

# Faculty-Student Dual Relationships: Implications for Counselor Educators

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## Abstract

This article considers dual relationships between faculty and students from an ethical perspective. A review of the literature focuses on the potential impact of dual relationships on students, faculty, academic institutions, and the consumers students will ultimately serve. Models promoting ethical dual relationships are identified and strategies for counselor educators to influence the systemic variables impacting faculty-student dual relationships are discussed.

## Introduction

The literature concerning dual relationships presents a fascinating array of diverse perspectives that mirror the complexity of this issue. Even the term "dual relationship" is somewhat ambiguous, as evidenced by the necessity of operationally defining the term in the context of research. For example, Kitchener (1988) described dual relationships from a role theory perspective, noting "role theory suggests that in dual relationships one individual is simultaneously or sequentially participating in two role categories that conflict or compete" (p. 218). Congress (2001) distinguished between educational and non-educational relationships in clarifying dual relationships for her research with social work educators, defining a dual relationship as "an educator having a noneducational relationship with a student. A noneducational relationship occurs when an educator relates to a student as a sexual partner, a friend, an employer, a professional colleague, or as a therapist" (p. 259).

Corey, Corey, and Callanan (1998) noted that the term "dual relationship" does not adequately convey the complexity of roles and relationships between therapists and clients; this may be even more accurate of faculty-student relationships. The authors of the American Counseling Association's (ACA) 2005 *Code of Ethics* appear to have responded to this complexity by removing the term "dual relationships" from the *Code of Ethics*, substituting the more general term "nonprofessional relationships".

The absence of clear language specifically addressing dual relationships between students and supervisees is apparent to counselor educators who look to the *Code of Ethics* for guidelines concerning faculty-student dual relationships. The 2005 ACA *Code of Ethics* encourages educators who enter into nonprofessional relationships with students to take precautions similar to those taken when entering into nonprofessional relationships with clients, ostensibly on the premise that guidelines regulating counselor-client relationships can be used for educator-student relationships as well. Indeed, Sullivan and Ogloff (1998) identified major similarities between faculty-student and client-counselor relationships. For example, both relationships are based on an inherent inequality in that one individual is seeking a service from another, and each presents the potential for negative consequences for noncompliance. While suggesting that clients have greater psychological vulnerability and an accompanying need for protection, these authors identified the inherent power differential as a common factor between faculty-student and client-counselor relationships.

Despite these similarities, however, others have identified significant differences between

relationships in academe and therapy. For example, Bowman and Hatley (1995) noted the absence of therapeutic goals, direct financial contract, and degree of disclosure of personal information, and further emphasized that the purpose of faculty is to develop colleagues and professionals, a goal noticeably absent from the counselor-client relationship. These differences make questionable the use of ethical guidelines developed for the counselor-client relationship within the context of the faculty-student relationship.

The confusion surrounding faculty-student dual relationships is particularly troubling in light of the potential for harm to both faculty and students involved in dual relationships (Biaggio, Paget, & Chenoweth, 1997; Blevins-Knabe, 1992; Kitchener, 1992; Schover, Levenson, & Pope, 1983; Holmes, Rupert, Ross, & Shapera, 1999). This review of the literature identifies how, as faculty members, counselor educators commonly encounter the challenges of dual relationships in the routine course of their educational responsibilities. The impact of dual relationships on students, faculty, academic institutions, and consumers is explored with the aim of increasing awareness of the potential for harm. Finally, models promoting ethical dual relationships between students and faculty are identified and recommendations are provided based on the implications of systemic variables impacting counselor educator-student dual relationships.

### **Challenges of Dual Relationships**

Counselor educators are faced with an especially thorny problem in that their relationships with students include many tacitly accepted dual roles that are both unavoidable and necessary. For example, the job expectations of faculty members include several overlapping responsibilities including serving as academic advisor, graduate student employer,

administrator, supervisor, and mentor, in addition to the role of teacher (Kitchener, 1988; Rupert & Holmes, 1997). At first glance, these roles appear relatively benign. However, as Kitchener (1988) observed, all dual relationships have the potential for ethical boundary concerns. In fact, the most prevalent problematic dual relationships are nonsexual in nature (Biaggio et al., 1997).

The mentoring relationship in particular has been cited as a potentially problematic relationship from an ethical standpoint (Johnson & Nelson, 1999; Rubin, Hampton, & McManus, 1997). Johnson and Nelson (1999) described how the multiple aspects of the mentoring role make it particularly complex and unique in potential for both benefit and harm for students, citing the lack of literature and formal training concerning mentoring and the closeness of the mentoring relationship as contributing factors.

