utilized the Center attributed their non-use to a lack of understanding or familiarity with the Center’s services and/or purpose. These
misperceptions may be traced directly to misconceptions within the building related to the role of school counselors. The counselors-in-training who staff the Center are trained under the *Transformed School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) Model.* As noted in Chapter two of this manuscript, TSCI promotes five proactive functions of school counselors: (a) leadership; (b) advocacy; (c) teaming and collaboration; (d) counseling and coordination; and (e) assessing and using data (Perusse & Goodnough, 2001; Sears, 1999). This new way of conceptualizing the role of the school counseling is unfortunately in conflict with the way the school counselors at HSS view their position. For example, the senior school counselor, who has been at HHS for the six years in which the Center has been in existence, is now the test coordinator. She has viewed her chief role as assisting students with non-counseling related activities, such as scheduling and administering tests (personal communication with Director of HHS Counseling and Wellness Center, April 4, 2006). Therefore, some of the confusion students have related to the types of services offered by the Center may be attributed to the role resistance and contention between the services the Center is trying to provide and the services the school counselors have historically provided in the past.

Student misperceptions regarding the Center may also be attributed to the fragmentation of services currently administered throughout the building. Logistically, the Center is on the second floor, and each of the three school counselors are located on the third and first floors. Furthermore, ancillary programs, such as Project GRAD and I KNOW I CAN, provide career and college counseling. Thus, these services are not viewed within the repertoire of the Center or school counseling staff. To add to this
division, school counselors, Center staff, and other support personnel do not meet consistently to discuss dissemination of services. While the Center Director has worked to try to bridge this gap, she has been met with much resistance (personal communication with Director of HHS Counseling and Wellness Center, April 4, 2006). Furthermore, despite many requests for telephones and computers for the Center on behalf of the Director and faculty at OSU, school administration has yet to provide these necessary tools. Therefore, communication and collaboration between these parties has been further stilted.

Regrettably, the Center has had to overcome some logistical and personnel challenges in order to provide much needed services to students at HHS. These challenges may have inadvertently affected the Center’s ability to reach all students and therefore affected the willingness of students to utilize Center services. Section 5.4 of this chapter speaks to recommendations regarding the promotion of Center services.

5.1.4 Research Question 4

What experiences, both positively and negatively, have had the greatest influence on students’ attitudes towards and beliefs about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

Students who had utilized the Center mentioned several experiences, which led to their positive attitudes and beliefs about the Center. Specifically, the male students seemed most impressed with the scrabble and game clubs during lunch. They conceptualized the Center as more than a place to play games. To them, it was a place where they could escape the daily pressures of their lives. The Center became a room where students could go to avoid getting into trouble during lunch and “just chill.”
Students also mentioned that they had witnessed counselors welcoming students to the Center and offering their assistance. Thus, the Center became not only a place of hospitality but a place where students believed they could seek and obtain help. Students stated they would recommend the Center to their friends for precisely that reason—they had received help and believed that their friends would also. The students who utilized the Center mentioned anger management groups, the Respect Yourself group (i.e., a self-esteem group for girls), and individual counseling as services they found to be helpful. All of the students rated the services they received favorably.

It is notable that none of the students, even the students who had not utilized the Center, perceived the Center in a negative fashion. Throughout all of the interview data, there were no negative experiences mentioned, even when the researcher asked questions to elicit such responses. Rather than stating they had experienced something negative in relation to the Center, responses generally focused on students’ lack of familiarity with the services. Even Tameeka, who originally thought something might be “wrong” with her because she received a pass to come to the Center, stated she quickly changed her mind once she understood what the Center could offer her. The fact that none of the sixteen students verbalized any negative experiences with the Center or the Center staff in the time that they have been at HHS is quite remarkable. It does, appear, however, that the Center needs to improve upon marketing and publicizing their services. This is especially true, because the students who participated in Center services spoke very highly of them and, as discussed in the following section, many students believed the services helped to change them for the better.
5.1.5 Research Question 5

What changes do students see in themselves as a result of their involvement in the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

This question necessarily limits the sample to the eight students interviewed who had utilized the Center. The answers regarding this question were particularly informative, because it helped to establish that the Center was effective in delivering counseling interventions. As noted in section 4.11.2, students articulated that they gained specific skills and self-awareness as a result of their involvement in the Center.

To this end, students stated they acquired communication, anger management, and study skills. In addition, students learned how to set and meet academic, personal and career related goals. They also attributed a greater sense of self, more self confidence, the ability to make sounder judgments, and having a better plan for the future directly to the counseling interventions they received through the Center.

Furthermore, students believed the Center was a place where they could escape from the often chaotic school environment. The male participants stated this helped them to become more relaxed and to avoid trouble. One male student credited the Center with providing him with a place to spend time with his brother. For some, it appeared that the Center became a “home away from home.” Students not only gained skills and self awareness, but a sense of comfort and peace. Thus, for many of the participants, the Center staff and the Center itself provided meaningful relationships and experiences which positively influenced their lives.
5.2 Conclusions

As predicted, the below assumptions were validated in the current study:

(1) Services provided to HHS had a positive influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development.

