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Conceptual Model of Career Counseling for Better Preparing Students for the Transition from School to Work

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CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CAREER COUNSELING FOR BETTER PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

by

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ABSTRACT

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CAREER COUNSELING FOR BETTER PREPARING
STUDENTS FOR THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Brian Christopher Preble
Old Dominion University, 2017
Chair: Dr. John M. Ritz

The purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model of career counseling for high school counselors to assist students with the school-to-work transition. A framework addressing the nature and substance of interactions and activities that support workforce preparation was needed. Qualitative research was conducted. Four focus groups comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, managers and employers from business and industry, and high school counselors were held to collect data. Two coders established intercoder agreements and a kappa was calculated to determine interrater reliability. Economic data obtained from interviews with business specialists at America's Job Center of California and the literature review assisted with data triangulation. The results indicate a need for comprehensive and responsive career counseling at the high school level that allows for self-discovery, incorporates employment data, and utilizes learning experiences in a systematic fashion. A conceptual model of workforce counseling was developed. Counselors maintain an involved leadership role, yet career development activities involve both the school and local community. Workforce counseling proposes that career development be school-wide and systematic, including specific, vertically-aligned, career development and counseling activities to help with the transition from school to work. The model enhances career and occupational awareness, with knowledge of self and the working world through assessments, seminars, activities, and planning resources. Workforce counseling commences before a student

begins his or her freshman year and develops throughout their four years of study. The model fosters soft and technical skill development to aid in general employability through use of career and technical education.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father, my friends, mentors, and students, without whom none of my achievements or successes would have been possible.

Brian C. Preble

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The list of individuals that contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation is quite extensive. I offer heartfelt thank you for all who have assisted and encouraged me along this journey.

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I must thank the students I have worked with over the course of my career in education. The lessons learned from interacting with you have shaped the educator I am today, motivating me to improve, advocate, create, and change myself, my practice, and the system.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dynamic changes in America have dramatically altered the economy and the world of work. Post-recession United States has been characterized by high debt and sluggish job creation (Docksai, 2013). Frum (2012) estimated it would take another half decade before the United States returns to full employment. Americans remain uncertain. According to Frum, the *Panic of 2008* stimulated feelings of "ambient anxiety" (2012, p. 26). The United States is a fearful, worried nation with an overwhelmed political system and a weak economy, the nature of which reveals additional insights.

The digital revolution of the 21st Century helped usher in this era of economic instability. In addition to new technology—and partially due to it—globalization and job redesign have shifted and transformed the nature of work (Savickas, 2005b). Gardner (2007) declared the third millennium a time of vast changes so epochal they will possibly dwarf those of previous eras. He contends that the future world will require capacities which have up to this point been mere options. Gordon (2010) explained that society is entering a "Cyber-Mental Age" (p. 43) focused on innovations resulting in ultra-high technology, intelligent machines, and systems, which has created labor demands whereby people possess knowledge instead of the experience and training of the passing computer age. Quite ironically, opportunities for work exist; yet, employers and manufacturers face skilled talent shortages. Many seeking work lack employability.

In the midst of these changes, the current generation of students, dubbed "Generation Recession" (para. 1) by Ratner (2009) face grave crises. Ratner estimated a loss of approximately 2.5 million jobs for this segment of the population, revealing that youth have been hurt the most in this current economic downturn. Adolescents face other obstacles. According to Donahoe and

Tineda (1999) many adolescents of the post-computer age are coping with issues of drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, increased poverty, a decaying family structure, declining academic performance, alarming high school drop-out rates, and joblessness. Disadvantaged youth leave school ill prepared for employment in the labor market that increasingly demands greater technical and cognitive skills. Those without career orientation or are deficient in skills and training are expected to be "'thrashing' or 'milling about'" (p. 2) to successive low-wage jobs lacking benefits and little chance for upward mobility. A positive career orientation has shown to be an inhibitor of adolescent problem behavior (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). To best address current issues faced by this demographic, the educational community needs to amend the way it delivers career counseling services to high school students.

The need for extensive career education (awareness, education, and preparedness) is at an all-time high, and it is the function of schools to deliver a total educational package that assists learners in attaining maximum self-sufficiency, to actualize their potential, and solidify their identities (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013). Though traditional career exploration and interventions have proven beneficial to learners in any form (Savickas, 2005b), a new frame of reference and updated methodologies—a paradigm shift—is needed for supplementing current practice and assisting students in this postmodern era. As in previous eras, yet more poignant today, "counselors need to know a great deal about the world of work and the paths into it" (Ginzberg, 1971, p. 48). A new model of career development for practitioners of counseling and learners is in order.

Statement of the Problem

Current career guidance practices have limited success in assisting students to prepare for the world of work after high school completion. Standard practice calls for students to take an

inventory or assessment and identify an occupation of choice followed by their own basic research of the occupation; all is objective. The purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model for career counseling to be used by high school counselors to better assist students with the school-to-work transition.

This model will provide school counselors with a framework as to the nature and substance of interactions and activities of high school guidance that assist with the school-to-work transition. A conceptual model of career counseling for professionals to assist high school students with career development is important for guidance counselors and high school students as many are ill prepared for the world of work, possess career indecision, and need a bolstering of self-efficacy. Furthermore, young people must develop skills, abilities, and attributes employers' desire in addition to knowledge of industry demands. They must also acquire and practice employable soft skills and become familiar with knowledge of pathways of education and training that meet their career objectives. Finally, the model aims to add a more subjective and constructivist approach to supplement career development and counseling.

Research Questions

This study provided a basis to develop a conceptual model for career counseling for high school guidance counselors that assists with students' school-to-work transition. The following research questions were employed to guide this research:

RQ$_1$: What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition

from school to the world of work?

RQ$_2$: What do students need to better prepare for the school-to-work transition?

RQ$_3$: Can a model be developed to meet the needs of students and practices of

high school counselors to enhance workforce preparation?

These research questions were developed based on the theoretical and empirical research literature identified regarding these questions. The model was developed by the use of qualitative investigation. Four focus groups comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, managers and employers from business and industry, and high school counselors, provided data used in the analysis.

<div align="center">**Background and Significance**</div>

Alterations to the world economy of the 21st Century have created a myriad of new questions regarding the fundamental concept of a career, specifically how one can successfully negotiate many job changes in his or her lifetime without altering or losing a sense of self and one's social identity (Savickas, 2005a). Current career exploration practices tend to be objective in orientation, employing an assessment that does not lend itself to considering important nuances of individual differences (Taber, Hartung, Briddick, Briddick, & Rehfuss, 2011). Common career exploration relies upon psychometric inventories, assessments, and scales and/or an appraisal of vocational interests. Savickas (2005a) revealed the inadequate and somewhat archaic nature of these assessment activities, citing a report from the Saratoga Institute (2000). All were adequate during the 20th Century, a time of greater economic stability and secure employment, where one could expect to have one job at one organization for an extended period of time. Students in the postmodern era are projected to possess 10 jobs on average during their lifetime (Savickas, 2005a).

A more comprehensive and personally meaningful representation of the self can be ascribed through additional measures. For example, two individuals may possess the same typology yet different psychometric variables: motives, goals, strivings, self-image, and adaptive strategies (Savickas, 1995). People are more than a sum of scores.

Dynamic social, economic, and intellectual changes require alterations and revisions to the content and methods, making career development current and relevant. According to Savickas (2005b) a paradigm shift from objective to more subjective and constructivist methodologies is required. Identity, flexibility, employability, commitment, emotional intelligence, and lifelong learning should become components of career development practices.

A change in focus and additional considerations need to be added to the current practice to better prepare youth for the world of work. Hartung, Porfeli, and Vondracek (2008) call for a shift from an emphasis on biology to a more social psychosocially derived construct. Many concur calling for a more robust, subjective, and therapeutic endeavor, which fills in gaps and facilitates deeper perspective (Taber et al., 2011).

Comprehensive career development at the high school level should address the issue of career adaptability. According to Career Construction Theory (Hartung et al., 2008), adaptation is essential, as youth should expect to have ongoing transitions in the workplace due to a continuously rapid changing workforce dubbed "serial careers" (p. 64). Changing demands and opportunities will be, and currently in many instances are, the norm. To remain productive and gainfully employed adaptability constitutes a critical element of work success. Brown (2002) advises for the preparation of students for a series of careers and life roles.

Though the origins of the counseling profession were firmly rooted in vocational education and guidance (Gray & Herr, 1998), a study completed by the American School Counselor Association revealed that its members spent less time on career counseling and more on academic and personal/social issues (Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin, 2012). Furthermore, some question the career selection strategies currently in use (Savickas & Lent, 1994). To complicate matters, a study conducted by Domene, Shapka, and Keating (2006) revealed that

few students seek the assistance of their counselor with career-related issues. According to Collins (2010) students need career decision-making assistance, as information is constantly changing and often confusing and conflicting with the complex global economy. The significance of this study will be the development of a conceptual model that assists counselors with career development practices, techniques, and understandings when working with students. The career counseling model will be developed with both limitations and assumptions considered.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model of career counseling to be used by high school guidance counselors to assist with the school-to-work transition. Field testing the model was not the purpose of this research. Ideally, future studies will continue to explore the topic of career counseling practices at the high school level and use this model when assisting with the school-to-work transition.

The conceptual model was influenced by use of four focus groups comprised of 6 to 12 individuals each and composed of a purposive sample of subjects that were either unemployed individuals searching for work, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, employers and managers from business and industry, and high school counselors. Unemployed individuals searching for work were either without a job or filling temporary positions. Gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians had maintained sought-after employment for over a year. Employers and managers were either small business owners or individuals who worked under the auspices of a human resources department. High school counselors were staff members at public secondary schools. The study did not include current high school students, recent high school graduates, college students, military recruitment personnel, or individuals working for

proprietary educational institutions. Volunteers may not truly represent the populace or members of their specific group due to the nature of self-selection (Boughner, 2010). However, focus groups comprised of volunteers were deemed appropriate due to their attributes being congruent with the goals of the study.

According to Morgan (1996), comparisons of focus groups to other research methodologies reveal a convergence of similar results; in fact, the nature of this technique allows for depth of information. That said the use of focus groups to obtain data posed possible limitations. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), dynamics must be taken into account when employing focus groups. Morgan (1996) explained that a successful session relies on mutual self-disclosure and is linked to the moderator, who determines the agenda and forum for discussion and must possess the ability to assist in the process of producing focused interactions. Members must feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings with the other members of the group in order to obtain candid input from all participants. However, when one gathers multiple individuals into a group they seldom act as true equals; some participants are likely to dominate, while others may feel reluctant to express their individual perspectives (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Morgan (1996) explained that sometimes members may polarize. In addition, participants may feel pressure to fit in and conform or to state socially desirable answers and not express opinions counter to the group majority (Hays & Singh, 2012).

The researcher may pose specific limitations. Relationships with several of the participants may have allowed for the creation of a halo effect and increased engagement. One may assume the researcher undertaking the role as facilitator with connections with many of the participants might have impacted their ability to share fully and candidly or made them feel obligated to do such. Finally, the coding and assessment regarding the quality of participant

comments in the focus groups was based on two individuals' judgements, both that of the researcher and the additional code rater.

The conceptual model was not designed to answer all of the problems associated with student preparation for workforce education and was not intended to be an all-encompassing, "one-size-fits-all," career counseling methodology. In addition, the model was not designed to examine the school-to-work transition in totality. Rather, it was designed to complement the established practices of career exploration—such as use of career assessments and inventories, research assignments, mock interviews, and the like—while adding new insights, focuses, practices, and norms to counselor-student interactions during guidance counseling. The model solely addresses the two critical areas, career counseling and the transition from school-to-work.

Finally, data collection was limited to a region of California. Both the populations that participated in focus group sessions and the employment data used for data triangulation originated from the Salinas Valley, within Monterey County, California.

Assumptions

Assumptions were made about the conceptual model and focus group participants. Previous research has provided evidence for traditional approaches to career exploration, counseling, and development beneficial (Ryan, 1999; Savickas, 2005b). This model also assumes that every high school student, regardless of prior career exploration and development, would benefit with supplemental career counseling of a more individualized, subjective, and dynamic nature to foster the development of self-efficacy, choice, adaptability, and preparation for jobs that will materialize in the years to come. Also, select focus group participants and focus groups represented knowledgeable populations with regard to both counseling at the high school level and the world of work.

Procedures

This research study was conducted in distinct stages. First, a review of literature, including topics on career counseling, the school-to-work transition, workforce education, career exploration, guidance strategies, and conceptual models was completed. A semi-structured interview protocol was created to interview focus group participants, stemming from both the review of literature and the research questions. Next, the formation of four predetermined homogeneous groups followed. Individual focus group sessions were conducted and transcriptions were completed. Data provided from each session were analyzed. Intercoder agreement will be sought. A Cohen's Kappa of at least .70 was needed to validate the results from the four data sets (Wood, 2007). Data triangulation, in the forms of data source, methods, research, and theoretical perspectives, strengthened the study. The results from three data sources—the review of literature, the four focus group sessions, and employment data provided by the State Employment Development Department—were used to complete a conceptual model of career counseling at the secondary level to better assist students with the school to work transition.

Definition of Terms

To assist the reader, the following terms were defined:

Adaptability: Attitudes, competencies, and behaviors individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them. It involves coping with vocational tasks, transitions, and personal traumas (Savickas, 2005b).

Career: According to Super (1957), the course of events that constitute a life; a lifestyle choice, opposed to a definition of work (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005).

Career Counseling: A systematic approach to assist individuals in selecting an occupation (Gray & Herr, 1998; Niles & Harris-Bowlsby, 2005; Super, 1957). It includes counseling activities associated with career choices over an individual's lifespan (Zunker, 2006).

Career Guidance: All components of activities and services at agencies, educational institutions, and other establishments that offer career-related educational programs and counseling (Zunker, 2006). An applied field, a structured intervention to help people realize the opportunities that are open to them (Ginzberg, 1971).

Conceptual Model: A mental model allowing one to receive and process information and respond accordingly (Mackay, 2014).

Focus Group: A type of interview research where a homogeneous group of participants is asked a set of predetermined questions in an attempt to gather data from both responses and interactions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Foundational Skills and Qualities: Three attributes believed to support the competencies needed for successful job performance: (a) basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, speaking, and listening, (b) thinking skills such as creative and critical thinking, learning how to learn, and problem solving, and (c) personal qualities such as responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Postmodern: A philosophical position in reaction to logical positivism which argues there is no fixed truth and adheres to a constructivist paradigm (Zunker, 2006).

Self-efficacy: The belief, conviction, or expectation that one can successfully execute a behavior required to produce the outcomes. The stronger the efficacy, and/or mastery expectations, the more active the efforts (Bandura, 1977). Beliefs people have about their capabilities to exert influence over events that shall affect their lives (Bandura, 1997). In essence,

one's belief patterns are correlated to their thoughts, feelings, and actions as they influence motivation.

School-to-Work Transition: The link, arrangement, or connection between education and employment opportunities (Gray & Herr, 1998).

Vocational Personality: An individual's career related abilities, needs, values, and interests (Savickas, 2005b).

Workforce Education: Education that facilitates growth of learners who are competent in problem solving, collaboration, making meaning, life-long learning, adaptable and flexible worker citizens, change agents, and practitioners of a democratic process (Miller & Gregson, 1999).

Summary and Overview of Chapters

In order for students to better prepare for their transition to the world of work and for counselors to better assist them, it was imperative to address the issue of traditional career counseling being objective in nature and therefore of limited benefit and value to fully prepare students for their future careers. The purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model for career counseling to be used by school counselors to better assist with the school-to-work transition. This conceptual model will provide a framework which adds subjectivity to career development and counseling to be used in the creation of activities and both individual and group counselor-student sessions to help students become career ready.

This chapter comprised an overview and background of the problem. In summary, dramatic economic changes on a global scale have altered the world of work in the United States. Extensive and relevant career education and vocational guidance, beyond current standard practices, is needed to best prepare adolescents for the transition from school to work. There is a

need for a conceptual model of workforce counseling to assist high school guidance professionals with career development. Successful workforce counseling enables practitioners to best assist students' development of self-efficacy, knowledge of self, career exploration, understanding of educational and training pathways that lead to gainful employment opportunities, and the skills, attributes, and abilities employers desire. Subsequent chapters will complete the study. Chapter II reviews the theoretical and empirical literature on the topics of career development and career counseling, the school-to-work transition and workforce education, educational models of counseling and guidance practices, and conceptual models. The concepts for the semi-structured interview protocol used in the focus group research originated from knowledge gained in this chapter. Chapter III provides an explanation of the methodology, including a detailed description of the focus group technique, the study population, instrumentation, data collection methods, and the data analysis performed. Findings of the study will be presented in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V will include the summary of the study, conclusions, including a conceptual model for high school guidance counseling to enhance learner preparedness for the school-to-work transition, and recommendations for implementing the findings of this study and further studies that might be undertaken.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to achieve a literature review for this study, the researcher utilized resources from the library, Internet, journals, and governmental publications related to the topic of career development. Career counseling activities are often a feature in school guidance practices. Career and technical education (CTE) and the broader practice of career counseling influence the work of school counselors in secondary education. While both have adapted to current changes in the American and global social and economic landscapes—modernizing their aims, goals, objectives, and practices—thus far there have been few systematic efforts to examine the accomplishments and limitations associated with school counseling services and their ability to remain current.

The underlying interdependence and logic requires an awareness of the historical development of school guidance counseling, workforce education, and the broader practice of career counseling as part of this literature review. This review aims to provide an accurate depiction of occupational counseling services at the secondary level and to highlight possible new approaches to improve the provision of career counseling. This chapter will delve into four main topics. The first section examines the topic of work, focusing on the complex definition of work and why people engage in it. Section two will explore workforce education, providing background information, current trends, and future projections of career and technical education. Section three provides a background on the history and development of career guidance, including school counseling. Finally, a section that defines conceptual models and explains why and how they are created is included.

The Topic of Work

Work Defined

Work is a paradox. Though a relatively simple concept, deep reflection reveals much complexity. Work is omnipresent and influential, playing an important role defining individuals, cities, towns, and nation states. Work impacts everyone. In fact, according to Gardner (1997) "work stands at the center of modern life" (p. 127). Holland (1973) explained, "Everyone has vocational decisions to make and vocational problems to resolve" (p. 1). Parsons (1909) declared the choice of an occupation to be one of the most important steps in a person's life. Super (1957) declared, "If the average adult's twenty-four hour day is examined to ascertain how he spends his time, we note that his occupation absorbs more of his time than does any other type of activity" (p. 17).

Definitions of the term work reveal its complex nature. Work is a social construct, defined differently, broadly or narrowly, with great complexity or great simplicity, depending on context. Meanings can be highly personal. That said, Super (1976) stated the term was used without definition by scholars within fields which rely heavily on it, under the basic assumption everyone knows what it is. Hoyt and Wickwire (1999) suggested the use of Hoyt's 1975 definition of career, that had been adopted by the National Career Development Association: "conscious effort, other than that involved in activities whose purpose is either coping or relaxation, aimed at producing benefits for oneself and/or for oneself and others" (pp. 49-50).

Related terms, though often erroneously used synonymously, demonstrate the dynamic nature of the role of work in our lives. Work-related terms can be understood with regard to their context, or location, along a spectrum from local to global constructs: task, position, job, occupation, vocation, avocation, and career (Super, 1976). In addition, contrasting terms exist.

Play and leisure are understood to be the opposite of work (Super, 1976). Gutting (2012) argued that leisure should be our primary goal. Play has been defined as, "an activity for its own sake," while leisure is "time free from required effort or for the free use of abilities and pursuit of interests" (Super, 1976, p. 9) or "productive activity enjoyed for its own sake" (Gutting, 2012, para. 5). Aristotle explained, "we work to have leisure, on which happiness depends" (Gutting, 2012, para. 4). One does not have to look outside the realm of work for contrast, as conflicting realities exist within.

Rose (2004; 2008) addressed the erroneous division within the world of work, the hand-brain binary. Work has been categorized and classified for millennia. Societies have created a bipolar reality: mental vs. manual, blue vs. white, neck down or neck up, skilled or unskilled, experiential vs. formal knowledge, body vs. mind. Rose (2004) critically revealed the cognitive dimensions of physical work, involving codes, rhythms, timing, and sequencing, and true commonalities with all forms. Even so, a deep bias exists, possibly rooted in the division.

Work can possess a negative connotation. Work is often denoted as a burden that individuals bear out of necessity (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001). Super (1976) added it is often described by behavior scientists not only as a burden but curse or social obligation. Parsons (1909) offered possible explanation for such sentiments stating, "an occupation out of harmony with the worker's aptitudes and capacities means inefficiency, unenthusiastic and perhaps distasteful labor, and low pay" (p. 3). Gutting (2012) argued the ambivalence may stem from the reality of wage labor, "work-for-pay" (para. 3), and not doing work for its own sake. Bertrand Russell (1932) questioned society's belief in work's virtuousness, and he claimed it harmful. He declared there was too much work done in the world. All has been culturally reinforced, exemplified by such popular sayings such as, "Satan finds

some mischief for idle hands to do" (para. 1). Russell contended individuals were kept away from a world of leisure due to this belief of completing work for its own sake. The duty of work was for board and lodging. Accordingly, he argued that working hours should be reduced to four. And yet, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon (2001) contend that the human species "would not have survived if most of us had not developed a taste for work" (p. 15), particularly good work, of expert quality, that benefits society at large, that which is excellent, ethical, and engaging for the individuals partaking in it (Gardner, 2007).

All told, work is something to be taught and learned, something for which one prepares. Workplace literacy skills include higher academics, which include reading comprehension, mathematics, and science, decision-making, and group procession competencies (Gray & Herr, 1998). Gray and Herr revealed a hierarchy of basic skills beginning with work ethics such as work habits, speech, dress, values, and people skills, followed by academic and ultimately occupational proficiencies. Many of these can be learned on the job.

Why We Work

Individuals engage in work for various reasons. Beyond economic motives, individuals engage in work for social, economic, political, and psychological reasons.

Economic principles influence the reason why the majority of individuals engage in work. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) explained work is "what we must do in order to generate energy for survival and comfort" (p. 10). Labor markets have created supply-and-demand exchanges based upon human capital which create competition for jobs and determine wages (Gray & Herr, 1998). Super (1957) noted relative level of income being a factor in work satisfaction and/or morale. Lack of economic success in our culture is often explained by a paradigm that includes skills and abilities. Conventional wisdom holds that unemployment and poverty can be explained

by a lack of occupational skills (Gray & Herr, 1998). And yet, economics cannot entirely explain the reasons why individuals engage in work.

Social factors influence why many individuals engage in specific work. The American Dream reveals the central role work plays in our culture. Gray and Herr (1998) explained the United States is a social organization whose social fabric is held together by "hope" (p. 30), the expectation for middle class status and upward mobility, and belief in potential and opportunity. Individuals aim to improve their social status by improving their occupations (Super, 1957). Hilgendorff (2013) adds society's standards and programming influence why Americans work and explain our incessant, energizing, and exhausting drive for success. After our primary and secondary school years introduce people to the notions of failure and success, individuals reach adulthood and have received "basic programming: the harder you work, the better you will be, the more people will like you, and the more material success you will have" (para. 2).

Work affords many with purpose and identity. According to Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2005), work, for many Americans, is viewed as the most important source of identity. Upon meeting a new individual, one of the first questions asked is, "What do you do?" In fact, Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey explained that occupational titles are typically used to identify a person more than any other single characteristic. This social identity, related to occupation, is a defining characteristic in the American class structure (Lind, 1995). Super (1957) stated that in our fluid society occupation was the main determinant of social class and in our culture the work one performs told more about that individual than any other item of information. This may be due to the result of role expectations and work routines that establish social behaviors which must be conformed to and occupational personalities that "develop as a result of interests in the problems

of work, pride in skills, investment, internalization of motives, and sponsorship by professors" (Super, 1957, p. 29).

For many, work brings meaning. In fact, Victor Frankl (1959) noted it was one of three sources of meaning, next to courage and love. Work affords many with an opportunity for self-expression, an outlet for one's abilities, interests, and needs (Super, 1957). This is not always the case. Yalom (1980) explained that modern-day work, "what there is of it," (p. 448) no longer offers meaning as it lacks any creative outlet and intrinsic value. Beyond social identity and life meaning, work can influence an individual's mental state, especially if the tasks match the need of the worker.

Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon (2001) contend that doing good work "feels good" (p. 5). Csikszentmihalyi (1997) coined the metaphor "flow" (p. 29) to describe the mental state individuals experience when completing a task they are highly engaged in, commonly described as "being in the zone" (p. 29), complete immersion, a sense of effortlessness, harmony, or being in a state of ecstasy. Though often sensed when completing a favorite activity, individuals experience flow at work, when challenges are met with fully-involved high skills. How active, strong, and alert one is depends on the specific task at hand. Concentration is typically highest when individuals are on the job, using skills, and understanding what needs to be completed (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2001). Therefore, a job and the work therein, a central part of one's life—40% of one's waking life, taking most of a person's psychic activity along with leisure and maintenance—must be satisfying (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

An individual's self-worth may stem from the work they do, as it often stimulates feelings of self-fulfillment (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). Gray and Herr (1998) stated career, motivation, and self-worth are assumed to be interconnected, reciprocal, and interactive. They

cite findings of unemployment that reveal the importance of work and employment on an individual's self-concept and motivation. Super (1957) discussed the prestige factor influencing why people work being more of a need for individuals in higher level positions. In addition, Super explained that work establishes class distinctions and other stratifications, brought about by status or power, shared or divergent values, and superiority-inferiority relations.

Many engage in work for religious purposes or understand work as an act for the Divine. Early Christians developed an understanding of work being beneficial, which led to the origins of such notions as "idleness was akin to sinfulness" (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005, p. 6), the belief in sharing of the fruits of one's labor, work as a means of serving God, and ultimately the "Protestant work ethic" (p. 6).

Work-related concerns often take the national spotlight. Gary Gutting (2012) explained that the word job is significantly relevant, especially when used by politicians. At times, unemployment is a pressing national concern. Gray and Herr (1998) stated societies measure "a better" (p. 41) life with the "standard of living" (p. 41) metric, in which an unskilled, unemployed, and underemployed population is a detriment. They mention that the United States possesses the best salaried and educated professional workforce in the world, yet at the same time possesses the worst educated and unskilled non-professional hourly workforce when compared to other major economic global powers. Work is essential in maintaining a standard of living; if the value of imported goods and services exceeds that of exports, a drain of wealth out of the country will occur (Gray & Herr, 1998).

Governmental policies influence work significantly, either directly or indirectly. In fact, unemployment is a pressing national concern and the term *jobs* is a highly relevant word used by politicians (Gutting, 2012). According to Collins (2015), it is typical for all governments to step

in to assist the economy to achieve the goals of growth, full employment, and price stability. Governments may aim to control aggregate demand and instability due to speculation and the power of Wall Street (Pollin, Aronowitz, & Wright, 2013).

Public policy, which stems from legislation created and enacted at the local, state, and federal levels (Gray & Herr, 1998), provides an example of government's influence on work. Though he disagreed with the premise of the public sphere having the ability to create jobs and argued only real growth can come from work created in the private sector, DiLorenzo (1984) noted the popularity of the phenomena of government-created jobs that became popular under President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s. According to Gray and Herr (1998), other examples of governmental policy include aspects of workforce education, which helps support the economy and greatly influences employment in America. It is funded by the government and instigated through public policy. Policy must not mention work outright to have influence. In Europe, political cooperation between nations led to economic integration influencing work beyond market forces (Armstrong & Drysdale, 2009).

In addition to public policy and job creation, government can influence the world of work in an array of manners, some wholehearted and good, and some not. Government can utilize its power to tax and spend through fiscal policy, regulating the supply of money, and setting interest rates. Bohn (2013) explained the manipulation of a reserve package could be used to *prop up* the economy and monetary policy could be used to stimulate it. According to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve (2015), monetary policy can impact the demand for goods, services, and employees, as well as the financial conditions of households and firms through inflation. Another example is the weakening of unions through political means, which has impacted the world of work by potentially increasing inequality (Acemoglu, 2011). Also,

governmental regulations often influence employment in dynamic ways, creating or destroying jobs. For example, regulations may impose costs on firms which are often passed along to customers. This can yield a reduction in sales or shift in buying patterns, possibly stimulate future outsourcing for material input, and ultimately result in job loss (Resources for the Future, 2015). Finally, Mironov and Opp (2004) cite the issues of corruption, bureaucracy, and legal formalism when they touted politics being the most important and most explanatory variable in economic development.

Politics also influence the world of work in a micro sense, in the form of workplace politics. Most in the working world are familiar with a version of the aphorism regarding decision-making power and influence. "It's not what you know; it's who you know" (Rawes, n.d., para. 1). Underlying psychological realities, such as the compromising wants and needs of individuals—sometimes unconscious—and the emotional insecurities of people reveal the fact that at some level all organizations are political (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2014).

Work is at the core of the human experience. What one does, is able to do, and is afforded to perform can influence them on social, economic, and personal levels. One's work history and development sum into their overall career. Career is lifestyle. Social, political, and economic factors influence occupational exploration and attainment. The centrality and juxtaposition of work on both individual and national prosperity influenced the creation of vocational educational models throughout the course of America's history.

Workforce Education

Workforce education, central to civilization, has been present in various forms for millennia. Career and technical education (CTE)—a specific form of vocational education—has a very long and rich tradition, with roots tracing back through the centuries and key periods of

growth and development in modern times (Gordon, 2015; Lewis & Zuga, 2005; Rojewski, 2002). One can trace CTE's origins to the manual arts movement and the industrial arts, yet it was in the educational philosophy of John Dewey that we understand the true vision of career and technical education (Lewis & Zuga, 2005; Petrina & Volk, 1995). Though slighted in its day, in the decades that followed many advocated for a revamping of industrial arts to a form aligned with Dewey's wisdom. Career and technical education emerged, established, blossomed, and proved to be a vital component in the American educational system. Future projections call for a more prominent and expanded role, preparing the workforce for a new era, while better educating our youth and strengthening America's economic position in the world (ACTE, 2006; Barton & Coley, 2011).

History, Foundations, Origins, Icons, and Watersheds

There have been many watershed moments in the development of career and technical education. Institutions, individuals, and governmental legislation created foundations, transformations, and revolutionary changes.

Discussions over the focus of career education were present early on in the development of manual arts education. One can trace the American history of industrial arts in formalized school settings to Calvin Woodward and the Manual Training School of Washington University in St. Louis, and William Runkle and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Lewis & Zuga, 2005). Each program took a different philosophical approach regarding the value and purpose of manual arts—educating all boys regardless of career aspirations vs. educating mechanics to apply acquired knowledge and skills to specific jobs, respectively.

Debates over the philosophical approach of career education continued into the 20th Century, encompassing much sophistication when compared to their predecessors. Prosser and

Snedden called for the development of targeted skills for specific occupations, while Dewey advocated a broader approach and application of career education to satisfy basic human fulfillment, which included vocational-adaptability and self-sufficiency, to best prepare students for life (Petrina & Volk, 1996; Rojewski, 2002). According to Wagner (2006), Snedden desired to train efficient producers with specialized abilities to allow one to do his or her share in the world of work and earn a living. Dewey championed against separating learners according to class, against social predestination, a sorting of students to probable destinies (Rose, 2008). Dewey desired the use of vocational education as the purpose for industrial arts and organized content in a manner that promoted the study of occupations (Lewis & Zuga, 2005). Dewey focused on benefits to society at large, envisioning education through occupation, which not only developed thinking, attitudes, and dispositions but linked them to experiences (Wagner, 2006). According to Lewis and Zuga (2005), though the standard definition of industrial arts was created by two of Dewey's colleagues, Bonser and Mossman, and contained his ideals, the practice retained the original curriculum established by Woodward for manual training schools. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 firmly established industrial arts as a subject to be taught in schools, separate and distinct from academics, in the form advocated by Snedden (Kazis, 2005; Petrina & Volk, 1996; Wagner, 2006).

The vocational education united as a conglomeration of six different traditional subjects in the former half of the 20th Century with the "lure of federal dollars" (p. 2) from the Smith Hughes Act and evolved into a plethora of diverse career and technical education offerings in the latter half of the century (Gray & Walter, 2001). In addition to agriculture, Lynch (2000) identified the six fields of study: "distributive education, business education, health occupations, technical education, occupational home economics . . . , and industrial arts" that matched specific

industrial categories (p. 16). Vocational programs were developed and nurtured by a strong and consistent federal influence (Gray & Walter, 2001) that led to the establishment of 11 different types of career and technical education teachers (Lynch, 2000). These include: agriculture, business and office, marketing, health, family and consumer science, trade and industrial, technical and communications, public and protective services, child care and education, food service and hospitality, occupational home economics, and personal and other services. Table 1 contains legislation that influenced the growth of workforce education.

According to Stone (2014), the "social efficacy" (p. 7) approach to vocational education was uncontested until the Soviet's launch of Sputnik in 1957. Stone argued this created our first STEM crisis, and the federal government stepped in by responding with the National Defense Education Act in 1958, which emphasized the teaching of mathematics and overemphasized that of science. Passage of the 1962 Manpower Development and Training Act was designed to assist dislocated workers (Gordon, 2015). In response to concern expressed by business, the government passed the 1963 Vocational Education Act, the largest investment by the Federal Government to American high schools in U.S. history, which expanded the breadth of course offerings to a wider range of students (Stone, 2014).

In the 1970s, career education received its first federal funding through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (Hoye & Drier, 1999). Many, like Martin (1985), advocated for an approach similar to Dewey's, calling for a more significant and advanced role for industrial arts with an infusion into school curriculum. The aim was to help students develop generalizable, flexible, and enduring process skills, such as critical, creative, and analytical thinking along with communication, application, synthesis, evaluation, and abstract reasoning abilities. Industrial arts had not disappeared; rather

it was in multiple transitions to macro views—successful aspects and uses remained (Martin, 1985; McCrory, 1985; 1987).