The prevalence of dual relationships in academe is perhaps made more palatable by the potential benefits for students who enter into dual relationships with faculty members, such as development of professional identity (Robinson & Reid, 1985), opportunities for scholarly discourse and professional socialization (Biaggio et al., 1997), facilitation of the supervisory process (Rubin et al., 1997), employment opportunities as research and teaching assistants (Congress, 2001), and development of student autonomy and decision-making ability (Ei & Bowen, 2002). Ei and Bowen in particular advocated for recognition of the benefits of dual relationships with students, noting the potential for students' development as they "explore and act on their own ideals," and that "students who take the initiative to seek out or respond to certain types of interactions with instructors may be looking for an enhanced college experience and might therefore be encouraged" (p. 189).

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Balancing the potential benefits of dual relationships between faculty and students is the potential for harm due to difficulties in identifying, establishing, and maintaining ethical boundaries. Rupert and Holmes (1997) noted the confusion stemming from the complexity of faculty-student relationships, as well as the lack of clear guidance from the professional literature. Biaggio et al. (1997) also recognized the challenges faced by faculty as they attempt to discern between valuable and problematic practices, and identified three conditions to use as benchmarks for professors to assess the ethicality of dual relationships with students including the maintenance of educational standards, the provision of educational experiences, and the absence of exploitative practices.

Further compounding the maintenance of ethical boundaries is the lack of consensus among both faculty and students regarding the limits of ethical behavior. For example, in a national survey of professional psychology faculty, Rubin et al. (1997) identified several behaviors that were considered ethical by a majority of respondents under most circumstances, including students seeking advice regarding their personal lives, students initiating personal relationships with faculty members, faculty serving as mentors to students, and having friendships with students. In a study involving graduate students and counselor education faculty, Kolbert, Morgan, and Brendal (2002) found differences in student and professor responses to dual relationships involving friendships and monetary interactions with current students, and romantic-sexual relationships with former students. Students also demonstrated disagreement regarding the ethics of dual relationships in a study by Holmes et al. (1999) in which 160 undergraduate psychology students identified varying perceptions of the appropriateness of several types of faculty-student relationships, including friendship/social interactions, business/financial interactions, and personal/counseling interactions. Congress

(2001) identified differences in social work educators' beliefs about what constituted ethical and unethical behavior. Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel, and Pope (1991) reported that less than one-fourth of their sample of teaching psychologists considered accepting student invitations to parties to be unethical, and pointed out that the availability of social activities to faculty and students contributes to blurred boundaries in the academic system. Furthermore, a wide discrepancy was identified between educators' perceptions of ethical behaviors and actual behaviors.

Gender differences related to the ethical boundaries have been well documented. In comparison to men, women generally demonstrate higher ethical standards in regard to dual personal relationships and are less likely than men to engage in questionable relationships and behaviors with students (Bowman & Hatley, 1995; Ei & Bowen, 2002; Holmes et al., 1999; Rubin et al., 1997; Tabachnick et al., 1991). Holmes et al. (1999) reported that male faculty are more likely to inaccurately identify a relationship with a female student as having a potentially sexual outcome and less likely to see this outcome as unethical. Vasquez (1992) noted that the vast majority of violations of sexual conduct in academe occur between male supervisors and female supervisees. This finding may explain, in part, why women tend to be more sensitized to potentially exploitive relationships (Vasquez, 1992).

One particularly disturbing finding in the research regarding dual relationships is the prevalence of the most potentially damaging dual relationship, sexual intimacy between professors and students. Although somewhat dated, the significance of the research conducted during the 1980's and early 1990's regarding sexual relationships between faculty and students bears examination. For example, Glaser and Thorpe (1986) conducted an anonymous survey of female members of the American Psychological

Association's division of Clinical Psychology and found that 31%, or 144 respondents indicated they had received a clearly sexual overture, proposition, or advance from a psychology educator and 17%, or 80 respondents reported actual sexual contact with at least one psychology educator while in graduate training. In a survey of APA members working in higher educational settings, Tabachnick et al. (1991) reported that of 482 respondents, 11% reported having become sexually involved with a student. Robinson and Reid (1985) conducted a survey of 287 female psychology doctorates regarding their experiences with sexual harassment in their educational and professional careers. Nearly one-half (48.1%) indicated they had experienced some type of sexual seduction (i.e., flirting, joking, and excessive attention) as students, with 86% of these experiences involving teachers.

In addition to the potential for harm to students and faculty, the literature concerning dual relationships has additionally identified academic institutions, as well as the future consumers served by students as being at-risk from the negative impact of unethical dual relationships. The potential consequences of unethical dual relationships for these groups are explored next.

