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**BILINGUAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS WITH ADDITIONAL MENTAL
HEALTH TRAINING AND DIVERSITY SENSITIVITY FORM
STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH DIVERSE AND AT RISK
POPULATIONS WHICH INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS AND
OVERALL GRADUATION RATE**

Andrea Judge

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BILINGUAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS WITH ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH
TRAINING AND DIVERSITY SENSITIVITY FORM STRONGER CONNECTIONS
WITH DIVERSE AND AT RISK POPULATIONS WHICH INCREASE STUDENT
SUCCESS AND OVERALL GRADUATION RATE

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by

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ABSTRACT

BILINGUAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS WITH ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND DIVERSITY SENSITIVITY FORM STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH DIVERSE AND AT RISK POPULATIONS WHICH INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS AND OVERALL GRADUATION RATE

Andrea Judge

This study will examine the relationship between school counselor and ELL student and see if at risk and diverse populations graduate on time when they have a relationship with their counselor. Also if the school counselors have additional training helps school counselors form relationships with their students. The researcher will inquire about additional certifications, such as mental health counseling, school counselors may have and if having additional certifications creates a connection and increase the graduation rate. Administrators that oversee counselors from Suffolk County high schools on Long Island will be asked to participate in the survey on ethnicity, certifications and graduation rates. Administrators will be asked to answer the fourteen survey questions. The role of a school counselor is to build trusting relationships. These relationships define the dynamics among counselors and students. Counselors that form stronger connections with a student can be particularly helpful for students as they go through changes and challenges in becoming an adult.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Brenden, and my son, Jaden.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In New York State the overall graduation rate is 86.1 percent (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2022) while the graduation rate for our English Language Learners (ELLs) is only 54.1% (NYSED, 2022). Overall, New York State has 272,292 (10.4%) Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in the 2017-18 school year. According to NYSED (2022), the number of MLLs in NYS has increased from 248,140 in 2015-16 to 272,292 in 2017-18 school year. This is a 9.7% change within the three years. In New York City the percentage of ELL/MLLs has remained the same at 15.3% of the student population. The number of ELL/MLLs enrolment in the rest of New York State has increased from 95,930 in 2015-16 school year to 111,696 in 2017-18 school year. This is an increase change of 16.4% over three years (NYSED, 2022). Spanish and Chinese speaking students make up the largest number of ELLs in New York State.

NYSED Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 was created to help school districts service their ELLs. They have a lower graduation rate and higher dropout rate than their non- English language learners. Reflection and planning to improve policies, programs, and instructional practices geared toward improvement in ELL graduation rates. Schools need to take a look at what they are doing for our current ELLs. Why are our ELL students not graduating on time? We need to examine district practices and structures to identify and address ELLs at risk of dropping out and/or not graduating on time.

It is not yet known if ELL students that have a bilingual school counselor have a higher graduation rate. Teachers and school counselors need to build a welcoming and trusting environment (Howard et al., 2007) which can significantly contribute to student

success. Establishing a positive learning community in the classroom where students feel comfortable and accepted is done through “practicing inclusive and non-judgmental discussions, reflection, and engagement strategies” (Howard et al., 2007, p. 312). Schools need to establish a culturally responsive setting so all learners can flourish. According to Nieto (2013) being culturally responsive in the class room is having a mindset that respects and honors students’ individuality as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories. Students want to trust that their teacher is interested in them and their unique life experiences. Through team building processes, educators can “establish that racial, cultural, and economic differences are real in the context of the student’s background” (Howard et al., 2007). Classroom discussions must engage students and create a learning environment that is understanding and supportive of individual differences. Through a trusting environment students become more aware of the struggles they need to work on to be successful and graduate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between Bilingual School Counselors’ and their ELL students. The counselor/student connection will increase ELL students’ academic success and raise their graduation rates. It is not yet known if ELL students that have a bilingual school counselor will have a higher graduation rate. There are many factors that influence the achievement of ELL students in our high schools and their graduation rates. School counselors are in prime positions to advocate for all students. Their role allows them to assess student needs and identify barriers that inhibit learning and limit academic success. School counselors develop and implement individual, school and community programs that facilitate personal and social growth and

foster academic achievement for all students (National Center for Transforming School Counseling, 2011).

ELLs represent the fastest growing segment of the school-aged population in the United States (Capps et al., 2005; Kindler, 2002; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2011). School counselors have been described as essential in the success of these students (McCall-Perez, 2000). As schools become increasingly diverse, advocacy scholars indicate that counselors should be intentional in assuring that they equitably serve all students, including students who are ethnically and culturally diverse and ELLs (Lewis et al., 2003; Portman, 2009). Furthermore, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model charges school counselors to develop programs that ensure equitable access to opportunities and provide rigorous curriculum for all students (ASCA, 2012).

School counselors that have additional training may advocate more for school-based interventions and mental health referrals before moving to disciplinary measures and provides proactive leadership in identifying, preventing and intervening with student at-risk behaviors. Using data to develop and assess preventive and responsive services to address these risks is an integral part of a school counseling program. The school counselor must collaborate with staff, schoolwide teams, families and the community to identify students who are participating in harmful behaviors and intervenes with these students to limit or eliminate the risk of harm or negative consequences. Additional certifications may help with these interactions. White and Kelly (2010) delineated many evidence-based practices school counselors can use to address protective and risk factors.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Funds of Knowledge are the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge that are embedded in the daily practices and routines of families. Funds of knowledge theory argues that teachers can decrease the gap between school and home by drawing on the knowledge and skills that students acquire in their families and communities and can thus support academic learning (González et al., 2005; Hogg, 2011). Moll (2004) said “existing classroom practices underestimate and constrain what Latino and other children are able to display intellectually” (p. 705”). Moll (2004) believes the secret to instruction is for schools to investigate and tap into the "hidden" home and community resources of their students.

Helping students who are ELLs is a challenge that calls for strategic pedagogy to ensure the best possible success for emerging bilingual students. Recognizing that the individual cultural and linguistic strengths of such students provide a solid foundation for future learning, it is essential to not only help our students learn to communicate well in English, but also to engage with the varied curriculum offered in schools. Individual efforts by teachers, students, and helpers may be combined to reinforce the children’s individual efforts and form a community of learners. Curriculum content, instructional strategies, assessment, cultural responsiveness, and community resources need to be coordinated as critical but different aspects of learning components for ELLs’ ultimate success.

According to Nieto (2013) being culturally responsive in the classroom is having a mindset that respects and honors students’ individuality as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories. Teachers must find a way to include this in the curriculum and

through teaching approaches. This is a commitment to continue to learn about one's students' individuality as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories. Culturally responsive teaching builds upon this approach in that it requires that teachers critically examine pedagogy and curriculum. Teachers must "find ways to use the language, culture and experience of students meaningfully in their education" (Nieto, 2000, p. 203).

Everything about the student becomes an access point to help the student learn. Student culture, family background, student interest and high expectations for all learners regardless of the kinds of differences and issues they bring to school, are critical components for success. Taking a culturally responsive approach that recognizes the value of a students' primary language helps the educator engage in the opportunity of teaching ELLs to the benefit of all involved. Authenticity is another aspect of teaching responsively.

A level of trust and openness is closely tied to how students view their teacher as authentic (i.e., caring, loving, and trustworthy). Aronson and Steele (2005) find that student motivation and achievement outcomes are greatly influenced by the feeling of belonging, awareness that their teachers value their intellectual competence, and that they can trust the people around them. Thus, teachers have to engage in this process and ongoing personal growth and cultural competence while showing interest in the culture in which students belong.

Leary's Model for Interpersonal Communication is a theoretical framework that can help examine school counselor and student interactions. The theoretical framework and model are rooted in the importance of communication. The relationships with others and our attitudes towards others drive the interaction. According to Leary if we are on the

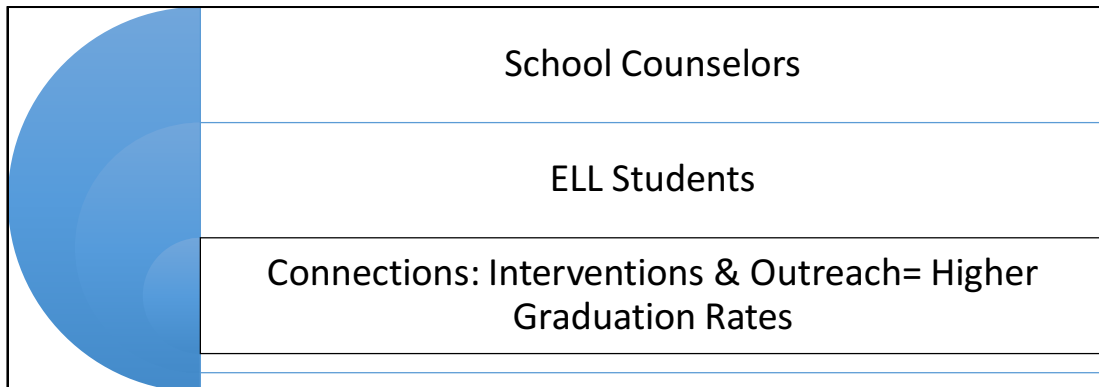
axis of *together* we are in the quadrant of *helping*. Leary examines the place of dominance and submission as basic behaviors. This can steer interactions and have a positive or negative affect on interactions. When looking at this theoretical framework in terms of this study the school counselor and student success rates define the relationship. The relationship can be positive, negative or non-existence. A positive relationship can increase students' academic success. A positive relationship can help "at risk" students overcome challenges. According to *Basic Framework of Eight Behavioral Dimensions of Teacher-Student Interaction* (1997), teachers have many different roles in the classroom, and each teacher has a different way of communicating with students. Researchers Wubbels et al. (1997) were primarily concerned with the behavioral dynamics a teacher might use to establish roles in the classroom. This can also be thought about in terms of school counselor and student interactions.