Table 1

Key Acts That Enhanced and Shaped Workforce Education in the United States

Legislation	Impact on CTE
Morrill of 1862	Created the prominent status and acceptance of vocationalism that focused on agriculture and mechanical arts promoting both a liberal and practical education.[1]
1914 Smith Lever	Established an Extension Service to promote outreach services from land grant colleges to educate rural Americans about agriculture and technology.[5]
1917 Smith Hughes	Mandated federal money for vocational education and education for grades K-12 for the first time.[1]
1962 Manpower Development and Training	Attempted to assist with employment and training of dislocated workers due to automation or technological change.[4]
1963 Vocational Education	Affirmed support for vocational education and noted vocational education and guidance were reciprocally related. Broadened the definition of vocational education in high school to include programs such as business and commerce.[1]
1968 Vocational Education Amendments	Ensured students with special needs were provided the opportunity for vocational education by backing goals stated in the 1963 act with specific funding.[2]
1984 Carl D. Perkins	Affirmed the essential nature of vocational education in developing skills and preparing individuals for the labor force and providing equal opportunity to adults in vocational education.[3]
1990 Perkins II Vocational and Applied Technology Education	Workforce preparation with academics integrated into content. Required accountability and called for articulation with higher education institutions.[1]
1994 School to Work Opportunities	Responded to skills shortages by fostering collaborative partnerships between business and industry and education. Called for an integration of curriculum, promotion of career guidance, work-based learning, technological advancement, and relevance and curriculum reform.[1&3]
1998 Perkins III Vocational and Applied Technology	Reauthorization required increased accountability and supported the establishment of Tech Prep.[1]
2006 Perkins IV CTE Improvement	Reauthorization included the first use of the term CTE.[1]

(Gordon, 2014[1], 2015[2]; Gray & Herr, 1998[3]; Kremen, 1964[4]; Manor, 2015[5])

Though a divide between academic and career education has existed through the years, recent legislation and developments have led to a synthesis. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 ushered in a new era of CTE, truly delineating it from its predecessor. Perkins legislation and subsequent reauthorizations have required program improvement, broader participation, promotion of general occupational competencies over specific skills for a particular vocation, new instructional structures, cooperation and partnerships with business and industry, the integration of academics, and the ability to enhance academic instruction through applied learning (Hoye & Drier, 1999; Wagner, 2006).

The development of CTE has not gone unchallenged and not everyone embraces the offering. Many events and pendulum swings in education have threatened career education in America; opposition exists. Vocational education maintains a stigma rooted in the belief that public workforce education was for the lowest social classes, hence opposition from some middle class white and African American communities (Gray & Herr, 1998). Historically, the first accord that relegated career education was the Harvard 1893 Committee of Ten Report, which mandated a college preparatory curriculum that did not include career education (Barton & Coley, 2011). In recent years both the 1983 publication entitled *A Nation at Risk* and the standards based reform movement have shifted education's focus toward reform, academics, and excellence, hastening full advancement and implementation of career education (Barton & Coley, 2011; Wagner, 2006). Roth (2014) offered discourse through the historical debate between liberal and vocational education, questioned the usefulness of quick, utilitarian, pragmatic career education, and ultimately championed liberal arts education for its promotion of personal development through inquiry and critical thinking.

CTE Now

Career and technical education (CTE) has become a mainstay in American public education. Its role has expanded, and in doing so it has increased high school completion rates, assisted with academic instruction, instilled employable skills, prepared students for future careers, and made the workforce strong. However, CTE still lacks full support and implementation (Roth, 2014).

Stand-alone liberal arts offerings have proven unsuccessful. The predominant singular focus on college readiness, or "college for all," by many in K-12 education has been questioned, and it has been declared insufficient and problematic by others (Castellano, Sundell, Overman, & Aliaga, 2011; Gray, 2004; Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011). Traditional offerings have failed to prepare students not only for college but also for work (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2011). Decontextualized learning has created disconnected youth (Kazis, 2005). Boring and irrelevant coursework has resulted in the United States having the highest dropout rate in the industrialized world (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011). This is taking place at a time when jobs for high school graduates are in sharp decline (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011; Taylor et al., 2012).

Career and technical education's role is blossoming; it is utilized to increase engagement and completion rates at the high school level while assisting with post-secondary education and training. CTE is at odds with the single-path focus, with such narrow purpose and test-based accountability, advocating for multiple pathways to accommodate difference and choice (Barton & Coley, 2011). Career education targets moral, social, and economic blight, aiding in the recovery and reconnection of youth to opportunities for building useful lives through work (Martin & Harperin, 2006). The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE, 2008)

notes that both career academies and increased relevance have allowed many to persist in high school. In addition, participation in CTE increases engagement and reduces dropout rates with "program of study" offerings that not only assist with high school completion but help with transition to college as some offer concurrent enrollment offerings (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2011; Gray, 2004; Martin & Halperin, 2006). Indeed, many recognize career education as a pathway to college (Castellano et al., 2011).

CTE is markedly different from its predecessor, industrial arts, which possessed an unimaginative and restrictive curriculum for a few (Rose, 2008). Today CTE students are mainstream students (Gray, 2004). At the turn of the century career and technical education teachers comprised 25% of secondary level teachers and 20% of all credits earned by students in high school came from career and technical education coursework (Gray & Walter, 2001). Current data reveals a marked increase with CTE serving 94% of students and an average number of credits earned being 3.6 (ACTE, 2015). The current Perkins IV funding accountability aspect requires rigor and challenging content standards as well as applied and incorporated academics in CTE; offerings must not only focus on workforce preparation but also educational improvement of academic competencies (Castellano et al., 2011; Kazis, 2005; Rose, 2008). The Association for Career and Technical Education (2008) reports CTE courses have been integrated with mathematics, literacy, and science curriculum.

Career and technical education employs not only a different focus when compared to traditional academic offerings but also uses different instructional methodologies, attributing to success at various levels. CTE offers "rigor, relevance, and relationship" (Kazis, 2005, p. 7). According to Doolittle and Camp (1999), career and technical education follows a constructivist approach that recognizes the importance of experience and real-world authentic learning that

involves negotiation, mediation, and relevance. CTE teachers act as facilitators of learning, providing learners with many perspectives, representations, and solutions. In addition, the employment of hands-on, contextually rich, real-world activities is commonplace in career and technical education classrooms (Gray, 2004).

CTE helps prepare youth for the transition from school to work. Career and technical education instills much-needed skills employers expect and the public desires (Johnson & Duffett, 2003). A broad and holistic approach to education with a foundation in literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills coupled with career development and an instilment in lifelong learning is the appropriate pathway for youth to productive and prosperous lives (Symonds et al., 2011). There is a need for work-based learning (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2011). The real-world context allows for the development of both hard and soft skills (Symonds et al., 2011). Employers need a workforce that understands the importance of timeliness, good attendance, teamwork, and problem-solving (ACTE, 2008). In addition, employers want competent, creative, innovative, and self-disciplined workers that are well organized and able to learn (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2008). Complementing the above mentioned dialogue, CTE teaches professionalism, work ethics, social responsibility, and oral communication skills (Barton & Coley, 2011), not to mention skills deemed important by the 1991 U.S. Department of Labor SCANS Report. They include a three-part foundation comprised of personal qualities such as responsibility, integrity, and sociability; thinking skills which include decision making, problem solving, reasoning, and creativity; and basic academic skills with listening and speaking. In addition, the SCANS report identified the following five workplace competencies: the ability to identify, organize, and allocate resources; the possession of a broad array of

interpersonal skills; the ability to acquire and utilize information; knowledge of complex systems thinking; and the capacity to select, apply, and maintain a variety of technologies.

Career and technical education prepares students for high-wage high-demand occupations. According to Kazis (2005), schools and programs that link school and work give students a better employment prospectus and a realistic sense of career options and entry requirements. Gray (2004) stated CTE prepares students for many high-skilled and high-wage occupations. Carnevale, Smith, Stone, Kotamraju, Steurnagel, and Green (2011) discovered the demand for middle-skilled professionals has increased. They report 63% of all jobs require post-secondary education and training and 27% of individuals with a license or certificate earn more than their Bachelor of Arts counterparts. CTE helps funnel students into these offerings through programs of study (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2011). CTE is a companion pathway to post-secondary success (Kazis, 2005).

CTE offerings are diverse, including some traditional expected courses of study and new cutting-edge offerings. School districts that fully embrace and support CTE offer programs such as: biotechnology, civil and criminal law, IT essentials, robotics, engineering, medical science, information technology, and computer engineering and programming (Castellano et al., 2011).

Though much has been enacted and developed in a manner congruent with Dewey's philosophy, CTE must continue to expand and evolve to fulfill the vision. Career and technical education underwent multiple transformations during the 20th Century. Programs for specific vocations are now mainstream classes assisting all students with workforce preparation. Though many programs offer specific certificates, knowledge and skills learned in the majority of CTE classes are transferable to multiple occupations. Students are able to apply what they have learned and prepare for the world of work.

Future Projections for CTE

There are many plausible directions career and technical education can take in the foreseeable future. One is an increased inclusion and expansion of CTE to better create a highly-skilled workforce to strengthen America socially and economically. Another is for the revamping of high school practices, requiring an expansion of career academies, and enhanced partnering with local community colleges. Finally, many advocate for a revolutionary alteration of public education as we know it. Nearly all agree on a focus and expansion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

Of all of the future possibilities, the patriotic/nationalistic use of career education to create a more competitive, competent, and successful workforce is present in the majority of literature. According to Wagner (2006), a highly qualified workforce is part of a nation's success. CTE can help prepare youth for successful participation in a highly competitive knowledge-based, technologically-driven global economy (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2008). Career and technical education that partners with business and focuses on high growth industries and careers in high demand will help America become more competitive in the 21st Century, as innovation and technology create economic gains (ACTE, 2008). With the goal of preparation for earning a livelihood in a changing economy, career education promotes much-needed lifelong learning (Barton & Coley, 2011; Carnevale et al., 2011). CTE programs can help youth find skilled employment (Castellano et al., 2011).

There are many possibilities for future custom advancement of career and technical education to meet different communities' needs. The Association for Career and Technical Education (2006) set a future goal for every student to fully participate in CTE. Many speculate career academies will continue to modernize, incorporating increasingly relevant topics while

continuing to move from job-specific to generic forms (Rojewski, 2002). Kazis (2005) envisions

not only more academies but a truly career-focused education with work-based learning and

career-themed schools. Rojewski (2002) desires an expansion of career planning and

development, along with personal planning, and the teaching of decision-making skills as

mainstays in public education. Many want students to specifically learn about the world of work,

such as education requirements for specific occupations, job transformations over time, and the

need to anticipate future trends in the workplace as part of a core curriculum (Barton & Coley,

2011). In addition to a high school diploma, CTE programs will offer industry certifications that

will assist students in obtaining gainful employment (Alfeld & Bhattacharga, 2011; Castellano et

al., 2011; Gray & Walter, 2001; Kazis, 2005). Increased use of programs of study will offer

educational systems an opportunity to link high school with post-secondary offerings through the

establishment of vertically-aligned/navigable pathways through cutting-edge articulation

agreements that utilize concurrent enrollment (Alfeld & Bhattacharga, 2011; Gray & Walter,

2001; Kazis, 2005; Rojewski, 2002; Symonds et al., 2011). CTE will promote an inclusive

readiness approach, promoting and assisting with both college and career preparation and

transition for all students (ACTE, 2006; Barton & Coley, 2011; Castellano et al., 2011).

Many have advocated for CTE's role to assist with educational reform and redesign

(ACTE, 2006; Kazis, 2005). Proponents of career and technical education want all students to

graduate with education and workforce readiness as well as the ability to enter and persist in

post-secondary educational settings (ACTE, 2006; Barton & Coley, 2011; Gray & Walter, 2001;

Kazis, 2005; Symonds et al., 2011). The United States Department of Labor noted in a 1991

SCANS Report that the world of work has changed quite dramatically, yet education has not.

Many have called for a broader educational focus that incorporates individual and societal needs,

interest-based context for core subjects, and systems that are innovative, creative, inclusive, and flexible—replacing the one-size-fits-all model (ACTE, 2006; Barton & Coley, 2011; Martin & Halpern, 2006). The National Center on Education and the Economy (2008) proposed ten changes to the current educational system which included new comprehensive competency examinations, schools run by independent contractors, and changing the 12-year program to a mandatory 10 years with academic and vocational options based upon test results. Martin and Halpern (2006) reveal there are many successful examples of systems that help at-risk youth complete their education, and question why such systems exist after the fact instead of in addition to; is it not better to have alternate systems in place from the beginning instead of after the fact?

Career and technical education also plays an important role in STEM education. Many note CTE's role in stimulating much needed interest in STEM (ACTE, 2008). There are good paying STEM jobs for middle skilled professionals in many of the 16 Career Clusters that require academic and technical education as well as the development of soft skills (ACTE, 2008; Carnevale et al., 2011; Symonds et al., 2011).

In the final analysis, career and technical education is advancing toward a materialization of the educational philosophy of John Dewey. Though historically linked to workforce education, manual arts training, and industrial arts education, CTE has evolved into a complex system of offerings designed to prepare all learners for a post-secondary transition. Career and technical education enhances liberal arts education through its ability to apply learning and place it in a real-world context. CTE prepares learners for the world of work, developing much needed skills and competencies required for the post-modern workplace and ever-shifting, knowledge-based, economy. Though the dominant culture limited the role career education has played in the

pubic K-12 system, increased understanding regarding employment opportunities and the benefits of workforce education may allow for exponential expansion in the near future. Interestingly enough, the same can be said with regard to career counseling at the secondary level. As a component of an educational team, school counselors' knowledge, skills, and expertise can help bridge school and work for future success (Coy, 1999).

<div align="center">**Vocational Guidance**</div>

Counseling, a relatively new field, evolved from very simple and purposeful beginnings to include a dynamic offering with multiple foci and specialties. Though many specialties have been incorporated, and current school counselors deliver academic, personal/social, and career counseling (ASCA, 2004), the focus on work preparation, job investigation, and occupational development have continually been a part of the practice, though this has waxed and waned along with social and economic trends and demands. In fact, counseling's origins originated with career.

Historical Development/Main Theories

Seligman (1986) explained that upon inception the field of counseling was both circumscribed and well-defined. Vocational guidance developed as a partner to vocational education during an era in which the economic and occupational structure of America was changing due to industrialization and urbanization (Gray & Herr, 1998). The origins of the counseling profession have been attributed to Frank Parsons, who authored *Choosing a Vocation*, that aimed to use a systematic approach to assist individuals in selecting an occupation (Gray & Herr, 1998; Niles & Harris-Bowlsby, 2005; Super, 1957). Parsons (1909) stated individuals typically found employment by chance and/or uninformed selection. Parsons suggested a more scientific *true reasoning* approach to career acquisition, which involved three components.

First, a clear understanding of yourself, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources,

limitations, and other qualities. Second, a knowledge of the requirements and

conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation,

opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work. Third, true reasoning on

the relations of these two groups of facts. (p. 5)

The first step in Parsons' process led to the creation of many different tests that helped with the

classification of characteristics. The second step facilitated the organization of jobs, education,

and training (Gray & Herr, 1998). Elements in the Parsonian approach have now been labeled as

either actuarial or trait-and-factor (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). The primary goal of a

counselor was to assist with occupational choices by seeking an ideal match between an

individual and a job (Seligman, 1986).

Through the 1940s and 1950s the role became multifaceted to include the facilitation of

the readjustment and rehabilitation of veterans and consideration of emotional development and

physical concerns were added to meeting the needs of clients' occupational aspirations

(Seligman, 1986). Theoretically, Super altered career development from being a single choice to

be made at one point in time to an ongoing developmental process across a lifespan (Niles &

Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005) and the characteristics of the chooser (Gray & Herr, 1998). Super (1957)

synthesized information from multiple disciplines, focusing on self-concept, career patterns, life

stages, and vocational development. Rodgers' writings encouraged counselors to focus on

individual needs and to adopt a broader and more flexible skillset (Seligman, 1986).

Trends and Developments

Many oppose the established "matching paradigm." Taber, Hartung, Briddick, Briddick,

and Rahfus (2011) stated a more subjective element needed to be added to career counseling to

make all more comprehensive and more meaningful. They argued that individuals were more than a sum of scores. Peavy (1996) noted a collapse of the objectivist behaviorist world view, with its permanent enduring beliefs and traits. Peavy (1997) promoted constructivism as an alternative to behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism. Beyond psychometric evaluations, Peavy (1996) called for the development of agency (intrinsic motivation), and the narrating, evolving, and organizing of personal meaning and wanted counselors to focus on relations, dialogue, and participatory reality. There were multiple perceptions and realities. While workers needed specific soft skills, counselors needed to focus not on scores but on individual meaning, which could be negotiated. He stated the self was not passive and career development was not smooth and linear. Standardized tests, used with caution, should be replaced with written narratives, journals, expressions of feeling, and all that made the self more visible. Peavy (1995) encouraged counselors to focus on lifestyle over linear development, options and self-reflection, and the psychology of narratives, where systems of meanings could be exposed. McMahon and Watson (2012) suggested the integration of narrative with trait and factor counseling.

Social constructivist theory amended traditional career counseling approaches with new methodologies. Lent (2005) noted complex and dynamic changes in society required a more jigsaw approach than a single solution. Social cognitive career theory, neither trait and factor nor developmental and rooted in Bandura's social cognitive theory, recognized the manner in which people, actions, and environment influence behavior. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001) stated a child's perceived academic, social, and self-regulatory efficacy influenced occupational activities and were more influential than gender bias, socioeconomic status, and parents' beliefs. Bandura (1977) first recognized the importance of self-efficacy and suggested counselors increase their levels and strength. Accordingly, career behaviors are driven

from proclivities: expectations, supports, and financial barriers. Brown (2002) suggested counselors prepare counselees for a variety of occupational and life roles and empower them to construct their own destiny and recognize how life events can lead to multiple careers.

Many career counseling theorists have called for more subjective and narrative approaches to career counseling, over traditional objective behavioristic practices (Cochran, 1997). Career construction theory recognized the importance of external factors in career development and the need to adapt to the environment over the maturation of inner structures. According to Savickas (2012), careers are constructed instead of unfolded. Counselors need to focus on the development of attitudes and competencies and help individuals interpret meaning. Careers can no longer be understood as linear developments and assessments should be used to reveal possibilities and not predict. Rather, Savickas stated career is a non-linear life story, a life design, where the individual is the author and he or she actively negotiates job changes without loss of self and identity. Individuals need meaningful activities to further self-making, shape identity, and learn how to construct, deconstruct, reconstruct, and co-construct a career through taking action. While constructivist theories developed, another career theory rooted in chance emerged.

Krumboltz' theories of happenstance and serendipity, as well as his promotion of failure dramatically revolutionized career counseling. Krumboltz (2009) declared, "What-you-want-to-be-when-you-grow-up" (p. 135) should not be planned in advance. Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) promoted planned happenstance. They declared traditional career interventions insufficient as too much in life is uncertain and deemed unplanned events to be inevitable and desirable. Individuals can be trained to capitalize on happenstance, actively promoting and increasing the likelihood of chance occurring, and prepare to capitalize on it when

opportunities arise (Krumboltz, 2011). Career counselors should teach the importance and benefits of being active while instilling in individuals the need to remain alert to opportunities. Career counseling should facilitate the learning of skills, values, beliefs, and work habits to help individuals generate, incorporate, and recognize chance events (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). Having an open mind should not be understood as indecision. In addition, they suggested individuals focus on five skills: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk taking. Krumboltz, Foley, and Cotter (2013) suggested counselors focus on action as opposed to insight and pushing people to create, recognize, and seize opportunities. Krumboltz and Levin (2010) contended that being aware of your surroundings, taking risks, and being adaptable and open-minded led individuals to generate luck, which is no accident. Finally, Babineaux and Krumboltz (2013) suggested counselors encourage individuals to "Fail fast, and fail often" (p. 23). They encourage individuals to try new things without overcommitting and to experience as much as possible while having fun doing it. They advise individuals to "Do it badly, as fast as you can" (p. 25) then deliberately learn from failures and mistakes to accelerate learning and exposure.

Chaos theory of careers focused on the complex changeability and connectedness of components of career development (Pryor, 2010). Combining many of the previously-mentioned elements, chaos theory focuses on the 5C's: complexity, change, chance, construction, and contribution. Nothing is predictable and career development is not linear, therefore long-term planning is speculative. Individuals must learn to live with uncertainty, note patterns that exist in the bigger picture in life, and take action. Furthermore, clients must be empowered to be optimistic, original, curious, creative, open-minded, and persistent. Career counselors are to foster open-system thinking, which helps individuals research and examine information, appreciate, and negotiate opportunities and the vicissitudes of careers.

Gray and Herr (1998) created a classification structure of career development theories that incorporated both the disciplinary origins and the conceptual emphases. Table 2 depicts their conceptual framework. According to these researchers, "each theoretical or disciplinary 'window'" (p. 113) helps explain some elements of an individual's and/or group's work and career behavior. Importantly, theories differ from approaches. Table 3 examines different approaches and their contributions to career counseling for youth that are employment bound.

Table 2

Classification of Career Development Theories

Theoretical Group	Explanation of Work or Career Behavior
Trait and Factor	Associated with Parsons (1909), dubbed matching or actuarial, it is simplistic, deterministic, and most familiar. A personality type is identified based on traits, aptitudes, interests, values, energy, and temperament and correlated with an occupation.
Decision Making	Linked to Bandura (1977) and Mitchell and Krumboltz (1984), it states personally held beliefs and perceptions influence an individual's self-efficacy, which influences motivation and choice. Interaction with the environment and personal values influence how people decide.
Situational/ Sociological	Associated with Roberts (1977) macro approach that argues socioeconomic status mediates and shapes behavior. One's environment influences their beliefs. One cannot choose what they do not know about or understand to be possible and probable.
Personality	A micro approach based upon the satisfaction of needs and drives associated with Roe (1956) and Holland (1973). A natural matching of personality type with the environment influences people to gravitate to settings with shared values and interests.
Developmental	Associated with Ginzberg (1951) and Super (1957), this is an integrated approach incorporating elements of all other theories yet applied across an individual's lifespan. Stresses the importance of self-concept in the shaping and triggering of individual behaviors.

Adapted from Gray & Herr (1998, pp. 112-136).

Table 3

Approaches to Career Counseling and Their Contributions to Youth

Approach	Contribution to Career Counseling
Trait and Factor	Matching individual traits to occupational requirements. Examining a range of jobs. Understanding the possibility of current knowledge and skills across industries and occupations. Developing understanding of assessments on probability of obtaining and being successful in different jobs.
Client Centered	Providing a safe and non-judgmental environment for people to explore, plan, and discuss work adjustment issues, as well as understand personal priorities and values, set goals, and identify ways to change issues and barriers hindering satisfaction.
Psychodynamic	Connecting the past to the present. Understanding unresolved conflicts, possibly hindering interactions, and recognizing messages and expectations from others. Examining views of self, feelings about opportunities, and sense of self-efficacy.
Developmental	Developing tasks individuals may need to anticipate, explore, or complete in the process of career planning. Integrating work life with the role of work. Clarifying self-concept and its integration into work while helping people act on their values, self-concept, resources, fashioning possible career patterns, adaptability, and change.
Behavioral	Demystifying concerns about work performance and career planning. Providing modeling, simulations, and role playing to identify deficits and assist with the learning and reinforcement of desirable skills to improve performance, adjustment, and job choice.
Cognitive-Behavioral	Providing a cognitive basis for moods and anxieties and modifying inaccurate, automatic, irrational, or maladaptive thoughts about self, others, and life events. Reframing and restructuring beliefs and thoughts. Identifying cognitive distortions and overgeneralizations related to choice and implementation of work.

Adapted from Gray and Herr (1998, pp. 233-234).

According to Pope (2000) career counseling evolved in six stages. These stages begin in the 1890s and end with the present era being 1990 to 2000 and are denoted with regard to how economic processes and societal changes influenced the development of career counseling. According to Zunker (2006), the next stage will be impacted by both the events of September 11,

2001, the subsequent war on terrorism, uncertainties, and changing economic conditions, requiring counseling goals to be self-directed and solution-based (See Table 4).

Table 4

Pope's Six Stages of Career Development

Stage	Years	Summary
One	1890-1919	Focused on job placement of displaced people for the expanding urban society and industrial economy.
Two	1920-1939	Establishment and solidification of educational guidance in schools.
Three	1940-1959	Promotion of the development of professionally trained counselors and guidance needs in tertiary education.
Four	1960-1979	Expansion of career development in organizations and the examination of the life roles and the nature of meaningful work.
Five	1980-1989	Development of private practice career counselors and significant transitions from industrial to information and technology age.
Six	1990-Present	Emergence of multicultural counseling, technological development, and focus on the school-to-work-transition.

Adapted from Pope (2000).

School Counseling

Sharing origins with professional career counseling and vocational education, school counseling evolved independently from both the former and the later, yet it is "coming full circle" (Schenck, Anctil, Smith, & Dahir, 2012, p. 221). However, are current career counseling practices at the high school level congruent with those of career counseling, workforce education, and current realities in the world of work and economy?

The historical origins of school counseling stem from developments in career counseling and workforce education. Though many cite the work of Parsons' (1909), *Choosing a Vocation,* as the origins of the profession and depict it as developing synonymously with career counseling (Gray & Herr, 1998), many note the work of Davis (Schenck et al., 2012). Davis designed, developed, and implemented the first comprehensive school counseling programs in the nation in

the early 1900s. These were cohesive in nature, including junior high school and high school. Davis' program focused on job awareness, selection of an occupation, service to one's community, and character building.

School counseling developed in phases, influenced by both social and political realities and waxing and waning like the swing of a pendulum in the second half of the 20th Century. A division that still influences current practices occurred in the 1930s. According to Gray and Herr (1998), the bonds between vocational education and guidance were frayed in the 1930s as both pursued distinctly different processes and purposes. To add, counseling practices had one of two aims, either helping students get into tertiary education and training programs—vocational counseling—or the practice of examining all occupations—vocational guidance (Schenck et al., 2012). Vocational guidance began to lose "central priority" (Gray & Herr, 1998, p. 218) in both school counselors' and mental health counselors' work as the practice of counseling became more developmental and personally oriented with psychotherapy's influence during the 1940s (Schenck et al., 2012).

Gray and Herr (1998) explained that since the 1960s federal legislation attempted to reconnect vocational education and vocational guidance. Schenck et al. (2012) stated that Sputnik and the National Defense Education Act that followed spawned a reemergence of career counseling in schools. Career education was further fostered with the mandates to increase the employability of all people through the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 and the Vocational Education Act of 1963. During the 1980s many nonacademic responsibilities were added to school counselors' duties such as supporting students dealing with physical, psychological, and emotional crisis; bullying, school violence, and illicit drug use and abuse; and academic counseling dominated in response to the "back-to-basics education movement" (p.

224) as well as the *A Nation at Risk* report (Schenck, 2012). At the same time the federal

government made the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 public law. The Perkins

Act addressed excellence and equity issues through the improvement, extension, and expansion

of guidance and counseling programs to meet students' needs for career development,

employment, and vocational education (Gray & Herr, 1998). The 1991 U.S. Department of

Labor's SCAN's Report focused attention on the need for employable soft skills during the

1990s and created the school-to-work movement (Schenck et al., 2012). This led to the

development of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act which defined career guidance and

counseling as programs that develop career awareness, planning, decision-making, and

knowledge of labor market needs, trends, and opportunities at the local, state, and national levels

(Gray & Herr, 1998). However, in the end, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 questioned

career activities and development, ultimately diverting time and focus toward the coordination of

testing and academics (Schenck et al., 2012).

In an attempt to define, codify, systematize, standardize, and foster comprehensive design

and delivery of school counseling practices, the American School Counselor Association

(ASCA) created the National Standards for Students (2004). These standards consist of three

domains (of service): academic, career, and personal/social development, respectively. The

career domain standards are to guide school counseling programs to facilitate the foundation for

the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and skills to assist with the school-to-work transition and

job-to-job transitions, across the life span. Comprehensive in nature, the ASCA career standards

are as follows: (a) the acquisition of skills to explore the world of work in relation to knowledge

of self and informed career decisions; (b) employment of strategies to obtain future career goals

successfully and satisfactorily; and (c) an understanding of personal qualities, education, and

training to the world of work (ASCA, 2004). Each standard possesses subcategories with

competencies and indicators. These are presented in summarized form in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of ASCA Career Development Standards, Competencies, and Indicators

Standards, Competencies, and Indicators
A. Investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self to make career decisions
A1. Develop Career Awareness
Locate, evaluate, interpret career information; learn about traditional and non-traditional occupations; become aware of personal skills, interests, and abilities; work collaboratively; learn how to: set goals, plan, make decisions, develop hobbies, and balance work and leisure.
A2. Develop Employment Readiness
Acquire employability skills and apply them to employment opportunities; learn how to compose a resume, time and task management skills, and respect individual differences; understand the importance of responsibility, dependability, punctuality, effort, and integrity.
B. Employ strategies to successfully and satisfactorily achieve career goals
B1. Acquire Career Information
Apply decision-making skills to course selection and career plans; learn how to use the Internet to access and research information; identify personal attributes and relate them to career choice; comprehend how changing economic and social needs influence trends and training in the workplace.
B2. Identify Career Goals
Assess and modify career plans; maintain a portfolio; demonstrate awareness of education and training needs and select coursework congruent with career goals; use skills in internships, mentoring, work experience, or job shadowing.
C. Comprehend the relation between personal qualities, education, training, and work
C1. Acquire Knowledge to Achieve Career Goals
Identify bias influencing career choice; explain how work can achieve personal success, satisfy means of expression, and impact lifestyle; understand the importance of equity and access in career choice; identify the need for lifelong learning and development of skills, comprehend the correlation between education and career success.
C2. Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals
Learn how to work cooperatively and employ conflict management skills; apply academic and employment skills in work-based learning situations; understand how interests, abilities, and successes relate to goals of a personal, social, educational, and career nature.

Note: Modified from the career portion of the *ASCA National Standards for Students* (2004).

The current emphasis in school counseling and education in general includes a focus on college and career readiness. The American populace desires all students develop college and career readiness skills, ensuring success in a variety of post-secondary arenas (Johnson & Duffett, 2003; Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011; Wagner, 2006). College and career readiness is a social construct denoting a spectrum of preparedness depending on the individual, which allows for multiple options of appropriate responses; it cannot be easily determined. Conley (2012) created an all-inclusive definition based upon empirical evidence and multiple research studies stating, "A student who is ready for college and career can qualify for and succeed in entry-level credit-bearing college courses leading to a baccalaureate or certificate, or career pathway-oriented training program without the need for remedial or developmental coursework" (p. 1). Though indefinite, as proficiencies vary on students' interests and aspirations at the tertiary level, studies reveal the majority of high school graduates are neither college nor career ready (ACT, 2013; United States Department of Labor, 1991). In fact, workforce readiness concerns have matriculated to the collegiate level (Stokes, 2015) and generated new foci for the ASCA.

The American School Counselor Association (2014) amended the *National Standards for Students* with the *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student*. Based in best practices and research, 35 mindset and behavior standards describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, prioritizing those that are needed to achieve academic success, social/emotional development, and college and career readiness. Standards were divided into two categories. Six mindset standards focus on psycho-social beliefs. Behavioral standards associated with being a successful student follow, with 29 identified standards included in three subcategories: learning strategies, self-management, and

social skills. Specific and measurable competencies exist at each grade level. To add, the American School Counselor Association (2012) framework includes the provision of career counseling at all grade levels.

Counselors employ a myriad of different activities when helping students in career development, standard, unique, and sporadically employed, depending on the type and the location. Though most associate Parsons (1909) with assessments and inventories, he advocated for assistance with self-analysis and assessment of counselees through the employment of frank individual interviews, use of employment data and statistics, reading books and magazine articles about specific occupations, and visiting industries to both observe and ask questions to current workers. Many promote exploration and role play through activities at home, school, volunteering, and part-time work as mentioned by Super (1957). Some advocate for the use of narratives or story in counseling (McMahon & Watson, 2012; Narayanan, 2013) or use of constructivist concepts (Peavy, 1993). An example of both is the career construction approach which employs the Career Story Interview (Savickas, 2011). When meeting with an individual, a counselor asks questions to elicit micronarratives about an individual's "typical role, preferred action setting, current script, and favored self-regulation strategies" (p. 180). Conversations revolve around favorite role models, television shows, stories, and sayings. Counselors do not interpret the narratives, rather they help individuals identify meaning and create an action plan. In addition, the use of internships, work experiences, job shadowing, and mentoring has been suggested (Smith & Edmonds, 2000). Krumboltz (2011) suggested the promotion of an action plan to generate, recognize, and capitalize on unplanned events. Many suggest building self-efficacy and reinforcement of career interests as an embedded component in counseling sessions (Parks, Rich, & Getch, 2012). Reynolds (2013) advocated for the use of targeted career panels

comprised of individuals from multiple occupations within a cluster instead of traditional career fairs. Beyond sessions, Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2005) suggested career interventions, such as an educational and career planning portfolio being employed in group or classroom guidance activities. Though mentioned for college and university settings, Gray and Herr's (1998) suggestions of infusing academic subject matter with career development information, seminars, field trips, and specific credit courses with personal development and career information components may be a good fit for post-modern high school guidance counseling. A study conducted by Fraze, Wingenbach, Rutherford, and Wolfskill (2011) revealed positive outcomes from summer workshops introducing students to specific careers in agriculture. All becomes more conflicting when one considers dynamics within counseling at the high school level.

Issues involving counseling practices at the secondary level add levels of complexity with regard to what approach, methodologies, and activities best serve students in preparing for the world of work in the post-modern, post-recession era. Career selection strategies employed by high school counselors have been questioned (Savickas & Lent, 1994). To complicate matters a study conducted by Domene, Shapka, and Keating (2006) revealed that few students seek the assistance of their counselor with career-related issues. And finally, results from a survey of school counselors that were American School Counselor Association members concluded counselors spent less time on career development and more time on personal, social, and academic issues (Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin, 2012). What aspects of effective and needed career counseling must be included in a conceptual model of vocational guidance that can be willfully, consistently, and practically used to assist students with career development and aid in the preparation for the transition into the world of work? This will be reviewed next.

Conceptual Models

Defined

Though conceptual models are uniquely described in a fashion related to an author's bias, all explanations share common elements. At the most fundamental level, a conceptual model is a mental model allowing one to receive and process information and respond accordingly (MacKay, 2014). Fawcett (2005) defined conceptual models as, "A set of relatively abstract and general concepts that address a phenomena of central interest to a discipline, the propositions that broadly describe those concepts, and the propositions that state relatively abstract and general relations between two or more of the concepts" (p. 16). They are illustrations of proposed causal linkages among a set of concepts which are believed to be related to a specific idea (Earp & Ennett, 1991), sometimes referred to as conceptual frameworks (Dottin, 2001). Johnson and Henderson (2002) explained conceptual models as a high-level description of a system's organization and operation—its ontological structure—which specified, described, and mapped, using metaphors, analyses, and relationships and task domains. They added conceptual models offered an idealized view of how a system should or would work. Models can demonstrate a process (Anderson, 2006). Importantly, models are informed by many theories and empirical findings (Earp & Ennett, 1991).