(2) Positive relationships with significant individuals assisted students in setting and attaining academic, personal/social and career goals.

(3) Overall, students believed that the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center has a positive reputation at Hope High School.

(4) Based on past literature (Sears, 2001), participants at HHS had a limited understanding about the appropriate role of a school counselor, and did not connect the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center to the school counseling department within the school.

(5) Each participant had his or her own collection of responses related to the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center and other school services.

Students who had utilized the Center repeatedly expressed its positive impact on their lives. Students discussed tangible skills (i.e., study, communication and anger management skills) as well as new perceptions of themselves (i.e., greater confidence, less sadness, better outlook towards the future) as a result of their participation in counseling interventions delivered by the Center. It is particularly noteworthy that students in the current study (both those that participated in the Center and those who had not) had only experienced positive interactions with Center staff, thereby leading them to
believe it was well-reputed within the school. However, students who had not utilized the Center seemed unclear or uncertain as to how the services were applicable to their lives.

Participants stated they desired academic, personal/social and career related services. While many students were able to get most of these needs met, a resounding request for more career related services was clearly articulated. This need was in congruence with students’ high educational aspirations. Additionally, students articulated a strong need for meaningful relationships in their lives. Toward this end, they desired a “parent” figure, who could assist them with their personal, academic and career goals.

Furthermore, as predicted, students saw very little, if any, connection between the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center and the school counselors in the building. As discussed, this chasm may be due to fragmentation of services and contentious relations with current school counseling staff. This disconnect is further pronounced, due to the school counselors’ inability or unwillingness to embrace the new concepts of TSCI—the foundations of which the Center is founded.

It was revealed throughout the study that the Center was a conduit for enhancing and promoting resiliency in students. Specifically, the Center provided four of the six components of Henderson and Milstein’s (1996) Resiliency Wheel: (a) a caring and supportive environment; (b) prosocial bonding; (c) opportunities for meaningful participation and (d) teaching life skills. These elements were evidenced throughout the focus groups and individual interviews. Unfortunately, Center services have not reached all students, due to a myriad of contextual issues within the school. An emerging
framework is presented in the next section which attempts to help illuminate this phenomenon.

5.3 Emerging Conceptual Framework

Utilizing the data collected from focus groups and interviews, an emerging conceptual framework was developed and is displayed in Figure 5.1. Conceptual links between codes led to four major emergent themes. The emerging conceptual framework incorporates these salient themes and their interconnected relationships to each other. In the upper left corner, the first three subthemes of Perceptions of the Center are displayed. The red stop sign illustrates the fourth and final subtheme in this category, The Center as an Unfamiliar or Misperceived Entity within the School. This subtheme has been conceptualized as Barriers to Center Effectiveness.

Many students at HHS had bypassed these barriers and experienced meaningful relationships and received academic and career/future-related services. These experiences led to the promotion of resiliency (i.e., a caring and supportive environment, prosocial bonding, opportunities for meaningful participation, and teaching life skills). However, some students had not circumvented these obstacles and therefore had not utilized the Center.

The square in the upper right hand corner displays other individuals students identified as promoting resiliency. As pictorially presented, if the HHS Center and these other entities work together, the likelihood for students to experience resiliency-promoting elements within the school is reinforced and enhanced. These valuable
experiences led to positive student outcomes (high educational aspirations and a strong self concept).

This emerging conceptual framework suggests that the Center and, when possible, its affiliation and collaboration with other valuable resources within the school, play an important role within students’ lives. Thus, the Center promotes resiliency and assists students in creating a promising future for themselves. Implications of this research are discussed in the following section.
HHS Counseling & Wellness Center
- A Place to Go
- A Place to Receive Help & Feel Connected
- A Place to Foster New Skills & Self Awareness

Barriers to Center Effectiveness
- Relationships with Counselors
  - Resistance to Change
  - Lack of Communication & Collaboration
- Inadequate Equipment
- Lack of Public Relations
- Misperceptions

Resiliency
- Meaningful Relationships
- Academic Assistance
- Career/Future Planning
- Caring & Supportive Environment
- Prosocial Bonding
- Meaningful Participation
- Teaching Life Skills

Other Individuals Identified as Promoting Resiliency:
- Family
- Friends
- Teachers
- Principals
- Counselors
- Support Staff

Student Outcomes
- High Educational Aspirations
- Strong Self Concept

Legend
- Fragmentation
- Collaboration
- Promotes
- Disconnect

Figure 5.1: An Emerging Conceptual Framework
5.4 Discussion and Implications

Educational professionals, policy makers, and concerned citizens are aware of the numerous problems plaguing urban schools but, unfortunately, have very few novel ideas about how to solve them. The OSU Center Model for training school counselors may be part of the solution. Thus, the results of this study may be far-reaching as the subject matter is of interest to varied audiences. Perhaps, the most pronounced of these groups is Counselor Educators. The field lacks substantial research in what works in counselor education (Whiston & Sexton, 1998), particularly with urban and minority populations (Wilson, 1986). Information about the influence of the Center Model, may prompt other programs to establish similar models, or at the very least, make appropriate changes to their current field placement components. Certainly, implications are directed at the School Counselor Education faculty at The Ohio State University. Information from this study is also instructive to the improvement of current services provided to Columbus Public School District and to the field experiences of OSU Counselor Education masters’ students.

