PRACTICES, PERCEPTIONS, AND PROFESSSIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS CONCERNING ECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS' POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION GOALS

by

WALTER ANTHONY PAWLOWSKI

(Under the direction of Robert Wicklein)

ABSTRACT

This study focused mainly on high school guidance counselors' development of career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. The *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program developed by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) was used to guide the development of the instrument, especially transition practices associated with postsecondary education. *The School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey (SCPES)* for CTE students was developed. The population of the study was high school guidance counselors in Georgia. According to a 2007 state roster list, the population contained 1,152 high school guidance counselors. Through a simple random sampling (SRS), instruments were e-mailed to 576 participants or 50% of the original population. A total of 233 valid responses were returned providing a response rate of 40.45%.

The factors examined were (a) practice, (b) perception of practice, and (c) need for professional development. Reliability analysis was completed for the subscales of the

SCPES. Additional information compared each of the research questions by using ANOVA to test for differences between different groupings of respondents. The open-ended responses were analyzed by repeatedly reading the responses and grouping the responses into categories using phenomenological analysis techniques

INDEX WORDS: Postsecondary education, Guidance practice, Guidance perceptions, Guidance professional development needs, Career and Technical Education.

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2011

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May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several individuals I am grateful to for their support and assistance that allowed me to accomplish this endeavor. I would first like to thank my parents who past away so many years ago, especially my mother I know she is watching as I complete this task. She instilled in me the foundation and desire to accomplish this task. I remember her words, "you need to believe in yourself and never give up." My children Andrew, Abby, and Anna who prodded me along by asking, "When will you be finished with your book, daddy?" I love them dearly and thank them for their encouragements and prayers. At 52 years of age with three young children at home, I pray my children appreciate the value connected to the life-long learning process; for they too have big dreams, my little architect, veterinary, and artist/lawyer. May their dreams be guided by their faith in God as they learn to enjoy life's many transitions and opportunities.

I am indebted to my committee for their untiring support and guidance. I especially thank my chair, Dr. Robert C. Wicklein, for his guidance and patience and never growing tire during this extensive process. I appreciate his pedagogy and enthusiasm as I share many hours in his classes, learning and loving to become a better teacher. My advisory committee's expertise and dedication was a key to my success. I am grateful for the direction and knowledge I received from Dr. Bettye P. Smith and Dr. Clifton L. Smith on guidance counseling theory and practice. I truly appreciate all of the time they committed over the years.

Most of all I thank God for blessing me with the opportunity to complete this research. I pray that it can be used to help improve the lives of others.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

School guidance counselors provide many services for students, and individual postsecondary education planning assistance is one of the most important resources because it can have a great impact on students' opportunities after high school (Stone & Clark, 2001). The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOC) (U.S. Department of Labor 2009-2011) states that high school guidance counselors advise students regarding college majors, admission requirements, entrance exams, financial aid, trade or technical schools, and apprenticeship programs. They interact with students individually, in small groups, or as an entire class. They consult and collaborate with parents, teachers, school administrators, school psychologists, medical professionals, and social workers to develop and implement strategies to help students succeed. Examining high school counselors and the role they play in the postsecondary education access process and how they perceive this role is an important and timely undertaking. One of the most widely accepted education goals for all students is gaining postsecondary access and building an educational foundation for success during their postsecondary education (Bailey & Karp, 2003). School counselors have not been able to address this goal for all students. Many high schools do not have counselors who specialize in high school to postsecondary transition, and this leaves many students with few available people at the school site who are familiar with postsecondary transition issues (McDonough & Calderone, 2006).

Research on postsecondary transition practices of school guidance counselors has been limited, especially concerning career and technical education (CTE) students.

Research has focused on school guidance counselors' allocation of time for duties (NACAC, 2004) and perceptions of counselor functions by parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors (Aluede & Imonikhe, 2002; Hughey, Gysbers, & Starr, 1993; Kaplan, 1994; Studer & Allton, 1996; Ter Maat, 2000). However, the research (Epps, 1995; Horn & Nuñez, 2000; McDonough, Korn, & Yamasaki, 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 1997) clearly presented data that support the concept that, when school counselors are consistently and frequently available and allowed to provide direct services to students and parents, they are a major part of the social network that influence postsecondary educational planning. Hughes and Karp (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of school-based career development and found that of the different types of career guidance interventions, the most effective was individual counseling. Parsons (1909) also believed that school counseling should be one-on-one and administered by professionals in order to be highly effective.

This research focused on career and technical education (CTE) students in Georgia and how guidance counselors assisted them in their transition from secondary to postsecondary education. Tuma (1996) reported that 24.4% of public school graduates in the United States were CTE concentrators in 1992. Levesque, Lauen,Teitelbaum, Alt, and Librera (2000) tracked enrollments and found that CTE concentrators were almost 21% in 1994. The National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE Independent Advisory Panel, 2004) concluded that participation has been fairly steady at about one-quarter of all high school graduates (Silverberg, Warner, Fong, & Goodwin, 2004). Also, national data show that CTE courses or programs are currently offered in 93% of the nation's 15,200 comprehensive high schools (Lynch, 2002).

CTE students are usually the students that experience low levels of participation when it comes to individual school counseling services. The ongoing echo of Parnell's (1985) *Neglected Majority*, which reported that 75% of students in high school do not go on to complete a 4-year-college degree, continues to hold true today. Many of these CTE students spend their high school years in a non-specific general track, where they receive little support or guidance for continuing their postsecondary education (Beebe & Walleri, 2005). These students, often referred to as the "forgotten half" by Parnell, may or may not be interested in postsecondary education; but typically, they have not made their decisions regarding postsecondary education apparent to a guidance counselor. The school guidance counselor spends more time with this group as a whole but less time individually. This contradiction exists because of the large number of students in this grouping (Ensor, 2005).

The Georgia House Bill 1187 (2000) states that the funding formula for school guidance counselors allocated in grades k-5 should be 1 counselor for every 462 students; in grades 6 to 8, it should be 1 counselor for every 624 students; and in grades 9 to 12, it should be 1 counselor for every 400 students. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) recommended a maximum ratio of 1 counselor for every 100 at all grade levels. To improve the overall delivery of school counseling, Georgia has recently implemented a comprehensive school guidance program (CSGP); which is modeled after the ASCA national model. Also the Georgia Department of Education (2007) is currently implementing the state's Peach State Pathways, the current vehicle of curriculum for CTE students. Through the implementation of the ASCA national model, schools and school counselors now have a concrete foundation of practice; the question is how a

CSGP affects individual, one-on-one guidance practice. The newly implemented Peach State Pathways also affect practices by giving CTE students a defined path of courses from high school to a postsecondary institution. The research explored Georgia high school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional development concerning career and technical education (CTE) students' individual transition plan from secondary to postsecondary education.

Students' postsecondary transition practices of school guidance counselors are determined by two factors. First, there are the counselors' personal perceptions of how one should perform their individual job duties. Second, there are the written definitions of the counselors' job duties that include the allocation of time for the delivery of these duties by local school boards, the state department of education (Georgia Department of Education, 2005), and mandates by the federal government (The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Improvement Act, 2006). How school counselors actually spend their time performing these duties and services are affected by these two factors and bring in a third element of how counselors actually practice their duties within the context of their personal perception and the written definition of their duties. Considering these three intertwining elements (perception of job, written job duties, and resulting actual practice), there have been a few studies (Kaplan, 1994; Studer & Allton, 1996; Ter Maat, 2000) in the area of school guidance counselors' individual postsecondary transition practices.

A number of studies (Frost, 2006; Horn & Chen, 1998; King, 1996; Plank & Jordan, 2001) showed positive results when individual services were provided to the student. Recent literature on school counseling has focused on the need for new

directions for school counseling and redefined roles for school counselors (Baker 2000; Fitch, Newby, & Ballestero 2001; Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel 2001; Schmidt 1999). However, since the 1984 supplement to the High School and Beyond (HS&B) survey, no national data have been collected to describe guidance counseling programs and activities. To help address this lack of current information, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted a survey (Parsad, Alexander, Farris, & Hudson, 2003) on *High School Guidance Counseling* in spring 2002. The survey, conducted through the NCES Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), provided a description of public high school guidance programs, activities, and staff in 2002. The survey claimed that 28% of public high school guidance counselors' time is spent on individual postsecondary practices. The survey did not describe the details of the interaction between student and guidance counselors.

McDonough's (2004b) research found no available data that described the share of time that counselors spend on postsecondary educational counseling. Research also included several descriptive studies that document widespread frustration with the availability of postsecondary educational counseling services. Such studies showed that students (Libsch & Freedman, 1995), parents (Chapman, DeMasi, & O'Brien, 1991), and teachers (Beesley, 2004) believed that school counselors should be devoting more time to providing direct services to students, particularly postsecondary-related counseling.

The changing role of the school guidance counselors has the 21st century school counselors confronted with many challenges, such as undefined role definition, ideal versus actual practice, and the demands placed on them by the local, state, and federal governments (ASCA, 2003; Carter, 1993; Napierkowski & Parsons, 1995; Paisley &

Borders, 1995). Counselors face a range of responsibilities and roles that compete for their time, including test administration, course scheduling, providing mental health or other counseling services, addressing disciplinary issues, and supporting students with special needs (Ettinger, Lambert, & Rudolf, 1994; MacDonald & Sink, 1999). The availability of individual counseling for transition to postsecondary education can be limited by these roles.

The short-term duration of interactions between school counselors and students limits the development of a "trusting" relationship between school counselors and students, especially working-class minority students (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). One goal of the school system was to help students make successful educational transitions, including the transition from high school to postsecondary education. Among the poor and minority students who are not familiar with higher education, high schools play a key role in preparation for postsecondary training (Epps, 1995). These two groups of students rely heavily on the school to provide them with tools and information they need to learn about educational and career options and to make successful transitions from high school to postsecondary education (Epps, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Recent literature (McDonough, 2004b) indicated that counseling currently is not an important point on any major policy agenda. Since 1990, national reforms have not emphasized school guidance counseling. The work-based learning reform, promoted by the 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act, did not involve guidance staff (Hughes & Karp, 2004), and current policy focus was on academic curriculum and teaching. In spite of the school counselors' lack of importance, postsecondary access was an important educational and economic policy issue. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999-2000)

has predicted that, by the year 2008, 12 of the 20 fastest growing occupations will require some form of postsecondary education.

The actual time school counselors spend with students on specific activities served as an index of opportunity that schools offered their students. The steps it takes to transition from high school to a postsecondary education is one such. What resources and services a school has to distribute are determined in part by the community in which the school is located (Csikszentmihas & Schneider, 2000). The lack of postsecondary transition services has motivated many parents who can afford the service to hire outside consultants to tend to the process of postsecondary transition for their children (McDonough, 1997). American high school students, parents, educators, and policymakers are increasingly convinced that some postsecondary education is an important pre-requisite for finding reasonably well-paid jobs (Bailey & Karp, 2003). This was echoed in the fact that a majority of 12th graders say that they definitely intend to earn a bachelor's degree, but only 25% actually completed college (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001).

One of the most important tasks for a high school student is to establish realistic goals after high school graduation (Moser, 1963). Parsons (1909), Moser (1963), and McDonough, (2004b) indicated that each student should receive help in preparing him/herself adequately to transition from high school into some form of postsecondary education, and the school guidance counselors can have a great influence over the process. High school counseling should be provided in an organized and encompassing manner in order to facilitate each student's postsecondary transition goals. An essential aspect of these services is assisting students in knowing their personal strengths and

weaknesses, providing information on their postsecondary options, aiding students in the analysis of this information, and helping students in the postsecondary educational admission process (Rosenbaum, 2001; Rosenbaum, Miller, & Krei, 1996). High school seniors often realize that they are entering into an important transitional stage in life; the decision to continue with their education or enter the world of work. The decision between postsecondary education and work requires careful self-analysis that includes guidance and support, life skills, a well-developed transition plan, and coordination between secondary and postsecondary institutions (McDonough, 2004b, Rosenbaum, 2001). Life-span development and life-stage theories promoted by Super (1976), Gottfredson (1981), and Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951) applied to the student and the methods the students' school used to foster the students development.

To help guide high school guidance counselors with postsecondary transition practices, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) (1990) developed a list of important steps guidance counselors should take to help students with the transition to postsecondary education. The document titled *Pre-college Guidance and Counseling and the Role of the School Counselor* was developed by the NACAC and guides school guidance counselors in their postsecondary transition practices. Pre-college advisement practices of the NACAC were reflected in the transition theory of Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995) which defined transition as "any event, or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions and roles" (p. 27). The four central tenets to Schlossberg's et al. (1995) transition theory that influenced a person's ability to cope with a particular transition were situation, self, support, and strategies.

Another important factor which limited the individual time school counselors spent with students was the student-to-school counselor ratio (McDonough, 1997, 2004b). Hawkins (2003) summarized that the state of postsecondary advising was lacking in secondary schools across the country, because the national student-to-counselor ratio remained high at 490 to 1 and public schools and urban and rural schools suffered the worst counseling shortage. One of the guiding associations for school counselors, the American School Counselor's Association (ASCA), recommended a student-to-counselor ratio of 100:1. The 2004 national average of 490:1 was astonishingly high, especially when that figure included large public schools as well as much smaller independent schools (McDonough, 2004b). Student-to-counselor ratios are typically higher in public schools than in independent schools and drastically increased as the total enrollment of high school increase (NACAC, 2006). Along with high student-to-counselor ratios, Moles (1991) found that counselors spent only 13% of their time engaged in postsecondary education guidance functions. Several studies (Frost 2006; Horn & Chen 1998; King 1996; Plank & Jordan 1997, 2001) have used rigorous empirical methods to evaluate how contact with high school guidance counselors was associated with various postsecondary grouping behaviors. For example, Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) found that counselors' assistance with postsecondary applications and essays was associated with an increased likelihood of students' completion and submission of postsecondary applications. Interaction with counselors about postsecondary education plans was linked with an increased understanding of postsecondary admissions policies and the odds of enrolling in a 4-year institution. Furthermore, McDonough (1997) reported that counselors can have a strong influence on the kinds of postsecondary institutions to

which students apply and attend (e.g., community college vs. 4-year institution). Also studies have found that improving individual delivery of guidance services has a significant bearing on postsecondary access for low income, rural, and urban students, as well as students of color (King, 1996; McDonough, 2004a; Plank & Jordan, 2001; Rosenbaum et al., 1996).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs of high school guidance counselors concerning career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. The component of an effective pre-college guidance and counselor program developed by NACAC was used to develop the questionnaire. Essential postsecondary criteria for counseling services were outlined in the NACAC program. These essential services included assisting students in knowing their personal strengths and weaknesses, providing information on their postsecondary options, aiding students in the analysis of this information, and helping students and their parents in the postsecondary educational admission process (Rosenbaum, 2001; Rosenbaum et al., 1996).

Research Questions

RQ1: What are school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs?

RQ2: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by gender?

RQ3: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by age group?

RQ4: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by years as a professional educator group?

RQ5: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by years as a school counselor group?

RQ6: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by school enrollment group?

RQ7: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by school location, urban rural, and suburban?

RQ8: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs compared by counselor student ratio group?

Conceptual Framework

Donald Super's (1990) stage model theory formed the conceptual framework for this study. Super stated that vocational development was a process of making several decisions, which culminated in vocational choices that represent an implementation of a person's self-concept (Super, 1957; Swanson & Fouad, 1999). Super (1957) emphasized the role of a person's self-concept, an image that develops and becomes modified over time as an individual emotionally matures and reacts to new experiences and a changing sense of reality. An individual's self-concept and emotional maturity develop as the individual grows and develops through life stages. Super (1980) stated that career

development takes place across one's entire life-span and can be divided into five developmental stages or maxicycles: growth (ages 4-to13), exploration (ages 14-to-24), establishment (ages 25-to-44), maintenance (ages 45-65), and disengagement (ages 65 and over). The stage, which is of interest to this study, was the exploration stage from the age 14 to 24.