Conceptual models have their limitations. They are not a mental model of the users or an implementation of architecture or use cases (Johnson & Henderson, 2002). Fischenich (2008) added it is important to note conceptual models are not: (a) the truth, rather they are a simplified depiction of a reality; (b) an end all, they are flexible and evolving; and (c) comprehensive, they focus on concepts deemed relevant and may ignore important yet not germane elements.

Why and How Models Are Created

Conceptual models are to be created during a specific part of the design process. Johnson and Henderson (2002) stated the sketching and organizing of a conceptual model should be completed in the design phase, after one gathered information on all fundamental requirements or performed a task-analysis. They explained the importance of this phase metaphorically speaking; individuals are to "get the bone structure right, then flesh it out" (p. 26). Dottin (2001) added conceptual frameworks are not simply a model or a theme but provide purpose rooted in a philosophy, reason for existence, or mission; they provide organization and direction for curriculum, programs, and governance, and are a way of seeing, thinking, and being, as well as an operational manner. Conceptual models help facilitate meaningful interpretation and coherence. Individuals create conceptual models for different purposes and organizations with the same basic intention. Johnson and Henderson (2002) explained that the desired result of a conceptual model is dependent on future user's internalization and ability to accomplish the goals portrayed by the system and what it is designed to support. Berman (2013) revealed the importance of asking individuals the question, "What is your conceptual framework?" (p. 1), as it helps provide focus and a reference point when an individual is attempting to explain or introduce a new reality. A visualization of concepts, such as conceptual models, helps learners focus, organize, conceptualize, and create new knowledge.

Kotamraju's (2007) framework for exploring student performance in career and technical education provides an excellent example regarding why and how conceptual models are created. A concern with the need for inclusion of multiple variables and essential elements as well as proper research and analysis led to its creation. The *success* element was described in terms of engagement, achievement, and transitions. Students were defined according to particular chosen

pathways: general, academic, or CTE. Metrics must be inclusive of high school graduation, college readiness, technical skills proficiency, and a postsecondary credential. Noteworthy, stop out points, employment success, and the learning swirl between education and employment identified in Kotamraju's discussion were not incorporated (see Figure 1).

Conceptual Models in the World of Work and in K-12 Education Practice

Conceptual models have proven useful in changing behavior in both education and workplace settings. Rock (2011) provided examples of adaptable conceptual models that could be utilized in different occupational arenas. These models were created to assist employees and employers with lessening counter-productive workplace behaviors. These frameworks developed a deeper understanding of adult learning through the identification of the elements, domains, or dimensions, which included the principles of motivation, self-monitoring, self-management, and self-directed learning. Researchers identified conceptual models as a solution to bridge the divide between educational scientists and teachers of mathematics (Glasersfeld & Steffe, 1991). Their aim was to change methods of instruction through the adoption of a cognitive paradigm which recognized learners as autonomous entities seeking meaning through experience. The 3P Model of Learning influenced educators to focus on learning over teaching through perceiving in the world of the learner (Biggs, 1989). The Ritz Model highlights key elements in the educational and curriculum development processes to assist educators produce more meaningful and understandable products (Ritz, 1980). Noteworthy, regardless of setting, the previously discussed conceptual models focused on changing professionals' behavior by developing an understanding of the needs of workers and students.
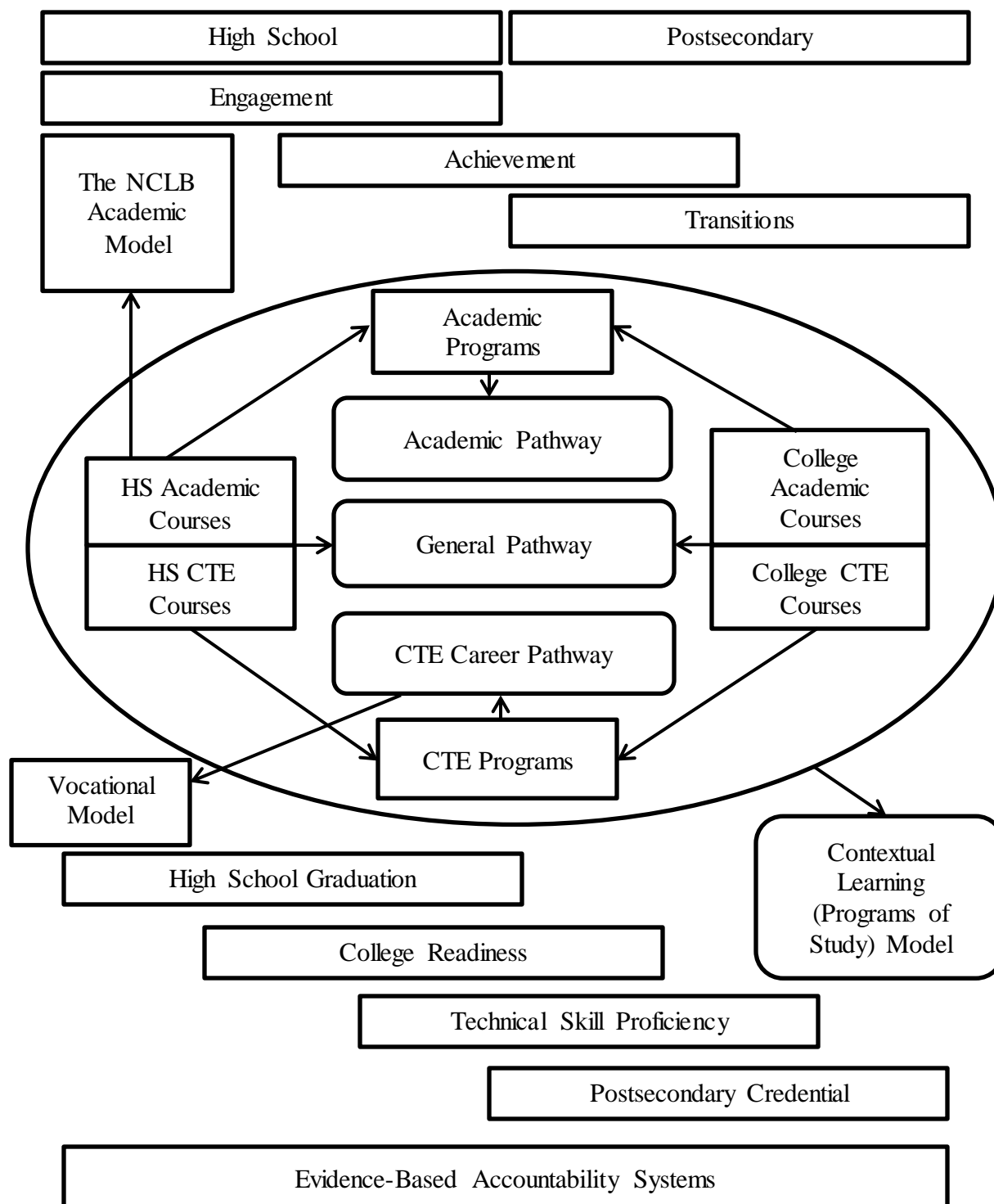
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Researching CTE Student Performance. Adapted from "Researching CTE student success: A new conceptual framework" by P. Kotamraju, 2007, *Techniques, 82*(4), p. 50.

Counseling and Guidance Frameworks, Models, Guidelines, and Considerations

According to Ginzberg (1971), the manner in which guidance operates is dependent on the goals and strategies pursued to reach objectives. Goals within the guidance movement—60 years of experience at the time of his writing—underwent a substantial expansion "from helping people find jobs to helping them improve their ability to plan their lives and realize their plans" (Ginzberg, 1971, p. 93). Services multiplied. Though originally aimed at attempting to help improve ones' vocational choices, counseling broadened to incorporate assisting with educational decision-making, and ultimately expanded to supporting adolescents with developmental issues. Ginzberg explained that beginning in 1951 vocational guidance had been glossed over for counseling psychology, which included the former yet expanded upon it with the focus on assistance with life adjustments. Thusly, the original *adjustive* strategy based on the premise that individuals needed to respond to a problem, choice, or decision gave way to a *non-directive developmental* stance that shifted attention from educational and career to life-adjustment problems, and eventually to the rise of an *activist* approach, concerned with the creation of new options and changes to systems.

Ginzberg (1971) noted that beyond this dynamic a possible area of tension existed between school counselors' perceptions of their work and of those that they are responsive to. Conflicting roles and expectations stimulated problems around the development of a professional identity. Ginzberg (1974) declared that career guidance represented a minor commitment to the counseling profession, educational goals dominated. And, guidance personnel focused on personal characteristics of counselees, "to the neglect of occupational realities" (p. 50).

Many encouraged change within the guidance movement. Ginzberg (1974) declared an "urgent need for redirection of career guidance" (p. 7). Herr and Cramer (1972) advocated for a

systematic approach to vocational counseling and career development. Gysbers suggested a comprehensive approach that is systematic and infused into multiple areas of a school environment (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997).

Counseling and Guidance Models

In 1971 the U.S. Office of Education awarded a grant to the University of Missouri-Columbia, under the direction of Norman C. Gysbers, to assist each state with the development of models and guides that implemented career guidance, counseling, and placement (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). In 1974 the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model was published. This first organized framework focused on total comprehensive and developmental guidance and denoted curriculum-based, individual facilitation, and on-call counselor functions (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997).

In addition to the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model, Gysbers and Moore (1974) created the Career Conscious Individual Model which focused efforts on assisting people with the development of life competencies, values and attitudes, the visualization of probable career goals, and analysis of these goals in one's current situation (Figure 2). A career conscious individual stands at the center of the figure. All aspects of growth and development are of concern, including roles a person plays throughout the lifespan, with regard to multiple settings in which the party is placed. This conceptual model contains four interrelated knowledge, skill, and attitude domains. The *Self Knowledge and Interpersonal Skills* domain focuses on assisting with the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Awareness of interest, aptitudes, abilities, and values, along with self-appraisal, help foster plans for self-improvement. Another domain focuses on *Knowledge of Life Roles, Settings, and Events*. Beyond learning about different situations and interrelated roles, students learn about the various occupations and

industries which make up the world of work. The development of an individual's learning of specific occupational requirements, characteristics, and personal skills, values, and interests are emphasized. Finally, the *Life Career Planning, Knowledge, and Skills* domain incorporates activities and content centered on decision-making. In addition to the collection and appraisal of information, acceptance of responsibility for life choices is stressed. The concepts of change, space, and time influencing life career planning are placed within this domain. *Basic Studies and Occupational Preparation* contains knowledge, skills, and understanding found in all educational disciplines. Instruction and career guidance and counseling and placement are the delivery systems for the Career Conscious Individual Model.
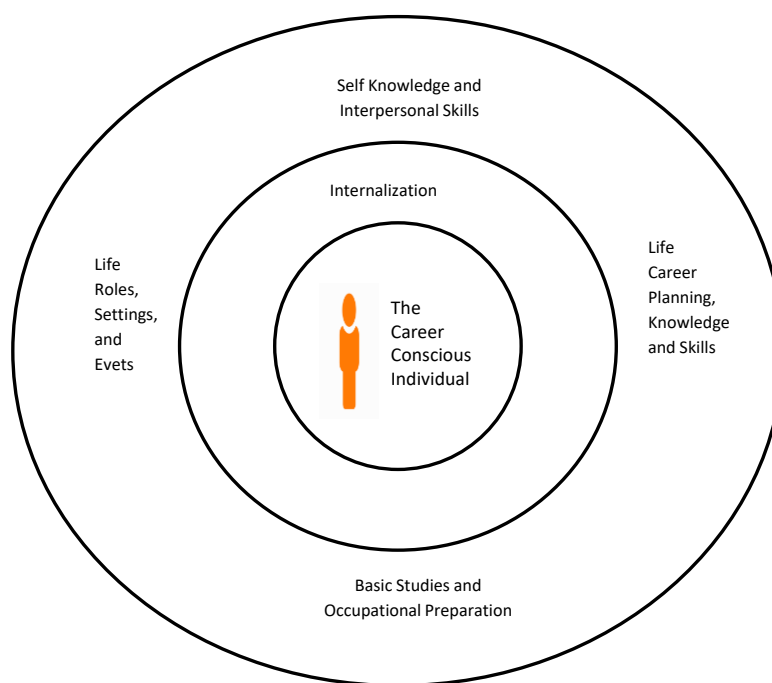
Figure 2. Educational Components Needed to Develop the Career Conscious Individual. Adapted from *Career Guidance, Counseling and Placement: Elements of an Illustrative Program Guide* by Gysbers and Moore, 1974, p. 12.

The *Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program Model*, aimed at helping districts develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive and systematic K-12 programs, contained three

elements: content, student competencies grouped by career, educational, and personal-social domains; an organizational framework, structural and programmatic components with time allocation; and personnel, financial, and political resources (Gysbers et al., 1997). A fourth element that focused on the development, management, and accountability has been added (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Embedded within the model is the desire to shift counseling from a position to a selection of services, and ultimately a comprehensive guidance counseling program (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997).

The New Hampshire Model is very similar to the Missouri Model (Figure 3). Guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support comprise the outer circle and are divided equally (this differs from suggested practice with regard to time allocation at the various grade levels). Students' career, educational, and personal-social development lay within, contained in a Venn Diagram. Life roles development stands at the center of the figure, along with an androgynous individual which represents the counseling program and counselor functions.

Independent of the Missouri and New Hampshire Models, and not focused on comprehensive counseling programs, Andersen and Vandehey (2006) developed the Career Diamond to illustrate the basic movement of career development processes. In this model the self and the world of work are depicted as two basic factors that must come together when individuals deal with career issues. The starting point for any phase of career development is awareness, when one understands that they need to make a career decision. An exploration phase begins whereby an individual expands both self-awareness and knowledge of external factors. In time personal characteristics and needs come together to form a vision. With this
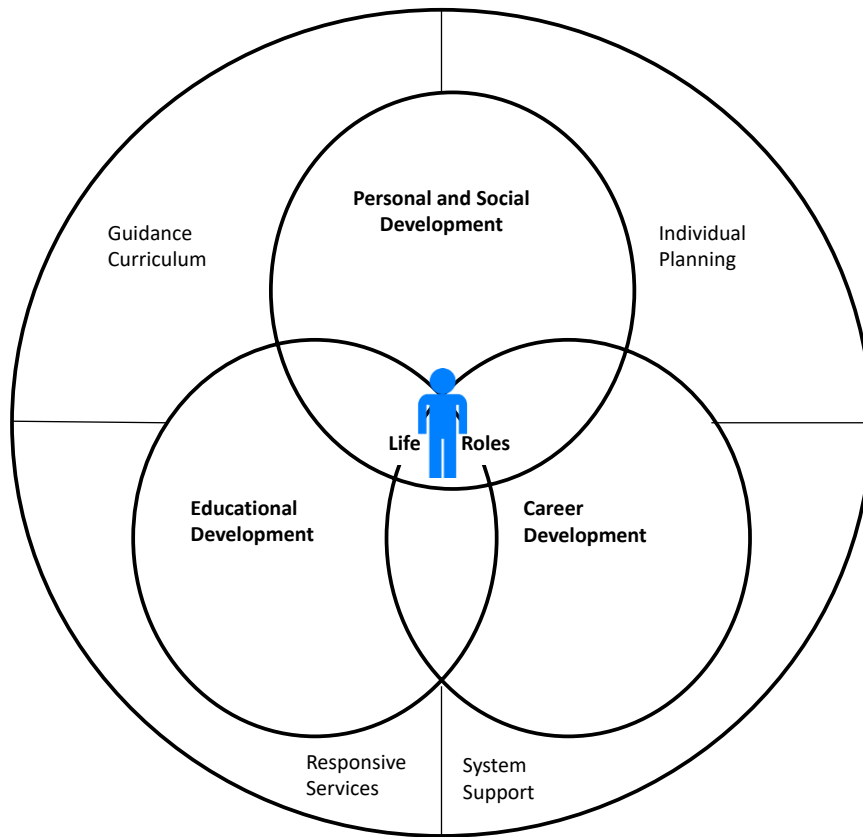
Figure 3. The New Hampshire Model (modified from the Missouri Model). Adapted from *Comprehensive Guidance Programs That Work—II* by Gysbers and Henderson, 1997, p. 274.

visualization of self and a realistic picture of the working world an individual then narrows

options, sets priorities, integrates the self into the external world, and moves toward a decision.

The Career Diamond illustrates Flum's four factors which influence choice: inner-limiting,

inner-directing, outer-limiting, and outer directing (Flum, 1966, as cited in Herr & Cramer,

1972). With regard to adolescents, the Career Diamond focuses primarily on the decision for

post-secondary education and training or finding work right after high school, and youth

confirming abilities and likes while increasing knowledge of the world of work (Figure 4).
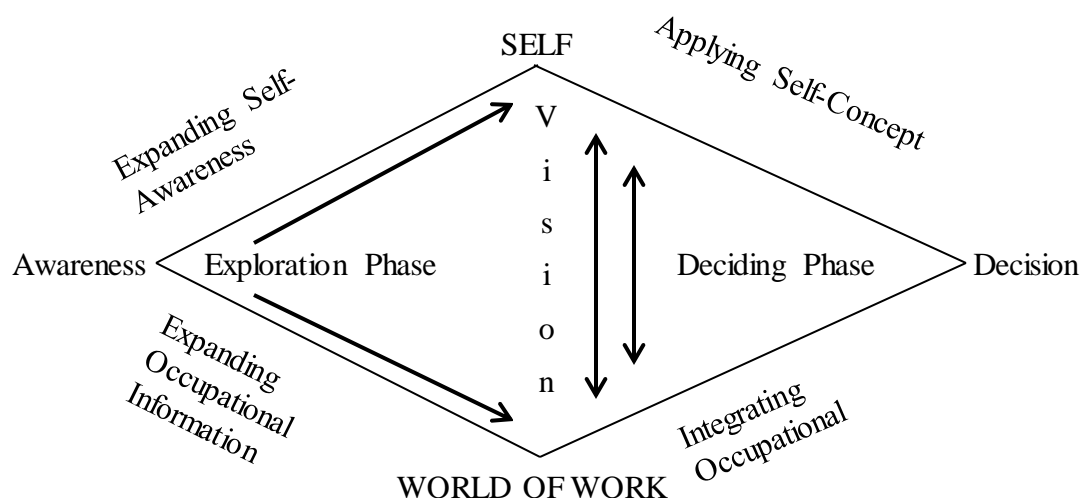
Figure 4. Career Diamond Adapted from *Career Counseling and Development in a Global Economy* by Andersen and Vandehey, 2006, p. 43.

Korkut-Owen, Arici, Demirtas-Zorbas, and Mutlu (2014) created the Career Sailboat to assist students in high school and beyond with the discovery process of career development. As opposed to the commonly used career path metaphor, the progression is described as a journey. The model emphasizes four categories of factors that impact students' decision-making processes. Career goals are symbolized by the port one is sailing to. The body of the boat embodies personal factors such as interests, skills, values, and maturity. Social factors represent one sail, while the second signifies those stemming political, economic, legal, and systems realities. Wind and waves, unpredictable and uncontrollable yet required for movement, depict chance. Routes of the sailing boat are subject to change. The authors stated that a constructivist perspective encourages counselees to create their own narratives and select their own port of call (Figure 5).

Guidelines

The National Career Development Association (2004) established *The National Career Development Guidelines* (NCDG) that serve as a framework for creating and assessing both
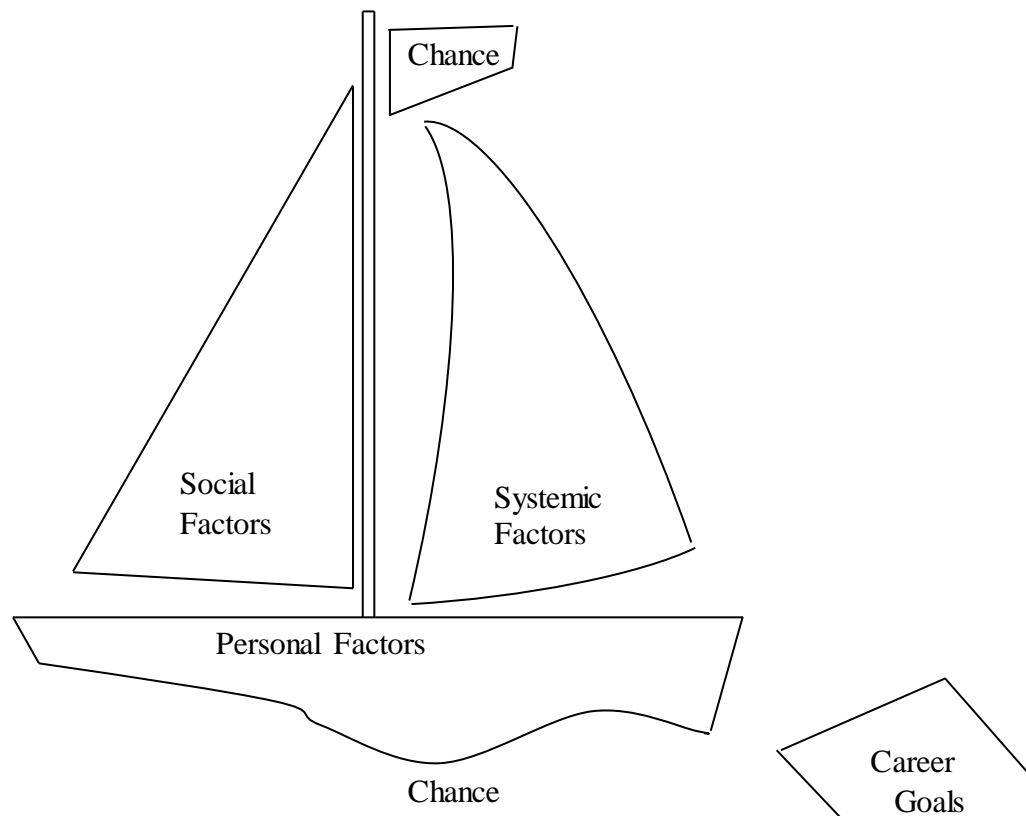
Figure 5. Career Sailboat Model. Adapted from *Using the Career Sailboat Model to Facilitate Career Planning and Decision-Making with Young Adults*. Korkut-Owen, Arici, Demirtas-Zorbas, & Mutlu, 2014, *Career Convergence Web Magazine*.

youth and adults in various settings. They can be utilized to either develop or evaluate career development programs (Andersen & Vandehey, 2006). The NCDG framework centers on three domains: personal and social development, educational achievement and lifelong learning, and career management. Goals support each domain, are age specific, and are organized into three areas: self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning (Andersen & Vandehey, 2006). Indicators of mastery that offer a more detailed understanding and purpose of each goal follow. Facilitation of goals may best be achieved by teachers, specialists, community members, or counselors (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004).

Operational Models

Conceptual models can become specific and directional in nature, becoming operational, informing individuals about expected behaviors. Super (1957) created an operational frame of reference for career counseling that was cyclical in nature, which employed the following nondirective and directive methods:

1. Nondirective problem exploration and self-concept portrayal.

2. Directive topic setting, for future exploration.

3. Nondirective reflection and clarification of feeling for self-acceptance and insight.

4. Directive exploration of factual data from tests, occupational pamphlets, extracurricular experiences, grades, etc., for reality-testing.

5. Nondirective exploration and working through attitudes and feelings aroused by reality testing.

6. Nondirective consideration of possible lines of action, for help in decision-making. (p. 308)

The New Orleans Public Schools (1987) published a Conceptual Model of Student Personnel Service for use at vocational and technical schools (Figure 6). The graphic contains three concentric circles. Student comprises the innermost circle. Five specific activities and their respective components/goal areas are placed within the middle ring: recruitment, assessment, employability training, placement, and follow up. The outer ring specifies individual and group counseling. While labeled conceptual, the term *all* in conjunction with a discussion of the five goal areas and potential clients, enrollees, students, and graduates reveals it to be operational.

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

RECRUITMENT

1. Location   2. Purpose
3. Admission requirements
4. Services
5. Completion
   requirements

FOLLOW-UP
1. Program
   effectiveness
2. Employer
   satisfaction
3. Community need
4. Public relations

STUDENT

ASSESMENT

1. Interests
2. Aptitudes
3. Work values
4. Career plans
5. Financial needs

PLACEMENT
1. Job
2. Military
3. Continued post
   secondary
   training

EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING
1. Realistic self knowledge
2. Knowledge of the world
   of work
3. Finding a job
4. Getting a job
5. Keeping a job

COUNSELING

Figure 6. Conceptual Model of Student Placement Services. Adapted from New Orleans Public Schools (1987).

Similarly, Beaumont, Cooper, and Stockard (1978) created a program for liberal arts college students that included career counseling and placement services over the course of students' academic involvement. The Tripod Career Planning System used at Moravian College offered an example. A model with four columns follows a conceptual framework. The level of development, activities, student class status, and assigned personnel comprise the respective columns. Information is organized within the framework. Though opportunity exists for variety with content delivery, the specificity of the model, dictating expectations, denotes it as operational (Figure 7).

Flow Chart—Tripod Career Planning System

	ACTIVITIES		PERSONNEL
	Admissions Events	F	ADMINISTRATIVE
		R	STAFF
	Registration	E	
		S	
AWARENESS	Orientation	H	
		M	
	Career Planning Resources	A	
		N	
	Individual Interview	S	FACULTY
		O	ADVISERS
	Vocational Inventories	P	
		H	
ASSESSMENT	Simulation Exercises	O	
		M	
	Evaluation Session	O	
		R	
		E	
	Information Seminars		CAREER
		J	PLANNING
	Part-Time Work Experience	U	STAFF
		N	
EXPOSURE	Organizational Life Seminars	I	
		O	
	Specific Career Field Data	R	
		S	
	Field Study Coordination	E	ALUMNI AND
		N	COMMUNITY
	Job Search Techniques	I	RESOURCES
		O	
TRAINING	Interview Training	R	
		S	
	Job Interviews		

Figure 7. Adapted from Beaumont, Cooper, and Stockard (1978).

Considerations

Bingham (1986) declared that an infinite amount of possible justifications for guidance can be generated, with multiple extremes ranging from the theoretical, which can focus on developmental issues, to economic, and considers the needs of the marketplace. Economic, social, philosophical, and scholarly forces shape an organization's reason for being, and these need to be considered to judge if practices are transferable or situationally specific. It is expected

then that guidance programs, structured out of these conceptual frameworks, may possess dissimilar, inferred, manifest, and expressed priorities.

Hutchison (2015) stated what we know about career development and counseling to be WEIRD. He stated we draw our assumptions about human functioning from a small population of humanity which is Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic. Likewise, Flores (2009) noted an original six tenets based on a western European culture and worldview that influence those of today: universality; individualism and autonomy; affluence; open opportunity and the myth of meritocracy; the centrality of work on career development; and a linear, progressive, rational process of career development (Table 6). Flores suggests career planning be examined through the filter of or context of culture to better serve diverse populations.

Table 6.

Six Tenets of Career Development.

Tenant	Assumption
Universality	Theories and practices can be applied universally and explanations can apply to a wide range of individuals of different races, ethnicities, classes, genders, and nationalities.
Individualism and Autonomy	The individual is the core unit that shapes one's destiny. Interest, skills, self-efficacy, and values help explain decisions.
Affluence	People possess the economic means to pursue their goals and interests.
Open Opportunity and the Myth of Meritocracy	Prestigious jobs are distributed based upon merit and effort. Wealthy people amass assets through hard work. An individual is in control and can make dreams a reality.
The Centrality of Work	Work plays a pivotal role, is at the core of one's identity, allows for self-actualization, and fulfills a person's needs.
Linear, Progressive, and Rational Career Development	Careers unfold in planned out, expected, linear fashion.

Note: Adapted from Flores (2009) in Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston (Ed.) *Career counseling: Contexts, processes, and techniques.*

Summary

This review of literature examined and reported on several variables that influence career counseling at the high school level. The dynamic and complex nature of work was explored. Components within the all-encompassing workforce education concept were addressed to identify the historical foundation of current career and technical education programs. The literature review contained a history and development of career counseling and its school counseling subcomponent. A brief examination of conceptual models finalized this investigation.

Work is more complex than many realize. Work impacts everyone at different levels. On an individual level, identity formation, purpose, and meaning can be influenced through occupation. Work influences career development, hence lifestyle. On a larger scale social stability and national prosperity are tied to economic realities, prompting governing bodies to enact public policy to bolster work conditions.

Workforce education, in the form of vocational education and career and technical education, possesses a rich history in American society. From the Morrill Act to present-day Perkins' legislation, the Federal Government has mandated a practical education for the masses at both the secondary and tertiary levels. Throughout the years occupational education has expanded to include a breadth of offerings preparing individuals with transferable skills ensuring employability and Dewey's vision of education through occupation (Lewis & Zuga, 2005; Petrina & Volk, 1995).

With roots in vocational education, career counseling evolved since its inception to include subjective elements along with behaviorist interventions. School counseling has also expanded and altered practices and became standardized. Though recently codified, current

school guidance practices are not fully congruent with the broader methodologies of career counseling and vocational education, relegating occupational foci to a minimum.

Conceptual models provide individuals with a mental framework which allows for the reception and processing of information and appropriate response. All are highly descriptive, explaining the elements of a system at both the micro and macro levels and diagramming connections between concepts. Though users' interpretations and implementation differ, they provided focus, organization, and conceptualization. New understandings can be better enhanced with the addition of training and development.

A conceptual model providing school counselors needed information about practices and approaches that better assist youth prepare for successful entry and sustainability in the 21st Century workforce would be beneficial for all. Prior to the creation of such a model, research must be completed to identify essential components that need to be addressed and studied. The relationships among these elements should be organized and codified. The resulting career counseling conceptual model will be a valuable tool guiding new research, adding new foci and practices, and ultimately assisting students with career development.

Chapter III will provide information on the specific methodology employed for generating and obtaining data for this study. The intended methods, procedures, populations, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis will also be reported to guide the development of a career guidance model.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model for career counseling to be used by high school counselors to better assist students with the school-to-work transition. With an ever-changing world of work, the need for workforce preparation will increase. Limited career development exists in high schools to prepare students for new workplace realities. In fact, much of the career development practices at the high school level are limited and of an objective test and tell nature, void of subjective elements, failing to address the basic need for soft skill and technical skill development, and lacking a focus on assisting students to prepare for and obtain gainful employment (Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin, 2012; Herr & Cramer, 1972; Osborn & Baggerly, 2004).

The researcher used qualitative research methodologies for data collection and analysis. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) stated the use of a focus group allows a researcher to interview several participants simultaneously, ensuring provision of the same information while allowing for detailed comparison. With a focus group, the dynamics of human interaction can generate more information when compared to the employment of surveys and individual interviews (Creswell, 2007).

Chapter III describes the methods and the procedures used for gathering and analyzing data for this research study. The first section of this chapter contains information about the research design, specifically the approach used to conduct the qualitative research, information about the population, and a rationale for using this data collection method. Next, an explanation of the research variables and a description of the population involved in the study with their characteristics and position in the world of work, and, when appropriate, their involvement in

career development was noted. The researcher included an explanation on the instrumentation employed. This was followed by data collection and analysis sections. The final section is a summary.

Research Design

A qualitative research method was deemed most appropriate for this study. This research was designed to take the experiences and insights of participants of targeted groups, synthesize them with existing information, and formulate a conceptual model. Focus groups were selected as the optimum method for this data collection. Grounded theory and phenomenological approaches were employed.

The researcher used a grounded theory approach. Research using focus groups requires an inductive process. Results emerge through the reflection and analysis of the data. Grounded theory involves ways of examining the world, allowing collected data to guide theory development by remaining close to established sources (Hays & Singh, 2012). Data obtained from the review of literature helped create Research Questions. Focus group responses to Research Questions were analyzed and grouped into themes. Codes were not selected in advance. Themes emerged and were modified as the analysis progressed. Main themes and subthemes were extrapolated from transcriptions of focus group sessions and ultimately influenced the creation of the conceptual model.

A phenomenological approach was also used. Patten (2012) explained that all qualitative researchers are in some sense phenomenologists due to the interest in subjects' perceptions. A phenomenological approach involves the study of human experiences and meanings within a given context. An interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) assisted in the collection of focus group participant's stories, feelings, claims, concerns, and thoughts about career

counseling at the high school level (Palmer, Fadden, Larkin, & de Visser, 2010). Transcriptions of focus group sessions were coded with an attempt to understand the thoughts and feelings of participants through their shared narratives and responses. Importantly, the specific background of the participant, beyond the employment classification of the focus group they participated in, was considered. Patterns were identified and ideas grouped. Responses and context were then interpreted by the researcher, which allowed for the identification of themes and subthemes.

The original use of focus groups was in business marketing (Patten, 2012). While used in business and marketing since the 1940s, and in sociology for a brief period, use of the focus group format by researchers in the counseling, psychology, education, and public health fields emerged in the 1970s (Hays & Singh, 2012). Currently, focus groups have become part of the collective consciousness in the qualitative research community and public imagination (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013).

Focus groups are unique as they examine human interaction on a topic determined by a researcher (Morgan, 1996). According to Hays and Singh (2012), focus groups are a natural data collection method for both clinical and educational settings, "well suited to uncover information about the counseling process as well as the effectiveness of counseling programs and interventions" (pp. 251-252). Some consider focus groups an extension of one-on-one interviews, conceptualize them as large interviews (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013), or declare them to be a category within qualitative interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Rather than interviewing individuals, the focus group is led by a facilitator who creates a non-threatening environment, describes the topic to be discussed, and asks a predetermined set of questions, probing for deeper meaning when needed (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

In a focus group individuals representative of a desired population are brought together by a researcher that acts as a facilitator of a discussion on a specific idea (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This data collection method capitalizes on interpersonal communication between research participants; the aim of the facilitator is to get participants to talk to each other and encourage debate in a manner dubbed "shared eavesdropping" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 301). The focus group serves as a catalyst for the selected participants to disclose and connect with each other, naturally expanding on or challenging perspectives in a manner requiring synergy (Hays & Singh, 2012). Instead of simply answering a researcher's questions, group members respond to each other's statements in an open manner (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interaction and group processes, in the form of dialogue and discussion, participant's questions, commentary on comments, jokes, and arguments, shared anecdotes, and individual priorities allow focus group research to go "in new and often unexpected directions" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299) and provides dimensions of understanding that other methods of research cannot. Morgan (1996) stated that focus groups offer insights into the sources of complex behaviors and motivations and are an effective technique to be employed for idea generation. In addition, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2013) stated that focus groups, grounded in positivist epistemologies, search for truth.

