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The Impact of Preparation, Field Experience and Personal Awareness on Counsleors' Attitudes Toward Providing Services to Section 504 Students with Learning Disabilities

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THE IMPACT OF PREPARATION,
FIELD EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL AWARENESS
ON COUNSELORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PROVIDING SERVICES TO
SECTION 504 STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Counselor Education

by

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May 2006

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my sons, Scott and Brett Busby, whose immeasurable and inexhaustible love inspires, nourishes, and soothes my heart, mind, and soul. The two of you have always been and always will be my greatest dream come true. With all the love in my heart I thank you for sharing this journey with me.

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To my children, Scott and Brett Busby, and my parents, Hazel and Nat Romano

Thank you for surrounding me with love, support, and encouragement.

Most of all, thank you for believing in my dream and giving me the gift of your time and toil so that I could dedicate my time to this goal.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem in Perspective	1
Advocacy	4
Conceptual Framework	7
Comparison of IDEA and Section 504	7
Identification of Students with Learning Disabilities	10
Purpose of this Study	12
Importance of this Study	13
General Research Questions	15
Research Hypotheses	16
Assumptions of this Study	18
Definitions of Terms	18
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	21
History of Court Cases Pertaining to Learning Disabilities	21
504 Students	27
Teacher Attitudes toward Inclusion	30
Role of the School Counselor	34
ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs	38
Social/Emotional Risks of 504 Students	39
Chapter Summary	49
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	54
Purpose of this Study	54
General Research Question	54
Research Hypotheses	56
Participants	56
Instrument Development	57
Data Collection Plan	63
Data Analysis	65
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	71
Characteristics of the Sample	72
Tests of Hypotheses	81

Research Question	81
Instrumentation	81
Test of Hypothesis 1	82
Test of Hypothesis 2	89
Test of Hypothesis 3	93
Test of Hypothesis 4	97
Test of Hypothesis 5	100
Test of Hypothesis 6	106
Test of Hypothesis 7	112
Test of Hypothesis 8	119
Summary	125
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	129
Purpose of the Study	129
Discussion of Findings	130
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 1	131
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 2	133
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 3	134
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 4	135
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 5	136
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 6	137
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 7	138
Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 8	139
Limitations	141
Implications for School Counselors and Counselors Educators	143
Implications for Future Research	145
Conclusions	147
REFERENCES	150
APPENDICES	167
Appendix A: Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument	167
Appendix B: Electronic Messages to Participants	173
Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter	179
VITA	181

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender.....	72
Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity.....	73
Table 3 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Certification	74
Table 4 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Work Setting.....	75
Table 5 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Type of School System.....	76
Table 6 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Levels of Education	76
Table 7 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Years of Field Experience.....	78
Table 8 Frequency Distribution of Respondent by Types of Personal Awareness.....	79
Table 9 Frequency Distribution of Respondent by Number of Disability Courses and Workshops Completed.....	80
Table 10 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 1	84
Table 11 MANOVA Results Hypothesis 1.....	86
Table 12 ANOVA Results for Hypothesis 1	88
Table 13 Means and Standard Deviation For Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 2	90
Table 14 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 2.....	92
Table 15 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 3	94
Table 16 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 3.....	97
Table 17 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 4	98
Table 18 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 4.....	100
Table 19 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 5	102

Table 20 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 5	104
Table 21 ANOVA Results for Hypothesis 5	105
Table 22 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 6	107
Table 23 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 6	109
Table 24 ANOVA Results for Hypothesis 6	111
Table 25 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 7	113
Table 26 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 7	115
Table 27 Correlations of “Accommodations” 7 and “Reaction Statements” 2	117
Table 28 ANOVA Results for Hypothesis 7	118
Table 29 Means and Standard Deviation for Item and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 8	120
Table 30 MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 8	122
Table 31 ANOVA Results for Hypothesis 8	123
Table 32 Themes of Open-Ended Comment Question	125

ABSTRACT

Although school counselors strive to address the needs of all students, children with learning disabilities are often overlooked (Bergin & Bergin, 2005; Dahir, 2004). Under federal requirements, all federally funded schools are required to provide services to students with disabilities. Further, the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) model for school counseling programs stipulates that school counselors should ensure appropriate services are provided to all students (Milsom, 2002). Research has been completed regarding teachers' attitudes toward complying with the federal mandates (Bateman & Bateman, 2002; Rea & Davis-Dorsey, 2004). There is, however, considerably less information regarding school counselors' roles, and only minimal information on their attitudes and background experience regarding learning disabilities (Frye, 2005; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Milsom, 2002).