In Super's (1969) scheme of career choice, the most important element was the exploratory stage, which he divided into three periods: the tentative substage, the transition substage, and the advancement substage. Here, according to Super, the individual began to develop an awareness of occupations. In the early or fantasy period of the tentative stage, the individual's choices were frequently unrealistic and related to play life. As the tentative period continues, choices were narrowed, but there was still incomplete knowledge of self and the world of work. Super (1969) stated that adolescents were in a crucial stage of exploring and confirming their career plans. Super (1990) suggested that career planning becomes significant during late adolescence and early adulthood. During this transitional stage, senior high school students enter a time in their lives when seeking career information and becoming aware of their vocational interest was a major developmental task. In the final period of this stage, the individual further narrows the list of possible choices to more realistic goals given improved knowledge of self and the world (Super, 1990).

During the adolescent exploration stage, teenagers tend to recognize and somewhat accept the need to make career decisions and obtain relevant information. They become aware of interests and abilities and how they relate to work opportunities. They also identify possible fields and levels of work consistent with their abilities and

interests and they secure training to develop skills and advance occupational entry and/or enter occupations fulfilling their interests and abilities (Super, 1990). During this transitional stage, Super (1994) described the role of advising intervention as one designed to provide direction, resolve impediments, and sustain planfulness in students about their goals for the future. Planfulness was defined by Super, Starisheysky, Matlin, and Jordaan (1963) as the narrowing of a choice path, which was followed by career planning and implementation of that plan. Super (1994) stated that planfulness was a core element to successful career development in adolescence and should be delivered on an individual basis.

Planfulness consists of autonomy, time perspective, and self-esteem. Super (1983) defined autonomy as the acceptance of responsibility since planning can only occur if individuals believe they have some control over their future career. The second component, time perspective, focuses on reflecting upon past experiences and anticipating future events. It involves the sub stages of exploration, crystallization, specification, and implementation (Super, 1983). Self-esteem, the third component of planfulness, encompasses self-esteem and is essential in determining the individual's worth and the control that he or she will exercise over future goals (Super & Nevill, 1984).

The focus of this study was on transition practices of school guidance counselors for career and technical education students. In this context, Super's exploration stage was most applicable. During this stage, the adolescent explores the world and sub-cultures in which he or she lives, trying out different roles congenial to his or her self-concept (Super, 1957). Society expects young people to learn who they are and what they will

become (Savickas, 2002). According to Super and Nevill (1984), this information-seeking behavior provided experiences that would enable the individual to deal with the three developmental tasks of the phase- namely, crystallization (exporting where they fit into society), specification (sifting through tentative preferences to specify a particular preferred occupational choice), and actualization (converting choice into action). The high school counselor's aim was to assist individual students in a collaborative relationship. Super (1983) proposed that counselors should determine their client's level of maturity and the importance of work for the student, as this would shape the individual counseling process (Crites, 1981). The quality of congruence depended on the individual's self-concept and emotional maturity. Counselors then can facilitate the individual transition process by guiding the student and providing the essential information for this life-stage. Super (1990) asserted that environmental factors, such as family, finances, educational attainment, participation in extracurricular activities, and independent behavior, also affect the individual's vocational decision making.

Significance of the Study

Data collection was a very important task and undertaking; it was vital to the research and literature in specific areas. The data can then be used to evaluate programs and improve in these areas. The primary intent of this study was to quantify the transition practices of high school guidance counselors in the State of Georgia by a survey questionnaire using the components of an effective pre-college guidance and counselor program developed by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC).

Historically, Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989) and McDonough (2004b) found that counseling education programs have not included preparation in the area of college counseling, as college counseling has traditionally been viewed as inconsistent with a counselor's focus on students' mental health. High school guidance counselors can improve knowledge in this area by securing accurate, up-to-date, college admissions and financial aid information through professional development. Professional development is a need for all high school counselors (Chapman & DeMasi, 1984). Moles (1991) found that the high school guidance counselors attended less than three in-service programs annually across all counseling domains. Hawkins (2003) found that 9 out of 10 counselors received time off for professional development; however, only 42% received full financial support, and only 21% of public school counselors received full financial support for those professional development activities. Also, in *Beyond College for All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*, Rosenbaum (2001) stated most high school counselors were well-informed about SAT and ACT scores, college requirements, and college applications, but they were poorly informed about career and technical education and the labor market for the career and technical education students. The survey was useful to determine the professional developmental needs of guidance counselors.

Hawkins (2003) reported that schools with supportive environments for postsecondary education report significantly higher rates of postsecondary attendance and have a well-staffed guidance counseling department. In a High Schools That Work study (Basmat, Alexander, Farris, & Hudson, 2003), it was found that 57% of high school counselors spent less then 19% of their time on postsecondary advising. In addition to a lack of postsecondary advising, the high school student-to-counselor ratio limited the

individual time counselors had with each student. Georgia's funding formula for high school guidance counselors calls for 1 counselor to every 400 students (Georgia House Bill 1187, 2000). Quantifying the postsecondary transition practices of Georgia's high school counselors will give policy makers the opportunity to make informed decisions that could affect high school guidance counselors, comprehensive guidance counseling programs, and the future direction of postsecondary transition practices.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERTURE

The purpose of this chapter was to review selected literature relevant to high school guidance counselors concerning career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. This chapter includes a review of (a) the history of school guidance counselors; (b) examples of comprehensive guidance counselor programs; (c) teacher as advisor programs; (d) Perkins Legislation; (e) Tech Prep; (f) Peach State Pathways; and (g) career theories, including trait and factor, social cognitive, and developmental/life span form the framework of guidance practice and theory.

History of School Guidance Counseling

In the 20th century, the school counselors' role and functions underwent various transformations in response to changing student and societal needs (Baker, 2000; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Herr & Shahnasarian, 2001; Paisley & Borders, 1995). Over the years, the role has focused on vocational guidance (pre-1950s), enhancing individual development (1960s), and most recently, on implementing comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling programs (1970s-present). Most research has focused on school guidance counselors' allocation of time for duties (NACAC, 2004) and perceptions of counselors; functions by parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors (Aluede & Imonikhe, 2002; Hughey et al., 1993; Kaplan, 1994; Studer & Allton, 1996; Ter Maat, 2000). However, research (Epps, 1995; Horn & Nuñez, 2000; McDonough et al., 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 1997) clearly presented data that support the concept that, when school

counselors are consistently and frequently available to help students and allowed to provide direct services (Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998), they were very effective. In the process, school counseling has evolved from a position involving a set of extra duties performed by a teacher to an ancillary group of services provided by a specially trained professional school guidance counselor. Until more recently, the current efforts was for school counselors to initiate an organized comprehensive guidance program based on a developmental framework (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

The role of guidance counselors was first introduced to public schools in the opening decades of the 20th century as vocational guidance. This idea of using schools to prepare young people for work blossomed into a major campaign to integrate the schools more closely with the economy (Kantor, 1986). The change from an agrarian society to an industrial society at the turn of the 20th century promoted schools to provide vocational advising for students which was administered by teachers with no formal training in the field (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). It was the central task of the schools to train youth for jobs and to direct them into occupations that used their talents and interests and matched the economic needs of the community (Kantor, 1986; Muro & Kottman, 1995).

At the time, Frank Parsons, who was recognized as the Father of Guidance, established the Vocational Bureau in Boston in 1908 (Aubrey, 1982) to assist young people in making the transition from school to work. Parsons' core concept was that of matching. According to Parsons (1909), ideal career choices were based on matching personal traits (aptitude, abilities, resources, personality) with job factors (wages, environment) to produce the best conditions of vocational success.

The guidance programs during the 1920s and 1930s followed two different philosophies. David Snedden (1920) and Charles Prosser (1939) prescribed guidance in education was a means by which schools could assign individuals to occupations according to innate capacities. They established specialized schools and courses which taught the skills and techniques of specific callings and reflected their students' intellectual capabilities, vocational interests, and future careers, thus, continuing the vocational matching philosophy. The other view was a more egalitarian perspective held by John Dewey (1916) and Frank Leavitt (1914) and sought to change the industrial conditions, especially for children, and assist students in career choices. Dewey viewed education as designed to meet the needs of the individuals and prepare people for life in a democratic society (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). From the 1920s to the 1930s, school guidance programs grew because of the rise of the progressive education movement in schools. The child-centered progressive movement of the time, influenced by the work of G. Stanley Hall (1904), and the child study movement emphasized the importance of the development of the individual child. At the time, progressive education movement in the United States was in the process of making a shift from the earlier concerns with the school as the engine of social reform to the concern with the liberation of the individual child (Cremin, 1961). The school counselor, according to Baruth and Robinson (1987), was regarded as an instrumental stakeholder in shaping and influencing students' lives during the progressive movement.

John Dewey (1916) was probably the most influential person to lay the technical and philosophical foundation for accepting counseling as an integral part of education in the broadest sense. Dewey introduced the cognitive developmental movement proposing

that people move through hierarchical stages of development. These stages were qualitatively distinct, with each stage being unique and separate. Dewey (1963) proposed that the challenge in child development was to provide children with the appropriate types of stimulating experiences during decisive periods of development when specific predispositions were ready to surface and progress. Therefore, Dewey emphasized the school's role in promoting students' cognitive, personal, social, and moral development. A result of Dewey's (1963) work was an incorporation of guidance strategies into the curriculum designed to support student development. During this period of time, the school system placed more emphasis on psychological testing and less focus on career guidance. According to Myers (1935) and John Brewer (1942), both educational leaders defined guidance as the ability to assist the intellectual growth of the child; and this recognized educational guidance with organized education. This movement placed the emphasis on personal, social, and moral development. Many schools reacted to this movement as anti-educational, saying that schools should teach only the fundamentals of education. This attitude, combined with the economic hardship of the Great Depression, led to a decline in school counseling and guidance (Aubrey, 1982).

During the 1940s and 1950s, there was resurgence in guidance counselors and the focus continued on vocational guidance. Although the directive (counselor lead) approach to guidance was entrenched during this time, developmental guidance took hold and guidance obtained a new direction from Carl Rogers (1942). Rogers played an important historical role in the development of psychology and psychotherapy. He was one of the first, if not the first, psychologist to propose a comprehensive theory about psychotherapy. This new theory minimized counselor advice-giving and stressed the

creation of conditions that left the client more in control of the counseling content. Many in the counseling fields adopted his emphasis, the non-directive (later called "client-centered") approach (Gibson & Mitchell, 1990).

Carl Rogers was a big influence on the approach to school guidance counseling during this time period. His theory on developing a “helping relations” or a “humanistic approach” between counselor and student to enhance the relationship was important. Rogers’ non-directive techniques changed the perception of where the responsibility would be placed for completion of goals and direction in an individual’s life (Gibson & Mitchell, 1990). Rogers, by far the most influential and eloquent voice in self-concept theory, introduced an entire system of helping built around the importance of the self. In Rogers' (1947) view, the self was the central ingredient in human personality and personal adjustment. Rogers described the self as a social product developing out of interpersonal relationships and striving for consistency. He maintained that there was a basic human need for positive regard, both from others and from oneself. He also believed that in every person there was a tendency towards self-actualization and development so long as this was permitted and encouraged by an inviting environment (Purkey & Schmidt, 1987). The growth of the client-centered approach as opposed to the counselor-centered approach led the government in the 1950s to establish the Guidance and Personnel Services Section in the Division of State and Local School Systems. This increase in federal and state funds started the positive growth of guidance services in public schools.

Robert Mathewson (1962) who, as early as 1949, proposed that the school guidance program should be organized and implemented in a developmental fashion

outlined school counseling that paralleled the various child developmental needs reflecting Rogers' self-concept. He also argued that teachers alone could not provide the necessary experiences required for optimal development of students, and he saw guidance programs as the most critical educational factor in enhancing student development (Aubrey, 1982).

In the late 50s and early 60s, politics and the threats brought forward by the Cold War increased the role of school counselors and spurred the formation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). ASCA became the fifth division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) and, in 1953, they began the publication of *The School Counselor*, a professional journal whose theme was to facilitate school counselors by providing resources specific to this profession (Minkoff & Terres, 1985). Federal legislation proved to be significant in defining counselor positions as very important in reaction to the 1957 launching of the Russian satellite and the Cold War. The Russians stunned the United States with the launch of Sputnik and soon after the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was passed and forced the abandonment of non-directive guidance (Minkoff & Terres, 1985; Paisley & Borders, 1995). The emphasis on school counseling then became redirected to preparing students for college; while students not planning to attend college were, for the most part, neglected (Coy, 1999, Minkoff & Terres, 1985). The federal funding provided school testing programs to both identify scientifically-talented students and to train novice and experienced counselors. At this time, the number of school counselors quadrupled and the ratio of students to counselors decreased as millions of dollars poured into education (Hayes, Dagley, & Horne, 1996).

During the late 60s to late 80s, much transition occurred when various guidance counseling organizational models developed to enhance individual development in an attempt to meet the demands of overburdened counselors. They were overburdened by the social upheaval, students' poor attendance, substance abuse issues, a rise in violence both at home and in schools, mental health issues, and changing family patterns (Gysbers & Handerson, 2000). Developmental guidance and counseling concepts began to emerge as did educational rights for handicapped individuals (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The diversification of the school counselors' role continued in the 1970s with the special education movement. The role of counselors increasingly focused on serving the needs of disabled and special education students and also college and university bound students, which once again left the mainstream student, about 80% to 85% of the students, without vital counseling and guidance services. The high and low achieving students (about 15% to 20% of the students) received most of the guidance services. In a reaction against the prevailing model of school-based guidance as a service offered by a counselor, the Comprehensive Guidance Counseling Program model was developed in the early 1970s at the University of Missouri-Columbia (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005) to place emphasis on guidance as a school-based system of cooperation and coordination between teacher and counselor. This occurred when the ASCA drafted the introduction of the Elementary School Guidance and Counseling Act to recognize the importance of counseling at all levels (Clawson, 1993). The role of the school counselor changed from providing therapeutic and vocational guidance to providing individual development with a development-guidance focus (Green & Keys, 2001).

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs

During the past two decades, there has been an effort to restructure the traditional work of school counselors from a reactionary and crisis orientation to a proactive developmental-prevention focus at the national, state, and local school levels (Wittmer, 2000). The reasons for this transformation were well-documented in the literature (Dinkmeyer & Caldwell, 1970; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, 2001; Herr, 2002; Myrick, 2003; Paisley & Borders, 1995). Briefly, they were (a) the enactment of federal legislation (Carl D. Perkins Acts) that support the advancement of school counseling; (b) the influences of developmental (Piaget's cognitive, Kohlberg's moral reasoning, and Erikson's psychosocial) and career education (Donald Super's stage model) theories; and (c) the economic-political demands for educational accountability, program evaluation, and curricular revisions (Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Johnson & Whitfield, 1991; Lapan, 2001).

A variety of different conceptual models have been effectively translated from theory to practice nationwide in developing comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (CGCP) (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; VanZandt & Hayslip, 2001). Earlier comprehensive counseling models that were supported by the professional literature and were incorporated in the widely accepted CGCP developed by the ASCA were Gysbers and Henderson's (2000) Missouri Model, Myrick's (1993) six interventions of developmental guidance program, and Johnson and Johnson's (1991) results-based guidance, a systems approach to student support. The CGCP model was the developmental approach which was a planned effort to provide each student with an

age-appropriate set of skills and experiences that helped enhance all learning and embraced all of the goals of education (Myrick, 2003). Additionally, Johnson and Johnson (2003) strongly influenced school counseling by reminding counselors of the importance of results-based programs and encouraged them to become more aware of the impact of their work on student behaviors and decision-making skills. These three approaches had as their primary goal the demonstration of the contributions of the counselor to student academic success.

The programmatic component of the Missouri model, developed by Gysbers and Henderson (2000), consisted of a guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support. The guidance curriculum consisted of structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom activities to enhance students' mental health and acquisition of life skills. The curriculum was organized around career planning and exploration, knowledge of self and others, and educational development.

The individual planning component of the Missouri model consisted of activities that helped all students set goals, plan, and manage their own learning as well as their personal and career development. Individual planning could include advisement, assessment, placement, planning, and follow-up. Conversely, the responsive services component consisted of activities to meet students' immediate needs and concerns. These services can be in the form of counseling, consultation, referral, or information sharing. The system support component consisted of management activities that establish, maintain, and enhance the guidance program as a whole. Professional development, staff

and community relations, consultation with teachers, advisory councils, community outreach, program management, and research and development made up this component.