Focus group research comprises several select components. According to Morgan (1996), three main components are being a research method dedicated to data collection, using interaction of a group as a data source, and creating group discussion. Focus groups usually consist of 6 to 12 participants that are gathered to discuss a topic (Patten, 2012). Group size is influenced by the time given for the discussion, the wide range of responses that may occur, the ability for group members to ask questions, and overall manageability (Morgan, 1996). According to Hays and Singh (2012), participant selection is a vital component to focus group

research methodology. Individuals selected to participate in a group are homogenous in some manner, with similar characteristics and power with regard to the phenomena of interest. That said, they added that there should be some diverse participants that share the same commonality. Group sessions are normally scheduled for a limited time period (Rubin & Rubin, 2012), which is usually one to two hours (Kitzinger, 1995), and typically an hour (Patten, 2012). In addition, two or more focus groups are generally employed by the researcher; Kitzinger (1995) stated 6 to 50 participants were the norm. A focus group session usually involves three to eight questions in the form of an interview protocol, which includes those that address experience and views in the early stages and follow-up questions (Hays & Singh, 2012). Participant responses are typically open-ended (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

A focus group was an appropriate method for this study for multiple reasons. First, focus groups are often congruent with counseling philosophy and values, such as respect for participants' views, encouragement, and insights (Hays & Singh, 2012). The goal of this study was to create a conceptual model. It therefore required the creative, personal, and practical ideas from various participants. The model stemmed from several backgrounds and examined unquantifiable constructs. Individuals represented multiple groupings of individuals with regard to socioeconomic status, abilities and interests, and ages.

Focus groups are a popular technique for gathering qualitative data (Morgan, 1996). An advantage is that they reveal the "evolution of perceptions in social context" (Patten, 2012, p. 155). Focus groups allow for creative and dynamic interpersonal relationships and dialogue to be examined. In this instance, individuals of homogenous employment backgrounds were chosen to discuss questions in detail. This allowed for comparison both between groups comprised of individuals searching for employment, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians,

managers and owners from local business and industry, and high school counselors. Focus groups produce a large amount of data on a specific topic in a relatively short time (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Hays and Singh (2012) claimed this methodology allowed for direct contact to be made between both participants and the researcher and allowed for follow-up questioning for clarification. In addition, they stated that focus groups allow for the creating of a relaxed feel and self-exploration when compared to individual interviews while facilitating greater data collection in less time.

Disadvantages must be considered when employing focus groups for the purpose of data generation. Reliability is sacrificed for the sake of validity when using focus groups and other types of qualitative research, as results from focus group sessions may not be replicable (Responsive Management, 2015). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), group dynamics must be taken into account. They explain that whenever there are more than two individuals in an interview they rarely act as true equals. Therefore, some participants may be reluctant to speak when others assume a dominant role, and researchers need to obtain input from all subjects for it to be useful and representative. Furthermore, Hays and Singh (2012) note that the power of group conformity might hinder an individual's willingness to express an opinion counter to the majority. To add, because of the number of individuals present, a researcher's list of questions must be kept quite short (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Therefore, focus groups may not offer the same depth of information as an individual interview (Hays & Singh, 2012). Also, Merriam (2009) cautioned about using focus groups with topics that were highly personal, sensitive, or culturally inappropriate. Finally, the researcher/moderator must possess the skill set needed to use this technique (Merriam, 2009).

Research Variables

Multiple variables were present in the study. Independent variables included the opinions of the various groups related to career education and career counseling. In addition, independent variables included key concepts and processes for career counseling provided through the literature and the state employment commission. Dependent variables included the needs to be covered by a career counseling model and the amount of different or unique ideas that provided relevancy to the topic of career counseling and their perceived quality, judged by their feasibility, effectiveness, importance, originality, and uniqueness (Fern, 1982). The researcher sought to generate ideas useful for career counseling in a high school setting to provide insights for the following: (a) helpful practices; (b) gaps in service; (c) areas of concern; or (d) approaches, methods, and practices.

Study Population

The population for this study consisted of individuals that either influence, have been influenced, or should have been influenced by career education and career counseling at the high school level. The focus was on career development and best counseling practices that would assist students in their preparation for entry into the world of work. To that end, the following groups were identified: unemployed individuals searching for work, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, managers and employers from business and industry, and high school counselors. A goal of obtaining 6 to 12 participants per focus group was established. Gender, age, ethnicity, and race were not considered as a factor in this study due to the emphasis on career development.

These groups were selected to be used as their perspectives were not generally included in the review of literature; their experiences and perspectives can offer insights into what

constitutes best practices and gaps in service. Unemployed individuals searching for work were able to identify aspects of career development including job search skills, what hindered progress, and what they wish they had known or had been taught or to what they had been exposed. This group varied in age and experience. Gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians who possessed desired occupations for over one year and were in a variety of environments, including agricultural production, the medical field, and construction/fabrication were sought. Having successfully obtained and maintained the work they desired, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technician participants were able to reflect upon the factors that influenced their success. Managers and employers from business and industry from various fields offered unique insights on career development since they seek employees and hire based on personal and company criteria. High school counselors working in student service employed at secondary school settings were familiar with theory obtained in their graduate programs and may possess valuable tacit knowledge from on-the-job training and experiences and narratives of current and former pupils as well as an educational background in the field. While the review of literature contains information on the skills, knowledge, and abilities employers' desire, identifying aspects of delivering and instilling them to students from the role of a school counselor is missing.

Education and Employment Data

When looking at the population for this study it was important to know the educational and economic realities of the area. Education and employment data were obtained from the United Way of Monterey County, the Bright Futures Educational Partnership for Monterey County, and the Institute for Community Collaborative Studies at California State University, Monterey Bay. The majority of parents desire their children to earn either a baccalaureate,

professional, or graduate degree (Navarro, Judson, & The Institute for Community Collaborative Studies at California State University, Monterey Bay, 2015). Students report ambitious post-secondary aspirations congruent with goals projected by their parents (United Way of Monterey County, 2015). That said, research conducted by the Bright Futures Educational Partnership for Monterey County (2015) estimated that out of 7,000 students that enter kindergarten, 5,600 start 12th grade, 4,400 graduate high school, 3,000 enter postsecondary education and training, and less than a third earn a degree, certificate, or credential.

Employment data revealed a lack of economic opportunity in Monterey County. Annual job projections show a shortage of jobs for individuals that have attained advanced certifications and associates degrees (Bright Futures, 2015). A Monterey County Business Council (2011) economic report revealed exact employment numbers by cluster. The top five largest industries ranked by number of jobs were: local government, 20,370; farm labor contractors and crew leaders, 20,194; crop and animal production, 13,654; hotels (excluding casinos) and motels, 6,720; and full-service restaurants, 6,139. Postharvest crop activities, employment with state and federal government, and limited-service restaurant complete the top ten. Agriculture provided 25.96% of all jobs with a total of 56,680 employees followed by 48,350 governmental positions, and 27,450 in service industry jobs. When grouped together, the largest industry clusters in the county are agriculture, natural resources, and mining, comprising 20%, leisure and hospitality with 16.5%, followed by trade, transportation, and utilities totaling 14%. Information and education and health services are next, with 11% and 9% respectively. According to the State of California Employment Development Department (2016), a 2% growth rate is expected for the 50 fastest growing occupations in the county. These 50 occupations comprise 67% of all job openings, with the largest categories being farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery, and

greenhouse; retail salespersons; and cashiers. Wages in the county range from farmworker and laborer positions, which require less than a high school diploma and earn a median average of $9.07 an hour, to doctoral and professional degrees with an average of $86.40 per hour. A table depicting Average Yearly Job Openings reveals most opportunities in the county require less than a high school diploma (4,120), followed by those requiring a high school diploma or the equivalent (1,960) (Figure 8).
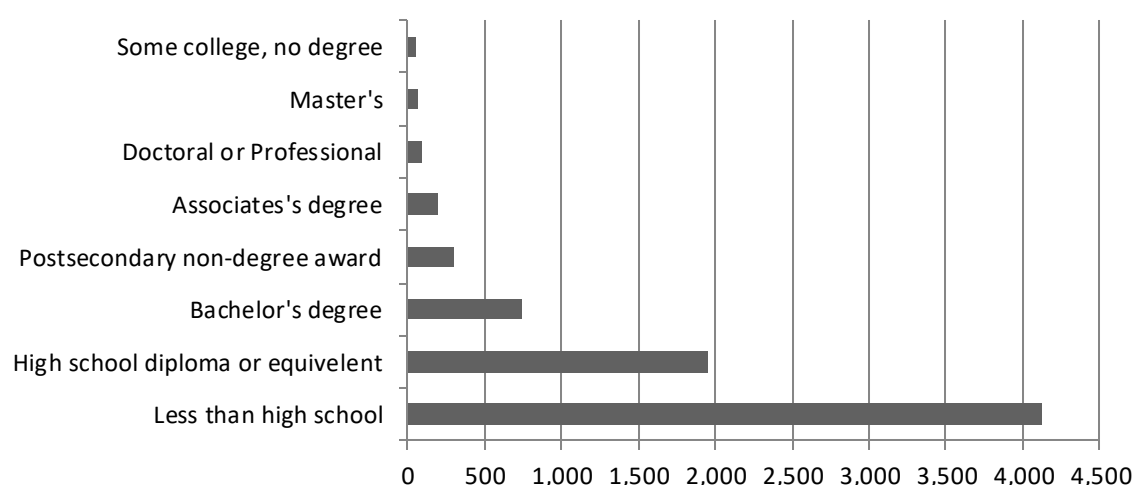
Figure 8. Average Yearly Job Openings by Education Level. Adapted from State of California Employment Development Department (2015), 2012-2022 Projection Highlights Salinas Metropolitan Statistical Area (Monterey County).

Instrument Design

The researcher used four focus group interviews as the main method of data collection for this study. The nature of this data collection, involving independently made material in the form of interview questions, makes the researcher the key instrument (Creswell, 2007). Questions stemmed from information presented in the review of literature and information obtained on how to conduct focus groups. Employment of a content validity matrix identified the variables reflected in the questioning route (See Table 7).

Table 7

Referenced Question Matrix

Question	Reference
Did you find the career counseling you received in high school beneficial?	Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin, (2012); Domene, Shapka, & Keating (2006); Hays & Singh (2012)
What did career counseling entail at your high school?	American School Counselor Association (2004); Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin (2012); Domene, Shapka, & Keating (2006); Reynolds (2013); Rose (2004); Schenck, Anctil, Smith, & Dahir (2012)
What counseling activities do you think students should receive to help them better prepare for the world of work?	Babineaux & Krumboltz (2013); Lent (2013); National Center on Education and the Economy (2008); Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey (2005); Rose (2004); Stone III (2014); Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)
Did the use of personality tests, interest inventories, guest speakers, television shows, and career/job fairs benefit students? Why or why or why not?	Anderson (2006); Babineaux & Krumboltz (2013); Brown & Lent (2005); Cochran (1997); Gray & Herr (1998); Krumboltz (2009); Lent (2013); Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz (1999); Narayanan (2013); Peavey (1993; 1995); Savickas (2005a; 2005b); Super (1957)
What would make career counseling become more comprehensive and thorough? What should career counseling at the high school level include?	Babineaux & Krumboltz (2013); Bandura (1997); Carnevale, Smith, Stone, III, Kotamraju, Steurnagel, & Green (2011); Conley (2012); Domene, Shapka, & Keating (2006); Gray & Herr (1998); Parsons (1909); Peavey (1993; 1995); Savickas (2005a; 2005b); Schenck, Anctil, Smith, & Dahir (2012); Skorikov & Vondracek (2007); Stone III (2014); Super (1957); Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)
How can school counselors better prepare students for in-demand occupations and jobs of the future, such as STEM careers?	Association for Career and Technical Education (2006, 2008); Gardner (2007); Gordon (2010); Gray & Herr (1998); Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek (2008); National Center on Education and the Economy (2008); Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011); Wagner (2006)
What level of focus should school counselors put on employable soft skills (such as getting along with others, punctuality, responsibility, etc.)?	Association for Career and Technical Education (2006, 2008); Conley (2012); Johnson & Duffett (2003); National Center on Education and the Economy (2008); Parsons (1909); Rose (2004); Stone III (2014); Super (1957); United States Department of Labor (1991)

Table 7 (Continued)

Question	Reference
How important is the use of employment data, workforce education, and career counseling? Should guidance counselors mention jobs that are in demand at the local and national level when working with students?	Carnevale, Smith, Stone, III, Kotamraju, Steurnagel, & Green (2011); Gray & Herr (1998); Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011); Wagner (2006)
Do school counselors ask students to state an occupation of interest before they are developmentally ready? If so, what should be done?	Krumboltz, (2009); Super (1957); Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)
If you were currently a high school counselor what would you wish to instill in your students and what advice would you give them?	Hays & Singh (2012)
Is there anything else that you would like to add about services for counseling young people about work?	Hays & Singh (2012)

Topics discussed in the four focus groups included participant background information, best practices, and gap in services regarding K-12 counseling and career counseling experiences, workforce preparation, and the world of work. Questions used in each focus group were generated to stimulate conversation and self-disclosure, and they were designed to obtain specific information pertinent to the stated research questions and enhance dialogue. The protocol acted as a bank of questions to be used. Not all questions were asked during each focus group session. Specific questions were selected from the protocol for use with each focus group based upon their group characteristics (See Appendix A for a copy of the questions asked to specific focus groups).

The semi-structured interview questions were refined. The questioning route was created in a graduate level class and then employed in a previous study, which involved individual interviews. Upon human subjects approval for this research study, the researcher piloted the

questions with an emeritus professor of counseling psychology, a recent high school graduate working part-time while attending a community college, high school counselors, a member of business and industry, and a gainfully employed skilled technician. The researcher made adjustments as needed to ensure they were fully understandable and asked what was intended. Suggestions regarding other possible questions were made. The individual that represented the precision production, craft, and repair occupations during the pilot session suggested asking the following: (a) Did you see your counselor in high school? If so, why? What was the nature/purpose of the meeting?, and (b) Should students develop specific hard skills before graduating high school to help them obtain a job? A high school counselor suggested asking members in the counseling focus group if it would be best to have one counselor designated as a career counselor or if all counselors be responsible for delivering this service. The individual that piloted the revised questions representing professionals from business and industry suggested asking members of all focus groups about the possibility of offering job placement, apprenticeship, job shadowing, and internship opportunities that could better link school with the world of work.

Data Collection

Group Formation

Formation of the first focus group comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work was completed through the assistance of an established group. The researcher established contact with an instructor/advisor with the Center for Employment Training (CET) at a local job fair. After speaking with the individual in person to provide information on the research project and obtaining support in accessing current clients, a follow-up email was sent with the intention of obtaining written permission to speak to an established group of individuals developing job

skills and searching for employment (Appendix B). Upon receiving permission, the researcher conducted a brief presentation to a large group of individuals during class-time at CET. After explaining the research project and the role of focus group participants, the researcher circulated a contact log to obtain the names of willing participants and their contact information. Potential participants were sent a letter informing them of the date and time of the focus group session, which again followed an established meeting for the group members. A follow-up email was sent to potential participants as a reminder.

The second focus group consisted of gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians. The researcher sought participants from the local community and from acquaintances that met the criteria. This contact was done in person through casual conversation. Subjects filled out a contact form with information that included a telephone number and email address. Individuals interested in participating were then sent an official letter and informing them of the date and time for the data collection session (Appendix C). A follow-up phone call was made to potential participants as a reminder and to gage the number committed to participating.

The third focus group consisted of a diverse group of managers and employers from business and industry who belonged to a Salinas Rotary club. The researcher was familiar with this local entity, a chapter of a national group that is a network of community leaders focused on improving society. Contact was made with the current president. The researcher sought permission from this individual to speak to the local affiliation that meets at regular scheduled intervals. An email was sent to the club president after the face-to-face meeting (Appendix D). After obtaining permission from the group, a date and time was set for a brief presentation where the research project was introduced. Individuals interested in participating in the focus group session wrote their names and contact information on a contact sheet. Volunteers were sent an

email thanking them for their willingness to participate and informing them of the official letter they would be receiving. The researcher worked with the president of the organization to determine several possible dates and times that would allow the focus group to commence upon the close of a regularly scheduled meeting. An official letter informing the potential subjects of the chosen time and date for the focus group was sent (Appendix E). An email used as a reminder followed, as did a phone call.

The researcher conducted a brief presentation at a gathering of high school counselors that work for the Salinas Union High School District and asked for volunteers. Interested individuals provided their names and contact information on a contact log. Then, a recruitment email was sent to all counselors working in high school settings within Monterey County. Email addresses were acquired by a simple Internet search of each respective school site. An email was sent to the majority of counselors in mass. In instances where email addresses were not offered the researcher sent the same email message to individuals from the remaining schools. After being contacted, individuals were mailed an official participant letter. Then a follow-up email reminder containing the date, location, and time of the focus group session was sent (Appendix F).

On the Topic of Volunteers

Issues concerning the employment of volunteers in research exist. Volunteers may differ in some way from the general population because of the specific group the researcher accessed (Hays & Singh, 2012) or because of the nature of those that chose to participate (Boughner, 2010). Though many assume people participate out of a sense of altruism, many adhere to the claim volunteerism is practiced to promote an individual's own interest, need, or want; this is known as an altruistic-egoistic duality (Shye, 2009). Clary and Snyder (1999) discovered values

and understanding to be the strongest elements motivating volunteers, and the desire to enhance career is an important factor among younger individuals. To add, they explained volunteer behavior does not solely depend on the person or situation, but rather the interaction of the person-based dynamics and situational opportunities. Similarly, Shye (2009) found that volunteers did not differ much from non-volunteers. A notable difference existed with a desire to express one's beliefs, and smaller differences could be found with an individual's desire to strengthen ties with one's culture, contribute to one's health, or express one's personality.

Field Procedures

Once gathered individuals were informed about the agenda for each session, which centered on the topics of the consent form, the protocol, introductions, the focus group session, and then the close. First, consent forms were reviewed and signed (Appendix G). Audio and video recordings commenced. The researcher then read the scripted protocol verbatim which called for a brief introduction of focus group participants (Appendix H). The focus group session followed. At the close of the session, a scripted ending was read to all volunteers. After the end of the focus groups, debriefs ensued, which included discussion, sharing of personal information, and closure.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

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Qualitative Analysis

Upon collection from each group session, interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Focus group interview data were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. Open coding, the examination of recorded data to identify distinct or separate segments, took place, as opposed to predetermined categories (Patten, 2012). The coding of transcripts involved a second party to assist with the establishment of intercoder agreement and interrater reliability. The

researcher recruited a recently retired high school guidance counselor. This counselor had over 20 years of experience possessing both a master's degree and a California Pupil Personnel Services credential for this purpose.

First, intercoder agreement was established (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). The researcher and additional coder read the transcriptions of focus group sessions together to identify and agree on large themes. Coding was conducted and disagreements were discussed and reconciled. Themes were then identified. Each identified theme was then denoted by a specific highlighter color for identification purposes during the process of coding. The researcher and second coder then examined the transcription, coding main themes using the specified color highlighter. In addition, both readers noted, identified, and established possible subthemes.

Analyses were then compared utilizing a Cohen's Kappa. Warrens (2011) explained that the Cohen's Kappa is, "widely employed for summarizing the cross-classification of two variables with the same unordered category" (p. 471). While the perfect agreement is 1 (Warrens, 2011), Wood (2007) explained, "For research purposes, there seems to be general agreement that the kappa should be at least .60 or .70" (p. 6). Wood noted the calculation for this statistic is as follows:

$$\frac{(\text{Observed percentage of agreement}) - (\text{Expected percentage of agreement})}{1 - (\text{Expected percentage of agreement})}$$

Examination of the transcription of the first focus group allowed for a foundation to be made with regard to future coding. The additional coder read and approved a written draft of the findings for that particular focus group before moving on to the next set of transcriptions. The researcher and additional rater utilized the methodology for the coding of all four focus groups.

An Excel spreadsheet was used to note the exact number and frequencies of similar information shared by the focus groups and to organize these data for the composition of the results.

Coding and analysis of data were done in different stages. The transcription of each focus group session was completed by the researcher, as opposed to using computer software, to allow the researcher to re-engage with the data and develop an initial layer of understanding. A thorough reading of each transcribed session by each coder followed. During a second reading of the transcriptions, the researcher and coder underlined key information and noted key categories and subcategories, and each took notes on overreaching themes. Discussion ensued and intercoder agreement was established. Main categories were identified. A third reading was conducted to identify code data into categories (Hays & Singh, 2012). Before advancing to code the next set of transcriptions the interrater read drafts of the findings on the previously coded group.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), when one codes using a grounded theory model they may see things unimagined in the transcribed data as codes are not selected in advance but rather you find and modify themes as the analysis progresses. Initially, construction of categories and codes is highly inductive, yet a subtle shift to a deductive mode of thought occurs as the researcher searches for the existence of a category in subsequent data attempting to see if earlier groupings of data "hold up" (Merriam, 2009, p. 185). Using input from the additional rater, the researcher developed core categories to help describe how the process categories interacted with one another.

Application of Findings

Patterns and themes identified in the multiple focus group data sources were examined on how they related to the research questions and to each other. In holistic fashion, the researcher

identified perspectives stemming from different data sources as they related to the problems noted in the research questions. The researcher organized main themes and grouped them according to secondary grade levels, identifying a foundation and then allowing for growth, development, and expansion. Main concepts present in focus groups were triangulated with employment data from America's Job Center of California and literature review data sources. The synthesis of these elements led to the creation of a conceptual model to be used to enhance the approaches high school counselors need to use to assist students in career preparation for the post-modern world of work.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability, the ability to replicate results, is an issue with focus group research let alone qualitative research in general; it is sacrificed for the sake of increased validity (Responsive Management, 2015). Merriam (2009) explained that the problematic nature of reliability in qualitative research stems from human behavior not being static, and the fact that what many experience may not necessarily be more reliable than that of a single person. Accordingly, Merriam noted the triangulation of data as a principal strategy to ensure reliability and validity. Therefore, the researcher included multiple forms of triangulation to check accuracy, enhance dependability, and ensure the quality of the study.

Triangulation of data sources, involving multiple perspectives and participant voices, resulted in the use of several participants representing a similar backgrounds and the recruitment of subjects congruent with the research design (Hays & Singh, 2012). Identification of similar information allowed for corroboration. According to Smith et al. (2009) (as cited in McIlveen, Morgan, & Bimrose, 2012), "phenomenological analysis requires purposive selection of participants, rather than large sample sizes for validity" (p. 25). To better enhance the credibility

of the analysis the researcher conducted multiple focus groups with standard numbers of select participants—6 to 12 individuals (Patten, 2012).

The researcher employed methods triangulation by using multiple source materials on the research topic (Patten, 2012). Hays and Singh (2012) referred to this as triangulation of data methods. The data that emerged from the focus group sessions were compared and to those from the review of literature and information obtained from interviews conducted with business services specialists employed by America's Job Center of California.

Triangulation of research occurred through the employment of an additional researcher/investigator in the coding of focus group data (Merriam, 2009). Intercoder agreement was established through an interactive process involving the two raters (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). This is often referred to as consensus coding (Hays & Singh, 2012). First, an evaluation of one focus group session was conducted to identify and agree on large themes. Both the researcher and intercoder met to read transcriptions of focus group sessions. Discussion ensued and consensus regarding themes made. The coding of one of the themes was conducted and agreement compared, which led to the establishment of subthemes. The process of coding was continued until consensus was reached through negotiation. The same method was repeated with all identified themes.

Finally, to assist with the description, conceptualization, and explanation of the phenomena a triangulation of theoretical perspectives which involved the integration of theories at any stage of the process was completed (Hays & Singh). Multiple theories present in the literature review added to the enhancement of the conceptual model on workforce counseling.

The researcher employed basic measures to enhance the reliability and validity of findings. A content validity matrix identified the variables reflected in the questioning route and

ensured the focus group questions originated from the review of literature. Focus group sessions were both audio and video recorded to enhance the accuracy of transcriptions. In addition, the moderator/researcher conducted member checking during the sessions, along with several recorded post-session debriefs (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). This involved asking follow-up questions during focus group sessions probing for deeper, tangible, and specific information.

Summary

This chapter provided specific information on the selected research methodology employed on behalf of obtaining research for this study. The researcher conducted an applied study, qualitative in nature, using focus groups. Research stemmed from the grounded theory theoretical tradition.

Instrumentation in the form of a questioning route (a semi-structured interview protocol) containing questions that stemmed from the review of literature was created and used with four focus groups. The first focus group was made up of unemployed individuals searching for work. The second focus group was comprised of gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians. The third focus group included managers and employers from business and industry who possessed knowledge of the skills, aptitudes, and abilities students need to possess to obtain and maintain employment. The fourth and final focus group consisted of high school counselors employed at the secondary school level that work with students and help guide them toward post-secondary education and training and prepare them for the world of work.

During each of the four focus groups the researcher asked preselected open-ended questions from the semi-structured interview protocol. All questions related to career counseling and career development practices and needs and will be asked in a manner to obtain participants'

opinions, suggestions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings. All conversations will be digitally recorded.

Transcription of the recorded conversations will follow. Transcriptions will be reviewed multiple times and major themes and patterns will be identified and coded with the assistance of an additional rater. A spreadsheet will be created to determine the number and frequency of themes in each focus group. All information will later be correlated and a conceptual model for career counseling for school counselors to best prepare students for the world of work will be developed.

Chapter IV will include the information extrapolated from the research, the data obtained, and the correlation of the information. Descriptive and detailed information about the homogenous nature of each group and the individual participants, as well as the purpose and the nature of the select discussions, and information obtained from each focus group will be presented. A correlation of the findings will also be determined and presented at the end of the chapter. Employment data obtained from America's Job Center of California for the purpose of triangulation will be presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model for career counseling to be used by school counselors to better assist students with the school-to-work transition. Data obtained through four focus groups were analyzed to identify both helpful aspects of current school counselor career guidance practices at the high school level and possible gaps in service. This information will then be integrated with data from the literature review and data from America's Job Center of California to create a conceptual model for career counseling at the high school level that assists with the transition from school to work. The following research questions helped guide this study:

RQ_1: What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition from school to the world of work?

RQ_2: What do students need to better prepare for the school-to-work transition?

RQ_3: Can a model be developed to meet the needs of students and practices of high school counselors to enhance workforce preparation?

Participants' discussions and responses made during focus group sessions to questions from a semi-structured interview protocol are reported. Descriptions of major themes that emerged through the analysis of focus group data are presented through a grounded theory approach. In addition to research ideas, the narrative includes quotes of participants from the focus group sessions that best exemplified and clearly illustrated major themes based upon data sets. Finally, descriptions of employment data and findings relevant to the research questions were included for the purpose of data triangulation.

Participants

The population in this study included individuals from different backgrounds who held various ideas regarding what is needed to make services more useful in preparing students for the transition from school to work. Participants were either influenced by, could have benefitted from, or were expected to offer career guidance at the high school level. The first focus group consisted of eight unemployed individuals who were actively developing job skills with the intention of improving the probability of their employment prospects. Some were high school graduates. None possessed employment of any kind. Seven gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians participated in the second focus group. Employment-wise, these participants included: a dental hygienist, a construction equipment operator, an electrician, a welder/fabricator, an individual who works designing and constructing septic systems, a facilities and projects manager from a local seed company, and a research associate. The last three worked their way up from entry-level positions and into skilled occupations within their respective companies. The third focus group was comprised of seven employers and managers from business and industry. Background-wise, they held the following occupations: director of a governmental agency for Monterey County, an owner of an information systems company, a superintendent of an elementary school district with years of experience in school operations, a ceiling contractor owner who has been in business for over 30 years, a manager from a linen supply company, a family doctor who teaches in the residency program at a local hospital, and a local jeweler. Finally, a total of nine high school counselors, from five comprehensive high schools and one continuation high school, and from two different school districts, participated in the fourth focus group.

Results From the Four Focus Groups

In order to collect and analyze the data collected from the four focus groups, sessions were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were completed by the researcher. Afterword, they were read multiple times and discussed and coded with the assistance of an additional rater. The researcher and additional coder identified general themes and specific data from each of the focus groups respectively, treating each independently, and guaranteeing that a minimum kappa (κ) of .60 was reached (see Table 8 and Appendix I).

Table 8

Interrater Kappa Coefficient

Focus Group	κ
1. Unemployed Individuals Searching for Work	.93
2. Gainfully Employed Artisans and Skilled Technicians	.86
3. Employers and Managers from Business and Industry	.80
4. High School Counselors	.76

Note: κ is the Greek symbol for kappa, a statistic which measures interrater agreement accounting for chance.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, "What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition from school to the world of work?" The researcher designed and selected appropriate questions from the protocol for the four different focus groups based upon their background and literature review.

Focus Group 1

Participants of the first focus group, comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work, were able to reflect on their high school experiences, their current economic situations, and the training they were obtaining to assist with their employability. They were asked Focus Group Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 to help determine what aspects of career counseling were useful.

Unemployed individuals searching for work were asked Question 1, "Did you find the career counseling you received in high school beneficial?" Participants stated a counselor's main goal was to get students through high school, and interactions were rooted in the annual scheduling of courses during their four years. One mentioned completing a four-year plan, focused on having students becoming A-G eligible (To be qualified for admissions to a four-year institution in California after high school completion students must have completed a minimum of four years of English, two years of laboratory science, three years of mathematics, two years of social science, one year of art, two years of foreign language, and one year of an approved elective, all with a grade of C or higher). This was part of a discussion of a four-year plan. Another participant mentioned a conversation regarding alternative education due to being behind in credits. To add, meetings did not occur as much as they wanted to, and when requests were made waiting to be seen was typical.

Several participants were able to mention career counseling activities when asked Question 2, "What did career counseling entail at your high school?" supported by elements of Question 4, which asked about the beneficial nature of personality tests, interest inventories, guest speakers, television shows, and career fairs. Multiple participants mentioned participation in mock interviews. One participant mentioned that she had been in mock interviews and was taught how to write a resume, cover letter, and thank you letter in high school. All was due to the fact she was a participant of the Future Farmers of America; career development was part of that program's focus. Other participants had completed mock interviews during their senior year. They stated nothing was emphasized, and depth and details were lacking. The former FFA student completed mock interviews during both her junior and senior years. Another individual mentioned being able to take a Regional Occupational Program (ROP, California's version of

CTE) course on Office Careers. This class taught her basic computer skills. Finally, one participant mentioned a time when she sought career guidance. The participant went to her counselor to discuss wanting to go to a local university to become an ultrasound technician. When she was told that the university did not offer that program the conversation ended. In hindsight, the participant felt that a discussion of what the university offered, in line with local in-demand occupations, would have been highly beneficial for her career development.

Responses to Question 9, "Do school counselors ask students to state an occupation of interest before they are developmentally ready?" prompted discussion on best practices and needs. All participants believed asking individuals their specific occupational and career goals was an important and influential practice. One noted she had been asked that at an alternative school site and not at the previous three high schools she had attended. She stated that her declaration was not supported with resources and direction. One participant commented that there needed to be different levels to asking about the jobs students desire. She noted that even though freshmen were very young, waiting until senior year was late. Another participant agreed. She thought it best to ask about occupational interests during their freshman year or upon entry to high school so students would have that focus and understand the expectations. Finally, another participant mentioned the use of portfolios as a tool to help students become ready for work.

Participants in the first focus group, comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work, were asked Focus Group Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 to help identify aspects of counseling practices that assisted high school students with the transition from school to work. Though meetings with school counselors were minimal and career counseling lacking, participants were able to identify some offerings and practices that could better assist students with employability.

Themes

Discussions stimulated from questions that aimed to generate data for the first research question helped identify themes. The researcher and interrater identified several themes in the transcription. Central ideas that emerged from these dialogues identified the following themes: absence of career counseling, influence of programs in career development, and systematic delivery of career counseling.

Absence of Career Counseling

Participant conversations regarding counseling experiences revealed limited and non-existent career counseling at the high school level. When asked to reflect and share their experiences with high school counselors the participants in the first focus group stated most were either lacking or not truly career related. Counselors focused on academics. When career guidance was sought assistance was deficient. Programs and course offerings were deemed more central to career development.

Influence of Programs in Career Development

Several participants mentioned the role school programs played in career development. Participation in the Future Farmers of America afforded one participant access to career development opportunities. All was a privilege for being in that program. Also, the selection of a career and technical education course allowed one student to learn computer skills.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

Participants suggested counselors scaffold activities into different levels. While freshmen were very young, it was important to set an expectation and have them begin thinking about what work they would like to pursue after high school completion. Career activities needed to begin early, as senior year was too late. Starting in one's freshman year would allow for gradual

development and exposure as well as imparting both purpose and expectations. Most had completed mock interviews during their senior year, which was understood to be too late.

Participants in the first focus group comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work were asked Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 to identify what aspects of career counseling at the high school level were useful. The coding and analysis of the transcriptions helped identify the following themes: absence of career counseling, influence of programs in career development, and systematic delivery of career counseling.

Focus Group 2

In order to obtain data for Research Question 1, participants in the second focus group, comprised of gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, were asked open-ended questions designed to stimulate reflection and discussion. Participants were asked Focus Group Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 from the semi-structured interview protocol.

Question 1 asked gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians if the school counseling they received in high school was beneficial. The majority of participants stated they hardly ever saw, did not remember much interaction with, or made career decisions without a counselor. One switched from college prep offerings to business after the passing of her parents without any consultation, and another stated, though he did meet with counselors in one district, when he moved to another area of the state he never met with a counselor or was even asked what he wanted to do for a living. Several stated that reasons for seeing a counselor were for discipline or for selection of classes. Not all shared these experiences.

Though several in the group did not receive or recall career counseling, three participants did note the career counseling they obtained in high school as being very helpful with their career development. Those that did meet with their counselor and had a solid relationship

expressed gratitude on the direction and influence their counselor offered. One of those participants expressed the need for some career training for the non-college bound. He declared that without it many students would not know what to do with themselves and then may get into trouble. Beyond trades, one individual mentioned the military. Disliking the careers offered in his region of the country, he joined the Army after high school, which expanded options and allowed him to leave the area.

Question 2 asked participants to discuss what career counseling entailed at their respective high schools. One participant spoke highly of the counseling he received in high school. His counselor had respected his goal of allowing him to "just graduate high school." He had no intention of going to college. In addition, the counselor pushed him toward career and technical education and learning a trade. He therefore learned welding, electrical, and mechanical work. As a result, he was able to get an entry level job and subsequently advance. Another participant mentioned a similar experience. He too was allowed to take the minimum academic offerings and take advantage of "the cool hands-on classes" that would prepare him for work in his area of interest. Another individual mentioned his counselor by name. Her words of wisdom were deemed highly influential. She told the participant, "College is fine. If you want to go to college that is wonderful." "But learn to do with your hands." "People should be able to do something with their hands because then they can always sustain themselves." Some participants mentioned the use of assessments in the career counseling they received in high school, and others mentioned involvement in career and technical education courses.

