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The Role of Program Evaluations in Improving and Sustaining State-Supported School Counseling Programs: A Cross Case Analysis of Best Practices

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THE ROLE OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS IN IMPROVING AND SUSTAINING
STATE-SUPPORTED SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS: A CROSS CASE
ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES

A Dissertation Presented
By

IAN MARTIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 2009

Educational Policy Research and Administration

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DEDICATION

To my supportive and loving wife.

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS IN IMPROVING AND SUSTAINING STATE-SUPPORTED SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS: A CROSS CASE ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES

SEPTEMBER 2009

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Recent work has shown that many state supported school counseling programs have not developed working statewide program evaluation schemas. This study examined two exemplary examples of state level program evaluation. Mixed-method case studies were created and then analyzed across cases to reveal common themes and best practices. The findings indicated that these cases were able to build statewide evaluation capacity within very different contexts.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

Introduction

Many states across the country have advocated for the creation and implementation of state-supported Comprehensive Developmental School Counseling (CDSC) programs (Sink and MacDonald, 1998; Martin, Carey & DeCoster; In Press). State departments of education and state school counseling associations typically share dissemination responsibilities and collaborate with counselor educators or research organizations to support these programs (Gysbers, 2006; Kaffenberger, Murphy, & Bemak, 2006). A recent national study found that states vary widely in the ways in which these programs are developed and sustained. Despite this variability, a general lack of program evaluation was common among the majority of states with over 80% of states failing to evaluate their school counseling programs (Martin, et al., In Press). This result presents a major barrier to the widespread use of CDSC programs. This study asserts that program evaluation when used has the power to strengthen state-level programs and position school counseling as an important and legitimate function of state-level programming.

A limited number of states have working evaluation protocols designed to influence local school counseling practice and state level policy (Martin, et al., In Press). Current research has not investigated how program evaluation is used within these states. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing two case studies of the most successful state supported program evaluation examples nationally as evidenced by extant data within Martin et al (In Press). Comparing these cases through a cross-case analysis (Huberman

& Miles, 2002) reveals the similarities and differences among these exemplars and provides crucial insight in how these states use program evaluation. This analysis has the potential to inform state CDSC programs of procedural lessons learned, to expose the relationship between program evaluation and policy, and to support the implementation and improvement of CDSC programs nationally.

Background

CDSC programs are not new, in fact over thirty years of school counseling scholarship has been devoted to the development of CDSC models and programs (Gysbers 2000; Herr 2001; and Paiseley & McMahon, 2001). In the simplest of terms, this literature asserts that delivering planned developmentally appropriate curricula and interventions systematically to all students is far superior to offering school counseling services that are reactionary or randomly prescribed. CDSC programs can be defined as organizational frameworks devoid of specific curricula. Theoretically, school counselors are to use CDSC programs to make better local decisions regarding what practices and interventions may best meet the needs of their populations (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). This theoretical perspective represents a major shift in the way school counselors identify professionally and work in schools. Moving to a more systemic and program focused delivery model fundamentally challenged the conceptions of school counseling as a position held by an individual within a school and continues to be an area of great discourse within the field (Baker, 2000; Gysbers, 2004).

The CDSC movement increased in national recognition and prominence when the American School Counseling Association incorporated elements from the leading CDSC models and published the National Standards (Dahir & Campbell, 1997) and the National

Model (ASCA, 2003). These two documents communicated the assertion that national implementation of CDSC programs would add legitimacy to the role of school counseling in the midst of the narrower mission of schooling created by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001).

The cumulative effect of CDSC research and development and ASCA publications have created a national landscape where the majority of state departments of education and state school counseling associations are presently engaged in promoting CDSC programs (Martin, et al., In Press). Sink and MacDonald (1998) estimated that over half of the states nationally would have statewide comprehensive programs by the year 2000. A recent national study investigating the status of state school counseling models found that 44 states are promoting CDSC programs; though states differ in levels of program establishment. Established states are described as those with fully developed and implemented programs; written career plans; designated leaders; official endorsement; progressive program accreditation; progressive candidate licensure; supportive legislature; consistent professional development, and rigorous school counseling evaluation; while progressing and beginning states lack some or most of the listed features (17 states can be described as Established, 24 states as Progressing, and 10 states as Beginning), (Martin, et al., In Press).

Even though most states are attempting to implement CDSC programs and/or the National Model (ASCA, 2003), variability between states reveals that some states are very successful, while other states are struggling to get their programs off the ground. Sink and MacDonald (1998) comment, “Speculating on the reasons for this trend is exceedingly difficult, for there are numerous and highly complex educational, cultural,

economic, political, and sociological factors that may have contributed to the current distribution pattern of guidance models” (p.93). Despite these complexities, contextual features (e.g., local politics, program endorsement, supportive legislature, etc.) can be identified to describe the specific ways in which states differ (Martin, et al., In Press).

Studying these contextual features reveals that program evaluation, above all other features within program establishment, is the most neglected nationally. Only eight of the 17 Established states, 2 of the 24 Progressing states, and none of the 10 Beginning states reported evaluating their school counseling programs. Furthermore, participants explained this phenomenon by suggesting that states were focused on model implementation instead of evaluation, did not have adequate resources to evaluate programs, or could not legitimately justify evaluating programs because they were not endorsed or mandated (Martin, et al., In Press).

Problem and Purpose

The lack of state CDSC program evaluation is troubling and represents significant implications for the future of state-supported CDSC programs. The above explanation offered by participants is a technically good context-specific interpretation of the problem, but a literature review of CDSC program evaluation and other related school counseling literature, discussed further in Chapter II, identified four underlying factors that may have contributed to the current lack of program evaluation within the majority of the states: (1) program evaluation discourse is directed towards school counselors’ abilities to self-evaluate their programs and omits other stakeholder perspectives and needs, (2) program evaluation is inconsistently presented within school counseling models, (3) persistent problems associated with school counselors and program

evaluation have not been addressed, and (4) program evaluation use within school counseling examples do not recognize the full potential of program evaluation use (e.g., applications of current program evaluation theory). Despite these significant barriers, the literature also contains some promising examples and practices that may help to address these problems. For example, evaluation capacity building activities within organizations and systems may alter views towards seeing evaluation as a worthwhile and important activity (See Chapter II).

Based on this review, this study posits that program evaluation can play a pivotal role in sustaining and improving CDSC programs within the states. Furthermore, this study asserts that the most pertinent and informative areas to study within this problem are the very limited exemplary cases of states that have actually used program evaluation as a key aspect within their CDSC programs, as identified by Martin et al (In Press). Despite barriers listed above working against program evaluation activities, these exemplary programs have developed working evaluation systems. Learning from these cases is crucially important to the future of state supported CDSC programs nationally. Therefore, creating case studies of the two most successful state-supported program evaluation examples and then completing a cross-case analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002) to identify similarities and differences among these exemplars has immediate implications for state leaders wishing to use program evaluation, but do not know how to address barriers; for state leaders and practitioners wishing to enhance the standing and legitimacy of CDSC programs within their state educational systems; and finally, for those state leaders and practitioners seeking program improvement and accountability.

This logic leads to the overarching research question: What lessons can be learned from analyzing exemplary cases of state supported program evaluation?

Theoretical Model

The following theoretical model was created in order to investigate and compare two exemplary cases of program evaluation use (See Figure 1):

The first aspect of the model explored the evaluation *purposes* within different state contexts. Within their framework, Mark, Henry and Julnes (2000) state there are four major purposes for evaluation: (1) program and organizational improvement, (2) assessment of merit and worth, (3) oversight and compliance, and (4) knowledge development. Furthermore, they posit, “If an evaluation is to aid in sense making about a program or policy, a series of decisions must be made about how the evaluation will be structured and carried out. These decisions will in turn affect the extent to which the evaluation provides useful information for improving, overseeing, selecting, or understanding public policies or programs” (p.49). This simple construct revealed a great deal about the initial conceptions of evaluations within the cases and indicated the degree to which program evaluation procedures were intentionally designed. Also by tracking the different purposes within these prominent examples, favored purposes were surfaced and linked to contextual outcomes (e.g., supportive legislature, greater funding, program endorsement, practitioner participation).

The second aspect of the model helped to inform and complicate the identified purposes of program evaluation. Cousins and Whitmore’s (1998) seminal evaluation construct on evaluation participation was used to surface subtle details amongst evaluation procedures and can easily identify, categorize and explain different levels of

evaluation participation within specific groups (e.g., practitioners, evaluators, state leaders). I assert that combining this construct with Mark, Henry & Julnes' (2000) evaluation purposes, deepened my investigation into the purposes of program evaluation at the state level and helped me to gauge the levels of input and involvement of different stakeholder groups within the cases. Levels of participation had significant implications regarding the analysis of decision making and issues of control within the cases.

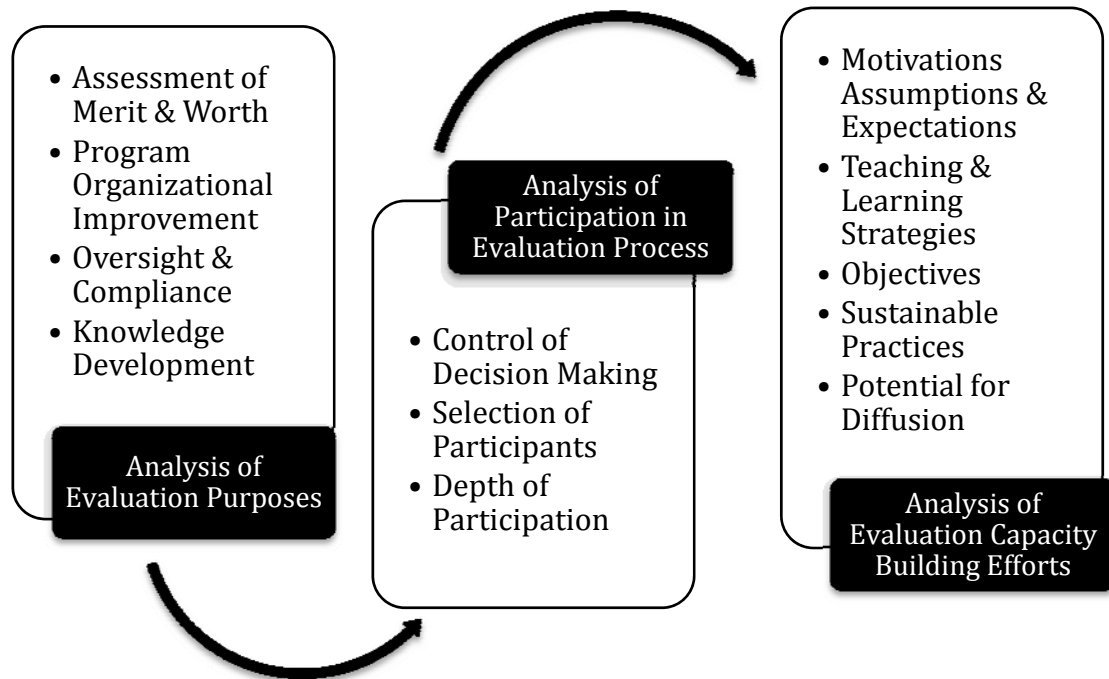
Finally, the third aspect of the model can be defined as program Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB). ECB is not a new concept within evaluation theory. Many ECB definitions and models exist. Trevisan (2002) completed a comprehensive review of school counseling literature using Milstein and Cotton's (2000) framework for ECB. Trevisan (2002) was able to identify many gaps in the literature that suggested that school counseling had not yet built an infrastructure that could support widespread implementation of CDSC programs. Interestingly, it was exactly that infrastructure within these cases that was investigated. These states, unlike their counterparts, have taken steps to build evaluation capacity throughout their systems. The recent work of Preskill and Boyle (2008) has advanced this concept to create a model that researchers and evaluators can use to, " a) guide practitioners' ECB efforts, and/or b) empirically test the effectiveness of ECB processes, activities and outcomes" (p.444). In this case, the development of a model that can be used to conduct research on evaluation fit with my goals and helped understand the strategies states have used to build an infrastructure that could expect quality evaluation practices. Therefore, Preskill and Boyle's (2008, p. 444) definition of ECB acted as a major underpinning of my theoretical frame:

ECB involves the design and implementation of teaching and learning strategies

to help individuals, groups, and organizations, learn about what constitutes effective, useful, and professional evaluation practice. The ultimate goal of ECB is sustainable evaluation practice—where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision-making and action. For evaluation practice to be sustained, participants must be provided with leadership support, incentives, resources, and opportunities to transfer their learning about evaluation to their everyday work. Sustainable evaluation practice also requires the development of systems, processes, policies, and plans that help embed evaluation work into the way the organization accomplishes its mission and strategic goals.

Focusing on organizational factors within evaluation capacity building aligns with the way I view states' abilities to build evaluation capacity. This notion is based on Martin et al.'s (In Press) idea that different levels of CDSC program implementation can be explained by contextual differences amongst states (e.g., program endorsement, state-level mandates, funding of school counseling initiatives). Working with this construct allowed an in-depth analysis of the organizational factors and practices that contributed to the sustainability and development of program evaluation within the cases.

Figure 1: Program Evaluation Conceptual Model



Research Questions

Based upon the information accessed through the above conceptual framework, the following research sub-questions were created to help inform the overarching research question: What lessons can be learned from analyzing exemplary cases of state supported program evaluation?

- 1) How are exemplary cases evaluating their programs?
- 2) Why are exemplary cases evaluating their programs?
- 3) How do exemplary states involve participants in program evaluation?
- 4) How have exemplary programs built evaluation capacity within their states?

CHAPTER II

EXPLAINING THE LACK OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Introduction

Identifying the underlying factors that contribute to the lack of program evaluation within state-supported school counseling programs was difficult because the problem had never been formally investigated. Furthermore, locating these factors was not as simple as identifying the major scholars within the discourse and reporting on their interpretations of the problem. Rather, to locate these factors, I made the assumption that program evaluation presentations, challenges, and examples within school counseling literature have impacted the attitudes and conceptions of program evaluation at the state level. Another important aspect of this literature review was the need to provide boundaries and explicitly define program evaluation. Therefore, I defined program evaluation as the activities associated with reporting, improving, legitimizing, and carrying out program evaluations tied to CDSC Programs and Models. This definition effectively omitted other evaluations associated with specific school counseling interventions, school counselor performance evaluations, and/or stand-alone evaluations of school counseling programs not tied to CDSC (e.g. bully prevention programs, peer mediation programs, etc.). In addition, this definition purposely focused the attention of the literature review on the problems associated with CDSC programs and provided insight into the factors that inhibit CDSC program evaluation.

Armed with this definition, I systematically reviewed the school counseling program evaluation literature looking for: (1) consistencies and/or contradictions in program evaluation presentations, (2) central program audiences, (3) documented

program evaluation problems and/or solutions, and (4) examples of program evaluation throughout the system (school level, district level, state level). To accomplish this I studied program evaluation within the major published CDSC models, reviewed journal articles specifically devoted to CDSC program evaluation, reviewed published examples of CDSC program evaluation, and finally, located several internal examples of CDSC program evaluation used by a state departments of education. Though this literature review cannot be directly linked to program evaluation at the state-level, I posit that it reveals a great deal about the factors that have contributed to the lack of program evaluation at the state-level.

Findings

Overly Practitioner Focused

Program evaluation perspectives or practices designed for anyone other than school-level school counselors are largely absent from the literature. The evaluation activities for school level administrators, district-level supervisors, school boards, and state-level school counseling leaders/supervisors are often omitted or only inferred. The most common presentation of the above stakeholders is as a consumer of program evaluation reports, with little discussion as to the life of the evaluation after it is has been submitted.