### Consequences of Dual Relationships

*Impact on students.* Sullivan and Ogloff (1998) questioned the capacity of students to give true, voluntary consent to engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with professors because of the power differential present and noted that this places students at risk for exploitation. The risk is increased for students who deny the existence of the power differential (Stamler, Pace, & Stone, 1997), and who reject the idea that they are not capable of voluntary consent (Skinner, Giles, Griffith, Sonntag, Berry, & Beck., 1995). Students who minimize the potential for long-

lasting negative consequences are also at greater risk (Biaggio, et al., 1997).

Another harmful aspect of sexual dual relationships is the secrecy that promotes isolation from other support systems, thereby increasing a student's vulnerability. These relationships may take on inordinate importance in the lives of students and are often characterized by heightened emotionality. As a result, after a sexual relationship with a professor has ended, students often express guilt, self-doubt, isolation, and shame (Stamler et al., 1997). The powerful impact on students is further highlighted by the research of Glaser and Thorpe (1986) who noted that some respondents in their study had considered leaving graduate school because of pressures related to sexual relationships with professors.

Similarly, Stamler and Stone (1998) identified the distorted learning process for other students who are not involved sexually with the professor but are aware of the relationship. Rather than a safe place for intellectual learning, students may come to perceive the classroom as a place where neutrality, fairness, and respect are eroded in the face of a "special" relationship with a professor. These authors noted that "the ban of sex with students has little to do with morality but everything to do with student learning" (p.29).

The negative impact of faculty relationships with students is not confined to relationships that are sexual in nature. Sullivan and Ogloff (1998) compared the professor-student dual relationship to that of a parent singling out one child, noting the potential for intensified rivalries, resentment of the parent and child by the other children, lowering of self-esteem of other children, and the inflated self-esteem in the favored child. These authors asserted that other students may be impacted in interpersonal, intrapsychic, professional, and economic areas.

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*Impact on faculty.* While faculty members are generally viewed as holding positions of greater power in dual relationships, they are not immune to the negative impact of these relationships. Sullivan and Ogloff (1998) identified impaired objectivity on the part of professors and issues of fairness to be potentially negative outcomes of these relationships. Schover et al. (1983) reported concern by educators about the potential for false accusations of sexual harassment. While Schover et al. dismissed the need for additional safeguards for the educator, an accusation of sexual misconduct could have significant negative consequences, both personal and professional, for the professor involved. For example, such an accusation could conceivably impact the career of a professor seeking tenure status or promotion. Finally, Stamler et al. (1997) identified isolation from collegial and familial relationships as a potential impact of a dual sexual relationship with a student, noting that isolation may result in increased emotional needs in the professor similar to those experienced by the student.

*Impact on institutions.* Sullivan and Ogloff (1998) observed that the reputation of the institution may suffer if appropriate action is not taken in response to sexual relationships between faculty and students. If misconduct is not handled promptly and appropriately, the reputation of the institution could be besmirched, discouraging potential students from seeking enrollment.

*Impact on consumers served by students.* Kitchener (1992) suggested that students develop boundaries outside the limits of ethical behavior through the influence of unethical behavior on the part of the faculty, a position supported by Rubin et al. (1997) who found a positive correlation between personal/sexual behaviors experienced as a student and later behaviors as an educator including having personal relationships with students, initiating physical contact with students, and engaging in discussion

of personal or sexual matters with students. Significantly, the more frequently these behaviors had been experienced as a student, the more likely was the educator to engage in these behaviors. Furthermore, the impact on professor objectivity noted previously may lead to making exceptions for students who are not proficient, thereby increasing the risk of harm to the populations the student will later serve. As Vasquez (1992) noted, the welfare of the client must be primary in the supervisory relationship.

### Promoting Ethical Dual Relationships

The focus on improper relationships between faculty and students has led to increased efforts to promote ethical behavior through the establishment of university policies, research concerning effective strategies for teaching ethics, and models promoting ethical relationships. Each of these is explored next.

*University Policies.* Sullivan and Ogloff (1998) observed that universities have begun to address student-faculty relationships in their policies and noted that while some colleges warn faculty about inappropriate student-faculty relationships, others may take formal steps against faculty who become sexually involved with students. Likewise, Rupert and Holmes (1997) found the most significant changes in institutional policies and attitudes toward student-faculty relationships to be in the areas of sexual relationships and sexual harassment. These authors reported that in their survey of institutions of higher learning, 100% of public and 98% of private institutions who responded indicated they were in compliance with federal guidelines mandating the publishing of policies prohibiting sexual harassment of students. Stamler et al. (1997) found many colleges and universities taking a tougher stand against sexual relationships between faculty and students by instituting policies categorizing unwelcome sexual advances as sexual harassment, and noted that some institutions had redefined even consensual

relationships between partners with different levels of power as sexual harassment.

