School Counselor Preparation to Serve Students with Disabilities

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JENNA M. ALVAREZ

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and The Patton College of Education by

Christine Suniti Bhat

Professor of Counseling and Higher Education

Renée A. Middleton

Dean, The Patton College of Education

Abstract

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School Counselor Preparation to Serve Students with Disabilities

Director of Dissertation: Christine S. Bhat

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single-case study was to examine how school counselors from a single master's level counselor education program are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities using interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). The primary goal was to gain a better understanding of how school counselors are currently trained to interact with and serve individuals with disabilities in light of curriculum standards defined by national associations and accrediting bodies. Data included transcripts from semi-structured interviews with nine school counselors-in-training in the program and course syllabi. These were analyzed using embedded analysis and pattern matching as analytic techniques (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). I identified a gap in knowledge amongst participants associated with the current curriculum training standards, competencies, and available framework for working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The predicted patterns matched the empirical patterns as supported through interviews and examination of syllabi content. A key finding included that school counselor trainees drew on prior knowledge and experiences rather than education to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Recommendations for the preparation of school counselor trainees include empowering and training school counselor trainees to advocate for PreK-12 students with disabilities,

and providing graduate students more opportunities to work with individuals from

diverse cultures, particularly disability culture during practicum and internship.

Dedication

To my husband, Joe, for your innumerable support. To our three children, Cecilia, Cruz, and Colson for being my why. To my grandmother, Goldie for instilling a love of learning and a sense of creativity. The love and support of my family has made this body of work a labor of love.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Professional school counselors are encouraged by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) to follow the ASCA National Model, including Counselor Competencies, and the ASCA Ethical Standards (ASCA 2012, 2016b, 2018). However, counselor educators are not required by graduate training programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) to prepare school counselor trainees to be competent in ASCA guidelines. School counselor trainees in CACREP accredited programs are not required to demonstrate ASCA competencies. The current CACREP standards do not address the ASCA National Model or require school counselors-in-training to adhere to the ASCA National Model, when creating a comprehensive school counseling program. The CACREP standards require both faculty members and school counselor trainees to embody a professional identity through affiliation with professional organizations that support the mission of school counseling (CACREP, 2015). ASCA came into existence as a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), but as ASCA's membership grew and the definition of school counselors as "educators" first and counselors second became widely accepted, a separation between ASCA and ACA began to emerge, with both organizations functioning independently of each other (Erford, 2015).

In early 2018, all ASCA members received an electronic memo from the ASCA Executive Director (on March 27, 2018) announcing a mutually supported formal separation of the organization from the American Counseling Association. The letter also included ASCA's plan to work with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator

Preparation (CAEP), the primary teacher education accreditation body, to create specialty standards for the preparation of school counselors that align with the ASCA National Model (Wong, 2018). ASCA leadership took this opportunity to inform ASCA members that CACREP does not plan to include the ASCA National Model in the CACREP School Counseling standards. Finally, the letter highlighted that the current CAEP graduate standards currently default to CACREP for guidance on training school counselors, while expressing uncertainty about how this particular relationship will continue (Wong, 2018). It seems possible that ASCA would consider providing support for the accreditation of school counselor preparation programs under CAEP rather than under CACREP in the future.

The lack of shared vision among accrediting bodies and professional organizations in school counseling regarding the creation of a set of professional training standards contributes to unclear guidelines of school counselors' duties. It also fragments the ability of school counselor training programs to guide how professional school counselors are to support disadvantaged student populations. The aim of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of how professional school counselors are trained to work with students with disabilities, one of the identified disadvantaged student populations in schools, by interviewing school counselor trainees. Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) reported a void in proper disability training and exposure to disability culture for counselor trainees, and addressed the importance of training in the disability area for all counselors, rather than through a specialty area lens such as rehabilitation counseling.

The term disability culture refers to any individual who was born into the culture or acquired a disability, after birth to gain membership into the culture (Oklin, 2002, 2007). The culture of disability is unique as membership occurs through a diagnosis and the individual can choose to accept or reject membership (Oklin, 2007). The culture of disability continues to grow as individual students are being identified with disabilities in American schools (Kraus, 2015).

It is expected that professional school counselors will work with students who have been identified with disabilities or show evidence of a possible disability. The ASCA ethical standards require school counselors to serve all students regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (ASCA, 2016b). ASCA has a formal position statement on how school counselors should engage students with disabilities. The goal is to serve all students, including those with disabilities, but also to take an active stance in advocating for the rights of students (ASCA, 2016a). However, professional school counselors and school counselor trainees need to be educated about disabilities, disability laws, and district policies if they are to effectively collaborate with parents to support the best interests of students with disabilities (ASCA, 2016a).

Support for Attention to Disabilities in School Counseling

The ASCA and CACREP standards for the training of school counselors, and important research focused on disabilities and school counselor training are presented in this section. A more detailed literature review is presented in Chapter Two. As mentioned earlier, Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) conducted training to expose master level counseling students to disability culture. Rawlings and Longhurst reported that

counseling students need more exposure to disability training which influenced the development of the study. Furthermore, these researchers discovered that many counseling students had misconceptions about disability culture (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). For example, the counselor trainees, who participated in the training, initially believed that all individuals with a disability, who enter into counseling are there to change things related to the disability (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). Rawlings and Longhurst, also reported that counseling student participants prior to engaging in the study, were unaware of the appropriate terms to be used when engaging with individuals with disabilities. For example, in both educational and community settings, the use of person first language, meaning referring to the person first, and the disability second is recommended.

Milsom conducted and co-authored several studies and wrote conceptual pieces regarding services provided by professional school counselors to students with disabilities (Milsom, 2002, 2006; Milsom & Akos, 2003; Milsom, Goodnough, & Akos, 2007). Milsom (2002) surveyed 100 professional school counselors who were currently employed in schools, were ACA members, and had completed school counselor preparation programs between the years of 1994 and 2000. The researcher found that high school professional school counselors did not feel they had adequate training to successfully help transition students with disabilities to post-secondary school or training (Milsom, 2002). Anderson et al. (2003) found in a national survey, designed to assess transition related standards for special education teacher preparation program, that transition content was delivered in multiple courses within a teacher education program.

Anderson et al. found a connection between faculty with a transition focus to the frequency in delivery of the standards and emphasis placed on the importance of transition. Benitez, Morningstar, and Frey (2009) found that teacher preparation programs that failed to adequately prepare teachers to engage in proper transition services impacted how students with disabilities transitioned to postsecondary education. This is critical, as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) mandates that all students served through an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) are engaged in post-secondary planning. Properly trained professional school counselors can provide valuable assistance to intervention specialists in post-secondary planning.

Milsom (2006) published a conceptual paper highlighting the important role that school counselors play in either positively or negatively impacting the school experience for students with disabilities. Professional school counselors who create initiatives to promote awareness and acceptance of unique abilities to bolster a positive school climate are likely to have a positive impact on students with disabilities (Milsom, 2006). Referring back to Rawlings and Longhurst's (2011) study, counselors in training are unaware of appropriate disability language as well as the fact that some individuals do not subscribe to disability culture (Oklin, 2007). Milsom concluded that it is important for school counselors to advocate for an environment that allows students with disabilities to feel accepted and supported. Therefore, school counselor preparation programs need focus on disability education and advocacy.

Currently, the CACREP (2015) standards do not include specific language on how school counselors should be trained to engage with and support students with

disabilities. However, there are several published articles that highlight the potential ways professional school counselors interact with students with disabilities, especially through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Notably, Owens, Thomas, and Strong (2011) wrote about how professional school counselors can play an important role as leaders and advocates on IEP teams. Milsom, Good, and Akos (2007) highlighted how professional school counselors could assist in the IEP process. At the elementary level, Frye-Myers (2005) examined how professional school counselors interact with students with disabilities and found that the three counselors considered students with disabilities to be a part of their caseload. The elementary school counselors stated that students with disabilities on their caseload often struggled the most within the personal/social domain (Frye-Myers, 2005). It is important to note that some of these studies are dated, which supports the need for the current study in a contemporary setting. In Chapter Two, further details on the professional school counselor's role with students with disabilities are presented.

CACREP has announced changes in the next round of standards for school counseling programs. The most notable change is the increase to 60 credit hours for school counseling programs by July 2020, matching other CACREP accredited programs such as clinical mental health counseling (CACREP, 2015). However, a special announcement was released in February stating that school counseling, among other specialty areas, now have until July 2023 to meet the 60 credit hour requirement (CACREP, 2018). Merlin, Pagano, George, Zanon, and Newman (2017) conducted a pilot study of a school counseling program that transitioned from 48 credit hours to 60

credit hours. Merlin et al. reported a sample size of 22 participants, which is typically the size of a cohort. The consensus was the credit hour increase could either have a "positive" or "neutral" impact on school counseling programs (Merlin et al., 2017). The above point is important to note as movement to 60 credit hours for school counseling programs could create space to add coursework specific to disabilities in the program.

Problem Statement

It is my position that there are shortcomings in how school counselors are currently trained in relation to disability culture, educational disability identification, legislation, parent involvement, advocacy, leadership and ethical responsibilities associated with servicing students with disabilities. For example, in Ohio, school counseling training programs are not required to obtain CACREP accreditation by the Ohio Department of Education, which provides oversight to the hiring of school counselors. In contrast, clinical mental health training programs in the state of Ohio are required (beginning in May 2018) by the Ohio Counselor Social Worker Marriage and Family Therapy Board (CSWMFT) to be accredited by CACREP (Bray, 2014). In Ohio, this provides a consistent framework for how clinical counselors are trained.

With the announcement by ASCA about the development of a partnership with CAEP to incorporate the ASCA National Model framework into CAEP standards, ASCA also announced that CACREP was unable to incorporate the ASCA framework into the CACREP standards (Wong, 2018). Regardless of whether the accrediting body for school counseling programs is CACREP or CAEP it seems that a focus on students with disabilities is important and necessary within school counseling training programs.

Standards in revision or new standards might provide an opportunity to advocate for the importance of such a focus. With this in mind, the current study sought to discover potential training gaps associated with how school counselor trainees are currently prepared to engage with students with disabilities.

Purpose of Research Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single-case study was to examine how school counselor trainees from a single counselor education program in Ohio are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities using interviews with trainees and program documents analysis (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). By studying school counselor trainees from one program, the goal was to gain a better understanding of how school counselors are currently trained to interact and serve individuals with disabilities. The objective was to analyze the data using embedded analysis and pattern matching as an analytic technique (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Through interviews and document analysis of program syllabi, I aim to answer the following questions outlined in the next section.

Research Questions

1. In what ways are school counselor trainees in a single counselor education program in Ohio currently prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

2. What is the potential impact of disability training on school counselor trainees' interactions and experiences with Ohio students with disabilities?

Pattern Matching Approach

Per Research question one outlined above, the goal of this qualitative exploratory single case-study approach was to gain a better understanding of how school counselors are currently trained to interact and serve individuals with disabilities. In order to accomplish this goals, data was analyzed using embedded analysis and pattern matching as single-case study analytic techniques (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). The pattern matching analysis process involved establishing predicted patterns prior to data collection, and then analyzing data gathered through semi-structured interviews and course syllabi in the graduate school counselor preparation program against the predicted patterns. The established predicted patterns included the following:

1. School counselor trainees are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

2. School counselor trainees were predicted to have only surface knowledge about disability culture based on their previous experiences and practicum experiences.

3. Participants would demonstrate a heightened awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture due to their knowledge that I as the researcher subscribes to disability culture.

I chose to conduct pattern matching as an analysis technique as it is highly recommended to analyze large amounts of data gathered in qualitative case studies (Yin, 2018). In Chapter Three, further details on the analysis procedures used are explained in detail.

Significance

The disagreement between CACREP and ASCA has the potential to create a discrepancy in how school counselors are trained to interact with PreK-12 students. The lack of a shared vision in training described above could impact how professional school counselors work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Aside from training, various studies in the literature examine the professional school counselor's interactions with PreK-12 students with disabilities resulting in service incongruence for this population of students (Frye-Myers, 2005; Leggett, Shea, & Leggett, 2011; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003). School counselors are often required to serve in excess of 500 students, which is double the recommended ratio of 250 students per professional school counselor (ASCA, 2012). The school climate has shifted to include high-stakes testing and school counselors need to utilize advocacy skills to protect students' emotional health before, during, and after mandated testing (ASCA, 2017). Students with disabilities are already at a disadvantage and could benefit from competent professional school counselors who are specifically trained to address the needs of students with disabilities.

Addressing counselor training related to disability, Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) exposed counseling students to disability culture through a one-hour training session. Their findings confirmed that prior to engaging in a disability workshop, counselor trainees were unaware of the importance of proper disability language, and best practices for engaging individuals with disabilities in counseling. After the training, the researchers expressed a desire for more training illuminating the need for the current study.

A qualitative approach was utilized to help me to gain an understanding of the process of educational experiences school counselor trainees receive in their graduate training programs related to the work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. I also took a qualitative approach to gain insight on current students' perceptions of training specifically related to how graduate students are prepared to interact with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The study was conducted with graduate students at my place of employment in a single counselor education program. The significance for this program is that the findings would insight into potential training gaps and consequent improvements that could be made to better prepare students to serve PreK-12 students with disabilities through curriculum enhancement in specific courses such as Counseling Special Populations. While this study focuses on one specific counselor preparation program the findings could be of significance to other school counselor preparations programs.

Theoretical/Practical Reasons

It is important to understand how professional school counselors view disability culture and what theory is utilized when approaching counseling with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it is important to understand how school counselor trainees view students identified with a disability. How professional school counselors were previously trained impacts current trainees during the practicum and internship experience. In the field, the school counselor trainee applies knowledge to practice with the support of a faculty and site supervisor.

The following models help conceptualize how trainees may perceive students

with disabilities. Through conducting individual interviews, I gained insight of the

limitations and training gaps relevant to disability culture and interactions with PreK-12

students with disabilities. The objective was to uncover possible training discrepancies in

order to create a training proposal to address the problem. The established research

questions were developed to examine how school counseling trainees are currently

trained in disability culture. This section provides an overview of each of the particular

models for viewing a disability. The following chapter provides a detailed explanation of

each model.

Moral model. This model explains the disability as the person's fault, or the

result of a wrongdoing (Oklin, 2002, 2007). It is considered the oldest model for viewing

disability culture and takes a faith-based approach to view the disability (Oklin, 2002,

2007). It tends to have a negative-shame connotation (Oklin, 2002, 2007).

Medical model. This model views disability as a medical issue, either inherited

or resulting from poor health-lifestyle choices (Oklin, 2002, 2007). The goal in this

model is to fix the disability, but this may create feelings of shame for the individual.

While this model does solicit disability services, it is not holistically focused on the

whole person (Oklin, 2002, 2007).

Social model. This model views disability as a problem with the environment,

not the individual person with a disability (Oklin, 2002, 2007). In this view, the

individual with a disability is being limited by society (Oklin, 2002, 2007). The goal is to

work toward a more inclusive approach to serving those with disabilities (Oklin, 2002, 2007).

Biomedical model. This model views a disability from a medical perspective and does not take into account any social justice considerations (Smart & Smart, 2006). Those using the model view the disability as part of the person and believe the person already has the tools to self-correct (Smart & Smart, 2006).

Functional models. This model is considered an *interactional model* with the environmental model (Smart & Smart, 2006). This model views disability biologically in terms of how the person functions within the environment (Smart & Smart, 2006). The model exposes counselors to the idea of functional limitations associated with being a person with a disability (Smart & Smart, 2006).

Environmental models. Smart and Smart (2006) explained that a person's abilities are not only impacted by the disability, but as a result of the how the person's environment is constructed. The environmental model takes into account the role of the environment into the individual's life and how the person operates within a particular environment depending on the available accommodations (Smart & Smart, 2006).

Sociopolitical model. This model is also known as the *Minority Model of Disability* and is changing how disability is viewed (Smart & Smart, 2006). The practitioner utilizes the model to look at how the individual with a disability interacts each day (Smart & Smart, 2006). This model also takes into account how the person with a disability perceives themselves as having membership into disability culture (Smart & Smart, 2006).

ADDRESSING model. This multifaceted model is a tool utilized by counselors when engaging with clients (Hays, 2001, 2016). The ADDRESSING model was created to break down possible minority and majority membership misconceptions (Hays, 2001, 2016). This provides the counselor with a cultural framework for forming a more comprehensive view of clients' identities. Each of the letters in the model stands for a unique part of the individual and is explained in Chapter Two.

Feminist therapy. The feminist therapy movement aligns with women activists fighting for equal rights (Remer, 2013). Historically, the popular theories were created by Caucasian males and addressed issues faced by the dominant culture (Remer, 2013). Feminist therapy aims to address external and internal issues that are associated with being a female, a minority, or both (Remer, 2013). A feminist perspective takes into account forms of oppression (Remer, 2013).

These techniques can be used with students with disabilities, who can be impacted negatively by a school environment that supports or promotes ableism (Milsom, 2006; Remer, 2013). A professional school counselor with a feminist approach can work to address external and internal influences PreK-12 students with disabilities face in school (Milsom, 2006; Remer, 2013).

Selected University

The institution selected for this research study was a university with a newly-formed school counseling program. The Master of Arts in Education school counseling program started with four school counselor trainees in the spring semester of 2017 and has since grown to roughly 45 school counselor trainees. The current counselor education

program is focused on specifically training school counselors and is onboarding an approved clinical mental health counseling track in the Fall of 2019. A goal of the program is to seek accreditation from CACREP. The current CACREP standards require a program to graduate a class of students before obtaining accreditation (CACREP, 2015). The program is projecting to have a site visit with CACREP and will utilize data collected from students' graduating in the spring of 2019 to obtain accreditation.

The site was selected based on the current focus of training school counselors, seeking accreditation with CACREP, as well as being a relatively new program. As a new program, there are opportunities for the data from this study to influence additional course considerations related to disability training. The argument for influence on courses is supported with the credit hour increase for school counseling training programs in July of 2023. CACREP (2015, 2018) is requiring all currently accredited and accreditation-seeking programs to increase school counseling programs from the current 48 semester credit hours to 60 semester credit hours. Also, with the approaching credit hour increase, the faculty have proposed introducing a course called Counseling Special Populations. The study allowed for the opportunity to gain insight on potential knowledge gaps in the current programming.

Definition of Terms

1. Disability—a broad term to describe a deficiency of a student that falls into a specific subcategory of a specific disability to qualify the student for services (IDEA, 2004).

2. Advocacy—An approach a school counselor takes to create change for individuals facing barriers (ASCA, 2012).

3. School counselor—An individual who serves all students in a school in a systematic and data driven fashion (ASCA, 2012).

4. Ableism—A form of oppression aimed to discriminate against a person whose abilities differ from what society views as acceptable or normal abilities (Remer, 2013).

5. Inclusion—A way to include students with disabilities into the classroom environment, but with the support of an intervention teacher (IDEA, 2004).

6. Disability culture—A group of people with various abilities that either subscribe or do not subscribe to the culture but are connected to the culture through either a diagnosis or school given label (Oklin, 2007).

Summary of Chapter One

The goal of Chapter One was to provide the significance of the research study connected to the most relevant literature. The objective was to give the reader an understanding of the role accreditation plays in how counselor educators train school counselors to engage with minority populations, specifically PreK-12 students with disabilities. Select studies that identified gaps in the preparation of school counselor trainees to serve PreK-12 students with disabilities effectively in schools were presented.

The next chapter will go into depth about the theoretical applications utilized in the creation of the study. The ADDRESSING model and other well-known models utilized for viewing disabilities will be explained in detail. Feminist therapy and feminist

disability studies will also be examined. The chapter will present the history of school

counseling connected to disability laws protecting American children in schools.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In Chapter, One I presented a preview of the literature related to the topic of school counselor trainees working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. This chapter contains a review of the relevant literature related to how school counselors are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. A brief overview of the formation of the profession of school counseling is provided. Also, a review of relevant disability laws and legislation for school counselors to consider when working with PreK-12 students with disabilities is provided. The reader is also provided with information on how the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) impact school counselor trainees, which then impacts PreK-12 students with disabilities.

School Counseling Historical Background

In the 1950s and 1960s, school counseling started to become a legitimate profession (Erford, 2015). Professional school counselors were absent from schools in America until the 1950s and 1960s; many higher learning institutions did not provide training programs for school counselors (Erford, 2015). The training and available funding at the time was focused on vocational guidance services, not training individuals to become professional school counselors (Erford, 2015). In 1952, ASCA was founded as a sister organization to the American Counseling Association (Erford, 2015). The profession of school counseling began to establish roots well before any legislation was created for individuals with disabilities.

While establishing a professional identity, professional school counselors were originally referred to as *guidance counselors*. The use of the term *guidance* to refer to the profession of school counseling was discontinued in the 1980s (Erford, 2015), however, educators and the public often still use the term *guidance* to refer to professional school counselors. Erford (2015) stated, "the term *guidance* was widely viewed as conveying the notion that the professional school counselor was primarily involved in a directive form of advice giving to the students" (p. 8). Also, the term *guidance* does not align with the ASCA professional identity and mission of school counselors. A school counselor is a leader who advocates for students to create systemic change while collaborating with others (ASCA, 2012). In 1953, ASCA introduced *The School Counselor* journal (Erford, 2015). Establishing a journal was one of ASCA's many initiatives to create a solid professional identity for professional school counselors.

Also in 1953, the United States Department of Education created the Pupil Personnel Services Organization (Erford, 2015) which helped to increase the professional credibility of school counselors by providing an organization to house the school counseling licensure as the profession moved away from the *guidance* identity (Erford, 2015). The needs of minority students gained the professional school counselor's attention; Erford (2015) wrote:

> The impact of the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation Movements, as well as legislation effectively mainstreaming all special education students, refocused the attention of the professional school counselors to diversity in schools and the needs of special populations for guidance and counselor. (pp. 9–10)

Today, the needs of students in American schools continues to be a focus of professional

school counselors who utilize the ASCA National Model. The ASCA National Model

provides the school counselors with tools and resources on how to serve students from

diverse backgrounds (ASCA, 2012). Additionally, ASCA regularly releases or updates

position statements related to various groups of students which are published to educate

the professional school counselor and school counselor trainee on how to engage,

support, and advocate for students from diverse backgrounds.

Laws and legislation. The education of students with disabilities is an ongoing

topic of conversation in the United States. The number of students with disabilities has

increased, so has the attention to properly educating students with disabilities by

professional school counselors (Rock & Leff, 2015; ASCA, 2016a). The increasing

attention to protecting the rights and education of those with disabilities can be seen in

the amendments and updates to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), along with

other laws and legislation related to individuals with disabilities.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) became law in 1974,

signed by President Gerald Ford (Rock & Leff, 2015). Senator James L. Buckley of New

York worked diligently to develop and pass FERPA which is often referred to as the

Buckley Amendment (Rock & Leff, 2015). The federal law helps to ensure the privacy

of each student's records and parents' rights to their child's educational records until the

child reaches the legal age of eighteen. Rock and Leff (2015) highlighted that when a

student turns 18 years old, the school counselor must obtain written consent from the

student to share records. For example, the school counselor would now need written consent to share information with teachers and parents.

However, depending on the state, there are laws in place that protect the parents' right to educational information until the student graduates from high school (Rock & Leff, 2015). It is important for the professional school counselor to have a complete understanding of the laws in his or her state (Rock & Leff, 2015). This duty aligns with the school counselor's ethical responsibility to ensure that he or she has a full understanding of laws, policies, and district guidelines (ASCA, 2016b).