It was clear from the beginning of this review that the majority of the discourse focuses on enhancing practicing school counselors' abilities to self-evaluate their own programs. This focus is important because it identifies the main audience of school counseling program evaluation as school counselors and helps to explain the persuasive tone that is adopted by many authors as they continually stress "why" evaluation is an

important component of school counseling programming. For instance, Norman Gysbers (2004) reviewed 80 years of accountability activities with an explicit focus on program evaluation. His review identified three main themes: 1) school counselors need to change their mindsets and embrace evaluation instead of fear it; 2) school counselors need to orient their evaluations towards outcomes; and 3) school counselors and school counseling leaders need to accept the challenges of accountability/program evaluation and do the work instead of just talking about it. Despite Gysber's (2004) thorough historical review, his piece does not speak to the many organizational and systemic barriers school counselors face later within this review.

This presentation of program evaluation as the sole responsibility of the practicing school counselor is problematic because the field needs discourse regarding the use of evaluation throughout the system. Relying so heavily on the presentation of evaluation at the practitioner level automatically ignores the potential of evaluations to impact policy and strengthen CDSC implementation at other levels of the system.

Inconsistent Presentation within Models

This section of the literature review involved tracking the presentation of program evaluation within two school counseling model categories: "popular models" and "national models." Popular models are typically presented within school counseling textbooks and are used during school counseling training and reiterated in conceptual pieces published in school counseling journals. National models represent major movements within the field and are attached to larger professional organizations. Dividing this work can best be described as a messy process because both categories share a linked history, common concepts, and similar features. The logic for categorizing

them was to create a mechanism that enabled comparisons across models. For the purposes of this review I limited both types of models to examples commonly referred to in school counseling evaluation discourse.

Presentation Within Popular Models

It is important to note that popular models involved decades of tinkering and that all of the models discussed in this review support CDSC and promote the delivery of school counseling through systematic programming with measurable outcomes (Gysbers and Henderson, 2000; Johnson and Johnson, 2006; Schmidt, 2003). It makes sense to begin an investigation into the presentation of program evaluation within popular models with arguably the most influential of school counseling reference books, *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program*, by Norman Gysbers and Patricia Henderson (three editions: 1988, 1994, 2000, 2006). After reviewing these works, I saw that evaluation was not an after thought. In fact, the authors included extensive historical reviews of educational movements that influenced current conceptions of CDSC starting as early as the turn of the century. In particular, the authors note the accountability movement during the 1960s to late 1970s as creating the groundwork for a systems approach to school counseling that continually stressed the importance of program evaluation. Later in their own model, they provide extensive resources for multiple program evaluation designs, and describe several evaluation uses including: staff development, program decision making, and administrative decision making. Throughout their work the authors constantly endorse the notion that school counselors should use program evaluation tools to enhance their personal professional legitimacy and freedom.

Another popular model recognized as influencing evaluation is Johnson & Johnson's (1982) results-based model. Advocating for results focused practitioners adds rigor to the sentiment of personal evaluation by arguing that comprehensive programming should be based upon results above the traditional evaluative assumptions connected to tracking school counselor activities (e.g., number of phone calls, classroom lessons, numbers of students using counselor supported resources, etc.) and administering user satisfaction surveys (used as indicators of popularity and value) (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). This assertion is important because it challenged the assumption that students benefit from mere contact with school counselors and places responsibility upon school counselors to demonstrate how students and the environment changed based upon their efforts to meet program objectives.

In later conceptions of Johnson and Johnson's results-based model, the authors provide explicit protocols for program evaluation. They advocate for an extensive "performance evaluation plan" that includes evidence and reflections on the results agreement, parent results, staff results, self-improvement, program implementation, program effectiveness evaluation, monitoring of student progress, student advocacy, and other professional contributions (i.e. collaboration and professionalism) (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

John Schmidt, an active proponent of program evaluation dialogue and a contributor to the limited examples of program evaluation, creates the most comprehensive and exhaustive description of evaluation within the popular models. Schmidt's text, *Counseling in Schools: Essential services and comprehensive programs* (four editions: 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003), provides details of program evaluation including

different types of evaluation (process and outcome evaluation), different goals of evaluation (learning related goals and service related goals), student outcomes, consumer satisfaction, and expert assessment. Schmidt (2003) also highlights potential difficulties associated with program evaluation and provides guidance regarding how administrators might evaluate school counselors. Schmidt's work is important to program evaluation discourse because he presents an image of evaluation that is not entirely the sole responsibility of the school-level school counselor.

After reviewing the presentation of program evaluation within popular CDSC models, one could easily conclude that program evaluation as an integral part of a successful school counseling program. Within these models (Gysbers and Henderson, 2000; Johnson and Johnson, 2006; Schmidt, 2003) several assumptions were presented as rationales and motivators to evaluate school counseling programs: 1) program evaluations protect jobs within environments of increasing accountability and scrutiny; 2) legitimize school counselor placement within schools; 3) free school counselors from administrative tasks not viewed as contributing to program objectives; 4) and finally, better meet the needs of students and the school environment. Based upon this review, it would be remiss to think that school counselors do not have access to systematic tools and rationales for program evaluation.

Program Evaluation Presentation Within National Models

This section investigates the macro models that are actively being disseminated to school counselors nationally. These models can be described as "attached" to the texts listed above, but must be categorized differently because they also represent more rigorous efforts to move the school counseling field through large professional

networking systems. Another key difference of these national models is their expressed efforts to provide professional advocacy with language and activities designed to promote the profession to the educational field and general public. Therefore, these models balance the dual purposes of being professional resources and advocating for the profession.

The Education Trust created the Transforming School Counseling Initiative in the late 1990s. This movement is largely credited to Martin's (2002) work that challenged the training of school counselors and proposed school counselors as leaders and advocates for social justice and student success. They argued that the unique position of school counselors in schools has the potential to impact educational reform movements and student access and equity problems. The Education Trust disseminated their message by working with Universities to train counselors, publishing resources for school counselors, and holding annual conferences.

A publication associated with the Education Trust's position on evaluation is Carolyn Stone and Carol Dahir's book entitled, *School Counselor Accountability: A MEASURE of student success* (two editions: 2004, 2007). The acronym "MEASURE" stands for: Mission, Element, Analyze, Stakeholders-Unite, Results, and Educate; and can be described as an accountability process that stresses data-based decision making. The book describes the process using practice-based examples, visual representations of data use, and personal testimonials of counselors and counselor educators that have used the process. Three main assertions were used throughout the book: 1) data use provides school counselors with tools to access and advocate for underrepresented populations within school systems; 2) data use connects school counseling programs to the needs of

larger accountability structures (school, district, state, federal); and 3) data use can have a positive impact upon the school system. Examples of MEASURE reports consist of short formatted documents containing a single or small number of goals with reported results and does not report on or evaluate the entire program.

This model, though deemphasizing program evaluation, is important to school counseling evaluation because it represents a logic that is grounded in social justice and communicates that student results are a moral imperative. This motivational lever is significant because it makes statements about what is “right” instead of explaining “why” and “how” evaluation is managerially beneficial. This rationale may speculatively align more closely with the typical school counselor’s value structure (citation).

The National Model: A framework for school counseling programs (ASCA, 2003), as mentioned earlier, grew out of the CDSC movement and attempted to unite the field by launching a public relations campaign that placed school counselor work within the increasingly rigid accountability parameters established by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001). The National Model is important to review because it can be considered the major thrust of the largest school counseling professional organization in the country. In an effort to be broadly adaptable to local demographics and school politics the model was designed as a framework that places school counselors as the major decision makers within model implementation and management. The four components of the model are: Foundation (beliefs and philosophy, mission statement, ASCA National Standards), Delivery System (school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, system support), Management System (agreements, advisory council, use of data, action plans, use of time calendars), and Accountability (results

reports, school counselor performance standards, the program audit). For the purposes of this literature review I will focus on the “Accountability” section of the model.

To accomplish this review I used the ASCA National Model Workbook (2004) that accompanies the National Model. It contains a compact disk, examples, and worksheets with instructions necessary for implementing the National Model.

The first section within Accountability is the “Results Report” which emphasizes three different types of results: 1) Guidance Curriculum Results (classroom lessons delivered to all students), 2) Closing the Gap Results Plan (small group impacts for specific populations, similar to the MEASURE process), and 3) Results Report, Impacts Over Time (tracking data in comparison to other calendar school years). These results reports are organized into charts that report data and describe interventions typically using descriptive statistics at differing grade levels. In all of the examples there are categories that describe “process data” (number of students served, percentage of population, etc.), “perception data” (percentage change, percentage of students meeting criteria, etc.), and “results data” (results from standardized tests or distal school related outcomes).

The second heading within the Accountability section is the “School Counselor Performance standards” which includes the description, “This section is a guide for school counselors to use as a self-evaluation and program evaluation. It is designed around each of the program elements as well as the four ASCA model themes. School counselors must work within their district’s evaluation framework. When schools require a particular form for school counselors to use, these items should be used as additional criteria to evaluate the school counselor” (ASCA, 2004, p. 112). These performance

standards are embedded within a program audit that tracks levels of implementation. For instance, the school counselor performance standards assess the school counselor's ability to be a leader, student advocate, and systems change agent; with the choices: none, in progress, completed, implemented, or not applicable. These performance standards are also imbedded within the "School Counselor Appraisal Form" that consists of forty yes and no evaluator responses that include areas for additional comments.

The third heading within Accountability is the "Program Audit." This section is presented as a tracking and planning device more than an evaluation tool. School counselors are advised to use these audits quarterly to track progress towards implementation and ensure that all ASCA model elements are addressed. The examples included only reference numbers of students served in activities (process data) and is not designed to assess the value or effectiveness of the programming.

After reviewing the national models available to school counselors it seems great efforts have been made to make evaluation easier and more straightforward. This is first evidenced by generally dropping the term "evaluation". The Education Trust places emphasis upon the term "data," and The National Model (ASCA, 2003) on "accountability." I speculate that these language choices were intentional due to the connotation that evaluation is rigid or judgmental. Regardless, these choices do have an impact upon how school counselors evaluate their programs. In the case of the Education Trust and MEASURE (Stone and Dahir, 2007), program evaluation is replaced with a focus on a singular or limited number of interventions. For example, a high school creates a goal to impact the postsecondary going rate. They then analyze the baseline data and create strategies to impact the problem that includes the work of school counselors,

administrators, teachers, students, parents, and colleges and universities. All in all, the group creates 26 strategies to address the problem. They track the going rate over the following year and find that the strategies contributed to a 3% increase in the postsecondary going rate. Finally, they conclude that the strategies were successful and celebrate their success (summary of a MEASURE report, Stone & Dahir, 2007, p. 77-80). While there is merit to working collaboratively to address high priority needs in schools, this process cannot be considered program evaluation and should not be substituted for rigorous evaluation activities.

Similarly, the National Model (ASCA, 2003) explicitly emphasizes program evaluation. Unfortunately, the explicit statements made in the model regarding the importance of evaluation are watered-down by attempts to be user-friendly within the workbook. The Workbook (ASCA, 2004) replaces the rigor of the National Model (2003) with an emphasis on whether or not the model elements have been put into place instead of systematically evaluating the program for effectiveness or improvement.

The dual purposes of professional resource and professional advocacy do not benefit the presentation of program evaluation within macro school counseling models. Comparing the presentation of evaluation within national school counseling models to the presentation within the popular models from which they grew, highlights noticeable gaps in evaluation thoroughness. Moving a whole field in new directions is exceedingly difficult and understandably, certain details may get lost in the translation. Unfortunately, the placement of program evaluation as essential to CDSC was not fluently translated into the national models. Based on this review I must conclude that there are significant inconsistencies regarding the presentation of program evaluation within the most

influential of school counseling models. This lack of consistent vision and guidance has implications across the system and can be viewed as a contributing factor to the lack of program evaluation at the state level.

Difficulty Addressing Persistent Problems

Several problems facing program evaluation within the school counseling field have been identified and may trump the mere availability of evaluation resources for practicing school counselors. A parallel source of literature used within this section is school counselor “accountability.” This literature is diverse and spans program evaluation, counselor performance evaluation, data-based decision making, intervention tracking, and efforts to connect school counseling to the standards-based reform movement. For the purposes of this literature review, I only included accountability articles or research when they explicitly discussed program evaluation or performance evaluation based upon program objectives. This section is important because it presents the notion that school counselor’ attitudes and beliefs regarding evaluation may persist regardless of the quality or the availability of program evaluation tools.

For instance, Lombana (1985) reported that school counselors were resistant to evaluation because they lacked enough time to complete evaluations and worried that results would place school counselors in a negative light. Lusky and Hayes (2001) echoed this sentiment by attributing resistance to evaluation as based on fears that evaluations are politically motivated and unfairly negative. Schmidt (1995), while conducting two district-wide evaluations, found that counselors were not prone to evaluating their own programs and often avoided managerial tasks when attempting to create comprehensive programs. He also commented on the difficulty to conduct evaluations when there was

little evidence that actual “programs” existed. Astromovich, Coker, & Hoskin (2005) conducted workshops and surveyed school counselors regarding evaluation and found that the majority of their participants did not receive evaluation training in graduate courses or professional development opportunities, worried that evaluation results would label their programs as successful or failing, cited time and the overwhelming nature of evaluation as a significant barrier, and were concerned about a lack of support from administrators and other staff members to aid in the evaluation process.

Similarly, Trevisan (2002) asserts that school counseling certification requirements do not adequately define the differences between research and evaluation. Schaffer and Atkinson (1983) studied counseling preparation programs and discovered that twice the training time was devoted to scientific research over program evaluation. Fairchild and Zins (1986) found that 45% of their participants did not collect evaluation data (authors use “accountability” but define it as evaluation) and that 52% cited a lack in training as a major barrier to evaluation. Fairchild (1993) followed up on the original 1986 study and found only slight increases in evaluation use when comparing the two studies (Though interestingly, respondents indicated that state departments of education were requiring more information). Whiston and Sexton (1998) completed an exhaustive meta-analysis of school counseling research from 1988 to 1995 and found that the majority of school counseling outcome studies focused upon responsive services (e.g. individual and group interventions), yet largely ignored the other aspects of interventions that make up comprehensive programming. Lapan (2001) suggests these findings indicate that evaluation research of comprehensive programming is not keeping up with the needs of practitioners working to implement programs. For example, Schmidt (2003) noted that

only two articles on program evaluation were written during the first three years of the of the Professional School Counseling journal (1997-2000).

Lusky and Hayes (2001), while testing their “Collaborative Consultation” evaluation model within a contracted evaluation of a high school counseling department, abandoned the collaborative process because, “In this case, continued implementation was constrained by an informal culture within the system that espoused but did not structurally support collaboration, a centralized organizational structure that lacked coordination across units, a counseling staff that remained divided in their level of enthusiasm for further change, and shifting school board priorities with the election of new members” (p. 33). These results reveal that even when evaluation models were based on recognized evaluation research, school counseling problems with evaluation can side-track potentially innovative practices.

The longstanding problems of school counselor resistance to program evaluation, lack of training in program evaluation methods and uses, and lack of viable program evaluation exemplars help to understand why program evaluation is a daunting task at the state-level. Trevisan (2002) assessed evaluation capacity building efforts by analyzing school counseling literature from 1972-2001 using on Milstein and Cotton’s (2000) framework. Their framework consists of analyzing: the Forces (policies that drive organizations toward evaluation), the Organizational Environment (where the evaluation is conducted), the Workforce and Professional Development (skills of those who carry out the evaluation), the Resources and Supports (funding models and evaluation methods), and the organization’s abilities to Learn from Experience (lessons learned during and after the evaluation). Trevisan’s (2002) analysis revealed that school

counseling has not yet built the infrastructure that could expect widespread program evaluation.

