School Counselor Support for the Academic, Career, Personal, and Social Needs of ELL Students

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SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUPPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC, CAREER, PERSONAL, AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF ELL STUDENTS

by

Jacqueline Seddon

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SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUPPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC, CAREER, PERSONAL, AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF ELL STUDENTS

Jacqueline Seddon

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to understand the needs of ELL students in U.S. public high schools in regard to academic preparation for post-secondary education, career-readiness, and development of personal and social skills, as well as the services ELL students receive as support for these needs.

PROBLEM:

The English language learners (ELLs) in U.S. public high schools are currently being underserved. ELL students have unique needs in their academic, career, personal, and social development and these needs have not been fully studied. Little research has been done in this area to identify what academic, career, personal, and social support school counselors are currently providing in U.S. public schools, and furthermore, what constitutes “best practices” when working with the ELL student population. To better understand how school counselors can be trained to become competent to work with a diverse population of students, it is important to study the needs of ELL students in the U.S. public school system.

METHODS:

Six individuals were invited to participate in a qualitative research study conducted at Novus and Amicus High Schools. These individuals were selected because of their in-depth work with ELL students as professionals within the school community. Two ELL Teachers, two School Counselors, and two Cultural Liaisons were interviewed regarding their work with ELL students.

RESULTS:

Participants advocated for after-school support, time, training, resources and materials, funding, additional support staff, and collaboration among school professionals to better meet the needs of ELL students. They also reported that ELL students enter U.S. public high schools with limited knowledge of the school system.
Cultural education and training are also identified as important for those working directly with ELL students. Providing support is one of the most important aspects highlighted by participants in their work with ELL students. Reaching the community and making parent visits to the home were both topics addressed by cultural liaisons in this study. Teachers need more time to create adapted curriculum and students need more time to learn and develop. Some participants placed emphasis on after-school programs and summer school to bridge the gap for extended services offered to ELL students. Students may also develop personally and socially through mentoring opportunities and involvement in sports teams.

The school counselor’s role in working with ELL students was not clearly understood or defined by participants in the study. Several participants identified the school counselor as a liaison to mental health services and academic placement. Beyond schedule changes and placement, little collaboration between ELL teachers and school counselors was found.

A whole school approach is supported by research and the findings of this study. As indicated by participants, ELL students could benefit from the added support of professionals within the school who can address the unique needs, challenges, and barriers some ELL students face in U.S. public high schools. Providing a structure that includes caring adults, mentors, and professionals will help ELL students feel well supported in the school.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance to School Counseling</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners as a Population</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Challenges for ELL Students</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Development</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic and Career Development</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counselor Multicultural Competency</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Total School Approach</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODS</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

v
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Subjects</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESULTS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Profiles</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research Directions</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Adult Informed Consent</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Interview Protocols</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Institutional Review Board (IRB)</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

[School] [c]ounselors can obstruct or facilitate the journey of a student through high school and beyond. [School] [c]ounselor awareness is a first step to responsible advising of ELLs. Large caseloads can pressure [school] counselors to serve only those students who seek them out. In such environments, immigrant students become invisible because they are not aware of the role and power of the [school] counselor. (McCall-Perez, 2000, para. 32)

Overview

English language learner (ELL) students encounter unique academic, personal, and social challenges during the cultural adjustment process (Goh, Wahl, McDonald, Brissett, & Yoon, 2007; McCall-Perez, 2000) when becoming immersed in a new culture and a new social structure in U.S. public schools. ELL programs have operated independently within the U.S. public school system for many years, with ELL specialists and teachers solely preparing ELL students for future success in college and careers (Clemente & Collison, 2000; Rance-Roney, 2009). With this growing population reaching nearly 10% of the total population of learners in the United States, there is an increasing need for resources and support for these students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Existing research regarding this population has focused primarily on low-income native Spanish speakers in an elementary school setting (Genesse, Lindholm-
Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005). Little research exists regarding the effective instruction of ELL students (August, Hakuta, O’Day, et al., 2009) and the developmental changes that ELL students go through from beginning to mature and advanced levels of English acquisition, reading, writing, and other academic skills (Genesse et al., 2005). “There is also a pressing need for additional research on ELLs in higher grades and on ELLs who enter the U.S. Educational system in middle or high school, particularly those with little or no prior schooling” (Genesse et al., 2005, p. 379). These findings indicate a gap in the existing research that could help school professionals better understand the needs of ELL students at the high school level, and help identify best practices for supporting ELL students.

A learning environment that calls for a total school approach with collaboration of school administrators, teachers, and school counselors has been advocated as a positive, inclusive, and enriched environment for ELL students to thrive academically and socially (Clemente & Collison, 2000; Wissot, 1970). The role of the school counselor is to support the academic, career, personal, and social needs of all students, while maintaining confidentiality, trust, and multicultural competence (ASCA, 2012a). Multicultural competent school counselors advocate for equity and resources for all students (ASCA, 2012a). School counselors may also get involved in the community and collaborate with stakeholders to further promote a school environment that embraces cultural diversity (ASCA, 2009a).
Problem

The English language learners (ELLs) in U.S. public high schools are currently underserved. ELL students have unique needs in their academic, career, personal, and social development and these needs have not been fully studied. Little research has been done in this area to identify what academic, career, personal, and social support school counselors are currently providing in U.S. public schools, and furthermore, what constitutes “best practices” when working with the ELL student population. To better understand how school counselors can be trained and become competent to work with a diverse population of students, it is important to study the needs of ELL students in the U.S. public school system.

Definition of Terms

Rance-Roney (2009) suggested that even with the growing population of ELL students in U.S. public schools, there is no consensus in the literature as to the appropriate terminology to refer to or categorize the English second language population. Currently, a variety of terms are used interchangeably to describe this population including ELL (English language learner), ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), ELD (English language development), ELS (English language service), and bilingual (Rance-Roney). For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to use the term English language learner (ELL).

The National Council of Teachers of English (2008) defines *English language learner (ELL)* as “an active learner of English who may benefit from various types of
language support programs” (National Council, p. 2). The ELL term is used primarily in the United States when describing students in grades K-12. *ESL (English second language)* was formerly used to refer to ELL students before the term English language learner was developed. The term ESL is still used to refer to multilingual students in higher education and increasingly refers to a program of instruction designed to support ELLs (National Council, 2008). A *second language* is learned in addition to the first/native language or mother tongue (National Council, 2008).

It is important to note that although many ELL students are newcomers to the U.S. having immigrated within the past five years, others are born citizens of the U.S. (Rance-Roney, 2009). Therefore, the effects of immigration cannot be generalized to the entire population of ELL students. However, many ELL students born in the U.S. may have parents who immigrated to the U.S. and as a result, may experience similar problems due to acculturation. Regardless of the status of ELL students as immigrants or born in the U.S., these students have a right to education and need support.

The term *Cultural Liaison* is used to describe the role of an individual working closely with ELL teachers to offer social service assistance to individuals and families who have limited English language skills. Cultural liaisons provide cultural and language interpreting for ELL teachers and school professionals to help carry out instructional activities and provide support for ELL students who face cultural and language barriers at school.
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the needs of ELL students in U.S.
public high schools in regard to academic preparation for post-secondary education,
career-readiness, and development of personal and social skills, as well as the services
ELL students receive as support for these needs. The concept of this study emerged
from a growing interest in the challenges ELL students face in the classroom,
preparing for their futures, and understanding American culture. With such
understanding, professionals within the school community can advocate for “best
practices” among school counselors to be competent in working with ELL students.

Method

A phenomenological qualitative research approach was used to collect personal
accounts from professionals who work directly with ELL students. This qualitative
method helps further the understanding of the academic, career, personal, and social
needs of ELL students and helps researchers gain a better understanding of the type of
support ELL students are currently receiving from school counselors in U.S. public
high schools by studying what the lived experience of ELL teachers, cultural liaisons,
and school counselors report.

To gather this data, interviews were conducted of cultural liaisons, ELL
teachers, and school counselors from two high school research sites that currently
serve a unique ELL population. Interviews were structured to address research
questions and sub-questions regarding the needs of ELL students and the ways that
these students currently receive support. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for later data analysis.

**Significance to School Counseling**

Learning how to better serve ELL students is critical for school counselors working in the public school setting, especially because the number of English language learners continues to grow annually in the United States. An in depth study of ELL students in U.S. public high schools helps improve the understanding of the unique needs of ELL students and the services they receive. The American School Counseling Association advocates that school counselors serve the academic, career, personal, and social needs of *all* students (ASCA, 2012a). Multicultural competence is critical for school counselors to promote the equity of all students and create an environment that embraces cultural diversity (ASCA, 2009a). Research in this topic area could help school counselors achieve a higher level of multicultural competence and increase the preparedness of school districts to serve this population.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The U.S. population has changed dramatically in the last three decades, as nearly 30 million immigrants, both authorized and unauthorized, have settled here seeking a better future for themselves and their children. Much attention has focused on… immigration laws at the national and state levels. A less studied, but perhaps vastly more important area of interest, is the effect immigration has on U.S. classrooms—where society’s response will determine the skills of the future U.S. workforce and the nation’s ability to remain competitive in a global economy. (Migration Policy Institute, 2015)

English Language Learners as a Population

It is the right of every child in the United States to receive an education. With the population of English language learners (ELL) increasing, understanding this group of students is becoming even more relevant for the U.S. public school system and the school counselors that socially and academically support ELL students so their right to an education is secured. The U.S. Department of Education (2013) reported on The Condition of Education and found that the percentage of students in U.S. public high schools who were ELLs in 2010-11 had increased to 10% [of the total population] or an estimated 4.7 million students, as compared to data from 2002-03 when ELL students comprised 9% or an estimated 4.1 million students of the total U.S. school population.
As the percentage of ELL students in U.S. public schools continues to significantly grow each year, surveys collected by the U.S. Department of Education has been documenting the growth of this population by state. According to the Local Education Agency Universe Survey, in 2010-11 Minnesota had 40,778 English language learners participating in public school programs throughout the state, amounting to 5.1% of the total student population in Minnesota (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

With the increase of ELL students in public school programs, the United States has seen an increase in language diversity (Smith-Davis, 2004). Despite the fact that 85% of the linguistic diversity in the United States comes from eight most commonly spoken languages—Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, Korean, Cantonese, Laotian, and Navajo—there are actually 350 languages spoken in the public school system in the United States (Smith-Davis, 2004). Such diversity serves as a reminder that not all ELL students in our classrooms will speak the same or a similar first language.

While not all ELL students are new immigrants to the United States, many are and many more who were born in the United States have parents who have recently immigrated. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact of immigration as well when considering the needs and services for ELL students. According to Smith-Davis (2004), the U.S. Department of Education classifies an immigrant as a student who is between the ages of 3 and 19, who was not born in the United States and who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than 3 years. Whether ELLs are citizens of the United
States, residents, or undocumented, Plyler vs. Doe Supreme Court case of 1982 ensures their right to an education; with the condition that they meet the age requirements determined by the education codes in that state (Rance-Roney, 2009).

In Minnesota, nearly half of ELLs speak Hmong as their first language. Minneapolis, Minnesota currently has one of the largest Hmong communities in the United States with approximately 20,000 Hmong speakers in grades K-12 (Smith-Davis, 2004). Smith-Davis (2004) suggests that this presents a real challenge as the written language of Hmong has only been around for an estimated 30 years and most Hmong children come from preliterate homes. Without family members or peers who truly understand the U.S. public school system, Hmong students and other ELLs become dependent on school counselors and educators to achieve success in high school and in reaching their future goals (McCall-Perez, 2000).

Similarly, Minnesota has been the destination for African immigrants, many of whom are refugees. Darboe (2003) described in New Immigrants in Minnesota: The Somali Immigration and Assimilation, that Minnesota has been a destination for Somali immigrants and refugees since 1990 when refugees escaped civil wars and famine across Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, and Sierra Leone. According to Darboe, the Somali population is mostly Sunni (Orthodox) Muslim with three major ethnic groups within the population: Somali, Arab, and Bantu. After civil war and clan warfare devastated Somalia, roughly sixty thousand Somalis immigrated to Minnesota (Darboe, 2003). Darboe explained that many Somali people come to Minnesota because of the economy, strong social services, health care systems, and
accommodating educational systems. Since Somalia has not had a central government since 1991, the educational system in Somalia offers little in terms of preparing school-age children for formal education in the United States (Njue & Retish, 2010). Though some Somali students gain school experience in refugee camps in other countries, not all are afforded the same opportunity. With the continued growth of the Somali population in Minnesota and the uniqueness of their needs in the school and community, this population is an important category for research.