It is important for professional school counselors to understand FERPA, especially when working with students with disabilities. There are three important FERPA-related situations that often are problematic for professional school counselors when working with students with disabilities (Rock & Leff, 2015). Under FERPA, items created and shared with others are considered an educational record, and full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2014). For example, a professional school counselor cannot guarantee or ensure that a student's confidentiality will be protected if the counselor plans to consult with the student's teacher. Rock and Leff (2015) cautioned school counselors against sharing information with other school staff as confidentiality protection becomes limited to comply with FERPA. For example, if the professional school counselor shares any information contained in a personal note written by the counselor, it then becomes an educational record, and parents and students 18 years or older have a right under FERPA to access this information (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2014; Rock & Leff, 2015).

A professional school counselor and school counselor trainee must be careful to maintain confidentiality and adhere to limits of confidentiality (ASCA, 2016b). The ASCA (2016b) ethical standards for school counselors address the duty by law to involve parents as it is an educational right. The professional school counselor must inform PreK-12 students, parents, teachers, and staff about the limits of confidentiality related to the ethical standards required of professional school counselors (ASCA, 2016b). It is important to have a full understanding of FERPA as well as the ethical responsibility of confidentiality to properly maintain a student's confidentiality.

Rock and Leff (2015) explained professional school counselors' need to be careful with confidentiality related to Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) meetings as to not share information found in personal counselor note files on the particular PreK-12 student. To comply with FERPA, a note or information from a session shared with colleagues would be considered an educational record. The ethical standards for school counselors indirectly address laws and legislation such as FERPA as follows: "are knowledgeable of laws, regulations, and policies affecting students and strive to protect and inform students and families regarding their rights" (ASCA, 2016b, A.1.g). The professional school counselor and school counselor trainees need to be aware of policies and work with parents to ensure that parents and PreK-12 students have access to educational records.

Under FERPA, parents have a right to review and request a copy of any educational records at any time (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2014; Rock & Leff, 2015). Also, parents and students 18 years or older have the right under FERPA to

determine what information can be shared by the school, and permission in writing is required (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2014; Rock & Leff, 2015). Another important impact of FERPA for school counselors is the right of parents and students 18 years or older to change information or add notes to any educational record that has been deemed inaccurate (Rock & Leff, 2015). The parents or student can also require information to be removed from the student's record (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2014). Rock and Leff (2015) explained the impact of confidentiality for professional school counselors keeping records on PreK-12 students with disabilities, as the professional school counselors must ensure that records, including counselor-created notes, are securely locked and accessible only by the counselor. It can often be challenging to protect notes on a student with a disability due to the amount of collaboration and education teaming that occurs for students with disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is the overarching law that protects students from birth to age 21 who have a disability (IDEA, 2004). Students with disabilities are protected under IDEA to receive access to an education at no additional cost to the family that also address the needs of the student related to the disability (IDEA, 2004). Students with disabilities are covered under IDEA as long as the disability is covered under one of the thirteen categories (IDEA, 2004; Rock & Leff, 2015). After a student has qualified for services under one or more of the disability determination categories, the student then is entitled to FAPE (IDEA, 2004). Section 504 requires school districts to provide students with a disability a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) and includes definitions as well as requirements on

the educational experience for individuals with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

FAPE allows students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the curriculum with peers through services and supports to help these students succeed academically. Under IDEA, a student can receive an IEP to ensure that he or she has a tailored education program to help him or her achieve educational goals. The IEP also serves as a legal document to protect the student's educational rights to support services (IDEA, 2004). It is important for the professional school counselor to understand the educational rights of each PreK-12 student with disabilities, which include an IEP and a counselor responsible for advocating for the student's education rights and needs (ASCA, 2016a).

If a student is not eligible for services under IDEA, the student may be qualified for services under Section 504. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects individuals with disabilities from being excluded from an activity or program solely based on the fact the individual has a disability (Jones, 2009). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is monumental, as it was the first legislation to provide individuals with disabilities protection (Jones, 2009). Since 1973, Section 504 has been amended several times to clarify confusing language around whether Section 504 was violated for a particular individual (Jones, 2009). For example, one amendment clearly defined *program or activity* to include any program or activity that received federal dollars (Jones, 2009).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 and underwent revisions in 2008 (Rock & Leff, 2015). Similar to IDEA and FAPE, the Americans with Disabilities Act helps to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination. The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 provides clear guidelines on reasonable accommodations for an employee with a disability (ADA, 2008).

The Department of Justice (2017a) made updates to Title II Regulations of the ADA. The Title II Regulations focus on local and state government. The major updates include broader coverage of individuals under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 to allow individuals with disabilities more protection (Department of Justice, 2017a). The definition of disability under ADA has also been expanded as a means to provide more individuals with disabilities coverage under ADA (Department of Justice, 2017a).

The Department of Justice (2017b) also recently updated Title III Regulations of the ADA. The rationale for continual updates is to ensure that public accommodations and commercial facilities are adhering to relevant accessibility accommodations (Department of Justice, 2017b). For example, with the changes to technology and new construction of buildings, it is important to regularly assess standards of accessibility. Prior to the 2017 ADA regulation update, Title III was updated in 2010.

Frantz and Prillaman (1993) conducted a study to determine how many states required professional school counselors to hold an endorsement in special education. The researchers found that out of the 46 participating states, 25% required all professional school counselors to hold an additional endorsement in special education (Frantz & Prillaman, 1993). At the time the researchers conducted the study, the state of Ohio did

not require professional school counselors to hold a special education endorsement, but the authors noted that Ohio was considering adding the special education endorsement (Frantz & Prillaman, 1993). The state of Ohio required professional school counselors to hold teaching licensure to be eligible for a school counseling license during the time the researchers conducted the study.

Currently, in the state of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) requires individuals seeking a professional school counselor licensure to attend an approved master's program in the state of Ohio or fulfill certain requirements if transferring a license from a different state (ODE, 2017a). The Ohio Department of Education no longer requires school counselor candidates to hold a teaching license to become eligible for a pupil service licensure in school counseling. However, since the publication of the Frantz and Prillaman article in 1993, ODE still does not require school counselors to hold an endorsement in special education. Professional school counselors are ethically responsible for understanding laws and policy as well as ensuring that parents and students are properly informed of educational rights (ASCA, 2016a, 2016b; Rock & Leff, 2015).

Similarly, the current CACREP school counseling standards do not address disability training specifically related to the professional role of the school counselor. The current standards do address training on professional organizations, legislation related to the school counselor, and ethical standards (CACREP, 2015), however, the CACREP standards do not explicitly mention training on the ASCA National Model or counselor competencies. A formal announcement was sent to all ASCA members

announcing not only the mutual separation from the American Counseling Association (ACA), but a formal partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) to include standards that align to the ASCA National Model standards (Wong, 2018). Additionally, ASCA took the opportunity to state that CACREP is unable to adopt the ASCA National Model standards into the CACREP accreditation standards (Wong, 2018).

In a 2014 position statement, ASCA's leaders wrote that school counselor trainees at both the master and doctoral levels should be trained utilizing ASCA-created documents that outline the ASCA professional school counselor (ASCA, 2014). ASCA established the following documents as important to the training of school counselors: *the ASCA National Model*, *ASCA Counselor Competencies*, *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success*, and *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (ASCA, 2014). ASCA highlighted the key areas of training for school counselors, explaining that professional school counselors need to ensure that all PreK-12 students have access to education and counselors work to close achievement gaps (ASCA, 2014).

Disability culture. Disability as a culture is one of the largest growing minority groups in the United States (Oklin, 2002, 2007). ODE (2017b) reports that children with disabilities PreK-12 account for 14 percent of the total student population in the 2015-2016 academic year. The report indicates that of the 255,798 students identified as having a disability, 99 percent of the students were served on an IEP (ODE, 2017b). According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) as highlighted by Kraus (2015) in the Disability Statistics Annual Report, 12.6 percent of Americans have a

disability; showing an increase from the 2010 survey. The adolescent population in this survey was included in the 5 to 17 age range, which represents 5.4% of the total disability population surveyed (Kraus, 2015). This is important statistical information for the counseling profession as many clients/students seeking services potentially have a disability.

As the culture of disability continues to grow, it is important for the literature and research to grow with it. Disabilities range from invisible disabilities such as learning disabilities to more visible disabilities such as physical impairments, and individuals can enter this culture at any point in their lives (Oklin, 2002, 2007; Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). Since disabilities are different from other cultures and the subcultures within disability culture vary, it is important for helping professionals to know this culture (Oklin, 2002, 2007; Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). ODE (2017b) reports that "Specific Learning Disability" was the largest qualifying eligibility category for the 2015-2016 academic year in the state of Ohio.

As a group, people with disabilities share challenges with other minority groups; Oklin wrote, "Minorities are underrepresented in many professions, underserved as clients, and underrepresented in normative groups for psychological testing" (2002, p. 134). These common threads hold true for disability culture when seeking counseling services as counselor educators are not providing counseling trainees in graduate programs proper training and knowledge on how to best serve those clients or PreK students with disabilities (Oklin, 2002; Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). When

underserved and already facing barriers such as exclusion, prejudice, and oppression, those with disabilities may resist seeking counseling (Peters, 2007).

When addressing disability culture, it is important to note that this group is similar to other minority groups in some respects but different in other ways (Oklin, 2002, 2007). One way disability culture differs from other minority cultures is that those with disabilities are still separated and not always considered equal (Oklin, 2002, 2007). For example, those with disabilities still have separate doors and transportation, and still receive education in different classrooms from their peers (Oklin, 2002, 2007). Although inclusion is becoming more available to those with disabilities, the level of inclusion can often depend on the needs of the person with the disability (IDEA, 2004). The goal of IDEA is to ensure that each student with a disability is served in the least restrictive environment; however, successfully educating the student is also considered when determining placement.

Another way those with disabilities differ from members of other minority groups is that those from the disability community are often the only one in their family who has a disability (Oklin, 2002). While this circumstance is different from most minority groups, those who identify with the LGBQ community often experience being the only LGBQ-identifying person in their family (Oklin, 2002). It is important for counselors to be aware of disability culture and the variations between this and other minority cultures (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). Also, the counselor needs to fully understand the history of disability and how society has viewed and still views disability through various models. After the counselor gains an understanding of the models of disabilities, it is

important for the counselor to utilize multicultural frameworks to ensure that they are competently working with the client.

      Models of disability. Oklin (2002) explains that there are three important points to address regarding models of disability: the framework for viewing disabilities, the similarities and differences of disability culture to other minority groups, and lastly the language that is used to explain this culture. There are several different model of disabilities used to describe persons within this culture. Oklin (2002, 2007) explores the following three frameworks: moral, medical, and social models.

      Those using the moral model view disability as a defect that the person should be ashamed of; it is the oldest model and the most universally used of the three (Oklin, 2002, 2007). According to the medical model, the body or genetics of the person with a disability are defective (Oklin, 2002, 2007). This model was developed in the 19th century and is still the most used model in the United States (Oklin, 2002, 2007). The goal is for practitioners to cure the disability as much as possible (Oklin, 2002, 2007). For example, if an individual has ADHD, medication would be used as an intervention to minimize the characteristics of this disability to the greatest possible extent.

      The social model is the final of the three and is quite different from the first two (Oklin, 2002, 2007). More ideally than the first two models, the social model examines how the environment or society lacks appropriate accommodations for those with disabilities (Oklin, 2002, 2007). Similar to feminist therapy, the social model focuses on how the individual with a disability has been oppressed by society and how that oppression can negatively impact the person (Oklin, 2002, 2007). However, the social

model is often discarded by the therapist as it is viewed as providing little benefit for the client, but in reality, the social model can have many benefits (Oklin, 2002). One of the main benefits of the model is providing the individual with a disability a sense of ownership and pride in the disability community (Oklin, 2002). The social model helps the client view the disability as part of the individual's identity and not as something separate from the person (Oklin, 2002). However, the client can also feel pressure when subscribing to the social model, as he or she might feel the need to commit fully to the disability culture and community (Oklin, 2002).

Smart and Smart (2006) also examined a few models for viewing individuals with disabilities applied to the professional practices of counselors. The models included the following: biomedical, functional and environmental, and sociopolitical (Smart & Smart, 2006). The authors combined the functional and environmental models, as the models work together and are co-dependent (Smart & Smart, 2006).

The biomedical model is the best known and most established model in the profession (Smart & Smart, 2006). Similar to Oklin's (2002) description of the medical model, the biomedical model focuses on the treatment of the disability (Smart & Smart, 2006). This model emphasizes stigmatizing individuals with disabilities (Smart & Smart, 2006). Instead of viewing the person first, the disability is viewed before other characteristics of the person (Smart & Smart, 2006). A counselor approaching therapy from a feminist lens would want to avoid the biomedical approach to disability, as it would conflict with the basic tenets of feminist theory. The goal of feminist therapy is to

focus on empowering members of oppressed groups, such as individuals with disabilities (Remer, 2013).

The functional and environmental models are interconnected, as each relies on the other (Smart & Smart, 2006). The models often lead to confusion, as it is difficult to define *disability* when using them (Smart & Smart, 2006). Smart and Smart (2006) explained that the biomedical model is clearer than the functional and environmental models in approaching the meaning or understanding of disability. However, when considering the cultural impact associated with an individual's disability, the functional and environmental models present a better context for understanding the role of the disability (Smart & Smart, 2006).

The sociopolitical model is the most current and recent model available to practitioners (Smart & Smart, 2006). This model presents a very different view on disability than the biomedical, functional, and environmental models (Smart & Smart, 2006). The sociopolitical model focuses on the day-to-day life and functioning of someone with a disability (Smart & Smart, 2006). Those using the sociopolitical model view oppression and experiences of discrimination as greater hurdles than actual impairments associated with the disability (Smart & Smart, 2006). Individuals with disabilities utilizing a sociopolitical approach consider themselves a minority in America (Smart & Smart, 2006).

These models serve to provide an explanation for disability in a general sense, offering a perspective and definition of disability with underlying tenets of the particular model (Smart & Smart, 2006). All of the models address who is responsible for the

disability and how the disability was acquired (Smart & Smart, 2006). For example, was the disability acquired in utero or after birth, perhaps as a result of a car accident?

Smart and Smart (2006) applied these models to professional counseling. Although biology is still a contributing factor in a person's disability, it is important for the counselor to be aware of how the client identifies with the disability, and to consider that not all individuals with a disability accept membership into disability culture (Oklin, 2007). The counselor should always revisit how the client feels about the disability throughout involvement with the client (Smart & Smart, 2006). The individual's views and perceptions of the disability could change during therapy. It is important for the counselor to know that individuals with disabilities often dispute the biomedical model of viewing disabilities (Smart & Smart, 2006).

Counselors must also be aware that the disability is not the whole person, but rather one element of the whole person (Smart & Smart, 2006). For example, school counselors need to be conscientious of working with students with disabilities instead of defaulting to the special education teacher, as this signifies that the disability is the whole person and should be serviced by the intervention specialist. It is important for the counselor to empower the client with a disability and not to displace the counselor's values or opinions onto the client (Smart & Smart, 2006). This is especially important when working with individuals with disabilities, who might perceive that the counselor believes more effort is needed to accomplish their goals (Smart & Smart, 2006). Smart and Smart (2006) stressed that the counselor must address the power difference between

counselor and client. This task is especially important when working with a client who has a disability, as the individual may feel inferior to the counselor due to the disability.

Smart and Smart (2006) explain, "counselors should recognize that, for many of them, their professional training may be inadequate to prepare them with the skills and competencies to work with clients with disabilities" (p. 38). A counselor who receives training from a CACREP-accredited program typically takes one multicultural course. ASCA (2016a) states that school counselors need to fully understand how to service a student with a disability in the role of the professional counselor. The school counselor needs to understand how education laws such as IDEA impact the student with a disability as well as the whole family. Through this knowledge, the school counselor should advocate for the needs of the student with a disability (ASCA, 2016a, 2016b, 2018). Also, the counselor needs to be willing to gain more experience with individuals with disabilities (Milsom & Akos, 2003; Milsom, 2006; Mitcham, Portman, & Dean, 2009; Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011; Smart & Smart, 2006).

Through more experience and knowledge related to working with individuals with disabilities, the counselor will feel more comfortable and confident (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011; Smart & Smart, 2006). Smart and Smart (2006) explain, "students in counseling programs should seek out course work (such as is available in Rehabilitation Counseling programs) and other workshops focus on disability issues" (p. 38). A foundational knowledge of disability culture is important, but the counselor still needs to consider how the individual person views the disability (Smart & Smart, 2006). This is a critical point when considering how to approach students with disabilities while

respecting the educational rights of the parents (ASCA, 2016a, 2016b). For example, students do not typically sign their IEP until high school. Also, when a student turns 18 years old, he or she can decline the IEP and services. It is important for the school counselor to work with the student and parents when considering the disability.

Theory Relevant to Research Questions/Hypotheses

It is key to consider research related to theories and therapies when working with individuals with disabilities. The counselor needs to consider what approach is best when working with the client in session. Also, the counselor needs to advocate for individuals with disabilities as well as teach self-advocacy skills (Leggett, Shea, & Leggett, 2011; Milsom, 2002, 2006; Smart & Smart, 2006). The relevant theories and research explored related to individuals with disabilities are feminist theory, disability feminist students, and the ADDRESSING model.

Feminist theory. In counseling, a major theory associated with empowering minority populations is feminist theory. Feminist theory works to address a variety of forms of oppression; specifically, for individuals with disabilities, it addresses ableism (Remer, 2013). During the 1960s and 1970s when women in America started to voice concerns of sexism, feminist therapy began to develop as a means to address not only women but other oppressed groups of people (Remer, 2013). The idea was that a new theory in clinical practice was needed to combat a Caucasian male-dominated approach to therapy, since many of the major theories of practice were created by Caucasian males (Remer, 2013).

According to the major theories at the time, issues were internal problems associated with the individual, not with cultural and social influences that impacted the individual person (Remer, 2013). The impact that oppression could have on the individual, depending on his or her membership in one or more minority groups, was not considered in traditional intrapsychic theoretical ordinations (Remer, 2013). Also, it is important for the feminist counselor to consider how the individual views the oppression.

Remer (2013) noted that pinpointing the exact history of feminist counseling is difficult, as feminist theory has several different root influences. Today there are several variations of feminist theory that focus on different populations. Also, Remer examined feminist therapy as a relatively nuanced approach to counseling. The range of feminist approaches are politically and culturally focused, and include liberal feminism, cultural feminism, radical feminism, and women of color feminism.

A liberal feminist counselor approaches problems through an examination of the effects of traditional gender roles (Remer, 2013). The liberal feminist counselor works with the client to process gender roles that the client embodies (Remer, 2013). The liberal feminist counselor takes a strong stance on societal changes related to equal opportunities for both men and women (Remer, 2013).

A cultural feminist counselor associates women's issues with the inequality between society's perceived value of women and their abilities and of men and their abilities (Remer, 2013). The cultural feminist does not approach gender from a biological standpoint, but considers how society currently views men and women. The cultural feminist counselor advocates for a balanced view rather than a gender superiority

view of an individual's abilities (Remer, 2013). The cultural feminist emphasizes the individual female client's strengths and abilities, with a focus on how impactful and empathic relationships can shape her (Remer, 2013).

The radical feminist counselor takes a different approach, considering society to be the root of the problem (Remer, 2013). The radical feminist believes that oppression exists in various parts of society to limit women (Remer, 2013). The radical feminist counselor advocates changes in society related to the oppression of women (Remer, 2013). The focus in counseling is on the ways that various forms of oppression have impacted the client (Remer, 2013).

Women of color feminist counselors feel that the other forms of feminist therapy do not address the impact of Caucasian women's majority-race membership (Remer, 2013). The women of color feminist counselors recognize that members of minority groups—specifically, women of color—can have different experiences with oppression than women with majority-race membership (Remer, 2013). When in session, the focus is on challenging how the client has allowed society to impact them (Remer, 2013). Women of color feminist counselors work to advocate for social change (Remer, 2013).

There is some weakness associated with feminist therapy; one major shortcoming is the lack of application to individuals who come from privilege (Remer, 2013). For example, a counselor may overlook the possibility of applying a form of feminist therapy with a Caucasian female from an upper middle-class family. A diligent focus is necessary when utilizing feminist therapy because the approach could be perceived as either honoring or criticizing a particular culture (Remer, 2013). Another weakness of

feminist therapy is the lack of focus on how each individual internalizes problems and situations (Remer, 2013).

Literature on the utilization of the general use of feminist therapy in schools could not be located. Through teaching students with disabilities self-advocacy skills, school counselors can address feelings of shame. The ASCA national model includes advocacy as a critical element of the school counselor's role (ASCA, 2012, 2018). The school counselor is not only responsible for advocating for students, but also teaching advocacy skills to prepare students for transition out of the school system (ASCA, 2012).

Disability feminist studies. The purpose of implementing a disability feminist-focused approach in research studies is to examine the stereotypes connected to individuals with disabilities, and to challenge how disability is approached by examining a cultural connection, similar to the connection of race (Garland-Thomson, 2005). The goal is to challenge society's current perceptions of the abilities of individuals with disabilities, and to encourage a new thought approach associated with disability (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Disability feminist scholars view the whole system and how this group faces discrimination (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Also, disability feminists examine how a community connects through labels created by society and discrimination associated with the membership (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Finally, disability feminists work to view the disability as power, similar to empowerment through representation in a system associated with race and gender (Garland-Thomson, 2005).

Also, disability feminists examine the broad generalizations associated with the term *disability*, and the impact of these generalizations on the individual whom society

considers to be a person with a disability (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Because language related to disability focuses on the individual's shortcomings and limitations associated with the disability, disability feminists challenge this language as demeaning and negative (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Garland-Thomson (2005) proposes language that is suggestive rather than explicit. For example, although different types of autism spectrum disorder have common characteristics, an individual with autism spectrum disorder may not have all of the associated characteristics, or may have varying degrees of some characteristics.

In feminist theory, conceptualization of disability falls into three main categories (Garland-Thomson, 2005). First, the counselor recognizes the individual's identity as a whole, not just as an individual with a disability. Second, the counselor looks at the intersectionality of the disability with other aspects of the person's whole identity (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Finally, the counselor considers how the person views his or her identity as a person with a disability (Garland-Thomson, 2005). For example, does the person take ownership of disability culture or choose not to subscribe to disability culture?

In order to gain a better understanding of how society views disability with an application of a feminist approach to analyzing publications, Garland-Thomson (2005) explored various types of work from narratives to scholarly publications. The goal was to help the reader understand disability and how to apply feminist theory to disability. Garland-Thomson wrote:

Feminist disability studies help us understand in more complex ways that the

particularities of human variation are imbued with social meanings and that those

meanings comprise narratives that justify discriminatory practices that shape the

lives of both disabled and nondisabled women (p. 1582).

The inclusion or exclusion of people based on abilities is an important point to consider

when approaching counseling. It is crucial to understand how society has impacted the

person both from a positive and a negative standpoint.

ADDRESSING model. Hays (2001) created the ADDRESSING model, which

complements the critical components associated with feminist theory and disability. The

ADDRESSING model works to explore how a person views membership in a particular

culture, deconstruct assumptions and stereotypes, and examine the benefits and

limitations associated with membership in a dominant culture, as well as minority

membership benefits and limitations (Hays, 2001, 2016).

Each letter of the ADDRESSING model is associated with a societal category

used to describe an individual. More specifically, the ADDRESSING model was created

to complement professional standards such as the American Counseling Association's

"Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards" (Hays, 2001, 2016).

Professional counselors can use the ADDRESSING model as a guide when working with

individuals subscribed to minority communities (Hays, 2001, 2016). All the letters in the

model work to direct the counselor toward culturally responsive therapy, as the counselor

does not have a membership to every minority group included in the model (Hays, 2001,

2016). The first letter addresses age and the impact that age has on the client. The

minority groups included in the age section of the model are children, adolescents, and elders (Hays, 2001, 2016). The next two letters address disabilities, whether the individual was born with the disability or acquired it during his or her life. The groups include developmental physical, cognitive, or psychologically associated disabilities (Hays, 2001, 2016). The "R" represents religion, and the minority groups identified are people belonging to faith-based religions that Western society would consider minority faiths (Hays, 2001, 2016). The next letter of the model is associated with a person's ethnicity and encompasses individuals of Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, African American, and Arab and Middle Eastern descent (Hays, 2001, 2016). The framework includes socioeconomic status and sexual orientation (Hays, 2001, 2016). In addition, the model focuses on indigenous heritage, national origin, and gender (Hays, 2001, 2016).