*Effective Strategies for Teaching Ethics.* The focus on ethical concerns of faculty-student dual relationships has prompted research regarding the teaching of ethics coursework. Downs (2003) reported that students who engaged in some type of practice in managing ethical dilemmas tended to be more open to using a broader range of pedagogical techniques later as ethics educators. Congress (2001) found a significant increase in the number of social work schools that had a course on ethics (55% vs. 10%) since a 1989 study by Black, Hartley, Whelley, and Kirk-Sharp (as cited in Congress, 2001).

Kitchener (1986) suggested four goals for ethics training including (a) sensitizing students to professional ethical issues and to the impact of their own behaviors, (b) improving students' reasoning ability in regard to ethical issues, (c) fostering moral responsibility and ego strength to promote ethical behavior, and (d) increasing students' tolerance of ambiguity when making ethical decisions. Kitchener (1992) further identified general ethical principles that should form the foundation of ethics education, including benefiting others, doing no harm, being fair, respecting autonomy, and acting faithfully in relationships, noting that these principles should also guide faculty interactions with students.

*Models Promoting Ethical Relationships.* Several models have been developed to assist in making ethical decisions regarding faculty-student dual relationships. For example, Kitchener (1988) provided criteria for identifying increased risk in relationships between faculty and students. First, the potential for harm increases as the incompatibility of role expectations increases. Second, the risk of divided loyalties and loss of objectivity increases as role obligations diverge. Third, the potential

for exploitation increases with increased disparity between the consumer's and the professional's power and prestige. Finally, Kitchener (1988) asserted that an increase in potential risk to students should be accompanied by an increase in ethical prohibitions against the relationships. Vasquez (1992) noted that the application of these criteria would preclude supervisors entering into dual relationships such as business ventures and intimate friendships with supervisees. Biaggio et al. (1997) identified three criteria by which to evaluate a relationship between a faculty member and a student which include assessment of the maintenance of educational standards, provision of educational experiences, and the absence of exploitative practices. Blevins-Knabe (1992) outlined a three-step model for assessing ethical risks in dual relationships that included analysis of the professor's role, assessment to determine if the teaching role is compromised, and using decision criteria to evaluate responses. Johnson and Nelson (1999) offered recommendations for reducing the risk involved in mentoring relationships that included training faculty and students for the mentoring relationship, giving equal access to minority groups, and evaluating the competence of faculty to mentor.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Counselor Educators**

A common limitation shared by many models promoting ethical dual relationships is the primary focus on the professor-student dyad. Stampler and Stone (1998) noted the importance of moving beyond a two-person conceptualization of faculty-student sexual relationships to viewing these relationships in the context of the university as a system. A cursory examination of faculty-student relationships reveals the presence of several systems which both impact and are impacted by the professor-student relationship.

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Minuchin (1985) identified six principles of family therapy based on systemic characteristics that provide a useful framework for considering systemic variables impacting faculty-student dual relationships. In this section, dual relationships are examined from a systems perspective based on these six basic principles of family therapy. Implications and recommendations for counselor educators are identified.

1. Any system is an organized whole, and elements within the system are necessarily interdependent. This principle, which is foundational to systems theory, transcends the debate regarding professor and student autonomy in dual relationships. From a multi-systemic standpoint, dual relationships, whether ethical or not, have the capacity to impact not only the two members in the immediate faculty-student relationship system but also many other systems on the student, faculty, university, and consumer levels as well. This ripple effect further extends to future systems, as present relationships impact the development of boundaries that will be maintained in future interactions. The potentially far-reaching impact of dual relationships underscores the need for counselor educators to actively encourage ethical boundaries in relationships between faculty and students as part of their professional work. The interdependence of members of the academic systems in which counselor educators participate suggests that by maintaining ethical boundaries in their own relationships with students, counselor educators can impact the ethical boundaries of many others.

2. Patterns in a system are circular rather than linear. The principal of circular causality is understandably troublesome when applied to systemic interactions involving a power differential and identified harm to members of the system. This principle becomes more palatable when the concept of regulatory power is introduced (Minuchin, 1985), which

accommodates the presence of the power differential while maintaining a neutral stance regarding blame and victimization. From a systemic perspective, morality and issues of “rightness” or “wrongness” only serve to obscure the more fundamental question of how any behavior serves a function within a respective system. Because exploitation regularly occurs in the system, it is the nature of the system that allows this type of boundary violation to occur; therefore, the system should be adjusted. Acknowledging the circular nature of faculty-student dual relationships paves the way for counselor educators to develop interventions directed toward increasing students' awareness of the risks of dual relationships and empowering students to respond to overtures in an assertive, self-affirming manner.