Additionally, concerned members of the school community may be interested in the findings of this study. Principals may be especially concerned about the programmatic interventions that seem to have made the most positive influence on students. Specifically, urban students vocalized a need for in school someone with whom they can form meaningful relationships. Additionally, they wanted more career/college planning and academic assistance (e.g. tutoring, teaching study skills). Therefore, principals may be wise to promote programs designed to assist students with these
necessary competencies. Furthermore, principals may indeed utilize the information garnered from the present study to advocate for similar Center Models in urban schools, as students who utilized the Center had overwhelmingly positive impressions of it.

Practicing school counselors might also find this study informative. When asked what services students needed from their school counselor, students articulated needs in three areas: personal/social, career and academic assistance. These responses were in line with the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). In particular, students in the current study wanted a “parent” within the school. They viewed school counselors as individuals who could give them “an extra push” and verbalized a need for someone to simply listen to them. Additionally, participants in this study were eager to obtain college information early. They requested assistance with college essays, financial aid, and college entrance exams beginning their freshman year.

Information from this study may also be of interest to parents of urban students. It is critical to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with parents, especially parents of color. Aligned with this notion, Moore (2006) stated: “African American parents have the capability to positively influence their children (arguably) more than any other people…parents can instill the importance of education…” (p. 262). Previous negative experiences within educational settings, inconvenient times of scheduled school events, transportation, and childcare issues create barriers to parental involvement in urban schools. Thus, forming collaborative partnerships with parents has been difficult in many urban settings (Perry, 2000). Findings from the current study demonstrate that school counselors and school counseling interns and/or practicum students can also make
positive differences in the lives of urban students. Such information may help to bridge the gap between “ivory tower” academia and practical solutions that work with urban students.

These findings also point to a variety of changes that need to be made within the Center Model. Understanding what is working well, and what needs to be modified or discarded will be useful for future school counseling training and teaching initiatives. As the first study of this kind, such research inevitably revealed various perspectives related to the efficacy of the Center. The below recommendations are given in the hopes of preventing potential barriers and ensuring the success of future Center Model initiatives.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations for the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center are provided. While many of the Center services are well-received, student responses indicated that these services are not well-publicized. In addition, there appeared to be a myth within the building that Center services were only for students who had “problems” or that the Center was simply a “game room.” The following recommendations are intended to address these needs.

5.5.1 Recommendations for Center Services

(1) **Bolster career and college related services early in students’ high school experience.** Many seniors in this study verbalized a desire to have more information pertaining to college requirements, college entrance exams, financial aid and scholarships earlier than they had received it. Designing and promoting sequential career and college interventions beginning freshman year and continuing throughout students’ senior year would not only be beneficial but well-
received by students. As recommended by Keisha, a class devoted to assisting students with the college process would also be beneficial.

(2) Utilize the Center for before and after-school tutoring and advising. Many students expressed a desire for tutoring services. In addition, students requested assistance with meeting graduation requirements. The Center offers a conducive space for these services. Center staff could work collaboratively with the University and community resources to broker such services. In addition, providing this assistance may appeal to student populations which previously have not utilized the Center. Thus, new opportunities to promote Center services may transpire as a result.

(3) Improve Public Relations with Students. Student responses revealed reasons for non-use of Center services centered around lack of information. Many students were unaware of the services the Center offered. Distributing information during well-attended programs (e.g. the lunch scrabble club) may increase students’ understanding of what the Center has to offer. Additionally, promoting services in classrooms at the beginning of each quarter may prove helpful in increasing participation. Similar to the other Centers in CPS, the HHS-OSU Center could sponsor a “PR Blitz,” with prizes and food within the Center. This may draw in students who normally do not frequent the Center. During the blitz, Center staff can be present to discuss services as well as to distribute printed materials related to upcoming small groups and career/college related workshops. Students in this study also recommended that Center staff make a concerted effort to know freshmen, as Channel stated so well:
I think you all should do things so the students know who you are so that they’ll know if they could benefit from your services or not, like as a freshman, if you introduce yourself to them they will know through the next 3-4 years if they need something they can come to you and you’ll be able to help them so that they’ll be comfortable with you. By the time they are a junior or senior when they have a problem, instead of just coming to you when they are a senior and them saying “well I don’t know them so I don’t feel right expressing my feelings to them.”

(4) **Improve Public Relations with HHS Staff.** Building staff also need to be informed of the Center’s purpose and services on a recurring basis. Because of the tremendous turn over within HHS, many incoming teachers and staff may be unaware of the Center. While the director of the Center creates quarterly reports for building administrators related to services rendered (see Appendix A), teachers and support staff also need to be kept informed. Highlighting services at regularly scheduled all-staff meetings and in-services would be helpful with this endeavor. In addition, creating monthly newsletters for staff regarding current and upcoming services would ensure consistent and current communication between Center and building staff. Finally, inviting staff into the Center for quarterly “teacher/staff appreciation days” may help staff become more acquainted with the Center and its offerings, as well as help to create a positive and welcoming impression for staff. The above mentioned efforts have yielded positive results at the AHS and SHS Centers.