Leary's Rose model has been shown to be very useful in education. "Behavior can be predicted, to a certain extent, which is what the model is all about. It is also clear that some behaviors evoke other sets of behavior. "The way in which a reaction is given can therefore be predicted and also influenced" (Leary, 1947, p. 247). According to Leary (1947) this is valuable in education, where teachers must teach the material to the students with the greatest possible precision. Leary's Rose helps to look at certain behaviors and learn to understand the other person. It can be applied from teachers to students, but teachers can also use the method to analyze their own teaching methods. Based on this, the teacher can take action when necessary. The method also helps teachers to provoke certain desired behaviors in students.

When working with students and our work with other people sometimes we meet people that we cannot find a way to reach that person or struggle supporting them. By finding their place and through our interactions we can connect to our students. Sometimes people can be withdrawn so school counselors may take an unexpected leader role. As an adult and counselor, we are trying to be helpful. We want our students to take a little bit more responsibility. Many situations create behaviors and communication that we can find challenging. How as school counselors can we change these responses for the benefit of the individual, the group and/or the task at hand? We do not want to create these difficult situations and experiences for our students. This could jeopardize our students overall academic success. Nieto’s Cultural Responsiveness, Leary’s model and Moll’s Funds of Knowledge can help school counselor find out about their students’ home lives by communication and this has influence on the connection we make with our students. Living in the society involves multiple interactions with other people, some short-term and unimportant, others – critical for our life and career. Below Figure 1 is a representation of the conceptual framework discussed throughout this research.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Leary, Nieto & Mole (2022)



Note. School Counselors additional training + Funds of Knowledge + Communication + Cultural Responsiveness = Higher Grad Rates for ELLs

Significance/Importance of the Study

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010), Latina/o ELL students are less likely to complete high school and attend college compared to their White non-Latina/o peers. The researcher will inquire about bilingual certifications and if having additional certifications create a stronger relationship with students based on ELL students' graduation rates compared to ELL students that do not have a school counselor with a bilingual certification. This is important to the researcher because it will allow her to examine if ELL students' positive interactions with their school counselor may help increase student achievement. Also, the researcher would like to examine if student relationship with their school counselor will help "at risk" ELL students graduate with their cohort. All schools and communities have students who could potentially drop out of school and/or engage in destructive behaviors such as absenteeism, performing below their potential academically, substance abuse, bullying, cyberbullying, suicidal ideation, physical violence or engaging in self-harm and other destructive or dangerous behaviors. Additionally, schools and communities may have environmental, resource or policy issues inadvertently contributing to student failure and harmful behaviors (Berrios & Lucca, 2011). These behaviors can have devastating lifelong implications and often stem from social/ emotional concerns including: low self-esteem, family and relationship problems, grief, trauma, neglect, abuse and/or substance use. Implementing trauma-informed practices may help staff with interventions while maintaining sensitivity to students (Cholewa et al., 2015). ELLs represent the fastest growing segment of the school-aged population in the United States (Capps et al., 2005; Kindler, 2002; NCELA,

2011). School counselors have been described as essential in the success of these students (McCall-Perez, 2000). As schools become increasingly diverse, advocacy scholars indicate that counselors should be intentional in assuring that they equitably serve all students, including students who are ethnically and culturally diverse and ELLs (Henderson & Gysbers, 2005). Furthermore, the ASCA National Model (2012) charges school counselors to develop programs that ensure equitable access to opportunities and provide rigorous curriculum for all students. The school counselor advocates for school-based interventions and mental health referrals before moving toward expulsion or other disciplinary measures and provides proactive leadership in identifying, preventing and intervening with student at-risk.

According to Brooks (2010) when school counselors do not have direct access to or relationships with ELL students and their families, they may misunderstand ELL student needs and perspectives or they may make decisions that do not take into considerations the needs of their ELL students and families. Often the result is an increasing disconnect between the home and the school, with neither group understanding the other. School counselors need to bridge this connection in order to help our ELL population achieve success and graduate on time.

Connection with Social Justice

Fifty years ago, NEA held a groundbreaking conference on bilingual education that led directly to the landmark Bilingual Education Act. Since that time, English Language Learners have grown from The Invisible Minority (the revealing title of NEA's 1966 conference report) to the nation's fastest-growing student group. Despite this momentous demographic shift, there is a profound lack of urgency

and understanding in the way in which schools perceive and educate ELL students. These bright young people have so much to offer their schools and communities, yet all too often they're seen through a deficit lens. Too many are struggling in school when they should be soaring. (NEA, 2022 p. 49)

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

RQ 1: To what extent does school counselors with similar cultural background as their ELL students increase students' graduation rates?

RQ 2: To what extent does school counselors with a bilingual extension certification increase graduation rates in student populations that traditionally have had lower graduation rates?

RQ 3: To what extent is student/counselor connection increased by school counselors with additional certifications such as crisis & trauma counseling, mental health counseling and social work therefore increasing overall graduation rates?

Definition of Terms

This section provides definitions of several key terms used in this study.

School counselors are individuals who have obtained a school counseling certification in New York State and are currently practicing in New York State high schools.

English Language Learners (ELLs) are defined as students meeting the English Language Learner qualification criteria identified by New York State and their particular school district.

Multilingual Learners are defined as all students who speak a language other than English at home and qualification criteria identified by New York State and their particular school district.

School counselor with bilingual extension are defined as a certified school counselor that is proficient in English and another language and has additional internship hours under another school counselor with the bilingual extension.

Cultural Responsiveness is defined as requiring individuals to be cultural competent. This competency is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families (Nieto, 2013).

Similar Backgrounds is operationally defined as same kind of family you come from, same social & racial origins, same type of education and financial status.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

There are many factors that influence the achievement of ELL students in our high schools and their graduation rates. Graduation rates have been investigated from a variety of perspectives. This chapter presents the theoretical model that guides the research to be conducted, which is based on the exploration of the relationship that Bilingual School Counselors' form stronger connections with ELL students which increases ELL students' success and overall graduation rates. Relevant research on the model of communication, relationships, cultural responsiveness, funds of knowledge, academic success and mental health have all be used to examine academic success.

Further, the chapter identifies and presents a brief review of literature on other widely investigated factors that have influenced student success. These include demographic factors including the background of students, social and family factors, psychological factors such as motivation and attributions, prior learning and school structure, as well as teacher characteristics. It may be noted that there are many conceptual and methodological issues surrounding these additional factors, but these are beyond the scope of this review.

Theoretical Framework

This research will use the frameworks of Moll's Funds of Knowledge, Nieto's Cultural Responsiveness and Leary's Theory of Communication to guide it. Nieto's (2013) cultural responsiveness is a mindset that respects and honors students' individuality as well as students' culture, experiences, and histories. Nieto (2013) includes this in the curriculum and through teaching approaches. There is a commitment

to learn about one's students' individuality as well as their cultures, experiences, and histories. There is a stance and a set of dispositions that include critical self-reflection about one's values, biases, strengths, and limitations, and how these can affect one's effectiveness with students of diverse backgrounds.

Nieto (2013) states there is value in language and culture. We should expect high quality and excellent work from all students. We should affirm students' identities while also expanding their world. Nieto (2013) believes in honoring families. There should always be a commitment to life-long learning. A culturally responsive action is to learn to say students' names correctly. According to NYSED (2022) the Culturally Responsive framework is intended to help education stakeholders create student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking. The framework was designed to support education in developing and implementing policies that educate all students effectively and equitably. This is to provide appropriate supports and services to promote positive student outcomes.