School counselors from ASCA's southern region were asked to respond to the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument online survey. The findings of this study demonstrated that although school counselors overwhelmingly support ASCA's guidelines, few have the full credentials outlined by the ASCA model. A majority of the counselors in this study had little or no educational training and reported feeling unprepared to address educationally-based tasks such as developing classroom accommodations, or acting as a consultant to the school staff on learning disability issues. In contrast, one third of the participants in this study were certified teachers who reported feeling prepared and confident about all areas of academic and disability services. These results support the conclusions of previous research which indicated that counselor preparation and years of experience were found to be related to more positive attitudes toward inclusion (Greene & Valesky, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Students with learning disabilities encounter many obstacles in the educational process including discrimination pertaining to their special circumstances. In this age of emphasis on individual rights and protection from discrimination, as well as accountability of schools and students, the populace has called for considerable improvement of the nations' educational system, and the services provided to students with learning disabilities. In addition, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has included in its guidelines for school counseling programs, a stipulation that school counselors address the needs of, and serve as advocates for all students.

According to ASCA's model, advocacy encompasses working on behalf of students to eliminate obstacles to academic success so that all students may have access to a quality curriculum (ASCA National Model, 2003). Advocacy strategies utilized by school counselors include assisting students in the implementation of behavior modification plans, including families in counseling sessions, making appropriate referrals to specialists, providing activities to improve self-esteem, serving as a consultant to parents and staff, and participating on the school multidisciplinary team which determines students' eligibility for special education services (Milsom, 2002). This study was designed to examine school counselors' attitudes toward implementing these advocacy strategies to meet the needs of students with mild learning disabilities.

The Problem in Perspective

The American Counselor Association Position Statement specifically calls for school counselors to serve on the multidisciplinary team (ASCA Position Statement, 2004). The purpose

of the multidisciplinary team is to identify special needs students, determine students' eligibility for special education services, and develop students' individual educational plans (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001). Members of this team typically include teachers, principals, learning specialists, and school counselors.

In order to be an integral part of the multidisciplinary team, it seems important for school counselors to acquire a basic understanding of the complexities of learning disabilities; and yet, the majority of counselor education programs do not require courses on disabilities, or field experience with special needs students (Milsom & Akos, 2003). A study by Milsom (2002) found that school counselors only felt somewhat prepared to provide individual services to students with learning disabilities. Similarly, in a Florida statewide attitudinal survey, Greene and Valesky (1998) found that school counselors did not feel comfortable providing services associated with inclusion, as this is an area outside of their training and expertise. According to Greer and Greer (1995) inclusion provides special needs students a normalized environment in which to obtain a free and appropriate public education in the regular classroom without having to face the stigma of being pulled out of the classroom for resource services. These authors also believe that inclusion requires school counselors to become more involved in the multidisciplinary team, and to participate more actively in the development of individualized educational plans. Furthermore, Greer and Greer maintained that school counselors' are uniquely qualified to coordinate the gathering of information from various disciplines and present this information to the parents in a non-threatening manner.

A concentrated ethnographic study by Frye (2005) that explored the strategies used by three elementary school counselors showed that the ASCA model calling for counselors providing services to special needs students can be successfully implemented. The counselors in

Frye's study provided a combination of classroom guidance lessons, and individual and group counseling activities to teach students how to improve their behavior, develop better social skills, and raise their levels of self-esteem. Frye emphasized that the classroom guidance activities increased all students' level of respect and acceptance for students' with disabilities. Frye does note, however, that the counselors in this study were very cognizant of the characteristics and needs of students with learning disabilities.