The ADDRESSING model encourages the counselor to learn about the majority and minority memberships the client has in various cultures (Hays, 2001, 2016). For example, a 30-year-old Caucasian male with a developmental disability has majority membership in age, race, and gender, while holding minority membership in disability. The model's goal is to help the clinician work through assumptions that he or she makes about a client before interacting with the client (Hays, 2001, 2016). For example, the client may have a minority membership to disability culture, but may not subscribe to disability culture.

CACREP and School Counselor Preparation

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) provides institutions with a set of standards for counseling programs.

CACREP requires, by the year 2023, for accredited or accreditation seeking school counselor training programs to be a minimum of 60 credit hours (CACREP, 2018). Since the 2009 CACREP standards, school counselor training has been a minimum of 48 credit hours (CACREP, 2009). However, CACREP has already required a minimum of 60 credit hours for other specialty counseling areas, such as clinical mental health (CACREP, 2015). Merlin, Pagano, George, Zanone, and Newman (2017) conducted a pilot study on the 2016 CACREP standards and the increase in school counseling credit hours. They found that the increase in credit hours will strengthen the profession of school counseling and better prepare school counselors to serve students.

Edwards (2017) examined the 2016 CACREP standards related to the preparation of school counselors. Edwards noted that CACREP has made several changes related to school counseling programs, and considered the increase in credit hours the most significant change to the preparation of school counselors. Currently, master's programs in teacher education are about 30 semester credit hours (Edwards, 2017), so the current requirement of 48 semester credit hours for school counselors is already significantly higher than similarly aligned master's education programs. CACREP-accredited school counseling programs will be required to operate at 60 semester credit hours by July 2023 (CACREP, 2018), double the number of semester credit hours required for teacher education master's programs.

Since the publication of the 2016 CACREP standards, no studies have been conducted to examine the updated standards and their impact of school counselor preparation. The current 2016 CACREP standards do not require CACREP-accredited

programs to train school counseling students on the ASCA National Model. Hayes and Paisley (2002) highlighted the importance of incorporating the ASCA National Model into CACREP-aligned school counseling programs. The CACREP standards do address professional identity and practice for all counselor specialty areas (CACREP, 2015).

Accreditation in Relation to Disability Training

In the literature, authors have explored CACREP and disability training in the past. However, no current explorations or studies specifically related to disability have been conducted since the release of the current 2016 CACREP standards. Milsom and Akos (2003) explored accreditation and school counselor training related to disability services. The authors discovered several themes connected to how school counselors are trained to work with students with disabilities. Milsom and Akos highlighted, "although legislation and professional organizations have called for school counselor involvement with students with disabilities, national accrediting agencies have provided only minimal guidelines for disability training for school counselors" (p. 87). Although the article referenced the 2001 CACREP standards, given the date of the publication, a similar theme can still be seen in the current 2016 CACREP standards.

The specialty area guidelines for school counselors broadly cover the role of the school counselor, and they do not specifically reference disability training for school counselors (CACREP, 2015). However, the standards do reference multicultural and diversity training for all counselors (CACREP, 2015). CACREP-accredited programs and accreditation-seeking programs are required to address multicultural standards. Accredited programs and accreditation-seeking programs typically address these

standards in a course specifically designed to introduce students to multicultural counseling. However, most counselor educators continue to infuse multicultural considerations into other courses through the utilization of case studies addressing multicultural needs.

Other accrediting bodies, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), do not address disability training for advanced (i.e., graduate-level) programs in their standards (2016). Regarding school counselor training, CAEP defaults in its advanced standards back to the educator's responsibility to seek specialized accreditation through CACREP (CAEP, 2016). Other accrediting agencies are looking to CACREP for guidance on how school counselors should be trained to meet the needs of students they will serve. General training and accreditation for school counselors should include disability training in order to enhance school counselors' work with minority populations.

The standards on social and cultural diversity include an overarching emphasis on training all counselors to be multiculturally competent (CACREP, 2015). Although CACREP currently does not address disability-specific training, the present standards require all syllabi to include the institution's disability accommodation policy and procedures (CACREP, 2015; Edwards, 2017). Shin, Smith, Goodrich, & LaRose (2011) addressed a lack of focus on diversity in CACREP-accredited master's programs, which included failure to adequately incorporate individuals with disabilities in the curriculum. The addition of disability educational policy language in all syllabi is an improvement.

However, CACREP still needs to address providing disability training to counselors in CACREP-accredited programs in order to increase diversity knowledge and practice. The incorporation of cultural diversity standards when training counselors is crucial. In current CACREP-accredited counselor education programs, disability is often covered in a multicultural course. Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) discovered that counselor trainees do not receive enough training related to working with individuals with disabilities. Milsom and Akos (2003) addressed the necessity of increased attention to training school counselors to be disability-competent. To that end, Oklin (2002, 2007) highlighted the significant differences between disability culture and cultures associated with race and ethnicity. In addition, ASCA (2014) provided a position statement to ensure that future school counselors are trained with ASCA-created models, competencies, and other materials.

Qualitative Experiences and Multicultural Awareness

Letourneau (2015) issued a call for action regarding the importance of incorporating more qualitative research experiences into the core courses of graduate counseling programs. The author recognizes that over the last several years, many counselor educators have created similar calls to action. However, there is still a dearth of exposure to qualitative interview experiences in master's programs (Letourneau, 2015).

Letourneau (2015) argued that in the profession of counseling, much of the learning happens through experience and hands-on activities. In addition, Letourneau explained that student engagement in experiential activities can motivate them to continue to explore that area of the field. This assertion is especially true in multicultural

counseling courses, as qualitative experiences within this course are essential to the learning process: students need to be exposed to various cultures in a hands-on way. Implementation of qualitative research within a multicultural course provides students with engaging learning experiences in which they are exposed to people and their stories.

Watt et al. (2009) conducted a consensual qualitative research study of how master's students in counseling programs handle conversations about minority populations in the classroom. The students wrote about how they identified in areas ranging from sexual orientation to disability identification (Watt et al., 2009). The final sample included papers from nine Caucasian female students who identified as heterosexual. Out of those students, five students were studying school counseling, two students were on the rehabilitation counseling track, and the final two students were seeking student affairs positions. Overall, the study produced the following eight themes: denial, deflection, rationalization, intellectualization, principium, false envy, minimization, and benevolence.

Counselor Trainee Disability Knowledge

Rawlings and Longhurst's (2011) study on disability culture and the knowledge that graduate students in one counseling program had about this culture shaped this study. The authors learned that students in the University of Wyoming counseling program were only exposed to perhaps one lesson on disability culture within their multicultural counseling class. Rawlings and Longhurst recognized that disability is a significant and growing minority population, and at some point in their professional counseling role, each student will work with an individual who has a disability. However, Rawlings and

Longhurst did not exclusively address how professional school counselors are approaching engagement with students with disabilities. The authors set out to determine the likelihood of increasing students' cultural competence on disability (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011).

Disability Knowledge and Clinical Practice

Similarly, Oklin (2007) provided a disability-affirmative therapy and case formulation for therapists to gain a better understanding of the role the disability plays in the counseling setting. Oklin designed the case study to help the reader gain an understanding through six critical questions about the client's developmental history. The questions help the reader understand what situations the individual might face, in order to further determine possible disabilities and how to work through them (Oklin, 2007). However, Oklin's model is intended for clinical mental health practice, not school counseling. A school counselor would want to consider the educational context of the student with the disability when utilizing these tools. Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) confirmed the importance of a disability-affirmative therapy, as mentioned by Oklin, as only one counselor trainee who participated in the workshop included the hypothetical client's disability into the treatment plan.

Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) discussed how to increase the level of comfort for graduate students in relation to disability culture. A guide to help counselor trainees feel more comfortable working with clients with disabilities is Hays's (2001, 2016) ADDRESSING model. This model includes disability in the consideration of one's culture, while also addressing other aspects of the person's culture such as age and racial

identity. Hays's model also prompts the counselor to consider whether the client subscribes to disability culture. Similarly, Oklin (2002) highlighted that anyone can enter and exit disability culture at any point in his or her life. An individual can be born with a disability and not know until primary school that he or she has been living with a disability. Oklin also shed light on the fact that an individual can have a disability but disown disability culture.

These are key elements that graduate counseling students must be trained on so they can process with the client to understand the individual's point of view about the identified disability. Moreover, Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) conducted a study that included 18 first-year master's students and one second-year master's student. The focus group for this project was comprised of smaller groups that each received the same questions (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). The authors did not collect descriptive data on every student who engaged in the research study. The researchers did collect several materials as part of this training, which included a vignette and a disability etiquette handout (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011).

The overall goal of the focus group was to learn about the trainees' experiences of participating in a workshop that solely focused on disability training. Other researchers have focused on how professional counselors engage with individuals with disabilities. For example, Schoffstall, Cawthon, Tarantolo-Leppo, and Wendel (2015) conducted a more recent qualitative study with 10 rehabilitation counselors who worked in the post-secondary setting with individuals of the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Overall, the focus group allowed the researchers to gather that students needed more exposure to disability culture, and that a one-hour workshop could not be considered adequate training on disability culture, but served as a starting point (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). Similarly, Schoffstall et al. (2015) recognized that there is limited research surrounding work done by rehabilitation counselors with the deaf and hard of hearing community. In another qualitative study, Hunt, Matthews, Milsom, and Lammel (2006) examined the experiences of lesbians with physical disabilities while in counseling. These authors used an alternate lens to the other studies that have been discussed, which primarily focused on the counselor's perspective instead of the client's. Furthermore, Jones (2013) conducted a similar study to examine how important the therapeutic relationship is to individuals who have learning disabilities.

In the Schoffstall et al. (2015) study, the authors utilized a grounded theory approach with semi-structured interviews to learn about the use of positive self-advocacy skills. During the coding process, the authors were able to identify 16 strategies that the rehabilitation counselors all commonly used when working with this subpopulation of the disability community. Some of the themes included having a mutual understanding of self-advocacy skills, working toward building skills, utilizing assessments related to self-advocacy, implementing modeling, and using opportunities to engage in self-advocacy (Schoffstall, Cawthon, Tarantolo-Leppo, & Wendel, 2015). The researchers emphasized how self-advocacy impacted this working relationship.

Therapeutic Relationship

Hunt et al. (2006) recruited participants for their study through a national organization, seeking women who identified as lesbians as well as individuals with a physical disability. The authors included information about themselves. Two out of the four researchers identified as lesbians and the others identified as straight advocates (Hunt et al., 2006). The researchers noted that none of them identified as having a physical disability. In addition, the authors made strong efforts to recruit minority women who identified as lesbians who also had a physical disability. However, the researchers were unable to engage any participants who met all of these desired criteria (Hunt et al., 2006).

Since the authors used a phenomenological approach for the study, they engaged in data immersion with the big picture in mind (Hunt et al., 2006). Also, each researcher read each participant's transcript twice to better understand each interviewee's unique experiences (Hunt et al., 2006). The authors identified nine themes from the interviews; out of those nine themes, five were about how the conversational partners felt about the counselor. These themes included "general satisfaction or dissatisfaction, counselors' general effectiveness, counselors' awareness and education regarding sexual orientation and/or disability, discrimination and bias, and counselor identity" (Hunt et al., 2006, p. 163). Three other themes were related to how the client navigated the counseling relationship (Hunt et al., 2006). The authors identified the final theme as depression and explained that this theme was related to the participants' counseling experiences (Hunt et

al., 2006). This theme provided a better understanding of the client's perspective on the therapeutic process and emphasized the importance of taking it into account.

Similarly, Jones (2013) employed a phenomenological approach and a semi-structured interview process with counseling psychologists who worked with individuals who had learning disabilities. Jones asked the participants to reflect on what impact they felt the therapeutic relationship had on an individual with a learning disability. Through the interview process, the researcher probed for information about theoretical orientation to help aid in the data analysis process (Jones, 2013). The researcher immersed herself in the data to gain a deeper level of understanding for the information presented in the transcripts. The overarching theme that emerged was that the therapeutic relationship is essential but complicated due to the unique qualities of each individual who presents to counseling with a disability (Jones, 2013). Overall, this study revealed the significance of the therapeutic relationship within the counseling setting and how impacts the individual who is engaging and counseling services.

ASCA and PreK-12 Students with Disabilities

ASCA provides professional school counselors with a foundation for how to operate, and created the ASCA National Model to help school counselors become accountable for the role they play in the school setting. The National Model provides school counselors with evaluation templates and empowers them to create comprehensive school counseling programs and collect and analyze data (ASCA, 2012). A set of counselor competencies are included in the National Model to help school counselors benchmark professional practice. Recently, a set of draft standards were released to work

toward updating the competencies to reflect the current role of the school counselor (ASCA, 2018). The overarching goal is to help school counselors ensure that their programs meet the needs of all students.

The National Model provides school counselors with information on parent-centered collaboration, as the child's parent(s) have the most knowledge about the child and can help influence change (ASCA, 2012). For example, when a school counselor is working with parents of a student with a disability, the counselor should implement a parent-centered collaboration approach. The parents can offer the school counselor a different perspective and provide background knowledge. Through utilizing parent-centered collaboration, the counselor can work toward meeting the needs of the student with a disability.

Systemic change can stem from collaborations and is a key element of the ASCA National Model. When school counselors create systemic change in multiple steps, they can remove system barriers and allow new opportunities for professional learning (ASCA, 2012). Mitcham, Portman, and Dean (2009) highlighted that urban school counselors implementing the ASCA National Model when working with students with disabilities can help eliminate system barriers for students. The authors suggested that school counselors utilize ASCA National Model initiatives such as advocacy and empowerment of students through teaching self-advocacy skills (Mitcham et al., 2009). Mitcham et al. provided perfect examples of how important it is for professional school counselors to adhere to the ASCA National Model when working with students with disabilities.

The National Model provides the school counselor with tools and resources to uncover potential barriers for the student body served (ASCA, 2012). The National Model allows school counselors to approach problems and situations through collecting data rather than guessing or assuming the needs of the school (ASCA, 2012). For example, a school counselor utilizes demographic information, which informs the counselor that a large percentage of students currently served have an IEP. The counselor creates assessments to gather more information related to the needs of students with disabilities. In the comprehensive school counseling program, the counselor creates goals and objectives related to the information found in the data.

The competencies included in the National Model help the school counselor to benchmark professional progress. The National Model's set of competencies related to serving all students through direct and indirect service connects with the ASCA ethical standards, designed to ensure that all students are serviced (ASCA, 2016b). The accountability-related competencies ensure that the counselor is adhering to the comprehensive school counseling program created and is analyzing data to evaluate whether the programs and initiatives in place are addressing the identified needs. For example, the standards help guide the counselor toward self-assessments, peer consultation models, ethical decision-making models, and professional resources for support (ASCA, 2016b). The ASCA ethical standards require all school counselors to service all students regardless of background and abilities (ASCA, 2016b). Also, school counselors must adhere to confidentiality practices while maintaining educational duties related to the parents' rights to involvement in the child's education (ASCA, 2016b). The

goal of the ASCA ethical standards is to help ensure that students have access to a school counselor who provides them with the best services.

ASCA has also published several position statements to help guide school counselors from professional education into work with different subpopulations of students. ASCA has a current position statement related to how school counselors should work with individuals with disabilities. ASCA (2016a) stated, "school counselors strive to assist all students in achieving their full potential, including students with disabilities, within the scope of the comprehensive school counseling program" (p. 55). The position statement aligns with federal legislation created to protect students with disabilities. Also, the position statement reinforces the underlying principles of the ASCA ethical standards for ensuring that counselors serve all their students (ASCA, 2016b). IDEA requires all public schools to provide students with disabilities equal access to education and services to help increase access to curriculum available to these student's peers (IDEA, 2004). The school counselor is not excluded from servicing students with disabilities or serving on IEP teams. The position statement briefly outlines IDEA and provides the counselor with a list of common disabilities found in IDEA (ASCA, 2016a).

In the position paper, ASCA also highlighted the school counselor's role with students with disabilities and provided a few examples of how the counselor is involved in serving these students. The school counselor serves as part of the educational team and is actively involved in IEPs through possible counseling-related goals and objectives (ASCA, 2016a). Milsom, Goodnough, and Akos (2007) wrote that the school counselor can be a very effective member of the IEP team. For example, the school counselor has

received training on the role and functions of groups, as well as leadership training

(Milsom et al., 2007). Also, the school counselor can effectively lead IEP meetings, as

he or she is skilled at de-escalating conflicts (Milsom et al., 2007).

In addition, the school counselor needs to employ advocacy skills when working

with and for students with disabilities (ASCA, 2016a). The counselor can work with a

student with a disability and teach the student self-advocacy skills (ASCA, 2016a). For

example, Leggett, Shea, and Leggett (2011) found that school counselor trainees working

with twice-exceptional students valued career planning over advocacy skill building. (A

twice-exceptional student is gifted in one academic content area and has a disability in a

different area.) The trainees felt that the parents of these students should work with their

children to increase self-advocacy skills (Leggett et al., 2011). This belief shows a

disconnect between the trainees' and the ASCA National Model's versions of the

professional school counselor's involvement with both student and parents. The ASCA

National Model provides the school counselor with several examples of how he or she

can utilize parent-centered collaboration to train and reinforce self-advocacy skills for

students with disabilities. The school counselor can also provide support to the family of

a child with a disability. Taub (2006) highlighted several ways the school counselor can

support parents, which ranged from creating a parent support group to encouraging

parents to allow students with disabilities to still have freedom.

Also, the ASCA position statement highlighted how the school counselor can use

consultation skills to enhance the services received by the student with a disability. For

example, Frye-Meyers (2005) conducted a study on elementary school counselors

working with students with disabilities. The author uncovered that when the counselor advocated for time to service the student with a disability individually, it allowed the counselor to work with the student to create goals and focus on the individual child's social and emotional needs (Frye-Meyers, 2005). To continue to support the student with a disability, the counselor collaborated with staff to keep addressing these needs (Frye-Meyers, 2005).

The utilization of the ASCA National Model when training school counselors is important. However, there is currently a lack of recent literature on school counselor training aligned with ASCA and CACREP. Additionally, most of the publications related to school counselors and students with disabilities are not focused on properly training school counselors to work with exceptional populations. In an introductory school counseling textbook, disability is broadly covered and most of the focus is on relevant legislation (Rock & Leff, 2015). A foundational understanding of the population is critical, especially in introductory courses. However, more research is needed on how to effectively train school counselors to work with students with disabilities. The counselor is in a position to positively or negatively impact the school experience of students with disabilities (Milsom, 2006).

School Counselor's Role with Students with Disabilities

As mentioned above, some relevant research is available on the school counselor's role and impact when working with students with disabilities. The research varies from studies that show the positive impact a school counselor can have with this population to studies highlighting discrepancies in services provided by the counselor.

This section will provide a comprehensive review of the current relevant research related to the school counselor's role with students with disabilities.

Advocacy and PreK-12 students with disabilities. The most important question that Oklin (2007) discussed in his six critical questions related to the client's developmental history is whether the person has been taught advocacy skills. Counseling trainees are seldom taught advocacy skills, and therefore lack the comfort level to work with individuals with disabilities (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). It is critical to consider the importance of advocacy for the professional school counselor when utilizing the ASCA National Model. The themes of leadership and advocacy are some of the fundamental principles ASCA applies to the role of the school counselor (ASCA, 2012).

Advocacy is a fundamental element of the ASCA school counselor's identity (ASCA, 2012). While research supports school counselors utilizing advocacy to help create systemic change for disadvantaged populations, some studies have shown that school counselors do not always fully service students with disabilities as expected. School counselors often lack access to resources needed to address the needs of all students (Dipeolu, Storlie, & Johnson, 2014). Students with disabilities have different needs than their peers, and self-advocacy can help the student ensure that proper resources and tools are provided (Dipeolu et al., 2014). School counselors can utilize modeling to help students with disabilities build skills, specifically students with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (Dipeolu et al., 2014). For example, the counselor can model how to advocate by verbally communicating that he or she needs a calculator, in addition to the student's IEP accommodations, to complete a math assessment.

Owens, Thomas, and Strong (2011) highlighted advocacy as an important part of the school counselor's job, but noted that it is also critical for the counselor to teach students how to become their own advocates. Milsom (2002) conducted a study to examine how much time high school counselors spent with students with disabilities related to transition. Milsom found that school counselors in the study only spent about 32% of their time working with students with disabilities. It is important to note that the participants in this study completed graduate coursework in school counseling between 1994 and 2000 (Milsom, 2002). Milsom explained that it is imperative for school counselors to advocate for students with disabilities. A critical future direction highlighted in the study is the importance of school counselors communicating training gaps to alumni institutions (Milsom, 2002). Through advocating, school counselors can create systemic change at the training level.

The trend in advocating for students with disabilities has continued within the professional literature. As mentioned earlier, Leggett et al. (2011) conducted a study on school counselor trainees' work with students who were twice- exceptional. A twice exceptional student is gifted in one academic content area and has a disability in a different area. The trainees in the study neglected the importance of training students to be advocates and felt that time with students who were twice-exceptional should be spent on career planning (Leggett et al., 2011). The trainees thought it was the parents' responsibility to focus on teaching the student self- advocacy skills (Leggett et al., 2011). This shows a disconnection between the ASCA National Model's take on the professional school counselors involvement with both student and parents.

The ASCA National Model provides school counselors with several examples of how collaboration, such as parent-centered collaboration (ASCA, 2012). The school counselor could utilize parent-centered collaboration to train and reinforce self-advocacy skills for students with disabilities. As part of a comprehensive school counseling program, the school counselor should not neglect the needs of the students or place full responsibility on the parents when adhering to the school counselor ethical standards (ASCA, 2016b).

Summary and Preview

There is minimal training related to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities for the professional school counselor. Although the professional literature highlights how the school counselor can impact the education of PreK-12 students with disabilities, there is still a lack of consistency related to engagement. A disconnect from CACREP and ASCA impacts how school counselors are trained. Although school counseling has become an established profession, a lot of growth related to professional identity and multicultural competencies is still evolving. The changing needs of PreK-12 students found in American schools' demands increase training on the diverse populations served by the school counselor. The ASCA ethical standards call for school counselors to serve all PreK-12 students and in order to serve all PreK-12 students, more training is warranted.

The following chapter addresses the gap of training through the examination of how counselor educators can prepare school counselors to effectively support students with disabilities. Chapter Three will focus on the methodology used to conduct the study.

The methodology that was used to complete this study will be pattern matching. The next chapter will include the population, location, and relevant literature related to the study. Also, the rationale for the chosen methodology of single-case study research design will be discussed in detail. The goal was to gain insight on counselor trainees' understanding of disability culture through semi-structured interviews which were analyzed through embedded units and pattern matching.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter Two, I provided an overview of relevant literature related to the topic of school counselor preparation to serve PreK-12 students with disabilities. In this chapter I outline the methodology for this qualitative single-case research study. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single-case study was to examine how school counselor trainees from a single counselor education program in Ohio are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities using interviews with trainees and program documents analysis (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). By studying school counselor trainees from one program, the goal was to gain a better understanding of how school counselors are currently trained to interact with and serve individuals with disabilities. Data was analyzed using embedded analysis and pattern matching as analytic techniques (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Through interviews and document analysis of program syllabi and student assignments, I aimed to answer the established research questions.