The basic premise of the funds of knowledge approach is that 'classroom learning can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn more about their students and their students' households' (Moll & Gonzalez, 1997, p. 90). The funds of knowledge approach consist of three main interrelated activities: a qualitative analysis of the funds of knowledge in households of local students, creation of after-school sites where researchers and teachers can think about their research and determine how to use that knowledge and rather than

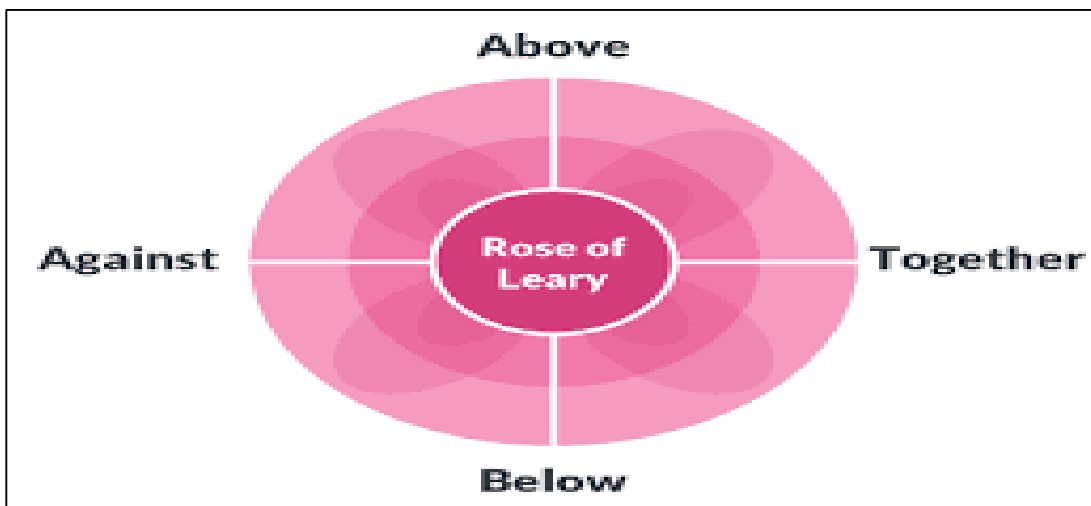
the traditional curriculum that either misrepresents or too many communities, Moll's approach represents 'communities in terms of the resources, the wherewithal they do possess, and a way to harness these resources for classroom teaching' (Moll, 1997, p. 625). According to Moll (2005) actual classroom attempts to enact forms of 'mediating instruction is by the teacher providing opportunities for classroom learning that mediate student life and school. The approach involves household analysis, the creation of study groups or lab settings with teachers, and the development of curriculum and pedagogy. The approach enables the use of the funds of knowledge of historically marginalized communities to make household assets 'pedagogically viable' (Moll, 2005, p. 278) and to reduce the 'insularity of classrooms' (Moll et al., 1992, p. 139). Helping students who are English Language Learners is a challenge that calls for strategic pedagogy to ensure the best possible success for bilingual students. Recognizing that the individual cultural and linguistic strengths of such students provide a solid foundation for future learning, it is essential to not only help our students learn to communicate well in English, but also to engage with the varied curriculum offered in schools. Individual efforts by teachers, students, and staff may be combined to reinforce the student's individual efforts and form a community of learners.

Timothy Leary created the communication model named the Rose of Leary to clarify human behavior and the interaction between people. The model has a horizontal and a vertical axis. The horizontal axis focuses on relationships with others and the vertical axis focuses on attitude to others. Leary (1947) referred to the north axis as the above behavior, the south axis as the below behavior, the west axis as the 'opposed' behavior and the east as the together behavior.

Leary examines the place of dominance and submission as basic behaviors. This can steer interactions and have a positive or negative affect on interactions. When looking at this theoretical framework in terms of this study the school counselor and student success rates define the relationship. The relationship can be positive, negative or non-existence. A positive relationship can increase students' academic success. Figure 2 shows the relationship with communication and individuals.

Figure 2

Rose of Communication Leary (1947)



Review of Related Literature

The review of relevant literature and theoretical framework supports the researcher's assumptions of bilingual school counselors form stronger connections with ELL students which increases ELL students' success and overall graduation rates.

The content knowledge and academic skills are only part of the equation for student success. Senge (1990) stated:

School performance is a complex phenomenon, shaped by a wide variety of factors intrinsic to students and the external environment" (University of Chicago,

2012, p. 2). The ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors are the base and guided practices for all school counselors. “Whenever I’m trying to help people understand what this word ‘system’ means, I usually start by asking: ‘Are you a part of a family?’ Everybody is a part of a family. ‘Have you ever seen in a family, people producing consequences in the family, how people act, how people feel, that aren’t what anybody intends?’ Yes. ‘How does that happen?’ Well... then people tell their stories and think about it. But that then grounds people in not the jargon of ‘system’ or ‘systems thinking’ but the reality – that we live in webs of interdependence” (p. 5).

Howe’s (2009) study looked at the importance of research in the school counseling field as well as a brief description of school counseling services and comprehensive developmental school counseling programs and how they can affect student outcomes. This research was in individual, small group and large group/classroom guidance counseling. Research was done in a middle school on students who received counseling services during the 2007-2008. It was analyzed and compared to the literature found on the subject of counseling and academic achievement. Implications for the counseling profession were discussed as were possible future directions for research. “Counselors are in a special position in that they can work with students on the various issues faced by students that may impede their education. School counselors have a repertoire of skills to help students with mental health issues, family and social problems as well as career exploration and course planning to make school relevant to each learner” (Howe, 2009, p. 47). Some studies reviewed showed that students achieve because of counseling. In general, there was an agreement that counselors do make a

difference for the better in the lives of the students that they work with. The challenge is to show this value to administrators and the community as a whole so that the work that school counselors do with and on behalf of students can continue.

According to Eunsook (2018), motivation is an important foundation of academic development in students. There are many components and concepts in this area such as beliefs, goals, and values. Also, Eunsook (2018) reviewed and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It presented a studied “theoretical perspectives of academic motivation and briefly illustrates strategies for increasing academic motivation” (p. 23). This addresses the importance of the school counselor's role in student academic development and describes preventive and remedial approaches that school counselors can utilize for promoting academic motivation.

According to Shi and Watkinson (2019) social identity factors by incorporating the factor of ELL students’ length of schooling in the United States. Using a mixed-method design, their study addressed the following research questions: Where do ELL students feel a relatively stronger or weaker sense of school belonging? Are there any statistically significant differences in perceived sense of belonging between ELL students who arrived in the United States during elementary school versus those who arrived during middle school? How do school personnel perceive the school experiences of ELL students (Shi & Watkinson 2019)? Participants were 3 school counselors, 1 teacher who served in the role of ELL family liaison, and 28 students who were receiving English as second language (ESL) services from the school (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). Of the school counselors, all identified as female and self-reported as white and African American. Years of experience as a school counselor ranged from one to more than six years. The

teacher identified as female and Hispanic, with 15 years of experience. Nineteen student participants self-identified as male and nine as female, with 86% coming from Spanish speaking countries (Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador) and 14% from Asia (Indian, Philippines, Bangladesh, and Pakistan). Among the 28 ELL students, 10 were in sixth grade, 9 in seventh grade, and 9 in eighth grade. Most participants first came to the United States when they were in elementary school and nine came in middle school. Regarding languages in students' homes, 64% of the students indicated that only a non-English language was spoken, 29% spoke both English and non-English, and 7% identified English as the only language spoken (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). A mixed-method research design was used to identify ELL students' perceptions of school belonging and how school personnel perceived the school experiences of ELL students (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). Quantitative data was used and also researchers collected qualitative data through two semi-structured interviews about how school personnel perceived the needs of ELL students. The participants signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the study. The first author conducted both interviews, the first a group interview with three school counselors and the second an individual interview with the teacher liaison. The second author facilitated the group interview with the school counselors by FaceTime. The interviews lasted from 45 min to 1 hr. They recorded both interviews and used an external service to transcribe the recordings. The Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSMS) was used to examine the participating students' school belonging (Goodenow, 1993). This scale was a self-report questionnaire (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). The main findings of this study was that students gave the highest ratings on the PSSMS to items related to future college plans and their

expectations to graduate from high school (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). The findings indicated a high level of agreement on statements related to respect from teachers and school personnel. The findings showed little agreement related to students' participation in school-related activities. According to Shi and Watkinson (2019) ELL students who arrived in the United States during elementary school rated significantly higher ratings of respect from teachers. According to Shi and Watkinson (2019) three main findings from interviews were: presenting issues for counseling services, obstacles for services, and finding solutions. The findings suggested that presenting issues for counseling services highlighted the concerns ELL students brought to the attention of school counselors. School counselor participants reported that they believed ELL students were less likely than other students to seek their services and when they did it was for help dealing with stress related to immigration or peer issues (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). This is connected to this research because their relationship with their school counselor and their academic progress is influenced by their undocumented status and mental health.