Question 4 asked participants, "Did the use of personality tests, interest inventories, guest speakers, television shows, and career fairs benefit students? Why or why not?" Use of metrics to assist with career development was discussed. Two participants recalled taking assessments or

inventories, however they did not receive much in the way of follow-up to find them useful. Scores and results were not examined in depth. Lack of follow-up on the activity minimized the impact. One wondered "if there was something they were good at that they should have been [told]." Though proper use of assessments and inventories were lacking, the influence of clubs and programs filled the void.

Participants noted different organizations and offerings which assisted with career exploration and development. 4H and Future Farmers of America were mentioned, the later multiple times during the focus group session. These organizations both allowed for exploration, were tied to career interests, and promoted job readiness. To add, individuals also noted course offerings through the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) such as welding and auto mechanics. Discussion of other forms of career exploration followed.

Interestingly enough, participants stated that career fairs were beneficial. One participant understood that for most students it was a "free day." One participant recognized the concern that many students would look at the event as a free day and not take advantage, however the chance of the one student discovering and learning was deemed worth the effort. He argued that these needed to be done if they helped reach even a minimal amount of students and helped fuel interests. Another participant mentioned that entry level work (where students could earn work experience credits) was most beneficial.

Question 9, which asked, "Do school counselors ask students to state an occupation of interest before they are developmentally ready? If so, what should be done?" prompted mixed responses. One participant reacted to the question by asking the researcher, "Can I ask you a question? At 18 years old, did you know what you wanted to do [or] what you are doing right now?" He explained that most at that age simply wanted to go out and make some money.

Instead of asking, counselors were better off to show students "what was out there" and provide information. Another individual stated that even the college bound students were unsure about what they wanted to do, and this was the norm. One participant declared, "My job found me." Another agreed with the sentiment. She worked for Monsanto for 30 years and ended up in a position she never considered at the time and was not qualified for if they were hiring for it today because she lacked a degree. She began to work for Monsanto decades earlier to earn money for bingo, became fascinated with the work (though she disliked science and math when in high school), and found her niche. Other individuals agreed. They felt that a willingness to work was more important than identifying an occupation of interest.

Participants in the second focus group were asked Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 from the semi-structured interview protocol. Responses to these questions were able to identify career counseling activities and school counselor behaviors that best assisted high school students in preparing for the transition from school to work.

Themes

Conversations encouraged from questions that aimed to generate data for the first research question helped identify several central ideas. The researcher and interrater agreed to the following themes that emerged from these dialogues: elements of successful career counseling, psychological assessments, employment data and work resources, influence of programs in career development, career development activities, and postsecondary pathways for education and training.

Elements of Successful Career Counseling

Participants discussed the topic of meeting with counselors and group members noted the influence of these interactions. Though the majority of participants stated they hardly ever saw,

did not remember much interaction with, or made career decisions without a counselor, those that did meet with their counselor and had a solid relationship expressed gratitude on the direction and influence provided. Good counseling involved the development of a relationship, respecting students' desires with regard to their educational experiences, recognizing realistic pathways for the non-college bound, and instilling the notion that students needed to develop marketable skills they could use for obtaining gainful employment or possibly fall back on if needed. To add, students did not need to be pushed or forced to make a career decision. A willingness to work with proper exploration would allow for individuals to find gainful employment.

Psychological Assessments

Participants mentioned the use of psychological metrics such as inventories and assessments. Proper use of metrics, with detailed explanations before they were given and follow-up activities that included an explanation of the results, would allow students to know more about themselves. This in-depth self-exploration would allow students to identify some occupations in which they may excel.

Employment Data and Work Resources

Exposure to local employment opportunities can assist with career development. High school students need exposure to the occupations that are present in their communities. Information regarding local employment opportunities need to be provided to students to help them consider options and better prepare for the world of work.

Influence of Programs in Career Development

Participants noted different organizations and offerings which assisted with career exploration and development. 4H and Future Farmers of America were mentioned, the later

multiple times during the focus group session. These organizations both allowed for exploration, were tied to career interests, and promoted job readiness. Participants also noted course offerings through the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) such as welding and auto mechanics.

Career Development Activities

Participants mentioned several career counseling activities. Proper use of metrics, requiring much follow-up and deeper explanation, was suggested. Development of a counseling relationship and individual sessions where career development and exploration were discussed was also an activity that assisted with helping students prepare for the world of work. Offering students career fairs was also mentioned.

Postsecondary Pathways for Education and Training

Discourse also included the need for consideration of multiple postsecondary education and training pathways and various forms of learning. Participants mentioned the need to promote multiple post-secondary pathways. As previously mentioned, several individuals noted that they were not college bound when nearing high school completion, and they added that not all students were going to choose to go to college. One expressed the need for vocational training for the non-college bound, as without it many students would not know what to do with themselves and then may get into trouble. Again, another participant who was college prep had to change her plans toward a vocational pathway after the death of her parents. She desired to study something she deemed meaningful and majored in business, choosing to be a secretary or some occupation that would allow her to make a living for herself. Beyond trades, one individual mentioned the military.

Participants in the second focus group comprised of gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians were asked Focus Group Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 to identify what aspects of

career counseling at the high school level were useful. Coding and analysis of these conversations identified the following themes: elements of successful career counseling, psychological assessments, employment data and work resources, influence of programs in career development, career development activities, and postsecondary pathways for education and training.

Focus Group 3

The questions asked to the third focus group, comprised of employers and managers from business and industry, identified previous experiences with counselors, career counseling activities, best practices, and suggestions on what guidance staff should impart in students to better prepare them for transition to the world of work. Open-ended questions from the questioning route were selected to ensure responses from all participants and to generate a full discussion. Focus Group Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 were used respectively.

Employers and managers from business and industry were first asked to reflect back on the career counseling they received in high school and share their experiences. Responses indicated very limited to non-existent experiences with counselors, let alone career counseling. Most participants stated they had not met with a counselor, or, if so, it was not for the purpose of career counseling, rather counselors discussed information such as GPAs and SATS. One participant reported it was, "Not a lot." In fact, he said it was, "Nothing I can remember." Another stated, "Career counseling was not part of our educational curriculum," and there was no "direction, insightfulness, or forethought as to what you should be doing or how you should focus on your skills." He was left to decide his career path without guidance. One stated counseling entailed a couple of contacts over a four-year period, focused on whether one was headed to a four-year institution, discussion over GPAs, and the like. All was mostly college

counseling. Responses to this first question prompted the researcher to void the second question in the questioning route, focused on what career counseling entailed at their respective schools since it had been addressed.

The researcher then attempted to identify specific career development activities the participants may not have associated with career counseling and asked Question 4, "Did the use of personality tests, interest inventories, guest speakers, television shows, and career/job fairs benefit students? Why or why not?" Several participants did recall taking tests and inventories. One remembered taking multiple personality tests. Another noted taking these metrics focused on personality, yet them not being associated with a counselor, rather a class. To add, the same individual recalled at one point answering, "a bunch of questions that would show you what career you may be good at." However, according to the participant, explanation was lacking, he felt as if he had "screwed up" on the assessment, and results ended the activity. Two individuals stressed the importance of Work Study (a program that allows for the attainment of elective credits through maintaining a job). One was able to work at a family run business. Another was able to venture into his current business because of the program. Work Study provided him with the opportunity to work with an individual at his store during school hours. Not only did he perform tasks but the employer allowed him to shadow him and see the employer's other businesses, as well as witness accounting and banking transactions. All led him to purchase one of the employers businesses in later years. Participants mentioned community service, exit interviews, and mock interviews as possible activities to help students become ready for employment.

At a later point in the focus group session the researcher asked participants Question 9, which examined the practice of asking students to state an occupation of interest during high

school. One participant argued that career development needed to begin before high school. In fact, the conversations should begin at the elementary school level and be focused upon with educational and career plans completed before high school. Students should declare a pathway prior to entering high school. Not all agreed. One participant voiced strong objection. He declared, "If we are talking career at the 6th grade level [it] seems like a preposterous concept." Another participant concurred, declaring that he could not imagine a path. Another interjected, questioning how students with limited world experience could know what they were supposed to do. He remarked, "Why start implementing ideas when the world is their oyster?"

Participants of the third focus group comprised of employers and managers from business and industry were asked Focus Group Questions 1, 4, and 9 to determine what aspects of career counseling best prepared students for the transition from school to work. Participants recalled very few interactions with their counselors, none concerning career development. Several participants remembered taking metrics in the form of career assessments and personality surveys, yet did not note them to be very influential.

Themes

Participant discussions stimulated from questions that aimed to generate data for the first research question identified several themes. The researcher and interrater agreed to the following central themes related to the first research question: absence of career counseling, workforce foundations, systematic delivery of career development, and career development activities.

Absence of Career Counseling

The majority of participants in this focus group received minimal counseling services and less career counseling. Academic counseling dominated, though some recalled taking inventories or metrics. Not much was memorable or applicable to this group of individuals.

Workforce Foundations

Though brief in this part of the interview, participants did discuss different foundations of career counseling. Some recalled the use of psychological assessments and inventories. While those were downplayed by members of the group, the experiential aspect of career guidance was deemed highly influential, allowing one to assist in the family business and another to learn business skills, be mentored, and eventually purchase the establishment.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

Though disagreement existed regarding when to begin focusing on career development, the idea that it be planned and organized was established. The thought that students should be asked to focus on their career before high school was suggested. High school should begin with a student having selected a career pathway.

Career Development Activities

Multiple activities regarding career counseling were mentioned. Again, assessments and metrics were discussed, as well as Work Study. Participants also discussed selecting pathways, completing 4-year plans of study congruent with career goals, and exit and mock interviews.

Participants in the third focus group comprised of employers and managers from business and industry were asked Focus Group Questions 1, 2, 4, and 9 to identify what aspects of career counseling at the high school level were useful. Several themes were identified from the coding and analysis of conversations stimulated from the above-mentioned questions: absence of career counseling, workforce foundations, systematic delivery of career development, and career development activities. While the experiences of the third focus group echoed experiences from participants in the first two focus groups, new ideas emerged due to their different background

and perspective such as the need for a foundation of basic skills and the importance of working during high school.

Focus Group 4

The fourth focus group comprised of high school counselors was asked to reflect upon current practices that assisted with career development. In order to generate data for Research Question 1, high school counselors were asked Questions 3, 4, and 9 respectively.

When asked Focus Group Question 3, "What counseling activities do you think students should receive to help them better prepare for the world of work?" high school counselors generated a list of specific activities and offerings. Participants noted metrics in the form of career interest surveys and 9th grade career assessments. They noted different career exploration activities such as field trips to local educational institutions to see what programs were available. A participant mentioned the use of guest speakers. Multiple participants mentioned the use of mock interviews and meaningful community service. One participant believed having students take courses needed to be eligible for California's university requirements assisted students not only with college access but with being better prepared for work. This participant added that aligning career interests to educational requirements was important. Participants mentioned both internships and work experience. Finally, one participant mentioned the manner in which he greeted students and had them behave in his office assisted them with preparation for interviews and with being ready to communicate with adults. Another participant agreed and noted confronting students on their behaviors, specifically dealing with communication, and mannerisms in a one-on-one setting as beneficial.

In response to Question 4, which asked about the effectiveness and beneficial nature of the employment of activities such as personality tests, interest inventories, guest speakers, and

career fairs, counselors deemed them beneficial yet not enough. Career assessments were given to students in one district during their freshman year. Though helpful and insightful all were a one-time event that needed more follow-up. A counselor from another school district stated that their students were able to use a Naviance program that allowed for a more comprehensive and systematic approach with multiple metrics. This was seen as highly useful in helping students identify a more appropriate postsecondary education and training pathway.

Question 9 asked high school counselors if they asked students to state an occupation of interest before they were developmentally ready. Counselors were not quick to respond to this question. One participant answered the question with her own rhetorical question. She asked the group, "How many of you knew in the 9th grade, 'I want to be a high school counselor?'" Only one responded that she knew she wanted to be in education.

The fourth and final focus group consisted of nine high school counselors. In order to obtain information for Research Question 1, high school counselors were asked Focus Group Questions 3, 4, and 9 from the semi-structured interview protocol. Participants mentioned several career development activities and counselor actions they felt would assist students with becoming employable. Themes identified through coding and analyses further exemplify the findings.

Themes

High school counselor discussions stimulated from questions that aimed to generate data for the first research question identified several main ideas. Central ideas related to the first research question were the following: career development activities and best practices and systematic delivery of career counseling. Identified themes were agreed upon by both the researcher and the interrater.

Career Development Activities and Best Practices

Members of the high school guidance counselor focus group provided examples of activities to assist students in their career development. Several participants mentioned career interest surveys, specifying the need to spend quality time assisting students in the interpretation of the results of these metrics. To add, members mentioned training students on how to identify different job outlooks as opposed to simply placing them in a high school program. One individual suggested having students take field trips to local educational institutions to discover what training and education opportunities were available, while another suggested taking trips to job sites to have students see vocations in action first-hand (How else was a student able to truly understand what a sheet metal worker does on a day to day basis? How appropriate for students to hear the educational and training requirements directly from an individual performing such jobs.). Aligning career interests to education requirements was mentioned. Having students participate in exploration in the form of meaningful community service, internships, mock interviews, and work experience were mentioned.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

One counselor mentioned that career development was a process and not a one-time event. Students needed multiple activities that supported and built off of each other. Career counseling needed to start in a student's freshman year and have follow-up activities all four years. Several argued that the inventories and assessments should happen annually, so learners could identify how their interests and abilities changed as they grew and explored, witnessed, and examined. Apparently some computerized programs allow for a more comprehensive program to be completed by students as it afforded more than standard practice. In addition, multiple activities were included as well as follow-up activities and the tracking of student

results. The computer program could be combined with other real life learning experiences. All assisted with students being able to better select an appropriate postsecondary education and training opportunity.

Participants in the fourth focus group comprised of high school counselors were asked Focus Group Questions 3, 4, and 9 to identify what aspects of career counseling at the high school level were useful. Several themes were identified from the coding and analysis of conversations stimulated from the above-mentioned questions: career development activities and best practices, and systematic delivery of career counseling.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, "What do students need to better prepare for the school-to-work transition?" In order to help facilitate discussion to elicit responses needed to generate data, the researcher identified and asked select questions to participants of each of the four focus groups.

Focus Group 1

Participants in the first focus group, comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work, were able to suggest actions, interventions, and activities they felt would best assist high school students develop to become employable. Focus Group Questions 5, 7, 8, and 10 were used to generate discussion with this group.

Participants were eager to share responses to Question 5, which asked, "What would make career counseling become more comprehensive and thorough? What do you think counseling at the high school level should include?" Immediately, one participant suggested that there needed to be more counselors at school sites. She noted that students in the Migrant Program received an additional counselor who provided those select students with more

resources and information. Several participants advocated for a "sit down" with counselors to discuss what they needed to do after high school. The session would include postsecondary plans and what was needed to fulfill them, job attainment, goal setting, and personal reflection on where they were headed, as well as a visualization to see what needed to be completed along the way. Several participants desired counselors to take a more active role in telling students what to do after high school. The participant that first spoke then recognized the limits counselors had with regard to the student-to-counselor ratio.

This led participants to suggest the development of a class or curricula that could be counselor monitored but teacher driven. A 30 minute period existed at one participant's school. She suggested career activities be offered during that class period once a week. Or, there should be a class that would be a graduation requirement. Participants suggested that having a teacher's help would be motivational. The curriculum would include lessons on how to get a job, the preparation, and the do's and don'ts. Resumes would be created and checked and along with a lesson on how to follow-up after an interview. Participants stated this work should be done in a class and deep explanation after grading would have to follow to explain not only what was right and not only provide a grade but go into depth and allow for detail and improvement for all involved. Counselors could assist in providing input on a one-on-one basis regarding assignments and experiences as this was deemed a factor needed to increase interest and effort. Counselors would ask students what they wanted to do in these sessions and teachers in these classes.

This discussion of a class prompted one participant to mention her daughter was in a program at a high school due to her grades. The program provided those privileged few with more resources, information, and excursions to colleges and universities. She suggested all

students be in some sort of program. Resuming focus on counselors, one participant maintained that counselors needed to meet with students one-on-one and provide a focused discussion on postsecondary plans, goals, and job attainment. She added she expected a counselor to prescribe a course of action. Students needed to be able to visualize a plan. Moments later, after struggling with this question while the group moved onto another topic, one participant suggested each student have two counselors; one would focus on the work environment and the other education. The career counselor would focus on telling students how to get a job, prepare students, and do follow-ups. Again, the need for deeper learning, explanations in detail, full lessons and beyond, were deemed needed. All would need to begin during a student's freshman year and grow in complexity in a systematic fashion.

Participants were asked Question 7, regarding the level of focus counselors should place on soft skill development. Right away one participant asked rhetorically if school counselors truly understood what students needed. After, she noted all students should learn the basics needed to obtain a job, such as basic reading and speaking abilities, and computer skills, all that was needed that could be put to work.

The researcher asked participants Question 8, regarding the importance of use of employment data, workforce education, and career counseling, stressing discussion on local jobs that are in demand and those at the national level as well. Providing students with information about local work opportunities was deemed necessary. One student stated she learned about higher paying jobs in agriculture such as quality control and pest management. Most students relate work in agriculture to field work. Some participants were raised in very small towns in the Salinas Valley where agricultural related work dominated. One participant explained that in her town they barely got a McDonalds and most of the shops were family run. Positions held within

had been maintained by people for years and lack of opportunity was the norm. If students were going to live in the valley then they should know what existed employment wise. The participant with a background in FFA had been exposed to opportunities in agriculture by way of participating in that program. Linking students to local employers in agriculture via a resource fair was suggested. One stated, "You live here, you might as well [learn about these options]." She added that these companies would pay for your education and training in such areas as pesticide management. She argued that students needed to know this. During that time period information on offerings and wages could be provided to students. This idea was suggested again toward the end of the focus group session. To add, participants also wanted counselors to provide information about employment opportunities on a national level, citing, "not everyone is going to live here." One participant stated, "Why cut their wings if they want to go somewhere else. Not everyone is going to live here." Participants felt the provision of options for employment in different regions was important.

Finally, Question 10 asked, "If you were a high school counselor, what would you wish to instill in them and what advice would you give them?" First, one participant discussed having students focus on the next step in their education and granting each student the right equipment, resources, and networks to proceed on whatever they conceived. Another participant would make sure students are able to take advantage of classes that focus on job preparation and computers, minimizing other academic offerings. The next participant would want students prepared for the real world and the work environment. Another would have students participant to be able to explore different occupations and truly see what a job they find interesting entails.

One participant argued that counselors should literally ask students about their next steps and make sure learners have the right equipment, networks, and tools needed to get a job. She

declared, "What is the point of being educated if you are not going to conceive of that job, if you are not going to get that interview?" Participants thought knowledge of the basic steps needed to obtain a job as well as how to compose a resume, cover letter, and thank you letter, in great depth and detail would help a lot. In addition, participants thought volunteering with the purpose of career exploration, the creation of a portfolio, completion of applications, utilization of guest speakers, and community hours were excellent activities that should be mandated at the high school level. Discussions regarding these activities led to conversations regarding counselor bias and the need for delivery of services to be well planned out, consistent, and balanced. Though many mentioned that students in earlier grades were probably developmentally not ready for all activities, participants called for a systematic and vertically aligned program of services to begin in a learner's freshman year. This would allow for gradual development and exposure while imparting purpose and expectations. Participants stated that too many of the activities in which they participated were during the latter half of their high school experience, mostly during their senior year, when they were, "already out the door."

Participants became excited at the prospect of the creation of an event for all students, not just the smart ones, with a list of who was expected to attend. All would make students think. Instead of being a free-for-all, the intervention would be an assignment to mandate participation. While several wanted counselors to provide information on income information, a job fair would allow the one-on-one contact with human resource personnel and offer students the opportunity to learn the requirements and pay scale first hand from actual individuals working for local employers.

The researcher selected Questions 5, 7, 8, and 10 for participants in the first focus group comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work. Participants were able to suggest

specific actions, interventions, activities, and information they felt were needed to assist students in their transition from school to the world of work.

Themes

Conversations encouraged from questions that aimed to generate data for the second research question helped identify several main ideas. The researcher and interrater agreed to the following identified themes: influence of programs in career preparation, systematic delivery of career counseling, employment data and resources, career development class or planned activities, and work related soft and technical skill development.

Influence of Programs in Career Preparation

Participants of this focus group continued to mention programs within schools that they felt assisted students with career preparation. Students in programs had perks. Individuals who participated in the Migrant Program were afforded an additional counselor. This extra support allowed those individuals access to resources not provided to the general student population. Select individuals in other programs were granted access to more college information and field trips.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

Participants maintained that career counseling at the high school level should involve multiple offerings and activities that would begin in students' freshman year and reach all students. Information and resources and discussions would grow in increasing complexity and expectation as students progressed through high school. Though many mentioned students in earlier grades were probably developmentally not ready for all activities, participants called for a systematic and vertically aligned program of services to begin in learners' freshman year. Phases needed to be developed and denoted. The freshman year would allow for gradual development

and exposure as well as imparting both purpose and expectations. Many of the activities participants participated in were during the latter half of their high school experience. This would allow students to focus sooner rather than later and make a school-to-work connection.

Employment Data and Work Resources

Use of economic data and a keen focus on occupational opportunities on the local and broader level revealed a bias toward the use of employment data in career counseling. Participants did not advocate for the use of metrics or assessments. Rather, the majority thought it best that students know what occupations were in demand locally. The general sentiment present was that if someone lived in the area they should be focused on the economic opportunities and realities of their community. Partnering and networking with local companies, resources could help students develop awareness of occupational opportunities, their requirements, and pay. All could be symbiotic. Many industry leaders would help pay for education and training for positions they needed filled. However, some added students needed information regarding job opportunities outside of the region, as many would leave.

Career Development Class or Planned Activities

Participants mentioned the use of a class or planned activities that would target all students and be a general offering. Individual meetings with counselors were expected and deemed beneficial. This time would be used for the asking of career goals and discussion of postsecondary plans. Participants repeatedly mentioned the need for students to be prepared with materials deemed necessary for employment that would need to be completed outside of a counseling session and in a general classroom: resumes and cover letters, etc. In addition, scheduled events and guest speakers, creation of portfolios, and community service hours suggested the need for a structured and complex delivery of services to be implemented school-

wide. Focus group subjects discussed student-to-counselor ratios and questioned how counselors could be responsible for the delivery of career guidance alone. Though in the end the group advocated for a mandatory class, many first suggested a teacher could guide students and comment as to what was necessary to improve upon completed assignments when compared to a counselor. A counselor could work with, provide information to, and support teachers as they would see students on a daily basis. Either a class was recommended or a mini lesson could be delivered school wide once a week or at minimum every month. Counseling sessions could build upon classwork. Students with additional questions could be referred to their counselor and receive assistance on a one-on-one basis regarding assignments and experiences.

Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development

Skills were seen as something important for all students to be conscious of and to develop. Participants believed students not only needed soft skills but hard technical skills. Students needed to understand the basic skills needed to obtain a job. Among these were basic communication skills. To add, participants did suggest students develop basic computer skills. Participants suggested the minimization of academic offerings for job preparedness.

Participants in the first focus group comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work were asked Focus Group Questions 5, 7, 8, and 10 to identify what students needed to better prepare for the transition from school to work. The coding and analysis of the transcriptions helped identify the following themes: influence of programs in career preparation, systematic delivery of career counseling, employment data and resources, career development class or planned activities, and work related soft and technical skill development.

Focus Group 2

In order to obtain data for Research Question 2, participants in the second focus group, which consisted of gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, were asked Focus Group Questions 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10 from the semi-structured interview protocol.

Question 3 asked, "What counseling activities do you think students should receive to help them better prepare for the world of work?" In addition to the previously-mentioned job fairs, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians thought it best that high school students be exposed to more hands-on applied learning and real life experiences. One participant mentioned job shadowing as an appropriate activity for students that are truly interested in a particular line of work. Participants suggested career fairs that allow students to actually participate in an activity. Rather than walk up to a booth and speak with a representative, obtain handouts, or possibly witness a demonstration, students would benefit from actively engaging in an activity related to a specific occupation. Involvement in an application or hands-on aspect of a specific job at a career fair would provide for a deeper understanding and allow a more accurate depiction of the work one would perform. In addition, job shadowing was suggested. Field trips where students could visit a local establishment or an open house at a career and technical campus of a local community college and see people working were also mentioned. One individual spoke about a career day held at the technology campus of a local community college. This event was open to the public. He witnessed adolescents being exposed to individuals working with different types of tools and equipment unfamiliar to them. He recalled them becoming enthusiastic and interested after observing these demonstrations. One focus group participant had experience with both career fairs and "ride-alongs" through his work. Again, though some individuals were fulfilling a requirement and going through the motions, others

were intrigued, took notes, got involved, and eventually obtained the same line of work after the experience. Finally, one participant noted entry-level work as a step in an adolescent's career development. It was deemed very difficult to obtain, and seasonal in nature, yet important in making one independent and self-reliant.

Participants did not offer much data regarding Question 6, which asked, "How can school counselors better prepare students for in-demand occupations and jobs of the future?" One participant noted there would always be a demand for welders, mechanics, fabricators, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians. He stated that students should take classes at the Regional Occupational Program center. A participant thought counselors could possibly reach out to cutting edge green energy companies, such as solar companies, to see what jobs exist. Another participant suggested looking at television, as things shown on silly and futuristic shows of yesteryear have come to fruition.

Question 7 asked, "What level of focus should school counselors place on employable soft skills?" Both hard skills and soft skills were deemed important for youth to develop in preparing for the world of work. Participants agreed the development of soft skills was a must. Being punctual was deemed most important. Students needed to learn how to communicate, specifically how to listen, understand basic business skills, and use consumer math skills to manage finances. Being book smart was not enough. Students needed to learn how to work well with others and work with a purpose. Participants noted the sense of entitlement the new generation maintained. Beyond soft skills, the focus group participants restated the importance of developing hard skills. Many restated the comment mentioned earlier, being able to fall back on an occupation that uses manual skills. One participant mentioned the need for students to become bilingual in Spanish due to the demographic realities present in the area. Others agreed. In line

with soft skill and hard skill development, participants mentioned the need for all individuals, regardless of the postsecondary pathway they select, to be able to learn how to learn.

Question 8 asked participants to comment on the use of employment data, workforce education, and career counseling in a student's career development, and if counselors should mention specific jobs that were in demand at the local and national levels. Participants believed that an inventory of what occupations were available or in demand in the Salinas Valley was useful. It would help provide options. To add, information on larger trends was seen as important. Students needed a bigger picture and should not be cut short.

Multiple participants believed all students needed to have hands-on learning experiences. Beyond having something to fall back on, applied learning allowed individuals to understand at a deeper and more practical level, not just textbook learning. Knowing how to learn and having different learning experiences beyond the textbook and classroom were deemed beneficial. The majority of participants stated that they learned much on the job. Knowing how to learn, being in an environment that was somewhat stimulating and their ability to do so allowed them to rise up into positions beyond expectations that now require a college degree. One participant mentioned that he was a "self-taught college graduate" because he had learned how to learn and was then able to teach himself by doing. He learned on the job, taught himself to read plans. Tacit knowledge allowed him to move up the career ladder. Other participants agreed. Some college graduates obtained managerial positions yet did not truly understand what work entailed because they lacked applied learning experiences and had not moved up from entry-level positions. He brought up the point that many college graduates that obtain supervisory roles have trouble truly understanding aspects of the job because they lacked the hands-on applied learning experiences gained through entry level work. Others agreed. Lack of understanding elements of the work at

hand, coupled with a sense of entitlement, cause friction and was problematic. Many agreed that applied learning situations involving creative problem-solving were needed for all individuals, including those destined to go on to a university.

A discussion of occupational information revealed a desire for students to have access to different foci to keep options open. All participants agreed that an inventory of occupations available at the local level would be beneficial for high school students. That said, several noted a need to show students what was "out there" job-market-wise on a grander level, because many would not remain in the local area. To add, some suggested resources made available to students concerning occupations projected to be popular in the future.

Finally, participants were asked Question 10, "If you were currently a high school counselor what would you wish to instill in your students and what advice would you give them?" One participant restated the importance of students developing soft skills. Another wanted students to find a skill, something they were good at and could fall back on. One participant thought it was important for students to learn business skills and basic consumer math to be able to do such things as balance a checkbook and maintain a bank account. The next participant desired to instill work ethics and principles such as being reliable and being able to work with a team with a shared purpose. One would advise students to have options, and another thought that suggestion was poignant as options were seen as lacking for this generation. Finally, one participant would tell students to "follow your heart."

Themes

Gainfully employed artisan and skilled technician discussions stimulated from questions that aimed to generate data for the second research question identified several main ideas. The researcher and interrater agreed to the following themes related to Research Question 2: career

development class or planned activities, work related soft and technical skill development, workforce foundation, and hands-on applied learning.

Career Development Class or Planned Activities

Focus group participants discussed different types of career development and career exploration opportunities that maintained the nature of an event or intervention. Career fairs were referred to as a positive method of career exploration by multiple participants. Modification of this type of event was suggested. One individual mentioned a career day held at the technology campus of a local community college. He witnessed adolescents being exposed to individuals working with different types of tools and equipment unfamiliar to them. He recalled them becoming enthusiastic and interested after observing. Another participant suggested the need for students to be involved in some sort of application or hands-on aspect of a specific job at a career fair, which would provide for a deeper understanding and allow a more accurate depiction of the work being performed. In addition, job shadowing was suggested. One focus group participant had experience with both career fairs and "ride-alongs" through his work. Again, though some individuals were fulfilling a requirement and going through the motions, others were intrigued, took notes, got involved, and eventually obtained the same line of work after the experience. Finally, one subject noted entry-level work as a step in an adolescent's career development. It was deemed very difficult to obtain, and seasonal in nature, yet important in making one independent and self-reliant. This discussion of showing individuals options carried over into the need to offer other education and training options beyond the mainstream academic college and university route.

Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development

Both technical skills and soft skills were deemed important for youth to develop in preparing for the world of work. The promotion of soft skill development was deemed to be important. Showing up on time was declared to be the most important soft skill needed for employability. Work ethics and principles, being reliable, getting along with others, having purpose, and being a good listener followed. Becoming bilingual in Spanish due to the demographic realities present in the area was suggested. Beyond soft skills, the focus group participants restated the importance of developing technical skills. Many restated the comment mentioned earlier on, being able to have your hands to fall back on. Also, participants suggested students develop an understanding of basic business skills and consumer math aptitudes to manage finances. In line with soft skill and technical skill development, subjects mentioned the need for all individuals, regardless of the postsecondary pathway they select, to be able to learn how to learn and have experienced practical applied learning experiences.

Workforce Foundations

Information stressed a bias for counselors to employ practices and activities rooted in a workforce foundation. A discussion of occupational information revealed a desire for students to have access to different foci to keep options open. All participants agreed that an inventory of occupations available at the local level would be beneficial for high school students. Several noted a need to show students what was "out there" employment wise on a grander level, because many would not remain in the local area. To add, some suggested resources made available to students concerning occupations projected to be popular in the future and having students participate in career and technical courses leading to occupations like welding, fabricating, plumbing, and carpentry, which were always going to be needed.

Hands-on Applied Learning

Members of the gainfully employed artisans and skilled technical workers' focus group discussed the need to promote multiple forms of learning. Knowing how to learn and having different learning experiences beyond textbooks and classrooms were deemed beneficial. The majority stated that they learned much on the job. Knowing how to learn, being in an environment that was somewhat stimulating, and their ability to do so, allowed them to rise up into positions beyond expectations that now require a college degree. Many agreed that applied learning situations involving creative problem-solving were needed for all individuals, including those destined to go on to a university. Those in supervisory roles needed a basic understanding of technical skills learned through hands-on applied learning to truly comprehend all aspects of work being performed under their leadership.

Participants in the second focus group comprised of gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians were asked Focus Group Questions 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10 to provide data to answer the second research question. The coding and analysis of these conversations identified the following themes: career development class or planned activities, work related soft and technical skill development, workforce foundation, and hands-on applied learning.

Focus Group 3

Participants of the third focus group, comprised of employers and managers from business and industry, were able to identify and recommend specific practices, activities, and attributes deemed necessary to better prepare students for the transition from school to work. Data specific to Research Question 2 were generated from responses to Focus Group Questions 3, 5, 7, and 10.

Participants provided detailed responses to Question 3, which asked, "What counseling activities do you think students should receive to better prepare them for the world of work?" One participant suggested students have a 5-year plan, completed before they enter high school, rooted in career conversations held during elementary school years, which identified a pathway. Within that goal-setting, activities would take place and expectations set. Many participants scoffed at this proposal, questioning how someone so young would be able to identify a career path without having any experience. Another participant suggested the interjection of career into school curriculum.

In response to Question 5, focus group participants suggested multiple ideas on what to include in career counseling at the high school level to make it more comprehensive and thorough. One participant mentioned counselors being consistent, having the same individual follow students for multiple years to help build the relationship. Another participant suggested there be options for youth, possibly programs like what are done in Switzerland. At age 15 individuals could select a pathway and complete an apprenticeship or select an academic high school if appropriate. A respect for work and work ethic were also needed. A system should instill the notion one is valued for being good at ones job regardless of what it is. Students should aim to be the best person in that line of work, to aspire to be the best whatever it was. A participant suggested counselors provide detailed and in-depth information regarding a job. He stated that the truth was not really told. Realities needed to be told, which would include knowledge of differences within an occupation and levels of work required to be successful in that line of work. Several participants suggested the promotion of specific classes, such as speech, and home economics, while another mentioned the Puente Program (a program run through the University of California aimed at helping underserved students become more college

ready). Finally, one participant suggested involving parents. Parents were seen to have a greater influence than counselors in students' career development. Bringing parents to school for show and tell needed to happen at the high school level, yet this time parents could explain more at a deeper level regarding what an occupation truly encompassed.

Responses to Question 7, which asked, "What level of focus should school counselors place on employable soft skills?" indicated that all participants believed counselors should maintain a high level of focus on the development of employable soft skills. One participant declared counselors should "definitely" focus on soft skills, maintaining kids need a basic foundation of these. He stated students needed to have the basic kind of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Others agreed that students needed a basic foundation. A participant stressed the need to have a basic skill set in English and mathematics in order to be successful in business. Another participant agreed and mentioned the need to understand basic mathematics and business writing. Some stressed the need to learn how to talk. However, one was quick to point out methods of communication were changing with the influence of technology. The individual working as a jeweler noted he had to adapt and text certain customers because it was becoming a new norm. Work ethic was also deemed an important soft skill. One participant wanted students to develop the ability to explain "the why" of things and be able to articulate themselves very well "on the fly." One participant argued the need for students to develop resiliency. Students needed to learn how to fail and how to come up from that failure. Counselors should avoid fluff talk and building students up and avoid the "everyone gets a trophy" phenomena. The realities of human interaction, such as maintaining eye contact, should be included. To add, a participant suggested students be taught time management skills when learning how to study.