Gysbers and Henderson (2000) referred to all tasks that did not fit in the four preceding major components as non-guidance activities. Gysbers and Henderson (2001) made no time allowance for non-guidance activities. Therefore, he recommended that counselors develop a plan to eliminate all non-guidance related activities from their role.

Another popular model that has been used to guide the structure of school counseling programs was Myrick's (1993) model that focused mainly on the development of the student. Myrick identified six counselor interventions or functions in which school counselors work: (a) individual counseling, (b) small group counseling, (c) classroom guidance/large group guidance, (d) consultation, (e) coordination, and (f) peer facilitation. Organized around time, Myrick proposed that individual counseling should consume about 2 to 6 hours per week and be provided on a caseload basis for approximately 12 sessions. This was about 5% to 15% of the counselor's time. Myrick recommended that small group counseling be allotted 10% to 25% of a counselor's weekly time. Classroom guidance should take no more than 7% to 8% of a counselor's time, and no more than 7% of a counselor's time should be devoted to consultation. Myrick suggested flexibility and variability with the amount of time allotted to coordination and gave no specific percentage of time for this role. Peer facilitation or the training of students to help other students, according to Myrick, should receive a time commitment of 1 to 5 hours weekly. Myrick stated that the emphasis in developmental guidance programs was on prevention rather than remediation and counselors should shift from a crisis-based orientation to a planned orientation.

Johnson and Johnson (1991) described their competency-based model as client-based services to insure the acquisition of competencies for success in school, higher education, and employment. The competency-based guidance program was designed to be an integral part of the education of each student within a district. The program itself consisted of a system of elements, which were interrelated and interdependent. It also provided congruence with the school district's philosophy, curriculum, and other educational programs. The structure of the program lent itself to the formation of a student support team which worked collaboratively to meet the identified goals and student competencies. The student support team consisted of all support professionals on the school staff including school psychologists, social workers, attendance professionals, health professionals, and others. The elements of the program were described and are as follows: mission, philosophy, conceptual model of guidance, goals, competencies, management system, monitoring system, results agreements, needs assessment, advisory council, master calendar of events, and a glossary.

The elements of the system were a student support team approach to results-based school counseling and guidance programs. Each program was unique to the school population it served, the interests and skills of the individual professionals, the constraints of the resources and community it served, and the framework of the school system within which it reside. It was based on a belief that there was no right way nor was there a student support program that would fit every community. Only the professionals within the system know what would work best within their school environment. The counselors were considered professionals with individual accountability for their programs, their activities, the student results attained, and the evaluation of their program.

For many years, school counseling has lacked a consistent identity from state to state, district to district, and even school to school. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2003) created the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs to give counselors a framework, a tool which could be used to help define their role to their administrators, faculties, students, parents, and other concerned individuals. By implementing a school counseling program based on ASCA's National Model, schools and school districts could: (a) establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school, (b) ensure every student had equitable access to the school counseling program, (c) identify and deliver the knowledge and skills all students should acquire, and (d) ensure that the school counseling program was comprehensive in design and delivered systematically to all students (ASCA, 2003).

The ASCA National Model is a comprehensive school guidance program that supports the school's overall mission by promoting academic achievement, career planning, and personal/social development. It serves as a framework to guide states, districts, and individual schools in designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive, developmental, and systematic school counseling program. The Model consists of four interrelated components: foundation, delivery system, management systems, and accountability. Infused throughout the program are the qualities of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, which lead to systemic change. ASCA's National Model outlines a program allowing school counselors to direct services to every student. As educators who were specially trained in childhood and adolescent development, school counselors could take a leadership role in effecting systemic change

in a school. However, a successful school counseling program is a collaboration of parents, students, school counselors, administrators, teachers, student services personnel, and support staff working together for the benefit and development of every student (ASCA, 2003).

The review of the literature demonstrated that there was substantial empirical evidence that these programs promoted student development and academic success (Myrick; 1987; Shaw & Goodyear, 1984). A study of Missouri high schools showed that schools with more fully implemented model guidance programs had students who were more likely to report that (a) they had earned higher grades, (b) their education was better preparing them for the future, (c) their school made more career and college information available to them, and (d) their school had a more positive climate (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997). Another study showed that school counselor effectiveness was influenced by school climate. In schools with effective counseling programs, principals generally provided enthusiastic support for the programs and encouragement to the counselors. Another common element was a clear understanding between counselors and administrators as to the goals of the school counseling programs. These conditions were generally not present in ineffective programs (Sutton, 1995). Research showed that school counseling interventions had a substantial impact on students' educational and personal development. Individual and small-group counseling, classroom guidance, and consultation activities seemed to contribute directly to students' success in the classroom and beyond. School counselors should spend the majority of their time performing these interventions. Coordination activities should be confined to those that improve the program’s efficiency and accountability (Borders & Drury, 1992). In an edited work by

Gysbers and Henderson (1997), there was consensus among the authors who were involved in the implementation of the comprehensive guidance programs that more students were served and that the school counselor and the program had a higher profile than before initiating the program.

The research of interest to this study was individual counseling. Four studies were found on individual counseling, all addressing high school students. Three of the studies were conducted on students in the High Schools That Work (HSTW) schools. The first two studies, Frome (2001) and Kaufman, Bradby, and Teitlbaum (2000), linked an increase in individual counseling time spent with a teacher or school counselor had a positive effect on academic planning and an increase in mathematic test scores. Another study, Frome and Dunham (2002), of rural high school students found a positive relationship between the amount of guidance received from counselors in planning student's high school program and the number of college-prep math and science classes student took.

Georgia's Comprehensive Guidance Counseling Program was in the process of being implemented and followed the ASCA National Model. The Georgia model consisted of a more active role by guidance counselors in each school district to design and implement a comprehensive school counseling program that would follow the state's guidelines. Guidance counselors assumed more of a responsibility for student growth and, thus, became more accountable in the process. The activities that guidance counselors conducted had a link to define student standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2000). The primary purpose of the Georgia Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Curriculum was to assist local school systems in developing, implementing,

and evaluating comprehensive and developmental programs in grades K-12. The guidance program was an integral part of each school's total educational plan.

Georgia's Guidance and Counseling Curriculum has standards and objectives that were aligned with the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC), last updated in 1999, the Guidance and Counseling Curriculum, known as Georgia's Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Curriculum emphasized promotion of student success and high achievement for all students by altering the philosophical thrust of guidance programs (Georgia Department of Education, 1999). The State of Georgia was quite prescriptive in defining the role of school counselors and their use of time. Through Georgia House Bill 1187 (2000), counselors were required to collect data that reflect the new role and function of counselors, including monthly reports that recorded the percentage of time spent in counseling. Guidance counselors were required by law to spend at least five of six periods counseling or advising students and parents. The law simply stated:

> The local board of education shall provide for school guidance and counseling services in accordance with state and federal laws, State Board of Education rules, and department guidelines: Insuring that each school counselor is engaged in counseling or guidance activities, advising students, parents, or guardians, for a minimum of five or six fulltime segments of the equivalents. (Georgia Department of Education, 2005, p. 1)

The full-time segments of equivalents consisted of (a) Program design, planning, and leadership; (b) Counseling' (c) Guidance and collaboration; (d) Consultation and coordination; and (e) Insuring that each school counselor was engaged in other functions for no more than one of the six program segments or the equivalent. Simply stated, the

guidance counselors should spend 83% of their time advising and counseling students or their parents. Even though guidance and counseling are required by law in Georgia, the state's Department of Education has no provision in the law that states guidance counselors must develop a postsecondary transition plan for each of their students, and there is no provision that the school guidance counselor has to advise each student individually.

Georgia's Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Curriculum characterized the new program development in guidance and counseling as results driven (Georgia Department of Education, 1999). Using a collaborative process that involved guidance counselors, guidance supervisors, and teachers, the state developed a Framework for Developing and Implementing Asset Building Standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). The framework has evolved over the past few years and is designed to assist counselors in developing standards and competencies to use in maximizing students' assets and abilities (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). The objective in developing this framework was to provide guidance counselors with competencies to enable students to be prepared to meet the career demands of the new century. The core convictions guiding this objective were: (a) Every student deserves to be surrounded by a culture of high expectations and a rich array of options for the future; (b) Every student deserves rich educational and career guidance in order to define the choices the options he or she chooses; and (c) Every student deserves rich curriculum, instruction, and services to be able to realize the options developed through the guidance process (Georgia Department of Education, 2005).

Implementation of the comprehensive guidance counselor program was accomplished through the adviser/advisee program or teacher as advisor (TAP). TAP programs are predicated on the belief that every young adolescent should have at least one adult at school to act as the student's advocate. According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), every student should be able to rely on one adult in the building to help them through the myriad of changes and advocate on their behalf for every resource to help them succeed in the future. In similar fashion, Beane and Lipka (1987) presented a useful description of advisory programs:

> Advisory programs are designed to deal directly with the affective needs of [young adolescents]. Activities may range from non-formal interactions to use of systematically developed units whose organizing center are drawn from the common problems, needs, interests, or concerns of [young adolescents], such as "getting along with peers," "living in the school," or "developing self-concept." In the best of these programs, [young adolescents] have an opportunity to get to know one adult really well, to find a point of security in the institution, and to learn about what it means to be a healthy human being. (p. 40)

A long inventory of national legislation has specifically advocated the importance of career and technical education students to career guidance (Herr& Shahnasarian, 2001). The history of landmark pieces of legislation that have made significant contributions to the evolution of career guidance and counseling that advocate career guidance as a policy imperative and shapes the professional preparation of counselors included the George Barden Act of 1946, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Career Education Incentive Act of 1976, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act of 1984

and subsequent amendments (1990, 1998) to Perkins including the 2006 amendment, and also the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994.

Vocational/career guidance for CTE students has been supported by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act from its inception in 1984, and more recently, in The Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Improvement Act (2006). What makes the Perkins Act of 1990 and 1998 interesting is the changing of the definition of career guidance. In the 1990 Act, the following definition was provided:

> The term "career guidance and counseling" means programs (A) Which pertain to the body of subject matter and related techniques and methods organized for the development in individuals of career awareness, career planning, career decision making, placement skills, and knowledge and understanding of local, state, and national occupational, educational and labor market needs, trends, and opportunities; and (B) Which assist such individuals in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices. (104, Part 2, Stat. 753)

In the 1998 amendments, the direction for career guidance had changed substantially. The new definition was as follows:

> Career guidance and academic counseling means providing individual with information access on career awareness and planning for their occupational and academic future which shall involve career options, financial aid, and postsecondary options. (112, Part 1, Stat. 3076)

Gone from the 1990 Act was the notion of an organized program based on a body of subject matter. In the 1998 Act, career guidance and "academic" counseling focused only on providing individuals with information. This was a dramatic change in purpose for

guidance and counseling conceptually and operationally. It narrowed the purpose of guidance and counseling considerably. This new direction for career guidance remains the same with the Perkins IV Act of 2006 (The Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Improvement Act, 2006).

Integration of secondary and postsecondary education through Tech Prep was a mechanism for linking secondary vocational education students to postsecondary education; more specifically Tech Prep links technical training to postsecondary education, most often in community colleges. Tech Prep in 1991 was funded by the federal government, as part of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 [Public Law 101-392, Title IIIE]. Today many of the early Tech Prep programs have evolved into career clusters, career pathways, and magnet programs (Bragg et al., 1997; Layton & Bragg, 1992). The implementation of Georgia's Peach State Pathways was one such evolution of Tech Prep to Career Pathways. Tech Prep or Peach State Pathways was one of the main postsecondary transition mechanisms for CTE students to continue their education after high school.

The law effectively defined what a Tech Prep education program must include to be federally funded. By law, the program must be a combined secondary and postsecondary education program that (a) leads to an associate degree or 2-year certification; (b) provides technical preparation in at least one career cluster; (c) builds students competence in mathematics, science, and communication; (d) leads to placement in employment (U.S. Congressional Record, 1990). The origins of Tech Prep date back to 1968 when an Oregon task force in charge of improving vocational education recommended that occupational education include the following: (a) articulation between

high school and community colleges, (b) cluster approach to occupational planning, (c) occupational exploration in grades 7 through 10 and implementation of programs in grades 11 and 12, and (d) guidance and counseling services throughout all grades (Bragg, Kirby, Puckett, Trinkle, & Watkins, 1994). These recommended elements were reinforced by federal education amendments in the 1970s and through 1980s with the leadership from both Dale Parnell (1985) and Dan Hull (Hull & Parnell, 1991) that had a direct influence on the federal Tech Prep policy of the 1990s (Bragg et al., 1994).

Georgia's Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program was a natural partner with the newly developed Peach State Pathways: Education and Career Plans (Georgia Department of Education, 2007) for CTE students as they work together to develop career curriculum for students. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 fueled the re-development of a seamless transition to postsecondary education for CTE students. The State of Georgia has developed career pathways that will be much more than a sequence of related courses or a state-approved program. Career pathways will be an umbrella initiative that incorporates and aligns all the necessary educational and training components to align with Georgia's Strategic Industries and to assure that Georgia's current and future workforce can compete in a knowledgeable economy. The structure evolved through time and aligned educational, economic, and social entities that helped students or workers obtain the skills needed in the workforce. Building Georgia's career pathways system was a process of adapting existing programs and services and the possibility of adding new ones that would enable all students to advance to higher levels of education and employment. A career pathway is a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career courses, commencing

in the ninth grade and leading to an associate degree, an industry recognized certificate or licensure, or a baccalaureate degree and beyond. A career pathway is developed, implemented, and maintained in partnership among secondary and postsecondary education, business, and employers. Career pathways are available to all students, including adult learners and are designed to lead to rewarding careers (College and Career Transitions Initiative [CCTI], 2005).

Summary

The past decades have seen a change in school guidance counselors' practices both nationally and locally due to the contribution of different developmental career theories, guidance models, and both state and local legislation. As a result, school guidance counselors' duties and responsibilities shifted from providing vocational guidance to providing development guidance (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994; Schmidt, 1999). The shift from vocational to comprehensive developmental guidance programs has also been the result of rapid complex economic, industrial, occupational, and social changes which ultimately impact the needs of students. According to Dykeman et al. (2003), students and their parents need assistance in navigating the school system and accessing information so they can make informed decisions about school programs and postsecondary education that meet students' individual needs. Comprehensive school guidance counselors' programs provide a framework to reach every student in every grade with appropriate guidance counseling activities delivered through teacher advisor/student advisee programs. However, the literature showed that helping students prepare for postsecondary education or assisting students in enrolling in a postsecondary

school was not written into any existing accountability system or any k-12 job description (McDonough, 2005).

The literature showed that state programs such as Tech Prep and Peach State Pathway (career clusters) developed from federal acts (Carl Perkins Act) created a seamless transition that took students from secondary to postsecondary education. The Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Improvement Act, 2006) defined career guidance and academic counseling as providing individuals with information access on career awareness and planning for their occupational and academic future which shall involve career options, financial aid, and postsecondary options.

Review of the literature revealed only a few empirical studies that described the share of time that counselors spend on postsecondary education counseling (McDonough, 2004b). The lack of available postsecondary counseling was limited because of the high student-to-counselor ratios and other school counselor priorities (Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999; McDonough 2005; NACAC, 2006; Venezia & Kist, 2005). The magnitude of constraints on providing postsecondary counseling varied across schools based on the characteristics of the student the school served and the location in the particular districts or states (McDonough, 2005, NACAC, 2006; Venezia & Kist, 2005).

Career Theories

The varying practices of school guidance counselors and comprehensive guidance programs are derived from various career theories. This section will focus on the different theories of career choice. Theories of career choice and development are generally grouped into three categories. These theories include trait and factor theories of Parsons (1909) and Holland (1966, 1973, 1997b), social cognitive theories of Lent, Brown, and

Hackett (1994, 1996, 2000, 2002,), Lent (2005), and Krumboltz (1979) and the developmental or life-span theories of Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992) and Super, Savickas, and Super (1996), Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005), Ginzberg et al. (1951), and Ginzberg (1952, 1972, 1984).

