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The Need for Collaboration: Experiences and Perceptions of Preservice Principals and School Counselors

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Abstract

While professional collaboration between school counselors and principals has the potential to enhance the educational environment for students, preparation programs typically do not provide collaborative opportunities to preservice candidates. In response to concerns expressed by preservice school counselors and principals regarding this lack of opportunity, researchers designed and implemented a collaboration workshop. Following the workshop, a multiple-case study research design was utilized to explore the value of collaboration from the perspectives of both groups through participant interviews grounded by the Five Elements of a Professional Community. Findings indicate educators in these preparation programs have the opportunity to institutionalize a collaboration culture in their preservice candidates by providing cross-training to limit school counseling and principal role disconnect. Preservice training can ensure professional collegiality in school counselor and principal practice.

Keywords

Collaboration, School Counselors, Principals, Preservice Preparation

When principals and school counselors create collaborative partnerships, their combined efforts have the potential to improve school programs and positively influence student success and staff engagement (Robertson et al., 2016). Effective collaboration between principals and counselors also enables a school system to respond cooperatively to the changing dynamics of students and the ever-expanding expectations placed on all education professionals to increase student academic achievement (Duslak & Geier, 2016). In creating these partnerships, principals and counselors should possess a concrete understanding of one another's roles and function in order to tap into the wealth of collective wisdom they possess and effectively advocate for that which capitalizes on their strengths (Young et al., 2015; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). However, their work in the field often occurs in isolation, with school counselors focusing on the academic, career, and social/emotional development of students and principals focusing on the instructional program and management of the school. By working in isolation and failing to capitalize on their potential collaborative partnerships, their individual impact is limited (Duslak & Geier, 2016; Robertson et al., 2016; Whitaker, 2003). Considering the rapid rate of change in public schools as well as increasing demands and expectations to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, it is essential that principals and school counselors work together to effectively impact the students and schools they serve (Rock et al., 2017).

Efforts to create these collaborative partnerships need to begin at the preparation level. School counselor and principal preparation programs must be modified to include models of change, teamwork, and purposeful collaboration to enable candidates to develop a better understanding of one another's roles and functions (Janson et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2016; Zalaquette & Chatters, 2012). Thus, the purpose of this study was to address the need for collaboration during preparation programs by offering a collaboration workshop for preservice

school counselor and principal candidates in order to learn and dialogue about roles, responsibilities, and perspectives. Following the workshop, a sample of participants was interviewed to explore the value of collaboration through a multiple case-study research design grounded by the Five Elements of a Professional Community (Louis et al., 1996). This article investigates the perspectives and experiences of preservice school counselor and principal candidates following their participation in the collaboration workshop.

Literature Review

As school counselors and principals occupy key positions of leadership in schools, it is critical they interact collaboratively, rather than independently, to ensure effective, healthy functioning of schools (Dahir & Stone, 2009; Janson et al., 2008; Lent, 2016; Neibuhr et al., 1999; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000; Zeinabadi, 2014). However, their collaboration often occurs under the auspices of “contrived collegiality,” in which they simply come together to complete a project in a spontaneous and unpredictable manner, such as during state achievement testing and in times of crisis (Hargreaves, 1994).

As noted by Williams and Wehrman (2010), the first step in creating an effective, collaborative educational environment is for school counselors and principals to develop a trusting relationship and an understanding of one another’s roles. However, one of the underlying reasons principals and school counselors do not work together in an effective manner is due to their lack of understanding or a misunderstanding of each other’s role (Shoffner & Briggs, 2001; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000; Young et al., 2015). While there is little research on the relationship between preservice school counselors and principals, DeSimone and Roberts (2016) found that misconceptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors and principals are evident among preservice counselors and principals as well. This can lead to superficial relationships and

differing approaches, rather than a consolidated effort, when addressing concerns related to student learning or achievement (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012). Principals and counselors also tend to view their own roles differently, which may complicate the process of aligning goals and focusing on a shared objective toward school improvement (Robertson et al., 2016; Young et al., 2015; Young et al., 2013). It also can impact their expectations of one another as noted by Dahir et al. (2010) who indicated the school counselor's role is altered and influenced by the principal's beliefs about their responsibilities and training, which at times is an inaccurate representation of the counselors' training and capabilities. Likewise, DeSimone and Roberts (2016) found that the most influential factor that interfered with the school counseling program was the relationship and misunderstandings between the school counselor and principal.