Participants provided mixed responses when asked Question 10, "If you were a high school guidance counselor what would you wish to instill in students and what advice would you give them?" Most restated previously-mentioned information, such as knowing why, being able to articulate oneself, possessing resiliency skills, developing a work ethic, maintaining soft skills, and understanding/knowing the literacy basics. A participant desired students to find something they were passionate about. One participant desired to confront students on the issue of entitlement. He argued that most wanted things the easy way, yet in reality that was not going to happen. He would encourage students to develop wants and desires. In addition, a small business owner rooted in the trades thought all students should be encouraged to attend college regardless of their high school GPA. A lack of exposure to information was understood as a deficit. And, in this era community colleges offered certifications and degrees in trade-related areas. Other participants agreed with being able to lessen the entitlement mentality and the attitude that accompanied it. Finally, at the close of the focus group session, one participant desired students to be ready for multiple pathways, as she recognized that students would need to be adaptable for multiple occupations within their work life.

The researcher asked Focus Group Questions 3, 5, 7, and 10 to members of the third focus group comprised of employers and managers from business and industry. Responses helped identify counseling practices, career development activities, and attributes participants thought were needed to better prepare students for the transition from school to work.

Themes

Discussions stimulated from questions that aimed to generate data for the second research question identified several central ideas. The researcher and interrater agreed to the following themes related to the second research question: CTE course or planned activities, systematic

delivery of career counseling, work related soft and technical skill development, realistic career expectations, and primary influencer of career development.

CTE Course or Planned Activities

Participants suggested multiple activities they deemed useful in making career counseling more beneficial and comprehensive during the discussion. Some believed a 5-year plan that took place before students entered high school would help with career development. Others believed career conversations useful. Counselors and teachers needed to begin to talk to students about the world of work, incorporating career into dialogue on a routine basis. These too would begin before high school and continue on during high school. In addition, students needed to be provided detail and in-depth information about jobs in which they were interested, beyond the superficial level. Finally, participants mentioned the need for the promotion of specific classes like speech or home economics that would help with career development.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

Discussion hinted at the need for career counseling to be school-wide and completed in a planned and orderly fashion. As previously mentioned, some suggested that it would be useful for students to enter high school with a plan. The interjection of career planning into the high school curriculum was mentioned. One participant suggested the provision of actual planned alternatives and pathways, options for youth such as educational and training programs offered in other countries. At age 15, students should be able to select an appropriate pathway, academic or career and technical, or participate in apprenticeships.

Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development

The phrase, "basic foundation," was mentioned multiple times by several participants. Participants declared the need for basic skills, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, not

advanced academic knowledge. Basic English and math skills were needed in the business world, so too was the ability to think and be articulate. All agreed that a high level of focus on soft skill development was needed. To add, participants shared the belief that a broader basic foundational skill development, which include basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities needed for success in the world of work, was needed to help students prepare for the world of work. Finally, participants discussed the need for students to develop a healthy respect for work, in all forms—pride for work one was passionate about, and a work ethic.

Realistic Career Expectations

With regard to pursuing an occupation, students simply needed to find a career or occupation that they were passionate about and pursue it. The notion students were being sheltered from the realities of the working world, and they needed to be prepared for and exposed to the truth about work dominated part of the second half of the focus group session. Part of this included the provision of detailed information about jobs. Differences existed within occupations. All should not be couched in a positive light. Students needed to develop resiliency and understand that they would fail in some aspects of life. Educators should not shelter students from failure, nor entitle students. Lessening the entitlement mentality and the attitude that accompanied it was suggested. Pupils may want things done the easy way but this would not help them prepare for the real world, where everyone did not receive a trophy for simply being present. All told, many agreed that all students should attend college after high school. Community colleges offered degrees and technical certifications beyond mere academics. And, a lack of career knowledge was understood to be a potential deficit to be avoided.

Primary Influencer of Career Development

A concern over who was the primary influencer of career development comprised much of the focus group session. Members with backgrounds as employers and managers in various businesses and industries wondered who was best suited to take on this task, a teacher or a counselor, and what role were parents to play in this enterprise. Another member noted that at best a counselor would meet with each student once or twice a year and often caseloads would change, requiring students to switch to a new counselor, negatively impacting the student-counselor relationship. Some reasoned that much career development started at home and asked what a parent's role would be in the career development of their child. The reasoning was that his kids paid more attention to him, and the relationship with their counselor was not real or deep enough due to limited meetings and changes in assignments. One asked where parents fit in, especially with the fostering of basic soft skills and exposure. To that note one mentioned that society could not expect a counselor to teach parenting skills to students' parents. To add, in a school setting teachers were deemed more motivational, quasi parents.

Participants in the third focus group comprised of employers and managers from business and industry were asked Focus Group Questions 3, 5, 7, and 10 to provide data to answer Research Question 2. The coding and analysis of these conversations identified the following themes: CTE course or planned activities, systematic delivery of career counseling, work related soft and technical skill development, realistic career expectations, and primary influencer of career development.

Focus Group 4

High school counselors were asked questions from the semi-structured interview protocol that were designed to help answer Research Question 2 that aimed to identify gaps in service or

student needs that would better prepare students for the transition from school to work. They responded to Focus Group Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11.

Question 5 asked, "What would make career counseling become more comprehensive and thorough? What do you think career counseling at the high school level should include?" High school counselors provided specific answers and hinted to constraints within educational systems. One counselor noted that the career counseling being discussed was seen as "so distant" from some of the assessments and interpretations students typically take. She added training students how to identify job outlooks for in-demand occupation was needed along with the exploration of interests and abilities. Another participant agreed and declared there were definite gaps in service, yet questioned whether counselors were really trained to help and needed more support. Few contended that career exploration and development was better left for other individuals in the school community or greater community. Another participant added that more hands-on exploration in the form of visiting job sites and internships was needed. There was importance to providing exposure to a specific workplace, meeting people, and obtaining deeper information from a primary source at the job site. Another participant agreed, thinking it best to have students go out into the community and explore. A participant called for career counseling services to be more systematic and in depth, not a "one time event." Activities needed to be built upon with purpose, from freshman year throughout high school. Others agreed. Activities needed to occur annually because abilities and interests changed. One participant noted that students needed to learn how skills transferred from one environment to another, one occupation to a distinctly different position. Another participant argued that aligning their career interests with their educational requirements was needed. This brought up a concern with the goals and focus school districts had with regard to graduation requirements.

The current educational zeight geist was on preparing students for college and not the workforce. Counselors noted that schools were academically driven. Districts' graduation requirements were aligned with university entrance requirements, which limited students' choices on electives, especially if they were in Special Education or English Language Learners and required additional academic support classes. Counselors noted that the focus on academics alone disengaged many students with the idea of doing well in school. Many students desired to start on a vocational track but could not because of the need to meet graduation requirements. A participant mentioned the European model, where students were allowed to take a vocational track earlier. Some counselors believed the school system should allow for this option, to keep students engaged and give them the skills they would need to leave high school and go right to work. One admitted that most counselors were, "a little afraid to move away from the one-size-fits-all college prep program in education." This pronouncement allowed another counselor to declare that some research showed if students took California A-G university admissions requirements that they were not only better prepared for college but for work as well. Some counselors disliked the notion of tracking students. One participant noted that they were so academically driven and school systems needed to "back off the four-year push and let kids find their way." Counselors needed to advocate for more career training programs, such as academies and call for change. However, students that chose to participate in academies needed to attend summer school to not only meet program requirements but district requirements too. The discussion prompted one counselor to note that in different states students were able to select different options for a high school diploma.

One participant admitted there was a need for more training. She explained, "I think that with the role we have, I think that is a piece that is missing." In that district one counselor

provided career counseling activities for the entire school population. With a ratio of over 400 to 1, a counselor confided, "they are failing classes and you know you are just so stressed just trying to get them graduated." She remarked that it would be great for counselors to develop career counseling skills, yet they did not have time to do it, even with the best of intentions.

When asked Question 6, "How can school counselors better prepare students for in-demand occupations and jobs of the future, such as STEM careers?" counselors provided insights and concerns. One thought showing employment data with students was beneficial as, "It is the world we live in." Another participant suggested providing students with information and opportunities. One participant noted that at her school elective classes were lacking, not allowing for exposure to STEM careers. Several counselors contended that they were doing students a disservice by not encouraging and exposing students to STEM careers, especially those of color. A participant from another district noted the plethora of STEM electives offered by their move from a six-period to a seven-period day. Finally, one participant dismissed the STEM focus, arguing the focus was once on nursing, moved to STEM, and would transition to teaching in a few years.

Participants responded to Question 7, "What level of focus should school counselors place on employable soft skills?" yet, with limited examples. One stated, "Obviously, we don't." Then discussion transferred to interpersonal communication and presentation. A participant did feel she focused on soft skills when confronting students on their lack of social skills. As previously stated, another felt as if he focused on soft skills by shaking hands with students and having them work on their greeting. Communication and self-expression was also noted. One participant stated that soft skills were not stressed or addressed by counselors systematically.

Another participant thought they were not explicitly taught and students would learn them with the new Common Core standards via classroom instruction.

Question 8 asked counselors to comment on the use of employment data, workforce education, and career counseling in schools. With regard to data, one participant suggested it was important to let students know about information and opportunities. One counselor noted the benefits of career and technical education. Former Health Academy students who went on and earned CNA and Medical Assisting certifications were doing better than other students that attended four-year institutions, earned degrees, and were living at home with their parents with debt and no employment. One participant noted the demand for individuals with a background in computer science, that she mentioned it to students, yet the lack of any exposure and knowledge of what it was hindered students ability to pursue the field.

When asked Question 11, which stated, "Is there anything else that you would like to add about services for counseling young people at work?" a participant brought the discussion back to soft skills. She wondered how she learned her soft skills and argued that they did not come from school. All was "social stuff" and not classroom based. Another participant stated she learned her soft skills from work, as they were modeled for her. She contended that, "The kids that have those good soft skills or people skills are the ones that have them from even a little bit of work." "Where else were you to get better training?" In essence, part-time employment helped foster soft skill development and not a high school setting. Another participant stated that soft skills development in the school environment was influenced more by teachers and coaches who could better model and set expectations. Also, behavior you assumed they should have before high school needed to be demanded on campus. One participant declared that everyone in life

and all in the educational setting needed to teach kids how to treat people with respect, not so much counselors going into a classroom and presenting.

Themes

High school counselor conversations stimulated from questions that aimed to generate data for the second research question identified several themes. The researcher and interrater identified many central ideas related to the second research question. These themes were the following: best practices for preparing for the world of work, workforce foundations, work related soft and hard skill development, not my job, limitations within school systems, and systematic delivery of career counseling.

Best Practices for Preparing for the World of Work

Focus group participants mentioned several behaviors counselors could follow to best prepare students for employment in the current world of work. Participants mentioned the need to provide high school students with both opportunities and information regarding employment opportunities. While several stated counselors were doing their students a disservice by not encouraging and exposing them to STEM careers, especially those of color. One counselor disliked the utilization of the term "push" in these instances, instead guidance staff should simply provide data and allow their counselees to make their own decision.

Workforce Foundations

Both the use of assessments and inventories, hands-on applied learning experiences, and information regarding in demand occupations hinted at the need for a workforce foundation. Use of assessments and inventories in an in-depth manner would allow students to develop self-awareness regarding their interests and abilities. While counselors could provide students information regarding in-demand work opportunities such as STEM careers, students could be

trained to assess job outlooks. High school counselors supported the exploration of work in the community in the forms of career and technical education classes, visiting job sites, completing community service, and participating in internships or work, successful practices for establishing a workforce foundation.

Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development

Counselors discussed both work related hard and soft skill development. Both were deemed important. One stated students needed to know best technical skills, for example the techniques needed to be a welder but also soft skills such as how to interact with others. Noting the work related hard technical and soft skills that were transferable from one occupation to another was deemed useful for students to identify. In the end however, individuals questioned where they developed these skills.

With regard to soft skill development, counselors understood that many students were not receiving appropriate modeling and instruction at home. For example, yelling may be a norm activity in one household due to its size. The development of basic communication was further challenged with the broad adoption of the Internet and social media. Were these skills explicitly or inexplicitly taught? One mentioned her soft skills were not developed at school. Another stated she learned her soft skills because they were not only modeled for her but expected from her at her first place of employment.

Not My Job

Counselors discussed school system constraints that influenced their ability to conduct adequate career development. Counselors mentioned obstacles that hindered the growth, development, and delivery of comprehensive career development at the high school level. An issue regarding limited time emerged. One counselor mentioned rhetorically, with so many

students failing classes did counselors have the time to provide comprehensive career development? Her ratio was 400 to 1. She remarked that it would be great if counselors were able to develop their students' employability skills, yet they did not have time to do it, even with the best of intentions. While they saw the need for students to know more about themselves and be able to make better postsecondary option decisions, they were trying to target it but needed more time and more manpower. In addition, counselors were not really trained to help students in career awareness; some participants wondered who was truly responsible for students' career awareness. Counselors needed to be trained to conduct career exploration activities. Everyone in life and all in the educational setting needed to teach kids how to treat people with respect, rather than counselors going into classrooms and presenting. A participant noted that high school coaches did an excellent job in transforming students and being able to alter behavior. Students needed more experience before they could say what they wanted to do, more of a base before talking to a counselor. They also suggested a class offering that would grant students the time and allow for the development of a workforce foundation by learning how to investigate and research careers and jobs and details about what they wanted to do. Counselors could work on the results gained from these experiences.

Limitations Within School Systems

Participants recognized that the aims and objectives of school districts and school boards influenced the offering of educational choices. Problems with the dominant college-for-all mentality, the aim to make all students four-year college preparatory ready, was not good for all and influenced high school counselor functions. Counselors noted that the focus on academics alone disengaged many students with the idea of doing well in school. Many students desired to start on a vocational track but could not because meeting minimum graduation requirements

would not allow for it. A volunteer mentioned the European model where students were allowed to take a vocational track while in school. Some counselors believed the school system should allow for this option, to keep students engaged and give some the skills they would need to leave high school and go right to work. One admitted that most counselors were, "a little afraid to move away from the one-size-fits-all college prep program in education." Another mentioned it would be great to have a career exploration program, yet schools were very much academically driven.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

While multiple activities were suggested, the need for career counseling services to be more systematic and in-depth was suggested. All was not a one-time event. Activities needed to be built upon with a purpose. Participants advocated for the fostering of a developmental approach over mere events. A developmental approach denotes planned activities that gradually increase in complexity over time that build upon each other.

Participants in the fourth and final focus group comprised of high school counselors were asked Focus Group Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11 to provide data to answer the second research question. The coding and analysis of these conversations identified the following themes from their session: best practices for exploring the world of work, workforce foundations, work related soft and hard skill development, not my job, limitations within school systems, and systematic delivery of career counseling.

Summary of Focus Group Data

Data obtained from the four focus groups were inclusive of Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, which asked, What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition from school to the world of work?, and What do students need to better prepare for

the school-to-work transition? The coding and analysis of transcriptions allowed for the identification of themes regarding beneficial counseling practices at the high school level and what was needed to make career counseling more effective in assisting students in the transition from school to work (see Table 9). While beneficial, opportunities for career counseling at the high school level were limited. Regardless of perceived limitations, counselors played a role in career development. Multiple activities were deemed beneficial and a course, use of career and technical education, and planned career development and career awareness activities were suggested. All had to be inclusive of psychological metrics to help students learn more about themselves while also using employment data to help identify employment opportunities. It was also suggested that career counseling be responsive, systematic, purposeful, and connected to real-world learning in classrooms and in the community that assisted in the development of skills (see Table 10).

Table 9

Themes Identified From Focus Group Sessions

Theme	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus Group 4
Absence of Career Counseling	*		*	
Influence of Programs in Career Development	*	*		
Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling	*		*	*
Elements of Successful Career Counseling		*		
Employment Data and Work Resources	*	*		
Career Development Class or Planned Activities	*	*		
Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development	*	*	*	*
Postsecondary Pathways for Education and Training		*		
Best Practices for Preparing for the World of Work				*
Psychological Assessments		*		
Workforce Foundations		*	*	*
Career Development Activities		*	*	
CTE Course or Planned Activities			*	
Hands-on Applied Learning		*		
Realistic Career Expectations			*	
Primary Influencer of Career Development			*	
Career Development Activities and Best Practices				*
Not My Job				*
Limitations Within School Systems				*

Table 10

Summary of Findings From Focus Groups

Major Theme	Finding
Absence of Career Counseling	There are a limited amount of career counseling and career development activities offered to high school students
	Most activities and interventions are treated as a one-time event with limited follow-up
	Academic counseling more dominant
Influence of Programs in Career Development	Organizations and programs such as Future Farmers of America and 4H focus on career development and provide extra support, information, and exploration
	Career and technical education courses allow for job readiness
Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling	Career development should be vertically aligned, grade-level specific, scaffold, defined, school-wide, and gradually become more complex
	Not an isolated one-time event; deeply focused on, built upon, and revisited
	Appropriate and purposeful, leading to other lessons and activities
	Could begin before students began high school
Elements of Successful Career Counseling	Involves the development of a relationship that respects student's educational and occupational desires, instills the notion of needing to develop marketable skills, and promotes different pathways for postsecondary education and vocational training
	Incorporates both psychological metrics, employment data, opportunities for exploration and soft and technical skill development, and assists students in preparing for the real world
Employment Data and Work Resources	Provided students with information regarding job outlooks to assist with appropriate career choices
	Include both local and national employment information
Career Development Class or Planned Activities	The creation of a curriculum, to be offered in a classroom setting, may allow for a more in-depth and comprehensive focus on career development
	A curriculum with lessons to be implemented by grade level, systematically, and schoolwide may also assist with providing opportunities for activities with a shared focus on general employability
	Guest speakers, scheduled events, the creation of resumes and portfolios, and other activities are best suited for a class
Postsecondary Pathways for Education and Training	There is more than one appropriate pathway for students to obtain education and training after high school

Table 10 (Continued)

Major Theme	Finding
Postsecondary Pathways for Education and Training	Career counseling should provide students information about all options, including apprenticeships, military, vocational, community college, work related, and college
Best Practices for Exploring the World of Work	Make career counseling real world, applied, hands-on, and meaningful
	Provide high school students with both opportunities and information regarding employment opportunities
	Encouraging and exposing students to STEM careers
Psychological Assessments	Highly beneficial when used properly as they allow for self-exploration and the development of knowledge of self
Workforce Foundations	Assist with the development of self-understanding When focused on workforce preparation of students the direction provided is highly beneficial
	Allowing students to experience work in high school influences career development
Career Development Activities	Can be both school based and hands-on, applied, and experiential
	Need to be offered at every grade level and vertically aligned
	Should be focused on the student and employment opportunities
	Should incorporate the proper use of psychological metrics
	Should include career fairs, work study, 4 or 5-year plans congruent with career goals, field trips to job sites and educational and training institutions, and exit and mock interviews
CTE Course or Planned Activities	Placement of students in specific Regional Occupational Program/career and technical education classes may allow for the development of soft and hard skills through applied learning, thus enhancing employability
Hands-on Applied Learning	Beneficial for all students
	Enhances employment opportunities
	Develops soft and technical skills
Realistic Career Expectations	Connected to the real world
Primary Influencer of Career Development	Counselors are not necessarily the primary influencer of career development
Career Development Activities and Best Practices	Activities need to be clearly defined, understood as career development in orientation, offered at each grade level, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate

Table 10 (Continued)

Major Theme	Finding
Career Development Activities and Best Practices	A rationale is needed with regard to which activities are offered at each grade level
	Align career interests to educational requirements
	Detailed explanations of the purpose and limitations of metrics are required before administration and in-depth follow-up should be provided after
	Teach students how to identify job outlooks
Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development	Academic knowledge is not as valuable as is knowing how to learn, being an independent self-starter, being able to be responsible, and work well with others with a purpose
	Allow one to be able to develop skills in multiple environments as they are transferable
	Should be focused on explicitly and routinely
	Students need to have a basic foundation with regard to reading, writing, listening, mathematics, and communication of various forms
Limitations Within School Systems	Academically driven
	Goals and aims within a school system influence delivery of counseling services

Employment Data From America's Job Center

In order to triangulate data, the researcher obtained information from the Monterey County Office of America's Job Center of California (formerly known as the One-Stop Career Center). The researcher interviewed the lead business services specialist and a business service specialist that work for the Workforce Development Board's Business Services Unit. In order to obtain background information from the America's Job Center of California the researcher sought answers to questions from an additional interview protocol (Appendix J). These questions identified the goals and services provided, the number of individuals served, an overview of employment and individuals America's Job Center aims to assist, and relationships maintained

with business and industry. The semi-structured interview protocol used with the focus groups also guided this data collection.

Findings From the First Interview Protocol

The Monterey County Office of the America's Job Center of California operates with the goal of placing residents in open positions that need to be filled. Since 1981 over 10,000 job seekers have found employment, and in the past ten years 4,000 individuals have upgraded their vocational skills at the center (America's Job Center of California, 2016). The center houses three different agencies that focus on employment solutions for both businesses that need staffing and workers in need of jobs. Agencies form a network that provides dozens of services for local businesses and residents. Career guidance and counseling in the form of resume and cover letter writing assistance, vocational skills assessments and skills testing, and job search assistance and skills workshops and placement assistance are offered. Internet job boards, recruitment sites, referenced materials, books, and computers are present for an individual's use. Job clubs and networking groups exist. And, vocational and on-the-job-training are provided (America's Job Center of California, 2016). Though much is offered, reportedly, the wants and needs of job seekers and employers are not always matched.

Business services specialists from the Workforce Development Business Services Unit revealed a trend encountered when attempting to connect unemployed individuals searching for employment to open positions that local business and industry desperately need to fill. Currently, there are more job openings than individuals available and/or willing to fill them. Many jobs are entry-level, low wage, and physically demanding. Some require a commute and/or working at night. Basic soft skills are in demand. For example, three agricultural production companies were actively searching for 50 sanitation workers. This work entailed cleaning the machinery and

equipment used in processing and packaging, and required one to work for a low wage, at night, in a refrigerated environment, using a high pressure hose to wash off equipment. With regard to hard skills, bilingualism and the possession of mechanical abilities were desired. Individuals searching for work have different jobs in mind with different constructs.

According to the Business Service Specialists, a disconnect exists between what employers want and the work available to job seekers. Employers are searching for reliable, intrinsically-motivated individuals with "clean" backgrounds to fill production, maintenance, or mechanical positions in the local agricultural industry, and bilingual individuals to work in customer service positions in hospitality and tourism industries. Beyond recruitment, retention issues emerge with these occupational offerings. The business services specialists stated that individuals searching for employment desire work different from the majority of occupations available to them. Most want to work during the day, earn a living wage and benefits, have weekends off, and be employed in a convenient location that does not require a commute. These shortcomings are compounded when individuals lack a positive attitude, a clean background, basic responsibility, and a solid work ethic, let alone the willingness to start at the bottom and work their way up within a company. The business services specialists deemed these expectations "unrealistic." Both explained that the placement of unemployed skilled workers and professionals searching for employment was far more difficult. Highly trained and skilled employees from industries no longer present in the region (for example, various occupations which existed at the Capital One credit card processing center) struggled with career changes and were more reluctant to start over or accept a lower wage. Data obtained from the semi-structured interview protocol provided additional information and insights.

Answers to Focus Group Questions

Research Question 1 asked, "What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition from school to the world of work?" While both Business Service Specialists did not receive comprehensive career counseling services in high school, they supported a thorough delivery of career counseling at the secondary school level.

A participant stated that it was good to ask pupils about an occupation of interest. Adolescent students needed to be prepped and begin thinking about work. Asking was a reality check. She explained that she felt part of a school counselor's job was to help train and coach. Students needed to be able to identify which careers interested them. And, it was a counselor's and teacher's job to guide and ask about occupational interests. If students stated an occupation that was not realistic, a counselor could/should guide the individual to a more suitable line of work. For example, a student may declare an interest in accounting, yet lack the mathematical abilities required for the position. A counselor's and teacher's job should be to assist with the skill sets needed for the position. The utilization of tests would help counselors and students identify strengths and deficiencies. The participant urged counselors to be realistic with students and help students be realistic with their wants and thoughts about occupational interests. If a student lacked the skills needed for an occupation of interest, it was important for a counselor to note positions that were a better match for their interests and abilities. The other participant shared the fact that it was important for students to be flexible, recognize instability in the world of work, and state multiple occupations of interest, expecting to work in six to eight positions over the course of their working lifetime.

Research Question 2 asked, "What do students need to better prepare for the school-to-work transition?" Participants suggested the use of multiple forms of career exploration and the

use of career and technical education. To add, participants thought it best that counselors use employment information in their counseling sessions with students, incorporating it with other resources and focus on skill development. And, counselors needed to help students be able to carry themselves with an affect that radiates confidence, teaching them the importance of body language and proper mannerisms.

Real-world and computer-based exploration were deemed beneficial in preparing students for the world of work. Inventories and assessments were deemed beneficial. Students needed to take skill inventories to help them assist with the identification of various options and interests. Participants suggested students explore careers, participate in mock interviews, learn how to dress for work, understand how and where to look up employment information, and have career and job fairs. Allowing students to take advantage of ROP/CTE courses was also mentioned. Work experience, internships, job shadowing, volunteering, and community service were also considered highly valuable as they exposed students to real work experiences before they made their commitment, discovered realities about the work they disliked, or identified discrepancies they possessed that needed to be improved. To add, promotion of specific websites, such as California Career Zone, and other Internet resources would also help students better prepare for the transition from school to work.

Participants declared career and technical education important. Not all students were college bound. Bringing back classes like Home Economics and providing a class on business training and finance, where students could learn how to complete tasks such as creating a budget and things they were actually going to use in life, were declared important. In addition, it was suggested that counselors at the high school level should work with the local workforce development board to help incorporate components to make future graduates successful.

Participants discussed the development of a class, an elective that would last one semester or that would last half an hour once a week where students would learn about potential careers and develop skills such as to interview, complete a resume, develop an understanding about the importance of networking, identify ways to look for a job, and be instructed on the importance of being well mannered and well groomed. Finally, work experience was deemed very important. Students needed work experience to cushion them from the shock some individuals that never worked felt when they obtained a job later on in life. Students would learn a skill and hopefully gain some pay. To add, students would learn about entry-level work, which was needed as many youth lack realistic expectations about the positions they could acquire and the wages they can earn.

Participants believed it was best for counselors to simply provide resources from within the community and from outside as well. Counselors needed to know what was offered in work and make connections. With regard to STEM, one participant believed such a focus excluded a large group that would not be interested or able to work in those fields.

Participants declared the focus on and development of soft skills highly important. Both business services specialists stated that adolescents lacked basic soft skills. When employers were recruiting at the site many younger applicants could not recognize facial cues, communicate effectively, lacked focus, seemed bored, were reluctant to fully fill out applications, or were on their phones.

Both participants strongly supported the employment of labor market data in counseling sessions with students. Being able to find and read that information if they planned on staying in the area or were considering moving away was a must. Too many students selected postsecondary options because of friends or due to knowing someone who had made a particular

choice, which usually resulted in a lack of completion or setting themselves up for future failure. Knowing what options existed and those that matched their interests could allow for a better election of postsecondary education and training. Finally, understanding local labor market data would assist students in making realistic decisions.

Finally, the participants from America's Job Center suggested that students raise their self-esteem, preparedness, and self-efficacy so as to be comfortable. Having a high comfort level allowed one to radiate confidence, which she strongly correlated with success. To be confident one needed to be serious. The "sky is the limit," yet this involved making commitments. Those with confidence were thought to have more options than others. The other participant mentioned the line in the movie "Dead Poet Society," *carpe diem*, asking students to seize the day. Students should be encouraged to take full advantage of all the people offering assistance; they should choose action rather than simply hoping for a bright future. She insisted students prepare as, "it would not just happen out of the blue."

Themes

Several themes regarding career counseling practices for the high school level emerged through the interview with the business services specialists at the Monterey County Office of the America's Job Center of California. The development of work related soft and technical skills was one theme identified in both interview sessions. Systematic delivery and comprehensive format of career counseling were two themes that also surfaced through the discussions. The themes realistic career expectations, best practices for preparing for the world of work, and expectations of school counselors developed with the last interview session.

Work-related Soft and Technical Skill Development

The topic of basic educational skills permeated both interview sessions as well as institutional documents. These basic skills, in various forms and categories, were sought after, worthy of development, and essential to successful employability. Basic education skills and personal qualities, such as reliability, responsibility, a positive attitude, willingness to work and learn, punctuality, flexibility with work assignments, and basic writing and communication skills and bilingualism were desired. Technical skills in the form of mechanical abilities also made one more employable. Individuals need to be able to identify their own personal skills and deficiencies through assessments. While the America's Job Center aimed to foster the development of multiple vocational skills through workshops and trainings, much could be developed at the high school level if given focus. Counselors and teachers could help learners identify their own basic skillset, train and coach students on skill attainment, and assist students in the identification of the skills needed for specific occupations.

Realistic Career Expectations

Participants repeatedly noted the need for career counseling at the high school level to be realistic. Although currently there were more jobs than individuals ready to fill them, it would benefit students to understand the fact that even with proper education and training most positions open to them will be entry-level, low wage, and possibly physically demanding, in the top industries for the region. While students should aspire and aim high, they should also understand economic realities present to them and be willing to start at the bottom and work their way up within a company. Work during the day, for a living wage, with weekends off and benefits is a worthy goal, however it may not be achieved for some time. To add, students need to be aware of the expectation of changing occupations multiple times throughout their careers,

embrace adaptability, and not be reluctant to start over. Counseling-wise, if students expressed interest in an occupation that was unrealistic due to limited opportunities or a lack of a needed skillset, or discussed impractical thoughts or wants, the counselor should guide the learner to more suitable lines of work. Exposure to real work experiences would assist in the development of this understanding.

Best Practices for Preparing for the World of Work

The theme that career counseling be comprehensive in nature was identified. Career counseling services need to incorporate both psychological metrics and employment data. To add, career counseling services also need to be multifaceted, multidimensional, and multimodal. The development of knowledge of one's own skills, talents, and abilities was needed. The use of career assessments and inventories could assist in this process. Discussions could also assist students with the development of self-awareness and self-efficacy. Real world experiences and applied learning situations, such as internships, community service opportunities, work experience, and CTE courses would assist in this process, allowing deeper understandings of likes and dislikes and discrepancies between thoughts, interests, and abilities. A counselor's role in this process was of a guide, whose aim was to help train and coach students to find suitable lines of work. Use of employment data would provide a balance and focus students' attention on economic realities. Students would develop an understanding of what occupations exist, the skills needed, wages offered, and working conditions for specific identified jobs of interest. A comprehensive format of work exploration would also require counseling services to develop networks both in the school community and the greater economic community to foster collaboration and provide learning opportunities. Understandably, all would need to be developmental in nature and be well planned.

Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling

Analysis of local economic data revealed the expectation that career counseling be systematic when delivered to students. A process was noted with regard to students' preparation for transition to the world of work and/or postsecondary education and training; multiple components were at work that require strategic placement of them in a high school experience. The development of employment skills, identification of personal likes and dislikes, and understanding of employment options required time for gradual research, training, exposure, refinement, and planning. Initially counselors could assist with students' identification of a course of study congruent with their career interests. All could stem from the use of career assessments and inventories. This would make students think about the world of work and develop knowledge of their interests and capabilities. Identification of various career options and interests would be refined through exploration, which would involve real workforce experiences. Exposure to a series of work-related events, economic and career resources, and job offerings would provide exposure to the world of work. Ultimately, students would be expected to partake in work experience such as part-time employment. Successful completion of these components would allow individuals to identify select occupational goals and appropriate postsecondary training and education opportunities congruent with their career aspirations.

Career Development Course or Planned Activities

Discussion regarding the systematic delivery of a comprehensive career counseling program denoted the need for either a class and/or planned school activities. Activities would need to be scaffolded, vertically aligned, institutionalized, expected, and, though led by, involve the participation of multiple individuals beyond the counseling and guidance department. An elective course focused on career development or could help guide not only the fostering of self-

knowledge but also provide information on how to search for work, prepare for obtaining a job, focus on opportunities for gainful employment, and identify an appropriate pathway after high school completion (college or vocational training).

Expectations of School Counselors

Another main idea or theme that emerged from the two interview sessions was the expectations from school counselors with regard to career counseling. Participants believed career guidance to be a central component of a school counselor's role. Counselors were expected to help coach and guide students. Participants maintained that not all students were going to attend college yet all would work. Participants believed that school counselors were responsible for preparing students for appropriate education and training opportunities after high school and helped direct students to work opportunities. Counselors were central stakeholders if not leaders in providing multiple career exploration activities to students. And finally, they assumed that guidance staff understood economic opportunities available to their clientele and had an established network of individuals and agencies that would assist their students with career exploration and development.

In summary, the researcher focused discussion of the study's research questions to be answered by representatives from the Monterey County Office of the America's Job Center of California (formerly known as the One-Stop Career Center). Individuals from the Business Services Unit of the Workforce Development Board were able to provide answers to the research questions. The researcher identified six main themes presented in their responses—work related soft and technical skill development, realistic career expectations, comprehensive format of career counseling, systematic delivery of career counseling, career development course or planned activities, and expectations of school counselors (see Table 11).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a conceptual model of career counseling at the high school level that better prepares students for the transition from school to work. The population for this study consisted of unemployed individuals searching for work, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, employers and managers from business and industry, high school counselors, and business specialists. The researcher employed qualitative methods of data collection in the form of four focus groups interviews. The researcher conducted the focus groups in a face-to-face format utilizing an interview protocol comprised of questions that are referenced from the literature review. In addition, the collection of employment data from a local America's Job Center provided information employed for the purpose of data triangulation.