Through conducting interviews with school counselor trainees and conducting a document analysis of program syllabi, the goal was to gain a better understanding of how school counselors are currently trained to interact with PreK-12 students with disabilities. A qualitative exploratory single-case study utilizing embedded analysis as well as a pattern matching analytic approach to data from the semi-structure interviews and from program syllabi (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). The goal of embedded analysis is the use of data found within the actual case (Yin, 2018). I used embedded analysis, in the form of program syllabi as it was a unit of information that could be utilized within the analysis process (Yin, 2018). I also established predicted patterns in order to engage in

the pattern matching approach (Yin, 2018). Once data collection was completed, I then took the predicted patterns to find the actual (empirical) patterns (Yin, 2018).

The rationale for utilizing qualitative research design was that it would allow me to gain insight into the experiences of the participants. As Glesne (2011) explains, "qualitative researchers often seek to make sense of actions, narratives, and the way in which they intersect" (p. 1). Through interviews with school counselor trainees, I explored how coursework and training experiences impact the ability of school counselor trainees to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. I also reviewed course syllabi as part of the document analysis process.

This single-case study helped me explore models of disability culture to participants' experiences with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Yin (2018) states, "the single-case can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building by confirming, challenging, or extending the theory" (p. 49). For this study, I focused on contributing to the current knowledge on how school counselors are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. An overview of the sample population, institution, and training program is provided in this chapter.

The implementation of qualitative research for this study was also influenced by the literature explored in Chapter Two. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) national model calls for school counselors to holistically approach counseling services for all students regardless of background or potential barriers (ASCA, 2012). The ASCA ethical standards require school counselors to provide services to all students while incorporating knowledge regarding law and other policies (ASCA, 2016b).

According to the ASCA standards, school counselors are required to be competent and responsible for services to students, parents, and other stakeholders (ASCA, 2012). I sought to understand how school counselor trainees connect *the ASCA National Model*, *ASCA Counselor Competencies*, *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success*, and *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* in working with PreK-12 students with disabilities (ASCA, 2012, 2014, 2016a, 2016b).

Additionally, I wanted to connect the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) standards to the training of school counselors. CACREP standards will require all school counseling programs to increase from 48 semester credit hours to 60 semester credit hours by July of 2023 (CACREP, 2018). Merlin, Pagano, George, Zanone, and Newman (2017) examined the impact of the credit hour shift from a pilot study. Merlin et al. noted that the call for increased and relevant training has been made several times for the profession of school counseling. These authors note that typically an increase in credit hours usually heralds a shift in standards for the specialty area in the next iteration of the CACREP standards (Merlin, Pagano, George, Zanone, & Newman, 2017). The increase in credit hours is of relevance to the current study. Programs that are looking to increase credit hours for master's counseling programs from 48 to 60 should be intentional about incorporating courses that enhance the ability of school counselors to serve PreK-12 students effectively.

The utilization of qualitative research was intended to gain a better understanding of how school counseling trainees are prepared to interact with PreK-12 students with disabilities. In addition, I wanted to gain an understanding of trainees' comfort level

when interacting with PreK-12 students with disabilities and their knowledge related to special education laws. Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) conducted a study with second year master's in counseling students to gain a better understanding of how prepared students were to engage with individuals with disabilities after a one-hour training workshop. It is important to note that in this study only four of the nineteen participants had experience working with individuals with disabilities (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). I gained an understanding of the preparedness for school counselor trainees when working with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

Research Questions

Currently, school counselor trainees are not required by CACREP or ASCA to engage in disability-specific training related to counseling PreK-12 students with disabilities or to demonstrate an understanding of laws related to the educational rights of students with disabilities. This study addressed the connection between training and services provided by school counselors to PreK-12 students with disabilities. The study answered questions related to understanding how school counselor trainees are currently prepared to interact with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The research questions are:

1. In what ways are school counselor trainees in a single counselor education program in Ohio currently prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

2. What is the potential impact of disability training on school counselor trainees' interactions and experiences with Ohio students with disabilities?

Qualitative Research

The rationale for utilizing qualitative research was to gain a better understanding of school counseling trainees' preparation and experiences of working with diverse populations, specifically PreK-12 students with disabilities. Utilizing qualitative research allowed me to evaluate meaning (Patton, 2015). For example, I looked at the school counselor trainees' experiences to serve PreK-12 students with disabilities and the meaning associated with the experiences. The study examined the current status of school counselor trainees' preparedness to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The study informed future directions to improve upon current school preparation programs.

The current study was designed based on a pilot study that was conducted in March of 2017, while I was a doctoral student. The pilot study helped to confirm the value of qualitative research as well as embedded single-case study as the chosen design (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In the pilot study, structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interview methods were used, and grounded theory guidelines were applied. Engaging in the initial pilot study allowed me to determine the best interview structure and provided a rationale for a single-case design for this study.

During the pilot study, I interviewed three second-year master students who completed internship hours in clinical rehabilitation sites. I selected students from the clinical rehabilitation track to get a better understanding of how other counseling specialty areas are trained to engage with individuals with disabilities. Through this experience, I was better informed of potential needs for training related to the school counseling specialty area. The current qualitative study utilized exploratory single-case

study design to explore the issue of school counselor training related to serving students PreK-12 with disabilities within a school counselor education program.

Single-case Study Design

A single-case study design is identified by the typology of the particular case (Yin, 2018). The typologies do not have to act independently allowing me to use various types simultaneously. Yin's (2018) typologies include exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. For the purposes of this single-case study design, I selected to use the exploratory typology. The exploratory type allows for a particular issue to be studied in depth within the actual setting (Renfro-Michel & Lenz, 2017). The author sought to examine how school counselor trainees are prepared to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities within an actual training program for school counselors.

Setting

The setting selected for this research study is an institution located in the Ohio, which began offering a Master of Arts in Education in School Counseling two years ago. The program has enrolled students seeking licensure as school counselors. The rationale for selecting this location was based on access to potential participants and the program's focus on school counseling as the only specialization in the program. The university and counseling program are currently working toward seeking accreditation with CACREP for the school counseling program. The whole department of education, including undergraduate and graduate programs are currently accredited through CAEP. Once more information is released on the ASCA and CAEP partnership, the program faculty will work to ensure new CAEP standards are met.

Marshall & Rossman (2016) explained site-specific research needs to rationalized to explain the benefits and unique qualities of the one site. The selected site had the potential to provide results that could influence how other counselor education programs train school counselors to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The school counseling master program has several distinct factors that made it an ideal site for this particular study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For example, the Master of Arts in Education counseling program focuses solely on training school counselors. The study focused on how school counselors are trained and utilizing a program focused on training school counselors helped to identify gaps. The school counselor trainees currently in the program work, learn and engage with peers who are focused on the same goal of becoming a school counselor.

Participants

My goal was to interview a minimum of 10 school counselor trainees from a pool of 19 school counselor trainees that met the criteria for the study. The school counselor trainees who were contacted for this study, all completed a counseling practicum in spring semester, 2018. The school counselor trainees either took the Counseling Diverse Populations course in summer, 2017, or were scheduled to take the Counseling Diverse Populations class in summer, 2018.

All potential interviewees were enrolled in courses in the summer of 2018, and the interviews were conducted during the summer semester. All of the potential school counselor trainees were enrolled in the same school counseling program at the same institution; all participated in practicum in the spring of 2018; all engaged in a practicum

at an Ohio school under a licensed school counselor, and all are projected to graduate by spring 2019.

Recruitment

The first call for participants was sent on June 12, 2018 via email using the blind carbon copy feature. From the first recruitment email, five individuals came forward to volunteer for the study. A second call for participants went out on June 17, 2018. This second recruitment effort led to one additional individual volunteering for participation in the study. To increase potential engagement in the study, I sent individual emails to students as part of the third call for participants.

The third call brought three more individuals who were willing to participate in the study. One of the individuals who responded to the third call initially withdrew due to personal scheduling issues, but later requested to join. However, the individual was unable to make the requested deadline. I offered the individual dates and times that were after the requested deadline, but the individual was not available until August. Due to the nature of my professional role and the established IRB protocol, the study could not be extended into a time period when I would be re-engaging with any eligible participants as an instructor or advisor.

A fourth and final call was sent individually to any remaining participants. This call engaged three more individuals who were interested in the study. One of the individuals followed through with engagement in the study. The other two individuals were provided with several dates and times, but were unable to schedule an interview time. I offered these individuals additional dates and times following the initial requested

deadline. However, the two individuals did not respond to the additional availability offer.

Time Frame

The initial recruitment email for participants went out to all eligible graduate students on June 12, 2018. The first interview was conducted on June 14, 2018 and the final interview was conducted on July 6, 2018. I aimed to interview each participant for 60 to 90 minutes, with the actual interviews lasting from 60 to 65 minutes. I spent a minimum of 40 hours on site to prepare for and to conduct interviews as well as to complete other tasks associated with the study. In addition to the 40 hours spent on site, I spent additional hours reviewing transcripts, conducting member checks, reviewing syllabi, and analyzing data. Once interviews were completed the member checking process was initiated.

Member Checking

Marshall and Rossman (2016) highlighted that member checking is a method used in qualitative research to help strengthen the trustworthiness of a study. To help ensure the credibility and trustworthiness, the research study called for two levels of member checking. The initial member checking stage involved each individual participant receiving a copy of the transcribed interview in which they were involved. After completing a review of the transcriptions, I sent a condensed preliminary findings report to all participants. At each stage of member checking, the participants were given a time frame to provide feedback or to request changes. During the transcription review, one member requested that an identifiable location be removed. I acknowledged this request

and made the appropriate changes. During the second stage of member checking, no participants from the study provided feedback or requested any changes. The following section includes the findings in detail from the study. The appendix includes the findings report that was sent to participants on Monday, July 23, 2018 (Appendix B).

Data Collection

As an instructor in the counselor education department, I had access to potential participants. However, I ensured that no potential participants were in classes taught by me during the semester in which data collection took place. After obtaining IRB approval, potential participants were contacted via university email to inform them about the study and to invite their participation. Participants provided written informed consent prior to engaging in the study. I offered monetary compensation of 15 dollars in the form of a gift card to each participant. The monetary compensation was clearly defined in the invitation, written informed consent, and IRB paperwork.

I conducted interviews lasting around 60 minutes in a conference room in the education department at the university in which participants were enrolled. Yin (2018) explains that an embedded method allows a researcher to look at more than one unit of analysis. In this study, I conducted interviews and examined syllabi from the program. The embedded approach of analysis is considered superior for a single-case study (Renfro-Michel & Lenz, 2017; Yin, 2018). Although this is a favorable approach, a researcher can overlook the whole case by focusing intensely on the two different units (Yin, 2018). The goal of data collections was to achieve data saturation through testing the patterns, and then determining if more data would be needed (Marshall & Rossman,

2016). The research believes that data saturation was achieved through the patterns and themes. The findings explained in detail in Chapter Four support data saturation.

Through extending an invitation to all eligible participants I worked to engage as many participants who are willing to volunteer with the goal of achieving data saturation. Cunningham and Carmichael (2017) explain, "the debate is about how small or big a sample can assure that the qualitative research meets standards of academic rigor" (p. 79).

The rationale for conducting interviews in a conference room at the participants' university rather than my office or in a classroom was to allow participants to feel comfortable sharing information in a more neutral location. I spent a minimum of 40 hours on site while in the role of the researcher. The time included conducting interviews, creating field notes, and analyzing documents. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed using a transcription service, and then analyzed. Findings from the interviews and the review of syllabi (in order to further determine the amount of exposure the students have had to disability culture during the program) are discussed in Chapter Four. The practical goal of the study was to provide the university, the counseling program, and the students with future directions to enhance disability training and to consider how to incorporate training on disability culture for school counselor trainees.

Furthermore, the participant criteria were chosen because the selected participants would help inform the research study and the central research questions (Creswell, 2013). Each potential individual was projected to graduate by spring 2019, had already taken practicum during the spring semester of 2018, was enrolled in or had completed the

counseling diverse populations course. This ensured that each individual had some level of knowledge related to school counseling training, multicultural implications, and initial hands-on experience as a school counselor through the completion of practicum.

Interviews. Interviews were semi-structured and were conducted in-depth for approximately one hour each. Rubin and Rubin (2012) state, "by listening carefully to others, researchers can extend their intellectual and emotional reach across a variety of barriers" (p. 3). For example, through studying graduate students who have completed an initial practicum, I gained insight into the nature of school counselor trainees' interactions with students with disabilities. Through conducting interviews, I extracted data to make sense of the school counseling students' experiences and how they were impacted by disability training. Rubin and Rubin explained, "sometimes talking to those involved in a process or program can challenge long-held assumptions and can help recast ineffective public policies" (p. 3). For example, I uncovered that educators assume school counselor trainees are already adequately prepared to work with individuals with disabilities based on prior experiences with this culture. The proven assumption allowed for an opportunity to recommend new training practices for educating school counselor trainees when working with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

In qualitative research, specifically qualitative interviewing, participants are referred to as a conversational partner (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The utilization of the term conversational partner helps to separate a social conversation from a research conversation. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained that it allows a researcher to communicate to the participants that their experiences are valuable and will influence

change in the profession. As the researcher, I went to the conversational partner with a research problem and a set of interview questions to help me make sense of the research problem. The information shared by the conversational partner shaped the study as each individual shared knowledge and experiences that answered the research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The semistructured interview style allowed me to present a set of interview questions to the conversational partner and the flexibility to ask follow up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). All of the interviews were scheduled and conducted face-to-face during the summer semester of 2018. I utilized the style of responsive interviewing. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explains responsive interviewing: "it emphasizes the importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and interviewee that leads to a more give-and-take conversation" (p. 36). Although I had an established relationship with the potential participants, it was important to develop a research relationship with the conversational partners. This relationship building allowed the me to establish trust outside of the instructor role.

To develop questions for the study, I examined studies and conducted a pilot study. Schoffstall et al. (2015) formulated questions for semi-structured interviews for rehabilitation counselors. In this study, the authors worked to develop questions from a broad lens for how rehabilitation counselors work with individuals from the deaf and hard of hearing community and then piloted the questions with seasoned rehabilitation counselors (Schoffstall, Cawthon, Tarantolo-Leppo, Wendel, 2015). After conducting the pilot study, the questions were restructured and implemented during individual

interviews (Schoffstall et al., 2015). The strategy of piloting the questions was not

attainable for this study. However, I did work to organize the questions around broad

topics and utilized a professional disability lens.

I completed a pilot study with similar questions connected to the current study in

spring, 2017 in which the focus was on the experiences of rehabilitation counseling

master's students in Southeastern Ohio who were in their final semester of internship.

Questions from the pilot study were then restructured to address the goals of the current

study and assess the experiences of participants who were enrolled in a school counseling

master program. Appendix A of this manuscript contains the interview questions used for

this study.

Documents. After engaging in the semi-structured interviews and completing

member checking of the transcriptions, I gathered all of the syllabi. The program syllabi

analyzed for this study were the courses that the participants had already taken. Since the

program utilized rolling admissions, the syllabi included courses that all or some of the

participants had already taken. The documents were compared to interview transcripts to

determine if the predicted patterns were consistent with what was found in the

transcriptions. Course syllabi that were reviewed and analyzed included: Counseling

Diverse Populations, summer 2017 and summer 2018 were analyzed; Introduction to

School Counseling, spring 2017 and fall 2017; Program Develop, fall 2017; Theories

and Techniques of Individual Counseling, fall 2017; Theories and Techniques of Group

Counseling, spring 2018 were analyzed; Counseling Children and Adolescents, summer

of 2018 (although not all of the participants had taken the course); Human Development,

spring 2017 and 2018; Wellness, Addictions, and Ethics from summer 2017 and 2018;

Practicum, spring 2017 (all sections); Career Counseling, fall 2017; Consultation and

Collaboration, spring 2017; Research Statistics and Methodology, summer 2018;

Scholarly Research Project, summer 2018; and finally Teaching: Best Practices, summer,

2018 (only one participant took this course during the summer in which participant

interviews were conducted).

Students gained an understanding of multicultural counseling, various minority

populations, and how to work with individuals from different cultures during the

Counseling Diverse Population course. This course syllabus was reviewed because it is

the class where students would learn about a variety of cultures that they may encounter

in practice. Depending on when students took the course, the class should have provided

students with a basic level of understanding of disability. An explanation is provided in

Chapter Four regarding the connection between the interview data and the document

analysis.

Data Analysis

Glesne (2011) highlights the data analysis as a process of working through the

data in a very analytical manner to gather themes and patterns. The analysis of this data

was approached carefully to make connections to all of the data from the interviews to

the syllabi that were made available to me by the instructor of each course.

I used highlighters both on paper and electronically to code data. Then found that

it was most effective to highlight paper transcripts for the individual themes and use color

coded tabs due to the large amount of data. Electronic copies of syllabi were analyzed

for connections to the rest of the data. I used an excel sheet mainly to map out the themes and went back to printed transcripts with a color coded system. The page numbers to transcripts and names of syllabi were referenced in the excel file connected to the patterns and themes.

Any information in the transcripts for pattern one was highlighted in pink. The second pattern was then highlighted in green with the final pattern was highlighted in blue. Then I mapped out themes. Once the themes were mapped out, I went back through the transcriptions and highlighted the themes in orange. While highlighting the themes in orange, I wrote the particular theme next to the highlighted section.

The color-coding system allowed the me to see where the themes overlapped with the patterns. Once this process was complete, the syllabi were examined and then connected back to the transcriptions. Chapter Four provides a detailed conceptualization of the exploratory single-case study research design. Additionally, an explanation of the utilization of embedded analysis and pattern matching is provided.

Pattern matching. The utilization of pattern matching as an analysis tool in qualitative case studies is a well-respected technique to make sense of large amounts of data (Yin, 2018). The information from the two embedded units was utilized in pattern matching to determine if "how's" and "why's" of how school counselor trainees are prepared to the predicted descriptive information that was defined before data collection occurred (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) explains, "If the empirical and predicted patterns appear to be similar, the results can help a case study to strengthen its *internal validity*"

(p. 175). It was important to predict how school counselor trainees are prepared to determine if the prediction matched the findings of the study.

Before conducting the study, I first predicted, with support from the literature explored in Chapter Two, that school counselor trainees are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Then I predicted, that school counselor trainees will only have surface knowledge about disability culture based on their previous experiences and practicum experiences. Finally, I predicted that participants would demonstrate a heighten awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture due to their knowledge that I subscribe to disability culture.

When the patterns identified as a result of the findings are closely related to the predicted patters, it then supports the validity of the study (Yin, 2018). The patterns identified as a result of the findings are called the *empirical* patterns (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) states, "the concern of the case study analysis, however, is with the overall pattern of results and the degree to which the empirically based pattern still matches the predicted one" (p. 177). The predicted patterns were validated by the findings of the study.

Document analysis. Then after reviewing interview data for predicted patterns, I then checked if themes found in the interviews were connected to what the school counselor trainees reported learning in class by reviewing the syllabi. The research worked to apply to school counselor trainees' experiences, perceptions, and understanding of disability culture and disability as related to the educational setting.

Thematic analysis. I engaged in thematic analysis after confirming the predicted patterns. Each transcription was then review to see if additional themes emerged, after finding themes. The themes included prior exposure, disconnect, access, school culture, immersion to disability culture, and parent collaboration. The themes were found by going through each transcription and highlighting the connecting item throughout each of the interviews. Once the themes were established, each was then examined to see if theme connected to the three predicated patterns. A further explanation of the themes is located in the next chapter.

Self as Researcher

As a researcher, and as a person with a disability, I bring my experiences to this qualitative study. I was given the label of having a "learning disability" in elementary school, and I have experienced first-hand what it is like to feel powerless and to have my voice suppressed. My experiences of being labeled, feeling invisible and inadequate, and eventually being able to accept and appreciate my disability provides unique perspectives. My experiences have shaped my drive to educate individuals with disabilities on how to become self-advocates and feel empowered.

As the only student in my class with an invisible disability, it was difficult for me to feel a sense of pride and community. My experiences with ableism have led to a passion for education, leading to earning an undergraduate degree in special education and a master's degree in school counseling. With the intention of taking these experiences of feeling devalued and turning them into positive experiences for future students, my goal is to educate and help empower individuals to be more than their

disability. My theoretical orientation as a counselor embodies a feminist therapy perspective, and this has influenced my research on disability culture and school counselor preparation. Through teacher education and counselor education experiences, and by reviewing professional literature, I have formed the view that those with disabilities, especially PreK-12 students, could benefit from school counselors who are competent in disability culture and disability legislation.

The school counselor's role is critical in the development and education of students in the school setting. In addition, the role of the counselor educator is to prepare school counselor trainees to successfully serve all students. The ASCA national model can play an important role in how a school counselor approaches a comprehensive school counseling program to serve all students, including students with disabilities. The disconnect between professional organizations and accrediting bodies can create gaps in how school counselors are trained, especially when working with students with disabilities. This discovery shaped how I viewed school counselor preparation, the lack of cohesiveness, and the potential impact that it can have on students with learning disabilities.

My experiences as both a school counselor and special education teacher who identifies as a person with a disability have influenced the development of this study and enhance the potential for positively impacting change in how school counselor trainees are prepared to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. These perspectives are valuable to the qualitative research genre, in which the researcher is the instrument. As a woman with a disability, I am drawn to the feminist theories and methodologies found in

qualitative research as it recognizes experiences where those with disabilities are oppressed and silenced.

As Marshall and Rossman (2016) eloquently explained, "Importantly, feminist perspectives increasingly incorporate the recognition of multiple intersectionalities of identity" (p. 28). This has led to realizing the importance of including and recognizing the various identities of each participant. Further exploration has led to the discovery of feminist disability studies in qualitative research, where the idea is to reexamine the way those with disabilities and disability culture are viewed in a similar fashion as traditional feminist theory would challenge gender oppression (Garland-Thomson, 2005). Uncovering this particular lens of disability culture situated in feminist theory of qualitative research influences my perceptions of my own disability.

This study aligns with the ideals found in feminist disability research, which views disability from a social perspective as a variation that the person possesses rather than with the medical model that views disability as a defect (Garland-Thomson, 2005; Oklin, 2002). It is important to acknowledge disability ownership varies within the disability community where not all members embrace being a part of this culture (Oklin, 2002). It is important to explore what limitations might surface with the consideration of my background and experiences. As well as what is known about the complicated nature of disability culture that is unlike other minority cultures (Oklin, 2002).

Credibility and Trustworthiness

As mentioned, I have a disability and disclosing this to participants may increase the credibility as well as the trustworthiness as the researcher. I am also a former

intervention specialist and school counselor. In addition, I am currently the instructor at the institution in the school counselor program. The former roles and current role could help gain the trust of the participants while in the role of the researcher as I may be seen as credible for having these credentials.

In addition, validity played an active role in the trustworthiness of the researcher. Glesne (2011) talks about eight various ways for the researcher to show trustworthiness and validity. For example, prolonged time at the site as an instructor helped me with continuing to build trust (Glesne, 2011). To continue this trusting relationship, I engaged in member checking by sharing the transcribed interview and interpretations with the participants as recommended by Marshall & Rossman (2016).

Design. The proposed study had access to 19 potential participants. The study was voluntary, and nine students decided to engage in the study. However, 12 students came forward, but three withdrew due to personal scheduling conflicts. The goal was to achieve data saturation. While only nine participants were interviewed data saturation was achieved as the same patterns and themes were found across the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Personal. Given my personal and professional knowledge regarding disability culture, and my personal identification, personal biases could have emerged. However, using a semi-structured interview format provided me with a set of boundaries. Any questions asked during the interview that were not predetermined, were follow up questions or clarification questions to the participant's response. In addition, I have professionally served in the role of school counselor and in the role of intervention

specialists. My expectations for how a school counselor should collaborate with parents and teachers were predicted to be a limitation. I used an interview protocol that allowed her to jot down any notes and provided a space to reflected when necessary to avoid allowing personal expectations to get in the way.