However, when principals and counselors develop a shared understanding and appreciation of each other's role and function, their collaborative relationship can improve the school culture and positively impact the school community (Cisler & Bruce, 2013; Dahir et al., 2010; Finkelstein, 2009; Robertson et al., 2016; Shoffner & Briggs, 2001). In addition, by becoming knowledgeable about their domains of expertise and skills, they can develop a team learning approach in the relationship. Senge et al., (1994) defined team learning as "transforming conversations and collective thinking skills so that groups of people can reliably develop intelligence and ability greater than the sum of the individual members' talents" (p. 6). This approach allows school counselors the opportunity to advocate, educate, or administrate as necessary (Robertson et al., 2016) and enables principals to make decisions that take advantage of counselors' multifaceted skills (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012).

In addition, effective collaboration between school counselors and principals creates the promotion of continual and sustainable school improvement practices (Duslak & Geier, 2016;

Rock et al., 2017). According to Garmston and Wellman (2013), these efforts result from both parties “sharing expertise and perspectives on teaching and learning processes, examining data on students, and developing a sense of mutual support” (p. 16). This type of collaboration modeled by the principal and school counselor leads to robust school programs that appropriately balance the academic, career, personal, and social success of all students and can positively influence the working relationships in a school building (Janson et al., 2008; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000).

A joint study by The College Board, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) assessed the perceptions of school counselors and principals across the nation regarding the principal-counselor relationship (Finkelstein, 2009). Communication and respect were identified as most important in developing an optimal principal-counselor alliance. In order to improve communication and respect, the study reiterated the importance of understanding the roles and functions of one another. Likewise, Cisler and Bruce (2013) found school counselors may benefit from understanding the role of the principal, and principals should be aware of the knowledge and skills possessed by the school counselor in creating an effective collaborative relationship.

For principals to appreciate and value the expertise, knowledge, and skills of school counselors, it is crucial they understand elements of the ASCA National Model (American School Counselor Association, 2019) that guide the work of school counselors. The ASCA Model provides the foundation for comprehensive school counseling programs that focus on student, parent, school staff, and community outcomes, as well as various delivery methods for offering counseling services. Additionally, the model includes the management of responsive organizational assessments and tools that address student and school needs, in addition to accountability checks that school counselors must demonstrate to prove their impact on student

achievement, attendance, and behavior. Researchers found many principals are unaware of the ASCA Model and, therefore, lack the knowledge that school counselors are trained and capable of providing direct support for student achievement (Finkelstein, 2009; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). When principals are aware of their training and abilities, counselors have the opportunity to be advocates, collaborators, and contributors to systematic change. In addition, school counselors can effectively own their professional identity and use it to achieve common goals (Robertson et al., 2016; Young et al., 2015).

Despite widespread understanding of the value of professional collaboration between school counselors and principals in the field, little to no interaction occurs during their preparation and licensing programs. It is important to note that the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Program (CACREP) includes standards for school counselor candidates to actively participate in workshops and trainings that will contribute to their professional and personal growth, as well as to develop an understanding of their roles in school leadership; however, there is not a specific standard that requires the collaboration between counselors and principals during their preparation through these trainings or role development (CACREP, 2016). Furthermore, intentional teaching on the art of developing collaborative relationships is not included in any shared curriculum of school counselors and principals (Duslak & Geier, 2016; Shoffner & Briggs, 2001; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). In solving this problem, Brott and Myers (1999) recommended implementing meaningful preservice collaboration and decision-making opportunities through a seminar approach in which both individuals develop a clear understanding and appreciation for each other. Likewise, Carnes-Holt et al. (2012) suggest preservice counselors and principals spend time together in schools where they can discuss potential points of contention and clarify misconceptions regarding roles and responsibilities. When school counselors and