Trait and Factor Theory

Parsons' (1909) core concept was that of matching. According to Parsons, ideal career choices were based on matching personal traits (e.g., aptitude, abilities, resources, personality) with job factors (e.g., wages, environment) to produce the best conditions of vocational success. Parsons (1909) developed a triadic framework to help individuals decide on a career: (a) clear understanding of yourself, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations, and other qualities; (b) knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensations, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; and (c) true reasoning of the relations of these two groups of facts. Parsons' (1909) work represented the first conceptual framework for career decision-making and became the first guide for career counselors (Brown & Brooks, 1996). It was Parsons' hope that individuals who actively engaged in the process of choosing their vocation would be more satisfied and more efficient with their work.

John Holland's (1966, 1973, 1997a; 1985,) theory that career choice was a function of personality has been one of the most widely researched theories in the history of career psychology. Holland's theory organized personality and work environment into six different typologies: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). Realistic personality types prefer working with their hands, tools, or machines. Investigative personality types enjoy working with

numbers or manipulating data. Artistic personality types prefer to be unrestrained and creative. Social personality types enjoy being with people. Enterprising types enjoy working with personal, status, and monetary gain. Conventional types prefer to engage in business or clerical work. The theory postulated that the greater the similarity between the individual and the work environment type, the higher the job satisfaction. This satisfaction was a result of the individual expressing his personality through his work. Holland (1973) has always believed that personality and vocational choices were related:

> If vocational interests are construed as an expression of personality, then they represent the expression of personality in work, school subjects, hobbies, recreation activities, and preferences. In short, what we have called 'vocational interests' are simply another aspect of personality. If vocational interests are an expression of personality, then it follows that interest inventories are personality inventories. (p. 7)

Holland's (1985) theory asserted that individuals want work environments that match their personality; that one's job choice is a function of personality. Holland viewed his theory in a hexagonal geometric shape and believed that the mathematical relationship with regards to the six interest types in the hexagon was equidistant. The degree of congruence, or agreement, between an individual's personality type and an occupation can be estimated by this hexagonal model. The shorter the distance between the personality type and the occupation type, the higher the congruence.

The degree of consistency was also defined by the model. Adjacent types on the hexagon were most compatible. For example, Enterprising and Social rate high in consistency as they lie adjacent to each other in the hexagon model. Opposite types, such

as Realistic and Social were the most inconsistent in interests, personality, characteristics, or work environments.

Social Cognitive Theories

More recently, the needs for theory to take into account both traits/factors and life-span has been recognized. Theoretical models based on social learning theory, more recently conceptualized as the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986), included the learning theory by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990, 1996) and the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) of Lent (Lent, 2005; Lent et al., 1996, 2002).

SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) is an application of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory of career development and outlines the process whereby (a) educational and career interests develop, (b) interests and other socio-cognitive mechanisms promote career-relevant choices, and (c) varying levels of career performance and persistence are attained. The specific cognitive mechanisms by which people develop, pursue, and modify their career-related interests over time include the following: (a) self-efficacy beliefs, (b) outcome expectations, and (c) goal representations. Through repeated activity, modeling and feedback from important others, children and adolescents develop specific skills, set their own performance standards, develop varying levels of confidence in specific types of activities and tasks, and form expectations about future outcomes of their performance. According to SCCT, greater levels of interest are associated with domains in which the person has higher self-efficacy and outcome expectations, and these interests lead to the development of intentions or goals for further activity exposure (Lent et al., 1994). Personal inputs, such as race, sex, and intelligence, as well as proximal and distal contextual factors, such as cultural and gender role socialization, are

also critical sources of influence on career development and are postulated to directly affect access to learning experiences, which can influence cognitive beliefs , self-efficacy and outcome expectation. Lent et al. (2000) further postulated that contextual influences, such as career supports and barriers, can be crucial in the development of career beliefs.

The Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making by Krumboltz (1979) explained how educational and occupational preferences and skills are acquired and how selections are made. The theory identified interactions between an individual's genetic factors, environmental conditions, learning experiences, cognitive and emotional responses, and performance skills that affect decision making. The aforementioned factors and their combinations produce several different decision points at which the individual has one or more options. According to Krumboltz (1979), internal (personal) and external (environmental) influencers (constraints and facilitators) shape the nature and number of those options and the way in which the individuals respond to them.

Krumboltz (1979) suggested four categories of influencers that affect occupational selection. Each category can be further divided into factors, categories, events, and conditions. The four primary categories are genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. The category of genetic endowment and special abilities includes gender and ethnic factors. The environmental conditions and events category contains macro-level conditions and events that may be due to human action (social, cultural, political, and economic) or natural forces. The significance of technological, economic, and social changes on career choices is today unquestioned. Krumboltz (1979) divided learning experiences into instrumental learning experiences and associative learning experiences.

In instrumental learning experiences, the individual acts on the environment in such a way as to produce certain consequences. In associative learning experiences, the individual learns by observing real or fictional models. Learning experiences generate task approach skills, which lead to specific career related actions. Task approach skills are skills that are formed in the interaction between learning experiences, genetic, and environmental influences. These skills affect outcomes of each task and overall outcomes for the individual.

Self-observation generalizations were defined as an overt or covert self-statement evaluating one's own actual performance in relation to learned standards. According to Krumboltz (1979), interests are one of the most important types of self-observation generalizations in career decision making which influence future activities, chances to obtain new experiences, and thus, the choice of education and occupation.

Krumboltz (1979) summarized the process of career planning and development to be the sequential cumulative effects of numerous learning experiences affected by various environmental circumstances and the individual's cognitive and emotional reaction to these learning experiences. In addition, the process of career planning and development may be affected by circumstances that cause a person to make a decision to enroll in a certain educational program or become employed in a particular occupation.

Developmental/Life-span Theories

The researcher opted to select a developmental/life span theory, more specifically Donald Super's Developmental/life-span theories refer to the interaction and change over time and are portrayed in some theories as a series of stages through which individuals pass. The developmental theories of Ginzberg et al. (1951) and Ginzberg (1972, 1984)

and Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992) and Super et al. (1996) have attempted to account for the process of career development. The advent of the developmental or life-span theories represents what Savickas (2002) claimed was the second grand perspective of vocational psychology, the individual development view of careers. Time is an important consideration in the development approaches and takes into account that career choice is not just a single static decision but rather is a dynamic developmental process involving a series of decisions made over time. Career development is the shaping of a career over time and career decisions are made throughout life, and as a result, the developmental theories are referred to as life-span approaches.

Ginzberg's (1952) work was of significance as it represented one of the earliest departures from the existing trait/factor theories, and was a vital contribution to developmental theory. Ginzberg believed that occupational choice was a developmental process made over a 10 year period that begins in early childhood. Career development follows an orderly and predictable pattern and is marked by the progression through three broad life stages. The three stages through which the individual passes are the fantasy, tentative, and realistic stages. In addition, the tentative stage had the substages of interest, capacity, value, and transition; and the realistic period was divided into exploration, crystallization, and specification.

In the fantasy stage, the occupational preferences expressed by an individual generally reflect identification with the role of an adult they know and a lack of reality, rather than a mature career decision. The tentative stage involved a maturational process during which individuals at first base their career choice on their interests and abilities, and later begin to weigh these up against their capacities, the second phase of the stage.

In the tentative stage, there was also a growing awareness of their work values and the need to order them (Ginzberg, 1984). The final phase of the tentative stage, transition, corresponds with the first phase of the realistic stage which is exploration. During the third and final stage of this model, the realistic stage, individuals have reached the point of integrating likes and dislikes with capabilities and tempering these two variables with society's and one's personal values (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). The individual then begins to implement these tentative choices and evaluate feedback on their vocational behavior. Eventually, crystallization occurs when the young person makes a definitive occupational commitment and the process of career development is complete (Ginzberg, 1972).

Super (1980) said that career development took place across one's entire life-span and can be divided into five stages or maxicycles: Growth (4-to13), Exploration (14-to-24), Establishment (25-to-44), Maintenance (45-65), and Disengagement (65 and over). During the growth stage, the self-concept forms through identification with family members and key figures in the social-cultural environment. The exploration stage includes the developing of a self-concept. At this stage, the adolescent has the opportunity to try out various roles in a variety of situations at home, at school, in the community, or in part-time employment. Super (1957) explained that this stage was akin to personality integration. Here those aspects of the self that bring satisfaction are retained, while those that do not are rejected. In the instance of conflict between self-concept, behavior patterns are modified to bring about resolution. This phase was essentially characterized by the adolescent developing a sense of self and finding an occupation through tentative exploration of possible occupations. In the early or fantasy

period of this phase, the individual's choices are frequently unrealistic and related to play life. The tentative period comes next and choices are narrowed, but there was still incomplete knowledge of self and the world of work. In the final period of this stage, the individual further narrows the list of possible choices to more realistic goals given improved knowledge of self and the world (Super, 1990).

After the exploration phase, the establishment phase evolves. This stage is characterized by the individual establishing a permanent place in the workplace. Factors such as income, family responsibilities, and emotional ties affect this stage from the point of view that a secure income, coupled with the need to support a family, contributes to the stabilization process. In the next stage, the maintenance stage, the concern is to consolidate and hold the position attained in the family and community. Super (1957) described this stage as keeping up appearances. During the final stage, the decline stage, the individual is more restricted as a result of a decrease in their physical capacity. They become less active in work and life.

Finally, in his formulation of the stages, Super (1990) made it clear that the transition between the stages is flexible and that stages could involve a recycling of stages. Thus, each transition involved a recycling through one or more stages.

Summary of Career Theories

Each career theory can be applicable for this study that focus on transition practice of guidance counselor for CTE students from secondary to postsecondary education. The research opted for Donald Super's (1990) stage model theory to form the conceptual framework of this study. Super stated that vocational development was a process of making several decisions, which culminate in vocational choices that represent

an implementation of a person's self-concept (Super, 1957; Swanson & Fouad, 1999). During this transitional stage where the students is contemplating their future, Super (1994) described the role of advising intervention as one designed to provide direction, resolve impediments, and sustain planfulness in students about their goals for the future. The focus of this study was on transition practices of school guidance counselors for career and technical education students. In this context, Super's exploration stage was most applicable.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter focuses on the methods and procedures used to meet the purpose of this study. Described in this chapter are the major components of the methods including (a) research design, (b) population, (c) instrument, (d) data collection procedures, (e) data analysis, and (f) timeline.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to describe the practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs of high school guidance counselors concerning career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. This quantitative survey research design assessed school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs. The design of the survey (see Appendix B) and the cover letter (see Appendix C) explained to participants the purpose and the importance of this study. This study used quantitative statistics and parametric statistics to compare school counselors' practices and perceptions by geographical location, counselor-to-student ratios, and guidance counselors' years of experience. Quantitative research serves to describe situations or events and does not necessarily seek or explain relationships, make predictions, or infer meanings or implications (Isaac & Michel, 1981). This design was used to describe the characteristics and variables in the population by obtaining information on beliefs, variables, and attitudes reported on the survey. This design was ideal for measuring the beliefs and attitudes of a larger population (Babbie, 2001; Smith & Glass, 1987) when comparing

school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs across the State of Georgia. Analysis of variances was used to test whether several groups were equal across one variable.

This quantitative study used a web-based survey hosted by *Survey Monkey* software to answer the research questions posed by the study. Quantitative research explores relationships using numerical data in controlled conditions (Creswell, 2003). A survey provides a way to describe participants in a sample and examine the relationships between the responses of selected groups. Survey research offers an opportunity to generalize the results to the population from which the sample was drawn. Survey research methods also provide the flexibility of collecting and presenting the responses of a large number of participants to a large number of items in a short amount of time (Babbie, 1998). Standardized questionnaires provide the same information from everyone completing the survey, allowing for meaningful analysis.

The advantage of this survey research was the ability to describe the characteristics of the group being studied and the activities they routinely scheduled. This survey was easy to administer and the data collection method was generally reliable. Once the questionnaire was developed, it provided quantifiable information from the population (Creswell, 2003).

The advantages of administering an electronic survey included: (a) cost savings, since it was less expensive to send questionnaires online than to pay for postage; (b) ease of editing/analysis; (c) faster transmission time; (d) easy use of pre-letter as a common courtesy to inform people they are going to receive an request to help in an important

study (Dillman, Tortora & Bowker, 1998); (e) higher initial response rate; (Tse, 1998), and (f) more candid responses from the participants (Comely, 1996).

According to Babbie (2001), the disadvantages of survey research include: (a) the requirement of standardization forces questionnaire items to represent the least common denominator in assessing people's attitudes, orientations, circumstances, and experiences; (b) surveys can be inflexible in the respect that initial survey designs typically must remain unchanged through the research study; and (c) surveys are subject to artificiality as the topic of study may not be amenable to measurement through questionnaires.

Participants

The population for this study was the 1,142 high school guidance counselors in the State of Georgia (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). To achieve adequate power for statistical analysis, a sample size of 288 was required for a population of 1,142. To determine appropriate sample size, Cochran's (1977) sample size formula for categorical data and an acceptable educational research margin of error of 5% was used (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002). The alpha level of .05 was acceptable for this educational research. Cochran's (1977) procedure resulted in a minimum return rate of 288. The size of sample needed for this study was at least 288 participants, and the researcher expected a 50% targeted number of returns and completed surveys (Dillman, 2000; Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). According to Babbie (1990), a return rate of at least 50% was considered adequate for analysis and reporting data. The survey was sent via *www.surveymonkey.com* website to 576 school guidance counselors, twice the calculated sample size. A total of 233 individuals completed the survey resulting in a response rate of 40.45%.

Simple Random Sampling (SRS) was used to select participants for this study. This is the process of selecting a sample in such a way all individuals in the defined population have an equal chance of being selected for the sample. It involves defining the population, identifying each member of the population, and selecting individuals on a chance basis using a table of random numbers or another technique. Simple Random Sampling was the single best way to obtain a representative sample (Creswell, 2003). A list of guidance counselors in the State of Georgia was constructed (the population). Each guidance counselor was allocated a unique number, and then a computer generated random number table was used to select the sample. The Stat Trek's Random Number Generator (2009) was used to determine the sample.

Instrument

A cover letter (see Appendix C) with a description of the purpose and the importance of the study was e-mailed to each participant with a link to the questionnaire (see Appendix B). Respondents were assured of their anonymity and free to decide whether or not to participate in the study. Clear instructions were given to the respondents regarding completion of the specific items throughout the questionnaire (Dillman et al., 1998).

The questionnaire was designed in such a format the data could easily be entered into a computer. The questionnaire was divided into different sections in order to facilitate the processing of the data. A self-administered online survey instrument, *survey monkey*, was used to collect data for this study. The *School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey* (*SCPES*) (see Appendix B) was developed by the researcher. A review of the literature did not reveal an existing survey appropriate for this study; therefore, the

researcher developed a survey instrument based on the literature and feedback from a committee of expert guidance counselors in the field (see Appendix D).

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section contained items designed (see Appendix C) to obtain demographic information about the respondent and the high school where they worked. The second section contained the survey questions for the study, and the third section was an open-ended question. Items in the first section of the questionnaire asked each respondent for their gender, age, years of teaching experience, years of counseling experience, number of full-time and part-time guidance counselors at the school, and number of students enrolled at the school, student-to-counselor ratio, and the geographic location of school. These demographic characteristics were used as independent variables for this research study.

The second section of the survey focused on the practices, perceptions, and professional development needs of guidance counselors' postsecondary plans for CTE students and determined the dependent variable for this study. This section incorporated components of the *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program (see Appendix A) developed by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and was used to guide the development of the survey document. The NACAC identified specific functions that high school guidance counselors need to use when planning the transition to postsecondary education. Theoretically, guidance counselors' postsecondary transition practices are based on the components defined by the NACAC. The researcher then determined the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores (American Psychological Association [APA],

1985). Validity can often be thought of as judgmental. According to Patten (2004), content validity is determined by judgments on the appropriateness of the instrument's content. Patten (2004) identified three principles to improve content validity: (a) use a broad sample of content rather than a narrow one, (b) emphasize important material, and (c) write items to measure an appropriate skill. To provide additional content validity of the questionnaire, a focus group of three experts in the field (Appendix D) of high school guidance counseling was formed.