Table 1: Summary of Trevisan’s (2002) findings

| Evaluation Capacity Factor | Findings |
|--|--|
| Forces | <p>Relevant incentive policies to conduct evaluations have yet to be developed</p> <p>Directive policies that require evaluation are not prevalent</p> <p>Standards for evaluation have not been adopted</p> |
| Organizational Environment | <p>Many schools do not value evaluation as a priority</p> <p>The presence of full-time district level evaluators is not uniform</p> <p>Many leaders do not advocate/support evaluations</p> |
| Workforce and Professional Development | <p>Clearly deficient in this area (local, district & state)</p> |
| Resources and Supports | <p>Literature does not identify any viable funding sources available for program evaluation</p> <p>Limited tools for evaluation efficiency have been created</p> <p>Current evaluation models may be too complex</p> <p>Reference materials are not connected to evaluating CDSC programs (evaluation literature review from 1972 to 2001)</p> |
| Learning from Experience | <p>Few examples of actual evaluations exist</p> |

The majority of evaluation literature attempts to persuade practicing school counselors to self-evaluate their programs with the assumptions and/or expectations that counselors have the skills, resources, and supports necessary to carry out such endeavors. Unfortunately, this review questions these assumptions and expectations by providing

evidence that this line of thinking may be unrealistic without building an infrastructure that could expect practitioner evaluation (Trevisan, 2002). This review bolsters the argument that creating resources and sound arguments for voluntary program evaluation may not be enough to increase school counselors' participation in program evaluation. I assert that failing to address these persistent problems greatly impacts the use and conceptualization of program evaluation throughout the system and can be viewed as a major contributing factor to the lack of program evaluation throughout the system.

Limited Scope

Expert Evaluations

As noted by Trevisan (2002) few examples of program evaluation exist. Of the limited examples, many published works can be categorized as "expert evaluations." Schmidt (2003), provides his perspective on expert assessment based upon his experiences as a program evaluator,

Over the years I have been involved in external reviews of school counseling programs and have consulted with other evaluation teams. In most instances, these reviews were invited by superintendents who wanted an outside evaluation of their school counseling programs. Often these requests were a prelude to the decision of whether to add new counselors to the system. Typically these external reviews consisted of surveys designed cooperatively with the school system and administered to students, parents, and teachers and on-site visits to schools to interview the principals and counselors (p. 252).

This type of evaluation places school counselors within the very real boundaries of typical school district hierarchies and conjures up images of the expert coming in to judge

the program. Under these circumstances, the barriers mentioned earlier would be viable concerns. Schmidt (2003) notes that these types of evaluations don't occur very often due to their expense.

Schmidt (1995) published a popular article highlighting the merits of expert evaluation within two separate program evaluations. Unfortunately, beyond his argument for expert evaluations, Schmidt's results are often cited as evidence that counselors resist formal evaluation and have difficulty creating and managing comprehensive programs. Other examples of expert evaluations have continued in the literature. Scruggs, Wasielewski, and Ash (1999) completed a k-12 district school counseling program evaluation by employing randomized sampling; teacher, parent, and staff surveys; and focus groups. The expert evaluator was used as an outside consultant throughout the process. In this case, the evaluation was received favorably and the recommendations did not reflect poorly upon the school counselors in the district. One comment imbedded within a recommendation to reduce non-counseling related duties hinted at the potential of evaluations to have far-reaching effects, "However, this is a goal that will require policy, funding, and practice commitments at the state, district, and campus levels" (p. 247). This comment is interesting because these issues are well beyond the influence of the program. This example highlights that program evaluations can potentially have influence beyond the local setting.

More recent examples of expert evaluation have adopted collaborative and participatory designs. For example, Lusky and Hayes (2001) present a highly collaborative model for program evaluation that places the expert in a consultation role that works toward program improvement and then, ultimately, evaluation. In practice, as

mentioned earlier, this model proved difficult to implement without a great deal of prior evaluation capacity building and administrative support.

Another example of expert evaluation is Curio, Mathai and Roberts' (2003) evaluation of a district's secondary school counseling program. This evaluation design consisted of a signed evaluation contract, team of expert evaluators, stakeholder surveys, open-ended interviews, focus groups, evaluation reports and evaluation follow up questionnaires. The evaluators also adopted a collaborative approach while conducting the evaluation, but did not assume a consultant relationship. For example, "In her first meeting with the counselors, which occurred in August before the school year began, the primary evaluator asked counselors for general areas of concern. Their remarks formed the basis for many of the areas covered in the interview guides developed by the evaluators" (p. 298). This evaluation design, under the specific circumstances presented in the article, proved to be straightforward and doable. Furthermore, the results of this evaluation support Schmidt's (1995) findings that counselors have difficulty establishing true programs. This is important because this evaluation was completed nearly ten years after Schmidt's 1995 evaluations.

Given these examples, expert evaluation is difficult to assess because it is case based and lacks sufficient numbers of cases to build any substantial analysis. Barring routine or wide scale school and/or district evaluations, random district initiated program evaluations (successful or not) do little to build upon the program evaluation infrastructure advocated by Trevisan (2002).

Large Scale Statewide Evaluations

Several large-scale statewide evaluations have been completed. Typically these evaluations were done in cooperation with researchers and state departments of education or state school counseling associations, and require a great deal of coordination and resources. For instance, Missouri researchers found that high schools and middle schools with more fully implemented CDSC programs had students whom reported higher grades, had better relationships with teachers, felt safer and more satisfied in school, and had more positive outlooks regarding the future and career opportunities (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001).

Similar to the statewide studies conducted in Missouri, the Utah Office of Education has conducted several evaluations that investigated the implementation of career plans, student to counselor ratios, and school counseling outcomes related to levels of program implementation (Kimball, Gardener & Ellison, 1995; Gardener, Nelson & Fox, 1999, Nelson et al, 1998; 2007). It is important to note that these evaluations were designed to be used internally within the state and have rarely been discussed within the national school counseling literature on program evaluation.

Another relevant study, though not conducted statewide or supported by a department of education, investigated 150 diverse elementary schools and found students did better academically in schools with CDG programs (Sink & Stroh, 2003). The study also found that students did better in schools over a three-year period that had CDG programs, even if the programs were not fully implemented.

These works have been referenced as research more often than evaluation, but they do make comments and draw conclusions regarding the efficacy of school

counseling programs. Despite this contention, there is evidence that these evaluations have influenced policy and contributed to legitimizing school counseling nationally.

The Problem of Limited Scope

This problem surfaces when these two different types of program evaluation (expert evaluations and large-scale evaluations) are compared. Both evaluation categories contribute to the discourse regarding the promotion or improvement of CDSC programming, but there is a missing link that may allow for connections between the two endeavors. How do these very different types of program evaluations relate? Scope is important because we have not done the work to create these connections theoretically. Without this work we are failing to see how program evaluation at different levels, using different methods, and seeking different outcomes can actually become a collective story. Reviewing the examples of available evaluations does not illustrate how successful program evaluations conducted at the school levels, district levels, and state levels connect to create a better future for school counseling practice. I view this limited scope of program evaluation as a major contributing factor to the status of program evaluation nationally.

Beacons of Hope

Thus far, I have painted a gloomy picture of school counseling program evaluation. With all the problems outlined it would not be illogical to question if program evaluation of school counseling programs is even a possibility. Though, this review did surface some literature that offers hope for the future of school counseling program evaluation. First there are stories of over 20 years of program evaluation use by the Utah State Office of Education, and the Missouri Department of Education. These two states

do have a long history of program evaluation use and can offer distinct cases of potential best practices. Second, the notion of building evaluation capacity within school counseling has a great deal of potential to help address the program evaluation concerns mentioned within this literature review. These examples provide valuable resources for improving and solving problems associated with program evaluation.

For example, Michael Trevisan (2002) spent three years working with a large urban school district to train school counselors, build buy-in from administrators, and persuade the school board to conduct systematic program evaluations of their district's school counseling program. He defined his work as "capacity-building" and did not assume that counselors or leaders inherently had the skills, resources or supports to conduct successful evaluations. This perspective is important because he used his expert status to address the district's capacity instead of weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the program itself. By concentrating on evaluation skills, leadership, and administrative leverage, he focused on altering the environment of the district. His model can be viewed as a beacon of hope because he was able to identify and address the roadblocks associated with evaluation and proactively work towards creating an infrastructure that could expect positive future evaluation use. Furthermore, this example also reveals the levels of determination and internal leadership necessary to build such capacity.

Even though these examples are very different, I combine them because I believe there is a way to conceptually link their content. The collective Utah and Missouri stories have the potential to reveal what kind of impact sustained program evaluation can have upon a state's capacity to conduct program evaluations throughout a system over long

periods of time. The Trevisan (2002) model reveals what is involved in building evaluation capacity within complex organizations. Furthermore, his example highlights the potential impact that thoughtful and intentional capacity building can have upon a school system's ability to conduct program evaluations. The "link" can be created when Trevisan's model is transferred to the state-level. I posit that if states were able to assess and then systematically address program evaluation needs through intentional capacity building activities, we could begin to positively impact the lack of program evaluation use at the state-level.

Summary of the Literature

This review set out to explore the question, "What factors can be identified to help explain the lack of program evaluation at the state level?" Several key factors were revealed within distinct areas of the school counseling literature. The first factor was the promotion of self-evaluation over other forms and perspectives of program evaluation within the system. The second factor was an inconsistent presentation of program evaluation within the most influential of school counseling models (popular models v. national models). The third factor was a failure to realistically address persistent problems associated with practicing school counselors' training, attitudes and conceptions regarding program evaluation. Finally, there was a lack in addressing problems of scope pertaining to how examples of successful or unsuccessful program evaluations at differing levels fit together to create a fully realized program evaluation schema. These factors suspend program evaluation from reaching its peak potential.

Despite these factors, some examples demonstrate that program evaluation has the power to strengthen state-supported school counseling programs. One would assume that

some of the above problems that inhibit states from evaluating state programs have been solved or addressed in innovative ways within these cases. A major aspect of this study involved identifying issues within the cases that addressed or informed the barriers identified within the literature.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The following methods were created to investigate the overarching research question and sub-questions: What lessons can be learned from analyzing exemplary cases of state supported program evaluation?

1. How are exemplary cases evaluating their programs?
2. Why are exemplary cases evaluating their programs?
3. How do exemplary states involve participants in program evaluation?
4. How have exemplary programs built evaluation capacity within their states?

Site and Participant Selection

The states identified within this study were purposely selected due to their exemplary use of program evaluation (Martin et al., In Press). These states were: Missouri, and Utah. The selection process consisted of a review of extant data within Martin et al. (In Press). The data demonstrated that these state programs stand out as having the most systematic and comprehensive evaluation protocols nationally. Four other state programs with similar quantitative answers were not selected due to their lack of detail within extant qualitative data when compared to the two exemplars. Furthermore, Missouri and Utah are the only states recognized as having a documented history of large-scale statewide program evaluations (Kimball, Gardener & Ellison, 1995; Gardener, Nelson & Fox, 1999, Nelson et al, 1998; 2007; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001).

Because this study investigated two different states, it was crucially important to identify key participants carefully and design the methods to accommodate limited possibilities for face to face contact. Based on Gysbers' (2006) description of state-level school counseling leadership (i.e., identification of typical stakeholders, history, and current personnel configurations) and my prior experience interviewing state school counseling leaders, state-level Directors of Counseling, housed within state departments of education, were identified as key participants. These key participants provided feedback regarding the logistics and selection of an appropriate methodology. Once settled upon case studies and cross case analysis, the key participants were then instrumental in allowing entry into the settings, allowing access to other stakeholders, providing access to evaluation documents, and providing opportunities for member checking. Without their buy-in and participation, this research would not have been possible.

A good example of the importance of buy-in was the potential of this study to include a third state. The extant data within Martin et al (In Press) indicated that there was a state with similar qualitative answers as both Missouri and Utah. This state indicated that self-evaluation information was collected from schools regarding school counseling programs and that review teams engaged in on sight reviews every five years. It was my hope that the state had internal statewide evaluation results that were not represented in the current literature. After approaching the state, it became clear that the state Director of School Counseling did not see program evaluation as a priority and that the review process was not comprehensive (i.e., the school districts selected two schools to be reviewed every year). Furthermore, the idea of having someone investigate program

evaluation in the state was seen as a burden. In our final communication regarding the study we both concluded that this project was not the best fit for including this state in the study.

In contrast, when state directors were approached in Missouri and Utah there was instant enthusiasm and encouragement that program evaluation was a huge part of their respective programs. Early conversations involved extensive brainstorming as to how logistics of the study could be realistically completed. They willingly collected information, contacted potential participants, reviewed draft proposals, provided access to their networks of practitioners, and were very responsive to my needs. My interest and presence was not seen as a burden, but rather as an opportunity to learn more about their own programs. They interpreted the study as an evaluation of their evaluation efforts and instantly saw the potential value of the project. Their commitment and support allowed me to conduct this study nearly free of compromises and I can say with confidence that I completed the study I intended to do.

Based on these experiences, I feel that not including a third state within this study was an advancement rather than a set back. It revealed that I really was working with states that were committed to using program evaluation as a cutting edge tool to promote and sustain their CDSC programs. Furthermore, I was able to engage with participants that valued my work and were invested in seeing this project through.

Because of this access, I was able to conduct online questionnaires of 262 practicing school counselors; in-depth interviews with three district level guidance directors, many of whom held leadership positions within the Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA); in-depth interviews with the State Director of Guidance and

Placement Services within the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and in-depth interviews with Norm Gysbers, a prominent Professor of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Similarly in Utah, I was able to conduct online questionnaires of 127 practicing school counselors; field observations of two high school Performance Review panels; a focus group of district level guidance directors and active members of the Utah School Counseling Association; in-depth interviews with the State Director of Student Services; in-depth interviews with the current and past state Specialist for Comprehensive Guidance; and in-depth interviews Norm Gysbers, a prominent Professor of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Norm Gysbers was included in this case because he was actively involved in early statewide program development and training.

Steps to Ensure Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) chapter, entitled *Establishing Trustworthiness*, presents five techniques designed to increase the credibility of a naturalistic investigation's findings and interpretations. These five techniques include: (1) activities that increase the probability that credible findings will be produced (prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation); (2) peer debriefing; (3) negative case analysis; (4) referential adequacy; and (5) member checking. Based upon geographic, logistical and resource constraints I was not able to implement all of these recommended techniques within this study. For instance, prolonged engagement and persistent observation can easily be identified as outside the scope of this study due to a host of problems related to feasibility (e.g., cost, travel, lodging, access, time). Therefore, in

order to create credible case studies and legitimate analyses, I was hyper-vigilant in implementing the techniques that were doable under the specific circumstances of this study. Tactics identified as doable were: (1) triangulation, (2) peer debriefing, and (3) member checking. Employing these techniques rigorously and transparently helped to enhance the trustworthiness of my findings and interpretations.

Special Considerations

It is of great importance that I describe two core beliefs that I took into the field. The first is the notion of reciprocity as advocated by Rist (1981). Reciprocity was a very important element within this study that was communicated and operationalized as a priority. For instance, as stated earlier, my primary contact participants were Directors of Counseling within the each state's department of education (actual titles varied). These leaders needed to view my work as being helpful and important to their own practice. To this end, I attempted to balance the needs of my key participants with the needs of the research project. My desire to study program evaluation was of great interest to my key participants and they welcomed an extra set of eyes to view their work critically. In essence, my participants saw this as an opportunity to evaluate their program evaluation efforts. This outcome, though secondary in the terms of my purposes, allowed the notion of reciprocity to be a very key aspect within my research and contributed to the completion of the study without any major difficulties.

The second core belief that I took with me into the field was the desire to establish quality relationships with my key participants. Based on my prior experience, these state leaders are extremely overextended and do not have time to waste. Going in with this mindset contributed to the strategic ways in which I approached data collection and

assistance from these individuals. One error in relationship building represented opportunities to jeopardize the progress of data collection and/or negatively affect the overall integrity of the project. Furthermore, I felt that creating positive relationships with these participants would greatly enhance my ability to maintain a nonintrusive nature within this study. Throughout the duration of the study I paid very close attention to building quality relationships with my participants. Primarily, maintaining timely communications, sharing drafts of questionnaires, and offering preliminary drafts of proposals and conceptual models enacted my definition of quality relationship building. Being open and well organized in the early stages of this study allowed me to build trust with key participants. This trust spilt over into my site visits and allowed for comfortable and honest conversations during my actual face to face interactions.