principals receive collaborative training during their preparation programs, the potential exists to improve their relationships, create collaborative partnerships, and positively impact their future students, staff, and schools (Williams & Wehrman, 2010). This study was designed to fill a gap in the literature regarding relationships between preservice school counselors and principals and the impact of a collaboration workshop during their preparation programs.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study was the Five Elements of a Professional Community (Louis et al., 1996). These five elements describe the necessary components of a collaborative relationship in a school setting:

1. Identifying and affirming shared norms and values.
2. Emphasizing the collective focus on ensuring student learning.
3. Engaging in reflective dialogue about practice.
4. De-privatizing the professional practices of each group.
5. Fostering a value of collaboration.

According to Louis et al. (1996), these elements are needed to create productive, collaborative relationships within professional educational communities. The elements do not demonstrate a hierarchy; rather, all should be present for optimal partnerships and positive impact on student learning. For this study, the five elements informed the creation of the interview protocol, the data analysis procedures, and the implications as it provided the necessary components for successful collaboration. In addition, the five elements were introduced and used during the collaboration workshop described below to promote a shared vision for the preservice principals and school counselors during the workshop.

The Collaboration Workshop

School counseling and principal preparation faculty developed a collaboration workshop for preservice candidates in an effort to emphasize the importance and value of collaboration in increasing the efficacy of a school system. The goals of the workshop were to (a) enhance the understanding of educational paradigms and the training, roles, and functions of school counselors and principals; (b) instruct preservice candidates on developing collaborative relationships and increasing their teaming and cooperative skills; and (c) place candidates in situational activities to highlight the necessity of collaboration in school settings. The workshop was grounded in Finkelstein's (2009) survey of principals and counselors which identified the "most important elements and biggest barriers to a successful principal-counselor relationship" (p. 4): communication, collaboration, respect, and shared vision. These elements were considered to be the most critical for maintaining an effective relationship, thus the program faculty emphasized these elements throughout the workshop.

Candidates were randomly divided into three groups, with equal numbers of school counselor and principal candidates in each. The groups rotated through three sessions, including information about complementary and potentially conflicting roles and responsibilities, collaboration and teaming techniques, and situational activities on Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) initiatives and crisis management. Scenarios focused on areas of tension, such as circumstances when principals believe counselors should break student confidentiality, and the inappropriate role of counselors serving as both disciplinarian and counselor. As stated above, the purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of preservice school counselors and principals regarding the value of collaboration following their participation in the workshop.

Methodology

Research Design

A multiple case-study research design was utilized to explore the value of collaboration during school counselor and principal preparation programs from the perspectives of two cases: the preservice school counselors and the preservice principals (Yin, 2018). The benefit of conducting this type of study was the opportunity to explore the perceptions of the two cases following their shared experience, which was the collaboration workshop (Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018), including two cases produces a stronger effect in the overall research, due to the contrast and comparison of multiple cases when establishing findings. The preservice school counselors and principals have different roles and preparation, yet their collaboration is necessary for student success; thus, including the comparison of both of their experiences provided a wider perspective on the benefit of collaboration. The researchers conducted one-on-one interviews with a sample of participants from the workshop to examine their perspectives and experiences from their participation, as well as their recommendations for preservice training and collaboration between the principals and counselors during their preparation programs. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What areas of preservice training are needed between school counselors and principals to build a collaborative environment in schools?
2. What are the benefits of preservice school counselors and principals engaging in collaboration in their preparation programs?