In addition to bracketing biases prior to engaging in interviews through the creation of the established question method. The research then worked through biases when developing the *Self as Research* section before engaging in the semi-structured interview process. During the interviews and following the interviews, I bracketed out any personal experience by taking informal field notes on the Interview Protocol Project sheet (Appendix D). While reviewing the completed transcriptions, completed by the transcription company, I took additional informal notes when any thoughts surfaced.

Professional. The research study was conducted at my place of employment which is a private institution. While there are some benefits such as easier access to participants there are also disadvantages associated with using the place of employment as the research site. Marshall and Rossman (2016) state, "disadvantages include researcher bias and subjectivity and the inability to separate oneself from the research" (p. 107). As mentioned, I did not serve as instructor or advisor to any school counseling trainees during the summer semester of 2018. The program administrators were supportive of the study being conducted and did not attempt to shape the study or the findings in any way. I did not experience any constraints regarding the study being at my place of work.

Summary and Preview of Next Chapter

Chapter Three discussed site selection and potential participant criteria. This chapter explained the methodology used to validate the predicted patterns when compared to the empirical patterns as a result of conducting the study (Yin. 2018). In the following chapter, the empirical patterns will be discussed and connected to the predicted patterns. Chapter Four will describe in detail the characteristics of the site and space used to conduct interviews. What was learned from each participant will also be explained in detail. Finally, discovered themes will be highlighted.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single-case study was to examine how school counselor trainees from a single counselor education program in Ohio are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities using interviews with trainees and program documents analysis (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Chapter Three provided a detailed overview of the methodology and design of the study. I utilized a semi-structured interview format that included 14 prepared questions. Additionally, I reviewed program syllabi as embedded analysis to support the findings of the study. The literature contained in Chapter Two informed the structure of the questions. Historically speaking, school counseling is a profession that adapts to the changing needs of society, beginning with a singular focus on vocational needs to a shift of focus on education and career with the race to space movement (Erford, 2015). The changing needs of society led to the creation of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) (Erford, 2015). This is important to note as the profession of school counseling continues to evolve. With an ever-changing society, ASCA continues to support the profession with updated ethical standards, counselor competencies, and student standards.

ASCA (2012) provides school counselors with resources and tools centered around the professional identity of an advocate who drives change through the utilization of data. School counselors are called to serve and meet the needs of all students (ASCA, 2016b). One way school counselors work to meet the needs of students is through advocating for systemic and policy change that act as barriers for students. However, many within the counseling profession, including school counselors, are not adequately

prepared to effectively work with students with disabilities (Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). The lack of effective preparation is not discounted in the literature and research in the profession, although many scholars have written on the positive impact a school counselor can have with PreK-12 students with disabilities (Milsom & Akos, 2003; Milsom, Goodnough, & Akos, 2007; Milsom, 2002, 2006; Mitcham, Portman, & Dean, 2009; Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). Against this backdrop, the findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

I utilized an exploratory approach within this qualitative single-case study which examined how school counselor trainees are prepared to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities within a graduate-level training program for school counselors. A pattern matching analytical technique was used to compare the actual findings with the predicted potential findings that were identified before conducting interviews with participants (Yin, 2018). The three predicted patterns included:

1. School counselor trainee participants are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

2. School counselor trainee participants are likely to only have surface knowledge about disability culture based on their previous experiences and practicum experiences.

3. School counselor trainee participants would demonstrate a heightened awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture due to their knowledge that I as the researcher subscribe to disability culture.

In Chapter Three, the process of recruitment of participants is explained in detail, and the criteria for eligibility for the study are briefly highlighted. Information about the selected site, participant code, number of participants, documents analyzed, and time frame of data collection are presented. A description for each individual participant is presented, including demographic information, previous as well as current work information, practicum experience, disability knowledge, and comfort with working with students with disabilities. Finally, a detailed explanation of the findings of the study is presented.

School Counselor Disability Training

I sought to answer two research questions related to how school counselor trainees are currently trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The research questions were:

1. In what ways are school counselor trainees in a single counselor education program in Ohio currently prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

2. What is the potential impact of disability training on school counselor trainees' interactions and experiences with Ohio students with disabilities?

The research questions were informed by the literature and relevant studies highlighted in Chapter Two. School counselors can have a positive impact on PreK-12 students with disabilities when the counselor engages with the student (Frye-Myers, 2005; Milsom & Akos, 2003). However, a few studies have found that school counselors are not always completely or correctly engaged with PreK-12 students with disabilities for a variety of

reasons, including lack of training and disability knowledge (Dipeolu, Storlie, & Johnson, 2014; Leggett, Shea, Leggett, 2011; Rawlings & Longhurst, 2011). I sought to understand whether training is an indicator of school counselor trainees' ability to work with students with disabilities.

Participants

I invited 19 counselor trainees who completed practicum in the spring of 2018 to engage in the study. All eligible participants for this study attend the same institution and are currently enrolled in the same Masters of Arts in Education program. Since I sought to gain a better understanding of school counselor training, it required that the participants are actively seeking licensure in school counseling upon graduation from the program. This section includes an explanation of the participant code. In the following sections, a rich description will be provided for each participant and the site.

Participant Code

To protect the participants' identity, a participant code was established, consisting of numbers and letters. For example, all participants have the same first two letters, "CS", followed by a number 1 through 9. The letters identify the individual as a counseling student. The numbers identify the order of the interviews. For example, CS-5 refers to the participant who was the fifth individual to be interviewed.

Site Description

The institution is a small private university that is located in major city in Ohio. In the heart of the small campus is a court yard with walking paths, green spaces, and benches. The campus also has an urban feel, with local shops and restaurants within

walking distance to the main buildings. It includes a coffee shop, various athletic fields, residence halls, a dining hall, and health services. The total student enrollment, including undergraduates and graduates is 3,384 students.

All graduate programs, which includes, counselor education, school administration, and teaching are part of the Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) degree. Student demographic data for all the MAEd programs is 80.8% female and 19.2% male (University X data, 2018). The students in the program are 73.1% Caucasian, 11.5% African American, 3.8% Hispanic, 3.8% multiracial, and 7.7% did not report or declined to report race/ethnicity (University X data, 2018).

The building in which the interviews were conducted houses all of the programs in education. The exterior of the building has a 1970s appearance, with many interior spaces resembling the exterior style of the building. Some spaces within this building have been remodeled and all of the classrooms now include appropriate technology needed to engage students in lectures. The building comprises three different levels of classrooms and faculty offices.

Interview Location

All participants were interviewed in the same conference room located on the upper level of the building. The conference room does not have a number assigned to it and is located near the copy room. It is shared by various undergraduate and graduate education programs. The interview space contains a large wooden oval conference table, accompanied by brown upholstered chairs. The space holds resource materials for teacher preparation and old state subject standard manuals. The conference room

windows overlook the central green space on campus. The campus church bells could be heard during many of the interviews as they chime by the hour. The space had a comfortable temperature during all of the interviews. The interview location was chosen because it was a neutral space for participants.

Number of Participants

At the outset of the study there were 19 potential participants who were students in the counselor education program, who had all successfully completed practicum, and were currently enrolled in summer classes. However, one potential participant withdrew from the counselor education program at the start of the summer courses. Another potential participant withdrew from classes and the program mid-way through the summer semester. This reduced the number of potential participants to 17.

A total of 12 participants volunteered for the study and of them, nine individuals engaged in an interview. There were three individuals who withdrew before engaging in the study. The three individuals either stopped responding or decided not to engage in an interview due to their own personal scheduling conflicts. The participants included 7 females and 2 males within the age range of 20 - 40. There were 7 participants who identify as Caucasian and 2 participants who identify as African American. One of the participants is bilingual in English and Spanish. One of the participants is a licensed teacher who currently teaches PreK students with disabilities in an urban setting.

Participant descriptions

The following sections will describe each participant in detail. To describe each of the participants in an organized manner, the sections use the established participant

code. The descriptions of each participant are based on information acquired through engagement in the interview. The descriptions for each participant include general demographic and background information. Previous work and practicum experiences are also included for each participant. The individual's disability knowledge and comfort working with students with disabilities is examined in each section.

CS-1. The participant, "CS-1", identifies as a 28-year-old bilingual student. Through his undergraduate training and travels, CS-1 became fluent in Spanish. This individual's previous work experience includes serving as an assistant for students who were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) from Spanish speaking countries. While serving as an assistant to teachers and students, CS-1 was able to attend a few individualized education program (IEP) meetings to translate for Spanish speaking parents at the middle school level. The participant described these experiences as fast-paced meetings in which a lot of content was covered in a short amount of time. CS-1 described the IEP meetings as a supportive gathering, remarking, "I love that there are people in different capacities that are supporting the student and the family, working on the team".

In addition to translating for Spanish-speaking parents, CS-1 has worked with ELL students who were identified, or were in the process of being identified, for special education services within his assistant role. While serving as an ELL assistant for classified staff in the district where he previously worked, the participant attended training geared toward providing interventions to ELL students, students with disabilities,

and other potentially at-risk students. CS-1 mentioned that this district-wide training did not extend his existing knowledge on working with students with disabilities.

CS-1 recently experienced a job change and is now employed at a private school in an administrative role. He does not currently work directly with students. The private Catholic college preparatory school where CS-1 now works has an intense work study program. In his current position, the participant recruits students and supports the director of the school. The main objective of his role is to recruit Spanish speaking families through attending local events and community programs. In addition, CS-1 mentioned that he is also tasked with duties such as conducting information sessions, entrance exams, and school registration.

The practicum experience for this participant was located in his previous place of employment, where he served as an ELL assistant within a local suburban public school. In his practicum experience, CS-1 mentioned that more time was spent focusing on the social, personal, academic needs of the students rather than the impact of the disability. CS-1 noted, "In my experience, I haven't seen, how school counselors are really helping these students with disabilities transition successfully into a post- secondary context". CS-1 also expressed fears related to a vague understanding of disability legislation combined with minimal experience working with students with disabilities during practicum.

During the one-hour interview, the participant spoke about his disability knowledge and comfort levels associated with working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. CS-1 shared:

In general, I don't feel like I know a lot about disability culture. I know that historically people, students with disabilities haven't received what they needed, haven't received equal opportunities in schools. I know that even from just my personal, like my testimonial experience, it seems like students with disabilities are allocated to their own area. You know, I think that if I didn't support a couple of students that had IEPs or something, or had extra intervention support at the school, I wouldn't have known where it was in the building that I worked.

The participant provided a thoughtful and personal perspective of the utilization of resource rooms in school systems. CS-1 explained that he knew about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and provided an overview of how IDEA works to protect students with disabilities. He added that he felt counselors had a role related to advocacy. CS-1 was unsure of exactly the school counselor's role is, under IDEA, when working with students with disabilities.

During the interview, CS-1 mentioned that he has become comfortable working with individuals with disabilities through his work experience. This statement was confirmed by the multiple work examples provided during the course of the interview. CS-1 noted, however, that he experiences uncertainty related to knowledge, experience, and education when working with this population. For example, he stated, "I feel like I lack the breadth of knowledge. I feel like I need to know every single one to be equipped for it and I don't know if that's true." Finally, CS-1 said he felt explicit guidelines would help influence interactions with individuals with disabilities.

CS-2. The participant, "CS-2", identifies as a 26-year-old student who received services through a 504 plan for her bipolar diagnosis during her grade school career. She mentioned, "I had a 504 plan, something that at the time, I didn't understand. And I mean, obviously that worked for me". In addition to sharing her own personal experiences, CS-2 described during the interview the integral nature of disability culture within her family system. She stated that her brother was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at a very young age. CS-2 provided a family perspective of a family member belonging to disability culture:

> My parents were always worried he was never going to be able to have a relationship, go to college, have a job. I remember my mom crying when he was younger, "I don't think he'll ever be able to do anything." You know? It's been a struggle, and then because of that, we've connected with other people who have disabilities, and I've sort of sought them out through different means of meeting other people who have struggles.

CS-2 explained how her personal experiences, such as the aforementioned example, have helped her to become more attuned to the needs of people.

CS-2 completed her undergraduate education at a small private school, graduating with a degree in anthropology. The participant went on to describe her diverse work experiences, which included various roles in different industries. She worked in a museum, where her role was to educate the general public about the exhibits showcased. In addition, she mentioned that she had held several customer service positions, including working in the fraud department for a credit card company. Her most recent job was

working as a college guide in a rural high school. In this role, she helped first generation low-income students work through the transition from high school to college. CS-2 mentioned that this position directly impacted her pursuit of becoming a school counselor. Since starting the school counseling graduate program, CS-2 no longer serves as a college guide.

While completing her practicum hours, CS-2 worked as a substitute teacher in the district where she is now located as a school counseling intern. CS-2 plans to continue to take substitute teaching jobs as she completes her internship hours. She explained that taking on a long-term substitute position allows her the opportunity to work hands-on with intervention specialists and students with disabilities. CS-2 explained that she felt that she had more access to intervention specialists within the school while in the role of a substitute teacher, as opposed to her role as a school counseling intern.

CS-2's practicum experience was conducted at a rural school with a site supervisor who had both school and clinical counseling credentials. The site where she currently serves as the school counseling intern is the same school site where she served as a college guide. The participant will continue at this placement for her internship experience. While in practicum, CS-2 was able to gain experience advocating for a student who would have benefitted from a 504 plan for mental health concerns related to the student's bipolar and anxiety diagnoses. CS-2 stated, "I'm like, just a very simple adjustment of this or understanding, creating her a 504 plan would have helped this student." The participant went on to explain that she experienced pushback from the administration, which asserted the attitude that mental health did not qualify a student for

a 504 plan. During the interview, CS-2 expressed her belief that it would be beneficial for students with disabilities to understand their accommodations as a way to encourage advocacy.

CS-2 shared how her site supervisor provided her with background information on students with disabilities and that she took time to review each student's file to become more comfortable serving that individual student. She also remarked that serving as a substitute teacher at the middle level influenced her comfort with working with students with disabilities. The participant explained during the interview how her substitute teaching experience influenced her work with students with disabilities compared to serving as a school counselor:

> I could see a student who wasn't paying attention, or who had a certain tick to them. I could see firsthand working with them, on what they were able to grasp, what they weren't able to grasp. It's something that maybe as a school counselor, if there was time in a classroom, if I had sat in the back, it was something that I would have picked up there. But, just trying to find the time to do something like that, or observe even for a half a class, would be really difficult.

The information provided in this example helps to demonstrate the struggles school counselors and counselor trainees currently experience. CS-2 also noted that she has a basic understanding of IDEA, and expressed the belief that the school counselor should be advocating for all students, including students with disabilities.

During the interview, CS-2 talked about her background with a population of students within disability culture with whom she is currently uncomfortable working

with. The participant stated that she is not at ease working with students with disabilities

because she feels has not had enough experience with this population. She mentioned

that while in practicum, she encountered a senior student who relied on a wheelchair and

feeding tube. CS-2 explained that the student used software to communicate and had a

full-time nurse. CS-2 disclosed that she felt she did not have enough exposure to this

sub-culture of the disability population to help with college transition planning. She

recognized that college would be difficult for this student, and as a school counselor

trainee she feels she needs more exposure to working with students with physical

disabilities.

CS-3. The participant, "CS-3", identifies as a 30-year-old student. She is

currently planning a wedding this summer with plans to get married in the fall. She

recently resigned from her corporate position to focus full-time on completing her

internship for her graduate program. CS-3 grew up in the state where she currently

resides. However, in her adult life, she lived in different states before returning to her

home state. She feels her childhood summers, which were spent in a different state,

greatly influenced her life. CS-3 highlighted, "It's very isolated and rural, and removed.

But a part of me grew up there, and that still, you know? And is like in gorgeous nature

as well". She explained during the interview that her mother's family still resides in the

state where she spent her childhood summers and her mother still spend her summers in

her home state.

CS-3 reported that her mother is an educator and that she grew up around

educators. She also shared that she was raised as a Catholic and attended parochial

schools for her grade school education. She explained that since her mother and other educators were an influence in her life, she did volunteer work related to serving various educational systems. Although her undergraduate degree is in theology, CS-3 stated that she had held an internship that overlapped with the profession of education. She remarked, "And so, through a series of events, I've come here to counseling. But a part of that education has always been like in the side of my mind also". The participant shared this information to explain how her school and early work experiences shaped her decision to pursue a profession that also allowed her to interact with people.

CS-3 provided a thorough history of her previous employment and educational background. She reported that her first job was in the food industry, serving customers ice cream while she was in high school. During college, she continued to hold customer service positions in the food industry. In the interview, CS-3 described these jobs as "people facing positions" that allowed her to see the value of, and her personal desire for, interacting with other people. She stated, "You can give them ice cream, and then they're happy and they leave. It's such a simple transaction". This example was one of many that highlighted her motivation for positive interaction.

CS-3 noted that upon graduation from college her jobs became less about people and more about processes and corporate systems. She expressed that she started to miss interaction with people and serving individuals. CS-3 stated with emphasis, "And those inward facing careers have like sucked the soul out of me". This led to her connecting the dots of wanting to be in education, serving students, as a school counselor, not as a teacher in the classroom.

CS-3 completed her practicum in a K-8 parochial school setting in which her mother worked as a teacher. It was the same parochial school CS-3 attended as a child. Her practicum experience was unique, because the school was starting to integrate resources for students with disabilities within the classroom during her time there. The school began to have intervention specialists work directly with general education teachers. CS-3 described witnessing pushback from teachers, who felt this change was a direct reflection of their teaching abilities. She mentioned that the educational setting in which she was placed seemed stuck, as many of the teachers were still wanting students to receive "pull-out" service. The participant added that the school did not have any special education classrooms. The school staff included intervention specialists, speech therapists, physical therapist, a reading specialist, and a school psychologist. CS-3 also reported having limited interactions with students with disabilities while at her practicum location.

The participant was able to communicate a basic understanding of disability legislation. She stated that she knew about IDEA, but would need to reference the document and her textbooks in a situation where she needed to serve students with disabilities. CS-3 stated her perceptions of students with disabilities:

Obviously people with disabilities have different needs than normal students, but I don't think I have any specific descriptors of like, they would be this way or that way. They're a part of the student body that we're serving, and they'll have special accommodations sometimes if needed, but would be, I think, treated pretty similarly to students in the school, as needed.

She recognized that schools, including parochial schools similar to her internship location, have students with disabilities who need to be serviced, and affirmed the importance of limiting the amount of time students are removed from the classroom. Throughout the interview, CS-3 was unsure of how she would service PreK-12 students with disabilities, but acknowledged the responsibility of advocating for all students as a school counselor. CS-3 mentioned that she felt comfortable working with students with disabilities due to having more relevant training than other counselors who might have been trained 20 years ago, for example. In addition, she expressed that she feels uncomfortable when her colleagues do not understand or do not want to support students with disabilities. She specifically mentioned being uncomfortable when other educators do not understand the role of the school counselor when working with students with disabilities.

CS-4. The participant, "CS-4", identifies as a student. At a young age she was identified as having ADHD. During the interview she did not share much personal background information. She reported that she attended the same private school from kindergarten to high school graduation, located in the state in which she currently resides. She mentioned that she struggled in grade school and was labeled as "the talkative child". CS-4 stated that she kept getting passed along through each grade, and that her teachers could not figure out why some scores declined and other reports showed growth in her intellectual abilities. In the interview, CS-4 talked about how her anxiety started to increase over her frustrations with school. The participant mentioned that she only made the connection between these issues and her ADHD diagnosis in high school, when she

met with a school counselor. CS-4 stated, "She connected me to a learning specialist, and outside psychologists who then helped with the diagnosing process for that ADD piece. Which we were like, how did nobody figure this out when I was like 10?" These experiences exemplify what led her to pursue jobs in various helping professions.

Before entering her current graduate program, CS-4 obtained an undergraduate degree in psychology. She stated that her time as an undergraduate taught her a lot. She gained research experience, as her institution strongly encouraged student research. CS-4 mentioned that she had an opportunity to volunteer in the classroom of a local school as part of a service learning project. In the interview, she described how she went on to participate in "Adopt a School", which was a college club that paired university students with a teacher for the school year. CS-4 went from volunteering with the outreach program to working as the site coordinator. She stated the experience provided insight:

> So that was really cool, getting to see kind of the higher up level. We're going to match this kid with this teacher, because this kid [college student] has a background in this, and this teacher really needs help because she has five kids in her class who are ESL, and this kid speaks Spanish.

This opportunity allowed her to see a range of what teachers need in terms of support when serving students.

She went on to describe her internship experience, which was similar to her volunteer position. CS-4 worked for a local non-profit that connected mentors with students. After graduating, she mentioned trying to figure out what she wanted to do as a career. She then met with a mentor who exposed her to the school counseling profession.

During the practicum experience, CS-4 was placed within a local school district at a public elementary school. She mentioned that the district had a total of 12 elementary schools and the school where she was placed was considered the "overflow" school, which served a diverse population of students. CS-4 provided a thorough description of the school:

> You'd have kids who are middle suburban children from a particular neighborhood], that have well-adjusted families, and they're just happy-go-lucky kids. Not that those kids can't have problems too. Then we had kids with parents in prison, and kids whose parents came to school on drugs. We talked to children's services all of the time. And a huge piece of my experience there was that there are so many kids with emotional disturbance, maybe not so many. I mean out of 500 something kids, maybe 15 or something. But still that's enough to overthrow the school.

She went on to contrast the high needs of the school with limited administrative support, as the school only had one principal. CS-4 described the school culture, remarking, "It's very, very interesting, the dynamic between the principal and the administration, and the teachers". She stated that the school only employed one school counselor, her site supervisor, who had to share a classroom space with a special education teacher. CS-4 explained that this gave her the opportunity to see a collaborative relationship between the school counselor and the intervention specialist. She added that the special education teacher also had a student teacher, and this allowed her to partner with the student teacher.

CS-4's undergraduate work gave her considerable exposure to disability culture. During the interview, she highlighted the fact that while she was trying to figure out her major, she was able to take special education courses, speech courses, and various child development courses. CS-4 spoke fairly knowledgeably about IDEA due to her previous coursework. She did explain that although she has had exposure to various sub-cultures of disabilities, she still feels uncomfortable with educational legislation. She explained, "I feel like sometimes legal things and policies and procedures get a little lost for me in education, because every school's so different". During the interview, she mentioned feeling most comfortable working with students who have mild to moderate disabilities, such as emotional disturbances, oppositional defiant disorder, specific learning disabilities, or dyslexia. CS-4 explained that she would be uncomfortable working with students who were non-verbal, since she has never experienced working with a child who was unable to communicate verbally. She clarified that if presented with the opportunity to work with a student who was non-verbal, she would do so, but would need to figure out how to best serve the student.

The participant went into more detail describing her experience of working with students with disabilities as well as her exposure to disability culture. During practicum, she worked with a student who had ADHD to prepare for a school project that involved mock job interviews. CS-4 described how she used personal disclosure to help the student feel more comfortable. Her collective experiences helped to shape her understanding of disability culture, while allowing her to recognize the importance of more education related to working as a school counselor with students with disabilities.

CS-5. The participant, "CS-5", identifies as a 33-year-old student. He currently lives in the same state where he grew up, but a few hours away from his hometown. He moved to this area to be with his fiancée, to whom he is now married. They recently purchased a house in the area after having a baby a few months ago.

His work experience includes three years in law enforcement before serving in the military for four years. After his active duty in the military, CS-5 completed his undergraduate degree at a local university. CS-5 stated that his father was an educator for 37 years before he retired and his sister has been teaching for the last eight years. He explained, "Just think it's kind of in my blood maybe". CS-5 mentioned that he took a year off to work after completing his undergraduate degree. During his year off from undergraduate to graduate school, CS-5 did not disclose the type of job he held. He then decided that he wanted to go into education and enrolled in the education licensure program. However, he felt that teaching in the classroom was not the right fit, so he chose to apply for the counselor education program at the institution where he is currently enrolled in the licensure program.