According to Migliarini and Stinson (2021) the relationship between English Language Learner that were classified with a disability for special education in a mid-sized urban school district in Upstate New York. The study explored how teachers use and implement New York State Education policies which affect the education of ELL students and inclusion of ELL students in the school (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021). The sample was ten educators working in elementary and secondary schools in a mid-sized urban school district in Upstate New York were selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021). All participants identified as white and five participants were English as a New Language (ENL) teachers, two were

general education teachers, two were special education teachers, and one was a speech therapist. All participants, worked closely with disabled ELL students. The research method was a qualitative case study methodology. This study reviewed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of NYSED policy documents related to the education of ELLs and disabled ELLs and semi-structured individual interviews teachers from a mid-sized urban school district in Upstate New York. The ELL/MLL status of and Services for Students with Disabilities (NYSED, 2018) and The Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success (NYSED, 2018a) was used in the collection of data, as well as some of the emerging themes from the analysis of the qualitative, semi-structured interviews with the teachers (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021). In order to establish the study's credibility by member-checking with participants and data triangulation with policy documents were done throughout the data collection process (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021). The findings of this study revealed how discursive frameworks preserve a comfort-fantasy of ELL inclusion (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021), in which educators are positioned as agents of equity for ELL students while students' language and disability status are positioned as barrier-sites of deficiency. According to Migliarni (2021) the themes from the interviews included through individualizing, highlighting barriers to inclusion, and relating inclusion to behavioral compliance, conformity and procedure. These themes show how the language and values existing NYSED policy documents center the ideal citizen at the level of local implementation as teachers imagine inclusion and equity only for students who are nondisabled, assimilated, and compliant (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021). The findings suggest policy implementation needs to support teachers in practicing of a more critical culture of inclusive education. Also, to place value related

to individual achievement and difference (Migliarni & Stinson, 2021). The focus is practices that help ELLs become successful.

Jimerson et al. (2016) understand associations between individual, family, and school factors and educational outcomes (school completion and postsecondary school attendance) for ELL students at high academic risk. This study examined school dropout and understanding factors that help school completion and examined predictors of educational resilience to explore potential protective influences (Jimerson et al., 2016). The study examined information about specific predictors associated with school completion and postsecondary school attendance for ELL students at high academic risk (Jimerson et al., 2016). Participants in the study were high school seniors enrolled in one of four school districts in central California. Only Latino/a students' classified as an ELL was used in the sample. This is because the researchers only wanted to focus on this population. The sample was 115 Latino/a who were classified as ELL within schools. Participants were picked from a pool that was predominantly Latino (95 %), with 3 % of students from Asian/Pacific Islander backgrounds and 1 % American Indian. Equal numbers of males ($N = 57$) and females ($N = 58$) were in the sample (Jimerson et al., 2016). The average age was 18 years, with a range from 17 to 21 years. Also, 79 % of students ($N = 91$) sampled qualified for free and reduced lunch (Jimerson et al., 2016). The methodology was quantitative. An initial survey of participants was used, a follow-up survey of participants was used, and school records obtained from school districts was examined. The initial survey in the consisted of 37 items. The second round of follow-up data collection in the fall consisted of 12 questions, gathered via telephone survey. Surveys were available in both English and Spanish; 31 % of the respondents completed

the Spanish version of the surveys. The measures in this study were drawn from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS 1988, see Ingels et al. 1994; McLaughlin et al. 1997) and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health; Resnick et al. 1997). According to Jimerson (2016) data was analyzed using the SPSS statistical package (IBM Corporation, 2013). Due to the dichotomous nature of the two outcome variables in the current study (i.e., school completion and postsecondary school attendance), logistic regression and discriminant analysis were used (Jimerson et al., 2016). The findings showed ninety percent of participants indicated that one or both of their parents viewed attending postsecondary school as the most important thing for them to do right after high school. According to Jimerson (2016) the parent expectations variable was toward participants who endorsed the presence of parent expectations for postsecondary school attendance. The majority of participants (84 %) also reported having self-expectations of postsecondary school attendance (Jimerson et al., 2016). ELLs' success academically and attendance are large factors and contributors to ELL students' graduation rates.

Kieffer et al., (2009) evaluated the effectiveness and validity of accommodations for ELLs participating in assessments. The study examined previous studies on test accommodations for ELLs and the results. In addition, the study examined which accommodations were appropriate and support ELLs on large- scale assessments (Kieffer et al., 2009). This study used for its sample and participants 11 studies previously done. The total of participants was 23,999 with 17,445 being native English speakers and 6,554 being ELLs (Kieffer et al., 2009). The method of eight of the eleven studies used were true experiment where students were randomly assigned accommodations or no

accommodations. The three remaining studies were quasi-experiments. The participants ranged from grades four to eight. A baseline was used with math and science before giving participants the large-scale assessment (Kieffer et al., 2009). The large-scale assessment used was the National Assessment Education Progress (NAEP). There were seven accommodation types used for this study. They were simplified English, English dictionaries and glossaries, bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, tests given in native language, dual language test booklets, dual language questions and extra time. A narrative review was used to examine data (Kieffer et al., 2009). The findings showed all seven accommodations were effective. The English dictionaries and glossaries had a statistical significance impact on ELLs' performance. There was limited evidence the other five accommodations were effective on performance. In addition, none of accommodations was found to affect performance for the native English speakers (Kieffer et al., 2009). This study's findings agreed with previous studies that showed English dictionaries and glossaries were most effective on large-scale assessments (Kieffer et al, 2009). ELLs' success on large-scale assessments have a large impact on academic progress and graduation rates.

Amatea and Clark (2005) examined counselors' roles based on administrators' point of view and how this can improve school counselors training programs. The study wanted to obtain a deeper understanding of administrators' concepts on counselors' roles. The activities the administrators valued that school counselors perform and the priority given to certain activities. The purpose was to provide guidance for counselors in regards to school environment and goals (Amatea & Clark 2005). Twenty-six administrators that worked at the elementary, middle, and high school level were interviewed for this study.

The sample was picked by administrators that worked with school counselors and were interested in being interviewed (Amatea & Clark, 2005). The sample was voluntary. This was a qualitative study that looked at how school administrators viewed the role of school counselors. The method used was interviews with the administrators that were participating in the study. The researchers used data gathered from a two- year grounded theory study. Grounded theory was a qualitative methodology based on symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1967). Symbolic interactionist theory asserts that people construct meanings for phenomena based on their interactions with others (Amatea & Clark, 2005). The findings showed a variety of concepts from administrators on school counselors' roles. The findings find there were four distinctive domains. The four domains were main work activities, specialized knowledge, counselor- student activities, and coordination of jobs. School counselors' roles need to be defined as partnership with students and families. This research defines counselors' roles differently than this research but is relevant because when working with different districts the researcher will need to consider the definition of roles for school counselors per district.

Rochkins and Ott (2010) examine high school students experience with guidance. Also, they looked back on their own high school experiences. The researchers examined teenagers and giving their guidance counselors' bad reviews. They used data from a survey of students conducted by a public agenda. The research procedures examined a guidance system in which one-half of all students believe their guidance counselor sees them as, 'just another face in the crowd' (Rochkins & Ott, 2010). Other research shows that high school guidance counselors carry heavy caseloads and are expected to perform a wide range of other duties. The authors suggested that as a first step, schools improve

student-counselor ratios, relieve counselors of other duties, and improve counselors' preparation and training. More important, they suggest that "the time has come to ask broader, more basic questions about how schools help students plan for their future and what roles counselors, teachers, and others should play in that enterprise" (Rochkins & Ott, 2010). The meeting with the high school guidance counselor is expected and routine—a time set aside for students to talk about goals and plans with an adult trained to offer advice, options, and assistance. At least, that's the goal. Unfortunately, the reality sometimes falls short. One young man, now in his early 20s, summed up his experience as disappointing and pointless. Such meetings are impersonal, perfunctory, and common. According to a 2009 survey of young adults ages 22–30 conducted by Public Agenda for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Johnson et.al., 2010). The findings from this survey, along with several others we have conducted in recent years offer one clear message: As education focuses its attention on bringing today's high schools into the 21st century, the guidance counseling system is a prime candidate for innovation and reform.

Even if the student-to-counselor ratio was more manageable and if counselors' time was not monopolized by scheduling and administrative tasks, schools need to reimagine counselors as more than a menu of postsecondary options. Students need more than a high school diploma to be successful in today's job market. Respondents gave low ratings for how much counselors helped them find ways to pay for college, with 33 percent of young people saying their counselors' performance was actually poor. Although the ratings were better on helping students with the college applications process. More than half of the survey respondents (55 percent) assign ratings of fair or

poor.