The preservice school counselors and principals were not yet practicing in schools as counselors or principals; however, all were current educators. Therefore, their experiences in schools, as well

as their participation in the collaboration workshop and preparation programs gave them insight in addressing the research questions.

Participants

The study sample included 12 graduate candidates—six principals and six counselors—who participated in the collaboration workshop. Criterion-based sampling was employed in order to include an equal number of preservice counselors and principals and to ensure a diversity of backgrounds and experiences within the sample (Patton, 2014). Half of the participants were enrolled in a two-year master's school counseling licensure program, and the other half were enrolled in a two-year master's principal licensure program; all were in their first year. The study included equal representation of males and females ranging in age from 23 to 40 ($M = 31$). Years of professional experience in the field of education ranged from 1 to 15 years ($M = 6$), with all being current teachers. Last, two of the 12 participants were Hispanic and the others were Caucasian.

Data Collection

Upon obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, collaboration workshop participants were provided with consent forms detailing the purpose of the study and the interview processes and procedures. The interviews averaged 30 minutes in length, were digitally recorded, and were conducted through a one-on-one process with one interviewer to ensure data were gathered in a systematic manner (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A semi-structured interview protocol included the Five Elements of a Professional Community to explore the participants' perspectives regarding the professional roles and functions of school counselors and principals, as well as the challenges facing schools and students. Additionally, they were asked to identify areas of training needed for preservice school counselors and principals to build a collaborative environment in schools and

the potential benefits of receiving such training. They were also asked how the collaboration workshop impacted their understanding of one another's roles. Adherence to the interview protocol ensured questions were carefully worded and asked in a specific order, and probing questions were embedded to provide opportunities to seek clarification and meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Data Analysis

A thematic content analysis of the interview data was conducted using Silverman's (1993) case study model in which researchers search for themes and patterns related to the research questions. Data were coded in a comprehensive process to identify cross-references between the data and the evolving themes while memoing, which allowed for flexibility in coding the interview transcripts (Silverman, 1993; Watt, 2007). The data were coded in cycles, as described below.

Silverman (1993) asserted superior qualitative case study research must draw interpretations and remain consistent with the data collected. Therefore, during the first cycle of coding, an initial read-through of the transcripts was independently conducted using the basic inductive concepts of thematic content analysis to develop attribute codes. Attribute codes included areas of agreement and disagreement, shared understandings and mis-understandings, and macro and micro views of schooling.

During the second cycle of coding, the data were analyzed inductively and deductively (Silverman, 1993). Using an inductive approach, the researchers independently began with broader generalizations and moved to precise codes through the development of propositions and macro-codes. This process assisted with ensuring the themes were effectively linked to the data (Patton, 2014). The deductive analysis occurred as the codes were compared with the Five Elements of a Professional Community (Louis et al., 1996) to identify common emerging themes. Furthermore, in the third cycle, inductive sub-codes were developed. Researchers used thematic content analysis

to group associated data, which were then coded to identify similar categories and to search for patterns and themes. During this cycle, patterns and categories, as well as fuse codes, continued to be identified and revised, and new findings were amalgamated.

Deeper theoretical coding occurred during the fourth cycle. An important step in thematic content analysis is the evaluation of the themes to ensure they represent the whole of the text (Silverman, 1993). Miles et al. (2013) reported validating themes are essential in the early and late stages of data analysis. In this final cycle of coding, the researchers continued to memo and focused on patterns, categorizations, and possible naturalistic generalizations. After completing the cycles of analysis, three major themes were identified: the need for cross-training during preparation programs, the benefit of overcoming role disconnect, and the value of potential collegiality in the field (Miles et al., 2013; Watt, 2007).