During the interview he stated that as a child he was identified as a student with a disability. He explained, "Yeah, I think for me it was growing up as a child, I had a speech delay, I had stuttering, was diagnosed with ADHD at the time when ADHD wasn't a very heavily researched diagnosis". The participant provided this comment in reference to why he selected a profession within the field of education. CS-5 mentioned that his time in law enforcement and the military made him question what had happened to the adults he encountered when they were children. In his own words he explained:

Again, with the ball being dropped, I have to look so far back to see where is the

education at currently? I just felt counseling is probably the best way for me to be

a benefit to give everything I have to adolescents or children. I guess that's how I

looked at education, counseling was to give back to society in a good way.

Throughout the interview he shared a strong belief in not failing children and the

importance of parental responsibility.

CS-5 completed his practicum at a PreK-8 parochial Catholic school with 556

students enrolled. The experience was unique in terms of how the school perceived and

served students with disabilities. The school implemented a primarily inclusive services

model for students with disabilities. CS-5 mentioned that he was able to sit in on an

evaluation meeting for a student at his practicum location. He explained that the private

school contracted with the local public school to complete the evaluation process. CS-5

expressed that while in practicum, he realized that consultation, communication, and

collaboration with all stakeholders are valuable in serving a child with a disability.

During the interview, he mentioned that on one occasion, he noticed a situation that

wasn't working, but at the time he did not feel it was his place to speak up until he had

established his place at the school.

During practicum, CS-5 also had the opportunity to work directly with a

kindergarten student who had Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). He explained how he

used his consultation skills to get a sense of what the whole team wanted as an end goal

for the student. CS-5 mentioned that he did not have any previous exposure to a student

with ASD. In the interview he talked about how he worked to learn more about the

diagnosis. CS-5 disclosed, "At the time, I felt very scared. I didn't know how to approach it, but I felt utilizing what I had there as resources really helped that". The participant noted that he used the intervention specialist who worked with the student to gain more information.

CS-5 indicated that he felt fairly comfortable when interacting with students with disabilities. He provided a basic understanding of disability culture and of working with these students in the school setting. While in the educational licensure program, the participant took a class related to working with students with disabilities. He also mentioned, "uncomfortability for me personally is a word I don't really use a lot just due to my past experiences and just life in general and being exposed to hostile environments". Aside from being willing to work with all students, CS-5 admitted that his knowledge about disability legislation is limited to a basic understanding of IDEA.

CS-6. The participant, "CS-6 ", identifies as a 27-year-old student. She expressed that she felt pressure to select a major during her undergraduate studies. CS-6 recalled that she had been undecided between education and psychology. When she started to do field placements in inner-city schools, she settled on education as the best choice. In the interview she talked about her initial experiences, then remarked, "But my senior year, I did my student teaching in inner city C****, which was a total culture shock for me". She talked about how she had to shift her mindset to focus on what the students needed. CS-6 contrasted her suburban upbringing, where she attended private parochial Catholic schools for her K-12 education, with the culture shock she experienced in student teaching. She stated, "After teaching for a few years, I realized I wanted to be able to

more of the helping than just in the classroom. So that's why I decided to go the counselor route".

CS-6 just completed her fifth year of teaching in an inner-city school. Her current teaching role involves working as a PreK intervention specialist. She completed her undergraduate program in another major city in the state, where she had exposure to inner-city students as a general education teacher. She then went to a local university to obtain her intervention specialist license. Since she already had a teaching license, CS-6 did not have to complete a full student teaching experience to gain her intervention specialist license. During the interview, she mentioned that both of her parents were teachers and that this had impacted her decision to pursue education. Her teaching experience then impacted her desire to work to become a school counselor.

The participant's practicum experience was conducted at her current place of employment. The school is in an inner-city district and was identified as a poor performing school. Since the school was considered an at-risk school, several initiatives were started. The principal of the school implemented a trauma-informed care training plan after data showed that many students served by the school have experienced some level of trauma. All of the school staff started this training program during the last school year and will continue to complete the training. The school had access to two clinical counseling programs that provided counseling services to qualifying students while they are at school. However, the school shared a school counselor with another elementary building in the district. CS-6 ran an anger management group for fifth grade boys. She found that many students struggled with self-regulation. CS-6 mentioned that a lot of

third grade students were discussing sensitive subjects. CS-6 and her site supervisor created a group to address the social needs of students. She did not mention involvement with students with disabilities related to completing practicum hours.

During the interview, CS-6 talked about her knowledge related to disability culture. She felt that she had a good understanding of disability culture related to working with children as an early childhood teacher. She noted that children come to her already identified as having a disability or a social or emotional developmental delay. She highlighted the importance of getting to know the student. She reported having a good understanding of IDEA due to her past education and current work experience. During the interview, she did not mention any connection of IDEA to the role of the school counselor. CS-6 said she was comfortable working with students with disabilities to whom she has been exposed in her previous and current work experiences. She mentioned not feeling as comfortable working with students who would be considered as having moderate to intensive needs. CS-6 spoke about needing more experiences working with students with disabilities in the capacity a school counselor related.

CS-7. The participant, "CS-7", identifies as a 32-year-old. She spoke about having family members who were identified as having a disability:

My half-brother and his daughter both have severe intellectual disabilities, and then I have two nephews from my sister that have severe intellectual disabilities, and they actually pretty much all were in special education classes growing up. I don't know the full details, but probably IEPs and a lot of support. And then, my nephews are actually in supportive living, supportive employment right now.

CS-7 went on to explain that she has several family members who have needed help related to their mental health. During the interview she talked about her sister and her emotional health needs. CS-7 reported that her family was very traditional and that conversations about mental health and disabilities did not happen during her childhood. She stated her father would not talk about the needs of her siblings and she described his reluctance as sad. She stated, "I would have loved to be able to be a bigger part of that support for my brother and my sister".

CS-7 completed her undergraduate work in psychology before moving to another state. After graduation she began working at an inpatient mental health facility. CS-7 described her previous work experiences, remarking, "And I did direct care for two years, and then crisis and intake for two years. And then after that, I did child welfare counseling with parents whose children have been removed from their care". During the interview she expressed how difficult it was to work with parents who had lost or were in the process of losing custody of their children. After this experience, she decided to work in mental health adult case management for a year and a half. Upon returning to her home state, she began her current position, in which she has case management and therapeutic responsibilities. Her caseload comprises clients between the ages of 4 and 13. All of the children and adolescents in her caseload have a behavioral or mental health diagnosis. CS-7 explained, "So they all have, typically, issues with anger, impulse control, problems like family relationship problems. I deal with a lot of family conflict stuff". Her current position also takes her into various schools within the state. CS-7

mentioned that about a third of her caseload includes students being serviced on an IEP by the public school they attend.

CS-7 completed her practicum experience within a suburban school district with an elementary school counselor, who acted as her site supervisor. The school counselor was assigned to three different elementary schools. CS-7 completed hours at two of the three buildings that her site supervisor serviced. She was able to sit in on IEP meetings and observed her site supervisor in collaboration with teachers to serve students with disabilities. CS-7 explained that her site supervisor was responsible for writing 504 plans. The supervisor wanted CS-7 to write a 504 plan, but due to time constraints she was unable to do so. However, she was able to observe her site supervisor as she wrote 504 plans.

During the interview, CS-7 had a good awareness of IEP and 504 plans. She gained this knowledge independently, as she realized the caseload for her current job involved working with individuals with disabilities. She knew about IDEA but did not provide any additional information or discuss IDEA in the context of the role of the school counselor. CS-7 talked briefly about disability culture in terms of not making assumptions about a person with a disability and the importance of inclusion. She mentioned that she wanted to learn more about deaf culture. She explained:

Yeah, I read the other day about a child on America's Got Talent from last season. She was a deaf person, and she was a singer and played guitar just using vibrations from her feet. But she's been facing a lot of backlash from the deaf community because she's participating in a hearing kind of hobby.

Throughout the interview CS-7 displayed a desire to learn more about different disability sub-cultures. She expressed being uncomfortable with the legalities of working with a student with a disability out of fear of doing something wrong that could create problems in the future. CS-7 noted that exposure to role plays and case studies had helped her become comfortable working in the role of the school counselor. She also mentioned that learning from her peers helped to increase her general knowledge.

CS-8. The participant, "CS-8", identifies as a 45-year-old student. She is married with five children and is currently renovating a house while working to finish her master's program. CS-8 has an undergraduate degree in social work. She explained that it took her a long time to complete her degree because she got married and had children. When asked to describe herself, CS-8 said, "I am a full-time employee. I am a mom, and a wife, and a minister, and overwhelmed". During the interview, she mentioned failing while attending a larger school and that she appreciates the hands-on approach that comes with being at a smaller school. Before receiving her bachelor's degree, CS-8 earned an associate degree in mental health, chemical dependency, and mental retardation.

CS-8 is currently employed in a position that is closely tied to disability services, insurance, and state policies. She preferred not to disclose the title of her role, and remarked, "Some of the policies that I do in my full-time job, actually touch individuals with disabilities". In her current role she works closely with state officials related to serving individuals with disabilities. She mentioned that prior to this government position, she worked with individuals with disabilities after obtaining her associate

degree in mental health. The associate degree included chemical dependency and disabilities.

CS-8 completed her practicum experience in a parochial school that serves K-8 students. During the interview she mentioned that she observed inconsistencies in how students with disabilities are served through her professional and personal life. Through witnessing these inconsistencies, during her practicum, she advocated for her site supervisor to keep a running record of how many minority students compared to majority students were sent to the school counselor. CS-8's reference to minority students includes students of color and students with disabilities. She stated, "I'll just say, and it's not just Black or Hispanic, it's all minorities". At the end of the practicum, her site supervisor reported on the data she collected to find that that CS-8's initial assumption that more minority students were sent to the school counselor was correct. The participant stated that she and the site supervisor are working to formulate an action plan to address the amount of minority students who are being referred to the office during CS-8's internship experience.

CS-8 also indicated in the interview that the parochial school did have many students with disabilities and no students with physical disabilities. She said that the school had a formal interview process that the student must engage in as part of the admission requirements. CS-8 explained:

> During the school interview process, with the student and the family, it's an
>
> opportunity for the school to determine if they think they can meet the needs of
>
> that student. A lot of kids with disabilities can be weaned out, not receive the

benefit of being served by that school. And so, because they have the private fund, or receive funds from private sources, to be able to do that, I think it's unfair.

Throughout the interview, she continued to emphasize that within the school culture, the interview played a significant role in the selection of students at the expense of other students. CS-8 explained, "And yes, they are expected to meet a quota of "others", but even with their quota of others, it's probably on the higher end". She also pointed out that the school did not have a physical therapist, occupational therapist, or speech therapist on staff. However, she reported that the school did have students on service learning plans, which are equivalent to an Individualize Education Plan (IEP) in the public school system. CS-8 concluded that she has had limited access to students with disabilities.

During the interview, CS-8 spoke about her husband and how he is currently considered disabled and is unable to work. She explained, "I recognize that individuals with disabilities are no different than us, having family members who have disabilities, having a best friend who has a disability, and is wheelchair bound". CS-8 went on to assert that while those with disabilities are like everyone else, they also face different challenges unique to their disability while engaged with society. To explain her statement, CS-8 provided a personal example of her friend:

I recognize that there's, even just the small things, like going out to dinner, that there's so much that we have to do, just to make sure that her needs can also be

met, as well as mine. Things as simple as, why did the person who can obviously

walk a half a mile park in the parking spot? And we have to park way out.

The participant proceeded to give other examples of how disability culture is close to

home for her. Later during the interview, CS-8 mentioned the case of her niece and the

frustrations she experienced in the public school system related to disabilities. In

addition to her personal experiences with individuals with disabilities, CS-8's current

employment revolves around disability policy. She had a good understanding of IDEA

associated with her job, but she made only a limited connection to the role of the school

counselor. She expressed feeling comfortable working with individuals with disabilities,

as she identifies as a minority.

CS-9. The participant, "CS-9", identifies as a 24-year-old student. She grew up in

a town about an hour away from her current place of residence. She stated that she

mostly grew up with her mother after her parents separated while she was in the fourth

grade. The participant attended Catholic schools from elementary to high school.

Although she went to Catholic school and grew up as a Catholic, CS-9 attends a non-

denominational religious congregation and does not consider herself to be Catholic or

Baptist. She mentioned that she had some exposure to the Baptist church through her

father, but not as much due to their inconsistent relationship.

CS-9 obtained a degree in psychology at the same university where she is now

enrolled in the graduate counseling program. During her undergraduate experience, she

played on the women's basketball team. She mentioned that during this time she did not

engage in internships, research opportunities, or other school activities. She explained

that this was mainly due to the time commitment involved with playing a college sport.

CS-9 took a year off from her studies before starting graduate school. At that

time, she worked with a nonprofit within a local urban school district serving as a college

guide. The role involved helping high school students prepare for college and career.

She described the job as fun but also very stressful. She pointed out that working for a

nonprofit brought financial stress because the pay was significantly less than other

careers. CS-9 concluded, "I mean, but the outcome of just being able to help them and

see the senior kids that actually go to college was well worth it". In her role as a college

guide, the participant also communicated with teachers and school counselors.

CS-9 explained that the nonprofit she worked for had two full-time college guides

stationed in the school. CS-9 was to collaborate with the two full-time college guides to

make sure student needs were met. In this role, she gave students different assessments

such as the Meyers-Briggs indicator. In addition, she instructed freshman students in the

use of Naviance college and career readiness software. CS-9 acknowledged the

challenges that came with getting all of her work done. She added, "And if you didn't

reach it by the end of the year, that's what we did, we were just catching them up but at

that point, it was pointless, because they're just flying through this". She was referring to

the pressure placed on all of the college guides to meet the expected quota, which in turn

did not benefit the students because it did not generate a meaningful experience.

As the interview continued, CS-9 explained that she was able to come back to the

university to attend school while serving as a graduate assistant. Based on her previous

experience in college readiness support, the participant mentioned that she felt school counseling was a good fit. Aside from her professional experience, CS-9 mentioned that finishing college was very important to her as several immediate family members either did not attend college or did not complete a degree. CS-9 reflected on her decision to enter graduate school to work towards a career that was meaningful to her. She stated, "A lot of different experiences really, and just still trying to figure it all out honestly. It's a process".

CS-9 completed her practicum experience in a parochial high school. The school experience was unique because her site supervisor took all students who are serviced as English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities who are on service learning plans. This meant that CS-9's site supervisor had the identified students for their high school careers. In addition, the school also had each staff member teach a study skills class. The site supervisor advocated to have her ELL and students with disabilities in her study skills section. CS-9 mentioned that she and her supervisor worked to address the needs of the students during this study skills class. Outside of this experience, CS-9 described having limited interaction with students with disabilities.

CS-9 reported that she took a diversity class over the summer. She said that the class prompted her to think about how to engage with individuals with disabilities. CS-9 stated:

And one of the questions was that, like what do you know about working with the disability population? And I'm like I don't really know much. When I think about it, I think about, my immediate thought is struggle and accommodations, and I

think a lot of it is misunderstandings as well, because even with just having

practicum for that semester, seeing how my site supervisor, kind of, worked with

everybody, it was just a lot of misunderstanding. And it takes a lot of

communication to understand that population.

She continued to communicate that she did not feel knowledgeable or very comfortable

with working with students with disabilities. CS-9 also affirmed during the interview that

she knew what IDEA stands for, but beyond that she would need to learn more about the

rights for students with disabilities.

Findings

The following section will discuss in detail the analytical process used to uncover

the themes in this qualitative study. After all of the interviews were conducted and all

transcriptions were complete, I engaged in the pattern matching process against the

predicted patterns. In the following sections, the predicted patterns will be discussed and

compared to information learned from the participants. Included is an analysis of the

course syllabi that was conducted after the interview process.

Pattern Matching

Pattern matching was the technique used to analyze the data from this study. This

technique is used to help strengthen the internal validity of this single case study (Yin,

2018). The predictor patterns were identified before engaging in interviews (Yin, 2018).

After interviews were conducted, the collected transcriptions were compared to the

syllabi. All of the data was then compared to each predicted pattern to determine if the

pattern was confirmed, or if a rival pattern emerged.

Prior to engaging in any interviews, three predicted patterns were established. The initial study-predicted pattern was that school counselor trainees are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities. It was also initially predicted that school counselor trainees only have surface knowledge about disability culture based on their previous experiences outside of the program and practicum experiences. Finally, I predicted that participants would demonstrate a heightened awareness of the important of understanding disability culture due to their knowledge I as the researcher subscribes to disability culture. In the following section, the above predicted patterns are compared to and discussed in relation to the actual outcomes of the study. The outcomes are supported with dialogue from the conversational partners.

Pattern one. As predicted, school counselor trainees are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities. All participants were asked to share the amount of time spent on disability culture. In the semi-structured interview, participants were asked question 11, "Where in the program does a student learn about disability culture and how much time have you spent learning about this culture" (Appendix A). All nine of the participants identified the diverse population course as a class in which students in the program learn about individuals with disabilities. However, several of the participants wanted more activities centered on how the school counselor can work with students with disabilities.

In addition, the program syllabi supported the first predicted pattern. Counseling students were exposed to disability culture in the following courses: Introduction to School Counseling, Counseling Diverse Populations, and Consultation and Collaboration.

In the aforementioned courses, participants were exposed to disabilities in one class meeting. In the Counseling Children & Adolescents course students were exposed to DSM-5 related social emotional disabilities, such as ADHD and Anxiety. The participants either engaged in the content online or in person, as the program was delivered in a hybrid format. School counselor trainees cannot be expected to be adequately prepared to effectively work with PreK-12 students with disabilities through the participation in two courses that covered information related to working with this student population in two class meetings.

While a few participants displayed superb knowledge gained from their prior experiences with individuals with disabilities, it was evident that applying this knowledge to the role of the school counselor was difficult. For example, CS-1 explained:

I think a school counselor has a huge role of helping students with disabilities be successful, and have class offerings that are helpful and challenging for them, that are rigorous as well for them, so helping them access that and school counselors are the ...We talk about high school, school counselors being basically schedule people, and while that's still a role that they have, that's I think is super relevant to students with disabilities, and I mean helping with transition planning from middle school to high school, and high school to college. I don't know what school counselors do, but I know it's their role to help with that, and they're the middle man there, they are the one who is going to help that bridge be made so, I don't ... in my experience, I haven't seen, how school counselors are really helping these students with disabilities transition successfully into a post-secondary

context. I don't know what they do. I believe ... I'm convinced that, that's their

role.

Although this proved to be a difficult task for participants, all individuals displayed the advocacy and leaderships skills of professional school counselors. As the example above displayed, CS-1 clearly knew that school counselors need to be involved with students with disabilities, and conveyed a sense of purpose, passion, and advocacy. However, he struggled to explain how a school counselor would serve students with disabilities related to transition services.

The school counselor providing transition services to students with disabilities can be seen in the literature. Milsom (2002) found that only 40% of the school counselors surveyed spent time related to transition planning for students with disabilities. In the current counselor education program, transition services for students with disabilities is briefly covered in the Introduction to School Counseling course in a portion of a chapter covered in the course syllabus schedule.

Pattern two. The second predicted pattern was also supported by the data. The participants had surface knowledge about disability culture based on previous experiences outside of the program and practicum experiences. Surface knowledge was defined as having limited knowledge associated to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities in terms of IDEA, counseling best practices, accommodations, 504 plans, and collaboration with key stakeholders. The amount of exposure to disability culture did vary from participant to participant. I found that experiences prior to entering into the program influenced disability knowledge. For example, participant CS-2 stated, "I know

a fairly significant amount. My brother was diagnosed autistic, at a very young age. I myself was diagnosed with bipolar, so I've been living this for a while, of knowing limits, and seeing him struggle academically". This participant has a family and student understanding of disability culture. However, she stated during the interview that she has a basic understanding of IDEA and limited knowledge related to working with individuals with physical disabilities despite having family and personal exposure to the culture. Participant CS-9 had very limited exposure to disability culture before entering into the graduate program which contributed to her understanding of disability culture. When asked to share what she knew about disability culture, CS-9 stated, "I can't say much".

CS-2 mentioned, "school counselors could be doing more, and they're just not". CS-1 also shared that he knew school counselors could be doing more with students with disabilities, but was unsure of how to define the role of the school counselor. The information provided by the participants are great examples of how school counselors could be doing more, but a disconnection in training is occurring as counselor trainees are expected to already be competent in engaging with students with disabilities. For example, other participants mentioned having site supervisors who were expected to develop and implement 504 plans. While the curriculum in the current program, excludes any 504 preparation or training. The CACREP (2015) standards for the school counselor specialty area do not include any benchmarks for disability service plan competencies for either 504 or IEPs. Additionally, ASCA (2016a) does not support the utilization of school counselors for disability service planning or coordinating. This

stance could be in order to separate the role of the school counselor from the role of the special education teacher.

The ASCA (2016a) position statement on working with students with disabilities states, "school counselors strive to assist all students in achieving their full potential, including students with disabilities, within the scope of the comprehensive school counselor program" (p. 55). However, the ASCA national model does not provide a framework for engaging with students with disabilities. In addition, the ASCA statement does not include physical disabilities as an area of concern for professional school counselors. During the semi-structured interview four participants mentioned feeling uncomfortable with students with physical or intensive disabilities. All participants expressed a desire for a holistic understanding of disability culture as it relates to the role of the professional school counselor. The current CACREP (2015) standards do not address a school counselor trainee's ability or responsibility to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. However, all participants engaged with students with disabilities in practicum.

Some participants displayed more knowledge arising from prior experiences than others regarding subgroups of disability culture. For example, participant CS-4, identifies as an individual with ADHD and struggled during grade school in relation to attention. In her undergraduate education, CS-4 took several classes that exposed her to disability culture and students with disabilities in PreK-12. However, during the interview, she mentioned the desire to gain more information on how to work with students with disabilities in the role of the school counselor. She stated, "I think this is

how I should talk to the child who has this. I think this is what I should do" (CS-4). This statement was in reference to insecurities and gaining confidence when working with different student populations. CS-4 also mentioned being uncomfortable with students who presented with "really severe problems".

All participants displayed a basic understanding of IDEA related to disability culture and education. All participants knew about IDEA, but were unable to connect the act to the role of the school counselor. The course syllabi supported this predicted pattern, as IDEA is only briefly covered in Intro to School Counseling. In the Program Development course, counseling students had to create curriculum lesson plans with an accommodation section for each lesson related to students with disabilities. However, students were not supplied with additional directions or information related to this request. This limitation contributes to the surface knowledge. All school counselor trainees eligible for took the Consultation and Collaboration course. While this course did not focus on disability culture, it did feature case studies built around students with disabilities and collaborating with school teams. Some participants mentioned this course as one of the more helpful courses for working to support students with disabilities. Finally, the practicum syllabus did not directly address engaging with students with disabilities.

Pattern three. I predicted that participants would demonstrate a heightened awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture due to their knowledge that I as the researcher subscribes to disability culture. While this predictor is more open ended, I found that all participants recognized the importance of understanding disability

as an actual culture similar to others such as racial and ethnic cultures. This is a critical

point, as the research indicates that disability is not always viewed as a culture in society

or in family systems (Olkin 2002 & 2007).