As Minnesota continues to grow in diversity, school counselors will inevitably face situations when culturally sensitive interventions are necessary in working with parents and students. One aspect of multicultural competence involves developing an understanding of the cultural background of the students and families school counselors serve. When striving to support ELL students, school counselors must work to understand the potential language and cultural barriers that may impact both students and their families. In the following section I will highlight several family challenges ELL students in the United States may face.

**Family Challenges for ELL Students**

For some first generation ELL students whose parents are insufficiently engaged in school or academic decision-making, learning the U.S. public school system can be a challenge. Cota (1997) suggests that older siblings are often placed in parental roles in helping their younger siblings learn English and complete homework assignments. As the interviews in Cota’s study indicated, “the students’ siblings are
the primary persons to help them with homework assignments and exam preparation, because in most cases, their parents do not speak English and are not high school graduates” (Cota, 1997, p. 159). The challenges these older siblings often face as their younger siblings enter grade school illustrate the unique responsibilities and pressures some ELL students face.

Many ELL students also experience a conflict related to language use at school and in the home. Although in Cota’s study, the majority of ELL students’ mothers believed learning to speak English as a second language was necessary and important, about half of students reported their fathers as never speaking English. A large majority of ELL students spoke their native language with their parents in the home (Cota, 1997). The low level of English language proficiency among parents of ELL students often results in children of these families acting as interpreters between school and home. In fact, Goh et al. (2007) found that many ELL students might eventually reach a point when they have gained more English language skills than their parents. Such a discrepancy can result in ELL students playing the role of language interpreter and taking the responsibility for helping parents understand the U.S. public school system. The outcome leads to role conflict and misinterpretation within ELL families (Goh et al., 2007), especially for older siblings as they may often take on parental roles for their younger siblings. Though not advisable or ethical, ELL children are sometimes asked to be interpreters or mediators between parents and school professionals (Goh et al., 2007) in the event of behavior, academic, or social problems at school. This creates both a hardship for the parent-child relationship and a
professional dilemma for school administrators, teachers, and school counselors. Additionally, school counselors can struggle with the issue of confidentiality when providing services to ELL students and their families in which interpreters may need to be involved.

In addition to the challenges immigrant ELL families face in regard to language acquisition and learning a new educational system, many also experience difficulty related to poverty and socioeconomic status in acculturating (Goh et al., 2007). Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes (2007), in their framework for social justice advocacy, stated that students who are constrained by generational poverty may benefit from school counselors advocating on their behalf. All students should be given the opportunities to see beyond the limitations they have grown up with, as some family members are often unable to offer the academic and social guidance that other students with college-educated family members often take for granted. Many ELL students, who do not have the social support of English speaking family members, seek support from school counselors, teachers, administrators, and friends. These students who seek support must be taught how to access resources and formal help structures like school counselors and social workers when needed (Goh et al., 2007). In addition, school counselors and social workers must be adequately trained to work with ELL students and their families.

One specific area that professional school counselors are trained to provide support for students is in their personal and social development. In the next section, I will explore the first of three pillars in the American School Counselor Association
(ASCA) model, which states that school counselors provide support for students in their personal and social development, as well as academic and career development. In the next three sections, I will address the personal and social challenges that many ELL students in the United States face in regard to expressing their feelings, forming relationships, developing social support systems, as well as the academic and career challenges ELL students may face.

**Personal and Social Development**

To better understand the personal and social development of students, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) stresses that school counselors maintain “professional knowledge of the ever-changing and complex world of students’ culture” (2012, p. 24). School counselors must understand the complexity of students’ personal and social needs while also adapting to an ever-changing U.S. public school setting. While professional school counselors regularly strive to create an environment that embraces cultural diversity (ASCA, 2009a) and encourages all students to feel comfortable addressing personal or social problems (ASCA, 2012a), the reality is that some students may experience a lack of trust in school counselors and this may be amplified for ELL students.

In a study conducted by Clemente and Collison (2000) entitled *The Relationship Among Counselors, ESL Teachers, and Students*, researchers found that ELLs felt a lack of trust in school counselors as a result of the students’ difficulties expressing how they truly felt in English. This finding increases the importance of
school counselors having a thorough awareness, understanding, and appreciation for cultural experience and language barriers often experienced by ELL students so they are better able to help develop a school climate that encourages all students to share personal and social issues they are facing (ASCA, 2009a), even if language proficiency makes it difficult to share the depth of these stories.

School counselors are uniquely positioned within U.S. schools to provide all students with a safe place to share their stories, concerns, and challenges while providing support and assistance to help students achieve success. School counselors can and should be an especially important resource for ELL students, as many ELL students face a number of unique challenges and may sometimes lack family and social supports. For example, many ELL students have experienced trauma from war, refugee camps, poverty, or health concerns (Goh et al., 2007). These experiences have been found to cause personal and social challenges for many ELL students that lead to isolation and loneliness; behaviors such as acting out, being silent, or continually complaining, difficulty making friends, and poor school attendance (Goh et al., 2007). For many ELL students, expressing these challenges can be difficult and it is important that their stories are heard and assistance is provided.

Toffoli and Allan (1992), conducted an interactive group guidance study with a class of ELL students, which illustrates the challenges faced by many ELL students and the value of providing a safe place for them to process their experiences. In their study, they used a guided imagery activity that helped students to mentally return to the school they attended in their homeland and reconnect with memories and
experiences they had there. Students were asked to draw pictures and write stories about their experiences and memories. Some important issues were revealed in this study through the use of storytelling. Students expressed confusion from living in two cultures and finding where they belong. Students also expressed a desire to keep their heritage and memories from their homeland alive (Toffoli & Allan). Toffoli and Allan (1992) suggested that the emotional realities linked to dealing with major losses, grief, and readjustments are common for most ELL students. As students process significant life changes and the personal and social challenges associated with adjusting to a new culture, school counselors can provide support for issues related to separation and loss, the time needed to heal, and the space for students to tell their stories and have them heard, witnessed, and acknowledged (Toffoli & Allan). As students share their stories, they are helping satisfy an essential need to express both positive and negative experiences and emotions. Such storytelling and processing opportunities can take place in the classroom environment or school counselor's office depending on the sensitive nature of the issue and the degree of support needed (Toffoli & Allan).

Goh et al. (2007) suggested that depending on their age, new immigrant students may not be able to readily recall or put into context their prior experiences and must be treated as unique individuals.

ESL [English second language] students, when asked to talk about schools and schooling in their homeland, often reply that it is “almost the same as here.” When asked about some specific details, however they often reveal that things are in fact, quite different. Although some of their inability to answer more fully is probably due to having forgotten, other factors involved seem to be a lack of an appropriate frame of reference and lack of vocabulary. (Toffoli & Allan, 1992, para. 14)
Students who immigrated to the United States at a very young age may not be able to effectively recount and share their childhood experiences from their native countries. Goh et al. (2007) emphasized, “it is important to realize that although immigrant groups share some similarities, all students are unique and should be viewed as individuals as well as within the context of their cultural and family systems” (p. 67). It is therefore important that school counselors also recognize that not all immigrants to the U.S. will experience the same personal or social challenges, language barriers, or struggles adapting to American culture or an English based school curriculum.

In addition to processing past concerns, it is also important to be aware that the needs and abilities of ELL students often change as they progress through the U.S. educational system. First, as ELL students become more integrated with native English speaking students, both inside and outside of the classroom, ELL students are better able to refine their English language skills (Cota, 1997). The ability to relate to and communicate with fluent English speaking students and friends might help curb some of the social challenges ELL students experience. One approach that can be used to support ELL students in developing social skills is cooperative learning exercises such as brainstorming, discussions, and holding debates (Cota, 1997). Furthermore, ELL students who participate in extracurricular school activities are exposed to social and leadership skills, as well as the opportunity to practice their English skills in social contexts. Involvement and participation in extracurricular school activities could be an outlet for ELL students to socialize with other students and become more involved in their schools (Cota, 1997).
Aside from joining extracurricular school activities, ELL students can also learn social and leadership skills through participating in group counseling sessions. Researchers have successfully used group interventions when working with ELL students experiencing personal or social challenges to help them find a sense of belonging and social support (Shi & Steen, 2010). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) promotes this type of intervention as group counseling allows individuals to learn more about themselves and others while also making it possible for “more students to achieve healthier personal adjustment, cope with the stress of a rapidly changing and complex environment and learn to communicate and cooperate with others” (ASCA, 2008, p. 24). Group counseling strategies provide a supportive context for ELL students to voice their concerns among peers who are experiencing similar challenges. When students express similar challenges and those common experiences are linked together, students begin to feel the issues they are facing are normal, thus helping them feel less isolated and more comfortable in school (Shi & Steen, 2010).

Group counseling strategies can be used as a means for building social support for students while also addressing specific mental health concerns, exploring personal growth topics, providing resources and information, or improving academic achievement. Culturally appropriate school counseling interventions, such as group counseling, have been used to address a number of personal and social concerns, such as self-esteem (Shi & Steen, 2012), but also could be used to address other topics, such as academic and career-related concerns (ASCA, 2008). In the next section, I will
address the second and third pillar of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) model: supporting student academic and career development. I will specifically highlight some ways that school counselors can support ELL students in academic advisement and career planning as they prepare for college, future careers, and their place as contributing members of society.

**Academic and Career Development**

The tradition for students to attend a high school in the U.S. education system for only 4 years can present an overwhelming challenge for ELL students who first begin learning English as adolescents (McCall-Perez, 2000). Genesee et al. (2005) noted that, “…current evidence suggests ELLs typically require three to five years to achieve advanced proficiency in oral English” (p. 367). Some studies suggest 6 to 7 years for ELL students to become “redesignated to English proficient” (McCall-Perez, 2000, para. 18). Although the process from beginning to middle levels of proficiency is fairly rapid, Genesee et al. suggested the progress from middle to upper levels of proficiency tends to progress much slower. Advanced proficiency in English is vital to school success as it increases ELL students’ aptitude to further learn, acquire, and use the language (Genesee et al., 2005). Despite the fact that schools may exempt ELL students from achievement testing in English for up to three years, schools must evaluate English language proficiency annually without an exemption period for completion (Genesee et al., 2005). Most ELL students recognize the importance of
mastering English not only to achieve academic success, but also to compete in the job market and establish themselves after high school (Clemente & Collison, 2000).

Understanding the relationship among student’s linguistic and social skills, course content, teaching styles, and student’s academic background helps school counselors make the most informed course placement decisions when working with ELL students (McCall-Perez, 2000). School counselors have the opportunity to best match students with appropriate courses to meet their academic goals and help students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to become college and career ready (ASCA, 2013). In many U.S. public schools however, school counselors view ELL programs as independent entities within the school and therefore, leave scheduling and academic affairs to the ELL specialists and teachers (Clemente & Collison, 2000). ELL student needs often go unrecognized or undetected because so much responsibility is placed on the ELL specialist to be a “one-stop shop” for all English language learners’ needs including translating, personal counseling, career or academic advisement, and even health care (Rance-Roney, 2009, para. 15).

McCall-Perez (2000) explained in The Counselor as Advocate for English Language Learners that despite some counselors’ view of student advisement as unfulfilling, it is an essential task for helping ELL students succeed in school and beyond. McCall-Perez found that, “while a large majority of ELL respondents expected to attend 4-year colleges and universities, only a small portion of them were actually enrolled in classes that prepared them for college” (para. 12). This is concerning as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) advocates that
professional school counselors take a proactive role in supporting all students’ college and career goals and an essential element in providing support is the selection of a “rigorous and relevant education program” that meets these students’ goals (ASCA, 2013, p. 1).