(5) **Improve Public Relations with Parents/Guardians.** As noted earlier, many urban parents have acrimonious relations with educational professionals, based on previous negative experiences (Moore, 2006; Perry, 2000). Additionally, participants in this study noted that parental influence played a significant role in
their lives. Thus, Center staff must be creative and persistent in their efforts to reach urban students’ parents through unconventional means. For example, Center staff may need to promote their services during freshmen parent orientation. Center staff should also be present during parent-teacher conferences held during evening hours. If possible, Center staff may want to attend PTA meetings and publicize their services. As none of the participants’ parents/guardians in this study completed college, information related to this topic may be helpful. Therefore, Center staff may wish to host parent workshops on topics such as demystifying the college application and the financial aid process.

(6) Enhance collaboration/communications between school counselors, building administration, support professionals, Center staff, and parents. As noted previously, relationships between these parties has been fragmented, inconsistent, and in some instances, contentious. A regularly scheduled meeting designed to increase communication and collaboration between these individuals is needed. These meetings will help to integrate efforts and reduce the likelihood for duplication of services. As noted previously in the full-service school literature (Dryfoos, 2003), interprofessional collaboration assists with improved student learning and development, increased parental involvement and a positive school climate. Furthermore, it is imperative that building administrators attend and endorse these meetings.
5.6 Limitations

As with all forms of research, the selected methodology has limitations. One major limitation of qualitative research is that it can not be generalized to a larger population. The current study emphasized experiences of urban seniors in a particular inner-city high school. Therefore, there was no attempt to generalize these findings to other populations of urban high school students. Furthermore, this study was comprised primarily of female students, African American students, and students who had earned GPAs of 2.0 or higher. Additionally, results are based solely on senior high school level participants. Suggestions for future research to address these limitations are discussed in the next section.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

There are several areas which merit further research. A five and ten year follow-up study of these sixteen young men and women would be of interest. Reviewing these students’ career and educational trajectories may be helpful in determining effective career and future planning interventions. As the current study only focused on seniors who had somehow managed to navigate the often difficult and challenging school environment, a longitudinal research design which follows urban ninth graders through twelfth grade graduation would be informative. A particular strength of a longitudinal design is its capability to systematically investigate changes in variables that may be precursors to student drop out. Such knowledge would be invaluable for intervention planning and strategy.

Furthermore, the current study’s population was comprised of chiefly African American females. Other “at-risk” populations should be further explored.
(2003) noted gains in higher education have been the result of degrees earned by African American women, whereas degrees earned by African American men have either remained stagnant or diminished. Concerted efforts to research perceptions of urban African American males are needed. In addition, Latino students’ graduation rates are plummeting. In 2003, 24% of all Hispanic students between the ages of 16-24 dropped out of school. Furthermore, in 2004, only 11% of Hispanics between 25-29 years old had earned a bachelor’s degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Clearly, studies designed to explore interventions aimed at assisting young Latino men and women succeed in school are merited.

While this study attempted to investigate the needs of low-achieving students, only four students with GPAs of 1.9 and below participated in the study. Research aimed at studying urban students who are not succeeding academically would be instructional for academic, personal/social and career related interventions. In addition, future studies regarding the efficacy of the Center Model of training school counselors are needed. An in-depth qualitative study designed to garner perceptions of other key stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, administrators, and school counselors) about the OSU-HHS Counseling and Wellness Center would help to triangulate the findings of the present study. Additionally, quantitative work is needed to help establish baseline data related to the services provided. Measures such as attendance records, behavioral reports and grade point averages throughout students’ educational careers would help to determine significant variables affecting student success.

Finally, research, surrounding the training experiences of school counselor interns and practicum students and how these experiences impact their professional lives post
graduation, is a worthy area of future study. In particular, a research project designed to measure if the Center Model is an effective way to train future school counselors would be additive to the cannon of school counseling literature and have strong implications for the training and development of school counseling professionals.

5.8 Reciprocity

Perhaps the greatest responsibility of the qualitative researcher is reciprocity (Patton, 2002). Despite every effort to be noninvasive and polite, inherent in qualitative research is the necessity of asking thought-provoking questions, making persistent and regular observations, and generally disrupting the lives of participants. Often, these participants are not compensated for the significant time and valuable perspectives in which they provide. Thus, it is incumbent upon the author of this study to offer back to the urban and professional community, at the very least, the knowledge in which she gained. Therefore, the researcher provided an Executive Summary of this study to the key stakeholders in HHS. The principal, assistant principals, teachers, school counselors and Center staff received a report detailing major findings and recommendations. It is the sincere hope that this research will promote pragmatic collaborative school counseling services that will continue to positively influence the lives of urban students, and thus make a difference in an inner-city high school. The Center Model has made progress towards this lofty goal. With modifications, this training model may be replicated and thus better the profession of school counseling and the future lives of countless urban students.
5.9 Final Thoughts

Despite the poverty which surrounds them, the violence which plagues their neighborhoods, and their many peers who have given up before them, these participants persevered. More importantly, they taught by example. While the researcher set out to produce knowledge, she now understands that she gained much more than she provided. Equally, she was inspired by what the students said, how articulate they were with their thoughts and desires, and how much faith they had in themselves. They overcame and they struggled. Yet, they have demonstrated by their own words and actions that there is, indeed, hope.
LIST OF REFERENCES


*Ohio State University field experiences* (n.d.). Internal document, The Ohio State University.