The participants, through conversations with me, displayed a heightened desire to

increase disability knowledge and culture understanding. Additionally, three participants

disclosed subscribing or having subscribed in the past to disability culture. This

contributed not only to their own heighted understanding based on personal subscription,

but a mutual membership in disability culture with the researcher. Two participants who

were in enrolled in the diversity course at the time of study with a different instructor,

mentioned feeling disconnected in the class in terms of disability culture as they did not

get exposure to a faculty member who subscribes to disability culture. Another

participant, who took the class the previous summer with me who subscribes to disability

culture, mentioned conversations with her peers on the differences between the courses.

CS-2 explained the value of direct exposure to a culture:

> But ours was great, because it was so small, and I felt like there was more room to
>
> self-disclose. Like, when you would self-disclose to us, it felt really comfortable
>
> to be like, Yeah. A lot of people in class self-disclosed, I subscribe to the culture,
>
> or I know people, and it just, it was almost like being in a group counseling,
>
> almost, where we were all able to talk about it and work through a lot of
>
> problems, and I felt like that was helpful in retaining what we learned.

Another participant confirmed this predicted pattern, as he found exposure to culture first

to be valuable to the learning experience. CS-5 stated, "the way I'm looking at it and the

way I'm going to answer it is any time you have a faculty member and he had previous knowledge or does have a disability, who's lived through it, and can contribute that knowledge and incorporate it within coursework, is always, to me, a valuable asset to the students". The statements confirmed the value of exposing counselor trainees to individuals from different cultures, as it creates a heightened understanding and a more meaningful learning experience.

All of the participants described varying situations of ableism related to disability culture. The participants that did witness or experience ableism, were aware, and displayed a heightened understanding for the importance of recognizing these situations as a school counselor trainee. The individuals are aware through courses and the interview, that I subscribe to disability culture, and were comfortable describing these situations and recognizing the situations as ableism. For example, CS-1 recognized that "separateness" still exists in schools for students with disabilities. He stated, "I wouldn't have known where it [classrooms for students with disabilities] was in the building that I worked in". As a faculty member, I disclosed in the diversity course taught in the summer of 2017 that she subscribes to disability culture. The ability to feel comfortable to recognize short comings in school culture and society associated with disability culture is directly connected to exposure to my openness about subscribing to disability culture.

Another example of witnessing ableism is described by CS-9 in her experiences in coaching. She described how coaches do not have the patience to work with an individual with a disability. She stated, "so I guess it just depends on, because of my situations, my position, it is kind of hard, but it's a lot of times my coach makes a joke

out of it" (CS-9). CS-9 was describing how the coach would make fun of players who have mental health related disabilities. CS-9 was able to articulate how she felt this was inappropriate and unprofessional.

Document Analysis

After analyzing all of the course syllabus, I was able to find a connection to the interviews and five courses. I found the Counseling Diverse Populations, Introduction to School Counseling, Program Development, Counseling Children and Adolescents, and Collaboration and Consultation syllabus were related to the preparation of school counselor trainees to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. However, not all of the aforementioned courses were identified by all of the participants.

The participants were asked, "Where in the program does a student learn about disability culture and how much time have you spent learning about this culture?" (Appendix A). All nine participants indicated the Counseling Diverse Population Course as a course where students learn about disability culture. One participant mentioned the Counseling Children and Adolescents course. Three participants felt a chapter or another connection to the culture was made in every class. Additionally, three participants felt disability culture was covered in the Introduction to School Counseling course. Finally, two participants mentioned the Consultation and Collaboration course. The second component of the interview question asked about time. The participants' responses varied from numerical values (minutes, hours, days, months) to responses related to a connection made in each course.

The following sections highlight each syllabus in connection to participant's experiences, perceptions, and understanding of disability culture. Additionally, one courses that was not mentioned by participants is included in the document analysis section. It is important to note that I taught all of the courses mentioned, expect for the summer 2018 Counseling Diverse Population course.

Counseling diverse populations. Seven participants took the Counseling Diverse Population course in the summer of 2017 with me. Two of the nine participants were enrolled in the course at the time the study was conducted. It was discovered that participants gained an understanding for various cultures through engaging in the course.

In the summer of 2017 students were expected to engage in a cultural interview and cultural research paper. Additionally, students had to develop questions for an assigned chapter and engage in a final exam. The cultural interview and paper allowed students the freedom to select a culture. Students were asked to select an individual from a different culture than a culture in which they subscribe. Each student developed questions to ask the interviewee. The cultural interview paper allowed students to select a culture that they wanted to learn more about. The question development asked peer groups to design questions connected to an assigned chapter. One class meeting from this section covered disability culture. This particular course was offered in an accelerated format over five weeks, with a face-to-face meeting and online component each week.

Of the seven participants who took this course, a few mentioned this course as shaping their experiences in perceptions. For example, participant CS-1 stated, "I wrote a paper that did pertain to children with autism, so I spent more time, but it was a choice

and that's why I chose it. I was like, I need to learn more about this, I think I should write about it". The participant knew he needed to increase knowledge, so he decided to take the initiative. However, later during the interview he could see how other would chose a different cultural direction if they were uncomfortable with disability culture.

In the summer of 2018, two participants took the Counseling Diverse Population course. The assignments included, a cultural immersion experience, a cultural autobiography experience paper, a peer group research project, online discussion post, and a final exam. The culture immersion experience asked students to walk through the community and write about the experience connected to values, stereotypes, biases, attitudes, and emotions. The cultural autobiography experience asked students to write about their own cultural identity. The peer group research project asked students to present on a culture group. The online discussion boards included a variety of topics as the course was hybrid format. One class meeting of this course covered disability culture.

The two participants who took this last mentioned feeling overwhelmed by all the cultures covered, but both mentioned that they enjoyed the course. CS-4 mentioned:

I would say the most vivid part of my education so where we talked about disabilities would be in diversity, where we did a short discussion about, "write down your daily routine. Now write down your daily routine as if you had this disability." You could pick, so then it was like, there were people who did a vision impairment. But that was a 10-minute activity. I'm not saying it's not

useful, I'm not saying it wasn't interesting…..At this point we all get that. I need

one step further.

The participant went on to explain that disability culture was covered in 15 minutes

during the course. CS-9 explained how she did not have a lot of background information

about disability culture and also mentioned that it was briefly covered. However, the

difference between the two participants is CS-4 came to the program with undergraduate

course work related to disability culture, but CS-9 did not.

Time spent on disability culture in the program ranged from one hour to a month.

When asked the second component of the question related to time, other participant

mentioned it being addressed in every class or somewhere in each textbook. The amount

of time spent in the counseling diverse population course was one class period and one

chapter. This amount of time supports predicted patterns one and two. A class period

and a chapter is not enough to effectively prepare students to would with PreK-12

students with disabilities. Additionally, this course covered the culture, not how to

engage with PreK-12 students with disabilities which led participants to rely on past

experiences and practicum experiences when working with this population which

contributed to having surface knowledge. Surface knowledge was defined as having

limited knowledge associated to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities in terms

of IDEA, counseling best practices, accommodations, 504 plans, and collaboration with

key stakeholders.

Introduction to school counseling. Two of the participants took this course in

the spring of 2017. Seven of the participants took the Introduction to School Counseling

course in the fall of 2017. However, in the spring of 2017, the disability chapter was not included, but CS-1 mentioned that it was touched upon briefly. In the fall of 2017, the course included the disability culture where a group was assigned to the chapter for a presentation. The three students who mentioned this course didn't happen on the course, but stated that the culture was covered in the course.

Consultation and collaboration. All of the participants took the consultation and collaboration course in the spring of 2018. The syllabus does indicate that consultation and collaboration models were covered related to supporting students with social, emotional and behavioral needs. Additionally, the course covered Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) connected to the school counselor's role. Through analyzing this course syllabus, it appears that out of all the courses, this course connects the most to school counselor serving disability culture. In contrast, only two participants mentioned this course, but three participants did mention a connection being made in every class. While this class appears to have foundational components that would contribute to participants' knowledge, the inconsistency in recognizing this course as relevant shows a disconnect related to the first predicted pattern.

Counseling children and adolescents. Six participants took this course in the summer of 2017. Three participants are enrolled to take this course in the fall of 2018. Of those who took this course, only one mentioned that that disability culture was slightly touched upon. After reviewing the syllabus, the course touched upon mental health diagnoses included in the DSM-5 that are also considered school identifiers for disability under IDEA. The current course supports the first predicted pattern as students could

have been exposed more intentionally to disability culture and the role of the school counselor.

Program development. All of the participants took the Program development course in the fall of 2017. In this course, students were expected to build a comprehensive school counseling program align with ASCA. The ASCA national model calls for school counselors to create programs that address the needs of all students (2012). Additionally, the lesson plan unit assignment asked all students to create a lesson plan the addressed accommodations for students with exceptionalities. This supports the predicted patterns of one and two. School counselor trainees are not currently prepared effectively to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

In the interviews, it was evident that the participants where relying on previous experiences and practicum experiences which contributed to surface knowledge related to disability culture. Surface knowledge was defined by as having limited knowledge associated to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities in terms of IDEA, counseling best practices, accommodations, 504 plans, and collaboration with key stakeholders.

It is clear through the document analysis that participants are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities. While the third predicted pattern is not supported by the document analysis, other supporting information found in the interviews for pattern three. However, two participants did mention that self-disclosure by me (while in the role of instructor in a previous semester), related to subscription to disability culture was helpful to awareness.

Themes

This section includes a list of the themes found across all interviews for this exploratory single case study. Themes include the findings discovered by me in addition to the pattern matching analysis. Each of the themes were informed by the pattern matching analysis and are explained as well as highlighted with participant quotes. A connection will be made to the predicted pattern.

Prior exposure. In each of the interviews, prior exposure impacted comfort level with disability culture. Three participants claimed subscription to disability culture. Six participants had direct work experiences in current or previous roles with children or adolescents with disabilities, or advocating for individuals with disabilities. One participant had prior law enforcement experience and noticed a connection to individuals with disabilities needing services in schools. Two participants had little exposure to disability culture prior to entering into the counselor education program. Two participants had immediate family with disabilities. For example, CS-7 spoke about how family dynamics with siblings who have disabilities contributed to her heightened awareness:

> I definitely think growing up having siblings with disabilities, emotional cognitive disabilities, it definitely always put that side of things in my mind of, they've always had counselors coming in or workers or case managers working with them. So I've always known, like that kind of services are out there. Or hearing about a family member. Like my sister had to be hospitalized several times and I

grew up knowing about that, knowing about a mental health is a thing. And

knowing a little more about that than most children probably would.)

The background of participant CS-7 demonstrates how prior exposure impacts comfort

level and awareness for working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Participant CS-

9 spoke about her prior work experiences, as she has not had much exposure working

with students with disabilities. She mentioned that she believed one of her peers in high

school had a disability. CS-9 explained, "They knew the situation, we knew the situation,

but there was no discipline. There was no…He was never in any type of program or

anything like that". This example demonstrated how exposure to disability culture

impacts counselor trainee's knowledge and skills. CS-9 reflected back on how she didn't

know any better at the time and how she saw that educators around her knew about her

friend's disability but didn't advocate for him.

While all of the participants had some exposure to disability culture, many

expressed the need and desire for more training related to working with PreK-12 students

with disabilities as a school counselor. When participants were asked to explain IDEA

and the school counselor's role, all struggled to formulate a response. For example, CS-3

stated:

> I know that there is legislation to allow students with disabilities to have any
>
> accommodations that they need, and to keep them in the classroom as long as, in
>
> the standard, I guess, classroom as long as possible. Is that IDEA? Am I correct in
>
> saying that's IDEA? Well I think that what I do know that is helpful is that there
>
> are many resources to refer to. If and when, I mean, I will assume when I work in

a school where I want to advocate for students with disabilities, I'll have plenty of

resources, whether it's my textbooks, my professors, ASCA's website, like will

help me understand better how to serve that student.

This theme directly connects to the second predicted pattern, as participants demonstrated

knowledge of disability culture connected to previous experiences, but struggled with

knowing how to best serve students with disabilities in the PreK-12 setting.

Disconnect. A common theme centered around feelings associated with being

disconnected from special education staff. The participants felt that staff did not

understand the school counselor's role nor did the school counselor understand the role of

the special education teacher. The school counselor trainees did not fully understand their

involvement with special education teachers to support students with disabilities. One

participant spoke about role confusion and how the purpose of an intervention specialist

was a button-pushing topic at her school:

And actually, a lot of the educators there are still adjusting to that, which is

interesting, because since they haven't ever had these intervention specialists

before, a lot of the educators didn't know really how to engage with them, or what

their roles were. And the administration at that school had not done really any. It

was kind of shocking to me that they just kind of like placed these people in other

educator's classrooms, and not had any kind of a training, or, this is a model that

we see working. And so there was a lot of confusion when it was at my practicum

site about that. (CS-3)

The participant went on to explain how her site supervisor did not have much involvement in the integration of intervention specialist in the classroom, or with students with disabilities. She mentioned that she felt that he was "old school".

Another participant stated that he had more involvement with special education staff as an ELL assistant than as a school counseling intern. This theme continued as another participant mentioned having more exposure as well as a working relationship with an intervention specialist as a long-term substitute teacher. A third participant noted that her site supervisor shared a room with an intervention specialist. She described the school counselor as "the catch-all" (CS-4). She remarked that this arrangement allowed for collaboration. However, this is also a good example of the disconnect between understanding the special education teacher and school counselor's role. To adhere to the ASCA (2016b) ethical practice, a school counselor needs to be able to have a confidential space to work with and serve students.

Access. The participants mentioned that access was critical to whether or how they worked with students with disabilities while in practicum and leading into internship. All participants expressed the belief that more exposure to this culture in internship would be critical to their future professional roles. There were four participants who acknowledged not working directly with students with disabilities while in practicum. Five participants had direct experience working with students with disabilities. Through analyzing the data, this theme connected with patterns one and two. While some school counselor trainees had access to students with disabilities, many expressed feeling at a loss as to how to best serve the student. CS-5 described being

asked to work with a kindergartner with emotional needs and a student with autism. He explained that he felt completely lost at first about how to approach the situation and had to consult with the students' teachers and his professors.

While CS-4 felt that she had great access to students with disabilities, she mentioned feeling overwhelmed and noted that on her first day at the school, a student was experiencing emotional distress and started throwing chairs. Another participant, CS-9, described how her site supervisor took on students with disabilities, exposing her to students with disabilities, but she still felt uncomfortable while working with students with disabilities as she was unsure of what she should do. CS-6 spoke about how her background in special education helped with her interactions with students with disabilities, but she still felt uncomfortable because she recognized the difference in the school counselor's role with students with disabilities. CS-3 and CS-8 mentioned the parochial practicum placement as a limiting factor due to less access to working with students with disabilities. CS-2 mentioned being conscientious about working with students with disabilities due to her personal background. She stated, "those kids, I do, I spend maybe a little but more time with, so that they understand". This is an example of the heightened awareness arising from subscription to disability culture. The two participants who subscribed to disability culture mentioned that they could see their peers avoiding working with students with disabilities. They expressed the importance of counselor educator programs to challenge students who are uncomfortable while in training to better serve PreK-12 students with disabilities.

School culture. All participants remarked that the experience of the school culture in which they worked had a major impact on the degree to which school counselor was involved in working with students with disabilities. The culture and climate of the school and its staff were identified as either a positive or negative element in how the school counselor served students with disabilities. CS-8 experienced a school culture that from her perspective impacted minority students in a negative way in regards to services:

> I think that, based on the school, and based on the needs of the school, some schools may only have one person, who's overwhelmed, providing all of those services. And they can misdiagnose, or mistreat, or miss-provide information, that causes a kid to be held back, or causes other people, who rely on the expertise of that expert, to have an impression that's not true.

This participant went on to explain that she felt many students were denied access to the parochial school because it required all students to interview. CS-8 also remarked that she observed many minority students being sent to the office.

Other participants experienced a similar culture, reporting statements such as, "Well, we don't do it for mental health. Mental health doesn't need a 504. They just need to kind of get over it" (CS-2). This comment explained how the high school student's counselor and the administration were not supportive of helping a student who struggled with an emotional disability. Another participant explained that elementary students with disabilities at her site had access to clinical mental health counselors, but the services are not included in the IEP. She stated, "Well, and I think the thing too with our building

where they sometimes might not put it in the IEP is because a lot of it would be on parent follow through, which we don't always have" (CS-6). Another participant shared a school culture experience related to students with disabilities:

And so it was a cool meeting, but then it started to raise some tension where teachers were like, "I'm already doing all of that, and I'm still getting…" It was just really intense. Part of that's the dynamic of the school. But I was sitting back, sitting with the counselor. And the gym teacher and one of the intervention specialist were sitting there, and they were talking, and one of them was like, "How did our kids get to be like this?" And the intervention specialist was like, "Because we let them." And I know that was such a simple offhand comment, but that really rubbed me the wrong way, where I was like, I don't know. (CS-4)

Other participants offered similar school cultural examples: how the students with disabilities were excluded to one area of the school, how they wouldn't have known where those students were located if they hadn't already worked in the building, or how the school had a derogatory nickname for the hallway of the resource rooms.

The above-mentioned examples show how school culture can impact students with disabilities and define the student's school career. Milsom (2006) explained how school counselors can work to create a positive experience for students with disabilities. When discussing school culture in the interview, one participant described the full inclusive environment of the parochial school of his practicum site. The school had on-staff intervention specialists and other support services with staff focused on pulling students out of class only when necessary for one-on-one services. He spoke about how

the mission of the school was to educate all students and use accommodations appropriately. The heightened awareness of ableism and examples of school culture towards students with disabilities can be connected to pattern three.

Immersion in disability culture. All of the participants made requests related to more immersion in disability culture in schools as a way to increase knowledge and comfort working with students with disabilities. Some expressed the need to learn more about working with students with disabilities related to their role as a school counselor. For example, CS-3 mentioned how the opportunity to lead a professional development workshop related to working with diverse populations would help increase knowledge and confidence. CS-5 mentioned that getting more hands-on exposure to students with a range of different disabilities would be beneficial. This aligns with the finding that all participants described feeling uncomfortable working with more intensive disabilities, as they had limited or no exposure to deaf culture, emotional disturbances, or students with physical disabilities. While all of the participants expressed a desire for more exposure to disability culture, the position statement provided by ASCA (2016a) defers to IDEA disability identification and excludes the mention of school counselors working with students with physical disabilities.

The need for immersion in disability culture is related to all three predicted patterns. Each participant recognized limitations of working with students with disabilities as the interview progressed. While answering the questions related to serving students with disabilities and the impact of the ASCA national model, all participants could identify the importance of working with all students and advocating for all

students. However, all participants struggled to describe how a school counselor would specifically work to support PreK-12 students with disabilities. Only one student mentioned that ASCA had a position statement regarding working with students with disabilities. Four participants mentioned the need for more intentionality with case studies, assignments, and practicum or internship tasks associated with working with students with disabilities. The absence of intentionality related to exposing counselor trainees to disability culture can be seen in all course syllabi.

Parent collaboration. Seven of the nine participants identified working with parents of students with disabilities as an area for increased training. Two participants described feeling uncomfortable working with parents of students with disabilities. Participants also mentioned a need for training related to parent collaboration, with alignment to IDEA. There were several participants who expressed feeling uncomfortable navigating these relationships out of fear that they would "mess up" or "accidentally deny" students access or accommodations. Five participants mentioned feeling fearful that they might unintentionally deny students with disabilities accommodations because of their worries associated with working with the parents, including overwhelming or upsetting them.

This theme is connected to all three predicted patterns. Participants recognized that they did not have enough knowledge or training to effectively serve PreK-12 students with disabilities. Those participants with prior exposure to disability culture demonstrated an awareness that while they have exposure to this culture, there were still limitations to their knowledge of how to engage students with disabilities in the role of

the school counselor. The awareness of limitations in knowledge and the willingness to learn or ask for support to better serve PreK-12 students with disabilities are associated with the third predicted pattern of having exposure to a faculty member who subscribes to disability culture. While participants demonstrated gaps in being prepared to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities, participants were comfortable describing shortcomings and providing suggestions to increase knowledge.

Summary and Preview of Next Chapter

The current chapter highlighted information shared by individual participants during interviews. Each participant description included demographic information, previous work experience, an overview of the practicum experience, disability knowledge, and comfort level of working with students with disabilities. This chapter also explored predicted patterns and themes connected to each interview and program syllabi. A gap in knowledge is associated with the current curriculum training standards, competencies, and available framework for working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The following chapter explores the findings in the context of the literature, describes limitations of the study, and presents implications, including future directions for counselor education programs.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In the previous chapter an overview of the research questions, participants, and site were provided. Chapter Four presented the outcomes of the predicted patterns and discovered themes found in the study. The goal of this chapter is to serve as a discussion of the relevance of the findings, potential limitations of the study, and professional implications. There are several professional implications for counselor education programs, counselor education, accreditation, and school counselors. Finally, the chapter will conclude with potential future directions for counselor education and the profession of school counseling.

Discussion of Relevance

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single-case study was to examine how school counselor trainees from a single counselor education program in Ohio are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities using interviews with trainees and program documents analysis (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Through engaging in a qualitative single-case study using semi-structured interviews, my goal was to gain an understanding of how counselor education programs are training school counselors to work with this population.

The 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards do not address through program or specialty standards the relevance of school counselor competence associated with working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The absence of a specialty standard related to serving students with disabilities was apparent throughout interviews and document analysis of syllabi in

this current study. The absence of training school counseling students to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities supported the first predicted pattern that school counselor trainees are not prepare to work effectively with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Milsom and Akos (2003) found a similar trend related to standards for working with PreK-12 students with disabilities for school counselor trainees when examining the 2001 CACREP standards.

The population of individuals with disabilities has been documented as the largest minority population within the literature and reports for decades (Kraus 2015; Oklin 2002, 2007, Rawlings & Longhurst, 2001). Ohio indicated PreK-12 students with disabilities made up 14% of the total student population in the 2015-2016 school year with 255,798 of the students identified, almost all were serviced through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) (ODE 2017b). Kraus (2015) reported a national percentage of 12.6 for adult, adolescents, and children with disabilities which indicated an increase from the 2010 survey. The proper education of students with disabilities connected to the role of the professional school counselor has been a topic of discussion in the literature and profession (ASCA, 2016a; Frye-Myers, 2005; Leggett, Shea, & Leggett, 2001; Milsom, 2006, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003; Milsom, Goodnough, & Akos, 2007; Mitcham, Portman, & Dean, 2009; Owens, Thomas, & Strong, 2011; Rock & Leff, 2015).

The role of the school counselor with PreK-12 students with disabilities is supported with this study as the participants were involved with students from this population. However, I found that the school counselor trainees were not prepared to

work with students with disabilities as they relied on previous experiences when working with students with disabilities while in practicum. Additionally, participants were unable to connect the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) materials to their work as school counselor trainees when working with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

While the ASCA national model, including counselor competencies, does not outline in detail standards regarding the school counselor's responsibilities or expectations for working with PreK-12 students with disabilities, school counselors are still expected to serve all stakeholders, which include students, teachers, and parents (ASCA, 2012). This was supported through the analysis of transcripts and syllabus as students in the program are trained on the ASCA national model and counselor competencies. However, we asked participants were unable to connect the ASCA national model to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Current literature related to comprehensive school counseling programs service students PreK-12 students with disabilities is absent from the field. Milsom and Akos (2003) have written on ASCA related to school counselor perpetration to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

Additionally, participants felt disconnected to special education staff and a few referenced prior exposure to disability culture when encountering students with disabilities. Another theme of parent collaboration emerged as participants felt apprehensive to work with parents of students with disabilities. A few participants were unsure of how they would approach this relationship. This is supported in the literature as Leggett, Shea, and Leggett (2011) found that counselor trainees were unclear on their

role when working with students with exceptionalities. Leggett et al. found that second year school counselor trainees thought advocating for the students was more role appropriate for parents, while first year student view career readiness and advocacy as equally important. This different from the current research study as participants demonstrated a heighten awareness for disability culture and advocating for students was apparent.