Ratts et al. (2007) stated that, “English language learners who are left out of the regular course selection process might be left with classes that do not adequately prepare them for their future academic or career aspirations” (p. 93). School counselors must be aware that admission requirements for colleges and universities differ, and some will not accept Advanced ESL coursework to fulfill English entrance requirements (McCall-Perez, 2000). Most English language learners who aspire to attend 4-year colleges or universities must be advised to take both ESL and English in high school to fulfill requirements for college entrance (McCall-Perez, 2000). School counselors can be proactive in explaining English entrance requirements but also opportunities ELL students may have in fulfilling foreign language requirements for college entrance (McCall-Perez, 2000). Some ELL students can use transcripts or other evidence of significant schooling in their home country to verify fluency in a non-English language (McCall-Perez, 2000). Awareness and understanding of these topics could help school counselors become more effective advocates for ELL students in course selection and the specific needs of these students in academic planning.

Effective school counselors, with an understanding and appreciation for diversity and individual differences, ensure equitable access to a rigorous curriculum
and educational opportunities for all students to fully participate in the educational process (ASCA, 2012b, p. 9).

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model for a comprehensive school counseling program seeks to improve the learning process for all students while providing them with the personal, social, academic, and career support they need to be successful (ASCA, 2012b). In the next section, I will address the importance of the multicultural competency of school counselors.

School Counselor Multicultural Competency

Multicultural competent school counselors possess knowledge of other cultures and worldviews, provide culturally competent counseling, ethical and effective interventions, and use culturally sensitive skills (ASCA, 2009a). When school counselors lack sufficient cultural competence, the result may be a reluctance to work with culturally diverse students and their parents, misunderstanding students’ struggles, choosing inappropriate interventions, and may possibly prevent school counselors from recommending ELL or culturally diverse students for gifted or enrichment programs (West-Olatunji, Goodman, & Shure, 2011).

Burnham, Mantero, and Hooper (2009) stressed the importance of multicultural competency, as do the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counseling. Both mandate several propositions, including school counselors’ openness to serving diverse populations (Burnham et al., 2009). Having a multicultural perspective includes avoiding the expectation that each student in U.S. public schools will be
westernized (Burnham et al., 2009). ELL students face many challenges including prejudices, discrimination, and racism from both adults and peers in U.S. public schools (McCall-Perez, 2000). It is the role of school counselors to advocate for students, to promote cross-cultural understanding, and help put an end to such biases (Burnham et al., 2009; Goh et al., 2007).

School counselors both advocate for and mentor ELL students, while also aiding in their socialization and individual development. School counselors can provide helpful support for ELL students in educating them on U.S. norms and practices (Roysircar, Gard, Hubbell, & Ortega, 2005). Without this type of support, students may begin to separate or marginalize from the student body, even if students desire to be integrated into U.S. society (Roysircar et al., 2005).

Goh et al. (2007) emphasized the role of school counselors as serving as bridges between cultures, as they function as mediators in many situations involving misunderstanding, conflict, or ineffectiveness in reaching ELL students. Lee, as sited in Goh et al., stated:

> Counselors who work in schools have as their mission the promotion of student development, welfare, and success. Combined with the training they receive in human development, relationships, and counseling skills, school counselors are in the best and most opportune position to promote cross-cultural understanding. (p. 67)

To create a school climate that is welcoming and has appreciation for the many strengths and gifts culturally diverse students offer to U.S. public schools, school counselors must collaborate with stakeholders and become actively involved in the community through advocacy (ASCA, 2009a). Making an ELL program successful
takes more than just collaboration within the school system. To better serve ELL students, “it is vital for the counselor[s] to be flexible, proactive, and willing to work with local ethnic or cultural leaders in reaching out to parents and the community” (Goh et al., 2007, p. 69). School-based community centers and added collaboration with religious and cultural leaders can better support school counselors in providing workshops, training, and resources for parents of ELL students (Smith-Davis, 2004).

In addition to parent and community outreach, school counselors should provide classroom guidance lessons that are culturally relevant for all students. The ASCA School Counseling Core Curriculum consists of structured lessons that are designed to meet specific counseling standards and help students attain desired competencies (ASCA, 2012b). School counselors teach character education; anti-bullying, harassment and violence-prevention programs; student technology use and online safety; career planning; and other topics related to student development. These topics are of importance to all students and should be provided as classroom guidance lessons in all classes including those for ELL students.

Many topics can be addressed through classroom guidance lessons and prevention programs, but individual students often need to meet with school counselors to address specific needs. Multicultural competent school counselors have the ability to adapt their counseling skills to meet the needs of each individual student. School counselors provide individual planning with students that address their personal, social, academic, and career needs (ASCA, 2009b). Students unmet needs in these areas and also specific mental health needs, can pose barriers to learning and
development (ASCA, 2009b). School counselors provide education, prevention, intervention, and referral services to all students and families to address these needs and promote healthy lifestyle choices (ASCA, 2009b).

Even though such services are available to all students, not all students will meet with a school counselor one-on-one, as some may prefer to take part in group counseling sessions. A group counseling model can be helpful for ELL students to learn and practice their English skills, learn appropriate classroom behaviors and norms, learn problem-solving and social skills, explore ethnic identity, express themselves in an environment where their concerns can be normalized, find a sense of universality among members, and feel socially included (Shi & Steen, 2010, 2012). Shi and Steen (2012) found significant improvements in the self-esteem of ELL students after participating in their group intervention. Their research reported that students had better attitudes toward themselves in general as well as when interacting with peers and parents in social settings or in the home (Shi & Steen, 2012). Shi and Steen promote the positive impact of group work as a way for school counselors to interact and connect with ELL students.

Multicultural competent school counselors work with students in classrooms, in individual and group sessions, and also in the community. Since multicultural competence may be limited by the specific training and personal experiences of school counselors, school counselors should also consult with other colleagues, professionals, community members, or families to gain insight regarding a student’s country of
origin (Shi & Steen, 2010) or other cultural considerations, to provide culturally sensitive, ethical, and professional support.

As educational professionals work together and collaborate to provide the best educational experience possible for all students, U.S. public schools can move toward what I advocate for in the next section, which is a total school approach.

A Total School Approach

The collaboration of ELL teachers, school counselors, and school administration is most beneficial for English language learners to increase English proficiency and perform at the academic level of native English speaking students.

Wissot (1970) stated in A Total Approach to the High School English-as-a-Second-Language Program that:

The total ESL approach is really a total school commitment toward providing the best possible education for all the foreign-born who enter school. It is neither an ESL curriculum nor any other scholastic curriculum but rather a joint effort on the part of all those concerned to put aside personal ambitions, petty quibblings, and departmental frictions in order to work interdepartmentally to remedy a total school problem with a total school approach. (p. 364)

Goh et al. (2007) stated that school counselors must act in partnership with teachers, as teachers are often the first to identify potential problems or conflicts that arise with ELL students. It is also of particular importance to identify regular classroom teachers’ attitudes toward students in ELL or ESL programs. Penfield (1987) suggested that English second language research has paid scant attention to the relationship between ESL specialists and classroom teachers or to perceptions and attitudes of regular
classroom teachers toward limited English proficiency students. School counselors could provide training for teachers to help eliminate some of the bias toward ELL students, as the collaboration of all teachers is necessary in serving this population. The National Education Association advocates for equity and language training for all educators, incorporating innovative ways to motivate ELL students to practice academic language skills to demonstrate growing proficiency; providing culturally relevant instruction that incorporates language development stages and language acquisition theory; and creating a classroom and total school environment that encourages and facilitates language learning (National Education Association).

Genesee et al. (2005) stated that ELL classrooms often change each year as new students enter the program and older students leave. Students in ELL programs may advance at different rates, creating an age gap at times, resulting in a classroom of students at different developmental levels. Research should be done in this area to better understand the social and intellectual dynamics of the classroom and how to design instruction that is effective in these ever-changing classroom contexts:

Carefully planned interactions in the classroom are also both the medium for delivering appropriate instruction about literacy and academic material and the message itself, insofar as the very language that is used during interactive instruction embodies many key features of language for literacy and broader academic purposes. (Genesee et al., 2005, p. 373)

As teachers and school counselors begin to work more collaboratively to provide support for ELL students, new techniques for instruction may be developed in the areas that are considered most challenging by native English speakers including science, history, and math (Genesee et al., 2005). “Schools need strategic methods to
employ for making grade-level materials and resources comprehensible for ELLs” (nea.org). There is an opportunity for change and with a growing movement for teaching 21st century skills, it is possible that new technology-rich learning environments will support the development of more effective practices in ELL classrooms. Just as English language proficiency will aid in the launch of ELL students into the workforce and prepare them for college, English language learners must learn critical thinking and problem solving skills, responsibility, and interpersonal etiquette to have successful futures. Teachers, administrators, and school counselors are responsible for helping all students in becoming equally prepared for post-secondary education, establishing their place in the workforce, and becoming active members of society.

As the number of English language learners in the United States continues to grow, there is an even greater need for understanding this population and the ways in which U.S. public school systems serve ELL families. Although ELL students in such programs do not always share a common language that can be easily taught or translated in an English language learners program, there are many distinct traits shared by this population. Many ELL students must overcome language barriers, environmental barriers, lack of social support, stereotypes, assumptions, and in some circumstances poverty, trauma, and other personal or social problems due to acculturation. The challenge school counselors face, and the problem addressed in this study, is finding ways to best support ELL students in meeting their specific needs related to personal, social, academic, and career development.
The role of the school counselor is to support the personal, social, academic, and career needs of all students. School counselors provide needed resources and support while affirming students’ culture, maintaining multicultural competency, monitoring the social supports of students, and building trust in the counseling relationship. Little evidence is available as to how school counselors are doing in meeting these standards and providing culturally competent services to ELL students. Therefore, I conducted a study in which I examined the needs of and services provided to ELL high school students in two particular high schools in Minnesota. By using a qualitative methodology, I believe I have gained new insights into the types of services and student needs ELL students experience, and now will present the methodology, results, and conclusion to help school counselors better understand how they can help support the full development of ELL students.
Chapter III

METHODS

English language learner (ELL) students face many challenges when immersed in a new and foreign learning environment. Understanding the academic, career, personal, and social needs of ELL students should be a goal of all school counselors to best support English language learners and to determine “best practice” strategies and interventions when working with students’ development in these areas. Yet, many school counselors and ELL programs may not be optimally involved or prepared to support this growing population. For this reason, I chose to conduct a qualitative study of the experiences of ELL teachers, cultural liaisons, and school counselors to gain insight into their perceptions of ELL student needs and provided services based on the participants’ lived experiences with these phenomenon.

Research Questions

There are two primary research questions that were investigated:

1. What are the needs of high school English language learners related to academic, career, personal, and social development as reported by ELL teachers, cultural liaisons, and school counselors?
Subquestions of the first question are:

a. What are the challenges ELL students face in U.S. public high schools?

b. How can ELL students be better served by the school and school counselors?

2. What types of support are school counselors providing ELL high school students as reported by ELL teachers, cultural liaisons, and school counselors?

Subquestions of the second question are:

a. What practices are school counselors engaged in which seem to effectively support the needs of English language learners?

b. How do school professionals collaborate to support ELL high school students?

Participants

Due to geographical considerations, two public high schools in Minnesota were considered for use in this study. The two high schools, which both reside in the same school district, were identified by the researcher as having a large English language learner population. Two cultural liaisons, two ELL teachers, and two school counselors were selected from the chosen sites for in-depth interviews. All participants had multiple years of experience and knowledge of the specific ELL population served in the district.
An informed consent form was developed for participants to sign before engaging in research (see Appendix A). Identification and contact information of the researcher was provided to each participant, as well as information regarding the nature of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the potential risks and benefits of participation, and the fact that any reporting of the data would be done in a manner which protects the identity of all participants.

Design

A qualitative research design was selected as it can be an effective method of gaining understanding and perspective on the needs of ELL students and how school counselors are currently supporting them in their respective schools. “Qualitative research is based on the assumption that each individual, culture, and setting is unique” (Clemente & Collison, 2000, para. 15). A qualitative research design involves the use of a theoretical lens, while inquiring into the meaning individuals ascribe to a problem (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). The theoretical lens applied to the problem identified in this study was phenomenological. “A phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). The researcher sought to derive information from the view of participants (cultural liaisons, ELL teachers, and school counselors) who are familiar with the phenomenon in this study. Qualitative interviews allow the researcher to gain a greater depth of information. The use of interviews in this study supported the researcher in recording information from the unique point-of-view of
participants, while finding clusters of meaning and significant statements identified in interview transcripts, related to specific themes (Creswell, 2007, p. 61).