According to Pangala (2012) evaluating the understanding and evaluation of various types of stressful situations that adolescents experience, interventions, and policies in India. The purpose of this study was to understand stressful situations teens go through to have a better understanding of these experiences to provide services. The research measure was a survey. The research and procedures of the research were taken in India. This study was done in India because it has been a growing concern. During the procedure the online survey was given to a sample of 128 male and female adolescents. The sample consist of female and male teenagers and their experiences growing up in India in regard to mental health. Also, policy stakeholders were interviewed to understand the mental health service or lack of services in place in India. The survey used was designed to collect and assess teens opinions on mental health and wellbeing, factors that cause stress, their willingness and attitude about seeking help, and the books and movies they read or watch that are sources of information about mental health. The survey used provided a beginning understanding of how urban teens experience stress, and their attitudes towards finding and receiving support from others. Involving other teens and meeting in small groups could help in developing a more comprehensive survey for future research. The measured in this research was based on interviews and the interactions with participants. Also conducted in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of mental health policies in India. The findings were analyzed using the policy triangle analysis framework (Pangala, 2012).

Also, according to Pangala (2012) there was no age ranges addressed by surveys and interviews nor were the vulnerable groups explicitly recognized. Stress, anxiety and

depression were commonly identified on the interviews. Mental health concerns and community, family, school were discussed several times to help establish preventive and treatment interventions. According to Pangala (2012) some interventions that could target some social norms like safe and supportive schools. Many social norms were not addressed. Some participants suggested preventive interventions for teens. Also, some participants stated there was little involvement of teens in the development mental health services and interventions (Pangala, 2012). Stakeholders identified several major challenges in implementing these policies because budget and government issues. The inclusion of a qualitative perspective via interviews and interaction with respondents can provide an in-depth understanding of adolescents' experiences of stress. The main findings and implications of this research demonstrated barriers to be aware when teens are seeking mental health services (Pangala, 2012).

Kam et al. (2018) examined factors that are tied to teenagers sharing with their school counselors their undocumented and or families undocumented status. Also, the researchers wanted to examine if disclosing status was tied to mental health. "Utilizing latent transition analyses with a sample of 410 Latina/o immigrant high school students, four profiles emerged in Wave 1: (1) indifferent non-disclosers, (2) concerned revealers, (3) anxious revealers, and (4) secure revealers. By Wave 2, we identified the same profiles, except anxious revealers were no longer present, and anxious non-disclosers emerged as a new profile. At Wave 3, we only identified three profiles: (1) indifferent non-disclosers (2), concerned revealers, and (3) anxious revealers" (Kam et al., 2018, p. 98). The researchers examined how immigrant students have more mental health condition and fear of being deported. Also, this study examined the different experiences

of undocumented students and families and which ones choose to disclose their status to their school counselor. A longitudinal survey was used. It looked at stress, resilience, and overall well-being. This took place in the southwest of the United States. Data was collected to capture change or stability across an entire academic year. Students completed a survey in November 2015 for Wave 1 (beginning of the academic year), in February 2016 for Wave 2 (middle of the academic year), and in May 2016 for Wave 3 (end of the academic year) (Kam et al., 2018). The sample was 410 undocumented students. The students were also part of the free and reduced lunch program. School district volunteered to participate in research. The findings showed that students need to disclose their status in order to relieve anxiety. Due to the challenges they were facing being undocumented there was fear in disclosing status. Many of the students demonstrated anxiety and depression too.

Bryan and Griffin (2010) examined school counselors' involvement in family connections and community partnerships. The purpose of this study was the connections that involvement brings to working with students. The research method used was a survey. The survey used was called, "The School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey". The research procedures included according to Bryan and Griffin (2010) principal factor analyses which revealed three dimensions of partnership involvement. The sample was a national sample of 217 school counselors. The sample was drawn from the Common Core of Data, and hierarchical regression analyses indicated that collaborative school climate, school principal expectations, school counselor self-efficacy about partnerships, role perceptions, time constraints, and the process included hours of partnership-related training associated with school counselor overall involvement in

partnerships (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). The participants were 217 counselors across the United States. The majority of the counselors were female and white. Thirty-four percent of participants worked in an elementary setting, 24% worked in a middle school setting, 28% worked in a high school setting, and eleven percent worked in a combination of elementary, middle, and high school setting. The schools were in rural, urban, and suburban settings. Thirty-seven percent of counselors had had one to five years of counseling experience, 21% had six to ten years of counseling experience, 18% had 11 to 15 years counseling experience and nine percent had 18 to 25 years of counseling experience. “Regarding hours of partnership-related training received, over a third (39.6%) of the school counselors reported that they had received no partnership-related training, while 35.9% had 1-8 hours, 9.2% had 9-17 hours, 6.9% had 18-27 hours, 1.4% had 28-36 hours, and 5.1% had over 36 hours of training” (Bryan & Griffin, 2010, p.16). Some of the counselors had training, some said they had professional conferences, and some said they had coursework. A sample of elementary, middle, and high schools were randomly selected from a National Center of Education Statistics database. This database provided the researchers with demographics of schools, addresses, and telephone numbers. The School Counselor Involvement in Partnerships Survey, a cover letter, a stamped return envelope, and an announcement flier announcing a drawing for two prizes was mailed to each of the 450 schools. Follow up was done via telephone during a 3-week interval after the initial mailing, and new surveys were mailed to all non-respondents at 4 weeks and at 8 weeks after distributing the first packet (Bryan & Griffin, 2010). According to Bryan and Griffin (2010) the findings showed that two principal factors analyses were used to decide survey items. The implications of this study were

that strategies for building school and family and community partnerships. Other implications of this study were that connection fosters involvement. Also, previous findings found that institutional characteristics have a greater effect on role performance in schools. help school counselors' practice and training (Bryan & Griffin, 2010).

Researchers have also identified the presence of attitudinal barriers held by school personnel that interfere with academic success (Cavazos Jr. et al., 2009; De Los Reyes et al., 2008; MacDonald, 2004). Cavazos Jr. et al. (2009) found examples of professional school counselors who held the belief that Latina/o students could not succeed in college and, instead, encouraged them to pursue other vocational options. Holding low expectations regarding academics has been associated with lower academic achievement (De Los Reyes et al., 2008). Moreover, attitudinal barriers may contribute to the overrepresentation of Latina/o ELL students in special education (Ford, 2012; MacDonald, 2004).

Conclusion

In this chapter we see there are many factors that influence ELL students' academic success and effect ELLs graduation rates. These factors have relevance and impact on all student achievement specifically ELL student achievement. While we cannot change the student's socio-economic status, parental education, family support, and psychological factors as school counselors we can communicate, be culturally responsive and use our students' histories to connect and help service them better. We can incorporate what we learn by having effective interpersonal interactions and positive guidance environments. School counselors who are aware of their own behaviors and

influences on their ELL students' can improve students' academic success and increase graduation rates.

CHAPTER 3

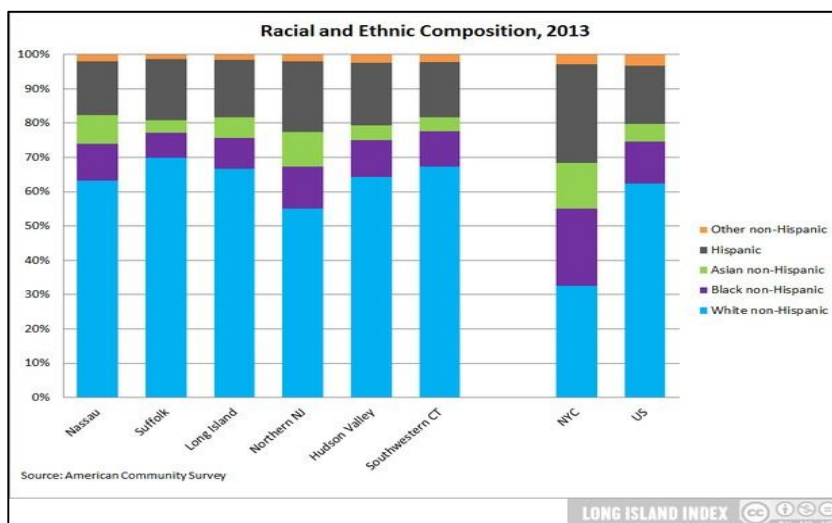
Introduction

Suffolk County, New York is the most eastern from New York City and is a suburban area. The growth of ethnic diversity over the last few decades is changing Suffolk County. Approximately 55% of the residents in Suffolk County communities had income between 125% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk [EOCS], 2022). There are areas of disadvantaged communities that are throughout Suffolk County. It is also one of the wealthiest counties in the country (EOCS, 2022). The lack of public transportation on Long Island causes those living in poverty to be geographically isolated which, in turn, poses a hardship for low-income families. The resulting unemployment or underemployment in this segment of the population raises the potential for other socio-economic issues as evidenced by increased gang-related activity, high school dropout rates, poverty rates, increased substance use, hunger/food insecurity, and other negative indicators (EOCS, 2022). According to the 2020 Census, Suffolk County's population was 1,525,920, making it the fourth-most populous county in New York State. In 2014, the county's racial makeup was estimated at 85.2% White, 8.3% African American, 0.6% Native American, 4.0% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 1.8% from two or more races. Those identifying as Hispanic or Latino were 18.2% of the population. Those who identified as "white alone", not being of Hispanic or Latino represented 69.3% of the population. The median income for a household in the county was \$84,767 and the median income for a family was \$72,112. By 2014 about 6.40% of the population were below the poverty line. In earlier censuses, the population below the poverty line was 2.70% (EOCS, 2022).