Myself as a Researcher

Qualitative research has a tradition of recognizing the self within research and suggests that one must come to grips with what they bring with them into the field and must recognize his/her own subjectivity (Peshkin, 2000). I feel that this exercise is important and will help to reveal the way in which I approached this work. First and foremost, I self identify as a school counselor. My work within a diverse urban population with limited resources has shaped the way that I view the field. I worked within a state that did not have a strong centralized structure for supporting the work of school counselors. As a school counselor I never participated in any evaluation beyond the school level. Nearly as notable, my work within the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research (CSCOR) has exposed me to the cutting-edge of research within the field and I find that I filter much of what I see through a lens of current school counseling

research. Furthermore, I must also comment on the fact that I am a firm supporter of the comprehensive counseling movement and feel that delivering services systematically is far superior than simply reacting to the daily crisis. More related to this inquiry, my prior investigations into state level school counseling organization has revealed a general lack of program evaluation structures and I am aware that program evaluation in most states is not even on the radar. Also, I have benefitted from being exposed to evaluation theory. This theory, though highly approachable, seems to be absent from most school counseling literature and practice, and therefore is foreign to most practitioners with whom I have come into contact.

I mention the above experiences and perspectives because I know that they greatly shaped the ways in which I viewed the data and engaged with others in the field. I feel that this subjectivity did not taint the data collection process, but rather acted as a guide while attempting to make sense of these cases. Being aware and open to their influences on my subjectivity allowed me to present the data and enact proper trustworthiness strategies in a way that other school counselors and school counselor leaders might learn from; ultimately taking away valuable insights about the purposes and uses of program evaluation offered within these cases.

Procedures

Despite the notion that contextualized cases can not be generalized, the “logic of analogy” (Rossman and Rallis, 2002, p.105) allows readers to review the presented information and then, through analogy, make decisions about what parts of the findings can be are appropriately adapted and applied to fit their contextual needs. Thus, the cross-case analysis methodology presented within this study was designed to be useful for

individuals and groups wishing to improve the use and effectiveness of program evaluation within the states. To this end, this study was divided into two distinct phases: (1) the creation of case studies, and (2) a cross-case analysis.

Phase I: Case Studies

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) while describing case studies state, “In essence, we see the primary defining features of a case study as being multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context (or in a number of specific contexts if the study involves more than one case)” (p.52). In order to access these perspectives, several methods were combined to describe program evaluation within two different state contexts. Due to the logistical parameters of completing these case studies in different states, the following methods were the most feasible: (1) document collection, (2) online school counselor questionnaires, (3) site visits with school and district level practitioners, and (4) in-depth face to face interviews with key participants and groups. The process of creating these cases can be described as quasi-iterative with each method building upon on the next. For example, the document review helped to inform the content of the online school counselor questionnaire and so on, finally culminating in in-depth interviews with identified key participants and groups (which would represent the most intensive method of data gathering).

The structure of the case studies was explicitly linked to the conceptual model. All of the data collected were filtered through the model by triangulation and coding to create the cases. This activity was less analysis and more of an organizational strategy to provide a consistent presentation and structure for the findings. This was appropriate because the model did not present a specific hypothesis and acted more as a tool for

categorization than theory building. More specifically, each of the model components can be seen as a fairly comprehensive continuum of program evaluation activity within each of the categories (evaluation purposes, evaluation participation, and evaluation capacity building) and allowed for data to be placed on that continuum.

Phase II: Cross-Case Analysis

This phase of the study involved completing a cross-case analysis of the two independent case studies. Huberman and Miles (2002) recommend several strategies for analyzing data across cases. The strategy that best fit this research was to create categories from themes within the cases that can be analyzed both within and outside of the independent cases studies. For example, the broad category of “evaluation participation” that was first presented within the case studies can then be scrutinized for similarities and differences between cases to surface new discoveries and patterns within the data. This strategy allowed the cross-case analysis to be conducted systematically and forced me to go beyond my initial interpretations. Finally, an effort was made within the cross-case analysis to identify practices that may have implications for applications in other states’ efforts to build evaluation capacity or to support the sustainability of CDSC programs. Efforts were made to provide readers with opportunities to learn from these exemplary cases.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORERUNNER, THE PACESETTER

Introduction

“Over the years, I've given myself a thousand reasons to keep running, but it always comes back to where it started. It comes down to self-satisfaction and a sense of achievement.”- Steve Prefontaine

Many people in the field would not be surprised to hear that Missouri is one of the few states with a working evaluation system. Scholars view Missouri as the birthplace of modern school counseling and guidance (Sink & MacDonald, 1998), and the state is credited with much advancement to the theory of Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling (CGC). Much of this can be linked to the research and work of Norm Gysbers and colleagues at the University of Missouri, Columbia. For over 40 years these counselor educators championed comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling programs and have completed some of the most often cited studies on CGC programs in the field (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001). Furthermore, Missouri was one of the first states in the country to write a comprehensive model for school counseling that was supported by the state department of education. This early relationship was informal, yet the implementation and dissemination of model documents can be traced back as early as the mid 1980s. In the years since, Missouri has acted as a model for the many other states that either adopted or adapted the Missouri model during the late 1980s and 1990s, and was major contributor to the creation of the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003). Norm Gysbers recalled this trend during our interview by stating, “When we designed the Missouri model program it was obviously for

Missouri. And then other people wanted to transport it, so I said, ‘At least take the name off of it’” (N.G. #1[meaning first interview with Norm Gysbers] by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Despite Missouri’s status as an early adopter and innovator, the state has not been free of challenges. One of the greatest contextual and structural constraints within this case is the element of local control. Local control can be defined in this case as the state leaving much of the educational decision making in the hands of local school districts. Bragg Stanley, the State Director of Guidance and Counseling, summed up this *laissez faire* sentiment best by stating:

Missouri is so local control, there is really very little they will do legislatively to mandate state stuff. We have some basic standards that you have to meet, but what you are going to be graded on is your performance. And as long as you are doing fine, you can do whatever you want. It is like a mixed message sometimes... You are not going to be graded on your MSIP (Missouri School Improvement Program) standards unless you are not performing (B.S. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Therefore, the issue of local control plays a huge role in the way school counseling programs are run and in turn, the ways in which school counseling program evaluations are conceptualized and supported within the state. A good first example of this phenomenon is the MSIP process that Bragg Stanley referred to in the above quote. The state has authority to accredit school districts based upon their performance and adherence to state standards. School counseling representatives lobbied hard and five program standards for school counseling were included within the MSIP process

(Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2005). Despite this win, the state does not have the capacity to collect school improvement plans and/or accredit all 524 school districts within the program's five year cycle. Therefore, the state's focus has naturally shifted towards those districts that are struggling to demonstrate performance in relation to the federal, No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB Act, 2001). Currently the state is only enacting the MSIP process within 20 percent of its school districts on any given five year cycle (retrieved from Missouri DESE website, 2009). All of the participants in this case noted the decline of the MSIP process as a let down. Bragg Stanley commented that for a short time he saw buy-in from counselors and allowed the state to use a "hammer" when working with schools and districts, but he also commented, "The MSIP process isn't really strong anymore" (B.S. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

So what does decline of the MSIP process tell us about Missouri? First, it reveals that even when the state is given authority to control local education it lacks the resources and the willingness to enact that control throughout the system. It reveals the true strength of local control within the state. Second, more related to school counseling, it demonstrates that school counseling is an important program in Missouri because it was included within the program. Given the environment, that inclusion of school counseling within its most structured educational policy symbolizes that school counseling programs are viewed as legitimate. But finally, and most importantly, through its decline it reveals and reinforces the approaches that school counseling leaders, researchers and advocates have adopted in the years prior and since the MSIP process. In relation to evaluation, the weak MSIP favors school school counseling program evaluation approaches that do not rely on the authority of centralized control. The strength of the following case surfaces

program evaluation practices that work within a highly locally controlled educational landscape.

Now that a context has been established, the research questions for this case:

1. How is Missouri evaluating their program?
2. Why is Missouri evaluating their program?
3. How does Missouri involve participants in program evaluation?
4. How has Missouri built evaluation capacity within their state?

The research questions can best be addressed by reporting on the findings in relation to the conceptual model presented within Chapter I. The model is broken up into three constructs that address the different research questions. The first, evaluation purposes, helps to inform the first two research questions; the second, evaluation participation, informs the third research question; and finally, the third construct, evaluation capacity building, informs the fourth question. The case is broadly organized around the conceptual model and will help to place the events and evidence of the case within the conceptual model to best answer the research questions.

Evaluation Purposes

Missouri's fundamental program evaluation strategy is the use of self-evaluation at the local district and school levels. The state is not involved in collecting any mandated evaluation information from schools. Since the first written resources to the last, Missouri has stressed the importance of using self-evaluations to fuel school counseling programs. Therefore, the majority of the evidence collected and presented within this case highlights the ways the state has promoted and supported the use of self-evaluation in the hands of practitioners. (they define or use self-evaluation as:) Norm Gysbers has written

on the concept and merits of self-evaluation for many decades. When asked how to describe Missouri's overall approach to program evaluation, he explained:

We wouldn't see our local counselors doing statewide evaluation studies. That's our job, counselor educators and the state. Their job is to look at what they are doing at the local level. And so we try to emphasize that, so we are not asking them to say somehow, you got to do this big grand scheme of evaluating everything that is going on. No, concentrate on specific things that you want to find out more about. To prove and improve, both and. That is what we are trying to teach people to do (N.G. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

The above quote sheds light on this orientation and crystallizes the message that school counselors have been receiving from the state for thirty years. This orientation also begs the question, where does self-evaluation fit within the evaluation purposes proposed by Henry, Mark and Julnes (2000)? Among their four broad categories (program and organizational improvement, assessment of merit and worth, oversight and compliance, and knowledge development), I argue that self-evaluation fits best within the evaluation purpose of program and organizational improvement.

This argument can be supported by many sources of evidence. The first was the responses of 262 practicing school counselors to an online program evaluation questionnaire. Several items revealed that the majority of these counselors see program improvement as the central evaluation purpose within Missouri. For example the item, "What is currently the main purpose(s) of program evaluation within your state?" Elicited 92% of the counselors to respond, "Improve school counseling programming." Furthermore, 90% of the responders indicated that program evaluation *should* be used to,

“Improve school counseling practices and procedures.” This evidence supports the notion that the state’s orientation toward self-evaluation is strongly rooted within the evaluation purpose of program and organizational improvement (Please see Appendix A for full responses to the online questionnaire).

The second source of evidence that links self-evaluation to the purpose of program improvement is the work done at the state level. Bragg Stanley, the Director of Guidance within the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), sums up his work by stating:

What is our role? I say our job is to see that every school has a fully implemented CGP [Comprehensive Guidance Program]. That is our vision. And what are we doing within our department to help schools achieve that? What are the barriers that prevent us from doing that? And how can we help support the removal of those barriers so that counselors can move forward and more fully implement their programs? Evaluation is part of that and you know, if we are to fully implement, we have to evaluate it. And how can we do that? Evaluation is a key part. Like you [researcher] said, it is sort of new. Evaluation is not new, but the way we are conceptualizing it I think is new, as we begin to focus more on student outcomes. And then how can we begin to help schools? What resources can we put into the hands of the schools to help them be able to do that? (B.S. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

The above quote is important because it describes how the state defines its role. The word “resources” jumps out because there were many examples of the state actively

pursuing the creation of resources for school counselors. The vast majority of these resources were voluntary, but it is clear that the state has devoted a great deal of time and resources to their development. When speaking with two district level directors of school counseling they described the types of resources that the state uses to support school counselors. They highlighted the state's funding of an online career exploration resource, the delivery of a new counselor mentoring program, opportunities to take online trainings and classes, the publishing of downloadable state grade level expectations and lesson plans, regular communication through an online newsletter for school counselors, and online classes created to inform teachers and administrators about the merits of school counseling programs. Another district level director of school counseling echoed the state's abilities to provide resources when she commented on Bragg Stanley's work, "He has done a remarkable job with a staff of two guys. They have gone out and do all kinds of education pieces for all different levels. He is always out there, and I tease him about it all the time, 'preaching the gospel of guidance.' He makes sure as many different audiences out there know what is going on... He has been very approachable and very hands-on. He provides tons of resources" (S.S. #1 by I.M. 4/6/2009).

Norm Gysbers provided more context to the state's use of resources. He pointed out that despite the fact that Missouri had not legislated school counseling, there is a history of support:

We do have resources by the way. Because if you look at the commitment of the state since 1984 to today, they've put millions of dollars into this. It is not authority coming from legislators, but it is coming from DESE and their willingness to commit Carl Perkins monies and state monies to really do this. So

there is money behind it, it just doesn't come through legislation. It comes through the state, so it is just another source. We couldn't have done everything that has been done without those resources (N.G. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Norm Gysbers continued by pointing out that the state has funded trainings in over 490 districts, secured money to supply school counselors with materials, have funded writing teams, contributed to research studies, website development and continue to fund state-level personnel.

Based on the above evidence, self-evaluation as a viable and productive way to promote program improvement within the state of Missouri. School counselors responded that they view program evaluation as primarily supporting the improvement of school counseling programs and the state supports that idea by providing a wealth of resources.

Another purpose of self-evaluation that is not fully captured by Henry, Mark and Julnes' (2000) construct is program advocacy. Within the presentation and structure of the self-evaluation process, program advocacy plays a major role in creating a motivator and rationale. For example, 81% of the Missouri counselors that responded to the questionnaire cited program evaluation as, "A useful tool for school counselor advocacy." Given the local control environment, self-evaluations that are connected to state guidelines and resources provide school counselors with a certain level of legitimacy when advocating for their work in schools. Because school counseling is not mandated and is considered an ancillary position, these self-evaluations can be seen as a way to demonstrate a connection to the best practices and symbolic authority offered by the state.

The purpose of program advocacy was evident throughout the case. Guidance directors at the district level spoke at great length about how they are constantly using program evaluation to advocate for their school counselors. For example two district directors recalled how evaluation had helped them to advocate for additional counselors within their district:

Two years ago we really went to our meeting armed with information and data. To be fair, it was a generous year, but we feel like we had information to support us... Just to show you what evaluation can do, we were able to show the results within individual buildings. If we were able to add 2.6 counselors... We could at least have close to fulltime counselors in every building. This is what you could do and they saw the [potential] results of that (C.R. & A.L. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

The purpose of advocacy becomes more dynamic when linked to the purpose of knowledge development. Because local control directly inhibits the state from collecting a reliable statewide perspective, the purpose of knowledge development helps advocate for school counselors. The purpose of knowledge development, as described by Henry, Mark and Julnes (2000) uses evaluation as a way to test and build theories through research. Missouri has been able to conduct large-scale statewide evaluations through the work of counselor educators in conjunction with the state and the state school counseling association. These evaluations support the theory development of Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and have been published in major journals within the field. For example, Bragg Stanley described the utility of these large-scale evaluation studies during our interview:

Using Norm's study, they took that to their school board and administration. And as a result of that meeting and study, were able to hire another school counselor, which they were trying to do for years and couldn't get it done. They saw that study and said, "you mean it can do all this? Well let's hire 'em" (B.S. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Knowledge development was not widely recognized as important by many school level counselors within the questionnaire. Only 45% of the respondents stated that program evaluation should, "Contribute to Theory building efforts within the Comprehensive School Counseling movement." Therefore it would seem that practicing School Counselors do not see their participation in large-scale studies as contributing to knowledge development, but rather as a way to support school counseling advocacy. Throughout the interview process I explored this idea. A district guidance director participation in studies (this one included) by stating:

Bragg was the one that sent that forward (evaluation questionnaire). When it comes from him, people will do anything. Because they know that he is our big advocate. We've got him in DESE and there is no question that he works like crazy on our behalf. So if he asks us to do something, it's like sure, no problem (B.S. # 1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Other district directors saw this issue similarly:

I think a lot of that [participation in research] has to do with, way back when we started the CGP [Comprehensive Guidance Program], and Dr. Gysbers has been very much an active role in all of that, I think we have been brought up trained to

participate in building a program and I think we've seen results. When you do participate in things there are results even at the state level that help us (C.R. & A. L. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Finally Norm Gysbers rationalized why participation might not be as high in other states, "They're not embedded in a process or program, so they don't see the relevance. Once they are embedded in it, they see the relevance and are responsive" (N.G. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

When looking at the program evaluation purposes within this case we can begin to see how school counselors are evaluating their work and we can also understand why. Very clearly, the state has dedicated its services to promoting the use of self-evaluation as a way to promote programs and advocate for school counseling programs within schools and districts. Secondly, and possibly only a priority of counselor educators, the purpose of knowledge development has enhanced the purpose of advocacy within the state and resulted in an evaluation schema that best fits the constraints of local control.