3. Systems have homeostatic features that maintain the stability of their patterns. Several characteristics of dual relationships contribute to resistance to change. Examples include the secrecy that typically accompanies sexual dual relationships, reluctance on the part of students to report, reluctance of professors to seek consultation from colleagues, beliefs about professor and student autonomy and personal rights and freedom, the need-satisfaction of professors and students, linear thinking that places the responsibility for maintaining boundaries solely on the professor, and reluctance by other faculty/administration to become involved.

The number of identified characteristics that contribute to maintaining homeostasis suggests that a significant amount of energy may be required to overcome the resistance to change. In order to produce this energy, counselor educators may need to advocate for changes in the system such as including questions on end-of-course evaluations regarding ethical behavior, empowering ethics committees to assist in the oversight of ethical behavior, and incorporating consideration of ethical behavior with students

into the decision-making process regarding professional advancement within the educational system.

4. Evolution and change are inherent in open systems. As previously noted, adjustment of the systems associated with dual relationships is vital for lasting, second-order change to occur. Change brings disorganization and discomfort, which is where the literature seems to be at the present time, as evidenced by the myriad viewpoints regarding dual relationships. Counselor educators are uniquely qualified to facilitate change and to assist in identifying and overcoming the discomfort associated with the ambiguity accompanying the process of systemic change.

The need for change is evident and requires the faculty-student relationship system to adjust to the needs of the larger societal systems of which this system is a part. In order for change to occur, the systems sustaining relationships between faculty and students must be open to influence. Counselor educators can help break through the denial that often accompanies a closed system and increase accountability on the part of faculty and students for maintaining appropriate dual relationships.

5. Complex systems are composed of subsystems. A multi-systemic exploration of faculty-student dual relationships reveals several systems and subsystems interacting in complex ways. The professor-student dyadic relationship can be viewed as a subsystem of the classroom system, which in turn is a subsystem of the department, etc. From this perspective, the professor is not solely responsible for interactions with students. Depending on the nature of the dual relationship, this relationship may also be viewed as a subsystem in the context of the social, financial, or other systems to which the professor and student belong. It may be argued that, rather than viewing

inappropriate relationships simply as a crossing of ethical boundaries, this may be seen as the establishment of a new subsystem, the nature of which conflicts with the educational goals of the faculty-student system.

Counselor educators can promote the establishment of systems that promote accountability for ethical behavior, systems that are invested in and promote the welfare of the student in the educational process. Examples might include the creation of systems that offer opportunities for dialogue among faculty members regarding ethical boundaries and behavior and providing avenues for faculty to privately consult with colleagues concerning their own relationships with students.

6. The subsystems within a larger system are separated by boundaries and interactions across boundaries are governed by implicit rules and patterns. Regulation of boundaries is not just the responsibility of the professor, but also of the other members in the involved systems. For a system to function effectively, an organizational hierarchy including an active executive subsystem must be present to define and maintain appropriate boundaries. The interactions of members within and between subsystems are governed by relatively enduring patterns that are created and maintained by members of the system. Minuchin (1995) noted that individuals carry within them the templates of previous systemic patterns and that these patterns become part of an individual's repertoire to be used in new systems the person joins. From this perspective, unethical dual relationships may be perpetuated through familiar patterns learned from previous interactions in professional and nonprofessional systems. The discomfort associated with crossing ethical boundaries may result in a recalibration of the professor's and student's ethical boundaries so that previously unacceptable behaviors become acceptable, thus allowing for the continuation of meeting



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personal needs through professional relationships. Recognizing the potentially far-reaching impact of all faculty-student relationships is critical in maintaining appropriate ethical boundaries.

### Conclusion

The literature concerning dual relationships between faculty and students reveals this to be a complex issue. While the ACA's *Code of Ethics* prohibition of sexual relationships between faculty and students is in agreement with the general consensus that these relationships are harmful and unethical, other dual relationships in academe are not so clearly defined. Obviously, outlining ethical guidelines for professors is not the end of the matter as ethical codes have no intrinsic power to insure appropriate faculty-student boundaries. Counselor educators must advocate for and model ethical dual relationships with students in order to impact not only the immediate academic environment, but a broader range of multiple systems including the academic institution, faculty, students, and future consumers as well.