First, the questionnaire was reviewed by Dr. Carrie McWhorter, an expert in the field with 20 years of guidance counseling experience. She suggested minor editorial changes to make the items appropriate in content and language for this study. The minor editorial changes consisted of changing the components of the *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program from statements to questions. Then changing the word "college" to "postsecondary education" allowed for all postsecondary institutions to be considered (trade schools, technical school, and community colleges) as well as colleges. Dr. McWhorter selected 12 of the components identified by the NACAC and most relevant for this research study. The 12 components were directly related to student-guidance counselor communication. The questionnaire was then reviewed by two more experts, Dr. Jacqueline Melendez and Vivian Snyder (Appendix D), both Coordinators of Career and Development Education at the Georgia Department of Education. They both agreed with Dr. McWhorter's changes.

The 12 school counselors' postsecondary education transition practices selected from the 21 components of the *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program were organized to ask respondents to give answers to each of the three functions (practice,

perception, and professional developmental needs) to help answer the research questions. Each function required a corresponding Likert-type scale for responses. The first function (How often do you perform this role?) requested the respondent to answer according to their level of agreement of frequency of practice, using a 4-point Likert-type response scale of: *Always* (4), *Frequently* (3), *Seldom* (2), and *Not at All* (1). The second function (How important is this role as a school counselor?) requested the respondent to answer according to their perceived importance of the practice, using a 4-point Likert-type response scale of: *Very Important* (4), *Important* (3), *Of Little Importance* (2), and *Not at All* (1). The third function (To what degree would professional development enhance your performance in this role?) requested the respondent to answer according to their perceived likelihood of enhanced performance of practice, using a 4-point Likert-type response scale of: *To a Great Exten*t (4), *Somewhat* (3), *Very Little* (2), and *Not at All* (1).

Pilot-Test and Reliability

A pilot-test of the survey was conducted to examine the content validity of the instrument and identify potential problems early in the instrument development process. A group of eight guidance counselors were selected that matched the population criteria to identify problems with questions and instructions (Babbie, 1990). Each of the eight guidance counselors received an e-mail with a link to the survey. The responses to questions on the survey were then downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet to determine the consistency of the survey (Kittleson, 2001). The analysis for each of the functions (practice, perception, and professional development needs) yielded a calculated Cronbach alpha of $\alpha = .84$, $\alpha = .72$, and $\alpha = .95$, respectively. As indicated at the outset, reliability implies internal consistency and reliability, and requires that the items are very closely

related to one another. This was seen through items having "fairly" high, positive correlations with one another (Cronbach, 1970). Nunnally's (1978) seminal work has been widely used for estimating the reliability of multi-item scales and a coefficient alpha value in the order of .70 has been determined as acceptable. Each of the functions (practice, perception, and professional development needs) calculated above .70 alpha levels achieving internal consistency.

Study Reliability

The administration of the *School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey* (*SCPES*) to the study respondents found there was a high level of internal consistency. The first scale addressed practice and used a response scale of *Always* (4), *Frequently* (3), *Seldom* (2), and *Not at All* (1). The calculated Cronbach's alpha for the practice scale was α = .874 demonstrating a high level of internal consistency and reliability. The practice scale asked respondents to indicate how often they practiced each function, such as, review academic progress and select courses, meet with parents and students to discuss academic progress, assist students in setting realistic goals, assist students in selecting college admission tests, or assist students in use of computer based guidance systems.

Using the same scale items, the perception scale asked respondents to indicate how important the same tasks were to the role of a school guidance counselor using a 4-point Likert-type response scale of *Very Important* (4), *Important* (3), *Little Importance* (2), and *Not at All Important* (1). The calculated Cronbach's alpha for the perception scale was α = .896 indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability. The third scale, professional development needs, again used the same scale but asked respondents to indicate whether or not professional development would help or enhance their

performance for each function. The professional development scale used a 4-point Likert-type response scale of *To a Great Extent* (4), *Somewhat* (3), *Very Little* (2), and *Not at All* (1). The calculated Cronbach's alpha for the study was $\alpha = .936$ indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Each of the functions (practice, perception, and professional development needs) calculated above .874 alpha levels achieving very high internal consistency. As indicated at the outset, this implied internal consistency and reliability which, in turn, required that the items are very closely related to one another (Cronbach, 1970).

An Open-Ended Question

The third and final section contained an open-ended question used to explore general ideas about postsecondary transition practices. The researcher analyzed each of the responses line-by-line to generate categories (graduation coaches, ninth grade guidance, time and caseload, and professional development). The research then focused on the comments exemplifying the characteristics of each category. From the analysis of the school guidance counselors' comments to the open-ended question, the researcher gained deeper understanding on how and why guidance counselors responded with certain perspective for postsecondary transition.

Data Collection Procedures

An online survey system using *Survey Monkey* software was used to collect the data. Data was collected from September 14, 2009, to November 11, 2009. Approval to conduct the survey was granted by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Georgia. The researcher e-mailed the following items to high school guidance counselors selected to participate in the study.

1. Pre-letter stating the purpose of the study and requesting their voluntary participation in this research project (see Appendix E).

2. Cover letter to guidance counselors (see Appendix C) with a link to the survey instrument.

3. Thank You/reminder letter (Appendix F) with a link to the survey instrument.

4. Second reminder letter/thank you (Appendix G) with a link to the survey instrument.

5. Final contact letter/thank you (Appendix H) with a link to the survey instrument.

Factors influencing the decision to use an electronic survey were speed, cost, sample, control, convenience, response rate, and quality of data (Mehta, 1995). The survey can be delivered to the respondents quickly and the responses can be returned in a matter of seconds. Compared to mail surveys, research has indicated respondents are more apt to respond, respond more openly, and provide longer answers to open-ended questions when using an internet survey (Dillman, 2000; Grover, 2003; Mehta, 1995). An offer to share the results of the study was given to all participants.

The internet survey was personalized to each individual the researcher surveyed. There are multiple advantages to sending the e-mail directly to each individual. Response rates tend to be higher if the survey is sent directly to the intended respondent. This also prevented the researcher from sending the survey to unintended respondents (Schafer & Dillman, 1998). The researcher determined the e-mail address of each respondent of the survey to send both the cover letter requesting participation with a link to the survey

(Dillman, 2000). Dillman suggested having multiple contacts. For this study, there were up to four contacts sent to some participants.

To determine the e-mail address of each respondent, a list of all the guidance counselors in Georgia was complied. This was accomplished by creating a spreadsheet that listed every high school in Georgia. Then each high schools' website was visited to obtain the e-mail of all of the guidance counselors.

An initial individual introductory pre-letter (e-mail) (Appendix E) was sent to each participant in the study on September 7, 2009. The first e-mail contact preceded the survey helped to verify e-mail addresses but also to informed possible participants of the importance and justification for the study (Dillman, 2000). Forty e-mails were returned as a non-response, either the participant no longer worked at the school or e-mail address was wrong. An additional 40 new e-mails were randomly selected and survey packets (Appendix E) were immediately e-mailed electronically to the 40 participants. On September 14, 2009, a link to the survey (Appendix B) and cover letter (Appendix C) was sent to each individual's e-mail address.

The respondents not replying after 14 days of receipt of the survey were sent an e-mail reminder and a replacement survey (Appendix F) on September 28, 2009. The reminder repeated the explanation of the study and again asked for the respondents' participation. The respondents not replying to the first two e-mail messages and surveys received an additional e-mail (Appendix G) 14 days after the second reminder along with another replacement survey on October 10, 2009. Finally, respondents not replying to the first three e-mail messages and surveys received another e-mail reminder (Appendix H) 14 days after the third reminder along with another replacement survey on November 1,

2009. The data collection was conducted from September 14, 2009, to November 11, 2009.

Responses to the survey were recorded and exported into an electronic spreadsheet and then transferred to *SPSS* software package for in-depth analysis. The researcher then calculated quantitative statistics and analyzed data as well as making comparisons. A total of 233 individuals began the survey resulting in a response rate of 40.45%.

In order to generalize to the population and determine if a non-response bias existed, the researcher compared the waves of respondents to determine if a non-response bias existed. Respondents were compared on a bi-weekly basis from September 14, 2009, to November 11, 2009, using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Testing for non-response bias assumed the late respondents were more similar to non-respondents; however, there were no statistically significant differences between wave 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the practice [$F(3, 214) = 1.005$, $p = .391$], perception [$F(3, 201) = 105$, $p = .957$], or professional development needs [$F(3, 181) = 1.516$, $p = .212$]. There were no differences in respondents by response wave. Table 3.1 illustrates the number responding and the response rate for each wave of respondents.

Table 3.1

Response Rate

Wave	Responses	Total Sent	Response Rate
1	72	576	12.50
2	66	504	13.09
3	40	438	9.13
4	55	398	13.81
Total	233	576	40.45

Data Analysis

Data were entered into the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (*SPSS*) for analysis. Prior to analysis, quantitative statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviation) were completed to ensure the data was accurate and met the assumptions of the statistic selected for the analysis. Reliability analysis was completed for the subscales of the *SCPES*. Each of the research questions was addressed by using ANOVA to test for differences between different groupings of respondents. The open-ended responses were analyzed by repeatedly reading the responses and grouping the responses into categories using phenomenological analysis techniques. Quotes from respondents' comments were used to illustrate and support the formation of the categories.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The study sought to investigate the perceptions, practices, and professional developmental needs of school guidance counselors on postsecondary education plans for career and technical education (CTE) students. School guidance counselors were asked to complete an electronic survey, the *School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey (SCPES).* Chapter 4 reviews the purpose of the study followed by a description of the subjects and the psychometric properties of the *SCPES*. The study utilized a quantitative survey design to address the eight research questions posed by the study. The study sought to identify differences and similarities between school guidance counselors in Georgia. The research questions posed by the study were as follows:

RQ 1: What are, school guidance counselors practice, perceptions and professional developmental needs?

RQ 2: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by gender?

RQ 3: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional development needs compared by age group?

RQ 4: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by years as a professional educator group?

RQ 5: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by years as a school counselor group?

RQ 6: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by school enrollment group?

RQ 7: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by school location, urban, rural, and suburban?

RQ 8: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by counselor student ratio group?

Each research question is addressed and the statistical analysis used to answer each question is presented. The chapter closes with a brief summary of the findings and introduction to Chapter 5.

Characteristics of Respondents

The *SCPES* was sent via the *www.surveymonkey.com* website to 576 school guidance counselors. A total of 233 individuals began the survey resulting in a response rate of 40.45%. There were 182 (78.1%) females and 51 (21.9%) males responding to the survey. The respondents ranged in age from 26-30 years of age to 55+ years of age. Table 4.1 presents the data for age range. The largest group of respondents was between 36-40 years of age (N = 44, 18.9%). Respondents had spent between 1 to 5 years and 30+ years as a professional educator and between 1 to 5 years and 31+ years as professional school guidance counselors. The majority of respondents (N = 54, 23.4%) had between 6

and 10 years of experience in education and 78 (33.9%) had spent between 1 and 5 years as school guidance counselors. Table 4.2 presents the data for years in education and Table 4.3 presents the distribution of years as a guidance counselor.

Table 4.1

Distribution of Age for School Guidance Counselors

Age	*N*	*%*
26-30	28	12.0
31-35	42	18.0
36-40	44	18.9
41-45	33	14.2
46-50	28	12.0
51-54	23	9.9
55+	35	5.0
Total	233	100.0

Table 4.2

Distribution of Years as an Educator

Years as Educator	*N*	%
1-5	39	16.9
6-10	54	23.4
11-15	37	16.0
16-20	39*	16.9
21-25	30	13.0
26-30	17	7.4
30+	15	6.5
Total	231	100.0

Table 4.3

Distribution of Years as a School Guidance Counselor

Years as Counselor	*N*	%
1-5	78	33.9
6-10	77	33.5
11-15	37	16.1
16-20	25	10.9
21-25	8	3.5
26-30	3	1.3
31+	2	.9
Total	230	100.0

The respondents in the study identified the location of their school; in a rural areas (*N* = 87, 37.7%), urban areas (*N* = 42, 43.8%), or suburban areas (*N* = 102, 43.8%). Respondents reported between one and nine full-time counselors in their school (*M* = 3.57, *SD* = 1.620) with four counselors being the average counseling workforce within schools. The largest group (*N* = 60, 26.3%) reporting four counselors in the school. School enrollments ranged from less than 500 students to over 3,001 students with between 100 students assigned to each counselor to 551 students per counselor. The largest category regarding student population had between 1,000 to 1,499 students per school (*N* = 65, 28.3%), and the majority of respondents reported having 400 students assigned per school guidance counselor (*N* = 47, 20.2%). Table 4.4 illustrates the distribution of students enrolled in respondents' schools and Table 4.5 presents the distribution of students assigned to each counselor

Table 4.4

Distribution of Students Enrolled in Respondents' School

Students	*N*	*%*
Less than 500	12	5.2
500-999	50	21.7
1,000-1,499	65	28.3
1,500-1,999	54	23.5
2,000-2,499	26	11.3
2,500-3,000	14	6.1
3,001+	9	3.9
Total	230	100.0

Table 4.5

Distribution of Students per Guidance Counselor

Students per Counselor	*N*	*%*
0-100	2	.9
101-150	0	0
151-200	1	.4
201-250	5	2.2
251-300	23	10.1
301-350	30	13.2
351-400	47	20.6
401-450	52	22.8
451-500	36	15.8
501-550	8	3.5
551+	24	10.5
Total	228	100.0

Findings of Research Questions

The data collected in this research was tested to determine if there were differences between groups of respondents by gender, years of guidance experience, school population, school location, student-to-counselor ratio, and number of years in education. Perceptions, practices, and professional developmental needs scale scores were created by summing across the responses for each individual and calculating a mean for each person for each scale. It was necessary to condense some of the groups of respondents in order to have a sufficient number for each comparison. For example, the distribution of years as a school guidance counselor was regrouped to group 21-25, 26-30, and 30+ together into one group resulting in five groups rather than the original seven. Number of students enrolled in the school was reduced from seven groups originally to six groups by combining enrollments of 2,500-3,000 and 3001+. The number of counselors to students was reduced from 11 groups to 6 by grouping 100 to 300 into 1 group and 550-550 with 551+. The regrouped variables were used in further analysis. Analysis of variance was used to test for differences between groups and a Bonferroni post hoc test was used to identify how groups differed if there were statistically significant differences. A probability level of $p = .05$ was used as the criteria for determining whether the differences were statistically significant. The assumptions of ANOVA were checked prior to analysis to ensure the data met the assumptions.

Research Question 1

RQ1: What are school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs?

Research Question 1 asked how often guidance counselors practiced each of the 12 items contained in the practice scale. The counselors' average for each item was below 3.00 or *Frequently*. Responses were slightly above 3.00 when asked about assisting students with college tests (*M* = 3.03) and being an advocate for students (*M* = 3.19). Guidance counselors had, on average, the lowest mean item score when asked about assisting students with postsecondary (*M* = 2.46). Overall, counselors practiced assisting and meeting with student between *Seldom* and *Frequently*. Average items scores indicated counselors did practice the 12 areas as often as might have been expected and item mean scores ranged from 2.46 to 3.19. When guidance counselors were asked about the importance of the 12 skills, their responses, on average, tended to be higher in the *Important* to *Very Important* response category. Item response means ranged from a low of 3.06 to a high of 3.73. On average, counselors thought it was important to meet with CTE students (*M* = 3.73), assist students with choices (*M* = 3.57), and advocate for students (*M* = 3.57). Of less importance was assisting students with postsecondary (*M* = 3.03), assisting with difficult situations (*M* = 3.20), and assisting students with guidance systems (*M* = 3.26). Guidance counselors were also asked where they thought they needed training or professional development. Item mean scores ranged, on average, from 2.39 to 3.10. Counselors indicated they thought training was *Important* in helping students with guidance systems (*M* = 3.10), assisting with choices (*M* = 3.07), and working with difficult students (*M* = -3.06). Guidance counselors found *Very Little* need for professional development in helping students explore options (*M* = 2.39), meeting with students and parents (*M* = 2.50), and assisting students with college tests (*M* = 2.58). Overall, the counselors, on average, attached importance to the 12 areas on the *SCPES*,

appeared not to practice these skills as frequently, and did not perceive there to be much need for professional development in the 12 areas.