APPENDIX A

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY-HOPE HIGH SCHOOL

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER

FINAL REPORT

2004-2005
The following reflects the counseling services provided by the OSU school counseling interns in collaboration with the staff at HHS for the 2004-2005 academic year:

Five interns provided 600 hours each of on site counseling support
Two interns provided 200 hours each of on site counseling support
Three practicum students provided 100 hours each of on site counseling support

In all, 3,700 hours of counseling services were received by the students at Hope High School during the 2004-2005 school year.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

107 students were referred or sought counseling for concerns/behaviors interfering with academic achievement. Number of sessions varied according to counseling needs with 6 being the average number of times a student was individually counseled.

Presenting identified concerns were:

* 59 Academics
  6 Career Planning
  18 Anger/Behavior
  6 Grief
  6 Stress
  4 Family/personal
  2 Depression
  3 Pregnancy support
  1 Sleep Disturbance
  1 Gender
  *also includes attendance and tardy

9th and 10th ACADEMIC COUNSELING

Four interns met individually with assigned groups of students who were repeating the 9th or 10th grade or who were at grade level but identified as “at risk”. Counseling plans were established based on individual academic needs, and records of participation and progress were provided to Ms. XX
SMALL GROUP COUNSELING

- Anger Management “Teens Talk Out” (individual groups for males and females)
- Grief and Loss
- ACT Test Preparation
- Test Taking Strategies
- ABLE
- Study Skills for Standardized Tests
- Girls “Respect Yourself”
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Circle of Trust for Survivors of Abuse
- Reducing School Tardiness
- *Career Exploration and Preparing for Post Secondary Education or the World of Work

*Specifically for 11th grade students

CLASSROOM GUIDANCE LESSONS

9th grade

Collaborate with Ms. XX and two 9th grade academies in presenting series of classroom guidance activities beginning 9/04 and concluding 5/05

Collaborate with Ms. XX in 8 sections of 9th grade English class assisting students with high school planner.

Collaborate with Ms. XX to assist students with course selection for the 2005-2006 academic year.

Collaborate with the school nurse to obtain guest speakers to present a one week series on “Smart Choices” addressing adolescent sexual behavior and issues confronting teens.

10th grade

Collaborate with Ms. XX and two 10th grade teachers in presenting a series of guidance activities.

10th grade

Conflict Resolution lesson presented to students in Spanish class.

12th grade

College Preparation Series for AP/KAP English Classes
Collaborate with two English teachers to present a series of college preparation topics
CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION

Supervisor, interns and/or practicum students are representatives on the following committees and planning teams:

SAIL
SAP (Student Advisory Program)
ABLE (Affecting Babies Lives Through Education)
Career Day
Health Fair
International Festival
Pupil Support Services

ADDITIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND COMMUNITY OUT REACH

• Chess Club – secured $500 mini grant funding to start a school club
• SCRABBLE Club – secured $2800 mini grant funding, renewable for up to 3 years, to start a school club
• Columbus Reads - HHS students partner with elementary school to earn service hours
• Book Club – secured donation of 40 books from Barnes and Noble to be used for reading groups
• Circle of Trust – coordinated with Mt. Carmel Hospital to provide facilitator for group of female student survivors of sexual abuse
• Math Peer Tutoring – matched students with peer tutors during lunch period
• Grief group – secured tree donation to plant as a “living symbol” for students participating in grief/loss group
• Race for the Cure – obtain donation to sponsor two HHS students in a 5K run to benefit breast cancer
• Obtain $1000 mini grant to fund guest speakers from Planned Parenthood and provide incentives to students participating in classroom discussion on healthy sexual and behavioral choices
• Facilitated two open houses for the HHS staff
• Organized a recognition week to celebrate the school counseling profession and the HHS school counselors
• Maintained school bulletin boards for the student advisory program and the graduating seniors

Respectfully submitted,

XXXX
OSU Counseling Supervisor
APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS
Focus Group Protocol for Students Who **Have** Utilized the
HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center

**General Questions:**

(1) What do you think students need from their school counselors?

(2) What services would be most helpful for freshmen?
   a. Sophomores?
   b. Juniors?
   c. Seniors?

(3) Who in this school would you go to if you were having a problem?
   a. A personal problem?
   b. An academic problem?
   c. A problem or concern related to your future plans?
   d. Any other?

(4) What keeps you coming to school?

**Student Support Center Questions:**

(5) How did you first hear about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(6) What services did you participate in?
   a. Individual Counseling?
   b. Group Counseling?
   c. A counseling intern came to your classroom?
      - What did s/he discuss with your class?
   d. Scrabble Club?
(7) What was helpful about the services you got from the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?
   a. Academically?
   b. Personally/Socially?
   c. Career/Planning for the Future?
   d. Any other?