Table 11

Themes Identified From Focus Group and Interview Sessions

Theme	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus Group 4	America's Job Center
Absence of Career Counseling	*		*		
Influence of Programs in Career Development	*	*			
Systematic Delivery of Career Counseling	*		*	*	*
Elements of Successful Career Counseling		*			
Employment Data and Work Resources	*	*			
Career Development Class or Planned Activities	*	*			*
Work Related Soft and Technical Skill Development	*	*	*	*	*
Postsecondary Pathways for Education and Training		*			
Best Practices for Preparing for the World of Work				*	*
Psychological Assessments		*			
Workforce Foundations		*	*	*	
Career Development Activities		*	*		
CTE Course or Planned Activities			*		
Hands-on Applied Learning		*			
Realistic Career Expectations			*		*
Primary Influencer of Career Development			*		
Career Development Activities and Best Practices				*	
Not My Job				*	
Limitations Within School Systems				*	
Expectations of School Counselors					*

The results of all four focus groups identified several themes with regard to career development and the role of school counselors in career education. Career exploration activities and events were discussed in all four focus group sessions. Each group mentioned the need to develop soft and technical skills. In addition, each of the groups discussed the need for there to be a comprehensive career counseling plan, systematic in nature, beginning early in high school and maturing in complexity by grade level. The development of curriculum and delivery in a classroom or schoolwide program was mentioned. Finally, it was noted that there were limitations with regard to school counselors' role in fostering career development, yet participants believed career counseling important and needed to be provided to all during counseling sessions.

Employment data obtained from America's Job Center revealed information critical toward preparing students for entry into the workforce. More employment opportunities existed than individuals seeking employment in the region. Some jobs were hard to fill as a disconnect existed with regard to the nature of the work and the desires of potential applicants to seek. In some cases, individuals were not willing to apply for jobs that work in uncomfortable environments, required travel, working nights and/or weekends, or were low paying. Some individuals searching for employment, especially individuals that had been laid off, felt they were entitled to more than entry-level work.

Findings of each of the focus groups and the employment data were reported in this chapter. Chapter V will provide a summary and correlation of the information obtained from all four focus groups and America's Job Center personnel. An analysis of common findings and data regarding the three research questions will be reported. A conceptual model that assists

counselors to better prepare high school students for the school to work transition will be

provided.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study. This information was the result of research data collected from four focus groups, two interviews, and a literature review. Four focus groups were chosen based upon the need to generate a wide variety of ideas to supplement data present in the review of literature related to workforce preparation. Data collected from focus group and interview sessions included audio recordings, which were coded by the researcher and interrater to determine which data answered the study's research questions. Data obtained from focus group sessions were triangulated with data from the review of literature and employment information from a state employment agency to answer the study's research questions.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a conceptual model for career counseling at the high school level to better assist students with the transition from school to work. In order to determine the needs of high school students the researcher conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups. A semi-structured interview protocol based upon information reported in the review of literature was created. Data obtained from the focus groups were correlated and analyzed, and they were triangulated with information from the review of literature and employment data from America's Job Center to develop a conceptual model for career counseling to better prepare students for the school-to-work transition.

Three research questions guided the study. The research questions were: RQ_1, What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition from school to the world of work?, RQ_2, What do students need to better prepare for the school-to-work transition?, and RQ_3,

Can a model be developed to meet the needs of students and practices of high school counselors to enhance workforce preparation?

New, ultra-high technology, globalization, intelligent machines, job redesign, and economic instability have altered the economy and the world of work (Frum, 2012; Gordon, 2010; Savickas, 2005b). Individuals predict a future with changes so vast they will dwarf those of previous eras (Gardner, 2007). The current generation of students faces many obstacles such as a decaying family structure, increased poverty, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, alarming high school drop-out rates, and joblessness; and without skills and training youth is expected to face successive low-wage jobs without benefits and a chance for upward mobility (Donahoe & Tineda, 1999). A career orientation promotes positive, employable adolescent behaviors (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007).

The American educational system has witnessed a growing emphasis on college and career readiness (Conley, 2012). The bias has been to focus on preparing students for four-year institutions, "the college for all" push (Gray & Herr, 1995; Rosenbaum, 2001; Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011). Academic counseling tends to supersede career counseling at the secondary level (Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin, 2012). Current career guidance practices in assisting students to prepare for the world of work after high school completion have been questioned (Savickas & Lent, 1994). Many high school students are neither college nor career ready (ACT, 2013; United States Department of Labor, 1991). A focus on workforce readiness and general employability is lacking from general high school counselor practices (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011). And, few students seek the assistance of their school counselor with career-related issues (Domene, Shapka, & Keating, 2006).

A need for extensive career education, which includes awareness, education, and preparedness, that assists students' attainment of self-efficacy, identity development, and actualization of potential is in order (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013). Students need career decision-making assistance, as information changes rapidly and may seem confusing and conflicting in this complex global economy (Collins, 2010). In addition, career adaptability should be addressed, as ongoing transitions in the workplace may be the norm for youth (Brown, 2002; Hartung et al., 2008).

This research sought to provide school counselors with a conceptual model to help students transition from school to work. This model will help define the nature and substance of interactions and activities of high school guidance that assist with the transition from school to work. A conceptual model for school counselors that assists students in the development of skills, abilities, and attributes employers' desire, in addition to providing an understanding of local industry and labor market demands, will be created. This involves the knowledge and development of employable soft skills and multiple education and training pathways that meet their career objectives.

The limitations of this study were identified as: (a) the conceptual model for career counseling to be used by high school guidance counselors to assist students with the transition from school to work was not field tested, (b) it was limited to a small sample of individuals that live in the Salinas Valley (an agricultural center), California, (c) data were obtained from a purposive sample of individuals from four backgrounds: unemployed individuals searching for employment, gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians, employers and managers from business and industry, and high school counselors, (d) semi-structured interview questions originated from the review of literature and discussions with an emeritus professor, recent high

school graduate, skilled artisan, and school counselor, (e) participants may not truly represent their group or the entire United States, (f) the dynamics of focus groups rely on mutual self-disclosure and focused interactions, the comfort of group participants, the provision of equal speaking time, and a lack of peer pressure, (g) a halo effect may have occurred due to the researcher having relationships with several of the participants, (h) the coding and assessment of participants' comments in focus groups were based on two individuals' judgements, and (i) the model solely addresses career counseling at the high school level and the transition from school to work.

The literature review provided the main elements for the conceptual model. Then main ideas were refined with those stemming from the four focus groups and interview with employment specialists. In order to determine how counselors could better assist students with their transition from school to work, focus group interviews were conducted. The groups were comprised of 6 to 12 individuals (Patten, 2012) with a similar employment classification (Hays & Singh, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Focus group sessions averaged one hour in length (Patten, 2012). The researcher guided discussions using select and group appropriate questions from a semi-structured interview protocol.

The population for this study consisted of individuals that either influence, have been influenced, or should have been influenced by career counseling at the high school level. Gender, age, ethnicity, and race were not considered as factors in this study due to the emphasis being on career development. The first focus group consisted of eight unemployed individuals who were searching for employment. This group was selected for their ability to identify aspects of career development such as job search skills, what hindered progress, and, upon reflection, what they wish they had known, been taught, or were exposed to. A second focus group was comprised of

seven gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians. Participants possessed desired employment in a variety of environments—agriculture, construction, the medical field—and could share information on the factors that helped influence their success. The third focus group was conducted with seven employers and managers from business and industry. All seven were responsible for hiring and/or supervising individuals and offered insights on career development since they seek employees and hire based on personal and company criteria. Finally, a fourth focus group was comprised of nine high school counselors. Professional counselors working at the high school setting were familiar with theory obtained in their credential programs and offered tacit knowledge from their work experience.

The dialogue of each focus group was digitally recorded and then manually transcribed by the researcher in order to review the information and analyze it for similarities and compare and correlate the data from all four focus groups. Transcriptions were read multiple times to obtain an idea on the content, tone, and applicability of the information. The researcher employed the assistance of another rater to assist with the identification of data and creation of themes and subthemes established through intercoder agreement (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). Kappas of .93, .86, .80, and .76, above the minimum .70 agreement, were achieved by two raters (Wood, 2007). The researcher and interrater identified themes. Dialogue from an interview with employment specialists at America's Job Center of California was also digitally recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Data obtained from the four focus groups were triangulated with the interview data from the employment specialists, and that of the review of literature to help develop a conceptual model for high school counselors that would better assist students with the transition from school to work.

Conclusions

Four focus groups and interviews were held in order to develop a conceptual model for high school counselors to better prepare students for the transition from school to work. Three research questions guided the study. The focus groups and interview sessions employed questions from a semi-structured interview protocol comprised of topics referenced from the review of literature.

RQ_1 was What aspects of career counseling best prepare students for the transition from school to the world of work? The focus group participants reported receiving minimal contact with their high school counselors. Some participants of one focus group reported having influential meetings with their high school counselor that not only discussed the need to prepare for the workforce but also allowed for the selection of classes required to build both technical and soft skills needed for entry-level work in specific industries. Some reported that they received some career exploration and career development type activities, yet they were typically a one-time event with little depth with regard to their delivery and little follow-up. To add, most experiences lacked hands-on components. While some participants believed it was too early for students to declare a future occupation, participants in the focus group comprised of unemployed individuals searching for work thought the practice was beneficial as it got students thinking.

To add, with regard to Research Question 1, the literature review conducted at the beginning of the research added the fact that work was central to life (Gardner, 1997; Parsons, 1909; Super, 1957), something to be taught and learned (Gray & Herr, 1998), and something that brings life meaning and purpose (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Super, 1957). Career and technical education, beyond vocationalism, offers students the opportunity to prepare for the world of work (Alfeld & Battacharya, 2011; Barton & Coley, 2011; Johnson & Duffett, 2003;

Symonds et al., 2011), yet lacks full support and implementation (Roth, 2014). Finally, it is expected that career exploration and guidance will be a central component of counseling at the high school level (American School Counselor Association, 2014; Conley, 2012; Gray & Herr, 1998).

The literature review provided insights to Research Question 1. Multiple themes were present and specific activities and actions suggested. Themes present in the review of literature specific to Research Question 1 were: elements of successful career counseling, best practices for preparing students for the world of work, psychological assessments, realistic career experiences, and career development activities and best practices. Suggested best practices included assisting students develop an understanding of job awareness, examining work opportunities, selecting an occupation of interest, and character development (Schenck et al., 2012). Connecting vocational guidance to career and technical education along with career planning, assistance with decision making, and the development of knowledge of labor market trends, needs, and opportunities were also noted as an ideal that helps students better prepare for the world of work (Gray & Herr, 1998). Assistance with the facilitation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that assist with the school-to-work transition, and job-to-job transitions was standardized by the American School Counselor Association (2004). Best practices have also included the use of assessments, exploration, and roleplay (Parsons, 1909; Super, 1957). The use of internships, work experiences, job shadowing, and mentoring to assist with career development was also suggested (Smith & Edmonds, 2000).

Finally, information obtained from the America's Job Center of Monterey County, California, was obtained to assist in data triangulation. The data obtained from the interviews suggested that assisting students with career exploration activities, career information resources,

and talking to students about the world of work was needed if not expected of school personnel. Also, the development of skills and attributes needed for success in a work environment was considered a best practice for school counselors.

In summary, the research provided insights into what counseling practices best prepared students for transition from school to work. Practices that allowed for career exploration, both online and applied, and occupational awareness were deemed useful. In addition, information, activities, the provision and development of resources, and counseling practices that provided information on the world of work were mentioned. A focus on employable skill development was also deemed a best practice. Activities such as the employment of metrics that allowed students to learn more about themselves were deemed important. Finally, having students engage in real world work experiences was deemed a practice that helped students with the school to work transition.

RQ_2 was What do students need to better prepare for the school-to-work transition? The results of the four focus groups indicated there needed to be a responsive approach to career counseling and development at the high school level. Employers and managers from business and industry questioned the age-appropriateness of career development, which called for a rational behind activities and practices. Participants argued that career counseling needed to begin during the freshman year, when high school students make their career plan, to stimulate interest and thinking as well as to set expectations for career pursuits. Focus group participants called for a systematic and comprehensive delivery of clearly defined, developmentally appropriate, career counseling services and activities, offered at each respective grade level and built upon previously conducted undertakings. To add, participants suggested the delivery of career development services be school-wide and of an experiential, hands-on, applied nature.

Participants believed counselors should focus highly on soft skill development when working with students, and some added the importance of experiencing hard technical skills. Gainfully employed artisans and skilled technicians suggested students develop employable hard technical skills as something to fall back on as future work, while counselors recommended students understand the technical skills needed for an occupation of interest. All focus groups mentioned concern with regard to counselors being the sole provider of career development and noted other individuals, such as parents and teachers, who held greater influence over students. They needed to be included in career counseling activities. According to the focus groups, the goals and aims of school systems, counselor to student ratios, and the need for training limited the delivery of career counseling with the total school environment. Finally, participants recommended the creation of a career development and exploration class, with curricula to be used school-wide specific to various grade levels and/or the placement of students in Regional Occupational Program/career and technical education classes.

In addition, regarding Research Question 2, the literature review revealed the development of career readiness skills as a best practice. Work is something to be taught and learned, starting with work habits, speech, dress, values, and people skills (Gray & Herr, 1998). The development of work ethics allowed for the survival of the human species, and good, expert work which is excellent, ethical, and engaging benefits society (Gardner, 2007). Participation in workforce education allows individuals to explore, develop employable skills, and prepare students for human fulfillment, self-sufficiency, and life (Petrina & Volk, 1996; Rojewski, 2002). Participation in career and technical education influences high school completion, enhances academic instruction, instills much-needed employable skills, and prepares students for future careers, making the workforce strong (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2011; Johnson & Duffett,

2003; Martin & Harperin, 2006; Roth, 2014). Career education also provides an alternate pathway to college (Castellano et al., 2011). The American School Counselor Association (2014) amended the *National Standards for Students*, which contained specific career development standards and competencies counselors are expected to deliver, with the *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student* (2014). This also focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to develop career readiness. Both self-analysis and assessment and different types of career development and exploration activities have been suggested (Gray & Herr, 1998; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Reynolds, 2013; Smith & Edmonds, 2000; Super, 1957).

The literature review contained insights to Research Question 2. Themes were present and suggested activities and elements discussed. Themes present in the review of literature specific to Research Question 2 were: realistic career experiences, work related soft and technical skill development, CTE course or planned activities, systematic delivery of career counseling, influence of programs in career development, and career development activities and best practices. The linking of school to work was suggested, as doing so provides students a better employment prospectus and realistic sense of career options and entry requirements (Kazis, 2005). A broad and holistic approach to education with a foundation in literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills coupled with career development and an instilment in lifelong learning is the appropriate pathway for youth to productive and prosperous lives (Symonds et al., 2011). Counselors should encourage all students to enroll in career and technical education courses. The contextualized learning will assist with the development of generalizable, flexible, and enduring process skills—general occupational competencies—such as critical, creative, and analytical thinking as well as communication, application, synthesis, evaluation, and abstract

reasoning abilities, while increasing engagement (Barton & Coley, 2011; Martin, 1985). The promotion of industry certifications earned though career and technical education offerings was also recommended (Alfred & Bhattacharga, 2011; Castellano et al., 2011; Gray & Walter, 2001; Kazis, 2005). This can include the use of career academies and programs of study (ACTE, 2008). Expanded career planning, personal planning, and decision-making skills were also suggested (Rojewski, 2002). Super (1957) advocated for having students focus on their ongoing development as opposed to making a single occupational choice. It was suggested that counselors help students focus on lifestyle and options, a variety of occupational and life roles, development of agency through the integration of narratives, journaling, and the expression of feeling (Brown, 2002; Peavy, 1995; 1996). A focus on the development of self-efficacy was also suggested (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). Babineaux and Krumboltz (2013) suggested educators train students to be active, alert, open to possibility, encouraged to try new experiences, and ready to capitalize on opportunities when they arise. Krumboltz (2011) suggested the use of an action plan to generate, recognize, and capitalize on unplanned events, while Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2005) suggested the use of an educational and career planning portfolio. Currently, ASCA (2014) developed the *Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success*, which include mindsets and behaviors deemed needed for career readiness.

Employment data from America's Job Center showed there was a need for students to develop employable soft skills and have access to information about employment opportunities at both a local and regional level. Participants suggested that counselors routinely discuss the world of work with students, use employment assessments and inventories, and help students create realistic career education and training plans. The use of applied learning activities and the

development of a course where all students learned the basics and promoting students to explore opportunities and career and technical education classes were recommended.

The research identified multiple themes from three data sources. The researcher identified key themes within the topics and subtopics in the literature review. The researcher and interrater analyzed transcriptions from the four focus group sessions and agreed upon main themes present in each. Finally, themes were identified from the interview sessions held with business specialists that worked at America's Job Center of California and the literature. These themes answered Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, allowed for data triangulation, and assisted in the development of a conceptual model, which answered Research Question 3 (see Table 12).

RQ_3 was Can a model be developed to meet the needs of students and practices of high school counselors to enhance workforce preparation? The development of a conceptual model entails the identification of key elements and components that address phenomena and their relationships (Fawcett, 2005). Conceptual models offer an idealized view of how a system should work, how it is organized, and how it should operate (Johnson & Henderson, 2002).

The research provided data on the needs for a diverse foundation for career counseling at the high school level. The identification and explanation of these key elements and their respective components follows. It would be proper to provide all high school counselors, whether assigned to a general, academic, or career counseling position, tools to be utilized in the career development process of high school students. An understanding of the foundation, content, and delivery of workforce guidance will assist school counselors in not only meeting professional standards and goals but in serving their students, school, and community.

Table 12

Identified Themes from Three Data Sources

Data Source	Themes	RQ1	RQ2
Literature Review	Complex nature of the world of work		X
	Centrality of work in the human experience		X
	Need for workforce education		X
	Evolution of career and technical education		X
	Best practices for preparing students for the world of work	X	X
	Work related soft and technical skill development		X
	CTE course or planned activities		X
	Influence of programs in career development		X
	Realistic career experiences	X	X
	School's role in career education	X	X
	Elements of successful career counseling	X	
	Psychological assessments	X	
	School counselors' role in career education	X	
	Evolution of the counseling and school counseling professions	X	
	Multiple foundations of counseling	X	
	Standardization and systemization of school and career counseling	X	
	Development of comprehensive guidance programs	X	
	School counselors role in career guidance	X	
	Career development activities and best practices	X	X
Focus Groups	Absence of career counseling	X	
	Influence of programs in career development	X	X
	Systematic delivery of career counseling	X	X
	Elements of successful career counseling	X	
	Career development class or planned activities		X
	Work-related soft and technical skills		X
	Postsecondary pathways for education and training	X	
	Best practices for preparing for the world of work		X
	Psychological assessments	X	
	Workforce foundations	X	X
	Employment data and work resources	X	X
	Career development activities	X	
	CTE course or planned activities		X
	Hands-on applied learning		X
	Realistic career expectations		X
	Primary influencer of career development		X
	Career development activities and best practices	X	
	Not my job		X
	Limitations within school systems		X
Employment Agency	Systematic delivery of career counseling		X
	Career development class or planned activities		X
	Work-related soft and technical skill development		X
	Best practices for preparing for the world of work	X	
	Realistic career experiences		X
	Expectations of school counselors		X

The research proposes a conceptual model for career counseling at the high school level to better prepare students for the transition from school to work. Five broad elements are required at the core of this conceptual model on workforce counseling: career awareness,

workforce foundational development, occupational exploration, self-awareness, and work experience. Though identified separately and in a specific order, each of the five components within the conceptual model complement the others; one element is not a prerequisite for another. Instead, the elements interplay, supporting and enhancing the relevance and influence of each. The identification and explanation of these key elements, their respective components, and possible vertically-aligned grade-level specific activities follows (Figure 9).

School		Workforce Counseling		Work

Workforce Counseling

Workforce Foundation Development
Career Awareness
Occupational Exploration
Self Awareness
Work Experience

8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade

Transition
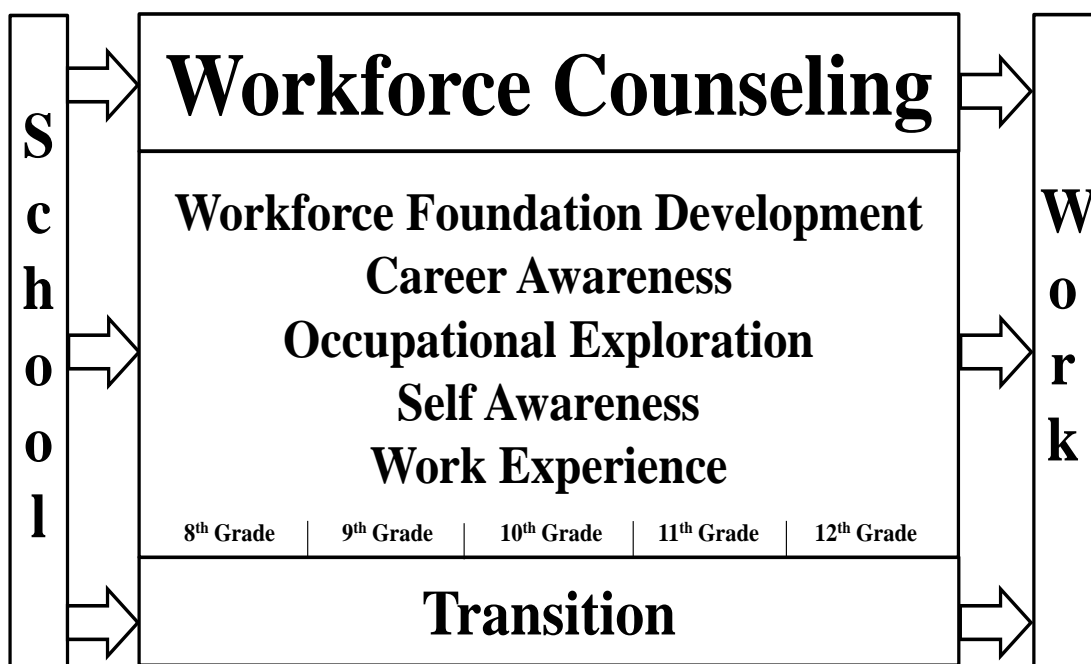
Figure 9. Conceptual Model of Career Counseling

Workforce Foundation Development

Workforce foundational development is the cornerstone of the conceptual model on workforce counseling. Workforce foundational development includes an understanding about the world of work, comprising the following topics: work ethic, why people work, the role of work in society, and the preparation needed for successful entry into the workforce. In addition,

workforce foundational development introduces and promotes the development of employable and marketable soft and technical skills. Finally, workforce foundations include knowledge of the attributes required for obtaining and maintaining a job and the development of functional documents (e.g., resume, cover letter, letters of recommendation) needed for students to successfully enter the world of work.

Career Awareness

The second element is career awareness. Workforce counseling utilizes Super's (1957) definition of career, lifestyle. In addition, the model depicts career as a journey with multiple pathways and occupations, as opposed to a single "career path." Career awareness not only helps students link education to career development, but it cultivates an understanding of the complex nature of work, the economy, and the influence of work on an individual's life.

Occupational Exploration

Occupational exploration is the third element in the model. Occupational exploration helps students develop a deeper understanding of different varieties of and opportunities for work. Exploration not only allows students to identify desirable jobs, but the pay, education, and training required for successful entry to specific positions. In addition, occupational exploration incorporates data regarding national and local projections for specific jobs.

Self-awareness

The fourth element is self-awareness. Self-awareness includes the ability to identify one's strengths, deficits, abilities, talents, and interests. This awareness of self can help students identify occupations of interest and create future career goals. Furthermore, self-awareness lends itself to character development and the building of self-efficacy. Self-awareness allows students

to recognize their motivations, understand others better, and identify ways others may perceive them.

Work Experience

Work experience is the fifth and final element in the workforce counseling conceptual model. Work experience includes gradual exposure and participation in the world of work. Work experience assists in the development of a student's work history and allows for exposure, learning, and application of both soft and technical skills. Work experience takes multiple forms in the workforce counseling model, from observation and brief "try out" periods, to long-term commitments, role play, and part-time employment.

Importantly, the delivery of workforce counseling is systematic and school-wide, utilizing career and technical education and established programs. The model is also comprised of vertically-aligned activities. School counselors maintain an active role in the workforce counseling model, working directly with students and taking the lead when working with the school community.

Incoming Freshmen

In the eighth grade students are introduced to the topic of workforce foundational development during preregistration. Students should begin to learn about the complex nature of the world of work. Counselor presentations help develop an introductory definition of work, note reasons why people engage in it, and demonstrate how employment influences our lives. Then, students are informed about the need to develop skills that will enhance their employability, job performance, and further education. Counselors should hold seminars for groups of incoming ninth grade students, where they are introduced to the three components of workforce foundational skills and attributes (i.e., personal qualities such as responsibility, integrity, and

sociability; thinking skills which include decision making, problem solving, reasoning, and creativity; and basic academic skills with listening and speaking). However, at this grade level, the focus ought to be on basic academic skills, such as: reading, writing, arithmetic, speaking, and listening. Students should develop an understanding of these foundational skills and how they will be further developed in high school. Students must also become acquainted with the importance of developing their creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, and learning abilities. A focus on these skills can help connect classroom learning to the world of work. To add, workforce foundational development in the 8th grade should also make students aware of the need to develop personal attributes employers want such as responsibility, sociability, self-management, and integrity. Counselors have to explain to students that these skills will be focused on with greater intensity during their high school career. Finally, the workforce guidance model requires incoming students be informed about the need to develop technical skills, including those that are sought after by employers such as computer literacy, keyboarding, and welding. Counselors should explain that technical skills differ from soft skills as their mastery is measurable.

Workforce counseling during the 8th grade incorporates career awareness through two different activities. Preregistration is the initial experience where counselors foster career awareness. Preregistration should be an activity where counselors begin to get acquainted with their future students and a showcase of the different programs and activities offered at the high school. While students are exposed to different pathways they should become aware of careers associated with each offering. For example, students become aware of the differences between academic and career and technical education pathways such as Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID), Green Building Academy, Health Academy, and Future Farmers of

America. Students that are interested in creating their own plan or wanting a more mainstream option should be able to create their own four-year plan (which should be revisited and updated annually, as students interests will change with growth, experience, and exploration). The creation of a four-year plan instills a future focus and prompts discussion of possible future career interests. Importantly, workforce counseling calls for the creation of thorough four-year plans, which do more than identify a probable sequence of courses to be taken during a student's high school career. A career plan should be included within the four-year plan. This plan should include a student's hopes, aspirations, and occupations of interest. While creating a four-year plan, counselors should incorporate discussion of different in-demand occupations to promote dialogue and awareness and stimulate thinking.

Workforce counseling requires counselors to help students begin to develop self-awareness. A learning styles inventory should be used at the end of the eighth grade year to help students begin to understand their uniqueness. The objective of the activity is for counselors to help students identify a typology as well as personal strengths. Penn State and Education Planner have free online learning style metrics that are 20 to 24 questions that counselors can use with students. The exercise helps students identify their learning preference and typology—visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic— and learn strategies that will enhance their learning (Students should also note ways of developing their ability to learn through non-preferential modalities).

Freshmen

Workforce foundational development in the ninth grade includes a deep focus on soft skills. Counselors take the lead in developing a school-wide focus on soft skills, such as being able to communicate effectively, working and getting along well with others, and being

adaptable and flexible. During freshmen orientation students are reminded about the goal and purpose of their education as well as soft skills: basic academics, thinking, and sought-after personal qualities such as responsibility, integrity, time-management, and gratefulness.

In addition, counselors should assist with the development and delivery of a lesson on soft skills to all freshmen in their English class. To continue the focus, counselors should provide 9th grade teachers with materials that reinforce the focus on the development of soft skills. Freshmen are also introduced to the ASCA *Mindsets and Behaviors* by counseling staff through classroom presentations on the three components of workforce foundations mentioned during preregistration, and the *Mindsets and Behaviors*. While many of the behavioral standards reinforce previously identified soft skills, the *Mindsets and Behaviors* broaden the focus to include learning strategies, self-management skills, and social skills that are soft skills, such as self-motivation, self-discipline, self-control, coping mechanisms, assertiveness, self-advocacy, and empathy. Posters identifying key components of the presentations should be displayed in ninth grade classrooms and counseling offices to help reinforce the focus. To add, teachers should emphasize the attention on workforce foundations by identifying the soft skills and mindsets focused upon in their individual coursework and classrooms such as writing, listening, and public speaking and team-building, cooperating, and decision-making. These can be identified in syllabi, classroom rules, and/or before the delivery of individual lessons. Importantly, counselors and administrators reinforce a focus on soft skill development in individual sessions. This is done through modeling appropriate behaviors, identifying those students who demonstrate them effectively, pointing out deficiencies, and suggesting specific measures an individual may take to develop workforce foundations.

The conceptual model of workforce counseling requires ninth grade students to participate in activities during their freshman year to help stimulate career awareness. During the ninth grade students should be introduced to career assessments through the employment of an age-appropriate metric. For example, freshmen can take a Career Cruising assessment. This should be completed in a class that all freshmen are enrolled in, such as a semester-length Health class, or another appropriate offering. Counselors need to help conduct the activity. Time should be allocated to allow for an explanation of the purpose, nature, and limitations of the assessment and next steps students should take after helping explain results. A presentation on the changes to the world of work and the importance of career readiness and an introduction to the Career Clusters can be used as a springboard to the assessment activity. At the end of the exercise, students should note occupations of interest that match their skillset and their abilities while also noting related occupations. Counselors should also mention in-demand occupations during this activity.

Workforce counseling suggests the use of a non-traditional career fair to develop occupational exploration in the 9th grade. The career fair should include employers from business and industry, institutions of higher learning and vocational training, trade union representatives, military recruiters, and senior students involved in career and technical education courses. Presenters should include visual and hands-on materials from their respective occupations. Freshmen should be required to visit all offerings and also complete a survey noting work of which they are interested. Students should be provided with a guide composed of questions specific to the presenters in the career fair. This will increase engagement and mandate that students visit multiple booths/stations. While career fairs are traditionally held in a gymnasium,

this non-traditional fair should include space outside where individuals can be allotted a larger space to be able to demonstrate work, materials, and tools with greater ease.

Freshmen should continue to develop a deeper self-awareness. During the first semester students should be introduced to the topic of multiple intelligence. The researcher suggests that counselors work with ninth grade physical education teachers to complete this activity. Counselors should have students review the results from the learning styles inventory taken before entering high school, then introduce the topic of multiple intelligence. Counselors need to explain the nature of the theory and the purpose of the assessment. Classes can take a paper and pencil version of the test or an online offering. When students complete the assessment activity, counselors should provide an overview of the different intelligences, allowing students to identify their typology, strengths, and uniqueness. To allow for a deeper understanding, students should be grouped by their results and be allowed to discuss "what is best" about their intelligence typology. Counselors should allow students to share their thoughts and opinions. Students from other typologies should also share regarding the uniqueness of other groups. Counselors must inform students that they can develop their intelligence in the other categories. Ultimately, counselors should share a list of occupations categorized by primary intelligence, linking self-awareness to occupational exploration.

Workforce counseling suggests ninth graders participate in community service as a form of work experience. Community service can be part of a school's graduation requirement to ensure full participation. Programs and clubs within a school can also make community service mandatory for their participants. Counselors promote community service when meeting with students in presentations and one-on-one sessions. Handouts with different non-profit venues for completing community service must be provided, such as homeless shelters, hospitals, Habitat

for Humanity, and the Boys and Girls Club. Students should be encouraged to select a location that offers exposure to a line of work they are interested in pursuing or exploring. For example, a student interested in health careers should complete community service at a hospital or at a local health clinic, and those interested in working with children can perform service as local tutors or help coach children at local elementary schools. Community service allows students to develop social responsibility, network, apply academic learning to human needs, be exposed to new environments, and, most importantly, work.

Sophomores

Workforce foundation development in the tenth grade advances to include specific materials students need to transition from school to the world of work. Counselors and teachers focus on the development of a broad array of interpersonal skills such as: nonverbal communication, assertiveness, decision-making, and problem-solving. Focus on these competencies is enhanced through their identification in teachers' syllabi, counselor presentations to students, and posters present in tenth grade classrooms. Counselors and teachers focus on developing students' ability to acquire and utilize information and their knowledge of complex systems thinking. Counselors should collaborate with tenth grade social studies teachers and develop lessons that teach different techniques for obtaining a job, from looking at popular websites, employment advertisements in newspapers, and simply searching within their local community for employment opportunities—*pounding the pavement*.

Counselors should help sophomores continue to enhance their awareness of different careers. Building off of information presented during their freshmen year on the career clusters, counselors should set up a special event where students participate in targeted career panels. This is an all-day event held in a large setting, such as the gymnasium. First, counselors identify the

career clusters that match the local employment needs of their region. Then, counselors recruit participants from different occupations within each cluster to form a panel. Panels should be large enough to reveal the diversity within a cluster, yet small enough to allow all members time to speak and participate. A minimum of four panels should be used. Tenth graders would come to the gymnasium from one class in which they all participate, such as social studies. There should be a maximum of four classes per period. Panelists can be seated behind tables and sets of 35 chairs placed in a semicircular fashion set in front of those tables. Each class should sit at a different panel. Once all are in the gym, a counselor should take the lead by thanking the panelists for participating and explain the objective for the activity. Students will be handed a document with a series of possible questions to ask panelists, yet they should not be limited to them. Classes rotate from one panel to the next every 15 minutes.

During the latter half of the school year counselors should work with tenth grade social studies teachers and conduct presentations on the topic of the cost of living. Counselors should help students become aware of the influence wages and earnings playout on one's lifestyle. A brief introduction to the topic should lead to specific examples. With coaching from the counselor-presenter and the classroom teacher, students can brainstorm the wants and needs individuals require when living responsibly and independently. Then, students should actively engage in the prospect of creating a budget for multiple living expenses, such as room and board, utilities, food, clothing, transportation, insurance, etc.

Occupational exploration in the tenth grade includes both the use of an advanced career assessment and a research project. These activities can be conducted in an offering all students are required to take such as world history. First, tenth graders should revisit their old career assessment results as a springboard, then be prepared to take a more detailed and thorough

metric. Sophomores should take the Career Key assessment. Counselors should help students understand the nature of this assessment, comparing and contrasting it to Career Cruising. This tool will allow students to be able to identify their particular typology or code: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. After completing the assessment, counselors should group students according to their code and have each group discuss their similarities. Groups should report what makes people with their typology unique and different, and what they learned by participating in the exercise.

The results of the Career Key will allow students to identify multiple occupations associated with each code. These results should be used for a research project to promote occupational exploration. Students should identify several occupations of interest under their typology and select one to explore. Counselors must provide students with multiple career websites dedicated to providing detailed information about occupations (such as the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*). A series of questions should be established to help guide students through the process of finding relevant information. Topics should include the nature of the work performed, the education and vocational training requirements, wages and benefits, employment figures, and future projections regarding growth and decline. If possible, students should be encouraged to conduct an interview with an individual that performs the line of work they are investigating and incorporate that into their report.