Table 4.6

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations by Scale

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. Meet with CTE students	2.99	.672	3.73	.465	2.56	.990
2. Meet with students and parents	2.62	.730	3.56	.517	2.50	.983
3. Assist student with choices	2.70	.665	3.57	526	3.07	.859
4. Assist students with realistic goals	2.73	.686	3.55	.518	2.93	9.13
5. Assist students with college tests	3.03	.748	3.46	.564	2.58	1.028
6. Assist student to interpret test scores	2.60	.745	3.29	.605	2.98	.915
7. Assist students with guidance systems	2.53	.808	3.26	.657	3.10	.931
8. Assist students with postsecondary	2.46	.753	3.06	.674	2.60	.962
9. Assist students with timelines	2.72	.742	3.36	.601	2.60	.917
10. Student opportunity to explore options	2.72	1.004	3.32	6.39	2.39	1.094
11. Advocate for students	3.19	.745	3.57	.534	2.63	1.076
12. Assist with difficult situations	2.50	.879	3.20	.677	3.06	.945

Research Question 2

RQ2: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by gender?

An analysis was conducted to compare differences between males and females on the scale scores for perceptions, practice, and professional developmental needs. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of males and females for practice [$F(1, 193) = 2.801$, $p = .096$], perception [$F(1, 182) = .182$, $p = .670$]., or professional development needs [$F(1, 193) = .287$, $p = .593$]. There were slight differences in the means of males and females, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.7 presents the means and standard deviations for this analysis.

Table 4.7

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations - Males and Females

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Females	2.76	.511	3.42	.391	2.76	.712
Males	2.63	.496	3.39	.419	2.69	.854

Research Question 3

RQ3: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by age group?

The second comparison was conducted on the age group of school guidance counselors for the scores on the scale mean scores for practice, importance, and professional development needs. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions by age group for practices [$F(6, 188) = .395$, $p = .882$],

perceptions[$F(6, 198) = .614$, $p = .719$], or professional developmental needs[$F(6, 188) = 1.544$, $p = .166$]. There were slight differences in the means by age group, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.8 presents the data for this analysis.

Table 4.8

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations - Age Group

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Age 26-30	2.76	.480	3.63	.400	2.74	.484
Age 31-35	2.81	.615	3.50	.459	3.01	.743
Age 36-40	2.73	.473	3.43	.335	2.82	.692
Age 41-45	2.69	.466	3.33	.371	2.44	.784
Age 46-50	2.73	.376	3.44	.380	2.71	.840
Age 51-54	2.63	.643	3.45	.426	2.72	.787
Age 55+	2.74	.490	3.39	.417	2.71	.798

Research Question 4

RQ4: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by years as a professional educator group?

The third comparison analysis was made by years as a professional educator for the scores on the scale mean scores for practice, importance, and professional developmental needs. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions by years as a professional educator for practice [$F(6, 209) = 1.110$, $p = .358$], perception [$F(6, 196) = 1.795$, $p = .102$], or professional developmental needs [$F(6, 186) = 1.110$, $p = .358$]. There were slight differences in the means by years as a

professional educator, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.9 presents the means and standard deviations for this analysis

Table 4.9

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations - Years as a Professional Educator

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1-5 years	2.71	.412	3.33	.374	2.73	.494
6-10 years	2.77	.567	3.42	.425	2.82	.793
11-15 years	2.67	.525	3.56	.360	2.88	.847
16-20 years	2.70	.400	3.33	.303	2.59	.774
21-25 years	2.71	.521	3.34	.483	2.64	.801
26-30 years	2.82	.580	3.55	.379	2.47	.713
30+ years	2.84	3442	3.40	.397	2.99	.614

Research Question 5

RQ5: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by years as a school counselor group?

The fourth comparison analysis was made by years as a school guidance counselor for the scores on the scale mean scores for practice, importance, and professional developmental needs. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions for yeast as a school guidance counselor for practice [$F(6, 211) = .978$, $p = .420$], perception [$F(6, 200) = .379$, $p = .824$], or professional developmental needs [$F(6, 186) = 1.573$, $p = .183$]. There were slight

differences in the means by counselor years, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.10 presents the means and standard deviations for this analysis

Table 4.10

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations - Years as a School Counselor

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1-5 years	2.61	.474	3.38	.410	2.62	.660
6-10 years	2.75	.493	3.45	.361	2.91	.801
11-15 years	2.74	.466	3.42	.390	3.79	.751
16-20 years	2.77	.556	3.38	.441	2.70	.646
21-30+ years	2.95	.500	3.49	.471	2.47	.952

Research Question 6

RQ6: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by school enrollment group?

An analytical comparison was made by school size for the scores on the scale mean scores for practice, importance, and professional developmental needs. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions by school size for practice [$F(5, 211) = 1.150$, $p = .335$], perception [$F(5, 196) = .761$, $p = .579$]., or professional developmental needs [$F(5, 189) = 1.153$, $p = .334$]. There were slight differences in the means by age group, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.11 presents the means and standard deviations for this analysis.

Table 4.11

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations - Student Enrollment Group

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Less than 500 students	2.78	.655	3.46	.340	2.58	.520
500-999 students	2.70	.640	3.39	.452	2.68	.776
1,000-1,499 students	2.81	.454	3.48	.363	2.94	.767
1,500-1,999 students	2.63	.462	3.38	.377	2.66	.711
2,000-2,499 students	2.65	.281	3.32	.480	2.79	.816
2,500-3,001+ students	2.84	.507	3.47	.346	2.62	.701

Research Question 7

RQ7: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by school location, urban rural, and suburban?

Comparisons were also made for the practice, importance, and professional developmental needs scales on the *SCPES* using the mean scale scores. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in school location for practice [$F(2, 215) = .545$, $p = .580$], perception [$F(2, 202) = 2.378$, $p = .095$], or professional developmental needs [$F(2, 192) = .539$, $p = .584$]. There were slight differences in the means by school location, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.12 presents the means and standard deviations for this analysis.

Table 4.12

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations by School Location

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Rural Area	2.77	.505	3.39	.397	2.71	.748
Urban Area	2.74	.620	3.55	.393	2.87	.942
Suburban Area	2.69	.463	3.39	.392	2.73	.669

Research Question 8

RQ8: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by counselor student ratio group?

The next comparison was made for the practice, importance, and professional developmental needs scales on the *SCPES* student-to-counselor ratio using the mean scale scores. Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions by counselor/student ratio for practice [$F(5, 209) = .829$, $p = .530$], perception [$F(5, 197) = .528$, $p = .755$], or professional developmental needs [$F(5, 187) = .267$, $p = .931$]. There were slight differences in the means by ratio, but they were not statistically different. Table 4.13 presents the means and standard deviations for this analysis.

Table 4.13

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey Item Mean and Standard Deviations by Students-to-Counselors

	Practice		Perception		Prof Dev Needs	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
100-349 students	2.80	.643	3.51	.363	2.61	.643
350-359 students	2.76	.551	3.37	.430	2.75	.551
400-450 students	2.72	.475	3.40	.416	1.76	.475
451-499 students	2.83	.479	3.42	.399	2.78	.479
500-549 students	2.68	.425	3.44	.393	2.77	.425
550-551+ students	2.66	.436	3.36	398	2.63	.436

Findings of the Open-Ended Comment

As a final item on the survey, participants were asked to provide any personal comments about the functions mentioned in the survey. Survey respondents (N = 81, 34.76%) added written comments at the close of the survey. While only about a third of the study participants had comments, their comments were valuable and pertinent to this study (see Table 4.14). Comments were read repeatedly to identify trends in the comments. Most of the comments were short and centered on one idea, how secondary to postsecondary transition practices were handled at their school. Comments could be grouped into several categories including: alternative personnel (graduation coaches, teacher as advisor, college career coaches), ninth grade, time and caseloads, and professional development. Each category will be presented and discussed with illustrations from the written comments.

Table 4.14

Categories Developed from Open-Ended Responses

Category	*N*	*%*
Graduation Coaches	12	13.95
Teacher Advisors	6	6.98
College Career Coaches	10	11.63
Ninth Grade	15	17.44
Time/Caseload	32	37.21
Professional Development	11	12.79
Total	86	100.00

Alternative Personnel

A number of the respondents mentioned their school having a graduation coach (GC) (*N* = 12, 13.95%), career specialist/college career counselor coordinator (*N* = 10, 11.63%), and teachers as advisors (TA) (*N* = 6, 6.98%) programs, or other similar job title able to work with students in addition to the guidance or school counselor. These positions have taken over the job of working with students to implement guidance strategies to foster student social/emotion growth and educational/career planning. School counselors now have other responsibilities, although a number did say they would like to be able to work with students to address life skills needs but do not have the time. The GC may be involved with issues such as college admission process, financial aid, entrance exams, and most important, helping students meet graduation requirements. One respondent noted teacher advisors relay much of the information listed in the survey. Teacher advisors had fewer students and moved from grade level to grade level with the students.

GCs and TAs were not college-educated guidance counselors and many had little knowledge of the needs career and technical educational students require. Also reflected in the comments, there appeared to be minimal professional training for GCs or TAs. Teacher Advisors may be trained by counselors and one respondent noted a guidance counselor's job was to train the TA on how to do what was mentioned on the survey. It is possible counselors need more professional development so they can train the TAs better to reach more students. One of the GCs mentioned having attended some state-sponsored professional developmental workshop prior to becoming a GC. It was unclear from the comments whether the additional personnel in guidance offices worked with all students or primarily college bound students.

Ninth Grade

It was interesting to note the number of 9th or 9th and 10th grade counselors (*N* = 15, 17.44%) who noted they did not do any career advising, very little postsecondary job counseling, or noted it was not their job to advise students about job counseling. One individual working with ninth grade students indicated there was little contact or involvement with postsecondary education. Sometimes the ninth grade counselors were busy acclimating their students to high school, and they may not have had the time to have their students in the ninth grade focus on their future even though it is only a couple of years away.

Time and Caseload

Time and caseloads were a concern in many of the written comments (*N* = 32, 37.21%). High student-to-counselor ratios prevented guidance counselors from having the time beyond tasks such as testing and hall duty to meet with students or parents. With

school budgets being cut, the student-to-counselor load is only increasing and many of the respondents felt they did not have the time to really provide any guidance, individually or in the classroom, since other duties take priority.

At the same time, other counselors (*N* = 5) mentioned meeting with students two or three times individually over the course of their high school careers, while one mentioned having parent nights to educate parents about postsecondary options. Counselors knew what they were supposed to be doing and wanted to do; however, there was little time to help students with developing or how to pursue career goals. From the remarks on the survey, counselors would like to be able to utilize their skills and develop more skills through professional developmental, but other job responsibilities managed to get in the way of accomplishing this task.

Professional Development

Several of the respondents (*N* = 11, 12.79%) indicated they did not need more professional developmental activities, they thought they knew what they needed to know. However; one counselor talked about how they could all use additional professional developmental experiences and education as so many of their tasks were now being computerized. Tests and career assessment were online, university and technical school catalogs were online, making computer expertise important to counselors. Another counselor talked about increasing their competence to perform the tasks they needed to do while another counselor talked about the need for professional developmental to keep up with changes in graduation requirements, accessing college information, and providing career guidance to students.

Chapter Summary

Comments provided by study participants were eye opening in many respects. High school counselors who worked with 9th, 10th, and even 11th grade students echoed that preparing students for tests and scheduling required classes for graduation was their main concern. They did not work with students as they planned their high school courses to pursue their dreams whether college or vocational school. School counselors talked about alternative personnel such as; graduation coaches, teacher advisors, and career centers working with students to implement guidance strategies to foster student social/emotion growth and educational/career planning. However, they did note how they were trained to work with students in these areas. One counselor noted, "I think that it is important for students to take responsibility for their own futures, Therefore, I do not typically meet with them to discuss particular details but refer them to college admissions officers." The tasks assigned to guidance counselors have been altered by principals and administrators so they are now far more involved in high stakes testing required by the states. However, many of the comments that were submitted by the responding guidance counselors spoke about what guidance counselors were trained to do but were not able to do because of a lack of time. A general trend was counseling offices becoming specialized with specific duties for individuals and not all of these tasks having to do with working with students outside of tests and test preparation. Caseloads were large and likely to get larger.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Research on postsecondary transition practices of school guidance counselors has been limited, especially concerning career and technical education (CTE) students. Research has focused on school guidance counselors' allocation of time for duties (NACAC, 2004) and perceptions of counselors' functions by parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors (Aluede & Imoniko, 2002; Hughey et al., 1993; Kaplan, 1994; Studer & Allton, 1996; Ter Maat, 2000). However, the research (Epps, 1995; Horn & Nuñez, 2000; McDonough et al., 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 1997) clearly presented data that supported the concept that, when school counselors are consistently and frequently available and allowed to provide direct services to students and parents, they are a major part of the social network that influence postsecondary educational planning.

Hughes and Karp (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of school-based career development and found that, of the different types of career guidance interventions, the most effective was individual counseling. Parsons (1909) also believed that school counseling should be one-on-one and administered by professionals in order to be highly effective. This research attempted to determine the interaction between high school guidance counselors and career technical education (CTE) students concerning transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. In Chapter 5, the researcher reviews the research problem and major methods used to conduct this study. Additionally, the

researcher discusses the major findings and presents summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on these findings.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions, practices, and professional development needs of high school guidance counselors toward development of career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. This research also examined differences and similarities between school guidance counselors in Georgia; based on counselor-to-student ratios, geographical location, and school counselor's years of school counseling experience, gender, and school enrollment.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are, school guidance counselors practice, perceptions and professional developmental needs?

RQ2: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by gender?

RQ3: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional development needs compared by age group?

RQ4: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by years as a professional educator group?

RQ5: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by years as a school counselor group?

RQ6: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by school enrollment group?

RQ7: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by school location, urban, rural, and suburban?

RQ8: How do school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions and professional developmental needs compared by counselor student ratio group?

Research Procedure

A quantitative survey based on components from the *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program (see Appendix A) developed by the National Association for College Admission Counselors (NACAC) was used to guide the development of the survey document. The survey document consisted of three sections. The first section of the survey asked participants to respond to eight demographic questions which were used to disaggregate the data for analysis. Items in the first section of the questionnaire asked each respondent for their gender, age, years of teaching experience, years of counseling experience, number of full-time and part-time guidance counselors at the school, number of students enrolled at the school, student-to-counselor ratio, and the geographic location of school.

In an effort to determine the practices, perceptions, and professional development needs of high school guidance counselors about the development of career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education, the second section survey contained a Likert-type response scale. This section of the

questionnaire incorporated components of the *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program (see Appendix A) developed by the National Association for College Admission Counselors (NACAC) and was used to guide the development of the survey document; the *School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey (SCPES).* Three experts in the field (Appendix D) were consulted and selected 12 appropriate components for this study from the *Pre-college Guidance and Counselor* program and the survey instrument was developed. The third section contained an open-ended question that asked respondents for a personal comment about the functions in the survey. After receiving IRB approval, a pilot-test of the survey was conducted to examine the content validity of the instrument. The analysis for each of the functions (practice, perception, and professional development needs) yielded Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .84$, $\alpha = .72$, and $\alpha = .95$, respectively, all levels achieving internal consistency.

The next step involved sending four waves of e-mails to each participant with a link to the *SCPES* (see Appendix B). A total of 233 individuals began the survey resulting in a response rate of 40.45%. An online survey system using *Survey Monkey* software was used to collect the data. Data was collected from September 14, 2009, to November 11, 2009. The researcher e-mailed the following items to high school guidance counselors selected to participate in the study.

(a) Pre-letter stating the purpose of the study and requesting their voluntary participation in this research project (see Appendix E).

(b) Cover letter to guidance counselors (see Appendix C) with a link to the survey instrument..

(c) Thank You/reminder letter (Appendix F) with a link to the survey instrument.

(d) Second reminder letter/thank you (Appendix G) with a link to the survey instrument.

(e) Final contact letter/thank you (Appendix H) with a link to the survey instrument.

Analysis of Data

Data were entered into the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (*SPSS*) for analysis. Prior to analysis, quantitative statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviation) were completed to ensure the data was accurate and met the assumptions of the statistic selected for the analysis. Reliability analysis was completed for the subscales of the *SCPES*. Each of the research questions were addressed by using ANOVA to test for differences between different groupings of respondents. The open-ended responses were analyzed by repeatedly reading the responses and grouping the responses into categories using phenomenological analysis techniques. Quotes from respondents' comments were used to illustrate and support the formation of the categories.