(8) Were there any services that you found not to be helpful?
   a. If so, what were they?

(9) What services do wish the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center offered?

(10) Would you be willing to come back to the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?
   a. Why/Why not?

(11) What type of reputation do you think that the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center has in the school?

(12) Would you recommend the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center to your friends?
   a. If yes, which services?
   b. If not, why not?

(13) How might you be different as a result of your involvement in the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?
Focus Group Protocol for Students Who **Have NOT** Utilized the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center

**General Questions:**

(1) What do you think students need from their school counselors?

(2) What services would be most helpful for freshmen?
   
   a. Sophomores?
   
   b. Juniors?
   
   c. Seniors?

(3) Who in this school would you go to if you were having a problem?
   
   a. A personal problem?
   
   b. An academic problem?
   
   c. A problem or concern related to your future plans?
   
   d. Any other?

(4) What keeps you coming to school?

**Student Support Center Questions:**

(5) Have you ever heard of the HHS OSU Counseling and Wellness Center before today?

(6) If yes, what has prevented you from utilizing the services?

(7) What do you know about the HHS OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

(8) What types of services and activities do you wish the HHS OSU Counseling and Wellness Center offered?

(9) What type of reputation do you think that the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center has in the school?
(10) Now that you know more about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center would you consider coming? If yes, why? If not, why not?
APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE
In Their Own Voices:

Urban Students’ Perceptions of the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center

<table>
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<th>Biographical Questionnaire</th>
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Pseudonym: _______________________________

1. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. What is your age? __________

3. Which racial/ethnic group best describes you?
   a. African-American,
   b. White/Caucasian
   c. Other ____________ (please list)

4. How many years have you been at your present school?
   a. One year or less
   b. 2 years
   c. 3 years
   d. 4 years
   e. 5 years
   f. Other ____________ (please list)

5. How many years have you been in this school system? ___________

6. How many times have you moved in the past 4 years? ____________

7. What is your current GPA? __________

8. What is your class rank? ____________

9. Have you ever been retained (held back) in a grade?
a. Yes
   i. If so, which one(s)? _______________

b. No

10. What is your primary parent or guardian’s highest level of education?
   a. Less than middle school
   b. Completed middle school
   c. Some high school
   d. High school diploma
   e. GED
   f. Some college
   g. Associate’s Degree (2 years of post high school)
   h. Bachelor’s Degree
   i. More than a Bachelor’s Degree

11. What are your future plans?

12. How did you hear of the HHS OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?
   a. A friend
   b. A counseling intern came to your class
   c. A teacher
   d. An administrator
   e. Other ________________ (please list)

13. What do you know about the types of services offered by HHS OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?

14. Have you ever been to the HHS OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?
   a. Yes
      i. If yes, how many times? ______________
      ii. If yes, for what reason(s)? (check all that apply)
          □ Anger/Behavior Management
          □ Academic help
          □ Personal issues/needed someone to talk to
          □ Career or College help
          □ Grief or loss issues
          □ Problems with friends
          □ Other ________________ (please list)
      iii. If yes, what type of service did you receive? (check all that apply)
          □ Individual Counseling
15. If yes, how would you rate the services? (check one)

☐ Not Good
☐ Good
☐ Very Good
☐ Excellent

16. If yes, who worked with you? ____________________

17. If yes, would you recommend it to other students?
   a. Yes
      If yes, why?
   b. No
      i. If no, why not?
APPENDIX D

RESEARCH TEAM DESCRIPTION
Description of Research Team Members

**Researcher: Melissa S. Ockerman**

The researcher of the current study is a Caucasian female. She is a doctoral student at The Ohio State University (OSU). She has been an intern in Columbus Public Schools (CPS) and has supervised master’s level school counseling interns and practicum students for the past three consecutive years in CPS. In addition, she has co-instructed the internship course at OSU. Furthermore, she has taken both qualitative and quantitative research courses. Her major academic area is Counselor Education, and her cognate is Urban Education.

**Research Team Member # 1:**

Research Team Member # 1 is a Caucasian female and has been the on-site supervisor of the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center since its inception in 2000. She has also co-taught the internship course for master’s level school counseling students for four years. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Licensed Professional School Counselor.

**Research Member # 2:**

Research Team Member # 2 is a Caucasian male. He is a doctoral student at OSU and is currently co-supervisor of the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center. He was also an intern at the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center. In addition, he has
coursework and experience working with qualitative research methodology and is a Licensed Professional School Counselor.