While students in the program are trained to utilize and implement the ASCA National Model, currently in the counselor education program, ASCA is not integrated into a class to support the work of school counselor trainees with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The themes of prior exposure and disconnect are similar to what Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) found after conducting a disability training with master counseling students. The participants in their study had preconceived notions of individuals attending counseling simply because the client had a disability and a few express hesitations of how to work with a client with a disability.

The overarching objective, according to ASCA, is for school counselors to provide all students with services that are informed by data and connected to a comprehensive school counseling program (ASCA, 2012). This objective recognizes the importance of current and relevant school counselor competencies. ASCA (2018) recently published a draft of the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies, requesting member input on the standards. The current drafted standards for cultural competence state the intention to "demonstrate respect for differences in customs, communication, traditions, values, and other traits among students based on

race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, physical or intellectual disability and other factors" (ASCA, 2018, p. 3). The initial competency calls for a demonstration of respect for physical disabilities, but does not currently call school counselors via the disability position statement to engage with students with physical disabilities (ASCA, 2016a, 2018). I found that the participants demonstrated a heightened awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture which aligns with the third predicted pattern. Participants expressed interest in more training and opportunities to work with students with more intensive disabilities.

It is important for counselor educators to consider the limitations to ensuring school counseling students are trained to serve all students. Counselor educators need to continue to be diligent to ensure they are providing educational opportunities related to the potential needs of different student populations, such as students with disabilities. To address the need for robust training for school counselors in general, ASCA released a statement to all members with the intention of partnering with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) to create ASCA aligned training standards (Wong, 2018). Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) addressed the training gap for counselors learning about disability culture and engaging with individuals with disabilities. In their findings, Rawlings and Longhurst discovered that counselor education students had a desire to become more knowledgeable about disability culture. While the study was informative, in general, for counselor education training, school counselors are in a unique position due to ethical requirements to serve all students (ASCA, 2016b). This

was supported by the study as participants expressed concerns for accidentally denying students access and due process cases by parents of students with disabilities.

I found gaps are in the program, education, and training of school counselors related to disability culture and serving PreK-12 students with disabilities. The gaps in the training resulted in themes of prior exposure, disconnect, access, school culture, immersion in disability culture, and parent collaboration. The themes were extrapolated from the three predicated patterns.

The goal was to take feminist theory and the models of disability outlined in Chapter Two and compare the models to the interviews and syllabi. However, the interviews took a different direction. When the participants where asked, "What are your perceptions of PreK-12 students with disabilities" (Appendix A). All of the participants responded by highlighting the role of the school counselor is to work with all. A few participants mentioned that they worried about students facing struggles, but that they personally did not view the students differently from their peers. A recommendation, moving forward, would be for the program to include models of disability and approaches to working with diverse clients into all courses. Additionally, the recommendation is made given the desire expressed by participants for tools to work with diverse populations, specifically students with disabilities.

Limitations

While the established study-predicted patterns were affirmed by the data, a few limitations to the study should be addressed. The study sought to interview a minimum of ten current school counselor trainees who completed practicum in the spring and were

enrolled in courses over the summer. There were 11 students who answered the call for participants, but three prospective participants withdrew due to personal scheduling conflicts. Since the counselor education program currently accepts students via rolling admissions, some of the participants did not take classes at the same time with the same instructors. Another potentially limiting factor is that I am an instructor within the program, who has taught all of the participants, but was not engaged in teaching during the data collection process. Also, since a researcher is a tool for qualitative studies, this is considered a limitation due to potential bias.

Additionally, I sought out to use feminist theory and the models of viewing disability that are highlighted in Chapter Two when analyzing the data. However, I discovered upon asking the participants about their perceptions of individuals with disabilities, all participants were confused and defaulted to ASCA (2012) stance on school counselors. A final limitation of the study is that two interviews were briefly interrupted, forcing me to pause the collection of data, despite efforts to ensure a confidential space.

Implications

The following sections outline a multi-tiered approach for implications related to impacting PreK-12 students with disabilities. The culture of disability is different when compared to racial- and ethnic-based cultures (Oklin, 2007, 2002). While all cultures have a variety of barriers and complexities, disability culture still reflects the presence of a "separate but equal" approach regarding how schools deliver instruction (Oklin, 2007). The effects of this separate but equal mindset are evident in the PreK-12 education

system. Students with disabilities often receive instruction in different classrooms, away from their typical peers. Although this particular research study does not focus on addressing school culture holistically, the study did identify several implications for counselor educators and professional school counselors, as collectively, counselors are compelled to advocate for individuals facing barriers. In order to empower counselor trainees to advocate, counselor educators should provide graduate students more opportunities to work with individuals from diverse cultures, particularly disability culture.

Counselor Educators

The findings of this study revealed potential recommendations for counselor educators related to the preparation of school counselor trainees to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Several participants expressed that they felt it was critical to have opportunities outside of practicum and internship to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Many of the participants indicated that during practicum, they were offered few occasions to observe or work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Although practicum serves as the initial field experience with limited hours, participants attributed the lack of opportunity to the school environment and site supervisor's knowledge related to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

A lack of direct access coupled with surface knowledge associated with PreK-12 students with disabilities means school counselor trainees are entering the field unprepared. Surface knowledge was defined as having limited knowledge associated to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities in terms of IDEA, counseling best

practices, accommodations, 504 plans, and collaboration with key stakeholders. It is imperative that school counselors understand how to interact effectively with intervention specialists, and contribute to IEP meetings in order to best support PreK-12 students with disabilities. At the same time school counselors have to exercise caution so that districts leaders do not expect school counselors to take an administrative role in IEP meetings. Guidance from accreditation bodies, professional organizations, and federal and state departments of education would help reduce role confusion regarding school counselor work with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

A few participants in the study mentioned that exposure in the field to various cultures, including disability culture, was dependent on the site placement and the willingness of the trainee. However, counselor educators can prepare school counselor trainees by including interactions with PreK-12 students with disabilities as an expectation within field hours. Counselor educators can build in expectations to create accommodations for classroom lessons and small group plans.

Another way to ensure school counselor trainees are prepared to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities can be achieved through intentionality. Counselor educators can integrate assignments into core school counseling courses associated with working with PreK-12 students with disabilities to promote inclusion. Such assignments could include learning, studying, and approaches to disability culture, or collaborations with intervention specialists. One participant remarked that the technique and skill courses did not include materials of how to work with individuals with disabilities. The participants expressed interest in having hands-on experiences and exposure to different schools

outside of site placements. For example, during the interviews some participants mentioned visiting specialized schools in the area that focus on serving a variety of disabilities. All of the participants mentioned wanting more exposure to PreK-12 students with intensive needs to feel more prepared when in the professional role of a school counselor.

A requirement for school counselor trainees to become familiar with preparing IEP and 504 plans does not align with ASCA's current position on school counselors' role with PreK-12 students with disabilities (ASCA, 2016a). It is important, however, for counselor educators to consider the ramifications of not training school counseling students to be knowledgeable on IEP and 504 plans. In the profession of school counseling, many current school counselors are charged with writing 504 plans. While counselor educators have the important task of training school counseling students in the tasks that are considered appropriate for school counselor per ASCA, they also have a responsibility to prepare students for the current demands placed on professional school counselors. It is important however for school counselor trainees to understand that writing 504 plans is typically not considered to be within the purview of school counseling while providing support and input to 504 plans is relevant and needed. This issue of identifying where the role of the school counselor ends and where the role of another educator on the school team begins in providing support to PreK-12 students with disabilities continues to be confusing and differs from district to district.

The dilemma discussed above provides an opportunity for counselor educators to acknowledge the inappropriate role usage of professional school counselors, and to

familiarize students with writing 504 plans, while teaching the trainees the importance of advocating for role-appropriate task. It may seem counterintuitive to teach school counselor trainees to competently complete a role-inappropriate task such as writing 504 plans. However, almost all of the participants in this study expressed fear of denying PreK-12 students with disabilities educational opportunities or accommodations, and revealed feelings of incompetence when collaborating with parents. The previous listed fears could potentially lead school counselor trainees to avoid interacting with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Throughout the interviews many participants mentioned that their site supervisors, who were all licensed professional school counselors, were in charge of writing and managing 504 plans.

Another implication of this study for counselor educators is that cultural awareness is not enough. While current professional standards call for professional school counselors to be culturally aware, training counselors to work with diverse populations is an area for continued improvement. Rawlings and Longhurst (2011) found that counselor trainees wanted to work with individuals with disabilities or had prior experiences with individuals with disabilities but struggled to be appropriately engaged. The Rawlings and Longhurst study focused on the importance of including disability in counselor education diversity courses. The current study found that participants did have exposure to disability culture, but expressed concerns that they had acquired cultural awareness, but did not feel knowledgeable about interacting with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

It is important, not only for disability culture, but for all minority cultures that counselor educators provide counselor trainees with cultural frameworks to support working with diverse populations. Hays (2001, 2016) created the addressing framework, which is a multifaceted framework that considers majority and minority subscription. A recommendation that surfaced from this study, is for counselor educators to apply multicultural frameworks in all courses.

Professional responsibility. Counselor educators also have a responsibility to provide on-going training to current professional school counselors, especially school counselors who are willing to serve as site supervisors. A few participants mentioned being placed with site supervisors who still considered themselves a "guidance" counselor. The term "guidance" was used to describe the current profession of school counseling and was removed in the 1980s (Erford, 2015). When a current school counselor still refers to themselves as a "guidance" counselor it denotes a lack of professional identity to the profession of school counseling. It is important for counselor educators to take an active role in placing school counseling students with site supervisors who have a strong professional identity and commitment to engaging in meaningful professional development. With intentionality toward exposing students to a comprehensive range of professional responsibilities, counselor educators can help to strengthen the professional identity of school counselors.

Accreditation Standards

Another implication of this study for the profession of school counseling relates to accreditation standards. The 2016 CACREP standards do not address the school

counselor's involvement with PreK-12 students with disabilities. ASCA communicated in a digital letter to members that CACREP was unable to integrate ASCA materials, such as the ASCA national model, into CACREP standards (Wong, 2018). The letter also announced ASCA's newly formed partnership with CAEP to members. However, the current ASCA national model does not explicitly address the school counselor's role with PreK-12 students with disabilities. All participants in this study struggled to connect the ASCA national model to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Several participants noted that the ASCA national model serves as a guide or framework for working with all students. Only one participant mentioned the ASCA's position statement on students with disabilities. Specific standards and competencies are needed in order to clarify professional identity and strengthen involvement with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

Professional School Counselors

Professional school counselors can be instrumental in the education and the development of PreK-12 students with disabilities. The participants in this study remarked that the school culture surrounding students with disabilities was often negative or derogatory. Milsom (2006) summarized how negativity in schools towards students with disabilities can be detrimental to the student. It is important for school counselors to access the culture of the school and develop ways to address issues in a data-driven fashion. Several participants in the study mentioned feeling frustrated, concerned, or angry about the comments and attitudes of teachers associated with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Milsom highlighted that negative attitudes from teachers toward

students with disabilities impacts the child not only academically but socially and emotionally. ASCA oriented school counselors are charged with ensuring that all students' needs are met academically, socially, and emotionally through a comprehensive school counseling program that is informed through data. Although school counselors do not currently have any competencies directly connected to serving PreK-12 students with disabilities, school counselors do have a responsibility to all students (ASCA, 2012).

Advocacy. School counselors need to ensure that when advocating for students, they are also advocating for students with disabilities. School counselors need to support and promote appropriate services for PreK-12 students with disabilities. It is imperative that school counselors advocate with data. Several participants expressed the importance of advocacy for all students, but participants also mentioned gaps in services. Data can help inform the school counselor of the gaps that need to be addressed and enhance advocacy for what students actually need, not what the school counselor assumes that they need.

Professional development. School counselors need to engage in meaningful professional development. Aside from general professional development, school counselors should seek out opportunities for development focused on serving students with disabilities. One participant in the study mentioned the outdated attitudes of her practicum site supervisor. For example, how the site supervisor approached work with students in a singular way instead of in a comprehensive, systematic, data driven approach to ensuring all students needs are being met. In addition, this participant suggested that professional development delivered by graduate students could help

disseminate current knowledge and updated practices. The participant spoke about how her colleagues could benefit from trainings on how to best support students with disabilities.

Supervision. School counselors who decide to take on a school counselor trainee as a site supervisor not only have an ethical obligation, but a platform to enhance the profession. It is critical that site supervisors provide meaningful supervision with an emphasis placed on multicultural awareness. The participants highlighted the previously mentioned point as they described experiences from supervised practicum that shaped their research projects for the program. In addition, participants mentioned that the lack of access to various populations, especially subcultures of disability culture, made them uncomfortable. It is critical for the site supervisor through supervision to establish a solid foundation with the school counselor training. Site supervisors should work to involve the school counselor trainee in working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. It is also important for the site supervisor to encourage the school counselor trainee to express and discuss reactions to working with students with disabilities during supervision. The establishment of a positive working relationship can allow for school counselor trainees to express what makes them comfortable and uncomfortable.

School Counselor Trainees

In addition, the study revealed implications for school counselor trainees as they move forward working with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Throughout the interviews, participants noted situations of need, areas for increased advocacy, and lack of parental involvement. As school counselors in training, it is important for trainees to

start practicing advocacy skills while in practicum. Some participants expressed hesitation to speak up due to their role as a student. It is critical for school counselor trainees to feel empowered and to empower the students whom they serve. To help empower school counselor trainees, counselor educators can help build confidence through course work.

Schools

While counselor educators, school counselors, and school counselor trainees have obligations to enhance the educational experiences of PreK-12 students with disabilities, so do American schools and state and federal departments of education. Currently ASCA recommends that school counselors have a maximum of 250 students on their caseload. However, there is currently no regulation for caseload numbers for school counselors, unlike intervention specialists. In addition, school counselors can be utilized in a variety of ways that do not always align with ASCA. As discovered through engagement in the interviews, school counselors are often faced with state testing responsibilities, charged with writing and managing 504 plans, and must often share rooms with other staff members.

School Culture

The participants mentioned how school culture impacted the practicum experience both positively and negatively. The culture of the school is critical to how school counselors engage with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Four of the participants mentioned being in environments that were supportive of the school counselor's involvement with PreK-12 students with disabilities. Two participants noted

that the school counselor with whom they worked was responsible for multiple buildings. How the school community views the school counselor directly impacts how the school counselor is able to work with students, specifically students with disabilities.

Participants interviewed for this study believed that it was important for school districts to continue to move away from separating students with disabilities and move towards a more inclusive model of inclusion. Several of the participants remarked situations of ableism observed in their practicum site. For example, administration not viewing mental health needs as an adequate reason for a 504 plan. School counselors have a platform to help enhance the school culture for students with disabilities (Milsom, 2006). School counselors can help districts and schools move towards inclusive models through the utilization of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Legislation

The current legislation, such as IDEA, should be updated to reflect the current needs of the schools and students with disabilities. Legislators need to understand the importance of school counselors working with PreK-12 students with disabilities, and how instrumental the role of a school counselor can be with minority populations, especially students with disabilities. In addition, transition planning needs to be updated to address the current needs of the school and the involvement of the school counselor.

Future Research Directions

The future research directions include, conducting a multiple-case study design to determine if the themes found in this study are consist with other school counseling programs in the state, and then nationally. If the patterns are confirmed at multiple-sites, it can help inform the direction of how school counselors are trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. The new ASCA and CAEP partnership to establish training standards for school counseling programs, presents an opportunity to address the need for increased training for school counselors when working with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

Future Directions

The findings from this study indicate several areas of future direction for the profession of school counseling. It is important for counselor educators to understand school culture and how school counselor trainees will encounter PreK-12 students with disabilities. Through this awareness, counselor educators can develop or restructure exceptionality classes to better engage and prepare school counselor trainees to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities. All CACREP (2015) accredited school counseling programs are required to increase to a 60 credit hour model. Counselor educators can use this opportunity to develop a course focused on the school counselor's role with working with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

In addition to the inclusion of an additional course focused on working with PreK-12 students with disabilities counselor educators need to consider the importance of educating school counselor trainees of the mental health needs of PreK-12 students with

disabilities. It is recommended that school counselor trainees be required to take a diagnosis and treatment course. While it is out of the scope and practice of a school counselor to diagnose and treat, engaging in the course will help school counselor trainees gain a better sense of the mental needs related to students with disabilities.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Please describe your previous experiences?

2. Why did you select to study School Counseling?

3. Tell me what you know about disability culture?

4. What are your perceptions of PreK-12 students with disabilities?

5. What is your current understanding of disability education legislation?

6. What experiences have you had during practicum related to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

7. Tell me about the experiences that made you more comfortable working with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

8. Tell me about the experiences that have made you uncomfortable related to working with or for PreK-12 students with disabilities?

9. How has the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) national model impacted the way you were trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

10. What experiences do you wish you had to prepare you to work PreK-12 students with disabilities?

11. Where in the program does a student learn about disability culture and how much time have you spent learning about this culture?

12. How does the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) influence your preparation for becoming a school counselor?

13. How does the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) influence your preparation of becoming a school counselor?

14. Any thing else you would like me to know?

Appendix B: Condensed Findings Report

School Counselor Preparation to Serve Students with Disabilities Condensed Findings
Report

Analytic Technique

Pattern matching was the technique used to analyze the data from this study. This
technique helped to strengthen the internal validity of this single case study. The
predictor patterns were identified before engaging in interviews and are highlighted
below.

Predicted patterns

I predicted, that school counselor trainees are not prepared to work effectively with PreK-
12 students with disabilities. Also, school counselor trainees are predicted to only have
surface knowledge about disability culture based on their previous experiences and
practicum experiences. Finally, I predicted that participants would demonstrate a
heighten awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture due to their
knowledge that the researcher subscribes to disability culture.

Pattern Matching Outcomes

A pattern matching procedure, examining transcribed interviews and the review
of program syllabi supported the selected predicted patterns for this single case study. In
this section each predicted pattern will be reviewed with the findings from the interviews
and the program syllabi.

As predicted, school counselor trainees are not prepared to work effectively with
PreK-12 students with disabilities. While a few participants displayed superb knowledge

gained from their prior experiences with individuals with disabilities, it was evident that applying this knowledge to the role of the school counselor was difficult. Although this proved to be a difficult task for participants, all individuals displayed the advocacy and leaderships skills of professional school counselors. In addition, the program syllabi supported this first predicted pattern. Counseling students are exposed to disability culture in the following courses: Introduction to School Counseling and Counseling Diverse Populations. In the aforementioned courses, participants were exposed to disabilities in one class meeting for each course. The participants either engaged in the content online or in person as the program is delivered in a hybrid format. School counselor trainees cannot be expected to be adequately prepared to effectively work with PreK-12 students with disabilities through the participation in two courses that covered information related to working with this student population in two class meetings.

The second predicted pattern is also correct, the participants had surface knowledge about disability culture based on previous experiences and/or practicum experiences. The study found the experiences influenced disability knowledge. As mentioned above, some participants displayed more knowledge than other participants related to subgroups of disability culture. However, all participants expressed a desire for a holistic understanding of disability culture. For example, some participants mentioned feeling more comfortable addressing mild to moderate disabilities and less comfortable addressing moderate to intensive disabilities. All participants displayed a basic understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) related to disability culture and education. All participants knew about IDEA, but were unable to

connect the act to the role of the school counselor. The course syllabi support this predicted pattern as IDEA is only briefly covered in Intro to School Counseling. In the Program Development course, counseling students must create curriculum lesson plans with an accommodation section for each lesson related to students with disabilities. However, students were not supplied with additional directions or information related to this request. Thus this contributes to the surface knowledge. All school counselor trainees eligible for this study took the Consultation and Collaboration course. While this course did not focus on disability culture, the course did have case studies built around students with disabilities and collaborating with school teams. Some participants mentioned this course as one of the more helpful courses for working to support students with disabilities. Finally, the practicum syllabi did not directly address engaging with students with disabilities.

Finally, I predicted that participants would demonstrate a heightened awareness of the importance of understanding disability culture due to their knowledge that I as the researcher subscribes to disability culture. While this predictor is more open ended, I found that all participants recognized disability as an actual culture similar to other racial and ethic cultures. This is a critical point, as the research indicates that disability is not always viewed as a culture. The participants, through conversations, displayed a heightened desire to increase disability knowledge and culture understanding. For example, many participants suggested or requested that the program provides trainees with more opportunities to engage with individuals with disabilities.

Emerging Themes

This section includes a list of the emerging themes found across all interviews for this single case study. The section includes the preliminary findings found in addition to the pattern matching analysis.

- Disconnect
  - A common theme centered around feelings associated with being disconnected to special education staff. The participants felt that staff did not understand the school counselor's role. The school counselor trainees did not fully understand their involvement with special education teachers to support students with disabilities.
- Access
  - The participants mentioned that access was critical to if or how they worked with students with disabilities while in practicum and leading into internship. All participants mentioned that more exposure to this culture in internship would be critical to their future professional roles.
- School Culture
  - All participants identified the school culture as a major impact to how or if the school counselor was involved in working with students with disabilities. The culture and climate of the staff was identified as either a positive or negative element to how the school counselor served students with disabilities.
- Emersion of Disability Culture with Skills
  - Participants requested that disability related emersion in individual and group technique courses as a way to increase knowledge and comfort to working with students with disabilities.
  - Some mentioned, the need to learn more about working with students with disability related to their role as a school counselor.
- Parent Collaboration
  - All participants in some way identified that working with parents of students with disabilities, as an area for increased training. Participants also mentioned a need for training related to parent collaborated with alignment to IDEA.
  - There were several participants that mentioned feeling uncomfortable navigating these relationships out of fear that they would "mess up" or "accidentally deny" students access or accommodations.

Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter

Project Number	18-X-208
Project Status	APPROVED
Committee:	Social/Behavioral IRB
Compliance Contact:	Rebecca Cale (cale@ohio.edu)
Primary Investigator:	Jenna Alvarez
Project Title:	School Counselor Preparation to Serve Students with Disabilities
Level of Review:	EXPEDITED

The Social/Behavioral IRB reviewed and approved by expedited review the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

IRB Approved:	06/12/2018 2:28:35 PM
Expiration:	06/12/2019
Review Category:	7

Waivers: No waivers are granted with this approval.

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. In addition, FERPA, PPRA, and other authorizations / agreements must be obtained, if needed. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Any changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Periodic Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of the IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. All records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least three (3) years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the Office of Research Compliance / IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under the Ohio University OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00000095. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Compliance staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol Project

Interview Protocol Project: School Counselor Preparation to Serve Students with

Disabilities

Time of Interview:

Date:

Interviewer:

Interviewee Code:

The study aims to gain a better understanding of current training as well as training standards associated with working with students with disabilities. This study seeks to address the connection between training and services provided by school counselors to PreK-12 students with disabilities. The study seeks to answer questions to understand how school counselor trainees are currently prepared to interact with PreK-12 students with disabilities.

Questions:

1. Please describe your previous experiences?

2. Why did you select to study School Counseling?

3. Tell me what you know about disability culture?

4. What are your perceptions of PreK-12 students with disabilities?

5. What is your current understanding of disability education legislation?

6. What experiences have you had during practicum related to working with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

7. Tell me about the experiences that made you more comfortable working with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

8. Tell me about the experiences that have made you uncomfortable related to working with or for PreK-12 students with disabilities?

9. How has the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) national model impacted the way you were trained to work with PreK-12 students with disabilities?

10. What experiences do you wish you had to prepare you to work PreK-12 students with disabilities?

11. Where in the program does a student learn about disability culture and how much time have you spent learning about this culture?

12. How does the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) influence your preparation for becoming a school counselor?

13. How does the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) influence your preparation of becoming a school counselor?

14. Any thing else you would like me to know?

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