The phenomenon as identified in this study is the perceived academic, career, personal, and social needs of ELL students and the services being provided to support ELL students. Furthermore, ELL students’ needs change as they progress through and advance beyond high school and the ELL program. A phenomenological approach has the advantage of allowing the researcher to obtain more in-depth and subtle information regarding these research questions as the needs of, and services being provided to, ELL students are complex and evolving phenomenon.

An example of this complexity involves the fact that ELL students experience changes, as they transition into the U.S. public school system, learn and grow as students, develop social relationships, experience challenges, and eventually graduate and/or leave the school environment. Understanding the needs of ELL students therefore involves understanding the acculturation process, and the many cultural and language barriers ELL students face when entering and moving through U.S. public high schools, and this will help to identify how school counselors can best support ELL students.

**Procedures**

An interview protocol was drafted for use in this study to aid in collecting qualitative data (see Appendix B). Interview questions were designed to collect information related to the posed research questions. Cultural liaisons, ELL teachers,
and school counselors were purposefully selected for face-to-face individual interviews. Interviews were conducted on site at both high schools over a span of 30 days. Each participant was allotted 1-hour for the individual interview. The contents of the interview were audio recorded. Each interview was fully transcribed and later coded by research questions, significant statements, and clusters of meaning.

Participants remained anonymous in recorded responses and transcriptions for confidentiality. Each participant was identified with use of a pseudonym as well as their title within the school (i.e., school counselor, ELL teacher, or cultural liaison). After transcription of interviews was completed, a follow-up validity check was conducted by having each participant review their transcribed interview to check for accuracy of the data and report to the researcher any clarification or changes. After research data was analyzed, the validity of the findings was tested through use of triangulation. First, data was collected through individual interviews and the responses were coded for themes. Second, research findings were supported by additional literature review and debriefing with participants in the study. Finally, a follow-up phone interview was conducted to check the accuracy of the data collected in the individual interviews and to allow for further questions. A follow-up validity check helps clarify details and findings to make the best representation of the data.

Analysis

The qualitative data collected from individual interviews were transcribed and organized to allow for coding and analysis of data. After full transcription of the
interviews, the content was initially coded by research question. Next, the research highlighted significant statements and quotations from participants that provided an understanding of how participants experienced the phenomenon. The third step involved clustering statements and quotes into themes. As major themes emerged from the data, a list was developed for coding purposes. Themes from the list were used to code segments of the text and organize the collected data. Information that did not fit into the two research questions of this study was also analyzed in a similar manner to help provide additional insights.

Human Subjects

The researcher received approval from the St. Cloud State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C) and the selected school district’s Institutional Review Board prior to initiation of this study.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

This study was conducted to better understand the experience of English Language Learners (ELL) in U.S. public schools by interviewing professionals who work closely with ELL students at two Minnesota high schools. The two high schools were comparable in size, with over 1,000 students enrolled in each as of 2015. Specifically, Novus High School (renamed to protect the school’s identity) enrolled 1,425 total students in 2015 with English Language Learners representing 15.4% of the overall student population (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). The second high school, Amicus High School (renamed to protect the school’s identity) enrolled 1,395 students in 2015 with ELL students representing 20.9% of the overall student population (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). Due to the geographic location and close proximity of the two sites, a similar population of English Language Learners is represented within the district.

Novus High School has become increasingly more diverse with a significant increase of Somali speaking students in the school and community over the past few years. The overall student population shows a fair amount of diversity with an ethnic breakdown of 1.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 3.4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.1% Hispanic, 25.3% Black, and 67% White (Minnesota Department of Education,
Novus accommodates a growing population of English Language Learners by hiring qualified teachers who specialize in teaching English as a Second Language. The student-to-teacher ratio of ELL classes is similar to that of mainstream classes though ELL programs are typically funded through special services, which have much smaller class sizes. Paraprofessionals and Cultural Liaisons have been hired to aid teachers in lower English proficiency classrooms. The structure of the ELL program at Novus is aligned with programs offered at other schools within the district, with a tiered program of advancement levels for students to work through as they gain English proficiency. Students who are new to country and have no prior knowledge of English may be enrolled in an intensive English program before transitioning into regular ELL classes. Core content is delivered to ELL students through co-taught classes. ELL teachers partner with content area teachers to provide structured content and material that is aligned with Minnesota Standards. An ELL Director functions as support for ELL teachers and oversees the ELL program within the district. A similar structure exists for Amicus High School, the second site selected for research.

Amicus High School has also welcomed many Somali students as the surrounding community grows in diversity as a result of immigration and the sponsorship of refugees to the area. As Novus and Amicus are neighboring schools within close proximity, Amicus High School has a similar ethnic breakdown with 1.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 5.4% Hispanic, 30.8% Black, and 57.6% White (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). Amicus accommodates the need for translation and additional linguistic support through the
use of Cultural Liaisons. Similar to Novus, two Cultural Liaisons were hired within the school to help bridge the gap of communication in making contact with parents and elders in the community, as well as provide classroom support for ELL teachers and students. The ELL department within the school meets regularly to discuss student concerns and placement, however collaboration between ELL Teachers, School Counselors, and Cultural Liaisons varies within the district.

Six individuals were invited to participate in a qualitative research study conducted at Novus and Amicus High Schools. These individuals were selected because of their in-depth work with ELL students as professionals within the school community. Two ELL Teachers, two School Counselors, and two Cultural Liaisons were interviewed regarding their work with ELL students. Each participant’s profile highlights their current role within the school and their experience working with ELL students. All names reported below are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

**Participant Profiles**

Bethany has been an ELL teacher at Novus High School for 9 years. She is interested in working with ELL students because of her own personal experiences being multi-cultural and bilingual. Bethany speaks both English and Spanish fluently. She is also learning the Somali language to better communicate with her Somali speaking students. This year, Bethany’s role as an ELL teacher has expanded to
include some co-taught ELL classes in core content areas. Bethany currently co-teaches United States History and World History as well as three ELL specific classes.

Elizabeth has been an ELL teacher within the district for 5 years. She first became interested in working with ELL students as a peer tutor in high school. Elizabeth has great interest in culture and finds her experiences working with ELL students to be especially rewarding. Elizabeth primarily works with Somali speaking students. Before co-teaching several core content classes this year, Elizabeth taught basic English skills for new to country ELL students through an intensive English program in the district. This program is offered to new to country students who qualify for entry into the program because of their new to country status and lack of exposure to the English language.

Russell has been working as a School Counselor at Amicus High School for fifteen years. Through the 15 years Russell has invested in his position at Amicus, he has witnessed many changes to the ELL program. During the early stages of ELL program development and expansion, Russell was a part of a site visit where Amicus learned what other districts were doing to help ELL students. Russell advocates that School Counselors be diligent, patient, find ways to provide support, and be change agents when working with ELL students.

Haley has been a School Counselor at Novus High School for 14 years. She enjoys working with ELL students because of the appreciation and importance many of them place on education. She does not consider herself an expert in working with ELL students, but instead considers herself an expert in the art of learning about new
experiences. Haley advocates for School Counselors who work with ELL students to think with an open heart, be open-minded, ask questions, be curious, and get to know students.

Kirauja has been working as a Cultural Liaison at Novus High School for almost 3 years. Kirauja grew up in Kenya, where most of his schooling was provided in the Somali language. Kirauja speaks four languages including the Kenyan language of Swahili. He considers his role within the school to be somewhat complex as he aids in communication with parents through meetings and phone calls, supervises students, provides support in classrooms, mentors students, and translates materials for the school.

Miskin has been a Cultural Liaison for 5 years at Amicus High School. Miskin describes his role at the school as bridging the gap of communication between parents and teachers. He helps with calls home, sets up appointments to sit down with parents, supports parents at conferences, assists with behavior problems at school, and provides interpretations or translations for parents and teachers.

Though each of the six participants serves English Language Learners in a different capacity within the schools chosen for research, all participants were able to identify academic, career, personal, and social needs of the ELL population at their school. Many highlighted specific challenges ELL students face in U.S. public high schools and the types of support ELL students receive from their school. Specifically, participants identified practices among school counselors and teachers who are effectively responding to the needs of English Language Learners. Similarly,
participants identified ways that ELL students could be better served by the school and their school counselors. Several themes emerged in reviewing the data collected through qualitative interviews. Culture and other barriers related to learning the school system and program structure were identified by participants as having an impact on ELL students. Research participants also highlighted strengths in terms of motivation and resiliency common to the ELL students at their school.

It is important to note that ELL students, in general, may not experience the same barriers or challenges that were found in the research conducted at Novus and Amicus High Schools. The ELL population served at both research sites is largely Somali speaking and thus the results of this study will indicate academic, career, personal, and social needs skewed to this particular population. Regardless, many of the themes found in this study may be applicable to ELL students from other countries of origin as well. The first major theme derived from the analysis of the data involved the academic needs of ELL students, including information on student history and the influence of linguistics on academic success. Since much of the information provided in this theme involves Somali students, this information may first serve to provide a better understanding of this population with many of these issues being generalized to the larger ELL student population.
Needs

Several themes emerged in research related to the specific needs of ELL students. The next section will highlight ELL students’ academic, career, personal, social, and other needs as identified by participants in this study.

Academic needs. The first theme involves the academic needs of ELL students related to learning a new language.

You can’t believe it because it is like you going to Somalia and now being placed in high school and you are told to learn, write, and read in English and Somali language. It is like how do you do it? That is the barrier. (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison)

One of the biggest obstacles for students who are new to this country is figuring out the English language, while at the same time being a high school student and learning the U.S. public school system (Russell, School Counselor).

As refugees…most of them have absolutely no formal background in schooling at all and so they are coming to me at 16, 17, 18 years old and they have never written. They don’t know how to read. They don’t know how to write. They have never been in a math class before. (Bethany, ELL Teacher)

Miskin, who is a Cultural Liaison at Amicus High School, suggests that academically, schools have a tough time teaching ELL students because many of them have never had the opportunity to go to school. Students who were born and raised in refugee camps may not know how the school system works (Miskin, Cultural Liaison).

Some students, who are afforded the opportunity to go to school in their home country or refugee camp, come to America with knowledge of three or four languages. Miskin explains that students born and raised in Kenya may learn to speak their native
language of Somali, the Kenyan language of Swahili, maybe Arabic, and a little bit of English. With some knowledge of language, students may be able to translate information more effectively however, Kirauja, the Cultural Liaison at Novus High School, explains that even the way the alphabet is pronounced in English is different than the Somali language. Kirauja explains that there are several letters in the Somali language that do not exist in the English language. This can make it difficult for Somali speaking students to bring information together and comprehend it (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison).

Bethany, an ELL teacher who is knowledgeable in the study of linguistics stated, “studies show it takes 10-15 years to learn a second language academically.” Bethany further explains that there are two different types of language in ELL. The first is BICS, the acronym for Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills. According to Bethany in her research in linguistics, it takes students 3 to 5 years to learn BICS language. “That is your everyday speaking and listening. That is when you go buy a coffee in English. That is when you need to go make an appointment in English” (Bethany, ELL Teacher). The second type of language is CALP language, the acronym for Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. This is the academic piece that takes 10 to 15 years to master. ELL teachers have to teach both BICS and CALP simultaneously, which can present an academic barrier for ELL students.

A lot of the students, they get the BICS and then they feel stupid because they say ‘well I know English and I am still doing bad in school’ and…I really have to intervene and say yeah you can speak and listen but that doesn’t mean you know academic English. That is like putting me in China and expecting me to
do rocket science…in like three to five years, impossible. (Bethany, ELL Teacher)

A second theme regarding academic needs involves the use of technology, which also appears to present an academic barrier for some ELL students who do not have the vocabulary, technical skills, or experience working with technology in the classroom. This could include typing short answers on the computer, doing internet-based research, and completing standardized tests. Many ELL students do not have experience with “fill in the bubble” tests, which presents an added challenge for them when taking standardized tests (Haley, School Counselor).