**Research Team Member # 3:**

Research Team Member # 3 is a Caucasian female. She is a doctoral student at OSU and is currently co-supervisor of the AHS-OSU Student Support Center. She was also an intern at the HHS-OSU Counseling and Wellness Center. In addition, she has coursework and experience working with qualitative research methodology and is a Licensed Professional School Counselor.
APPENDIX E

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS’ PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY
Research Team Member’s Pledge of Confidentiality

As a member of this project research team, I understand that I will be reading transcriptions of confidential interviews and focus groups. The information in these transcriptions has been revealed by research participants in this project who agreed in good faith that their interviews would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information in these transcriptions with anyone except the primary researcher of this project, Melissa Ockerman, and other members of this research team. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Research Team Member: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date: _____________
APPENDIX F
CODING WORKSHEET
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APPENDIX G

CODEBOOK
Emerging Codes: Categories and Subcode Definitions

Need for Academic Assistance (AA)
Responses pertaining to needing help with effective learning strategies

- **Tutoring/study skills (TUT)**
  Responses related to the need for tutoring or tutors
- **Scheduling (SCH)**
  Responses related to assistance with class scheduling and graduation requirements
- **Other**

Need for Personal/Social Assistance (PER)
Students’ belief that they needed assistance with non-academic related issues, personal problems, and interpersonal skills

- **Someone to talk to/listen (LIS)**
  Responses related to the need for someone to talk to and provide support
- **Trust (TR)**
  Responses encompassing the need for a trustworthy person with whom to discuss personal matters
- **Help with personal problems (PROB)**
  Student acknowledgement that they desire assistance in overcoming personal obstacles
- **Help with adjustment issues (ADJ)**
  Students seeking assistance with adjustment to high school or life changes
- **Dealing with pressures (PRES)**
  Responses related to the pressures of school, family and friends (peer pressure, gang, fights, conformity, etc.)
- **Role models/mentors (MENT)**
  The notion that they look up, value, or need a person to mentor or guide them; someone with whom they relate and can aspire to be
- **Help Finding Resources (RESO)**
  Responses related to needing assistance getting linked to school or community resources
- **Help with Getting Involved in the School (INVOL)**
  Student expressed desire to get more involved in the school through school activities or extracurricular programming
- **Advocating (ADV)**
  Responses related benefiting from/or seeking advocacy
• **Keep on Track (KOT)**
  Responses denoting wanting assistance with “keeping on track”, staying out of trouble, getting an “extra push” at school

• **Other**

**Need for Future Planning (FUT)**
Students’ belief that they need assistance with the skills necessary to navigate the world of work and post-secondary options

• **College-Planning (COL)**
  Responses related to the need for assistance with completing college applications, scholarships, ACT/SAT tests, college essays, etc.

• **Career/Job Planning (JOB)**
  Students seeking assistance with career/job planning and exploration, including assistance with internship opportunities

• **Other**

**Individuals Deemed as Valuable/Important (INDIV)**
Student beliefs about certain individuals within the school whom they regard as helpful or additive to their lives

• **Teachers (TEACH)**
• **School Counselors (COUNS)**
• **Administrators (ADMIN)**
• **Pupil Services/Support Staff (PUPIL):** Librarian, Secretary, Project GRAD, Social Workers, Nurse, Internship Coordinator, etc.
• **OSU Counseling & Wellness Center Staff (OSU)**
• **Family Influence (FAM)**
• **Friend Influence (FRIEN)**
• **Self Influence (SELF):** Articulation of a “do-it-myself” attitude and persona
• **Trusted Adult (TA)**
• **Other**

**High Educational Aspirations (ASP)**
Perceptions related to a student’s own belief that they will attend college and/or have a successful future

• **Self-Motivation (SM)**
  Responses related to self motivation, goal orientation, ambition and/or internal locus of control
• **Resiliency (RSY)**
  Student acknowledgement that they have successfully adapted/bounced back from, and became stronger due to, stressors in their everyday life

• **Hope for Future (HFF)**
  Student notions that there is a better day, a better future; a better life for them

• **Other**

**Perceptions of the Center: PCO**
Responses related to how students’ view the reputation of the Center within the school

• **Good/Positive Reputation (CPOS)**
  Student perceptions the Center is positive and fulfills a need within the school
    - **Center-A Place to Go/Getaway (CPGO)**
      Student perceptions that the Center was a safe place in the school where they could go to escape the daily pressures associated with the school climate; a reprieve from daily stressors
    - **Welcoming (WEL)**
      The notion that students’ felt that the Center was a welcoming, warm place in which to come
    - **Helpful (HELP)**
      Student notions that they could seek and obtain help from Center staff
    - **Make Connections (CON)**
      Students felt a sense of belonging, or connection with the Center
    - **Stay Out of Trouble (TROUB)**
      Student perception the Center was a safe place where they could avoid trouble
    - **Self Awareness (AWARE)**
      Student articulated they had a better sense of self due to participation in Center activities
    - **Gained Skills (SKILL)**
      Student articulated that they had gained a skill or asset due to Center participation
    - **Obtaining Information (INFO)**
      Responses related to viewing the Center as a place to get meaningful/helpful information
    - **Other**

• **Negative Reputation (CNEG)**
  Student perceptions that the Center is not a good or helpful place and/or deemed unpopular throughout the school
    - **Stigma of going to Center (CSTG)**
      Notions related to the idea that if students went or were called to the Center that there was either something wrong with the student or they were in some type of trouble
o Other

- No Reputation/Not Known (CKN)
  Student responses that they know little or nothing about the services offered in the Center and therefore are unable to make a judgment regarding its influence