The pace of racial and ethnic change has increased over the last ten years (EOCS, 2022). Hispanics and Asians continued to increase the population in Suffolk County and across the county (EOCS, 2022). The number of Hispanics and Asians all grew in 2013, and the number of white residents continued to decline. Asians, in particular, increased in number last year, expanding by 6% and Hispanics grew by 2%. Nationally, the pace of immigration has increased in recent years and this could be affecting Long Island as well (Census 2020, 2022). Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and other non-whites now represent 33% of Long Island’s population. In 2000, their share of the population was 25%, and in 1990 it was 16%. This increase changes Long Island specifically Suffolk County and our schools. Suffolk County has an increase of English Language Learners and yet in our schools our English Language Learners have a lower graduation rate than their white counterparts (NYSED, 2022). As of the 2019-2020 school year Suffolk County had 6,344 English Language Learners in grades 9-12 (NYSED, 2022). Figure 3 below shows the racial and ethnic make up for Long Island.

Figure 3

Long Island Index in 2013



Methods and Procedures

Research Questions

RQ 1: To what extent does school counselors with similar cultural background as their ELL students increase students' graduation rates?

RQ 2: To what extent does school counselors with a bilingual extension certification increase graduation rates in student populations that traditionally have had lower graduation rates?

RQ 3: To what extent is student/counselor connection increased by school counselors with additional certifications such as crisis & trauma counseling, mental health counseling and social work therefore increasing overall graduation rates?

Ho: There will be no statistical significance between school counselors with bilingual extension certification and/or additional certifications and their ELL students' graduation rate.

H₁: There will be a statistical significance between school counselors with bilingual extension certification and/or additional certifications and their ELL students' graduation rate.

Research Design and Data Analysis

The researcher is a current administrator for Suffolk County school district and a St. John's University doctoral student. The role of the researcher will be to ask current administrators that supervise school counselors on Long Island specifically high school setting in Suffolk County to take a survey the researcher has created. According to Creswell (2012), "survey designs" are procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called the sample) to

identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the population.) This data will be based on trends of the current times. The survey will be by volunteer and will used for the data collection to answer the research questions and hypotheses. The survey will ask caseloads size, number of counselors, certifications, graduation rates, demographics and percentage of ELL students on counselors' caseloads and in district. Also, the NYSED website will be utilized to obtain graduation rates of high schools. This data base will be used to examine overall graduation rates compared to their ELLs graduation rates per each high school used in this study. An email will be sent to the administrators asking for participation in this study. The email will explain the survey and the specifics of each school counselors' certifications and caseloads. All responses will be anonymous and confidential. Participants will also be informed that the data collected will be used to better serve students and families' needs in the guidance department within School Districts throughout Suffolk County.

Data Collection

Administrators will open survey in their email by having the link to the survey in email. The link will take administrators to answers as a yes or no to consent to survey participation. Once administrators answer yes the Google survey form will begin. Administrators will be asked to answer several survey questions. There will be no personal data, such as names, addresses, phone numbers, or email addressed will be collected to keep it anonymous. Administrators will have three weeks to complete the survey. A reminder message will be sent out through a communication at the end of the first week. Once the three weeks are up the survey link will close down. The responses to

the survey questions will form a Google doc. The Google doc will then be exported to a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. Values will be checked for accuracy. The Excel document will then be inputted into SPSS.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS statistical software. The goal of the descriptive analyses was to provide a summary of the study variables which were collected as categorical variables. The dependent variable, graduation rate of ELL students, was measured as a dichotomous variable (consistent or inconsistent with the school's graduation rate). The independent variables of counselor-student background similarity, counselors' bilingual extension certification, and counselors' additional certifications were measured as dichotomous variables. The observations were independent of each other. Due to the small sample size, a Fisher's exact test was conducted to determine if there was an association between school counselors' bilingual extension certification, measured as a dichotomous variable, and ELL students' graduation rate. Similarly, a Fisher's exact test was utilized to determine if there was an association between ELL students' graduation rates and counselors with additional certification measured as a dichotomous variable, additional degree or no additional degree.

Reliability and Validity/Trustworthiness of the Research Design

The positive relationship between the variables of students and counselors is essential for students' success. School counselors have been described as essential in the success of students (McCall-Perez, 2000). The survey used in this research was designed to be answered by administrators that oversee school counselors. The survey was piloted

before being sent to the institutions review board. Once the survey was piloted and researcher received positive feedback the survey was submitted for review. The survey was approved by the IRB.

An email was sent to all the administrators in Suffolk County that oversee school counselors explaining the purpose of the survey. Also, the researcher spoke to administrators at the Suffolk Directors of Guidance meeting and explained the survey and the purpose of the survey. A QR code was shared for the administrators to access and answer survey. All of the responses were gathered via Google Forms, converted to Excel, reviewed converted to SPSS, and reviewed a second time. All respondents answered all questions, and all responses were kept both anonymous and confidential.

Sample

The sample consisted of 16 schools from Suffolk County in Long Island, New York. Table 1 provides a summary of the schools' characteristics for the participating schools, including number of students, percentage of ELL students, number and background of counselors as well as graduation rates within the schools. Nine schools, 56.25%, reported that they do not have bilingual counselors while seven schools, 43.75%, reported that they had at least one bilingual counselor on staff. Of the seven schools who reported having bilingual counselors, five indicated that they assign ELL students to bilingual counselors while two reported that ELL students are not on the bilingual counselors' caseload. For the schools who indicated that they do not have bilingual counselors, six schools reported that they assign students alphabetically, while two schools stated using another method of assignment. Schools identified several ways in which the staff of the guidance department communicate with non-English speakers with

81.3% of the schools utilizing translations services, 62.5% employing interpreters, 43.8% relying on administrators and 43.8% using a secretary while 37.5% have school counselors communicate directly with the students.

Table 1

Schools' Characteristics

Variable	Number	%
No. of students in the school		
501-1000	3	18.8
1001-2000	10	62.5
2001 or more	3	18.8
% of ELL students in the school		
0-5%	7	43.8
6-10%	2	12.5
16-20%	1	6.3
21-30%	2	12.5
41-50%	3	18.8
51% or more	1	6.3
No. of counselors in the schools		
1-4	2	12.5
5-10	12	75.0
11-15	2	12.5
Ethnicity of counselors by school		
Hispanic or Latino	1	6.3
White	14	87.5
Unknown	1	6.3
No. of counselors who were former ELL students		
0	12	75.0
1-2	2	12.5
3-5	1	6.3
Unknown	1	6.3
No. of bilingual counselors in the school		
0	9	56.3
1-3	6	37.5
8 or more	1	6.3
Graduation rate for the school		
71-80%	1	6.3
81-90%	3	18.8
91-100%	12	75.0
Graduation rate for ELL students		
Under 20%	1	6.3
21-30%	2	12.5

31-40%	0	0
41-50%	1	6.3
51-60%	4	25.0
61-70%	0	0
71-80%	0	0
81-90%	4	25.0
91-100%	4	25.0

Note. $N = 16$. *Percentage is greater than 100 due to schools’ utilization of multiple methods of communication services with ELL students.

Population

Suffolk County is the easternmost county in the state of New York. It is mainly located on the eastern end of Long Island. Suffolk County has over 97 public and private high schools with over 98,779 students (high-schools.com, 2022). According to NYSED.GOV (2022) in the 2019-2020 school year there was 6,344 English Language Learners grades 9-12. These ELL students will be the population used in this study.

Instruments

A survey will be used for data collection that will have questions regarding school counselors’ certification (such as bilingual extension, additional certifications such as mental health counseling, and school counselors’ caseload such as percentage of ELL students. It will be called: “ELLs & School Counselors: Graduation Rates”. The survey consists of 14 multiple choice questions. The survey will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure there is no harm to participants. The survey will be reviewed and approved to ensure reliability and validity. The following chart has all of the survey items and how they relate to this research. Table 2 shows the survey items.