A third theme in the category of ELL student academic needs involves the proper class and program placement of these students as they get started in U.S. public schools. Students who are new to this country complete registration and testing through the Welcome Center in the district. Students enroll during all months of the school year. According to Haley, the School Counselor at Novus High School, students who are new to country and test low in English proficiency are placed in an intensive English program, which teaches basic English and a couple of core classes at a slower rate (Haley, School Counselor). This intensive English program also teaches ELL students about the U.S. public school system in terms of rules, expectations, behaviors, and norms. Elizabeth, an ELL teacher who has taught in this program for several years, said she taught ELL high school students how to walk down the hallways, what side of the stairs to walk on, how to use a locker, how to raise a hand
to speak, when to ask to use the restroom or pencil sharpener, and other expectations that many U.S. born students learn early in childhood.

Students are placed in ELL classes and programming primarily based on age, so those students young enough to meet the requirement for the intensive English program start at a lower level within the program. Kirauja, Cultural Liaison at Novus High School, suggests that when students are placed according to their age level and without prior background knowledge in the school system it presents academic challenges for those students. Kirauja further suggests that schools should do additional testing on student’s English ability before deciding to place students in classes that are unfit for their level of proficiency.

For students who received prior schooling in their home country or perhaps enrolled in the U.S. school system early in junior high or elementary school, there are more possibilities for them to accelerate beyond ELL classes in high school (Russell, School Counselor). Usually when students are brought to Early Intervention Team to come up with interventions to support the student’s learning, it is to assess the student for special services or find ways to better support the student. Rarely are ELL students brought to Early Intervention Team for gifted or talented referrals (Russell, School Counselor). Based on the responses of participants, it seems a test has not been developed to assess Somali speaking students for Special Education or Gifted and Talented services. It would be difficult then to identify students as exceptional learners without a tool or instrument that could accommodate the language skills they have in either a spoken or written language (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher).
Another difficult task in determining placement is the lack of permanent records for some ELL students. Many have permanent residency cards but in every case, students have a right to education with or without residency records. Haley, School Counselor at Novus High School, says Novus does require stamped, original copies of any transcripts from prior schooling and will not accept any email copies or photocopies to reduce the likelihood of receiving documents that have been tampered with. Haley further states that 90-95% of new to country high school-age students enroll without academic records and they are registered as ninth graders, if age appropriate, as a baseline to start the academic school year. Haley explains that students who are at a fourth or fifth grade level of English proficiency join mainstream classes, which presents an academic barrier for students, as some general high school textbooks are considered college level (Haley, School Counselor).

From an ELL teacher’s standpoint, Elizabeth identifies access to curriculum as an academic barrier for ELL students. These students, some with lower than fourth grade English proficiency, have little access to books and materials that are age appropriate for their English level. Elizabeth further states that it is difficult to find material that is low level and high interest for her students. Students overcome the challenge of facing material beyond their proficiency by using a Somali English dictionary, translator, trial-and-error, consulting with a Cultural Liaison, and through popular media and television (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison). Haley, School Counselor at Novus, states, “EL students manage and overcome. They are super hard workers. If
they are not super hard workers, they are certainly copying from other students and trying to get by the best they can.”

Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, estimated that the majority of Somali students who graduate from Novus High School do not go to college because of the language barrier.

Majority of [ELL students] are not linguistically prepared for college…they finish this school before they even achieve the academic goals; or some of them…they finish because by the age of 21, they are not allowed to stay in high school and they are forced out of the school system. (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison)

After age 21, students are referred to Adult Basic Education to complete their diploma (Russell, School Counselor). Students need to have 4 years of credit. If the student turns 21 after 2 years of high school, that student will have to complete 2 years of credit at the Adult Basic Education program (Russell, School Counselor). At Adult Basic Education, students have to be at sixth grade reading level in order to take the classes required for a high school diploma. Many ELL students are not able to pass an accuplacer test or ACT test to get into college due to their low English proficiency. Some students who decide to work toward a degree continue to do remedial classes at college to improve English proficiency. These remedial classes often use what is available for financial aid, however, they do not count toward a degree program (Russell, School Counselor).

Career needs. In addition to the academic needs identified by the participants, career needs of ELL students were also a category containing major themes from the
data analysis. “[ELL] students aren’t ready for life after high school or college just because they have 4 years of experience in a United States High School” (Russell, School Counselor). Many ELL students have goals for after high school but are missing the critical steps to achieve their goals (Bethany, ELL Teacher). ELL students may dream big or limit themselves based on what they know of the opportunities available to them. School counselors and ELL teachers help students explore career options and match interests with abilities.

Russell, School Counselor at Amicus High School, explains a grant-funded program called “Access and Opportunity” that helps high school students understand career and college options for their future. Some ELL teachers encourage students to first attend 2-year colleges and explore careers in technical fields so students can support themselves while continuing their education (Bethany, ELL Teacher). Navigating college applications, financial aid, housing, credits, registration, scholarships, and other aspects of college can be overwhelming topics for ELL students who may not understand the U.S. school system. Haley, School Counselor at Novus, does senior group guidance lessons to teach these career-related lessons to students. Miskin, Cultural Liaison at Amicus, suggests that not only do students need to be taught about their options, but also should be offered more in-depth experiences like touring universities and receiving in-school training during high school to prepare them for the workforce.

Bethany, an ELL teacher at Novus, noted that some of her female Somali students are more interested in getting married after high school and having children
than preparing a career path for their future as this is often a cultural expectation. Bethany, as well as other ELL teachers and school counselors, encourages students to have a career or college plan before they graduate high school. Parents and grandparents of Somali students, many of whom work in local factories where language is not an issue, are relying on and hoping this new generation to be educated and begin working careers in professional fields where they currently hold little ethnic representation (Bethany, ELL Teacher). Expanding ELL student’s frame of reference can be a challenge in career exploration but is necessary in meeting their career needs (Haley, School Counselor).

In summary, ELL students could benefit from career-related education and information regarding opportunities for college and career. With motivation and the encouragement of school professionals, ELL students can be successful in meeting their goals after high school.

**Personal and social needs.** In addition to academic and career needs, ELL students also experience unique personal and social needs which can pose challenges to their success. The first major theme in this category involved the social needs and challenges of ELL students due to the language barrier.

Miskin, Cultural Liaison, stated that ELL students stick together and do not often integrate with other students or people from other cultures. Bethany, ELL teacher, suggests that the Somali community within the district is large enough that the decision to integrate is left to the student. ELL students may not feel as obligated to
interact with students from other cultures if the school has a large population of English language learners that feel well supported by one another. Haley, School Counselor, explained that ELL students are resourceful in sharing information with one another and supporting each other in learning the school system and educational opportunities.

Bethany also suggested that many ELL students would like to be friends with native English speakers but find it difficult to communicate due to language barriers and cultural differences. In terms of being in class together, Bethany suggests the educational gap is so large that making friends and integrating with native English speakers can be difficult for ELL students. Often, English speaking students feel the need to help ELL students in the context of school and making friends, which as a result places students on unequal ground.

To level the playing field and place ELL students in opportunities where they can excel and make native English speaking friends, several participants said they often encourage their ELL students to join sports. Bethany, ELL teacher, suggested that sports are the only structured place outside of the educational setting for ELL students in her classes to make native English speaking friends. She further explained that ELL students involved in sports develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) at an increased rate. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, agrees that her ELL students are building relationships with other people in the community outside the Somali culture through their involvement with soccer, basketball, and other sports teams.
Opportunities for integration continue beyond sports into other extracurricular activities and events. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, explained the benefits of ELL students integrating with other students during the lunch hours. This integration would include ELL students in conversations about Prom, Homecoming, and other events that ELL students might not be familiar or take part in.

In addition to the social barriers faced by ELL students due to language, a second major theme involved the personal and social difficulties faced by ELL students due to cultural barriers. Though many participants highlighted the importance of building relationships and suggested ways for ELL students to integrate with native English speakers, many also encouraged their ELL students to support one another, as many will encounter similar struggles and challenges at school and in the community. Among those struggles, are negative perceptions, stereotypes, and discrimination that some ELL students face as a harsh welcome into the community or school system. Participants described perceptions they had witnessed within the district and community toward ELL students. Many negative perceptions within the community were identified related to appearance, hygiene, public support, terrorism, religion, and rituals. Participants suggested ways to combat these negative perceptions within the school to create a positive, open, and accepting school climate. Haley, School Counselor, suggested that schools are a microcosm of the community and that parents’ attitudes are imparted on students who bring those perceptions to school. Educating parents as well as teachers about culture and acceptance is the first step to reaching the students and changing the school climate.
Russell, School Counselor, explained that Amicus High School has a matrix that supports educating students about tolerance and acceptance. Through a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) initiative, Amicus High School promotes the values of safety, optimism, acceptance, and respect (Russell, School Counselor). Russell suggests that beyond the matrix, the information is disseminated to all students through teachable moments and lessons in the classroom. Lessons should prepare ELL students with an understanding of the school system, social norms, bullying, harassment, and expectations. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, suggests not only raising awareness of situations like bullying but also teaching ELL students the necessary steps to address challenges encountered at school.

In addition to challenges in social interactions, integration, and situations encountered at school, ELL students may also have personal development needs. Those needs could include coping strategies, help with transition, or overcoming difficult life events. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, explained that many ELL students do not receive help for their personal problems at school. Miskin suggested that some ELL students experience symptoms from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) but are not currently served within the school to address those needs. Many of the participants in this study agreed that ELL students who come from refugee camps have witnessed traumatic events and suffered difficulties in their transition to the United States. Haley, School Counselor, identified the overpopulation of refugee camps, family members witnessing a relative’s murder, or surviving with a lack of resources as difficult for ELL students to process and overcome. Miskin, Cultural
Liaison, further explained that students may have experienced the death of a family member or even serious illness in refugee camps and these experiences may cause students to react to stressful situations in a defensive or aggressive manner. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, identified that conflict sometimes arises between students from different refugee camps. Many Somali students come from clan-based communities that may be in conflict with one another. Elizabeth explained that a hierarchy exists among clans and there is a level of tension that exists from students who receive varying levels of schooling in refugee camps. These experiences can be difficult for students to manage and many are in need of counseling and mental health support.

Participants reported that ELL students, specifically Somali speaking ELL students, may have a negative perception of mental health or special services. Participants also identified that Somali speaking students may shy away from speaking to someone about personal problems or needs. All of these factors can influence the services ELL students receive for personal needs and even social support at school.

Other needs. English language learner students face barriers in the school and community. Many of these barriers are addressed through additional support at school, however a number of barriers exist in the community and also the homes of ELL students. Russell, School Counselor, identified housing as a barrier for ELL students and their families. Housing impacts movement within the district and frequent moving creates additional academic challenges. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, suggested that financially, many ELL students and their families are living below the poverty line. As
a result, Miskin stated that the ELL students he serves might only eat once or twice a
day. Bethany, ELL teacher, also suggests that these students may be working night
shifts and after-school jobs at local factories to support both their local family and
relatives overseas. Bethany states, “in high school specifically, those students have an
obligation to send money back to Africa and so a lot of my kids are grasping at
jobs…they are working from 5-10 p.m., they are going home, they are sleeping for a
little bit, they are getting up and doing a full day of school, and doing it over again.”
These students are not keeping the money but sending it back to their grandparents,
father, sister, or relative in Africa that is unable to get out of the refugee camp. It is the
student’s obligation to their family.

Haley and Russell, School Counselors, identified organizations and resources
that the school connects ELL families to for additional support. Among those
organizations are Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, and Welcome Centers
within the district. Both school counselors identified their role as helping to connect
families to resources and community agencies; working with county and social
services for the student to receive benefits; and locating places for families to find
clothing, food, and other resources they need. Resources may also include access to
information about medical assistance, car insurance, obtaining a driver’s license, day
childcare, navigating the legal system, paying bills, banking, citizenship, and technology
(Bethany, ELL Teacher; Haley, School Counselor).

Russell, School Counselor, also suggests public transportation is a challenge
for ELL students and their families. Limited busing is offered for after-school
programs and activities, which restricts the involvement ELL students can have after-school. Public transportation can be difficult to navigate and understand with limited knowledge of the English language and could be an added expense for families who are already struggling financially. Furthermore, Miskin, Cultural Liaison, suggests that a lack of transportation, especially owning a vehicle, makes it difficult for parents to attend meetings, conferences, and school events.