Findings

There were 182 females (78.1%) and 51 (21.9%) males responding to the survey. The respondents ranged in age from 26 years of age to 55+ years of age. The largest group of respondents were between 36-40 years of age (N = 44, 18.9%). Respondents had spent between 1 year and 30+ years as a professional educator and between 1 year and 31+ years as professional school guidance counselors. The majority of respondents (N =

54, 23.4%) had between 6 and 10 years of experience in education and (*N* = 78, 33.9%) had spent less than 5 years as school guidance counselors.

While investigating Research Question 1 with regards to the how guidance counselors perceive the importance of the components of an effective pre-college guidance and counseling program when advising CTE students about making the transition from secondary to postsecondary education, the *School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey (SCPES)* revealed that the respondents perceived each function on the survey as *Important* indicative by a mean score of *M* = 3.41, on a scale of 1-4. The respondents felt that the functions on the survey were central when transitioning students from a secondary to postsecondary education. The three most important functions when it came to guidance counselors' perceptions were: (a) actually meeting with CTE students (*M* = 3.73), (b) advocating for students (*M* = 3.57), and (c) assisting students with choices (*M* = 3.57). These three advisement intervention functions demonstrated Super's philosophy that every student deserves individual one-on-one guidance and support. Super (1994) described the role of advising intervention as one designed to provide direction, resolve impediments, and sustain planfulness in students about their goals for the future. Planfulness was defined by Super (1963) as the narrowing of a choice path, which was followed by career planning and implementation of that plan. Super (1994) stated that planfulness was a core element to successful career development in adolescence and should be delivered on an individual basis. Guidance counselors realized that this was a very important and appropriate stage of development in lives of high school students and their job was to assist and help plan.

However, with regards to how often school guidance counselors practiced the components of an effective pre-college guidance and counseling program; when advising CTE students about making the transition from secondary to postsecondary education, the respondents' scored *M* = 2.73, on a scale of (1-4). This revealed a low score for the actual practice falling between *Frequently* and *Seldom* on the survey. Echoing the literature (Beale & McCay, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997) that high school counselors must be performing other administrative duties that prevent them from performing roles they have been trained to perform, specified by American School Council Association (ASCA). One major study by National Center for Education Statistics (Parsad et al., 2003) results claimed that only 28% of public high school guidance counselors' time was spent on individual postsecondary practices.

SCPES revealed the two most important functions that school counselors practice were assisting students with college tests (*M* = 3.03) and advocating for students (*M* = 3.19). Assisting students with college tests was written into Georgia HB 1187 (2000) as part of the counseling function. It stated that counselors should provide direct/indirect educationally based guidance assistance to learners preparing for test taking. This meant helping students develop test-taking strategies, provide meaningful interpretation for both students and parents, and articulate the purpose of the test. Guidance counselors also scored high on advocating for students (*M* = 3.19). This reflects Super's theory in practice that adolescences at this stage in their lifes need support and guidance to develop planfulness as about career and future.

In regards to professional development needs, school guidance counselors believed professional development would enhance their performance when the

components of an effective pre-college guidance and counseling program were considered. *SCPES* found that professional development was *Important* to most high school guidance counselors. The score of *M* = 2.75 revealed a level of *Important*. The two most important items in regards to professional developmental needs of guidance counselors were: assisting students with choices (*M* = 3.07) and assisting students with guidance systems (*M* = 3.19), on a scale of 1-4.

Echoing Super's philosophy that students need guidance in planning and choice, school counselors would like to improve their skills in this domain. Also, the use of computer-assisted career guidance (CACG) systems has increased tremendously during the past 10 years. Studies of the effectiveness of CACG systems have generally shown them to be effective in promoting career development and exploration (Luzzo & Pierce,1996; Peterson, Ryan-Jones, Sampson, Reardon, & Shahnasarian, 1994). Research (Whiston, Brecheisen, & Stephens, 2003) also showed computer-guided interventions improved substantially if student-counselor contact took place during the time that the students were using the computer. Guidance counselors would like to improve their knowledge of CACG, the internet, and how to navigate college web pages.

Demographic data in the areas of gender, years as an educational professional, years as a school counselor, and the school's enrollment showed little or no difference in practice, perception, or professional development needs. Davis (2006) found that counselors with more years of experience were likely to implement developmental program. However, this study found no significant differences according to years of experience.

The next research question compared the differences and similarities between high school guidance counselors by location (rural, urban, or suburban). Findings indicated there were no statistically significant differences by geographic location.

When addressing school guidance counselors' practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs based on counselor-to-student ratios, the study showed no significant difference. Contradicting McDonough's (2004b) research, an increase in student-to-counselor ratios decreases the school counselor's effectiveness. One of the guiding associations for school counselors, American School Counselor's Association (ASCA), recommends a student-to-counselor ratio of 100 students to 1 counselor. The 2004 national average of 490 students to 1 counselor is astonishingly high (McDonough, 2004b). The research (NACAC, 2006) also found that as the student population increases the student-to-counselor ratio increases.

Comments on Open Ended Assessment

The open ended comments revealed much of what the current literature has stated. While only about a third (34.76%) of the study participants had comments, their comments were interesting and pertinent to the study. School guidance counselors' time delivering services to individual students was limit by other duties. Many school counselors solely work with one grade level (9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade) and secondary to postsecondary transitions were rarely discussed in 9th and 10th grades. According to Super (1969), this early period was when adolescents narrow future occupational choices, but there is still incomplete knowledge of self and the world of work. Super (1969) stated that adolescents are in a crucial stage of exploring and confirming their career plans and guidance. Super (1994) described the role of advising

intervention as one designed to provide direction, resolve impediments and sustain planfulness in students about their goals for the future. The research showed the main focus between 9th and 10th grade students and school counselors pertained to academics, completing required classes, and passing the multitude of required test, little time was spent on postsecondary education plans.

Most high school guidance counselors stated that secondary to postsecondary transition practices were delivered in two ways through a school implemented comprehensive guidance counselor program and/or by career specialist or college career counselors. One person at their school was in charge of counseling the students about postsecondary education and careers after high school. That alternative person could be another guidance counselor, a career specialist, or a graduation coach.

Also mentioned was the implementation of comprehensive guidance counselor programs that were delivered through teacher as advisors. Comprehensive guidance counselor programs utilized teacher advisement systems in which teachers as advisors are trained to mentor students throughout high school. Teacher as advisor programs compensated for the high counselor-student ratios that made it impossible for school counselors to know all students personally. Beyond this compensatory role, TAs ideally attempted to strengthen teacher-student relationships and created a supportive learning environment in which teachers and counselors could work together to provide personal and academic information to students. One of the disadvantages of TAs was that not all teachers were willing or able to work effectively with students in an advisory role. Many teachers viewed these programs as an infringement on academic time. Therefore, successful TA programs must have a clear defined purpose, reflected in a well-conceived

curriculum, and must enlist the full support of administrators, teachers, and counselors alike (Myrick, 1990).

Finally, school counselors felt the need for professional developmental in the area of computer technology that was geared to assist in helping inform and guide students in areas relating to the students' future direction. Guidance counselors would benefit from improved online testing skills, both in delivery and interpretation. Another area of interest for improvement was online career assessment skills. Finally, guidance counselors would like to improve their ability to navigating college web pages since most university and technical school catalogs are online, and navigating websites can often difficult.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to describe the practices, perceptions, and professional developmental needs of high school guidance counselors concerning career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. The components of an effective pre-college guidance and counselor program developed by NACAC were used to develop a questionnaire, *School Counselor Postsecondary Education Survey (SCPES*). The study concluded that high school guidance counselors in the State of Georgia were well-prepared to practice the components of an effective pre-college guidance and counselor program when transitioning CTE students' from secondary to postsecondary education.

Participants' responses determined that the components of the *SCPES* were important to their practice as school guidance counselors; however, the actual time they practiced the components was less than they would like. This research also showed that

high school guidance counselors believed the practice of advocating for students was very important, reflective of the conceptual framework of Donald Super. Also an important practice for guidance counselors was helping students understand test scores and how the scores have an effect on their future.

However, this research showed that the same problems that exist in Georgia are the same problems found in the professional literature. Guidance counselors have large caseloads and not enough time to advise each student. They are strapped with administrative duties, test evaluation, and scheduling. There was a lack of needed career advisement to 9th and 10th graders. In the area of professional development, there needs to be meaningful computer training for guidance counselors.

The sentiment of most guidance counselors has not changed over the years. High school guidance counselors still believe that they are not utilized for what they believe they were trained to practice. Most of the high school guidance counselors' time is consumed by administrative duties. High school guidance counselors believe secondary to postsecondary transition was very important and wished they played a bigger role in this practice. For now, school systems have put into practice comprehensive guidance counselor programs (CGCP), career counselors, and graduation coaches that facilitate the transitioning practice of students from a secondary to postsecondary education.

Recommendations for Future Study

Recommendations for further study were derived from the findings of this study. The role of the guidance counselors has changed over the years and most schools have implemented comprehensive guidance counseling programs (CGCP) to put into practice guidance strategies' to foster students' social/emotion growth and educational/career

planning. The delivery of these services has changed from school counselor to teacher as advisor (TA). TAs are directly responsibility for managing and delivering postsecondary information to a small group of students. The information disseminated through these CGCPs should be investigated to determine if there is a secondary to postsecondary component.

Most schools have implemented comprehensive guidance counselor programs that are administered by teachers as advisors (TA). Since this is the method schools have selected to provide information and guide students throughout their high school career, a closer look at CGCPs is recommended. The *SCPES* survey instrument can be applied to measure the extent of the secondary to postsecondary transition practices that are encompassed in the CGCP. By administrating the *SCPES* survey to TAs, the data collected would help to measure the extent of their practice, perception, and professional developmental needs in the area of secondary to postsecondary transition practices. This would help improve both the CGCPs and determine the training necessary in improve TAs delivery of information.

Because the outcome of the students who participate in CGCPs are vital, it is important to also research their perspective. The *SCPES* after modifications could be administered to high school seniors and, more importantly, high school seniors enrolled in career and technical education classes. The data collected would help determine the strengths and weaknesses of secondary to postsecondary transition practices encompassed within the CGCP. To further the scope of this line of research, the *SCPES* could also be administered to postsecondary freshman who participated in comprehensive guidance counseling programs at the high school level. This linear study would produce a

wider range of data which would help improve the secondary to postsecondary transition component of the comprehensive guidance counselor programs.

Discussion

This study's focus was on high school guidance counselors and career and technical education students' interactions concerning secondary to postsecondary transition plans. High school guidance counselors commented that they made no distinction between academic students and career and technical education students when assisting with secondary to postsecondary transition plans. However, the research showed most of the guidance counselors' interaction with students consisted of test preparation and scheduling. Preparing schedules for students to meet the minimum requirement of classes that all students are required to pass was a major concern for counselors. Yet school guidance counselors commented that they did not make contact with all students to discuss minimum requirements and other options due to other assigned administrative duties.

The research also showed that guidance counselors spend a percentage of their time involved with high stakes testing. High stakes testing has become mandatory in every state since the enactment of No Child Left Behind (2001). Guidance counselors are required by law as part of the counseling function to provide assistance with testing. The law (Georgia House Bill 1187, 2000) states that counselors should provide direct/indirect educationally-based guidance assistance to learners preparing for test taking. This means helping students develop test-taking strategies, provide meaningful interpretation for both students and parents, and articulate the purpose of the test.

Testing and scheduling duties occupied too much of the guidance counselors' time. Guidance counselors felt they do not have the time to practice what they have been trained to do and what they feel they should be doing. This leaves little time for one-on-one advisement with student to discuss secondary to postsecondary transition plans. This study identified that school systems have developed different practices to help guide students from high school to a postsecondary education. School systems have developed system wide comprehensive guidance counselor programs (CGCP). Some schools have hired alternative personnel such as; career counselors, college counselors and the state has added one graduation coach to each high school. School systems believe these resources will deliver the required individual postsecondary transition practices. The high school graduation coach initiative, introduced during the 2006 legislative session, allowed each of Georgia's high schools and middle schools to employ a coach. The coach's primary responsibility was to identify at-risk students and help them succeed in school by keeping them on track academically before they consider dropping out. In practice, the graduation coaches were hired to keep potential dropouts in school and not hired to help the entire student population of the high school.

Another option many high schools used to implement postsecondary transition practices is to staff career advisors to help students evaluate their interests and abilities. A career advisor may administer written or oral aptitude tests, which pair students' skills with potential career paths. Advisors provide students with valuable resources regarding different college majors and steps a person should take to obtain a certain career. In addition, many advisors help students write resumes and prepare students for job interviews. Career advisors also often provide teachers, administrators, and parents with

information they can use to support students' career exploration and postsecondary educational opportunities.

Research showed during the past two decades that most school systems have made the decision to established comprehensive guidance counselor programs (CGCP) in order to help school guidance counselors reach more students and communicate more effectively. These programs are administered through teacher advisement systems. The limitation and success of comprehensive guidance counselor programs is important, especially if this is the student’s only access to information concerning postsecondary education.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-COLLEGE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELOR PROGRAM

PRE-COLLEGE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELOR PROGRAM

Secondary School Level
• Meet with students and parents regularly to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.
• Assist students in relating their abilities, aptitudes, and interests to current and future educational and occupational choices.
• Assist students in setting realistic goals, developing decision-making skills, and accepting responsibility for the decisions they make.
• Address special needs of underrepresented students, (e.g., minority students, women, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, or other populations) by keeping up-to-date on programs and resources designed specifically for these students and insuring that the students are aware of them.
• Assist students and parents in understanding the college admission and financial aid processes by providing access to current, clear, and concise information concerning the wide range of postsecondary educational opportunities available, entrance requirements, financial aid, curricular offering, costs, admission and financial aid deadlines, and the variety of early admission and early decision programs available.
• Assist students in the acquisition, evaluation, and appropriate use of information, including college guidebooks and catalogs, computer-based guidance systems, and college videos.
• Encourage student and parent participation in college fair programs, admission and financial aid workshops, and related programs.
• Assist students in selecting and registering for appropriate college admission tests, and in interpreting resulting test scores and their influence in the admission process.
• Assist students with developing a personal timeline or calendar for completing the tasks associated with the college admission process.
• Work with students and teachers in developing students' essay-writing skills.
• Encourage students to visit college campuses, if possible, to gain first-hand information from admission and financial aid representatives, observe classes, and interact with faculty and students.
• Assist students in developing appropriate interviewing skills and in understanding the purpose of the college admission interview and their role in the process.
• Encourage student participation in on-campus pre-college enrichment programs.
• Develop productive relationships with colleges to assist them in understanding the nature of the school curriculum and the quality of their students' preparation.
• Develop and disseminate a school profile for use by colleges and universities.
• Work with college admission representatives to schedule visits to the school so that students will have opportunities to explore a variety of options.
• Advocate on behalf of students via letters of recommendation and personal communication with college representatives.

• Work with the school instructional staff in understanding their role in supporting students as they make important educational and career choices.
• Provide a supportive environment for students and parents and work to eliminate or reduce unnecessary anxiety too often associated with the college admission process.
• Assist students in dealing with difficult situations such as college admission and/or financial aid denials and in developing alternative strategies should this occur.
• Assist students and parents with preparation for the separation process that will occur in the school to college transition.
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APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Transition Survey for CTE Students

Exit this survey

1. Demographics

Demographics
Please check the appropriate response.

1. What is your gender?

	Female	Male
Gender		

2. What is your age?

	22-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-54	55+
Age								

3. Total number of years as a professional educator?

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30+
Years in education							

4. Total number of years as a professional school guidance counselor?

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31+
Years as a guidance counselor							

5. Number of full-time school guidance counselor in your school?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of School Counselors										

6. Approximately how many students are enrolled at your school from grade 9 to grade 12:

	Less than 500	500 to 999	1000 to 1499	1500 to 1999	2000 to 2499	2500 to 3000	3001 +
School's Enrollment							

7. Approximately how many students are assigned to each counselor?

	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500	550	551+

	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500	550	551+
Counselor/Student Ratio											

8. My school is located in a:

	rural area	urban area	suburban area
school location			

Next

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Transition Survey for CTE Students

Exit this survey

2. How often do you practice this function?

Please answer each of the twelve questions regarding the development of a postsecondary education transition plan for a career and technical education (CTE) students. Use the dropdown window to answer each question. Please answer according to your agreement of frequency for each practice (Not at All, Seldom, Frequently, Always).