Trustworthiness

Multiple verification strategies ensured the findings of the study were credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Anfara et al., 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to address credibility, the data were analyzed in cycles to ensure the development of precise codes and themes (Miles et al., 2013). To ensure transferability, thick, rich descriptions were utilized and data saturation occurred prior to the completion of all interviews (Patton, 2014). Dependability was addressed by evaluating the manner in which the themes represented the whole of the text through the data analysis technique employed (Silverman, 1993). Researchers ensured confirmability by validating themes in the early and late stages of the data analysis process and through random member-checking with participants (Miles et al., 2013). Dependability and confirmability were accomplished by involving multiple researchers in evaluating and providing

feedback on the identified themes, which enabled the comparison of multiple feedback loops (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2013).

Findings

As a result of the collaboration workshop, the preservice school counselors and principals identified the need for more training in their preparation programs in order to fully benefit from collaboration with each other in the field. To answer the research questions, three major themes were evident from the data analysis: the need for cross-training during preparation programs, the benefit of overcoming role disconnect, and the value of potential collegiality in the field.

Need for Cross-Training During Preparation

To answer the first research question regarding the areas of training needed in counselor and principal preparation programs, the preservice counselors and principals resoundingly identified a need for cross-training during their preparation programs in order to gain a deeper understanding of each other's roles, functions, and expectations. Over half recommended a shared class during their respective programs in which issues of role and function could be explored and discussed. As one principal candidate noted:

It would be beneficial to have a course where we can communicate about roles and values in the school building. I've never been told what the counselor actually does, I don't know if it depends on experience or personality, but without set expectations conflicts can ensue. We should have a better understanding of the limitations of school counselors, like with discipline; we should ensure they do not have to do things that could potentially damage their relationships with students.

According to the preservice counselors and principals, cross-training should focus on increasing the knowledge of each professional with the goal of truly understanding the role and

values of the other. By providing candidates with the opportunity to work cooperatively during their preparation programs, they will have time to discuss their professional assumptions and conflicts in a setting in which they are potentially more willing to learn from others. These views directly relate to the theoretical framework, the Five Elements of a Professional Community (Louis et al., 1996). By incorporating more targeted training in their preparation programs to define, understand, and value each other's role, the preservice school counselors and principals can identify their shared values (element 1), gain a deeper understanding of their professional practices (element 4), and hence, foster a deeper value in collaboration (element 5).

All interviewees suggested faculty- and practitioner-led dialogues are needed between the programs for counselors and principals, the third element of the theoretical framework. The counselor candidates found this to be of particular importance. Preservice counselors desired clearly defined roles and functions of both the counselors and principals to be shared in the preparation programs, as well as how those roles and functions operate in the field from sitting school counselors and principals, in order to gain better insight into potential professional expectations and relationship dynamics. One preservice school counselor said, "School counselors need to understand the expectations of principals. Things are not always portrayed the way they are meant to, we need more open communication . . . and talk through any role differences." Candidates from both programs welcomed the opportunity to discuss any role confusion or misunderstandings in the workshop, and many advocated for more opportunities to do so. One preservice principal shared:

I never put myself in school counselors' shoes. I never thought about their training, so it has made me more reflective on why they are put in compromising positions. So I think more time to be able to talk and align and be able to see where they are coming from, their

passions and their goals . . . but also, for them to be aware of where we [principals] are coming from and our training and our goals and responsibilities.

Most preservice school counselors and principals agreed they need a strong understanding of their respective roles and functions in order to best serve students, which relates to the second element of the theoretical framework, emphasizing a collective focus on student learning. One principal candidate pointed out that school staff should take the opportunity to “know what each individual can contribute to the greater cause . . . and be open enough to know where they need to improve for student success.” Additionally, a preservice counselor noted “the relationship between counselors and principals can definitely make or break a school a lot of times. If the principal allows the school counselor to do their job and support students, the school is much more likely to do better.” By having more concrete training in the respective roles of counselors and principals during their preparation programs, the preservice candidates believed their collaboration in the field would also improve.