Navigation can also be a barrier related to transportation. Using technology and cell phones for navigation can be difficult for ELL students who have had limited experience with technology (Bethany, ELL Teacher). Navigating buildings and unfamiliar places can also be a challenge for those with limited English proficiency. Instances such as finding a restroom or following directions can be unique challenges for ELL students who are not familiar with the U.S. public school system or the community (Haley, School Counselor).

Miskin, Cultural Liaison, suggested that in the community, ELL students do not want other people to know their struggles or family needs. Miskin explained that ELL students will reach out for help from native English speakers but often do not want members of the Somali community to know that they are poor or in need of resources.

While addressing the academic, career, personal, and social challenges ELL students face in U.S. public high schools and the barriers ELL students face in the surrounding community; participants identified how ELL students could be better served by the school and school counselors. Participants identified current strategies
for providing support for ELL students and ways to build collaboration between school professionals. The next section highlights how well ELL students are being served from the view of participants and what can be done to better serve ELL students in U.S. public high schools.

Services

How well are ELL students being served? When asked how well ELL students are currently being served, Miskin, Cultural Liaison, suggested “not well, but it is okay. Not the way we expect it, but I can say it is fair.” As interviews indicated, ELL programs are underfunded and underserved in many areas. Some participants highlighted preparation for college or career as a deficit in ELL programs. Others highlighted the need for additional personal support for ELL students overcoming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other challenges. With the added support of an ELL administrator in the district, participants felt well supported and many expressed feelings that the ELL program is making positive changes to better support ELL students.

How can ELL students be better served? Participants in this study indicated providing an orientation for new to country students, offering training to staff, allocating additional funding, increasing staff (cultural Liaisons, paraprofessionals, and ELL teachers), providing after-school programming, reaching out to families through home visits, allowing extended time for students in ELL programs to graduate
high school, and reducing class sizes are all among solutions for better service to ELL students.

The school counselor’s role in working with ELL students was not clearly understood or defined by participants in the study. Several participants identified the school counselor as a liaison to mental health services and academic placement. Beyond schedule changes and placement, research indicated little collaboration between ELL teachers and school counselors. Specifically, a disconnect was highlighted during analysis between the perception of cultural Liaisons and school counselors regarding effective practices among school counselors. Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, stated:

> you know mostly school counselors are not that much involved directly with kids. The only time they [are] involved is when [cultural Liaisons] are around them, when we brought a situation to them, a kid to them, and [during] that time we facilitate…for them to understand what they need.

School counselors offered an alternate view of their role in the school stressing the importance of providing service for the academic, career, personal, and social needs of all students. Haley, School Counselor, suggested that ELL students seek out services within the school and are personal advocates in getting the support that they need. In better delineating the role of school counselors, as it relates to the work of cultural liaisons and ELL teachers, schools can increase support services and form more collaborative supports for ELL students. The first step to increasing support services for ELL students is an increased cultural awareness. The next section
highlights cultural influences on the population in study and how culture impacts the needs of ELL students and services that can be helpful.

**Cultural considerations and services.** The first theme involves how services could be better provided to ELL students by increasing cultural awareness and finding the appropriate balance assisting students with acculturation, while also providing accommodation. Miskin and Kirauja, Cultural Liaisons, advocate for a top-down approach in educating faculty about Somali and other cultures, to reach students with culturally sensitive teaching strategies and create a school climate that values diversity. Culture was a specific theme that emerged from the data collected through qualitative interviews with participants. Kirauja argued that since culture is such a big issue that it would be appropriate for teachers and counselors to teach students the cultural values of populations represented in the school.

Teachers are seen as a second parent to Somali speaking students and school professionals are highly respected by elders and parents (Russell, School Counselor; Elizabeth, ELL teacher). Such high regard can lead ELL students to become overly dependent on teachers, as described by Elizabeth, ELL teacher at Novus High School.

Elizabeth, ELL teacher, also explained the hardship ELL students experience balancing their native culture while adapting to U.S. culture. This can create conflict between parent and child as well as tension within families as students juggle culture and traditions with fitting in at school (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher). Kirauja, Cultural
Liaison, stated “ELL students compromise most of what they have as a culture, as a belief, certain traditions, and way of life to come to this [American] way of life.”

Cultural invisibilities often create the most issues for students (Bethany, ELL Teachers). These invisibilities include unwritten rules and social norms that are adapted by members of society. Bethany, ELL teacher, argues that people do not realize these cultural invisibilities exist until they become visible when there is an issue. Somali students’ beliefs relates to conservative dress, faith based practices, gender roles, dating relationships, and showing respect may not overlap with what is socially constructed as appropriate for U.S. high school students. Culturally, Somali students show respect for others by not making eye contact (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher; Bethany, ELL Teacher). U.S. teachers may find this disrespectful or conclude that the student is not listening, when indeed the student is actually showing great respect for the teacher based on their cultural beliefs.

Another common cultural practice among Somali speaking students is “name calling.” As explained by Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, Somali speaking students may call others by a physical characteristic or even physical defect.

If I tell you the lady with the brown hair, for me it is a normal situation. I am not offending you but…you may see it as offensive. The way the English and American culture is, they don’t directly tell you what’s wrong or if you are disabled. Somali people would call you that disability as a name for you.

This can create misunderstanding and conflict for Somali students in social situation at school and in the community.
Somali students are challenged to uphold traditions and beliefs while also placed in situations in school that would not typically be accepted by Somali culture. The most prominent example of this in U.S. public high schools is the heterogeneous gender class structure that allows boys and girls to attend classes together. Men and women in Somali culture are not considered equal; men are typically held in higher regard (Russell, School Counselor). This creates challenges for girls in the classroom when presentations and other assignments require students to talk in front of the class. Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, explained that in a Somali school system, boys and girls would be taught in separate classes. He further explained that when ELL students are taught in the same classroom, girls often shy away when asked a question or when asked to speak in front of the class. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, also explained that since there is limited interaction between students of different genders, teachers find it challenging to create seating charts and assign group work time.

Similar challenges exist beyond content area classes into physical education classes where boys and girls are asked to play sports together. Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, explained that the U.S. norm is for all students to run and play together. For Somali students, cultural and religious expectations do not allow for close contact between girls and boys. In addition to playing sports, swimming in physical education classes is also problematic for Somali students. Wearing a bathing suit is regarded as nakedness and could be considered shameful for Somali students (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison).
ELL students do not always voice their concerns to ELL teachers or school counselors and therefore, these cultural conflicts continue to exist in the classroom. Cultural Liaisons in this study identified Somali speaking students as shy and placed an emphasis on communicating with students in a private space. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, explained that Somali students often keep personal problems or school concerns to themselves. Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, added that Somali students value speaking to people in close proximity and in a separate location that protects their confidentiality and identity, as other students may not be aware of the situation (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison).

Somali students come from an oral community of loud, passionate speakers (Elizabeth, ELL teacher; Kirauja, Cultural Liaison; Haley, School Counselor). This need to socialize can bring tension in the classroom and school as loud, boisterous behaviors are not often tolerated or accepted in the confines of hallways and classrooms. These behaviors, that may be natural for Somali speaking students, do not fit within the expectations and norms established within the school. In addition, Somali students often debate. Russell, School Counselor, identified in his work with Somali English language learners that part of the culture is being able to argue a point while having a discussion. Behaviorally, this can translate to play fighting and other instances that could be misinterpreted by teachers and result in negative consequences. This miscommunication and misunderstanding of culture can create a challenge for ELL students who are still learning the rules, expectations, norms, and climate of the school.
While understanding that communication styles can be related to culture, there are also cultural influences on the importance placed on time. In Western culture, there is a value placed on punctuality and upholding meeting times. Participants identified that Somali parents often set appointments or meeting times during parent teacher conferences and do not arrive during the designated time (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher; Russell, School Counselor). Punctuality can create real challenges within the school as ELL teachers and school counselors maintain classroom schedules and other meetings throughout the day. When Somali parents arrive to the school after the appointment time, it is important to accommodate as there is a cultural expectation to be seen right away.

In addition to meeting times, the school must also accommodate Somali students’ prayer schedule and religious practices. Participants suggested that the religious practices of Somali students were difficult for the school to understand with the first group of ELL students that enrolled at Novus and Amicus High Schools (Haley, School Counselor; Russell, School Counselor; Elizabeth, ELL Teacher). Haley supported the need for accommodations stating, “why don’t we have school on Sunday? Because we are honoring the religion of our dominant culture, which is Catholic or Christian religion.” Her argument is that schools accommodate Christian religious holidays and therefore, must also accommodate Muslim as well.

Russell, School Counselor, explains that students can request a prayer pass to leave the classroom for prayer. The school provides the time and a space to meet the religious needs of students. This may also include washing of hands and feet before or
after prayer time (Haley, School Counselor). The school also accommodates for male students to attend the mosque on Fridays for religious observations. Russell further explained that students who attend prayer but do not participate might have their prayer pass revoked.

Religious practices live beyond prayer time during school hours and include specific dietary restrictions. Muslim students have encountered difficulty during lunchtime in the cafeteria with their religious commitment to avoid consuming pork products or byproducts (Kirauja, Cultural Liaison). School cafeterias can accommodate for dietary restrictions and label meals for Muslim students to easily identify pork products.

While ELL students educate the school on cultural practices specific to Somali culture and school professionals must be more understanding and accommodating to ELL student culture; Miskin, Cultural Liaison, suggests that students also need to be educated in terms of U.S. culture and expectations. Miskin identified hygiene and clothing as major areas to address with Somali students. Miskin explained that students from other cultures might not understand the need to dress up for school, brush their teeth, or change their clothes throughout the week. Students may be accustomed to wearing the same clothing day and night for months; and Miskin suggests that if no one informs them about proper clothing attire, students may continue to wear the same shirt for weeks. This educational component is critical in helping ELL students to know and understand U.S. culture; to help students avoid being misperceived or ostracized because of their upbringing or cultural beliefs.
Cultural education and training are also important for those working directly with ELL students. Bethany, ELL teacher, suggests that school professionals take more than one cultural course to prepare them in their work with ELL students. Bethany advocates for study abroad and other opportunities that prepare professionals to work with students from other cultures. Continuing education, learning another language, and seeking cultural experiences help teachers and school counselors to better understand cultural issues and help ELL students navigate challenges at school. Russell and Haley, School Counselors, described that there is a unique challenge at each school and personal experience working with a diverse population helps prepare school counselors for their work with ELL students. Haley stated that, “…people in general are very forgiving and if they know that your intentions are the best, they will help you through that learning curve.” Russell stressed the importance of consultation with other school counselors to handle unfamiliar situations. Bethany, ELL teacher, explained that some programs require college students to observe an ELL classroom one day a week for a semester in the very beginning of their studies. This observation allows students to decide if becoming an ELL teacher would be a good fit for them based on their experience. Russell, School Counselor, explained that working with ELL students takes more patience, more time, and often more problem solving techniques to figure out the uniqueness of their situations. Russell’s response to the increased workload for school counselors working with ELL students is to continue to be diligent, continue to be patience, continue to be change agents within the school, and continue to find ways to provide support for students.
In addition to increasing cultural awareness, participants in this study have identified other practices among school counselors and ELL teachers who are effectively responding to the needs of English language learners in U.S. public high schools. In the next section, specific needs and corresponding practices are outlined with effective strategies in supporting ELL students.

**Increased support services.** Participants advocated for after-school support, time, training, resources and materials, funding, additional support staff, and collaboration among school professionals. ELL students enter U.S. public high schools with limited knowledge of the school system. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, supports the idea of providing an orientation that would present students with a basis of how school works, U.S. culture, how to be successful in school, rules and expectations to follow, and their rights and responsibilities as students. Miskin suggested that an orientation is offered to all Somali ELL students in both English and Somali languages. Orientation would serve as an educational experience for those students who are new to country and a reminder for other ELL students who have completed a year of more within the U.S. public school system.

Providing support is one of the most important aspects highlighted by participants in their work with ELL students. Bethany, ELL teacher, said that students consider her an English speaking mother. She pushes them, motivates them, and encourages them to try harder. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, agrees that teachers are the biggest support for ELL students in the school setting. Elizabeth also suggested that
community members provide support for students who are new to the country. Specifically, Elders and those who have been in the United States for several years, can provide support for students outside of school.