- Marketing/Public Relations (PR)
  Responses related to the need for the Center to better market or publicize their services to students throughout the school

- Other

Center Services
Responses related to services rendered by Center staff
- Small Groups (CGROU)
- Individual Counseling (CINDIV)
- Games (Scrabble, checkers, etc) (CGAME)
- Classroom Guidance (CGUID)
- Prom Dress Drive (CPROM)
- Anger Management (CANG)
- Academic Assistance (CACA)
- General Help or Assistance with Problems (CHELP)

- Other

School Climate (SCHCL)
Responses or beliefs relating to the HHS school climate
APPENDIX E

PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS’ RESPONSES TO

THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Yrs @ HHS</th>
<th>Yrs @ CPS</th>
<th>Times Moved</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Retained/ Grade</th>
<th>Parent's Ed</th>
<th>Future Plans</th>
<th>Heard of Center</th>
<th>Know about Services</th>
<th>Ever been/# times</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Rate Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.323</td>
<td>Y-3rd</td>
<td>Some HS</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Intern came to class</td>
<td>nursing school maybe doctor</td>
<td>Y-5</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Indiv</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.36</td>
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<td>Some Col</td>
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<td>Intern came to class</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Million</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.253</td>
<td>Y-4th</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>Intern came to class</td>
<td>College-Social Work &amp; Educ</td>
<td>Y-Million times</td>
<td>Anger, Academic, Personal, Career, Grief</td>
<td>Indiv./ career</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tameeka</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.407</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Assoc College</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>help w/ probs in personal life or school</td>
<td>Bradford for Educ</td>
<td>Y-blank</td>
<td>Group Career, college</td>
<td>Career/ college</td>
<td>V. Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.443</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Some HS</td>
<td>Recommend</td>
<td>Offers anything you need</td>
<td>Bradford for Educ</td>
<td>Y-last yr every day</td>
<td>Academic, career/coll</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>V. Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nae</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>HS</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Y-5</td>
<td>personal</td>
<td>Indiv</td>
<td>V. Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E.1: Participant Responses (Continued)
Table E.1: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo Name</th>
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<th>Parent's Ed</th>
<th>Future Plans</th>
<th>Heard of Center</th>
<th>Know about Services</th>
<th>Ever been/# times</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Rate Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>other-blank</td>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>Y-3 yrs</td>
<td>personal,</td>
<td>Career,</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2.616</td>
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<td>Assoc</td>
<td>Columbus State</td>
<td>Intern came to class</td>
<td>I don't know</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bartavias</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.837</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Tiffin &amp; play sports</td>
<td>Intern came to class</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.865</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>GED</td>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>chess, checkers, uno and other board games</td>
<td>Y-all last yr to play chess games</td>
<td>playing board</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>College</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3.442</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Some HS</td>
<td>Dominican for 4+1 MBA program</td>
<td>other-myself</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Loretta</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>HS</td>
<td>college to be doctor of some kind</td>
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<td>center for people to go to for diff issues</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Keisha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.964</td>
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<td>Zeek</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.914</td>
<td>Y-blank</td>
<td>Some HS</td>
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<td>friend</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>games</td>
<td>scrabble club</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Research Question/Focus Group Question Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Protocol Question(s)/ Have Participated</th>
<th>Protocol Question(s)/ Have NOT Participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) What services and individuals at Hope High School have had the greatest influence on students’ academic, personal/social, and career development?</td>
<td>#2, #3, #4, #6</td>
<td>#2, #3, #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) How do students perceive the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?</td>
<td>#7, #8, #10, #11, #12, #13</td>
<td>#6, #7, #9, #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) To what degree are students willing to utilize the services provided by the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?</td>
<td>#6, #9, #10, #11, #12</td>
<td>#6, #8, #9, #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) What experiences, both positively and negatively, have had the greatest influence on students’ attitudes towards and beliefs about the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?</td>
<td>#6, #7, #8, #10, #11, #12, #13, #13</td>
<td>#6, #7, #9, #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) What changes do students see in themselves as a result of their involvement in the OSU Counseling and Wellness Center?</td>
<td>#7, #13</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX J

IRB APPROVAL
March 22, 2006

Dear Investigators,

I review applications for exempt status.

The above project has been determined to be exempt. The project number is 2006E0141. You may begin your data collection. The signature page of the application will be sent to the Principal Investigator to serve as an approval letter.

The project is approved for exemption from IRB review under category # 2

- Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
  a. information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; AND,
  b. any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

(NOTE: The exemption under Category 2 DOES NOT APPLY to research involving survey or interview procedures or observation of public behavior when individuals under the age of 18 are subjects of the activity except for research involving observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.)

- Please note that only OSU employees and students who have completed CITI training and are named on the signature page of this application are approved as OSU investigators in conducting this study.

- You are reminded that you must promptly report any problems to the Office of Responsible Research Practices.

- No procedural changes may be made in exempt research.

Janet Schulte
Biomedical IRB Administrator
614-688-0389
614-688-0366-fax
schulte.58@osu.edu
www.orrp.ohio-state.edu