Evaluation Participation

Within this investigation it was important to discover how school counselors participate in the evaluation process. Cousins and Whitmore (1998) completed a comprehensive review of evaluation theory to help define the roles and functions of participation in evaluation. The theories that they identified ranged from highly controlled to practitioner run evaluations. For example, a highly controlled evaluation would involve an evaluator coming into a setting with some form of authority, setting the evaluation criteria and making all of the decisions regarding the evaluation process. On

the other end of the continuum, practitioner evaluation looks more like an evaluator training individuals to make their own evaluation decisions and carry out the evaluation process themselves.

Because Missouri supports self-evaluation, it was a fairly easy task to categorize the examples of participation within this case. In fact, evidence within the case notes that the state and districts do provide trainings on evaluation for individual counselors and then leave the majority of the evaluation decisions and processes up to individual school counselors. Three indicators found within the school counselor questionnaire speak to this type of participation. When asked about counselor participation in the evaluation process, 88% responded that they deliver needs assessments and 78% responded that they spend time analyzing and interpreting program evaluation results. Similarly, 67% of the school counselors responded that evaluation support involves opportunities to exchange evaluation experiences and ideas with colleagues. These types of activities typically would not be emphasized within more controlled evaluation scenarios.

A striking example of school counselor participation was committee work that involved approximately 40 school counselors from around the state charged with writing state-level grade level expectations and activity plans for the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program. During my interviews all of the participants highlighted the successes of this committee. Two district directors reflected on the process:

It has been a wonderful experience. We meet here [at the elementary school] four times a year. People donate their weekends, Friday through Sunday. We've done it for the last five to six years. It is amazing what we've done (C.R. & A.L. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Interestingly, even voluntary school counselor work was not free from the influences of local control. This influence was revealed while talking with another district director about what her counselors experienced while participating on the writing committee:

The way we've written it, we were told, you cannot refer to any specific resources. Because you don't know what the school district next door has available for funding. They may not be able to purchase that book. And so everything is creative, it is original. We provided all the documentation, all the handouts and all the booklets that go along with it. That really hit them hard. I had a couple of counselors on the original writing team and they came back saying, "We were just floored that we couldn't refer to things we have at the district." And mind you, I don't have a big budget. So we've created a lot of things that are basically free, hard work, but free (S.S. #1 by I.M. 4/6/2009).

As noted before, relying on self-evaluation limits the contact the state has with school counselors working within programs. Accessing a statewide perspective within an environment of self-evaluation resulted in some intriguing adaptations at the state level. Essentially, Bragg Stanley and his staff manages a loose configuration of individuals through personal contact and elicit participation through these relationships. A district director described an example of this:

He might ask me to come and do things. He draws on people who he knows he can count on and know their stuff. I think that is good. I applaud him for doing that. Because he knows what districts he can use as models and yet they are willing to go in and help school districts... He'll [Bragg Stanley] tip us [MSCA]

off about stuff. What is coming down the pipe. He has brought us to so many tables. Now it is, 'Oh, we need to have a school counselor here.' And we wouldn't have that if we didn't have someone strong at DESE. He'll pull together the right players. Put some ideas together and then feel out his supervisors. He is good at finessing situations... Nobody sees him as a threat. If he tells you something, you can take it to the bank (S.S. #1 by I.M. 4/6/2009).

Another good example of Bragg Stanley's maintenance of a network of supportive connections was an antidote that he shared during our meeting. He described a phone call that he received from a member of a grant review team that revealed that a new high school counselor was struggling. Bragg Stanley contacted this counselor, offered his help and was able to meet with her personally. I posit that these sentiments and examples would not be as likely if the state were to operate within the parameters of mandate enforcement and program oversight. Instead, local control has provided an opportunity for the state to be seen as a support and advocate rather than an enforcer.

Another example of the type of work can be seen in the way new counselors are mentored. All teachers, administrators and counselors are required to participate in some kind of mentoring program. These programs are implemented at the discretion of local school districts. The typical mentoring set-up involves pairing new hires with more experienced mentors within the district. A major incentive for participation is the fact that many personnel evaluations take into account whether or not individuals have participated in a mentoring program. As a resource, the state and MSCA created a mentoring program of their own to supplement the structures that were already in place within the state. In essence, the mentoring program is a voluntary partnership between the

districts, the state, and the state school counseling association. A district director experienced in the process described the program in this way:

Now we are able to talk to administrators in districts and say, “We have a mentoring program that works for your counselors that is more unique to counselors.” And of course the district administrators have to agree that they will allow that, but it is approved by the state, so there is no reason not to approve it (C.R. & A.L. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

This example is important because it illustrates how the state can be an influencing factor in the midst of local decision making. In effect, the mentoring program acts as a tool to more intentionally develop the types of skills and beliefs that the state sees as worthwhile.

Yet another example of the state eliciting participation from school counselors was the state award system. The state created two levels of awards that represent the very best school counseling programs within the state. The “Success Award” is given to districts that demonstrate fully implemented programs, and the “Gysbers Award” is given to one exemplary program annually. The first recipients were awarded in 2008. Both of the school districts that participated in this study were recipients of these state awards. They revealed that the process was extremely rigorous and involved. One district director explained that after receiving the green light from her district counseling advisory board, she and her counselors worked very hard for over six months to compile all of the requirements for the application. She pointed to two large bins of color-coded files filled with thousands of artifacts that were prepared for the application. She recalled the relief

when she dropped off the application as, “kissing her baby goodbye.” Furthermore she said, “When we got word that we won it (Gysbers Award), oh my gosh, the counselors flipped out! The administrators were beside themselves, and immediately it got into the press releases for the district. And now as the bond issue comes up, they list it” (S.S. #1 by I.M. 4/6/2009).

Other district directors commented on their experiences participating in the award process by stating:

Last year in the fall we were going to apply for the Gysbers [award]. And then we did the IIR [Internal Improvement Review]. We thought, whoa, we needed some work on our personal plans of study for example, and then we realized we hadn’t been doing the time-task [analysis] regularly or consistently and needed to do that. So those were probably the main things that we decided we shouldn’t apply for the Gysbers. We needed to do those things.

They commented further and said:

Yeah, the neat thing about this is that we really used it. We thought, “Oh this is just more paperwork.” And our counselors said, “Oh this is just more paperwork.” But in the end we were excited to think, “Oh this is what we need to do.” It became a tool for us to think about what we needed to do better as coordinators and what we needed to communicate to our counselors (C.R. & A.L. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

The resource of the award system functions on many different levels. It reinforces the that the tools created by the state are used, recognizes districts that are fully engaged in

the process, creates exemplary models for others, provides motivation for programs to improve, and creates yet another advocacy tool for local districts. When considering the returns on such a simple tool, the award system is successful in promoting a very high degree of participation with very little oversight.

This section recognized that in Missouri school counselor participation in program evaluation could not be expected. Despite this recognition, the state was able to design and collaborate with others to encourage engagement and continue to stress the merits of self-evaluation. The management of personal relationships greatly influenced the levels of participation within this case. The mentoring system and the award system can be viewed as artifacts of this influence. Furthermore, this section connects to the larger purpose of program improvement and helps to explain how school counselors engage in program evaluation procedures.

Evaluation Capacity Building

The final area within the conceptual model helps to explain the capacity of the state to accomplish its program evaluation goals. Preskill and Boyle (2008) designed a highly complex evaluation capacity model that investigates the relationship between practitioner knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the sustainability of evaluation procedures, as influenced by leadership, systems and structures, communication, and culture. The reality is that none of the above purposes or levels of participation could have been possible without the development of evaluation capacity within the larger body of school counselors. This area of evaluation theory is growing in significance and can be seen as a major element within this case. I argue that this construct best explains how Missouri was able to create one of the only working evaluation schemas in the country.

A major contributing factor to Missouri's abilities to build evaluation capacity was the unique structure of collaboration within the state. Norm Gysbers described the importance and major players involved in this collaborative structure when he said:

I think the strength of Missouri has been, for many years, counselor education from every counselor education institution, the state department and supported by the state department, and the school counselor organization-They all meet twice a year. That's been a device that has continued to bring cohesion, direction and focus to the state. And then you (Bragg Stanley) are regularly part of the school counseling association board of directors and connecting there. So there has been a very close relationship between trainers, practitioners and people at the school district level. You won't find that in probably any other state. That relationship has been formed over many years so that people, though we don't all agree, we learned how to trust each other (N.G. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

The influence of this collaboration upon evaluation capacity is hard to quantify, but one could easily assume that the potential of aligning these groups has had a major impact on school counselors' abilities to approach program evaluation in a similar way.

Bragg Stanley described this collaborative relationship further:

We really don't do anything separate. If I'm doing something I always try to get feedback from MSCA, "Hey this is the direction I want to go, what y'all think?" So we have a guidance advisory board that meets three times a year along with my counselor educator board. And counselor educators have MSCA members sit on their board, a counselor educator sits on their board, and I sit on all of them.

Again, it is just that constant communication and flow so that we are moving in the right direction (B.S. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

To get a handle on how this relationship impacts the greater body of school counselors, a district director and active MSCA leader stated:

There is a tremendous partnership between the state and the state school counseling organization, we've got 1700 members, which is pretty phenomenal. We've got 1400 people coming to our conference in the fall. A lot of these some-odd 500 districts, they are there. They are hearing and we are all getting the same thing. So the partnership we have with DESE, the organization, what Norm Gysbers does, Norm is known throughout the state. MSCA funds a lot, in conjunction with DESE, together we'll fund research projects for the enrichment of school counselors... I think the structure that we get through DESE and the state organization (MSCA) helps the counselors that are caught in local control feel like someone is looking out for them (S.S. #1 by I.M. 4/6/2009).

This relationship has major implications on the ways school counselors develop program evaluation knowledge, skills and attitudes. For instance, school counselors are provided with a consistent message regarding the purposes and uses of self-evaluation in pre-service training; then as working school counselors, they are flooded with resources designed to help them overcome barriers to self-evaluation; and then finally provided with many opportunities to connect to larger advocacy and research projects through the state school counselor association. This rationale is evident in the way counselors

responded to the online questionnaire: 78% of counselors stated that they received evaluation training from their districts, 58% stated they received training from the state, and 60% stated that they were supported by being able to attend workshops, seminars and classes on evaluation. This united collaborative effort also helps to explain why the state offers online evaluation courses for school counselors, includes evaluation in online offerings for teachers and administrators, trains counselors on evaluation at the state conference, includes evaluation as a key component within the mentoring program and weighs evaluation heavily in determining the annual school counseling state awards. School counselors simply cannot escape the evaluation capacity efforts housed within the state of Missouri. A good example of this is the experience of a district director that has been working with these concepts for over thirty years:

Dr. Gysbers was my advisor in 1976 and 1977. I always said, I think I should have gotten royalties or something because I'm pretty sure my class projects had a lot to do with Missouri Comprehensive Guidance (C.R. & A.L. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Conclusion

When reviewing the above case it is important to remember context. Context reveals that Missouri designed their evaluation schema around the constraints of local control. School counselors engage in the self-evaluation process because they have been provided with a simple vision that fits the context. The case paints a clear picture of why and how school counselors evaluate their programs, it describes the multiple levels and opportunities for more dynamic participation, and it sheds light on how the state was able to develop evaluation capacity through continuous collaboration. School counselors do

not evaluate their programs because of state mandates or legislative rules. School counselors evaluate their programs because they were trained to participate in a school counseling program and use program results to advocate for their positions and/or further development of their programs.

When talking about mandates and legislative authority, Norm Gysbers had this to say about the possible downsides of such legislation:

The downside I think, is people believing too much in that [legislation] and not taking their own initiative and seeing it as external, as oppose to being something that they can generate within a school. So I think there are some possible downsides. If you had to pick, which one would you pick? Well, you'd probably pick the resources of authority, given any consequences. But we're not in a position in this state to ever probably get that (N.G. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

This quote was included here because it calls into question the relevance of mandates and legislative action within the state of Missouri. If legislation ever were to become a possibility, thirty years of school counseling program evaluation structures, belief systems, and procedures would be called into question. I would argue that the real strength of this case is the state's position as a support structure. To take that away would threaten all that they have built.

So what does the future hold for Missouri program evaluation? Bragg Stanley and Norm Gysbers described a desire to more explicitly link the self-evaluation work of local school counselors to the state. They propose that creating some kind of common criteria and then warehousing that evaluation information at the state level may accomplish this.

This development would supply more access to the evaluation purpose of program improvement by supplying the state with a much need statewide perspective of what school counselors are actually doing in schools. I see this goal as aligning nicely with their current evaluation schema and look forward to tracking its development.

CHAPTER V
UNCHARTED TERRITORY

Introduction

“There's a saying among prospectors: 'Go out looking for one thing, and that's all you'll ever find.’” -Robert Flaherty

Many people in school counseling would be surprised to learn that Utah has a working statewide evaluation system. For the most part, barring a few published articles, Utah has stayed off the radar. I first became interested in the case while reviewing their data within a national study of the status of school counseling models (Martin et. al, In Press). Within this study, the State Director of Student Services referenced several statewide school counseling evaluation studies (Kimball, Gardener & Ellison, 1995; Gardener, Nelson & Fox, 1999, Nelson et al, 1998; 2007), and commented on procedures that indicated there was a regular protocol for collecting evaluation information from schools. Upon reviewing the evaluation studies and other documents available on the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) website, it became clear that the Utah evaluations were primarily used to demonstrate school counselor effectiveness to audiences within the state. This internal focus helps to explain why Utah’s story has not reached the national scene.

Despite the fact that very little about Utah has been published in major journals or texts, leaders within the state have recorded the historical development of the Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program, referred to in the state as the CCGP. Lynn Jensen, the former State Director of Student Services, and Judy Peterson, the former Specialist for Comprehensive Guidance, can be considered the resident historians.

Their writing charts the progression of a grass-roots movement through the milestones of higher and higher levels of legislative involvement (Jensen and Peterson, USOE, 2008).

Their historical account highlighted that the movement began modestly in the mid- 1980s with concerns over the numbers of available school counselors being able to meet the needs of a growing population. State leaders recognized the work of other states, such as Missouri, and were able to secure funding through Carl Perkins monies to begin to restructure school counseling in Utah. From the beginning there was a strong commitment to orienting school counseling services as an educational program as seen in Missouri. The following quote from Jensen and Peterson (UOSE, 2008), outlines an important strategy identified to build support and school counselor buy-in:

...Lead schools should be selected to initiate the process and that a supportive environment should exist at both the school and district level in order to maximize the chances of successful implementation...