As part of the academic system, counselor educators are situated in a position to influence systemic variables impacting faculty-student dual relationships. Therefore, counselor educators have a responsibility to be proactive in encouraging the development of systemic variables that have the potential to foster ethical professional relationships between faculty and students. For example, counselor educators can encourage self-care on the part of faculty and students so that the personal needs of faculty are not met in ways that do harm to students. Support systems can be established to provide resources to faculty and students in time of personal crisis. Nontraditional educational opportunities that have clear, specific guidelines concerning ethical behaviors can be structured to provide the types of benefits

currently associated with potentially problematic faculty-student interactions. Finally, counselor educators must familiarize themselves with research dealing with ethics, including effective techniques for teaching ethics coursework, which should be infused across the counseling curriculum to inform the educational process. ♦

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# Collaboration and Teaming Across Disciplines in the University Setting for School Counselors-in-Training

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## Abstract

This article describes an exploratory model for school counselors-in-training to acquire multicultural awareness and skills by working with English Second Language (ESL) students. Thoughts from the school counselors-in-training, ESL teachers, a foreign language educator, and a counselor educator are summarized.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) “endorses a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program as articulated in the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005), so that school counselors can assist *all* students and negotiate the demands of the 21st century” (Studer & Oberman, 2006, p. 82). It is critical for school counselors-in-training to be familiar with the components of the ASCA National Model. *Early* direct school-based experiences using fundamental school counseling skills may be beneficial in facilitating this learning process. While much has been written about school counseling components and how to implement them (ASCA National Model; Baker, 2000; Cobia & Henderson, 2007; Davis, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Sink, 2005; Stone & Dahir, 2006, 2007), there has been a dearth of literature on the degree to which the translation of the ASCA National Model’s core components to actual practice fosters initial multicultural competency.

This article describes an exploratory school counseling model that led school counselors-in-training to acquire new skill and experience by working with several components of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). The degree to which this knowledge fostered multicultural awareness and skill among beginning school

counselors-in-training is also discussed. Finally, we summarize the voices of: (1) the counselors-in-training and ESL teachers who utilized the exploratory learning model, and (2) the collaborators who coordinated and facilitated the exploratory learning model (i.e., a foreign language/ESL educator, and a counselor educator).

## *Aim of the Study*

The overall aim of this exploratory project was to provide school counselors-in-training with three important supervised educational opportunities at the *beginning* of their academic and clinical development. They were: (1) to translate knowledge of the school counseling components to practice, (2) to develop preliminary knowledge and skills to effectively counsel those who self-identify as ESL students, and (3) to practice adapting skills to embrace cultural differences. All three opportunities took place under the guidance of university professors from unique, but complementary, fields of study. Consequently, an innovative partnership, which was carried out across two disciplines in a college of education, was established. This successful collaboration was based on the tenets of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005), the unique needs of ESL students, and multicultural competency.

## *The ASCA National Model’s Major Systems*

The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005) is undergirded by four core systems of which school counselors must be aware: program foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability, with the aim of increasing the school counselors’ provision of useful and efficient counseling services. The ASCA National

Model provides school counselors with a roadmap to best understand and guide their own role (e.g., advocacy, leadership, collaboration), their clients' role (e.g., students, families, school), and the school counselor's management of the multiple contexts (e.g., school, community, stakeholders) in which they are embedded.

Schwallie-Giddis (2003) asserted that the four established components of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) "must be implemented in all schools in order to establish strong and effective programs" (p. 5). Further, numerous reviewers of the current ASCA National Model (2005) —and the four core components that underlie the model—affirmed that it is both efficacious (i.e., it works, and thus produces positive outcomes if used) and, at the same time, effective (i.e., it can be used and implemented in the everyday life and context of a school counselor). Although the ASCA National Model does not directly address ESL students and diversity issues, the authors find cultural sensitivity innately in ASCA's mission.

### *Counseling ESL Students*

Beyond the precepts of the ASCA National Model (2003, 2005), school counselors have additional reasons to work with ESL students. First, statistics show a rise of racial minority students in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Koskinen et al. (2000) discussed, "Schools in the United States are facing the ever-increasing challenge of educating students who do not speak English as their first language" (p. 23). A second reason for this exploratory, collaborative model is to address the limited contact and communication found between ESL programs and school counselors (Clemente & Collison, 2000; McCall-Perez, 2000). Clemente and Collison reported a general lack of interaction between ESL students and school counselors, with most ESL student interactions related to behavior, scheduling, or academic issues.

### *Multicultural Competency*

As the population with whom school counselors work continues to diversify, school counselors have a significant need to develop knowledge, skill, and awareness of how to best work with racial and ethnic minority students and their families (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Cultural knowledge, skill, and awareness are necessary ingredients for multicultural competence (Roysircar, Arredondo, Fuertes, Ponterotto, & Toporek, 2003). However, counselor educators often have difficulty successfully integrating all of these concepts into a multicultural course and training (Burnett, Hamel, & Long, 2004). Critical to building multicultural competency, school counselors-in-training need opportunities that allow for the translation of awareness and knowledge, evidenced in the university classroom, into their actual counseling skills with students in real-world settings. The given model proposes an innovative way to foster the development of school counselors-in-training with regard to multicultural knowledge, skill, and awareness.