A mandatory one-on-one counseling session should occur during the tenth grade to help promote self-awareness. This can be called a sophomore evaluation. Counselors should call students up for an appointment to review their four-year plan. Career counseling should dominate the session. Counselors should review students' results from past learning style and multiple intelligence assessments and ask what talents, strengths, skills, and abilities they

possess. Counselors should be able to identify discrepancies and add information when a student is not aware of his or her skillset. Students should be asked to identify several occupations of interest during the meeting. In addition, students should be asked how their individual skills, abilities, and talents will influence their future occupational opportunities and career choices. Counselors should close the session by guiding students through the process of creating both short-term and long-term goals regarding the skills and abilities they would like to develop. Goals should help update the four-year plan, identifying courses, volunteering opportunities, and community services congruent with aspirations.

Counselors should encourage sophomores to participate in work experience through volunteering, assisting, and/or observing. Building on prior community service, students should be encouraged to volunteer for a cause in which they are interested and in an area they would like to conduct career exploration. Volunteering will allow students to work, role play, and network. Unlike an internship, volunteering does not require a long-term commitment, so students have freedom and flexibility to test out different careers. Unlike community service, volunteering can take place in for-profit environments. Importantly, volunteering has the capacity to promote self-efficacy. Students will be able to develop a better understanding of their skillset and observe individuals performing tasks so they will better comprehend how to effectively engage in work when they are employed. Successful engagement in voluntary work experiences can also foster personal growth and self-esteem. Counselors can encourage students to volunteer for the same non-profits open to community service, but also encourage students to assist and observe individuals engaged in work in other venues. For example, a student interested in law enforcement may want to job shadow a police officer. This can be done through a ride along or participation in a police explorer program. Students interested in construction my wish

to observe an individual in action. Watching an individual work in context with different tools and materials would enhance understanding of the work that individuals perform. Importantly, when a student completes over 50 hours of community service or volunteering he or she should ask for a letter of recommendation which will be added to a portfolio compiled during their junior and senior years.

Juniors

Workforce skill development in the eleventh grade requires counselors to help students and teachers shift focus toward the development of technical skills, interviewing, and a portfolio. Though students may have participated in a class dedicated to the development of technical skills earlier on in their high school career, workforce counseling requires counselors to strongly encourage their students to participate in a career and technical education class. This allows students to apply and further develop soft skills while learning specific technical skills sought by local business and industry. Enrollment in career and technical education classes during the eleventh grade allows students to focus on two of the five workplace competencies mentioned earlier (e.g., interpersonal skills such as: nonverbal communication, assertiveness, decision-making, and problem-solving, and ability to acquire and utilize information and their knowledge of complex systems thinking and the capacity to select, apply, and maintain a variety of technologies) and the ability to identify, organize, and allocate resources. These skills should be learned in the career and technical education course they are enrolled in, such as Retail Sales, Auto Service, Industrial Welding, or Health Occupations.

In addition, counselors help students develop interview skills during their junior year. A presentation on interviewing techniques can be conducted in an eleventh grade social studies class. Counselors work closely with social studies teachers to teach interview techniques.

Students are exposed to popular interview questions then role play, practicing by interviewing their peers.

Juniors begin to develop a portfolio. Counselors work with eleventh grade English teachers to conduct lessons and assist students with the development of resumes, writing of a generic cover letter, completion of a generic application for employment, and obtaining a letter of recommendation (from a current or past teacher, coach, or individual with whom they may have conducted community service or volunteering). All documents are compiled into a portfolio students will update and finalize during their senior year.

During the eleventh grade students develop career awareness through a career day event, exposure to career data, and career planning resources. Building off of the non-traditional career fair, counselors and administrators obtain guest speakers from the community with different occupational backgrounds to participate in career day. This could include the use of school alumni. Each individual presents in a different classroom during a specific time period. Eleventh graders complete a request, selecting four or more of the presenters of interest. Counseling staff organize the requests and ultimately provide students with a pass to select speakers on career day. During each presentation speakers discuss their backgrounds, education and vocational training, past employment experiences, and current employment. Presenters are also asked to share their wages and benefit information with students and openly discuss how their occupation influences their lifestyle.

Workforce counseling requires counselors to work with social studies teachers teaching eleventh grade curriculum to help facilitate other career awareness activities. Counselors should provide an overview of the Bureau of Labor Statistics website, introducing the main components and limitations (such as the fact that national statistics often differ from regional data). The

overview of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* will exemplify the plethora of occupations available to students, exposing the multitude of possible and probable careers that can be sought.

Finally, counselors should provide career planning resources specific to students' needs during individual counseling sessions to enhance career awareness. During their junior evaluation, counselors focus much attention on a student's career plan. During the eleventh grade the career plan should expand to identify skills, goals, and interests; a specific occupation with different possible pathways to obtain the education and vocational training needed for the position; and a strategy to obtain work experience that will help lead to that chosen occupation.

Occupational exploration in the eleventh grade includes participation in an ROP/CTE course and a field trip to a local employer. As previously mentioned, the workforce counseling model requires all juniors participate in a career and technical education class to apply and develop soft and technical skills. In addition, students will be able to acquire an understanding of the different occupations associated with that offering. For example, participation in Health Occupations will allow students to learn about work that exists beyond the norm, such as that of an x-ray technician, a phlebotomist, or pharmacy technician. Students participating in Industrial Welding will not only learn technical skills, learn about industrial materials, apply mathematics, but also develop an understanding of the different work afforded to welders and occupations associated with welding in agriculture, transportation, fabrication, and design. In addition, during the eleventh grade counselors should work with local employers and conduct work-related field trips. Once permission is obtained and relationships established, counselors should have students participate in field trips to local employers and job sites, such as local hospitals, machine shops, warehouses, and retail and wholesale operations. These excursions should be personal and

manageable, including select students who are truly interested in observing and experiencing specific work performed at the location.

Juniors should also participate in two activities that focus on building self-awareness. During the first semester, students should take a Myers Briggs Typology Indicator. Counselors should work with career and technical education teachers to administer this assessment. Counselors should provide an explanation as to the purpose and nature of the assessment and guide students through the process as well as the results. Students should be able to identify their typology and be asked to read and report back on it. Counselors should assist students develop an understanding of the general nature of their typology, their strengths, individuals from popular culture who share it, and occupations that are a match or are strongly associated with that result. As previously mentioned, counselors should conduct a junior evaluation with each student. During this session students and counselors review and update four-year plans. Counselors should ask students to identify their talents, skills, and abilities. Counselors should help students identify the knowledge and skills needed for one of the occupations of interest. Students should then be made to set short-term and long-term goals regarding the skills and abilities they would like to develop. Counselors need to assist students in selecting an appropriate course of action that includes not only class selection but volunteering, community service, internships, and part-time work to help students achieve these goals.

The workforce counseling model requires that counselors promote work experience in the form of ROP/CTE coursework and internships during the eleventh grade. As noted above, counselors should assist students with the selection of a career and technical education course during their junior year that is congruent with their career goals. Students should be informed about the knowledge and skills they will be learning in the different courses as well as the

employment opportunities associated with each offering. For example, students interested in business should be told about agribusiness, hospitality management, accounting, cosmetology, forestry, or a similar offering. Understanding the purpose of each course and the knowledge and skill sets gained through participation will allow students to make an appropriate selection. In addition, internships should be established for students that have identified a specific occupation of interest. Internships can be arranged through the vast array of business and industry members who counselors network with, such as those who participated in the non-traditional career fair, career day, or contacts for community service and volunteering. Students should contact the agency they want to intern with, completing necessary applications and signing any terms, conditions, contracts, and agreements when applicable. Internships should be noted on resumes. In addition, counselors should require students to obtain a letter of recommendation upon the completion of their internship.

Senior Year

During the twelfth grade counselors continue to assist students with workforce foundations development. Seniors are expected to apply the technical skills they have learned through enrollment in advanced career and technical education classes and part-time employment. Counselors should work with and guide teachers helping students update and refine the documents included in their portfolio in their English class, adding skills acquired over the previous year, an additional letter of recommendation, and a list of references. All seniors participate in mock interviews. They are prepared for their interview in their twelfth grade civics or other appropriate class. Counselors should conduct presentations in classrooms stating helpful hints and expectations, preparing students for the event. Counselors should explain that students are expected to dress up for their mock interview when their entire class is escorted to the library

and interviewed by members of local business and industry recruited by the counseling department. During their interview session, students are expected to share their portfolio with their interviewer. Students will receive feedback from their interviewer, teacher, and counseling staff during a post interview debrief.

As a capstone to career awareness at the high school level, workforce counseling advocates that all twelfth grade students take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and create options for postsecondary education and vocational training. Counselors act as a liaison to the governmental agency responsible for administering the exam for their region. Counselors should work with administrators and teachers of senior students developing a testing schedule. Counselors should assist in preparing students for the activity conducting a presentation in a career and technical education class, explaining the purpose, and encouraging students to use the tool to assist with their own career awareness and development. A follow-up presentation on the different post-secondary education and vocational training options is conducted after students receive their ASVAB results. Ultimately, students meet individually with their counselor to discuss their graduation standing and to discuss students' plans after graduation. Counselors assist students in identifying multiple options for education and training—community college, university, work, trade school, military—providing them with information on those of interest.

Occupational exploration in the twelfth grade should include field trips for options for education and vocational training mentioned above and continued use of career and technical education courses. Multiple field trips should be offered to students during their senior year, congruent to the postsecondary education and vocational training that match their career. Rather than take an entire class of students to a local university, counselors should work with their

administrators, student service staff in tertiary education and vocation training institutions, and local unions to conduct multiple field trips that better serve the goals of the majority of students. Seniors can identify an educational or vocational training institution via an online survey conducted during the beginning of their senior year, such as a Google form. Then, counselors and administrators identify those of interest and the demand of each and begin to plan the logistics around many excursions. In addition, counselors can assist with the promotion of different job shadowing opportunities provided by individuals that participated in career fairs and other workforce counseling events. Importantly, enrollment in an additional year of career and technical education will allow students to explore and experience other lines of work. Most will be and should be unsure and undecided. Continued exploration in different CTE venues will promote much-needed career adaptability, career resiliency, and employability.

In addition to the results from the ASVAB, a counseling session centered around a senior evaluation will assist with the development of self-awareness. Senior evaluations should be conducted at the beginning of the school year. After reviewing a student's four-year plan for the last time, counselors need to help students identify not only their strengths but beliefs and motivations. Counselors should begin by reviewing the student's resume, making sure all strengths and abilities are present and students can speak to them and provide examples. Twelfth graders should be asked by counselors to reflect back on their experience and their life and share their life story. Their narrative should help explain their current actions and their future career goals. Counselors should help students identify and organize their life story and relate it to a personal statement writing assignment that will be completed in their English classroom (also a component of a student's portfolio).

Work experience during a student's senior year should include an additional year of career and technical education and part-time work experience. Students may wish to continue the same type of work experience activities promoted during previous years—volunteering, community service, interning. However, students should be encouraged to continue to enroll in CTE courses. As stated previously, some students may wish to investigate a different offering as a method of career exploration, while others may wish to continue on with an offering or take the second course in a sequence to be able to earn a certification. Also, counselors should encourage students to obtain part-time work. Students can employ different methods for obtaining part-time employment learned during the tenth grade. Students will actively engage in job seeking to apply what they have learned and develop an understanding of the challenges individuals face when seeking employment. Counselors can suggest locations where a student can gain entry-level work in a field of interest or develop skills that will help them obtain a desired occupation in the future. Counselors make students aware of the fact that they may not be able to obtain a position they desire and may settle for an occupation that will provide work experience and lend to their employment history and future reference. This plan is ideal. Schools should progress to reach an ideal level of career counseling (See Table 13).

Recommendations

The researcher acknowledges the study was limited to a population from the Salinas Valley in Monterey County, California, divided amongst four focus groups and two individuals who participated in interviews. Counselors, educators, and administrators should consider the findings of this research when delivering counseling services to high school students, reorganizing counseling activities, identifying areas of need in counselor training, and/or creating or implementing curricula changes to make career counseling a focus of schooling.

Table 13

Workforce Counseling at a Glance

	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Workforce Foundations	Seminar—Introduction to work, and soft and technical skills	Orientation Soft skill development Introduction to ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors	Soft skill development Job search techniques Resume—Introduction	Soft and technical skill development Interview training and simulation Portfolio	Technical skill application Individual mock job interviews Portfolio refining
Career Awareness	Preregistration--class/program selection 4-year plan	Class presentation—Introduction to career clusters and the world of work Career Cruising assessment	Targeted career panels Seminar—Cost of living	Career Day Career data seminar (BLS OOH) Career planning resources	ASVAB Post-secondary education and vocational training seminar and individual planning
Occupational Exploration		Non-traditional career fair	Career Key assessment Research project	Field trip—local employers ROP/CTE course	Field trip—postsecondary education and vocational training Job shadow ROP/CTE course
Self Awareness	Learning styles inventory	Multiple intelligence assessment	Counseling session—self efficacy	Myers Briggs Typology Indicator Individual interview—goal setting and self-efficacy	Evaluation session—narrative and motivations
Work Experience		Community service	Volunteering, assisting, shadowing, & observing	ROP/CTE course Internship	Part-time work ROP/CTE course Internship

The researcher recognized both recommendations for implementing the conceptual model and suggestions for further research. When this model is utilized, a foundation and support must be in place. It is recommended that counseling departments create or revisit their mission, beliefs, and values statements and incorporate aspects of career counseling. While certain

components of the conceptual model can be enacted with immediacy, a gradual integration of elements pertinent to the needs of the student population should be expected. Successful implementation of the conceptual model requires understanding and commitment from the greater school community; teachers, staff, students, and parents should be informed about the foci and the need for their understanding and participation in their students' career development. The researcher recommends a gradual approach for implementation. The school community should grandfather in the system, beginning with an initial freshman class and then increasing workforce counseling each year with that target class being the lead.

Future research is required. The model for workforce counseling needs to be validated. A researcher can either replicate this study or employ structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze data. SEM not only tests the validity of the proposed conceptual model providing coefficients, but provides the statistical significance and strength of relationships between constructs and factors within the model (Hox & Bechger, 1998; Mayhew, Hubbard, Finelli, & Harding, 2009). Also, education and training is needed to assist with a deeper understanding and implementation. Understanding must be developed for proper use. After training in the use of this conceptual model has been conducted in several school districts, a follow-up study should be completed to determine its effectiveness in helping develop career readiness. The research should focus on what support is needed that would make counselors more comfortable and effective in conducting different forms of career counseling. It should also focus on the tools, equipment, and accessories needed to assist counselors in conducting career counseling at the high school level, such as proper assessments, webpages, media, and community networks. These include the use of career conversations, understanding of foundational skills, finding and

incorporation of local economic data and resources, identification of Internet resources, creation of documents, and displaying of career counseling décor.

Additional research employing this study to a larger geographic area should be conducted to identify the needs of high school students in other geographic areas. Economic, political, and social realities differ from region to region. Students may need a more defined direction. To add, a follow-up study including a population of underemployed individuals may provide useful insights. Individuals that have earned a baccalaureate degree who are working in positions for which they are overqualified may offer insights regarding the need for counselors to provide information and direction prior to high school completion.

A study examining counselor knowledge regarding career counseling terminology that includes the ideals of workforce readiness, occupational readiness, career readiness, and the identification of employable and transferable soft skills beyond communication and interpersonal relationships may provide insights into training and education needs. This research revealed the majority of participants erroneously utilized distinctly different terms as synonyms. Lack of clear understanding of terminology can influence the provision of career counseling and development. In addition, a limited understanding of skills needed to be developed for successful employment may hinder career counseling. This research revealed a limited understanding among counselors regarding the skills employers want prospective employees to possess. To add, counselors revealed a limited understanding of soft skills, limiting them to punctuality, gratitude, and communication.

Another study should determine counselor bias and counselor comfort with regard to the three domains of counseling at the high school level: academic, personal/social, and career counseling. While studies have revealed bias (Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahin, 2012), a large

study that includes the information on the delivery of services, the familiarity and comfort of different aspects of counseling, and in the promotion of all postsecondary pathways—trade school, apprenticeship, community college, military, college and university, entry-level work—is needed. Counselor bias toward academic and personal/social counseling can influence the delivery of career counseling and career development. For example, comfort and bias toward academic counseling may influence counselors to lead students to a four-year pathway when another education and training option may provide a better match with regard to a student's skillset and occupational choices.

On that note, unobtrusive research needs to be conducted noting the visual displays dedicated to academic, personal/social, and career counseling in counseling offices. A study could reveal materials needed to promote career development, career exploration, and career counseling if found lacking when compared to presentations of college and personal social information. Images and information present in counseling offices and departments may influence counselor practice and counselor and student expectations.

In addition, research regarding counselor bias with regard to postsecondary training and education is needed. Beyond confirming a college-for-all preference over apprenticeships, the military, working, the gap year, or trade schools, it would be interesting to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the new, midterm, and veteran guidance counselors. Counselors that are new to the profession may be more apt to lead students toward a four-year postsecondary pathway, believing the more students they send to university the better job they are doing, while their veteran counterparts may not feel the pressure and/or need to do so.

Furthermore, research examining administrator's perceptions and bias of counseling practices at the high school level is needed followed by training in the implementation of the conceptual model. Principals and administrators play a large role in determining counselor functions. Their level of understanding, priorities, and goals for the counseling department influence guidance offerings and practices. In turn, school districts play a role in determining administrator goals. School districts' bias should be examined with regard to the four-year push, which impacts school counseling services.

Finally, this study did not include information regarding the socioeconomic status of high school students. A study should be conducted in order to determine if these variables are indicators of different career counseling and career exploration needs. The study should analyze the differences in the needs of poor, working-class, middle class, upper middle class, and wealthy student populations. Findings should be stratified in order to make appropriate recommendations.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Questions used in each focus group were to stimulate conversation and self-disclosure, designed to obtain specific information pertinent to the stated research questions and enhance dialogue. All stem from information presented in the review of literature. Not all questions were used for each focus group. Questions determined to be suitable were selected from the questioning route below.

Selected Questions for Focus Group Sessions

Question	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus Group 4
1. Did you find the career counseling you received in high school beneficial?	*	*	*	
2. What did career counseling entail at your high school?	*	*	*	
3. What counseling activities do you think students should receive to help them better prepare for the world of work?		*	*	*
4. Did the use of personality tests, interest inventories, guest speakers, television shows, and career/job fairs benefit students? Why or why not?	*	*	*	*
5. What would make career counseling become more comprehensive and thorough? What do you think career counseling at the high school level should include?	*		*	*
6. How can school counselors better prepare students for in-demand occupations and jobs of the future, such as STEM careers?		*		*
7. What level of focus should school counselors place on employable soft skills (Such as getting along with others, punctuality, responsibility, etc.)?	*	*	*	*
8. How important is the use of employment data, workforce education, and career counseling? Should guidance counselors mention jobs that are in demand at the local and national level when working with students?	*	*		*
9. Do school counselors ask students to state an occupation of interest before they are developmentally ready? If so, what should be done?	*	*	*	*
10. If you were currently a high school counselor what would you wish to instill in your students and what advice would you give them?	*	*	*	
11. Is there anything else that you would like to add about services for counseling young people about work?				*

Note: Focus Group 1, Unemployed Individuals Searching for Work; Focus Group 2, Gainfully Employed Artisans and Skilled Technicians; Focus Group 3, Employers and Managers from Business and Industry; Focus Group 4, High School Counselors

APPENDIX B

Email to Center for Employment Training Instructor/Adviser

_____:

I enjoyed speaking with you today during the Youth Summit and Resource Fair. It was an impressive event.

As mentioned earlier, I am a counselor at North Salinas High School and doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University. My research interest area is career counseling, specifically preparing students for the transition from school to the world of work.

I would like to be able to speak with a group of the individuals that you serve that are unemployed and looking for work. I would like to obtain a group of 6 to 12 individuals to participate in a focus group.

The purpose of the focus group session is to obtain information on best practices high school guidance counselors should employ when working with adolescents. The goal is to identify elements needed to create a conceptual model that demonstrates key components needed for comprehensive and optimal practice.

I believe participation would be both empowering and enlightening. Basically, I would lead a discussion and allow participants to speak freely. All conversations would be recorded and transcribed. The names of individuals would not be used.

After speaking with you I thought that I may be able to present on a Monday and hold the group on a Friday. I wonder if there was a space available for the focus group to meet. Also, I am willing to provide lunch to the participants (I will mention this after I see who volunteers).

If possible, I have next week off with Spring Break. This would be an opportune time for me to meet with you and the individuals you serve to both recruit participants and hold a focus group session. I understand it is short notice and may not be possible.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Brian C. Preble
Ph.D. Candidate
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX C

Letter Sent to Potential Focus Group Participants

Brian C. Preble
XXXXXXXXX
Salinas, CA 93906
831-756-XXXX (cell)
831-443-XXXX (home)

(Name)
(Address)
Salinas, CA 93906

10 May 2016

Dear (Name of Potential Participant):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group as part of my doctoral dissertation research. As mentioned earlier, I am a doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University and my interest area is career counseling, specifically preparing students for the transition from school to the postmodern world of work.

The purpose of the focus group session is to obtain information on best practices high school guidance counselors should employ when working with adolescents. The goal is to identify elements needed to create a conceptual model that demonstrates key components needed for comprehensive and optimal practice.

The focus group will be held on May 15th at 6:00 p.m. (at my house). At that time I shall provide a consent form for you to sign as well as a copy for your records. The discussion should not take more than one hour.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns, or if a conflict emerges and you cannot attend. I look forward to working with you. Your participation in the focus group and information is highly valued.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Preble   Dr. John M. Ritz, DTE
Ph.D. Candidate   Professor
Old Dominion University   Old Dominion University

APPENDIX D

Email to Rotary Club President to Obtain Permission to Recruit Focus Group Participants

Dr. _____:

As per our previous conversation, I would like to conduct a brief presentation to the Santa Lucia Rotary, on a night not associated with NSHS, and recruit volunteers for a focus group? I need to hold four focus groups, each with different backgrounds. One must be comprised of individuals from business and industry. I think Rotary is a perfect match.

I am a Ph.D. Candidate through Old Dominion University in Virginia. I received IRB Human Subjects approval in December and successfully defended my prospectus. I would like 6 to 12 individuals to participate in a focus group that discusses career counseling and development and the preparation of high school students for the world of work. Questions should stimulate open and honest discussion. There are no right or wrong answers. I do not think it would be controversial or difficult for those that participate to share experiences and personal insights.

My goal is to create a conceptual model of career counseling at the high school level that helps counselors better prepare students for the world of work.

If 6 to 12 people are interested, then my goal is to have them stay after a regular meeting in the near future and conduct the focus group.

Thank you for your interest in my study.

Respectfully,

Brian Preble
Ph.D. Candidate
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX E

Letter to Rotary Focus Group Participants

Brian C. Preble
XXXXXXXXX
Salinas, CA 93906
831-756-XXXX (cell)
831-443-XXXX (home)

(Name of Participant or Organization)
(Address)

(Date)

Dear (Name):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group as part of my doctoral dissertation research. As mentioned earlier, I am a doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University and my interest area is career counseling, specifically preparing students for the transition from school to the postmodern world of work.

The purpose of the focus group session is to obtain information on best practices high school guidance counselors should employ when working with adolescents. The goal is to identify elements needed to create a conceptual model that demonstrates key components needed for comprehensive and optimal practice.

The focus group will be held on March 15th at 7:00 p.m. (after the close of the regularly scheduled meeting). The focus group will meet in the adjacent room next to the main hall. At that time I shall provide a consent form for you to sign as well as a copy for your records. The discussion should not take more than 60 minutes.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns, or if a conflict emerges and you cannot attend. I look forward to working with you. Your participation in the focus group and information is highly valued.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Preble   Dr. John M. Ritz, DTE
Ph.D. Candidate   Professor
Old Dominion University   Old Dominion University

APPENDIX F

Email Reminder to Potential Counselor Focus Group Participants

Dear Potential Focus Group Participant:

This is a reminder that the focus group session on the topic of career counseling at the high school level will be held this Friday at 4:00 at _____ in downtown Salinas.

I will begin by passing out a consent form and providing you with a copy of the signature page for your records. I will then have to read a scripted protocol that will lead into introductions. I have about five questions for discussion for the group. I think our discussion should last 45 minutes to an hour.

After, we can socialize freely. In the other groups I have held there has been a post session debrief. If anyone wants to add something to clarify I will take note. If you wish to email something for the purposes of clarification this is fine too.

Please tell me if you are unable to participate. I understand we all have busy lives.

I can be reached via this email or my cell, which is ___-____.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brian Preble
Ph.D. Candidate
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

<u>PROJECT TITLE:</u> CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CAREER COUNSELING TO BETTER PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

INTRODUCTION
The purposes of this form are to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about career counseling practices at the secondary school level. I will be one of approximately 6 to 12 people participating in one of four focus groups for this research.

RESEARCHERS
I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Brian C. Preble, a doctoral candidate working on his Ph.D. in Education with a concentration in Occupational and Technical Studies in the College of Education at Old Dominion University, who is working under the supervision of Dr. John M. Ritz, DTE.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY
Several studies have been conducted looking into the subject of career counseling and vocational guidance. None of them have examined the need to alter and update methods and practices to include more subjective and workforce oriented strategies intended to better prepare students for the current world of work. In addition, none have included the input of recent high school graduates, individuals that have currently obtained employment, helping professionals at both the high school and community college levels, and individuals from business and industry.

If you decide to participate, then you will join a study involving research of career counseling methods to be used at the high school level. If you say YES, then your participation will last for 45 minutes to an hour at _____. Approximately 6 to 12 similarly situated subjects will be participating in this study.

RISKS
There is minimal risk from participating in the study. Participation in this research project is voluntary. The design will allow for a better understanding of what is needed for comprehensive and effective career counseling at the secondary school level. Participants' names, group affiliation, and place of study or employment will not be revealed. All will be replaced with pseudonyms in reporting data. Participant personal information will be secured electronically in a password protected computer program. A possible risk emerges from the fact confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

BENEFITS
There are no direct benefits to participants in the study. However, the field of career counseling may benefit from information obtained as a result of the study. Participants will be able to share their experiences and provide honest feedback about which career counseling approaches they believe are most beneficial for millennial students. This information may assist in the improvement and expansion of career development for students in secondary school settings, promoting both career and college readiness. Specific enhancements, taken from this research, may improve the delivery of career guidance, helping students prepare for the transition from school to work.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS
Participation in this project is voluntary. Participants will not be paid for their participation.

NEW INFORMATION
If the researcher finds new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then he will give it to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The researcher will employ reasonable measures to keep information private, such as secluding and ultimately destroying audio recordings and not using names in transcriptions. Due to the nature of focus groups confidentiality will be encouraged but cannot be guaranteed. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify participants.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE
It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study -- at any time. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. The researcher reserves the right to withdraw your participation in this study, at any time, if they observe potential problems with your continued participation.

COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY
If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact Brian C. Preble the primary investigator at 831-756-1003, Dr. John M. Ritz, DTE the responsible project investigator at 757-683-5226, Dr. George Maihafer the current IRB chair at 757-683-4520 at Old Dominion University, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research at 757-683-3460 who will be glad to review the matter with you.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT
By signing this form, you are saying several things. You are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form, the research

study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research. If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them:

Brian C. Preble (831) 756-1003   Dr. John M. Ritz, DTE (757) 683-5226

If at any time you feel pressured to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, then you should call Dr. George Maihafer, the current IRB chair, at 757-683-4520, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research, at 757-683-3460.

And importantly, by signing below, you are telling the researcher YES, that you agree to participate in this study. The researcher should give you a copy of this form for your records.

Subject's Printed Name & Signature	**Date**

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I certify that I have explained to this subject the nature and purpose of this research, including benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures. I have described the rights and protections afforded to human subjects and have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice this subject into participating. I am aware of my obligations under state and federal laws, and promise compliance. I have answered the subject's questions and have encouraged him/her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of this study. I have witnessed the above signature(s) on this consent form.

Investigator's Printed Name & Signature	**Date**

APPENDIX H

Script for Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

"I appreciate you agreeing to participate in this discussion today. Your input is important. As previously stated, I, Brian Preble, am a doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University and my field of interest is career counseling at the secondary school level. This research concerns the identification of gaps in service, needs, and best practices to generate a conceptual model of career counseling for use at the high school level with the desire to better prepare students for the current world of work."

"I am recording this session with your permission. I have a copy of the consent form you previously read and signed for your records I will return now "

"I have questions I have prepared for the group. Understand there are no right or wrong answers. Please do not feel compelled to answer a question. Also, as participation is voluntary, if you choose not to respond and discuss, or not want me to use your contribution please say so and I will honor your request."

"Due to the nature of focus groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. While I will not share information on the identity of any group member and their contribution I cannot ensure others present will do the same. That said, I encourage each of you to maintain confidentiality of what is said by others in this session. Anonymity will be maintained through the employment of pseudonyms in both the transcription of your name and reporting phase of the research project."

"To best facilitate the focus group session and obtain a positive outcome several guidelines have been developed:

1. Full participation is needed to make the session highly valuable.

2. Discussions and disagreements are encouraged.

3. Please only one person speak at a given time and no side conversations.

4. No individual, agency, or group names will be identified in the report, only results."

"Please introduce yourself to the group by giving your name and background."

(Transition to semi-structured interview questions).

Wrap Up

"Thank you for volunteering in this research project. I appreciate your allowing me to meet with you, your comments, and your discussion. I hope you have gained more insight into the need for comprehensive career counseling at the high school level. I shall provide copies of the report from this segment of my dissertation to each of you. If you feel as if you need to add to or omit any information you shared please feel free to contact me. If you have questions or comments about today's focus group session please feel free to talk with me."

APPENDIX I

Cohen's Kappa Results for the Four Focus Groups Using SPSS

Focus Group One: Unemployed Individuals Searching for Work

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.934	.036	14.645	.000
N of Valid Cases	63			

a.   Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b.   Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Focus Group Two: Gainfully Employed Artisans and Skilled Technicians

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.862	.052	17.261	.000
N of Valid Cases	49			

a.   Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b.   Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Focus Group Three: Managers and Owners from Business and Industry

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.802	.056	16.374	.000
N of Valid Cases	58			

a.   Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b.   Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Focus Group Four: High School Counselors

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.762	.064	12.833	.000
N of Valid Cases	52			

a.   Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b.   Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

APPENDIX J

Questions for America's Job Center

1. What are some of the goals and services One Stop maintains and provides?

2. How many individuals does the agency serve?

3. What is the current overview for employment and what individuals is One Stop looking to assist?

4. Does One Stop maintain any relationships with business and industry (i.e., serve a specific segment of the local economy)?

5. What are clients, both unemployed and employers, asking when they seek your services?

6. What jobs are being sought and are their qualified applicants?

7. What are each looking/screening for?

8. What skills are in demand—both developed and soft skills?

9. What are some of the shortcomings you witness among individuals that come for your assistance that are skilled (e.g., qualified, need education, do not know how to seek work)?

10. What shortcomings do you typically witness with regard to individuals that are unskilled (e.g., qualified, need education, do not know how to seek work, training needed)?

VITA
Brian Christopher Preble
bpreb001@odu.edu

EDUCATION
Ph.D.   Old Dominion University   2017 Occupational and Technical Studies
M.A.   California Polytechnic State University   2006 Counseling and Guidance
M.A.   California State University, Northridge   2006 History
B.A.   California State University, Northridge   1995 History

CERTIFICATIONS
Pupil Personnel Services Credential; School Counseling, 2006
Professional Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential, 1997

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
12/2006-present	Salinas Union High School District, *Counselor; English, Reading, AVID Teacher*
5/2006-6/2006	Nipomo High School, Nipomo, CA, *Counseling Intern*
11/2005-3/2006	El Camino Jr. High School, Santa Maria, CA, *Counseling Intern*
10/2002-3/2003	UCSB Upward Bound, Santa Barbara, CA, *Academic Adviser*
1/2001-10/2006	Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria, CA, *Adjunct Faculty*
11/2000-8/2006	Santa Maria High School District, CA, *Alternative Education Teacher*
8/2001-6/2003	Refugio/Santa Ynez High School, Santa Ynez, CA, *Alternative Education and History Teacher*
8/1997-6/2000	Madison Middle School, North Hollywood, CA, *History Teacher*

PUBLICATIONS
Preble, B. C. (2017). Embracing ambiguity: Navigating the school-to-work transition. *Techniques: Connecting Education & Careers, 92*(1), 24-27.

Preble, B. C. (2016). Getting your counselor to support technology education. *Technology and Engineering Teacher, 76*(2), 30-33.

Preble, B. C. (2016). Book review: Stokes, P. J. (2015). Higher education and employability: New models for integrating study and work. *Education Review, 23*. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/er.v23.1988

Preble, B. C. (2016). Book review: Pyle, K. R., & Hayden, S. C. W. (2015). Group career counseling: Practices and principles (2nd edition). *The Professional Counselor*. Retrieved from http://tpcjournal.nbcc.org/book-review-group-career-counseling-practices-and-principles-2nd-edition/

Preble, B. C. (2015). Exploring agricultural and biotechnical engineering through hands-on integrated STEM. *Technology and Engineering Teacher, 75*(2), 20-25.

Preble, B. C. (2015). A case for drones. *Technology and Engineering Teacher, 74*(7), 24- 29.

Preble, B. C. (2015, Spring). Book review: Roth, M. S. (2014). Why a liberal education matters? *Journal of Technology Education, 26*(2), 70-73.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS
Preble, Brian C. July 2016. *"Building Technological Literacy: Defining and Differentiating Technology, Tech Ed., and Ed. Tech."* SUHSD Summer Tech Prep 2016. Salinas, CA.

Preble, Brian C. March 2016. *"Getting Your Counselor to Support Technology Education."* International Technology and Engineering Educators Conference: National Harbor, MD.

HONORS/AWARDS
Foundation for Technology and Engineering Educators/Maley Outstanding Graduate
     Student Award, 2016
UCSB Inspirational Educator Nomination, 2015
Technology and Engineering Teacher Volunteer Article for the 2014-2015 Publication Year
Herbert E. Collins Scholarship, 2005-2006; CSUN Associated Students Scholarship, 1997-1998;
     John Baur Memorial Scholarship, 1997; Michael S. Patterson Scholarship Award, 1996;
     Dan Chernow Future Teacher Scholarship, 1996
Best Paper by a Graduate Student in History, 1996
Best Paper by an Undergraduate, Graduating Senior, 1995

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS
American School Counselor Association
Association for Career and Technical Education
International Technology and Engineering Educator Association
National Career Development Association

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