During my interviews with Judy Peterson she revealed that the above idea developed into a viable strategy that was used to secure state funding for school counseling programs. Spanning the years of 1989 to 1994 incredible work and coalition building occurred around the state. Small waves of willing pilot schools received Carl Perkins monies to participate in trainings and document their progress while implementing the Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program (CCGP). At the same time, Lynn Jensen and Judy Peterson were traveling around the state meeting with school boards, creating connections within the State Board of Education and the State Office of Education, aligning the program with the Governor's goals, and working to establish program standards within State Board Rules. Judy Peterson explained the results of this

hard work and coalition building through the events that took place during the 1995 legislative session:

The state board made recommendations for that funding year to include monies for schools meeting the standards [state CCGP standards] that had been identified as those making the whole personalized education of Utah students happen [Governor's goal]. Low and behold, we were asked to put a funding request together. We asked for 3 million and the legislators appropriated 1.5 million (J.P. #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

This development was a huge win for school counseling in the state of Utah and put them on the path to full statewide CCGP implementation. This funding created strong incentives for schools and districts to participate. Furthermore, Judy Peterson revealed that it also set into action the state's focus on program evaluation. She stated that because the state wanted to see returns on its investment in school counseling and student to counselor ratios of 400 to 1 by the year 2000, Lynn Jensen understood that more research was needed to go beyond the initial evaluation tool that consisted of yes or no program component checklists to create a convincing argument. Therefore, Lynn Jensen involved the services of a private evaluation company.

Between the years of 1995 and 1999 three evaluations were conducted that mirrored the priorities expressed by the state. The first evaluation (Kimball, Gardner, & Ellison, 1995) was designed to evaluate the implementation of the Student Educational and Occupational Plan (SEOP) and investigate the relationship between the SEOP and the CCGP. The SEOP was aligned with the Governor's goals and consisted of planning

meetings to document future career goals and academic progress. Surveys were delivered to school counselors in 49 Utah schools and school counselor interviews were conducted for more detailed information. Results indicated that many schools not only complied with the SEOP mandate, but also made significant innovations concerning SEOP programming and supports. Additionally, results suggested that housing the SOEP within the CCGP helped students create a better frame of reference that allowed for more depth within the SEOP process.

The second evaluation (Nelson & Gardner, 1998) investigated the efficacy of school counseling outcomes within more or less implemented school counseling programs. The first phase of the evaluation was conducted in 1997 and consisted of 197 middle and high schools completing surveys and interviews. The second phase of the evaluation was carried out in 1998 and involved analyzing student, counselor, principal, and teacher perceptions of school counseling services as compared to student achievement data available within the SOE. Results from the survey were largely positive. Nearly all students in within the participating schools reported completing an SOEP and principals and teachers reported that planning services were improved by the implementation of the CCGP. Also, within the second phase, significant differences in counselor duties, parent outreach and student achievement data were noted when low-implementing schools were compared with high-implementing schools.

The third evaluation (Gardner, Nelson & Fox, 1999) was designed as a follow-up to the 1998 evaluation and was focused on investigating implementation levels of CCGP in relation to student per counselor ratios. Surveys were delivered to 193 schools and asked participants to rate how accurately descriptors fit their programs. The results

identified a clear correlation between highly implemented programs and low student per counselor ratios. Of note, the 20 schools with the highest levels of CCGP implementation also had the lowest counselor to student ratios. The 20 schools with the lowest levels of CCGP program implementation had nearly twice the number of students per counselor on average. The average counselor to student ratio in Utah during 1999 was 436 to 1.

I went into such detail in describing these evaluations to illustrate how intentionally they were designed to address the information needs of the legislature. Because of this level of intentionality, Lynn Jensen was then able to approach legislators and ramp up CCGP funding to \$7.5 Million annually. Judy Peterson explained that the funding increased incrementally since that time and since 1995, the state has allocated close to 100 million dollars into the CCGP (J.P. #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

This history was crucially important to the case because it created a linear logic model from which other evaluation ideas, rationales and motivators were seated. In effect, the logic flowed as: 1) the CCGP needed evidence, 2) the evaluations provided convincing evidence, and 3) the evaluations were used to secure greater resources. Though this history exists largely at the macro level, it can be seen as a major contextual factor when investigating the ways in which program evaluation procedures have become institutionalized. Similar logical models were evident throughout the case and extended down into the practitioner level.

The following organization describes how program evaluation has developed as related to the historical context presented above. Answering the research questions demonstrates the ways Utah has embedded CCGP evaluation procedures throughout the

different levels of the educational system. The following research questions were investigated in this case:

1. How is Utah evaluating their program?
2. Why is Utah evaluating their program?
3. How does Utah involve participants in program evaluation?
4. How has Utah built evaluation capacity within their state?

Furthermore, the conceptual model was explicitly connected to the research questions.

The first construct, evaluation purposes, helped to inform the first two research questions; the second construct, evaluation participation, informed the third research question; and finally, the third construct, evaluation capacity building, informed the fourth question.

The case is organized around the conceptual model. Within each section, the case illustrates the changes that have occurred over the years.

Evaluation Purposes

After reading the evaluations presented in the introduction, I assumed that Utah's main evaluation purpose, as presented by Henry, Mark and Julnes (2000), would be one of oversight and compliance. It seemed logical that working within a state that invested millions of dollars into school counseling would create an environment focused on checks and balances. The first indication that this assumption might be amiss was the way that 127 school counselors responded to the online questionnaire. When asked about the evaluation purposes within the state, school counselors checked both, "improve school counseling programming" (92%) and "demonstrate accountability to requirements and mandates" (93%). After arriving in the state, it became clear that this combination of purpose developed over time. The evidence suggested that continuous program

improvement was a foundational strategy that has become more sophisticated over time as the program evaluation process has become more rigorous. For example, a district level director of counseling referenced this improvement by stating:

Evaluation is a lot better now, based on the fact that we have some things that are focusing on kids- I mean we had to start with focusing on counselors and counseling activities and those kind of things, but then we had to grow into where we were focusing on what was actually the outcome for the kids (Metro Meeting Focus Group [MMFG] #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

To put this growth into context, it is important to recall that the first evaluation tool was only a self-evaluation checklist that asked school counselors whether or not program components were in place. For instance, the evaluation tool might assess the delivery of a school counseling curriculum to all students by asking counselors to respond, yes or No. Obviously, this form of evaluation doesn't involve any judgments regarding quality and does not rate the programs in terms of established criteria. Judy Peterson explained the decision making behind the original checklist by noting that the focus at that time was on program enhancement and improvement and essentially was the only real option. She explained that it originally couldn't have been focused on outcomes because there weren't any outcomes yet. Similarly, it couldn't focus on mandates and/or personnel evaluation because there weren't any standards or protocols. Instead, there was the idea that evaluation needed to be focused on, "improving, sharing and learning from one another" (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

To better understand the amount of growth that has occurred within program evaluation it is important to describe what Utah is currently doing to evaluate their school counseling programs. All middle and high school counseling programs must demonstrate that they meet the 12 Utah State CCGP standards in order to receive full state funding. Two key strategies were developed to demonstrate this compliance. The first, the six year Performance Review, consists of individual schools presenting the ways their programs have addressed the standards. A panel of out of district school counselors, district level counseling directors, and administrators score a scaled rubric and present the rubric to the state that either approves or places sanctions on the program. The second, Annual Data Projects, consist of programs tracking specific interventions focused on student outcomes as expressed by student data. These reports are connected to needs assessments or program goals as outlined within the schools' previous Performance Review Reports. The state uploads all Data Project Reports to the CCGP website for public review.

At first glance, the above doesn't outwardly look like program improvement. The program improvement purpose surfaces within the above processes. Evidence based on observations and within every group indicated that growth over time and program improvement were intentional components deeply imbedded within all of the procedures. For example, while conducting group interviews with the district directors of counseling they were able to recognize this growth and focus on program improvement. They described that the evaluation process definitely did start out as a top-down mandate, but that is had changed over time. Many district leaders cited the supportive atmosphere of the review process and indicated that the data projects were instrumental in changing the

atmosphere and general feeling of the review process. They stated that it made the process more “rigorous” and student focused (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

When talking about the Performance Review process with the group of district directors, there was a lot of agreement around the room that most of the reviews needed to be focused on the positive things that counselors are doing right. One member described the final presentation as a “dog and pony show,” but was quick to note that the true learning really happened in the preparation for the event. While counselors are engaging with the standards and coming up with the answers they are also reflecting and recognizing what they are doing (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009). I observed this positive and reflective atmosphere while attending two Performance Reviews (By I.M. 3/15 & 3/16/ 2009). The panel repeatedly asked probing questions that got counselors to really see their growth and several times they even conferred openly to raise the scores on the rubrics when the group had not recognized this growth. Though, when I shared my observations with the counseling directors, my view was somewhat contested when they described that some reviews do not go so well. In those instances, the group described that the review process can be used as a learning tool because the panel consists of individuals that are invested in the process. For instance many members described using site reviews as opportunities to “learn something new” or for others to be exposed to “modeling.” This evidence would indicate that regardless of what type of program under review, accomplished or struggling, there are opportunities for learning(MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

Another element that speaks to the program improvement purpose as embedded within the review process was the great sense of accomplishment that came from the

group of district directors when they witness counselors meaningfully engaging with the evaluation process. One member commented, “Now the conversation is ‘Oh, there is a data project’ and I actually think they are starting to like them. They came to the realization that, ‘This is for me, this helps me.’” Further evidence within the district director group indicated how institutionalized the purpose of program improvement has become. For instance, one member stated:

They talk about the fact that they have a review coming up and think about the changes and how to address the requirements within the new documents. They are no longer afraid of their needs assessments anymore. Initially there was a lot of resistance, but now they just know that it is a fact of life. They’ve learned a lot about themselves through that process and their program of adaptation (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

Furthermore, the sentiment of program improvement was strongly echoed in the responses of 127 school counselors to the online questionnaire. When asked about what program evaluations provide, 85% responded, “Opportunities to improve procedural processes” and 95% indicated that evaluation results were directed towards “practicing school counselors.”

Judy Peterson, during her interview, summed up the relationship between oversight and compliance and program improvement by expressing that compliance was the initial focus until there was something to evaluate. Then after that period, it took another 20 another years of methodically laid out work to reach a point of sustainability (J.P #1 by I.M 3/18/2009). To her, this sustainability was about getting school counselors

to engage in a process that ultimately was meaningful to them. The evidence collected in the case supports her view.

Another notion investigated within the evaluation purpose realm was the degree to which the organization of the evaluation purposes in the state reflected the principles of Utah education in general. For instance, is this just the way that Utah does things? Do all programs in Utah have this level of oversight? Do all programs focus on engaging practitioners in the evaluation process? For example, if we were to investigate the Health Education Program, would we find similar structures? The overwhelming evidence within the case indicated that the use of program evaluation within the school counseling program is not mirrored in other programs. In fact, all of the participants stated that these structures are unique to school counseling. For example, one district director spoke to this phenomenon by stating:

They [school counselors] sometimes complain that their level of accountability within the context of the school is much higher than any other area or discipline perhaps. But it has also allowed them to integrate into the faculty better and the faculty now understands that they too have their curriculum; they too have their program. It brings a lot of integrity, organization and infrastructure to what they are trying to do and it has protected them too, from doing that non-guidance activity (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

I argue that this unique combination of oversight and compliance with intentional program improvement has greatly enhanced the position of school counseling within the state. When questioned about counselor legitimacy in the state of Utah, both Tom Sasche,

the state Specialist for Comprehensive Counseling and Dawn Peterson, the state Director of Student Services, had to stop and reflect on this sentiment because it was not something that they think about often. The idea that counselors are not seen as legitimate educators within schools was almost a foreign concept to them. Dawn summed it up best by disclosing that over her entire 14 year career, as a school counselor and at the state, she has never felt like a “second class” educator (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009).

Evaluation participation

The sheer amount of opportunities for individuals to be involved in the evaluation process collected was truly impressive. Again, in an environment of oversight, one would assume to find rigid structures that maintain the status quo. Instead, the evidence suggested that the state maintains many structures that encourage high degrees of input.

In order to illustrate the levels of participation it is important to describe the structures that are in place and how school counselors and other interest groups engage with these structures. The organization of the committee structure is a particularly good example of participation. The CCGP has had a functioning Advisory Committee since the 1980s. Originally, the advisory committee included anywhere from 30 to 45 individuals from various backgrounds that met regularly and were charged with making decisions regarding the implementation and oversight of the CCGP. The Advisory Committee included school counselor representatives, Parent Teacher Association representatives, Student Transition Specialists, Special Educators, counselor educators and Career and Technical Education representatives. Over time, state leaders began to question the productivity of such a large group made up of so many different constituencies. In the early 2000s a proposal was presented to reorganize the Advisory Committee into six

different Steering Committees that would meet monthly and report back to the larger group twice annually. According to Dawn Peterson and Tom Sasche, this reorganization was accepted unanimously. In their current form, the six steering committees consist of:

- 1) Metro Steering Committee: made up of urban district level counseling directors;
- 2) the Career and Technical Education Steering Committee: a supervisory state-level group under which the CCGP program falls organizationally;
- 3) High School Steering Committee: made up of eight high school counselors;
- 4) Middle School Steering Committee: made up of eight middle school counselors;
- 5) Elementary Steering Committee: made up of eight elementary school counselors; and finally,
- 6) Rural Steering Committee: made up of rural district counseling directors (though they are currently not a functional committee because they feel that their voice is being heard within both the practitioner level committees and the Metro committee).

Furthermore, the large Advisory Committee is still active and consists of the interest groups mentioned above. Evidence collected within the case indicated that this restructuring allowed for much advancement in general communication and decision making, which greatly impacted the development of the program evaluation process.

For instance, Dawn Stevenson used participants from the Steering Committees in conjunction with ad hoc committees made up of volunteer counselors to revamp the CCGP State Standards, develop the Program Review rubrics, and design the data projects to better reflect student outcomes. Tom Sasche described this committee work in the following way:

The stories and the battles that took place at these committees is the stuff myths are made of throughout the state...they just battled out, what do you want from

Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance programs throughout the state? (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009).

Judy Peterson recalled committee work during her interview when she stated:

Another big development was when the evaluation tool changed from a checklist with a little bit of explanation to the rubric. There was a group of us to roll that out to counselors. The team that put that rubric together actually had like 6 or 7 concurrent sessions to roll out the blue book (that is what we called it). And we all had the same PowerPoint- it was the same clear and consistent message (J.P.#1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

Other district directors also noted the power of the products created by these committees. For instance, they referenced that the establishment of state CCGP standards involved a lot of input from others and was an opportunity to define what counseling in Utah was really all about. It also allowed counselors to better focus their work on struggling students and to become more instrumental in contributing to school improvement plans (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

Several additional antidotes presented within the case helped to understand why participants would attend these to voluntary monthly meetings with such commitment. For instance, the Elementary Steering Committee consists of individuals spread throughout the state and requires them to drive hundreds of miles and stay with relatives overnight. The following story shed light on their motivation. Tom Sasche described that the High School Steering Committee meets across the hall from the office of the state Career and Technical Education Director, under which the CCGP technically falls. He

continued by saying that she can't help but hear what is going on in these meetings and often joins in the group discussions. He described one occasion in particular:

She brought one of the senators, Senator Jones, when she was meeting with him.

She says, 'You've got to come talk to these counselors.' She brought him into the High School Steering Committee meeting. These are high school counselors with a one on one meeting with a state senator- telling him their concerns and what they need. And she [the CTE director] took that to the hill [legislative meetings].

She said she wanted stories from counselors and everything, all because of those committees (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009).

When I asked Dawn Stevenson and Tom Sasche about their motivation in running so many groups and eliciting so much feedback they both responded in telling ways.

Dawn Stevenson replied, "It is safe to have honest discussion," and Tom Sasche said, "Well, these folks are steering things" (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009). It would seem that the levels of participation evidenced within the committee organization has created a mutually beneficial reciprocal relationship that has had real and lasting results.