For the larger field of counseling, although school counselors and teachers are expected to work collaboratively (Galassi & Akos, 2004; Frye), genuine cooperation oftentimes does not take place. Differences in teacher and counselor preparation programs in the areas of professional goals, pre-service education, predispositions, and professional experiences, can result in conflicts of opinions between teachers' emphasis on academic concerns and counselors' emphasis on social/emotional concerns (Rich & Shiram, 2005). Counselors without training in the field of learning disabilities tend to adopt their intervention strategies from other school staff (Frye, 2005), many of whom also lack adequate training (Smith & Smith, 2002). In a qualitative study on inclusion, Smith and Smith (2002) reported all of the six teachers selected for interviews from the 47 teachers in the survey cited a complete lack of any undergraduate training on learning disabilities to be a major obstacle to successful inclusion. Furthermore, these authors point out that many administrators, who received certification prior to the inclusion movement, also lacked adequate training on learning disabilities. In addition, studies have shown that the overall attitude of many general educators toward students with learning disabilities tends to be negative (Alghazo, Dodeen, & Algaryouti, 2003; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Marino, Miller, & Monahan, 1996). Factors relating to teachers' negative attitudes included teachers feeling unprepared to provide services to students with disabilities, discrepancies between principals and

special education teachers, and student dependence on special need services (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1990; Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2000; Kauffman, McGee, & Brigham, 2004).

ADVOCACY

In the absence of adequate training, it may be difficult for school counselors to meet ASCA's standard of advocating for students with learning disabilities; yet, advocacy remains a vital role. In order to successfully advocate, Brown and Trusty (2005) identify specific parameters of school related knowledge including, school policies and procedures, school governance structures, special education laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the function of local-school 504 committees, child protection laws, and student assistance programs. House and Martin (1998) believe counselors should take a social advocate approach to eliminate systemic barriers that block academic success for all students. They believe closing the achievement gap between poor and minority children and their more advantaged peers to be the most important goal of the school counselor. To accomplish this goal, House and Martin urge counselors to actively intervene in the schools' decision making process regarding students who are being underserved. Bemak and Chung (2005) agree that school counselors can advocate for the elimination of academic inequities, particularly in urban schools where there is such a large achievement gap between poor students and students of color as compared to middle and higher socio-economic class students. These authors warn however, that advocacy activities have the potential of placing counseling in opposition to teachers and school administrators who support policies that are not supportive of lower achieving students. To avoid being seen as a disruptive element in the schools, Bemak et al. emphasize the importance of counselors being able to maintain good professional relationships while challenging school systems to incorporate goals that benefit all students.

The importance of schools addressing the needs of all students is highlighted by the numbers of the students with learning disabilities who do not qualify for special education classrooms, yet get lost in the complexities of the school system. Approximately 28% of students with learning disabilities spend 100% of the day in the regular classroom (National Longitudinal Transition Study 2, 2005). As a result, these students may develop emotional and social problems in addition to their academic difficulties (Maugban, Rowe, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2003; Wenz-Gross & Siperstein, 1998). Because these children are in regular education classrooms, they do not benefit from the expertise of special education teachers. They must rely on the regular classroom teachers who may not have the background training to identify or support their specific needs (Ford, Pugach, Otis-Wilborn, 2001; King-Sears, 2005).

Often times, a special needs student's academic difficulties and classroom behaviors are mistakenly inferred as resulting from a lack of motivation or cooperation, rather than an indication of social or emotional struggles. Bowen (1998) points out that as academic tasks become more difficult, behavioral problems may occur and camouflage learning disabilities. In a study comparing students with a single learning disability to students who had multiple learning disabilities, Martinez and Semrud-Clikeman (2004) found that those with multiple learning disabilities were at higher risk for poor emotional functioning, school maladjustment, negative attitudes toward school, and depression.