Benefit of Overcoming Role Disconnect

To answer the second research question regarding the benefits of engaging in collaboration during preparation programs, overcoming “role disconnect” was a major theme that emerged from the data. The theme of “role disconnect” between school counselors and principals surfaced during the collaboration workshop as preservice candidates had the opportunity to interact with each other. They were surprised and unaware of the disconnect that existed until it appeared as a point of contention during the workshop. As one preservice principal described:

I did not know how divided we were. I did not know counselors think they are on their own. I thought counselors felt like they were part of the leadership-administrative team. I

thought that was pretty interesting that they felt like they are all on their own. It sounded like they felt like they are abused, not respected, not valued.

Most of the interviewees shared they had not recognized the existence of a “role disconnect” between counselors and principals. One principal candidate noted she had not “acknowledged the leadership role [school counselors] play or at least should play in the school.” Participation in the workshop provided preservice candidates with the opportunity to acknowledge and clarify this disconnect, which candidates noted as a benefit of collaboration. Another point of contention related to role disconnect that emerged in the workshop was confidentiality and ethical codes. The preservice candidates expressed their surprise when they did not appear to be on the same page as each other regarding these issues. A counselor shared:

I was a little surprised from the principal side how they seemed to be a little less willing to allow the counselor to keep confidentiality, it seemed they wanted to know about student issues even if it broke confidentiality. I understand the responsibility and liability but I guess I was surprised how some responses were pretty hard lines – “you better tell me or else.”

An additional counseling candidate elaborated on this by stating counselors need to educate principals on issues of confidentiality and counseling ethics, and they should not assume principals know the guiding foundations to which counselors adhere.

By being involved in the collaboration workshop, the preservice counselors identified the need to further define and reinforce their professional ethics and confidentiality expectations with the preservice principals during preservice training. They believed a shared class or future workshop would allow candidates to dialogue about and uncover the role confusion and discussion they experienced during the collaboration workshop. In relation to the Five Elements of

Professional Community, it was through their reflective dialogue (element 3) that preservice counselors and principals identified the role disconnect and took steps to overcome it. By incorporating this reflection and openness to discussion, the preservice school counselors and principals were able to de-privatize their professional practices (element 4) and further foster the value of collaboration (element 5).

Value of Potential Collegiality through Collaboration

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis was the value of potential professional collegiality in the field due to collaboration during preparation programs. The candidates expressed a shared desire for building trust and cooperation during their preparation programs in order to better serve students and their educational pathways and perform their roles and functions with fidelity and confidence as they began their careers. By having the opportunity to build this trust and cooperation during their preservice training, they would be more likely to engage in professional collegiality in the field.

The potential for greater collegiality due to their collaboration during their preparation programs was noted as a benefit because the preservice principals and counselors identified the lack of collegiality as a major problem in schools. One preservice counselor summarized the way in which a lack of cooperation fosters a “natural tension” between counselors and principals as they focus on different aspects of student growth and learning:

Rigor and relevance are more important to principals, but for school counselors it is the reverse; we are more interested in the relationship piece with the students in the building to make sure the school is a safe place for students to exist emotionally and socially . . . so I think there is some natural tension there . . . students experience the whole social,

relational aspects of school, and we cannot separate that from their academic experience, but principals seem to like to do that.

The preservice principals noted the need to work collaboratively to champion students effectively through the educational system. One principal candidate stated the “Emotional needs [of students] need to be addressed before academic needs can be addressed ... We have to be able to work collaboratively together to meet the diverse needs of students.” All interviewees were in agreement that “a team approach betters the odds for each student,” and they are there to do what is best for students by meeting their academic, emotional, and social needs. This belief reinforces the elements of the theoretical framework, specifically that valuing collaboration (element 5) and working together to ensure student learning (element 2) are vital to creating a productive educational community.