The other area that was crucial to investigate within the evaluation participation construct was the degree to which school counselors are actually engaging in the ground level evaluation work. Unique to this case, we do not have to guess as to how many counselors have participated in the process. All school counselors participate. This reality begs the question: well then, do they see the value in it? The questionnaire revealed that only 8% of respondents considered it a waste of time and resources, only 4% considered it a threat to counselors, and only 6% considered it an administrative task that does not

relate to school counseling. These results are significant because the process is so involved. To illustrate the time commitment and level of involvement present within Utah Performance Review process, I have included the following collection of observation notes taken while attending one High School's Performance Review:

A student in a letterman sweater greets us at the door and safely drops us off at a second floor conference room. The room is full of activity. The tables are arranged in a semi-circle around a podium. Beyond the semi-circle of tables there are rows of chairs set up for an audience. All of the chairs are full. The school counseling team thanks us for coming and directs us toward the food in the back of room that was prepared by the Culinary Arts program. Eventually the group is asked to take a seat. The review panel is seated at the table directly in front of the podium. Everyone at the tables is provided with a three-ring binder full of evaluation information. The principal stands at the podium and leads introductions around the room. He then proceeds to talk about the merits of his school counseling team and the program that they have implemented. He comments on the added benefits of several specific interventions and includes a description of a very intense school wide program that addressed several suicides that had occurred over the past years. He talks for nearly fifteen minutes. Next, the Lead Counselor spends nearly an hour providing a general overview of the program and how their team has addressed the 12 state CCGP standards. His presentation is followed by six more presentations describing the standards that relate to direct student services. The review panel follows each presentation by openly discussing the evidence that was presented, asking further questions,

offering suggestions, or complimenting the team on their strategies. The panel then records their rating on the scoring rubric before moving on. Finally, after nearly five hours, the panel reviews an evidence box that contains the five standards that are not related to direct student services and congratulates the team on their exceptional presentation and work. We all mingle around the back of the room before leaving (Personal observations by I.M. 3/15/2009).

One element clearly present within the Performance Review was the establishment of a community in practice. Both reviews that I attended involved a lot more sharing than reporting. This also helps to show why they take so long. Dawn Stevenson commented on one of her earliest experiences with the review process. She listened to a counseling team comment on their struggles to address the needs of their growing Latino population. Dawn Stevenson recalled that she asked, “What efforts have you made to translate some of your most important information into Spanish?” And further explained that this led to a long discussion about what could be done, instead of simply reporting what had been done. She said that she has witnessed countless “A-ha” moments within the evaluation context. Furthermore, Tom Sasche highlighted that working as a counselor can be isolating, but the evaluation process forces teams out into the greater community. He described this phenomenon by stating, “If you know that you face a team of your peers coming in to look at what you are doing, it fights isolation. When you know someone is coming, there is more incentive to change things around” (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009). Along these same lines I noted that counselors often referenced other counselor’s work within their presentations. This knowledge reveals that

counselors are familiar with what other people are doing and seek out that information. Tom Sasche said that he often fields calls from people wanting to know which schools or districts have addressed specific problems particularly well and he is happy that he knows where to direct them (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009).

Another key element that exposes the levels of participation at the ground level was the audience present within the Performance Review process. On both reviews that I attended there were counselors from other districts, students from universities, administrators from other schools, directors of counseling from other districts, classroom teachers, administrative support personnel, and students from the school under review. This detail alluded that something important was going on and that there was something to take away from the process.

Within Cousins and Whitmore's (2000) construct they describe several participatory categories that would indicate the levels of participation provided by an evaluation. On one end of continuum there is control and the other there is balance in terms of evaluation decision making. Theoretically speaking, the evaluation process in Utah can best be described as balanced. Early assumptions were proved false by the evidence that many individuals participate in the process at many different levels. Despite the fact that the process is formalized, there are still many local decisions and areas of flexibility that would indicate that this organization is capable of learning and growing through their evaluation process.

Evaluation Capacity Building

It would be safe to assume that the degree of accomplishment evidenced at both the conception of evaluation purposes and the levels of participation within the evaluation

process would indicate that great strides have been made in the area of evaluation capacity building. The structures and logic models seen throughout the case have also built a capacity for being able to expect high quality and sustainable evaluation practices.

The first evidence that capacity building was taking place was the focus on evaluation at the earliest stages of implementation. The work of Lynn Jensen and Judy Peterson provided an example of what convincing evidence can do to sustain a program. In essence, it created the logical expectation that evaluating programs get results and supports the work of school counselors. This motivator and incentive has not gone away.

Rather, these expectations have become institutionalized. While interviewing the group of district directors they all agreed that the process has simply become an “expectation.” They attributed the creation of this expectation to the program’s initial element of choice (i.e., In order to play the game and get the money, certain hoops must be jumped through). They further explained that at some point something changed and it became an expectation (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

Over the years several key structural elements have been created to help sustain program evaluation. The first is the connection between the evaluation process and pre-service training. Because the process is formalized, it has become part of what aspiring school counselors learn within their coursework. Several individuals within the case expressed this development and one participant explained that new school counselors come in, “Speaking the language.” Furthermore, Tom Sasche provides 8 annual new Basic CCGP trainings annually. These trainings consist of an overview of the program and explicitly train new counselors in the evaluation process. An interesting element of these trainings involves the request that new counselors bring along an experienced

member of their counseling team. Tom Sasche explains the true purpose of these trainings while describing a conversation he had during one of these trainings:

He just finished his counseling program, just got his Masters Degree and he said, “I know CCGP inside and out. I can teach this class. There is nothing I can gain here and I shouldn’t even have to be here.” He was missing the point. The whole point is you are with your team and learning how your team implements the program. It is not a college course on Comprehensive Counseling, it is about how it is implemented in your school (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009).

This becomes a key point when evaluation capacity building is looked at more holistically. It would seem that Tom Sasche’s criticism is not that the new counselor does not understand the CCGP concepts, it is that there is much to learn simply from participating in a shared process with a group of professionals. When the actual practices of the job become intentional learning tools, capacity building reaches new and dynamic depths.

Many sources of evidence revealed that the actual evaluation process possesses capacity building effects. While interviewing the district directors all of them agreed that the site reviews are great venues for professional development. Having so much participation and reflection almost guarantees that the process is used intentionally. For instance many members described using site reviews as opportunities to “learn something new” or for others to be exposed to “modeling.” One Director explained that the side effects can impact many different levels and that on numerous occasions the review has less to do with the school under review and much more to do with who is in the audience.

She concluded her thought by recognizing that this benefit is difficult to measure (MMFG #1 by I.M. 3/18/2009).

To try to access the deeper elements of evaluation capacity building efforts present within this case, I explicitly questioned Dawn Stevenson and Tom Sasche on some of the construct elements presented by Preskill and Boyle (2008). The following exchange was outlined in my notes:

What do school counselors understand?

1) There are clearly defined program standards and objectives; 2) that these standards can be implemented at varying levels and can defend their position; 3) that evaluation can lead to program improvement; 4) that the process can be demanding, but is beneficial; 5) that the program is comprehensive, developmental, driven by data, and preventative; 6) that the program is delivered by a team and is not a position or role, and finally, 7) that the outcomes of the program are focused on students rather than on them.

What are school counselors able to do?

1) Conduct an evaluation, 2) present in front of a group of their colleagues, 3) collect data, 4) analyze their program needs and results, 5) evaluate other programs, 6) learn from the process

What do school counselors believe?

Dawn Stevenson replied:

I think it (evaluation) helps reinforce their belief that they are competent. Even if they are overwhelmed and they are saying, “I’m not doing this, I’m not doing this, I’m not doing this...” Yeah but, you are holding together a program that meets not just the basic criteria, but in some cases exemplary criteria. I think it just strengthens the beliefs in themselves and their own capacity. For instance, the last big evaluation we did 97% of counselors said they are happy with their jobs (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009).

Evaluation capacity building is not just about the trainings, the resources and the funding that goes along with supporting the CCGP evaluation process. It is also the belief systems and skills that grow out of engaging in the evaluation process itself. This case represents a working evaluation system that continues to grow and improve. Being a school counselor in this state involves working from a completely different mindset, mastering different sets of skills, and holding different levels of expectations. The notes above are supported throughout the case. School counselors really do have those understandings, skills, and beliefs about their work. In this case the logic that evaluations can be used to sustain and support school counseling programs is not an error in thinking.

Conclusion

Not many people in the field are knowledgeable of Utah’s CCGP evaluation system. This is unfortunate because they have an incredible story. Simply, Utah’s approach has gotten results. Evidence shows that the status and position of school counseling in Utah would be difficult for school counselors working in other states to even fathom. They have been able to use evaluation to sustain their program by focusing

on the dual purposes of oversight and compliance and continuous program improvement. Over time, an infrastructure was created that could expect quality evaluation practices. Opportunities for practitioners to be involved in decision making and actively engaged in a learning process has aided in building this infrastructure. Furthermore, Utah's story is one of constant reflection and growth. All of these factors indicate that school counseling programs and evaluations expectations have become institutionalized in Utah.

To demonstrate the elevated status mentioned earlier, even in the face of tumultuous economic times, Utah recently established mandated student to counselor ratios of 350 to 1. When school districts balked that this would put undue pressure on the teaching and other programs available in schools, the School Board returned with a commitment to school counseling. They expressed this commitment by stating that those schools that did not meet the mandate would not be eligible for school counseling funds or any other state funds (D.S. & T.S. #1 by I.M. 3/17/2009). This level of seriousness coming from the State School Board is not what you would typically expect within most states. It has been my experience that most State School Boards do not see school counseling as a priority and certainly would not leverage school counseling against such high stakes. This example and many others like it, suggest that it is about time we start paying attention to what has happened and what is happening in Utah.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF MOMENTUM

Introduction

The organizational role of program evaluation within both cases was very different. Missouri was hemmed in by what participants called, “local control,” while Utah did not seem as impacted by these constraints and was able to move school counseling initiatives through the state legislature. In analyzing these two cases, their differing roles are crucial in understanding the best practices for school counseling program evaluation. Both cases, despite their very different roles, can be deemed successful if we unravel the contexts in which they were conceived.

Of the vast sea of literature devoted to state educational policy, several key examples provide a general interpretation of state departments of education. Timar (1997) tracked the institutional development of state departments of education over 150 years and compared them to European models. Through this comparison, he illustrated that states in the United States have legal authority over education, but typically lack the administrative authority seen in other countries that aren't as attached to traditions of democracy. For instance, a state may set mandates and standards, but then leave the administrative decisions regarding what should actually be done to meet those mandates and standards in the hands of local districts and schools. In contrast, European models typically do not pass any mandates without some form of mitigation and idea about what will be done to meet to the mandate. Despite a long history of local control, current state and federal policies are becoming more involved in issues of educational improvement and many are struggling to shift power to the state level (Minnici and Hill, 2007). In this light, the

traditional lack of an administrative core makes the role of state departments of education increasingly ambiguous. Are they enforcers? Are they policy makers? Are they managers? Or are they reformers?

This ambiguity was expressed when the Center on Education Policy (CEP) (Minnici and Hill, 2007) investigated the capacity of states to implement the requirements of the federal, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act, 2001). They found great variability within state's capacities to lead, fund, train, and generally support the changes put forth by NCLB. They also found that NCLB compliance and oversight was only a small fraction of the state department of education initiatives:

Among many other duties, they [DOE] must design and carry out the state's own reform strategies, implement new state initiatives, accredit schools, license teachers, supervise charter schools, and oversee a broad range of programs, from early childhood to adult education, and from special education to vocational education (Minnici and Hill, 2007, p. 4).

Similarly, Martin, et al (In Press) found variability in state capacity levels to implement school counseling programs. Many states struggled to even locate strategies that might work in environments with high levels of local control.

Based on this perspective, it would seem that many states are struggling to define their roles and determine their levels of administrative authority over their initiatives. The interesting similarity between Missouri and Utah is that both states were able to define their roles. School counseling leaders seemed to understand what strategies best fit the given organizational settings. In Missouri, leaders recognized that local control was so

strong that they functioned best as a resource rather than an authority. In Utah, leaders recognized that they could develop an administrative core of authority.

In order for the findings of this study to be informative for those looking to improve the evaluation protocols of their own state school counseling programs, it would be important to assess the status of their state departments of education. I argue that individuals working within states that are strongly oriented towards local control should look to Missouri as a guide, and conversely, Utah should be a guide for those in states with a capacity to develop more centralized control. The following cross-case analysis highlights the best practices identified within the cases and identifies the ways they address common barriers to program evaluation presented within school counseling literature (Chapter II).

Evaluation Purposes and Theories

A major similarity was that both states contained several combinations of evaluation purposes. In Missouri the purposes of program improvement, knowledge development and program advocacy were identified. In Utah the purposes of program improvement and oversight and compliance were seen as priorities. The similar theme of program improvement was conceptualized in different ways and speaks to the overall organization of evaluation within each of the cases.

Because of the element of local control, Missouri created evaluation motivators and rationales for program improvement and knowledge development through the argument of program advocacy. Greene (1997) writes about advocacy evaluation models and argues within this line of theory that most evaluations are not free from subjectivity, but rather present certain “value commitments” (p. 26). In the case of Missouri and the

use of self-evaluation, the state was heavily involved in creating and supporting a host of ‘value commitments’ within the implementation and evaluation of the program. These commitments communicated the merits of implementing school counseling programs (i.e., preventative, comprehensive, deliverable, connected to local school goals, logically organized). The creation of these value commitments was necessary because they countered misconceptions of the school counselor role. For instance, many administrators rely on their counselors to respond to daily crises, coordinate testing programs, discipline students, and/or complete clerical tasks. As indicated within the case, one of the major purposes and rationales for school counselors to engage in self-evaluations was to combat misconceptions of the school counselor role held by others (primarily building administrators).

The purpose of knowledge development also involves the purpose of advocacy because of its role within the case. Due to the organization of state, state leaders had difficulty accessing statewide perspectives. Schools and districts working to implement counseling programs needed evidence to convince stakeholders (administrators, school boards, parents and teachers) that implementing the Missouri CGP was a worthwhile activity. Large statewide evaluations were used to both access a statewide perspective and provide practicing school counselors with an advocacy tool. Several examples within the case noted that statewide evaluations were used to secure further support and resources for implementing programs. Furthermore, the advocacy purpose of knowledge development was necessary at all levels of the system. For instance, when I asked Bragg Stanley about why the state was so committed to helping school counselors implement these programs, he replied, “They do it because they see it is important. See, that’s my

job, to make sure that they see it is important and a valuable use of resources to do this. But I also need the data, like the state study, to show why it is important” (B.S. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

Because school counseling is a full-fledged educational program in Utah, advocacy was less of an issue. Rather, all secondary school counselors participate in the program, therefore the priority of evaluation purpose within the state focused on creating evaluation procedures to sustain and strengthen program outcomes. Utah’s purpose of oversight and compliance is best captured by Wholey’s (1999) work on performance measurement systems, which are assessed by the following six criteria:

- 1) Agreed-goals and strategies are in place;
- 2) The performance measurement system is of sufficient technical quality;
- 3) Performance information is used in managing the program;
- 4) A reasonable degree of accountability is provided,
- 5) More effective or improved performance is demonstrated;
- 6) Performance information supports resource allocation or policy decision making (p. 230)

Utah has an established program with clear standards (criterion 1); the review process is consistent and has real endorsements and consequences (criterion 2); evaluation results are used to set local goals between review periods (criterion 3); school counselors are held accountable for their programs (criterion 4); the evaluation process creates an expectation of continuous growth (criterion 5); and finally, performance information was used to secure continued funding increases (criterion 6). Based on this assessment, I argue that Utah has a working performance measurement system.

This development is significant because Utah's level of formality and accountability is not referenced in any of the school counseling literature. It would seem that Utah has reached a level of establishment that goes beyond the current best practices offered by such models as Missouri. State activity in this configuration is much less focused on providing school counselors with tools for advocacy or resources that aid in self-evaluation, but more invested in the administrative duties that are required in creating and managing an effective performance management system.