Table 2*Survey Items*

Item	Subject Matter	Relationship to Theory Framework	Statistical Analysis
1. # of counselors	demographics	Moll	Correlational
2. ethnicity	demographics	Moll	Correlational
3. former ELLS	RQ 1	Nieto & Moll	Correlational
4. HS pop	demographics	Moll	Correlational
5. % ELLs	demographics	Nieto & Moll	Correlational
6. Bilingual SCs & Ells	RQ 2	Moll, Nieto & Leary	Correlational
7. Caseload	demographics	Moll	Correlational
8. Add certs	RQ 3	Nieto & Moll	Correlational
9. PD	RQ 1,2 & 3	Moll & Nieto	Correlational
10. communicate	RQ 1,2 & 3	Leary	Correlational
11. Grad rates	School stats	Moll	Correlational
12. Grad rates ELLS	RQ 1, 2 & 3	Nieto & Moll	Correlational

Procedures for Collecting Data

The positive relationship between the variables of students and counselors is essential for students' success. School counselors have been described as essential in the success of students (McCall-Perez, 2000). The survey will be taken by the administrators that supervise school counselors in Suffolk County high schools.

All of the responses will be gathered via Google Forms, then converted to Excel, reviewed converted to SPSS, and reviewed a second time. All respondents answered all questions, and all responses will be kept both anonymous and confidential.

Research Ethics

This study will be conducted ethically and not harm any of its participants. The primary goal of this study is to gain knowledge to better help our English Language

Learners graduate from high school. This study will be designed to get an understandable answer to the important research questions. This includes considering whether the questions to be asked will be answerable, whether the research methods will be and whether the study is designed with accepted principles, clear methods, and reliable practices. The primary reason for using participants will be for the scientific goal of the study and not for exploitation purposes. Participants who accept the risks of research are in a position to enjoy its benefits.

Conclusion

The data that will be obtained using the above methods will be analyzed as stated. The findings will be presented in Chapter four. Implications of findings will be discussed in Chapter five.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between school counselors and ELL students' graduation rates. More specifically, this study aimed to explore the relationship between the student-counselor connection, availability of bilingual counselor as well as additional certifications held by counselors and ELL students' graduation rate. The findings for each research question are provided throughout this chapter.

Descriptive analyses were conducted and revealed that within the sample, 16 schools, 87.5% of counselors were identified as White, 6.3% Hispanic or Latino and 6.3% unknown. More than half of the schools, 56.25%, did not have counselors who were bilingual while 43.75% did. However, 62.5% of the schools reported that counselors at their school have an additional degree (e.g., LMHC, LMFT, LMSW, crisis training certificate, cultural responsiveness training). Fifty percent of schools reported that the graduation rate of their ELL students was consistent with the schools' overall graduation rate while 50% indicated that it was inconsistent.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does school counselors with similar cultural background as their ELL students increase students' graduation rates?

H₀: There will be no relationship between counselor-student background similarity and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

H₁: There will be a relationship between counselor-student background similarity and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

Due to the homogeneous sample where 87.5% of schools reported that counselors were White, the research question of the extent to which school counselors with similar cultural background as their ELL students impact graduation rates could not be answered. There was not enough variability to create different counselor-student groups.

Research Question 2

To what extent does school counselors with a bilingual extension certification increase graduation rates in student populations that traditionally have had lower graduation rates?

H₀: There will be no relationship between school counselors with a bilingual extension certification and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

H₁: There will be a relationship between school counselors with a bilingual extension certification and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

In order to determine whether there was a relationship between school counselors with a bilingual extension certificate and ELL students' graduation rate, a Fisher's exact test was conducted. Sixteen schools were included in the analysis with 9 schools identifying that they did not have counselors with a bilingual extension certification and 7 schools reporting that they did have counselors with a bilingual extension certification. Of the schools who reported no bilingual certification counselors, 5 (55.6%) schools

reported ELL students graduation rates to be consistent with their school’s graduation rate. For schools with bilingual certification counselors, 3 (42.9%) schools reported ELL students graduation rates to be consistent with their school’s graduation rate. See table 3 for the observed and expected counts. There was no statistically significant association between counselors’ bilingual extension certification and ELL students’ graduation rates as assessed by Fisher’s exact test, $p = .999$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 2 failed to be rejected.

Table 3

Crosstabulation of Bilingual Extension Certificate and Graduation Rate

		ELL Graduation Rate			
		Inconsistent	Consistent	Total	
Bilingual Extension Certificate	No	Count	4	5	9
		Expected Count	4.5	4.5	9.0
		% within BEC	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
Total	Yes	Count	4	3	7
		Expected Count	3.5	3.5	7.0
		% within BEC	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	8	8	16
		Expected Count	8.0	8.0	16.0
		% within BEC	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Note. $N = 16$. BEC = Bilingual Extension Certificate

Research Question 3

To what extent is student-counselor connection increased by school counselors

with additional certifications such as crisis and trauma counseling, mental health counseling and social work therefore increasing overall graduation rates?

H₀: There will be no relationship between school counselors with additional certification and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

H₁: There will be a relationship between school counselors with additional certification and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to examine whether there was a relationship between school counselors with additional certifications and ELL students' graduation rate. Sixteen schools were included in the analysis with 10 schools identifying that their counselors did not have counselors with additional certifications and 6 schools reporting that they did have counselors with additional certification. Of the schools who reported counselors with no additional certification, 5 (50.0%) schools reported ELL students graduation rates to be consistent with their school's graduation rate. For schools who reported counselors with additional certifications, 3 (50.0%) schools reported ELL students graduation rates to be consistent with their school's graduation rate. See table 4 for the observed and expected counts. There was no statistically significant association between counselors' bilingual extension certification and ELL students' graduation rates as assessed by Fisher's exact test, $p = 1.00$. Therefore, the null hypothesis for research question 3 failed to be rejected.

This study was to evaluate the relationship between school counselors and ELL students' graduation rates. This study aimed to explore the relationship between the

student-counselor connection, availability of bilingual counselor as well as additional certifications held by counselors and ELL students' graduation rate. The findings for the research questions did not find a statistical significant. The findings suggest that the COVID safety nets put in place for graduation by New York State did have a significant positive affect on the graduation rates of our English Language Learners than previous years without these safety nets.

Table 4

Crosstabulation of Additional Certificate and Graduation Rate

		ELL Graduation Rate			
		Inconsistent	Consistent	Total	
Additional Certificate	No	Count	5	5	10
		Expected Count	5.0	5.0	10.0
		% within BEC	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Yes	Count	3	3	6
		Expected Count	3.0	3.0	6.0
		% within BEC	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	8	8	16
		Expected Count	8.0	8.0	16.0
		% within BEC	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Note. N = 16.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The researcher surveyed administrators over seeing school counselors in high schools throughout Suffolk County to inquire about additional certifications, such as mental health counseling, if districts had bilingual counselors and counselors with similar backgrounds servicing their ELL populations. The researcher used NYSED data to take the previous mention criteria and compare the districts overall graduation rate with their ELL populations. This was important to the researcher because it allowed her to examine if students' school counselor may help increase student achievement. Also, the researcher wanted to examine if ELL students school counselor would help students to graduate with their cohort. Ell students historically have been "at risk" to not graduate on time with their cohort counterparts. All schools and communities have students that are considered "at risk." The researcher is defining "at risk" as any student that could potentially drop out of school and/or engage in destructive behaviors such as absenteeism, performing below their potential academically, substance abuse, bullying, cyberbullying, suicidal ideation, physical violence or engaging in self-harm and other destructive or dangerous behaviors. Additionally, schools and communities may have environmental, resource or policy issues inadvertently contributing to student failure and harmful behaviors (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). These behaviors can have devastating lifelong implications and often stem from social/ emotional concerns including: low self-esteem, family and relationship problems, grief, trauma, neglect, abuse and/or substance use. School counselors in tune with at risk factors and incorporate practices with interventions to empower students to graduate (Haviland, 2017).

Implications of Findings

This study set out to evaluate ELLs graduation in connection to their school counselor and ELL students' graduation with their cohort when they have a bilingual counselor, a counselor with additional certifications and or similar backgrounds. White and Kelly (2010) delineated many evidence-based practices school counselors can use to address protective and risk factors. The survey used asked administrators that oversee school counselors to answer questions regarding their school counselors and their ELL student population. The data collected did have whether the counselors were bilingual, have similar background to their students and if they held additional certifications in regards to mental health practices. This allowed the data collected to answer the research question. Instead, the data collected showed fifty percent of schools overall graduation rate for their ELL students was inconsistent to their overall graduation rate. There was not enough variability in the sample of school counselors to create different counselor and student groups. The ELL graduation rate overall was consistent with the schools' graduation rate. Schools that had counselors with additional certifications reported their ELL's graduation rate was consistent with the overall graduation rate.

There was not enough variability to create different counselor-student groups due to the homogeneous sample to answer research question 1. Of the schools included in the study, 87.5% reported that school counselors where white which indicated not having similar cultural background as their ELL students. Only three schools reported having bilingual counselors and their ELL students' graduation rates were consistent with the general students' graduation rates.