Kauffman (2000) emphasizes that children with learning disabilities need to feel a sense of achievement and believe that they are making academic progress in a stable, predictable, and understandable pace; yet, too many students experience the world as unknowable, unpredictable, and chaotic. In order to address the social, emotional, and behavioral risks of special needs students, Bergin and Bergin (2004) have emphasized that students with learning disabilities need

and deserve the help of a counselor who is both sensitive to their cognitive based differences, and who is able to advocate for the students with their teachers, parents, and school administrators. Within the school setting, strategies counselors can use in advocating for students with learning disabilities include listening carefully to the concerns of teachers and administrators, trying to understand the influences that contribute to teacher resistance, and continually becoming aware of resources and actions that may help minimize teachers' negative attitudes (Scarborough & Deck, 1998). School counselors can extend advocacy techniques into the home by helping parents to fully understand the child's disability, the impact that disability has on the child's capabilities, and the social and psychological difficulties experienced by the child (Bowen, 1998; Lardieri, Blacher, & Swanson, 2002). Additionally, school counselor advocacy can be utilized to teach the students themselves to become self-advocates by recruiting positive teacher attention, and requesting teacher feedback (Alber, Heward & Brooke, 1999).

The objective of teaching self-advocacy techniques to students with learning disabilities can also be accomplished through the use of support groups. School based support groups can offer LD students a higher level of empathy than they can obtain from non-learning disabled peers (Pocock, Lambros, Karvonen, Test, Algozzine, Wood & Martin, 2002). Support group therapy has shown a significantly positive impact on the academic, social, and emotional functioning of learning disabled students, as it allows students not only an opportunity to release energy, but also a chance to develop a growing sense of trust that change is possible and self defeating behaviors can be overcome (Flasher, Fos, Gilat, & Shectman, 1996). Pocock et al. point out the success of a self-advocacy group called LEAD which utilized group activities to help students discover their strengths, understand their disabilities, and develop strategies to advocate for their educational needs and rights.

Conceptual Framework

Presently all children with disabilities are entitled by law to a free and appropriate public education (H.R. 1350, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004). Depending on the severity of the learning disability, children may be eligible for services under three different federal legislative acts, namely, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) of 1975, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Even though each of these acts contains specific provisions regarding eligibility, and services for students with learning disabilities, misinterpretation or misunderstanding of these provisions has in many cases resulted in implementations becoming complicated, inconsistent, inappropriate, and costly, with the resultant student effect of being mislabeled or unidentified as eligible for services.

At the center of the confusion regarding the rights of children with disabilities are the tasks of determining which children have learning disabilities, diagnosing the type and severity of the disabilities, and identifying the specific federal act that pertains to each child's situation. An examination of the definitions and requirements of each law serves to illustrate the complexities faced by the nation's school systems.

Comparison of IDEA and Section 504

The Individuals with Disabilities Education ACT (IDEA), previously known as P.L. 94-142, mandates that all public schools provide eligible children free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. IDEA was amended in 1997 and again in 2004, to further clarify the definitions used by the federal government to stipulate eligibility for children who may be entitled to receive special education services (Altshuler & Kopels, 2003).

Under IDEA, schools are required to identify and evaluate all children suspected of having learning disabilities. Eligibility for special education services requires that the child meet the criteria for at least one of more than thirteen categories of disabilities identified in the law (deBettencourt, 2002). Once identified, IDEA requires schools to create Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for each child. This IEP must be developed by a team consisting of knowledgeable persons including the child's teacher, parents, a special education representative, the child if appropriate, and others as designated by the parents or agency.

Typically schools require counselors to be members of this team, as do many national counseling organizations (ASCA Position Statement, 2004; Scarborough & Deck, 1998; Traver-Behring, Spagna, & Sullivan, 1998). The IEP is reviewed annually and may be challenged by the parents if they are in disagreement with its provisions. Additionally, the parents may appeal the State agency's decision to State or Federal Court. Under the provisions of IDEA, schools are entitled to receive federal funds in order to address the needs of children with learning disabilities who qualify for special education services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 are federal legislative acts that protect the civil rights of persons with disabilities. Students with mild learning disabilities may not qualify for services under IDEA, but may still be entitled to services under the civil rights laws of ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Both of these acts are designed to ensure that federal funds are not spent in a discriminatory fashion (Smith, 2001). Essentially, Section 504 states that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall be excluded from participation in any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.

Eligibility under the civil rights acts is based on a person's inability to perform one or more major life activity such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning (Denbo, 2004). Because the task of learning is included, Section 504 and ADA cover educational situations, but are not limited to them. On the other hand, IDEA is specific to the area of education. All persons who qualify for IDEA automatically qualify under the broader provisions of Section 504 and ADA; however, individuals who qualify under Section 504 and ADA may not qualify under IDEA. Thus, there may be students in schools who are not considered to have a learning disability that meet the criteria for IDEA, but who do have a learning disability severe enough to warrant civil rights protection under Section 504.