Evaluation Participation

Participation within the contexts of the cases was the most dissimilar. In Missouri participation was voluntary. One would hope that the resources created by the state would be used, but there was no guarantee. Instead Missouri leaders worked creatively within their constraints by collaborating with others to supply engaging and rewarding opportunities. Good examples of this were the mentoring program, writing groups and the award system. Under these conditions, evidence supported a seemingly unconscious commitment of school counselors to voluntarily participate in research studies and statewide evaluations. I posit that this unique development of voluntary participation helped Missouri to create a complete evaluation protocol and in effect, provides evidence that practitioners are actually self-evaluating their programs.

On the other hand, Utah's participation was not voluntary and was a major strength within the case. Within effective performance measurement systems there is no expectation that participants value the system or for that matter, have any control over decision making. In Utah there was a great deal of input provided by the committee structure and the review process contained many qualities that enabled practitioners to

learn, share and grow from the experience. This balanced approach to participation paid dividends in the overall success of the evaluation approach and can be seen as a best practice within this context.

Evaluation Capacity Building

Within both cases capacity building can be viewed as the engine of these very different evaluation strategies. Missouri used capacity building to communicate shared value commitments to implement and evaluate a program within often challenging situations. It would seem that the resources designed understood and were sympathetic to the true conditions school counselors faced along this path. Trainings, resources, curriculum and materials all stemmed from this understanding. Furthermore, Missouri leaders saw the strength of collaboration. By uniting the interests of the state, counselor educators, and the school counseling professional organization, school counselors were presented with a shared message and feeling that someone was looking out for them. Defining and getting comfortable with the role of supporter, the state was able to build capacity through channels that would not be available were the state seen as an enforcer. For thirty years Missouri worked largely from this role. I argue that it is because of this role and approach to capacity building that Missouri is able to expect such high degrees of program implementation and voluntary self-evaluation. For instance, I speculate that the statewide studies and evaluations, if conducted in other local control states, would not attain similar results. Missouri has established levels of pride and shared values that were palpable throughout my time in the state.

Utah's evaluation capacity building can be expressed through the elevation of the profession within the state. School counseling works very hard to constantly improve the

structures and functioning of its processes. For thirty years their reflective activity created a capacity that used evaluation to constantly improve and demonstrate that improvement to others. Pride and commitment come from engaging in a rigorous process within a shared community. This community contains much deeper checks and balances than were expressed on paper. Their ability to bring meaning and value into performance measurement should be a model for other programs, even outside of school counseling. For instance, when interviewing the counseling director group, a participant shared that after a principal completed both a school counseling review and a state accreditation site-visit, he felt that the school counseling review was far more thorough, positive and focused on improvement. Moreover, she noted that this conversation took place 8 years ago. Based on Utah's history of continuous improvement, I cannot imagine where they might be in another 8 years.

Based upon the above analysis and using the organizational structures presented within the cases, the following table (Table II) was created. It describes the best practices that would be most helpful for those working within either local control (Missouri) or administrative authority (Utah). This is not an exhaustive list, but the strategies that were most fruitful within the cases.

Table II: State Level Evaluation Best Practices

| | Local Control | Administrative Authority |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Organizational Role</i> | Clearly define as a support | Clearly define as an authority |
| <i>Early Capacity Building</i> | Collaborate to communicate value commitments | Build coalitions to create momentum |
| <i>Statewide Evaluations</i> | Promote values and provide evidence for program advocacy | Create convincing evidence and capitalize on opportunities |
| <i>Main Strategies</i> | Supply school counselors with resources and rationales for self-evaluation | Create an effective performance measurement system |
| <i>Evaluation Participation</i> | Elicit deeper engagement through creative opportunities (i.e., mentoring program, writing groups, award system) | Create processes and structures that encourage input and community building (i.e., committee structure, review process, public display of work) |
| <i>Long Term Capacity Building</i> | Maintain collaborative relationships, supportive role, and model value commitments | Create processes that involve high degrees of reflection and intentional opportunities for learning |

Conclusion

Within the literature review I identified several possible underlying factors that contribute to the lack of program evaluation within the field. These factors were: (1) program evaluation discourse is directed towards school counselors' abilities to self-evaluate their programs and omits other stakeholder perspectives and needs, (2) program evaluation is inconsistently presented within school counseling models, (3) persistent

problems associated with school counselors and program evaluation have not been addressed, and (4) program evaluation use within school counseling examples do not recognize the full potential of program evaluation (e.g., applications of current program evaluation theory). It is important to discuss how the cases were able to inform or address these factors within their best practices.

When investigating the push for self-evaluation within the larger body of school counseling it is important to recognize that Missouri has the national stage. Norm Gysbers and the Missouri Program have set the tone for the rest of the field. Because the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2003) borrowed heavily from the Missouri program and the research base established in Missouri, it is no surprise that the field looks to these conceptions of evaluation as the standard. Within the literature review I interpreted this presentation of program evaluation as major factor that inhibited states from evaluating their school counseling programs. I felt that self-evaluation too narrowly defined the role of evaluation and omitted the perspectives and possible implications of evaluation focused at different levels within the system. After completing this study, it is clear that the focus on self-evaluation grew out of a local control environment. Unfortunately, the national presentation is unclear in describing how self-evaluation can work in conjunction with other evaluation purposes at the state level (e.g., Missouri's use of knowledge development through large scale evaluations and program advocacy). A best practice to take away from this case would be the explicit connection between convincing statewide evidence and self-evaluation. If other states working in local control environments were to gather a statewide perspective from which to advocate, school level self-evaluation efforts may be provided with a more meaningful advocacy tool. Citing the

work done in Missouri may not provide the convincing evidence or communicate the necessary value commitments to supplement the self-evaluation efforts of counselors working in other states. I feel that the presentation of self-evaluation would be greatly enhanced were these connections more explicitly stated.

Conversely, the Utah case did not use self-evaluation. It would seem that their evaluation presentation looks very different than what currently exists in the literature. Because school counselors are evaluating to meet the needs of the state, they operate on a different set of evaluation assumptions, protocols, skills, and outcomes. This evidence suggests that the universal presentation of self-evaluation may not be a usable or desirable evaluation strategy within all contexts.

The issue of inconsistent program evaluation presentation within the school counseling literature was a non-issue within both of these cases. Missouri represented a popular evaluation presentation within the literature, therefore Missouri school counselors were familiar with this presentation and did not suffer from confusing or contradicting messages. The combined message encompassing pre-service training through professional development and interaction with state resources all provided a consistent evaluation presentation. Utah did not suffer from a mixed presentation because they operated within a clearly articulated program evaluation process. Their levels of participation and evaluation use far exceeded what the presentations offered within the literature. Also, Utah had an ability to adapt the presentations within the literature to fit their processes. For instance, elements of language presented in the ASCA National Model (2003) was found in the Performance Review Process and the MEASURE model (Dahir and Stone, 2003), could be seen in the organization of the annual Data Projects. It

would seem that Utah was able to locate usable pieces from the literature and create an evaluation schema that best fit their context. I argue that in other states that do not have such an established evaluation perspective, locating the right program evaluation presentation may still represent an area of confusion. In fact, while talking to Norm Gysbers about this issue he said:

The field is fumbling its way along in terms of trying to figure this out [program evaluation]. I think you can see that very clearly. Carolyn Stone and Carolyn Dahir have their MEASURE concept and other people have different ways of talking about it. I think we are seeing different ideas proposed and so, is there a best way, or is there two best ways or whatever? (N.G. #1 by I.M. 4/8/2009).

The literature suggested that school counseling has not yet solved persistent problems associated with program evaluation. These persistent evaluation problems were school counselor resistance and fear; lack of understanding and training; and lack of commitment from the school counseling leaders and researchers (See Chapter II). Evidence from school counselors and participants within this study indicated that persistent problems associated with program evaluation were not present. I attribute this to two factors: 1) school counseling leaders defined their roles and clearly communicated their conceptions of program evaluation, and 2) evaluation capacity building within the cases influenced school counselors' attitudes, beliefs and skills regarding program evaluation. One of the most striking pieces of evidence within this study was the fact that there were so many shared program evaluation beliefs held by school counselors in two very different contexts (See school counselor responses to the program evaluation

questionnaire, Appendix A). I argue that in other states that have yet to build the evaluation capacity and communicate evaluation intentions, addressing these persistent problems must be a major focus of their efforts.

Finally, the literature suggests that school counseling has yet to see the full scope of what is possible by developing coherent and structured evaluation protocols within the states. Both of these examples express the importance of making program evaluation a priority within the implementation and support of school counseling programs.

Regardless of the context, program evaluation theory and practice suggests it has the power to advance programs to heights that are currently not recognized by the literature. Both states within this study invested in building infrastructures that can expect quality and sustained evaluation practices. In both cases school counselors have benefited from being part of a statewide schema that works to increase their effectiveness and legitimacy within their respective contexts. The field should note that these results involved a commitment of decades of time and an investment of millions of dollars. The result of these commitments and investments were evidenced throughout their respective systems. Unfortunately, the field has not yet recognized the importance of stressing or researching the role of program evaluation at the state level.

So what did we learn from analyzing two exemplary cases of program evaluation? We learned that these states were able to orchestrate an overall approach to program evaluation and their programs have benefitted. Despite the notion that the field is currently “fumbling along” as Norm Gysbers stated, these states have identified their roles and remained committed program evaluation. They were not passive in the hope that school counselors will figure all of this out on their own. These states took action and

built evaluation practices and capacities that are not currently recognized in the literature. Because of this action, common factors that inhibit program evaluation were nearly nonexistent. This study presents a great opportunity to begin a conversation about what statewide evaluation protocols look like and involve. These two examples broaden the horizons of program evaluation and reveal what is possible when states, instead of just individuals, engage in a role and build evaluation capacity throughout their spheres of influence.

Moreover, this study stressed the importance of context in understanding how program evaluations can be used to support or administer state level school counseling programs. Utah's evaluation system has developed to a degree that calls into question the field's focus on program advocacy and suggests more attention should be paid to performance measurement. As a result of this inquiry, I argue that context specific best practices can be identified at the state level (Table II) and can be used to better support and position school counselors within vastly different state educational organizations. The findings of this analysis, though not comprehensive, suggest that program evaluation efforts at the state level warrant more attention and present opportunities to solve old problems and move school counseling into new uncharted territories.

APPENDIX

2009 STATEWIDE PROGRAM EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE: RESULTS

| Questions | Counselor Percentage Responses: MO | Counselor Percentage Responses: UT |
|--|---|---|
| Program Evaluation Training (click all that apply) | | |
| None | 3% | 0% |
| Integrated within school counseling coursework | 59% | 56% |
| Graduate level program evaluation course(s) | 42% | 55% |
| School/District supported professional development | 72% | 82% |
| State supported professional development | 58% | 82% |
| What is currently the main purpose(s) of program evaluation in your state? (click all that apply) | | |
| Improve school counseling programming | 92% | 92% |
| Assess the allocation of resources | 33% | 62% |
| Develop new and innovative practices and procedures | 62% | 71% |
| Provide information for administrative decision-making | 48% | 54% |
| Demonstrate accountability to requirements and mandates | 83% | 93% |
| Program evaluation currently assesses the effects of the school counseling program on: (click all that apply) | | |
| Student Achievement | 78% | 86% |
| Student Behavior | 78% | 66% |
| School Climate | 73% | 81% |
| Parent Involvement | 65% | 78% |
| Community Involvement | 53% | 62% |
| School Counseling Perceptions | 75% | 78% |
| Program evaluation results provide practitioners with: (click all that apply) | | |
| Timely results reports | 44% | 58% |
| Suggestions for modifications to enhance services | 70% | 89% |
| Information regarding program strengths | 92% | 95% |
| Information regarding program weaknesses | 92% | 96% |
| Comparisons to accepted standards or best practices | 49% | 66% |
| Goals for future performance | 75% | 88% |
| Program evaluations collect detailed process information regarding: (click all that apply) | | |
| Program implementation (management agreements, etc.) | 73% | 88% |
| Delivery of services (responsive services, classroom lessons, etc.) | 93% | 96% |
| Counselor run interventions (closing the achievement gap plans, etc.) | 65% | 90% |
| School-wide programs or interventions | 68% | 84% |
| Interdisciplinary collaborations | 35% | 61% |
| Program evaluation results are mainly directed towards: (click all that apply) | | |
| General public | 14% | 14% |
| Administrators | 75% | 71% |
| Practicing School Counselors | 91% | 96% |
| State legislators | 1% | 26% |
| Program evaluations assess: (click all that apply) | | |
| Whether or not the services that are being delivered are the services that have been mandated | 57% | 74% |
| Percentages of students and sub-populations that are being served | 49% | 77% |
| Effectiveness of school counseling on student related outcomes | 85% | 87% |
| General implementation of programming | 84% | 90% |
| Whether or not career or education plans are being properly used | 50% | 74% |
| Degree to which school counselors are participating in non-counselor related duties | 66% | 78% |

| | | |
|--|------|-----|
| Program evaluations provide: (click all that apply) | | |
| Opportunities to report innovations | 43% | 72% |
| Opportunities to improve procedural processes | 82% | 85% |
| Opportunities to create state best practices | 55% | 67% |
| Opportunities to express practitioner generated feedback or criticism | 60% | 68% |
| Program evaluations should be used to: (click all that apply) | | |
| Demonstrate compliance and accountability | 78% | 82% |
| Assess school counselors' effectiveness in improving student outcomes | 79% | 82% |
| Contribute to Theory building efforts within the Comprehensive School Counseling movement | 45% | 46% |
| Improve school counseling procedures and practices | 90% | 95% |
| Program evaluation is: (click all that apply) | | |
| A waste of time and resources | .01% | 8% |
| A threat to school counselors | 0% | 4% |
| An Administrative task that does not connect to school counseling practice | 2% | 6% |
| A meaningful process for recognizing program strengths and weaknesses | 84% | 74% |
| A useful tool for programmatic goal setting and improvement | 80% | 78% |
| A useful tool for school counseling advocacy | 81% | 75% |
| A useful tool for demonstrating accountability and compliance | 74% | 82% |
| School counselor participation in program evaluation includes: (click all that apply) | | |
| Delivering needs assessments | 88% | 91% |
| Formulating evaluation questions | 47% | 63% |
| Writing evaluation plans | 34% | 61% |
| Selecting data collection methods | 56% | 82% |
| Designing data collection instruments | 42% | 70% |
| Writing evaluation reports | 40% | 73% |
| Managing the evaluation process | 49% | 66% |
| Interpreting results and drawing conclusions | 78% | 84% |
| Disseminating evaluation results | 60% | 75% |
| Program evaluation support includes: (click all that apply) | | |
| Explicit written instructions for conducting program evaluations | 40% | 70% |
| Online resources to learn about and aid in program evaluation efforts | 36% | 46% |
| Meeting time to discuss, plan and manage evaluation process | 64% | 75% |
| Opportunities to share evaluation experiences with colleagues and to exchange evaluation ideas | 67% | 74% |
| Time to attend workshops, courses and seminars on evaluation | 60% | 66% |
| Opportunities to receive help or trouble-shoot with an administrator, evaluator or experienced colleague | 59% | 67% |
| Performance evaluations of School counselors are: (click all that apply) | | |
| Related to the work of implementing comprehensive guidance and school counseling programs | 84% | 80% |
| Related to state performance standards | 72% | 80% |
| Related to district performance standards | 68% | 69% |
| Assessed using an instrument specific to school counselors | 70% | 75% |
| Assessed using an instrument specific to teachers | 13% | 11% |
| Assessed using an instrument specific to administrators | 4% | 7% |
| Administered by building level administrators | 69% | 50% |
| Administered by district level administrators | 14% | 46% |
| Administered by state level administrators | 3% | 30% |
| School Counselors are not evaluated | 2% | 3% |

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