A Fischer's exact test was conducted to answer research question 2. The null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no relationship between school counselors with a bilingual extension certification and ELL students' graduation rates as measured by consistency with the general schools' graduation rate.

Finally, the results for research question three using a Fischer's exact test had no statistically significant between counselors' bilingual extension certification and ELL students' graduation rate

These results primarily indicate that most high schools in Suffolk County do not have bilingual counselors to work with their ELL population. Also, for all counselors to meet and discuss their interactions with female and male students and what the differences are with those interactions. It is one thing for counselors to have a meeting with their students it is a whole other thing to evaluate the satisfaction of these student interactions. It is a completely different thing for students to actually leave an interaction satisfied and feeling understood and heard with their needs met. By inviting students into their school counselor's office and making themselves available and asking what students need would help school counselors grow and develop professionally while meeting students' needs.

That said, there was no specific activities evaluated with school counselors and students in this survey. Graduation rate was based on NYSED reporting. The focus should be on the nature of the relationship between the counselor and student to help students academically, socially, and emotionally. School counselors have been described as essential in the success of these students (McCall-Perez, 2000).

Relationship to Prior Research

Much like ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies Behaviors school counselors need to be demonstrating within their interactions with their students. School counselors have been described as essential in the success of these students (McCall-Perez, 2000). As schools become increasingly diverse, advocacy scholars indicate that counselors should be intentional in assuring that they equitably serve all students, including students who are ethnically and culturally diverse and ELLs (Lewis et al., 2003; Portman, 2009). Furthermore, the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2012) charges school counselors to develop programs that ensure equitable access to opportunities and provide rigorous curriculum for all students. Connecting back to Leary's Model for Interpersonal Communication framework. The relationships with others and our attitudes towards others drive the interaction. According to Leary, if we are on the axis of together we are in the quadrant of helping. Leary examines the place of dominance and submission as basic behaviors. This can steer interactions and have a positive or negative affect on interactions. When looking at this theoretical framework in terms of this study the school counselor and student graduation had no significant relationship. The relationship can be positive, negative or non-existence and ELL students still graduated with their cohort. A positive relationship can increase students' academic success. A positive relationship can help "at risk" students overcome challenges. According to *Basic Framework of Eight Behavioral Dimensions of Teacher-Student Interaction*. It states: "Teachers have many different roles in the classroom, and each teacher has a different way of communicating with students. The behavioral dynamics a teacher might use to establish roles in the classroom are the primary concern

of the researchers” p. 84 Wubbels, Levy and Brekelmans,1997) his can also be thought about in terms of school counselor and student interactions.

Limitations of the Study

The two main limitations of this study were the small sample size and the safety nets implemented by New York State during COVID to ensure all students were not harmed. Though there are over 70 school districts across Suffolk County, Long Island only 16 agreed to participate in this study. From the sixteen there were only a few that had a significant ELL population. According to Emmel (2015) a small sample size may make it difficult to determine if a particular outcome is a true finding and in some cases a type II error may occur such as the null hypothesis is incorrectly accepted and/or no difference between the study groups is reported. The sample size used was not able to show a significance difference in graduation rates between ELL students and the rest of their cohorts.

According to Harris and Chen (2022) data from 25 states, covering 57% of the nation’s school population, results suggest that high school graduation rates actually increased in the spring of 2020, followed by a return to the prior level in 2021. This pattern is not the result of reporting bias. Overall, it appears that, of all commonly measured educational outcomes, high school graduation has so far been the least affected. Harris and Chen (2022) found evidence that multiple factors were at work, especially the temporary relaxation of standards was likely one contributing factor. High school graduation rates actually increased for students with disabilities, ELL and black students. The slight increase of the graduation rate is likely because states reduced their standards. Essentially every state reduced standards in the immediate aftermath of the

pandemic. Harris and Chen (2022) said there were three broad categories: relaxing credit requirements, relaxing testing and graduation exam requirements, and relaxing attendance require.

Recommendations for Future Practice

School counselors, particularly high school counselors, are supposed to help students prepare for life after high school. The first step is by graduating high school. This study was hoping to show that bilingual counselors and counselors with additional certifications help raise ELL students' graduation rate. Future practice for school counselors post pandemic and the mental health crisis is the importance of relationships with their ELL students. School counselors moving forward for future practice can help students identify strengths and interests. School counselors can help students to develop plans for achieving specific academic and career goals. School counselors without incorporating inter personal skills to help form relationships with students may not have the ability to help students make future plans.

School counselors need to regularly review school programs to make sure they are meeting ELL students' needs. These regular reviews need to involve collaboration with students, families, teachers and administrators. School counselors need to make more weekly appointments with ELL students to foster relationships and to build trust. The goal would be for these relationships to help identify problems that would stop a student's progress toward graduation and a career goals. Counselors then would work with other school stakeholders to develop strategies for closing these gaps and preparing students for the challenges ahead based on the relationships the have foster with their students.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are two major research questions to which this study would lend itself. The first is to research if New York State regents are hurting our ELL graduation rate pre COVID and post COVID safety nets and second when “safety nets” are in place for New York State regents exams why are majority of all students graduating with their cohort. “Knowledge of key indicators of potential dropouts and current trends in dropout prevention research may assist school counselors in better understanding this complex issue” (Dockery, 2012, p. 10). School counselors that can implement intervention strategies and targeted programs to help meet students’ needs would serve the school buildings they work in better. For male students at risk of dropping out school counselors offering school-wide strategies may help school counselors better meet the needs of at risk students. It would serve to research if high school counselors have a positive impact with at risk students and disenfranchised populations.

Conclusion

The role of a school counselor is to build trusting relationships. These relationships define the dynamics among counselors and students. Counselors that form stronger connections with a student can be particularly helpful for students as they go through changes and challenges in becoming an adult. Students that are considered at risk such as our ELL population need the support of their school counselor to ensure academic success and to graduate with their cohort.

In general, schools are in agreement that counselors do make a difference for the better in the lives of the students that they work with. The challenge is to show this value to administrators and the community as a whole so that the work that school counselors

do with and on behalf of students can continue. A future direction of this study would be to track graduation outcomes for our English Language Learners after all the COVID safety nets have been taken away and graduation requirements return to the Pre- COVID requirements.

Epilogue

This research process has been challenging because of COVID. COVID changed the landscape of this process and changed the outcomes of this research. It is a positive that the COVID safety nets have helped our English Language Learners graduate with their cohorts and with higher level diploma types in New York State. The district where I am currently employed had our ELL students receive more Advanced Regents diploma than ever before. The challenging part is these safety nets were designed to be temporary and have ended as of August 2023. Our 9th grade cohort of English Language Learners now face the challenge of obtaining their New York State high school diploma meeting all the regent exam requirements with pre COVID standards. For so many ELLs this had been a challenge and a road block from obtaining a New York State high school diploma.

APPENDIX A IRB

Date: 9-24-2023

IRB #: IRB-FY2023-156

Title: BILINGUAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS WITH ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND DIVERSITY SENSITIVITY FORM STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH DIVERSE AND AT RISK POPULATIONS WHICH INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS AND OVERALL GRADUATION RATE

Creation Date: 12-18-2022

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Andrea Judge

Review Board: St John's University Institutional Review Board

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt
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Key Study Contacts

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APPENDIX B SURVEY

ELL students and counselors: Graduation Rate

1. Your District (optional):
2. How many high school counselors do you have?
 - 1-4
 - 5-10
 - 11-15
3. What is the ethnicity of counselors?

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

4. How many of your counselors were former ELL students?

0

1-2

3-5

6 or more

5. How many students are in your high school?

100-500

501-1000

1001-2000

2001 or more students

6. What is the percentage of ELL students at your high school?

0-5%

6-10%

11-15%

16-20%

21-30%

31-40%

41-50%

51% or higher

7. How many bilingual counselors does your high school have?

0

1-3

4-8

8 or more

8. If you have bilingual counselors are ELL students on their caseloads?

Yes

No

9. If no, how are ELL students distributed on counselors caseloads?

10. Do any of your counselors have additional certifications? Check all that apply.

Yes, mental health i.e. (LMHC, LMFT, LMSW, LCSW, CASAC)

Yes, crisis training

Yes, trauma training

Yes, cultural responsiveness training

No

11. Has your district provided professional development on cultural responsiveness training?

Yes

No

12. How does your guidance department communication with non- English speaking families? Check all that apply

Translation services

Interpreter

Secretary

School Counselor

Administrator

13. What is your graduation rate?

50-60%

61-70%

71-80%

81-90%

91-100%

14. What is your graduation rate for your ELL students?

Under 20%

20-30%

31-40%

41-50%

51-60%

61-70%

71-80%

81-90%

91-100%

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