In summary, this study and its resultant collaborative model incorporated all three of the aforementioned elements. The elements are: (1) the ASCA National Model (2003, 2005) and its underlying components, (2) the potentially unique needs of ESL students, and (3) multicultural skill and awareness.

### **Method**

In an introductory summer course for beginning school counselors-in-training, Dr. Joy Burnham, a counselor educator at the University of Alabama, sought practical opportunities for school counselors-in-training to learn about culturally sensitive school counseling and the components of the ASCA National Model (2005). Because local schools were not in session when the course was offered, Burnham sought unique, alternative methods for collaboration, suggesting that her primary goal was for the students to experience several school counseling components through direct exposure and hands-on experience with

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children and adolescents. A successful teaming effort was formed with Dr. Miguel Mantero, a foreign language/ESL educator at the University of Alabama. Mantero invited the school counselors-in-training to provide classroom guidance lessons in his ESL Summer Program at the University of Alabama, which involved approximately 120 students, ages 4-17, over two summers. Mantero stated that “being able to work with Dr. Burnham and the counselors-in-training helped to meet a vital goal of the ESL program: to build a foundation that ESL students can use to achieve academic success and thrive in their communities” (personal communication, June 23, 2004).

#### *Participants*

The participants included nine school counselors-in-training in the introductory school counseling course. There were eight females and one male enrolled in the school counseling course in summer 2004 and summer 2005. The ages of the students ranged from 22 to 30, ( $M=26$ ). All participants’ self-reported race was non-Hispanic white. Of the counselors-in-training, five of the participants had no prior teaching background, while four were certified teachers. There were approximately 120 ESL students, ages 4-17, enrolled in the ESL program in summer 2004 and summer 2005.

#### *Procedure*

The school counselors-in-training, enrolled in an introductory school counseling course, were invited to take part in this unique learning opportunity. The participants spent approximately five hours working closely with ESL teachers and ESL students, above and beyond the time spent in their university-assigned class. At the end of the semester, the counselors-in-training were interviewed in a group setting and were asked to reflect on the meaning and value of their experiences with the ESL students and ESL

teachers. These data were collected at the end of the semester.

#### **Results**

##### *Outcomes: What the Collaborative Model Taught Us*

An important component of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) is the measurement of outcomes. Analysis of the school counselors’ responses allowed us to consider the extent to which this exploratory, collaborative model yielded positive outcomes. While this study was specifically designed to assess the degree to which the *school counselors-in-training* experienced any measurable benefits in an early field experience, this section reports on the insights experienced by the *ESL teacher*, the *ESL educator*, and the *counselor educator* as well.

##### *School Counselors-in-Training*

The ESL program offered opportunities for the school counselors-in-training to practice and improve selected counseling skills as outlined in the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). For example, the student-participants enhanced leadership skills as they developed collaborative relationships with the ESL teachers. The counselors-in-training also learned about scheduling as they coordinated classroom guidance lessons with the ESL teachers. Consultation skills were honed as the participants learned how to plan and carry out developmentally appropriate classroom guidance lessons for the ESL students. Overall, the time with ESL students, contributed to a better understanding of such ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005) themes as teaming, advocating, leadership, and removing barriers to success.

The counselors-in-training also faced multiple multicultural issues. They taught guidance lessons to students from Russia, Korea, Jordan, China, Mexico, and Japan. Not only were the ESL

students representatives of numerous countries, but they had a wide-range of English proficiencies. At the end of the semester, counselors-in-training shared the lessons they learned. The counselors-in-training summarized the knowledge they acquired in Table 1. The school counselors-in-training also elaborated on what they learned related to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005) in Table 2.

### *Foreign Language/ESL Educator*

In stating the desire for collaboration between the programs to continue, Dr. Mantero suggested, "The ESL interns were able to act as a team with the counseling students. The counselors-in-training were able to apply their skills and expertise so that everyone involved learned more about themselves as educators and about the ESL students as dynamic individuals. We look forward to strengthening and developing this collaboration in the future" (personal communication, June 23, 2004).