Russell, School Counselor, suggested that visiting another school with an established ELL program could help professionals identify practices and strategies currently in place to support ELL students. Russell explained that the idea to develop a Welcome Center in the district came out of a site visit with a reputable ELL program at another school in the state.

Similarly, Amicus and Novus High Schools have piloted some changes within their own ELL programs to accommodate the growing needs of ELL students in the district. One is the use of cultural Liaisons who can provide bilingual support as translators, classroom support, and liaisons between Somali families and the school. Russell, School Counselor, explains that cultural Liaisons are always on call within the building to provide additional support when Somali parents visit the school for meetings, conferences, and parent-teacher collaboration held for ELL students. Currently, Amicus and Novus High Schools each employ two cultural Liaisons to serve within the school. Bethany, ELL teacher, sees a growing need for additional staffing as the ELL population continues to grow within the district. Bethany advocates a 50:1 ratio that would encourage the hire of a cultural Liaison for every fifty ELL students enrolled in the school. With a growing population and larger class sizes, Kirauja, Cultural Liaison, also suggests the hire of Somali speaking paraprofessionals in the classroom to provide additional support to teachers. As
cultural Liaisons are pulled from the classroom to assist with parent contact, translation, or even behavior incidents, paraprofessionals could be in the classroom providing support. Bethany, ELL teacher, agrees that paraprofessionals in the classroom would especially benefit the lower level English proficiency and new to country classes, where the most support is needed.

Increased support in the classroom could also include hiring additional ELL teachers (Haley, school counselor). With a shift to co-taught classes this year at both Amicus and Novus High Schools, ELL teachers now partner with content area teachers to deliver core content to ELL students (Haley, School Counselor). Elizabeth, ELL Teacher, explained that content teachers who originally taught the material to ELL students without ELL teacher support realized after the partnership that content teachers had been doing a disservice to ELL students for years. Content teachers may not realize the magnitude of ELL students’ struggle with content and how much extra support students need (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher). Teaching an entire class of low English proficiency students brings these challenges to awareness for teachers who are not accustomed to working with ELL students. Haley, School Counselor, suggested that the school should make a real focused effort on providing time and training for teachers throughout the year to learn best practices and strategies for working with ELL students.

Providing orientation for students and training for teachers only accounts for a portion of the educational components participants identified in this study. Participants also advocated for reaching the community with information about those cultures
represented in the district. Participants suggested a panel or workshop that could be provided to school staff and students as well as the community, that would address cultural information specific to the Somali population in the district. Russell, School Counselor, advocated for a panel offered during a workshop day for teachers to learn more about culture and working with ELL students. Haley, School Counselor, advocated for education in the classroom where ELL students can educate native English speakers about Somali culture, through Social Studies or other content areas. Bethany, ELL teacher, suggested a panel with representation of ELL teachers, cultural Liaisons, community members, elders, and ELL students that would address questions and answers related to culture. A panel event could be open to the entire staff including paraprofessionals and teachers as well as students, parents, and community members.

Reaching the community and making parent visits to the home were both topics addressed by cultural Liaisons in this study. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, explained that most Somali students’ parents do not speak English and do not know and understand U.S. culture, making it difficult to reach families with critical information related to school, resources, or opportunities. Haley, School Counselor, explained that school professionals should not assume a parent will not be able to communicate but instead should continue to connect with families. Miskin suggested when working with Somali parents to “go and listen, visit, talk to them, sit down with them, and then they will tell us what is going on at home or if they need help.” With potentially limited transportation, limited English, and a limited knowledge of the school system,
these barriers often restrain parents from getting important information about their student.

School professionals can increase efforts to reach out to parents and families as well as increase efforts to reach out to ELL students in the school setting. Miskin, Cultural Liaison, argues that the school is not doing enough to integrate with ELL students and to fully understand their concerns. Miskin suggested that school counselors visit ELL students in their classes and take time to ask them questions about school. Building this relationship is important in serving ELL students’ academic, career, personal, and social needs. Elizabeth, ELL Teacher, explained that many of her ELL students have witnessed traumatic events and experienced loss in their life that has resulted in physical and emotional stress damage. Starting a conversation with ELL students regarding school and academic concerns can help school counselors build trust to further support ELL students in addressing personal concerns. ELL students may have come to U.S. without parts of their family (Elizabeth, ELL teacher) and ultimately without social supports. School professionals can help connect students to resources and even outside mental health support to meets student’s personal needs.

ELL teachers, before an influx that brought class sizes to full capacity, were often considered that point of connection for ELL students when there were academic or personal concerns. Bethany, ELL Teacher, explained that when class sizes were under twenty students she was better able to be that counselor for her ELL students. She often helped her ELL students connect with resources, navigate social situations,
and address academic concerns. Bethany further stated, “…with 165 kids every day I can’t do that anymore and it breaks my heart and all of the secondary ELL teachers feel the same way; that…we used to be that third parent and now there are so many [students] that we physically don’t. We can’t do that anymore.” Bethany explained that the capacity of students has changed the services she is able to offer to ELL students. Elizabeth and Bethany, ELL teachers, agree that other populations within the school are able to hold smaller class sizes such as special education with seven or eight students and two paraprofessionals or foreign language classes like Spanish with class sizes at twenty or less. With smaller class sizes, under twenty students, ELL teachers would also be able to level students more effectively to meet their needs. Though funding often comes from special services, participants agreed that ELL programs are underfunded for the special population being served. As the population continues to grow, the funding and resources allocated to the program remain stagnant.

An area that both school counselors and ELL teachers stress importance involves educational materials. Haley, school counselor, suggests leveled textbooks that would serve students at different reading levels who are in the same content classes. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, advocated that adapted materials are created for ELL students. Some examples she explained were interactive worksheets for lengthy readings, providing step-by-step instructions instead of paragraph descriptions, eliminating unnecessary vocabulary, and adding pictures to definitions. Elizabeth explained when she writes out step-by-step instructions that she provides a check box
next to each numbered item for clarity. She has adapted readings and other content to create high interest material for students with low level English proficiency. Elizabeth stressed the importance of an “I do, we do, you do” model, where the teacher first instructs students and completes a practice problem with the students before asking the students to complete assignments on their own. Many of the strategies ELL teachers use in the classroom can be applied to co-taught and even general core content classes (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher).

Even with adapted assignments, ELL teachers are required to meet state specific standards. Haley, School Counselor, expressed concern for ELL students meeting state standards to receive a diploma. Haley explained that homework and other assignments may help ELL students to maintain passing grades, however may not be truly reflective of the knowledge ELL students have gained. Haley expressed concerns for failing test grades when homework grades are helping teachers push ELL students through the school system. The argument she makes is “it does matter to graduate from High School. What have you achieved and learned? It has to be standard” (Haley, School Counselor). ELL students who are struggling may not be receiving the added support they need to be successful and with limited time in the program some of these students graduate without the skill set they need to be successful after high school. Cultural Liaisons, school counselors, and ELL teachers in this study agree that students need more time. Russell, School Counselor, stated, “[ELL students] need more time. We need more community help…we need to think differently about how we service these students.” Teachers need more time to create
adapted curriculum and students need more time to learn and develop. Bethany, ELL teacher, explained that a five year program would allow ELL students to spend added time in high school to further develop skills. Bethany suggested that with students aging out of the program at twenty-one years old, there needs to be greater partnership between high schools and community colleges to allow ELL students to continue their education.

Some participants placed emphasis on after-school programs and summer school to bridge the gap for extended services offered to ELL students. Miskin and Kirauja, Cultural Liaisons, explained that an after-school program for tutoring and mentoring could help students boost their language skills. Bethany, School Counselor, suggests the limitation for after-school programming could be related to lack of transportation and busing for after-school activities. Another identified source for academic support is summer school. ELL students have an opportunity to take classes during the summer months for credit recovery and to graduate in time. Connection to academic programs and additional support could help ELL students gain linguistic skills that prepare students for college and the workforce.

Students may also develop personally and socially through mentoring opportunities and involvement in sports teams. Cultural Liaisons and ELL teachers explained that within the ELL program some teachers expect native English speaking or mainstream students to serve as aids in the classroom. Elizabeth, ELL teacher, stated “my [ELL] students thrive on being close to people and having those connections.” Setting up a mentoring program could help ELL students form
connections and also develop socially and linguistically. Another outlet for ELL students’ personal and social development is involvement in sports. Bethany, ELL teacher, suggested that sports help students to form connections with native English speakers and find a sense of belonging at school. Many ELL students find support from their parents in joining sports but cannot afford the activity fee associated with joining a team. Bethany, ELL teacher, explained that students on free and reduced lunch status pay a reduced rate of thirty dollars, instead of the two hundred dollars required to join a sport at Novus High School. Scholarship opportunities and other sources of funding could be available to ELL students; it is the role of ELL teachers and school counselors to connect ELL students to these resources and opportunities.

**Increased collaboration.** Differing views of collaboration exist among school counselors, ELL teachers, and cultural Liaisons. Though most agree that collaboration is essential in supporting ELL students, an initiative to increase collaboration within the school has not been put in place. Both counselors and ELL teachers identified scheduling as an outlet for collaboration in support of ELL students. Beyond selection of classes and making schedule changes, there is little overlap in the services provided to ELL students.

Elizabeth, ELL teacher, explained that the ELL department team meets twice a month at Novus High School to discuss student issues. Research indicated little to no collaboration with school psychologists, social workers, and counselors during these ELL department team meetings. Furthermore, the development of a team including
administration, the counseling department, and ELL department has not been established (Elizabeth, ELL Teacher).

Due to the ambiguous definition perceived by ELL teachers and cultural Liaisons regarding the role of school counselors, from the viewpoint of ELL teachers, most major issues are handled in the classroom. Therefore, school counselors have limited contact with ELL students, as students are not often referred to the school counselor to discuss academic, career, personal, or social needs. ELL teachers, as supported by research, are often the one-stop shop for ELL students. With a growing population, ELL teachers have indicated limited time to address the personal needs of their ELL students. This gap in service can be addressed with greater collaboration among school professionals. Participants highlighted communication as necessary and important in collaborating with one another to address scheduling concerns, placement, and other issues. Increased communication and referrals could help build collaboration, as ELL teachers may be limited in the services they are able to provide. School counselors, who are specifically trained to handle the personal and social needs of students, could lighten the load of ELL teachers by collaborating on home, school, and even personal issues of ELL students.

A whole school approach is supported by research and the findings of this study. As indicated by participants, ELL students could benefit from the added support of professionals within the school who can address the unique needs, challenges, and barriers some ELL students face in U.S. public high schools. Providing a structure that
includes caring adults, mentors, and professionals will help ELL students feel well supported in the school.
Chapter V

CONCLUSION

“All [ELL students] need is motivation and encouragement and time.” (Miskin, Cultural Liaison)

Entering a brand new culture, a new community, and a new learning environment completely unique from previous life experiences could be overwhelming and even terrifying for some people. Participants in this study agreed that overcoming language barriers and other challenges would be difficult for anyone to handle. Several participants even said, given the circumstances of some ELL students, they would have given up or blamed someone for the challenges associated with immigration or refugee camp experiences.

Many ELL students overcome the challenging situation they face with pride and advocate for their own needs (Bethany, ELL Teacher; Haley, School Counselor). Bethany, an ELL teacher with many years of experience working with ELL students, encouraged school professionals to “have empathy for [ELL students] but understand that you need to push them forward. You need to also be aware of racial and cultural issues to give them power to move on.” Bethany noted the difference between school professionals having empathy and feeling sorry for students overcoming challenges. “Don’t feel sorry for them. They don’t want that. You don’t help them that way”
(Bethany, ELL Teacher). Many participants highlighted a commitment to education among the ELL students they work with, expressing that ELL students understand that education is a way out and a ticket to success in the future.

This research study incorporated six different viewpoints from three groups of professionals that work closely with ELL students: school counselors, ELL teachers, and cultural Liaisons. Each participant, through their work with ELL students, has developed strategies and techniques for serving the needs of ELL students. Each helped paint a picture of the needs of ELL students and the system of support ELL students they receive and need from school professionals.