How often do you practice this function?

1. I meet with the CTE student to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.

How often do you practice this function?

1)

2. I meet with the CTE student and parents to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.

How often do you practice this function?

2)

3. I assist the CTE student in relating their abilities, aptitude, and interests to current and future educational occupational choices.

How often do you practice this function?

3)

4. I assist the CTE student in setting realistic goals, developing decision-making skills, and accepting responsibility for the decision they make.

How often do you practice this function?

4)

5. I assist the CTE students in selecting and registering for the appropriate college admission test, such as: SAT, ACT COMPASS, ASSET.

How often do you practice this function?

5)

6. I assist the CTE students in interpreting resulting test scores and their influence

in the postsecondary admission process.

How often do you practice this function?

6)

7. I assist the CTE student in the appropriate use of computer-based guidance systems, GCIS, Career Cursing, or other.

How often do you practice this function?

7)

8. I assist the CTE student in the acquisition, evaluation, and appropriate use of information, including postsecondary guidebook and catalogs

How often do you practice this function?

8)

9. I assist students with developing a personal timeline or calendar for completing the tasks associated with postsecondary college admission process.

How often do you practice this function?

9)

10. I work with postsecondary admission representatives to schedule visits to the school so that students will have opportunities to explore a variety of options.

How often do you practice this function?

10)

11. I advocate on behalf of students via letters of recommendation and personal communication with postsecondary representatives

How often do you practice this function?

11)

12. I assist in dealing with difficult situations such as postsecondary admission and/or financial aid denials and in developing alternative strategies should this occur.

How often do you practice this function?

12)

Prev Next

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Transition Survey for CTE Students

Exit this survey

3. How important is this role as a school counselor?

Please answer each of the twelve questions regarding the development of a postsecondary education transition plan for a career and technical education (CTE) students. Use the dropdown window to answer each question. Please answer according to how important you feel each practice is: (Very Important, Important, Of Little Importance, Not at All Important).

How important is this role as a school counselor?

1. I meet with the CTE student to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

1)

2. I meet with the CTE student and parents to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

2)

3. I assist the CTE student in relating their abilities, aptitude, and interests to current and future educational occupational choices.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

3)

4. I assist the CTE student in setting realistic goals, developing decision-making skills, and accepting responsibility for the decision they make.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

4)

5. I assist the CTE students in selecting and registering for the appropriate college admission test, such as: SAT, ACT COMPASS, ASSET.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

5)

6. I assist the CTE students in interpreting resulting test scores and their influence

in the postsecondary admission process.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

6)

7. I assist the CTE student in the appropriate use of computer-based guidance systems, GCIS, Career Cursing, or other.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

7)

8. I assist the CTE student in the acquisition, evaluation, and appropriate use of information, including postsecondary guidebook and catalogs

How important is this role as a school counselor?

8)

9. I assist students with developing a personal timeline or calendar for completing the tasks associated with postsecondary college admission process.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

9)

10. I work with postsecondary admission representatives to schedule visits to the school so that students will have opportunities to explore a variety of options.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

10)

11. I advocate on behalf of students via letters of recommendation and personal communication with postsecondary representatives.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

11)

12. I assist in dealing with difficult situations such as postsecondary admission and/or financial aid denials and in developing alternative strategies should this occur.

How important is this role as a school counselor?

12)

Prev Next

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Transition Survey for CTE Students

Exit this survey

4. To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

Please answer each of the twelve questions regarding the development of a postsecondary education transition plan for a career and technical education (CTE) students. Use the dropdown window to answer each question. Please answer according to what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

1. I meet with the CTE student to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

1)

2. I meet with the CTE student and parents to review academic progress and select appropriate courses.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

2)

3. I assist the CTE student in relating their abilities, aptitude, and interests to current and future educational occupational choices.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

3)

4. I assist the CTE student in setting realistic goals, developing decision-making skills, and accepting responsibility for the decision they make.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

4)

5. I assist the CTE students in selecting and registering for the appropriate college admission test, such as: SAT, ACT COMPASS, ASSET.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

5)

6. I assist the CTE students in interpreting resulting test scores and their influence in the postsecondary admission process.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

6)

7. I assist the CTE student in the appropriate use of computer-based guidance systems, GCIS, Career Cursing, or other.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

7)

8. I assist the CTE student in the acquisition, evaluation, and appropriate use of information, including postsecondary guidebook and catalogs.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

8)

9. I assist students with developing a personal timeline or calendar for completing the tasks associated with postsecondary college admission process.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

9)

10. I work with postsecondary admission representatives to schedule visits to the school so that students will have opportunities to explore a variety of options.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

10)

11. I advocate on behalf of students via letters of recommendation and personal communication with postsecondary representatives.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

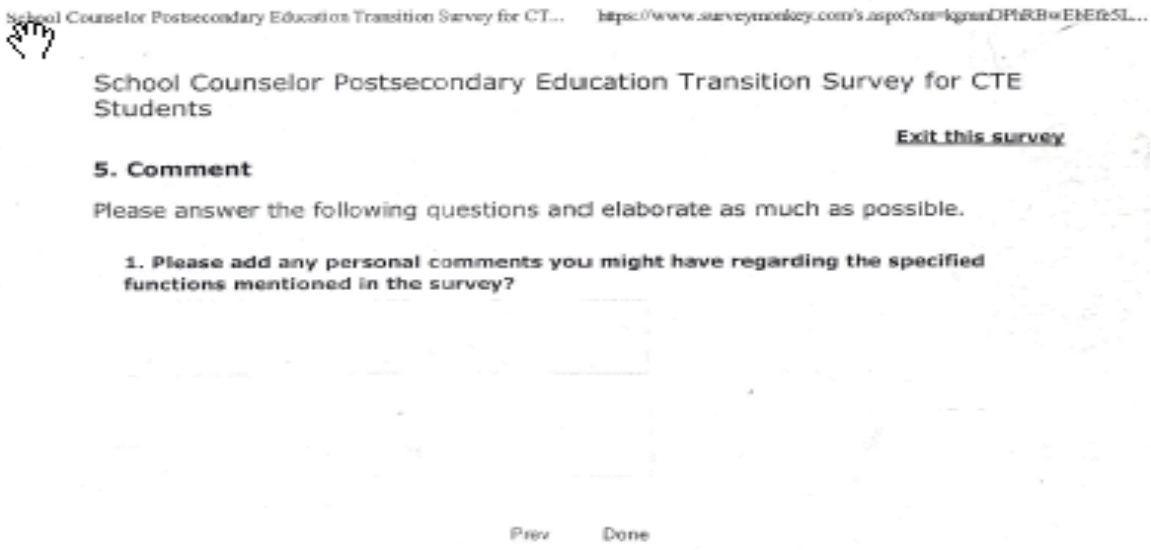
11)

12. I assist in dealing with difficult situations such as postsecondary admission and/or financial aid denials and in developing alternative strategies should this occur.

To what degree would professional development enchance your performance at this function?

12)

Prev Next


School Counselor Postsecondary Education Transition Survey for CT... https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=kgnmDPbRBwEbEfe5L...

School Counselor Postsecondary Education Transition Survey for CTE Students

Exit this survey

5. Comment

Please answer the following questions and elaborate as much as possible.

1. Please add any personal comments you might have regarding the specified functions mentioned in the survey?

Prev Done

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER TO GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Dear Georgia School Counselor,

I am a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Georgia. I am conducting a research study on the perceptions, practices and about and practices of high school guidance counselor toward development of career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. You are being asked to complete a survey requesting 1) general demographic information, 2) allotment of time for school guidance counselor's duties 3) acknowledgement of functions you as a high school counselor may have performed and how important those functions may have been to you, and if professional development would enhance your performance in this function, 4) and any other personal comments you might have regarding the specified functions mentioned in the survey or functions not mentioned in the survey.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. This is a Web-based, four-part survey with a completion time of approximately 15 minutes. Your honest response will help in this research study. You will have no further involvement in the study, nor will you be requested to complete any additional information. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without fear of consequences, and you are free to choose not to answer any question.

There are no risks or costs, for participating in this study. Your responses will provide insight for high school counselors to facilitate the success of high school students. All information provided for this research will be treated with complete confidentiality. Only the researcher and his advisors will have access to the information. Information will be kept under lock and key until the data is ready to be analyzed. Responses will be provided by grouped form; therefore individual responses will not be associated with any single individual. Surveys will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Please accept my sincere thank you in advance for your cooperation in this study. Six participants will be chosen at random to each receive a twenty-five dollar gift card to Barnes & Noble. You will be eligible to win a gift card if you answer the questionnaire within five days of when it is received. Good Luck.

Your expediency in returning the Web-based questionnaire will be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study, please contact Walter Pawlowski. The study should be completed by January 2009. By clicking on the link provided and logging into the secure site, you are agreeing to participate in this research study.

Here is a link to the survey: (press the Ctrl key on your keyboard and the link below)

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Logxn1RE_2bbVD2VkVsdXarQ_3d_3d
Your password is: winner

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, you may contact me at (770) 271-1872. My major advisor is Dr. Robert Wicklien and he can be reached at (706) 542-4503.

Thanks again for your valuable input.

Walter Pawlowski
(770)271-1872
Tandem96@bellsouth.net

APPENDIX D

COMMITTEE OF EXPERT GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Vivian Snyder
Coordinator Career Development, Technical and Agricultural Education
Vivian Snyder is the State Coordinator for Career Development for the Georgia Department of Education, Career, Technical and Agricultural Education Division. Prior to her work with the GDOE, she was a classroom instructor and local school counselor for the Fulton School System, Atlanta, GA. During that time she was very active in the Georgia School Counselors Association, was the Georgia facilitator for the American School Counselors Association award winning Planning for Life Program, a member and President of the Georgia Association for Career Educators (GACE). Currently she is developing a comprehensive, systematic career development initiative for the students in Georgia using Teachers-as-Advisors (TAA) as the delivery system.
Jacqueline Melendez
• Education Program Specialist
• School Counselor
• School Social Worker Program Specialist
• Georgia Department of Education
Dr. Sharon McWhorter
North Forsyth High School
Educational Background:
• Ed.D.--University of Georgia, Department of Occupational Studies
• M.Ed.--Georgia Southern University, School Counseling
• M.Ed.--Mercer University, English Education
• B.S.--University of Alabama, English Education
Counseling Experience:
• North Forsyth High School
• Peachtree Ridge High School, Suwanee, GA
• Perry High School, Perry, GA
• Houston County High School, Warner Robins, GA
• First Presbyterian Day School, Macon, GA

APPENDIX E

PRE-LETTER TO GUIDANCE COUSELOR

Dear Guidance Counselors:

A few days from now you will receive by e-mail a request to fill out an Internet questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by Walter Pawlowski, a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Georgia.

IRB approval number 2009-10066-0

I am writing in advance because many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one; I am conducting a research study on the perceptions, practices and professional developmental needs of high school guidance counselor concerning career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It's only with the generous help of professionals like you that research can be successful.

Sincerely,

Walter Pawlowski

APPENDIX F

THANK YOU/REMINDER LETTER

Dear Guidance Counselor:

My name is Walter Pawlowski, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia majoring in Workforce Education. As a requirement for completion of my EdD degree, I am working on a dissertation entitled "Practices of Guidance Counselors with Secondary Career and Technical Education Students Concerning Their Postsecondary Transition Goals". The study will require input from a group of guidance counselors from across the state of Georgia through a Web-based survey. I would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to respond to the Web-based survey questionnaire.

IRB approval number: 2010-10066-0

Last week an Internet questionnaire seeking your opinions about postsecondary transition practices was e-mailed to you. If you have already completed and submitted the questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, I encourage you to respond and will be especially grateful for your help. It is only by asking experts like you to share their opinions and experiences that we can fully understand and improve educational practices to benefit the future leaders of our society.

I am providing the Internet questionnaire link again in this e-mail in case you did not receive a previous e-mail with the Internet questionnaire link or if it was misplaced. If you have already responded, thank you. If for any reason you prefer not to participate in this study, please let me know by responding to this e-mail.

By clicking on the link provided and logging into the secure site, you are agreeing to participate in this research study.

Here is a link to the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Logxn1RE_2bbVD2VkVsdXarQ_3d_3d

Your password is: winner

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. My contact information is below. Thanks again for your valuable input.

Sincerely
Walter Pawlowski
(770)271-1872
Tandem96@bellsouth.net

NOTE: If for any reason you prefer not to participate in this study and do not wish to receive further e-mails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list. http://www.surveymonkey.com

APPENDIX G

SECOND REMINDER/THANK YOU LETTER

Dear Guidance Counselor:

My name is Walter Pawlowski, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia majoring in Workforce Education. As a requirement for completion of my EdD degree, I am working on a dissertation entitled "Practices of Guidance Counselors with Secondary Career and Technical Education Students Concerning Their Postsecondary Transition Goals". The study will require input from a group of guidance counselors from across the state of Georgia through a Web-based survey. I would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to respond to the Web-based survey questionnaire.

IRB approval number: 2010-10066-0

About two weeks ago I sent an e-mail with an Internet questionnaire link asking your opinions about postsecondary transition practices. If you have already responded to this questionnaire, thank you very much. I think the results are going to be very useful to the future of institution leaders, guidance counselors' members, and students.

I am writing again because of the importance that your questionnaire has for helping to get accurate results. It's only by hearing from nearly everyone in the sample that we can be sure that the results are truly representative. If you have not completed the questionnaire, I urge you to do so. Your experiences and expert opinions are very much needed in order to give this research study the data necessary to make accurate and applicable conclusions.

This questionnaire was sent to a random sample of guidance counselors currently teaching at public high schools in the state of Georgia. The questionnaire will be confidential and individual names will not be connected to the results in any way. Protecting the confidentiality of people's answers is very important to me, as well as the University.

If you have not already done so, I hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire soon. If for any reason you prefer not to answer it, please let me know by responding to this e-mail. By clicking on the link provided and logging into the secure site, you are agreeing to participate in this research study.

Here is a link to the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Logxn1RE_2bbVD2VkVsdXarQ_3d_3d

Your password is**: winner**

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. My contact information is below. Thanks again for your valuable input.

Sincerely
Walter Pawlowski
(770)271-1872
Tandem96@bellsouth.net

APPENDIX H

FINAL CONTACT LETTER

Dear School Guidance Counselor:

My name is Walter Pawlowski, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia majoring in Work Force Education. As a requirement for completion of my EdD degree, I am conducting a research study entitled the perceptions and practices of high school guidance counselor toward development of career and technical education (CTE) students' transition plans from secondary to postsecondary education. The study will require input from a group of high school guidance counselors in the state of Georgia through a Web-based survey. I would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to respond to the Web-based survey questionnaire.

IRB approval number: 2010-10066-0

During the last month I have been collecting data on an important research study I am conducting for completion of my dissertation and for gaining insight for high school counselors to facilitate the success of high school students. The purpose of the study is to add to the empirical data in the area of postsecondary transition. The study is drawing to a close, and this is the last contact that will be made with school guidance counselors. The survey will close October 15, 2008.

I am sending this final contact because of our concern that school guidance counselors who have not responded may have had different experiences than those who have. Hearing from every school guidance counselor in the sample population will help assure that the survey results are as accurate as possible. I also want to assure you that your response to this study is voluntary, and if you prefer not to respond that's fine.

Finally, I appreciate your willingness to consider the request as I conclude this effort to better understand the perceptions and practices of high school guidance counselor. By clicking on the link provided and logging into the secure site, you are agreeing to participate in this research study.

Here is a link to the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Logxn1RE_2bbVD2VkVsdXarQ_3d_3d

Your password is: **winner**

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, you may contact me at (770) 271-1872. My major advisor is Dr. Robert Wicklien and he can be reached at (706) 542-4503.

Thanks again for your valuable input.

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