### *ESL Teachers*

Several ESL teachers illustrated their views about the collaboration between the ESL and counselor education programs. One ESL teacher stated:

"What an amazing opportunity it was to collaborate with representatives of another essential element in the successful education of ESL students. Watching the counselors-in-training interact with my students provided me with insight which was only available from such an observation. It enabled me to move from the role of facilitator to observer. During this time, I became aware of nuances of interpersonal dynamics of which I had previously been unaware. As a classroom teacher, I appreciate the daunting requirement of these counselors-in-training to enter a classroom of students of myriad ethnicities and varying degrees of English proficiency and engage them in a discussion about personal concerns. Even though seasoned veterans

would be a bit unnerved by this task, these students worked to quickly put the students at ease and to elicit personal responses from them. I respect these students for their efforts to sensitize themselves to the particular needs of English language learners. I hope that this collaboration between the two programs in the college of education continues" (personal communication, June 23, 2004).

Another ESL teacher also offered insight about the collaborative effort, as found in Table 3.

### *Counselor Educator*

Burnham noted, "Dr. Mantero's cooperation allowed for us to not only talk about the components of a school counseling program, but to work with many of them. Undoubtedly, direct exposure to the counseling components was more effective and powerful than simply talking about them" (personal communication, June 23, 2004).

One ESL teacher intern summed the overall experience up when she stated, "The partnership offered many opportunities for information to be gained between the counselors, students, and ESL teachers. It was a very enjoyable and valuable experience for all involved" (personal communication, June 23, 2004). The participants in this collaborative effort provided useful qualitative data, which may inform larger quantitative efficacy and effectiveness studies going forward.

## **Discussion**

The present study investigated school counselors-in-training in their early fieldwork with ESL students, ESL teachers, and their assigned university professors. This model provides obvious benefits for the school counselors-in-training. For example, based on the comments

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after the ESL experience ended, the counselors-in-training were able to transform what they had learned in the university course into practice for the first time. Early field experiences in the school counseling program allowed for progression toward becoming culturally sensitive sooner because of the summer opportunities. In addition, implementation of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003, 2005) appeared to develop faster, because of the ESL experience.

This project highlights the usefulness of early field experience—with a particular focus on multicultural awareness, skill, and sensitivity—early in a school counselor-in-training academic program. The counselors-in-training, ESL teachers, and ESL students appeared to benefit from the summer programs. Such opportunities seem to provide innovative means to secure multicultural awareness and competency near the start of the school counseling program rather than near the end of the course of study.

Undoubtedly, with the current influx of ESL students in schools across the U.S., more innovative opportunities for collaboration with ESL students and teachers are indicated and needed in counselor education programs. Moreover, lessons learned from this exploratory, collaborative model may be extended and added to in students' practicum and internship field experiences. ♦

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**Table 1**

*Knowledge Acquired from the ESL Experience*

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Comments from Counselors-in-Training

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- “Children of any cultural background are just that . . . children who respond to games and activities with the same excitement. However, it is important to be aware of the language barriers.”
  - “Some things transcend barriers (e.g., music, art, play). Analogies do not transcend barriers as well as literal language.”
  - “Dealing with cultural diversity is an extremely important part of the school counselor’s role. It is my job to reach these students.”
  - “A simple concept may need further explanation for ESL students to understand.”
  - “Counselors must be aware of language acquisition stages and cultural restrictions among various students . . . be sensitive to cultural differences and not expect each student to be westernized.”
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**Table 2**

*Knowledge Related to the ASCA National Model*

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Comments from Counselors-In-Training

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- “Working with the ESL students helped me to conceptualize some of the reasoning behind the National Standards. I can better understand the need for disaggregated data and advocacy because otherwise the ESL students could be easily overlooked.”
  - “I think it is important for school counselors to realize that the ASCA National Model must be implemented to reach all students even if the students speak a different language and are from a different culture.”
  - “It is the counselor’s responsibility to make sure these students receive the same opportunities as other students.”
  - “I had to find a way to communicate my lesson across many cultural barriers. It gave me a first look at many of the challenges I will face as a school counselor.”
  - “The ESL classroom experience taught me how to take the components of the ASCA National Model and actually apply them. I learned how to plan and implement a group guidance lesson and was taught firsthand about children’s different learning styles and varying attention spans.”
  - “Working with the ESL students helped me understand the ASCA National Model. This experience was all about being able to actually implement the model, not just read about it.”
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**Table 3**

*ESL Teacher Views*

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Comments from an ESL Teacher

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- “The smiles and enthusiasm of the counselors made the ESL students much more at ease.”
  - “The students used concrete objects in the guidance lessons that helped make meaningful connections to the topic and theme of the lesson. The ESL students could hear what was being discussed and then they could connect visually with the item.”
  - “The counselors encouraged interaction among the students in a non-threatening manner. The ESL students were from five countries and would have enjoyed staying comfortable within ‘the box.’ But the counselors encouraged the students to branch out and to respect other opinions.”
  - “This opportunity to work with the ESL students provided the counselors valuable lessons they needed before interacting with wide-scale ESL student populations.”
-