ELL students have unique academic, career, personal, and social needs that should be supported by professionals in the school, as students overcome challenges and barriers to become successful students and members of society. With a collaborative whole school approach, school professionals can work in partnership to serve the needs of ELL students. With added time in the program, access to appropriate materials, increased funding, additional staffing, after-school programming, reduced class sizes, training for staff and students, and other support systems ELL students can be better served within the context of school.

The findings in this study could help school counselors to increase their awareness of the unique needs of ELL students and increase their multicultural competence. With a growing population of ELL students in U.S. public schools, it is important for School Counselors to understand the academic, career, personal, and
social needs of ELL students and effective strategies in supporting their development in these areas.

School counselors, with knowledge in working with ELL students generally and Somali students specifically, may find the results of this study to be representative of those experiences. The results of this study may not apply to work with other ELL populations and thus the results cannot be generalized to all ELL populations in U.S. public high schools. However, there may be many similarities between the needs and services found in the two schools in this study and those of ELL students elsewhere.

Limitations

One limitation of this study may be due to the small sample size, geographic location, and the specific makeup of the ELL population in this study. This study involved six participants sharing their experiences as employees serving ELL students in two Minnesota High Schools. The perceptions and experiences of these professionals and the ELL students they serve may not be the same experience in other locations.

A second limitation of this study involves the depth of exploration due to the limited time spent with each participant. Each participant participated in only a one hour interview and the opportunity for a short follow-up validity check contact. While valuable information was gained from these interviews, more time spent with participants would likely provide more detail and depth into participant experiences.
A final limitation involves the use of only participant perceptions. Due to time and access constraints, the researcher of this study was not able to also observe ELL students receiving services or interview the ELL students. Therefore the themes are limited to the experiences of the professionals serving the students. These limitations suggest the potential for future studies to aid in increasing the depth of knowledge related to this study.

Future Research Directions

For researchers to fully understand the challenges and barriers ELL students experience, further research in the area of immigration and refugee camp experiences could provide more thorough information regarding the needs of ELL students. Future research in this area could include a large sample of participants that would allow for student observation and lived experiences of Somali students. Classroom observations could support additional information related to personal and social challenges within the school. Observations could also include non-verbal and verbal communication and a greater understanding of linguistic challenges of ELL students.

Expanding research beyond ELL students’ experiences in U.S. public high schools to also include research at local community colleges and universities that offer ELL support and ELL specific classes would be beneficial. Future research could on ELL students’ transition from high school to college or career is needed. Scarce research is available in the area of career development for Somali students specifically, and ELL students in general. Similarly, research in the area of ELL
transition from middle school to high school could provide longitudinal data that reflects the amount of ELL students who are prepared for advanced placement classes or college programs. Finally, more research is needed on how school counselors can play a bigger role in providing counseling services to ELL students to ensure all students receive the academic, career, and personal, and social support from these professionals.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Adult Informed Consent
Adult Informed Consent

Title
School counselor support for academic, career, personal, and social needs of English language learner (ELL) students

Primary Investigator: Telephone: Email:
Jacqueline Seddon 815-985-0167 seja1202@stcloudstate.edu
MS: School Counseling
St. Cloud State University

Thesis Advisor: Telephone: Email:
Dr. William Lepkowski 320-308-5280 wjlepkowski@stcloudstate.edu
Associate Professor
School Counseling Program Coordinator
St. Cloud State University

Introduction
English language learner (ELL) students face many challenges when immersed in a new and foreign learning environment. Understanding the academic, career, personal, and social needs of ELL students should be a goal of all school counselors to best support English language learners, and determine “best practice” strategies and interventions when working with students’ development in these areas. Yet many school counselors and ELL programs may not be optimally integrated or prepared to support this growing population.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to understand the needs of ELL students in American public high schools in regard to academic preparation for post-secondary education, career-readiness, and development of personal and social skills, as well as the services ELL students receive as support for these needs.
Study Procedures

Participants will be recruited from two public high schools in St. Cloud, Minnesota. There will be three categories of participants including: cultural navigators, ELL teachers, and school counselors, who will be selected for in-depth interviews. Two successful interviews will be completed from each category of participants. Interviews will last at least one-hour per individual and will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The purpose of audio recording is to better recall information and maintain accuracy when the researcher later transcribes the interviews.

After the researcher transcribes the interviews, a follow-up validity check will allow you to review your transcribed interview to check for accuracy of the data. This follow-up will take place in a second interview that will not be audio recorded or transcribed, but will serve as a form of verification for the study.

Risks and Discomforts

This study presents no more than minimal risk to participants, meaning that the harm or discomfort anticipated in the research is no greater than that encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. When discussing your personal experiences you may experience undesired and/or unexpected psychological changes such as anxiety, emotional discomfort, embarrassment, etc. or other reactions when discussing sensitive information.

While every effort will be taken to protect confidentiality, please acknowledge that there is always a risk of a breach of confidentiality.

Benefits

While there are no guaranteed benefits, the information gathered in this research may help improve the understanding of the unique needs of ELL students and the services they receive. Research in this topic area could help school counselors achieve a higher level of multicultural competence and increase preparedness of school districts to serve this population.

Confidentiality

The information gathered during your participation in this study will be kept confidential. Your personal identity will remain confidential. You will not be identified by your name in any published material. All collected data (written and audio recorded) will be stored securely. All electronic forms of data will be kept in encrypted files. All stored data will be de-identified, which means that each participant’s identity will not be connected to their individual responses. All data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked office. All data will be destroyed summer of 2015.
Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time, for any reason, without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, the thesis advisor, or the researcher.

The study investigator may also stop your participation at any time without your consent for the following reasons: if you fail to follow directions for participating in the study, if the study is canceled, or for reasons deemed appropriate by the research coordinator to maintain subject safety and the integrity of the study.

Acceptance to Participate in Study

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read the information provided above, and you have consent to participate. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty after signing this form.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions regarding participation in this study please contact the Primary Investigator, Jacqueline Seddon at 815-985-0167 or Thesis Advisor, Dr. Lepkowski at 320-308-5280. Should you want a copy of the final write-up please contact the Primary Investigator.

Subject Name (Printed):

Subject Signature:

Date:

St. Cloud State University
Institutional Review Board

Approval date: 7/30/14
Expiration date: 7/30/15
APPENDIX B

Interview Protocols
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS


School Counselor Interview Protocol:

1. How long have you been working as a counselor?
   At this school?

2. What are the main challenges for ELL students in your school?
   In the surrounding community?

3. How would you describe the language barriers that ELL students face?
   In what ways do ELL students manage/overcome language barriers?

4. What are the academic, career, personal, and social needs of ELL students?
   How are they alike or different than overall student population?

5. How would you describe the cultural barriers (social norms, expectations, rules, dress code, perspectives, values, communication styles, challenges, difficulties, adjustments) that ELL students face?

6. Tell me about a time when a student overcame cultural barriers.
   a. What support did that student have in overcoming these challenges?
   b. How is this example similar to/different than experiences that other ELL students have?

7. What other barriers do ELL students experience?
   a. How do ELL students overcome these barriers?

8. What have you witnessed as far as attitudes (judgments, stereotypes, or negative perceptions) toward ELL students?

9. How well is the ELL student population being served from your perspective?
   a. What should happen?
   b. How can ELL students be better served?

10. How prepared do you think teachers are to support ELL students needs?
11. How prepared do you think school counselors are to support ELL students
   academic needs?
   Personal/social needs?
   Career needs?

12. What are school counselors doing that is effective in helping ELL students?

13. How often do you get in contact with the ELL staff?
   What are the main reasons for contact?

14. How do school professionals collaborate to help meet the needs of ELL
   students?

15. Have you received any specific training to support ELL students?
   What specific areas would be valuable to have more training or expertise in
   supporting ELL students?

16. Tell me a story about when an ELL student of yours/at your school beat the
   odds, struggled with adversity, or overcame a really challenging situation.
   a. How did that student overcome?
   b. What did that student’s support system look like?
   c. What do you find heartbreaking about that story?
   d. What do you find inspiring about that story?
Cultural Liaison Interview Protocol:

1. How long have you been working as a cultural Liaison? At this school?
2. Describe your role at the school? In the classroom?
3. What are the main challenges for ELL students in your school? In the surrounding community?
4. How would you describe the language barriers that ELL students face? In what ways do ELL students manage/overcome language barriers?
5. What are the academic, career, personal, and social needs of ELL students? How are they alike or different than overall student population?
6. How would you describe the cultural barriers (social norms, expectations, rules, dress code, perspectives, values, communication styles, challenges, difficulties, adjustments) that ELL students face?
7. Tell me about a time when a student overcame cultural barriers.
   a. What support did that student have in overcoming these challenges?
   b. How is this example similar to/different than experiences that other ELL students have?
8. What other barriers do ELL students experience?
   a. How do ELL students overcome these barriers?
9. What have you witnessed as far as attitudes (judgments, stereotypes, or negative perceptions) toward ELL students?
10. How well is the ELL student population being served from your perspective?
    a. What should happen?
    c. How can ELL students be better served?
11. How do school professional collaborate to help meet the needs of ELL students?
12. How prepared do you think teachers are to support ELL students needs?
13. How prepared do you think school counselors are to support ELL students
   academic needs?
   Personal/social needs?
   Career needs?

14. What are school counselors doing that is effective in helping ELL students?

15. What kind of training would be valuable or beneficial for school counselors to
    have in working with ELL students?

16. Tell me a story about when an ELL student of yours/at your school beat the
    odds, struggled with adversity, or overcame a really challenging situation.
       a. How did that student overcome?
       b. What did that student’s support system look like?
       c. What do you find heartbreaking about that story?
       d. What do you find inspiring about that story?
ELL Teacher Interview Protocol:

1. How long have you been working as an ELL teacher? At this school?
2. What interests you about working with ELL students?
3. What are the main challenges for ELL students in your school? In the surrounding community?
4. How would you describe the language barriers that ELL students face? In what ways do ELL students manage/overcome language barriers?
5. What are the academic, career, personal, and social needs of ELL students? How are they alike or different than overall student population?
6. How would you describe the cultural barriers (social norms, expectations, rules, dress code, perspectives, values, communication styles, challenges, difficulties, adjustments) that ELL students face?
7. Tell me about a time when a student overcame cultural barriers. 
   a. What support did that student have in overcoming these challenges?
   b. How is this example similar to/different than experiences that other ELL students have?
8. What other barriers do ELL students experience? 
   a. How do ELL students overcome these barriers?
9. What have you witnessed as far as attitudes (judgments, stereotypes, or negative perceptions) toward ELL students?
10. How well is the ELL student population being served from your perspective? 
    a. What should happen?
    b. How can ELL students be better served?
11. How prepared do you think teachers are to support ELL students needs?
12. How prepared do you think school counselors are to support ELL students academic needs? Personal/social needs? Career needs?
13. What are school counselors doing that is effective in helping ELL students?
14. How often do you refer students to the school counselor? Do they stop in on their own or are they called down? What do ELL students go to the school counselor for?

15. How do school professionals collaborate to help meet the needs of ELL students?

16. Tell me a story about when an ELL student of yours/at your school beat the odds, struggled with adversity, or overcame a really challenging situation.
   a. How did that student overcome?
   b. What did that student’s support system look like?
   c. What do you find heartbreaking about that story?
   d. What do you find inspiring about that story?
APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Administrative Services 210
Website: stcloudstate.edu/osp  Email: osp@stcloudstate.edu
Phone: 320-308-4932

Name: Jacqueline Seddon
Address: [Redacted]
Email: seja1202@stcloudstate.edu

USA

IRB Application Determination
Exempt
7/30/2014

Co-Investigators
Advisor: Dr. William Lepkowski
Project Title: School Counselor support for academic, career, personal, and social needs of English language learner (ELL) students

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application to conduct research involving human subjects. We are pleased to inform you that your project has been APPROVED in full accordance with federal regulations. Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

- Exempt reviews only require the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

Good luck on your research. If you require further assistance, please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 320-308-4932 or email ldonnay@stcloudstate.edu. All correspondence should include your SCSU IRB number as indicated on this letter.

For the Institutional Review Board:
Linda Donnay
IRB Administrator
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

For St. Cloud State University:
Patricia Hughes
Interim Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

SCSU IRB#: 1311 - 1623  Approval Date: 7/30/2014
Type of Review:  Expiration Date: 7/29/2015