While all of the preservice candidates agreed that a team approach was best, it was through the collaboration workshop that the preservice counselors and principals were able to identify what they needed in order for strong collegiality and collaboration to take place. All preservice school counselors indicated a need to feel supported, respected, and trusted by the principals in order to perform well. They desired to be empowered by their principal. One counseling candidate shared:

For me to be effective, to feel great about my position, I would need to be able to get along with principals and communicate and talk and feel like they are going to support and stand behind me if there are things I want to try and help the school grow and change.

Additionally, all preservice counselors indicated the principal’s responsibility is to foster a school culture in which everyone believes they are safe and comfortable to share thoughts and feelings about the direction of the school in order for collaboration and trust to exist. Likewise, the

preservice principals felt it is imperative the counselors trust them for support and resources, particularly regarding issues of ethics with students. One preservice principal noted:

[Counselors] can deal with the details, we just want a head's up on what may be going on in a school with a student that we are responsible for. Mutual trust and respect will go a long way in alleviating any concerns school counselors may have in sharing confidential or private information they know about a student.

Each interviewee commented that true collaboration can occur only when the school culture is safe for open, honest, and trustworthy conversations. In addition, a school with this culture will more likely possess the Five Elements of a Professional Community, which will benefit all stakeholders. By identifying these needs through the workshop, the preservice candidates had a stronger understanding of how to support each other in the field, thus, the potential for professional collegiality increased.

Discussion

The findings from this multiple-case study demonstrate the value of intentionally teaching collaboration and defining roles and expectations within principal and school counselor preparation programs. Misconceptions of roles and responsibilities are evident among preservice school counselors and principals and persist into practice (DeSimone & Roberts, 2016). Thus, the findings substantiate the need for a collaboration workshop or other such cross-training opportunities throughout preparation and into professional practice in order to clarify misconceptions and promote understanding and collaboration. It was evident that, as a result of the workshop, the preservice principals and counselors developed a deeper understanding of both roles and began the practice of communicating about the potential impact of their collaboration in the field. In addition, they understood the professional relationship is based on staff members'

willingness to build communication networks, their respect for each other's ability to work toward the common purpose, and their support of one another. Preservice training can ensure professional collegiality in school counselor and principal practice due to their broadened understanding of their roles and potential for collaboration.

Faculty in these licensure and preparation programs have the opportunity to institutionalize a collaboration mentality in their preservice candidates by providing cross-training on school counselor and principal respective roles and functions. As Williams and Wehrman (2010) expressed, the opportunity to collaborate, discuss, and learn from one another in preservice programs is the first step in developing stronger, professional relationships between principals and school counselors. Participants noted the collaboration workshop was their first experience during their preparation to define roles and to explore the benefits of collaboration. Their current training did not include meaningful opportunities to communicate about their differing roles and responsibilities or how their roles could align to promote and achieve school goals. All were surprised at the lack of awareness of one another's role, illustrated by a principal's admission, "I've never been told what the school counselor is supposed to do," and a counselor's belief, "School counselors need to understand the expectations of principals." This need for communication supports earlier findings that principals and counselors lack a clear understanding of both roles and responsibilities (Rock et al., 2017; Shoffner & Briggs, 2001; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012), which threatens collaboration and can ultimately hinder their ability to be successful in their own roles (Dahir et al., 2010). In addition, these findings suggest a better foundation and understanding of training and capabilities during the preparation programs could lead to more effective collaboration once they are in the field (Duslak & Geier, 2016; Finkelstein, 2009).

Taking the time to inform preservice principals and school counselors of their respective roles and potential for collaboration can mitigate role disconnect and other confusion in the field as well. In this study, the issue of confidentiality created tension for both groups more than any other issue. While little research has been done on confidentiality, Williams and Wehrman (2010) stated that developing an understanding of one another's professional and legal responsibilities, especially around confidentiality, is imperative in collaboration. As one pre-service counselor commented, "I was a little surprised from the principal side how they seemed to be less willing to allow the counselor to keep confidentiality." Counselor candidates placed a high value on confidentiality as part of professional and legal standards, yet principal candidates pressured them to divulge details that would break confidentiality during the workshop. This may be due to the pre-service principal's lack of training or awareness of the school counselor's ethical standards, as was the case in this study. All principal candidates expressed their lack of knowledge regarding these standards. When they became aware of this issue, they were able to dialogue about how to honor the professional ethical codes of counselors while considering the principal's ultimate responsibility for the welfare and safety of all. As demonstrated by this study, training and practice in communicating about the role of confidentiality and other areas of conflict would not only improve the relationship between counselors and principals but also would improve their collaborative efforts. This is an area for more research.

The findings from this study also support the theoretical framework, the Five Elements of Professional Community (Louis et al., 1996), as necessary components for successful collaboration in a school setting. From the interviews and experiences of the preservice counselors and principals in the workshop, it was evident all five elements were needed. For example, when each group de-privatized their professional practices (Element 4) and was able to clearly identify

their roles and functions, a greater natural understanding was developed. In addition, through this practice they were reflective about their own roles (Element 3) and collectively discussed the ways in which they could work together to ensure student learning (Element 2). It is clear participating in the workshop helped the two preservice groups to appreciate the value of collaboration (Element 5) and to identify their shared norms and values as educational professionals (Element 1). These five elements provide a framework that other preparation programs could implement when building a collaboration workshop or other training opportunity for preservice principals and counselors.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that participants were from one university who self-selected to be interviewed and who self-reported their perspectives and experiences; therefore, their views may not represent the experiences of candidates in other programs. Additionally, the findings reflect the perspectives of preservice school counselors and principals, not of current practicing principals and counselors. Additional research with candidates from other university programs, as well as school counselors and principals in the field, may provide broader perspectives, as well as further recommendations for opportunities to facilitate collaboration between the two groups.

Implications

One implication of this study is that including a collaboration workshop or other preservice cross-training for school counselors and principals during their preparation programs has the potential to garner a deeper understanding of roles, responsibilities, and the need for collaboration in the field. The findings from the interviews substantiate the need for ongoing training regarding roles, collaboration, and ethics of each profession. Additionally, the findings verify the need for

further collaborative interaction and coursework at the university level, while offering an intensive learning opportunity for both groups. This overall conclusion supports the recommendations of Janson et al. (2008), which promoted a transformation of educational training environments to include the explicit instruction of collaboration skills for preservice counselors and principals.

The information gained from this research highlights the necessity for changes to current approaches in teaching and preparing preservice school counselors and principals. Collaboration methods and models must be directly taught and presented in an inter-relational manner in order for schools to become more efficient and effective at meeting students' academic, career, and social/emotional developmental needs. The findings also support the researchers' perspectives that neither profession has developed a clear and full understanding of the training, roles, or paradigms in which the others function. Furthermore, including standards within such governing bodies as CACREP that implicitly require the collaboration of preservice counselors and principals during their preparation programs has the potential to ensure more training in this area and a deeper understanding of respective roles and the need for collaboration.

Conclusion

Apart from the joint study by The College Board, ASCA, and NASSP (Finkelstein, 2009), few empirical studies exist regarding the principal-counselor relationship. The participants in this study acknowledged the need for further collaboration between the two professions. While currently lacking in most preservice education programs, clarity of roles, functions, ethical issues, and collaborative models can be implemented. As a result of the findings of both the joint study and this research, it may be incumbent upon counselor and leadership faculty to ensure further preparation of school counselors and principals regarding collaboration and communication. Development of collaborative relationships and alliances does not happen by chance; it must be

taught with purpose to become systemic within a school building (Garmston & Wellman, 2013; Senge, 2006; Senge et al., 1994)—this is a clear need that preparation programs can fulfill. When this occurs, the education of all preservice school counselor and principal candidates relative to the necessary skills of effective collaboration will translate into academic success for all students.

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