Students who qualify for services under IDEA automatically qualify for services under Section 504. Therefore, students with dual qualifications receive services under the special education mandates of IDEA. Students who qualify only under the civil rights laws of Section 504, but not IDEA do not receive services based on the special education mandates and must rely on non-funded services provided by the school and the regular classroom teacher. Because the majority of Section 504 students qualifies under both categories and automatically receives IDEA services, those who qualify only under Section 504 are easily overlooked and may not receive any services (Brady, 2004; deBettencourt, 2002). Section 504 and ADA do not provide federal funds to facilitate implementation, but IDEA does. As a result of funding for IDEA, but not for Section 504 and ADA, Smith (2001) explained that IDEA became the primary focus of schools, while Section 504 was deemed to be less important as a function of money and funding. At the same time, Smith point out that as a result of an increasing number of students being

deemed ineligible for services under the definition of IDEA, and an increase in parental awareness, public attention has shifted to Section 504.

Identification of Students with Learning Disabilities

As parents and child advocates have become more knowledgeable about the civil rights' protection provided by Section 504, they have placed increasing demands on the schools to accommodate the needs of children who have mild learning disabilities, but who do not qualify for IDEA. As explained by deBettencourt (2002), even though Section 504 and ADA are not financing statutes, they do provide for enforcement of the mandate. In their effort to comply with these mandates, many schools are finding it difficult to determine the eligibility of students under Section 504. Furthermore, as Kavale, Holdnack, and Mostert (2005) maintained, the lack of consensus regarding operational definitions of learning disabilities has resulted in an over identification of students with learning disabilities and the resultant call by the educational community for radical changes in eligibility criteria. Attitudes of school personnel toward providing services to LD students may be adversely impacted by the standards used to identify students in need, particularly if those standards are not adhered to consistently. According to the guidelines of Section 504, it is school personnel who determine if a student's needs meet the criteria for 504 services (deBettencourt); however, Brady (2004) points out that many educators throughout the nation lack the ability and training to accurately identify eligible students.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (2002) contend that three major concerns of incorrect identification of students with learning disabilities are over identification, variability in identification, and specificity in reliably differentiating learning disabilities from general low achievement. Historically, the concept of discrepancy was used as the criterion for identifying learning disabilities, but recently many researchers have encouraged a change to a

Responsiveness To Intervention (RTI) criterion (e.g., Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005; Ysseldyke, 2005) that provides scientifically defensible identification through the use of direct measurement of students' academic improvement. According to Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, and Young (2003) RTI would replace using IQ achievement discrepancy as a means of identifying learning disabilities. These authors explain that RTI is based on classroom teachers providing alternative instructional methods to students who do not respond to basic instruction; students who failed to respond to the alternative instructional method are identified as learning disabled. Conversely, Kavale, Holdnack, and Mostert (2005) disagree with the RTI model because of its narrow focus only on reading disabilities, and oppose radical changes to the discrepancy model. They support stricter enforcement of the eligibility requirements under the discrepancy model, rather than the creation of a new model that may not be applicable to all types of learning disabilities. As the debate over decision making models for the detection of learning disabilities continues, it is up to the schools' personnel to determine the methods used for LD classification. In some cases, these classification methods have little or no validity (Mellard, Deshler, & Barth, 2004). These authors determined that in many situations, schools classified students as being LD based on factors that were unrelated to specific identification criteria, such as the degree of parental involvement, familiarity of parents with school personnel, availability of other services for at-risk students, perceived competence of site teachers, and the degree to which teachers felt a personal sense of responsibility for the academic progress of at-risk learners.

The additional work that providing services to LD students entails may result in teachers becoming wary of the number of students who are inaccurately identified as having a learning disability. In an investigation of teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with learning disabilities, Cook (2001) found that teachers reacted more negatively to students with mild

learning disabilities than to the students with severe disabilities. Cook reasoned this was presumably due to higher expectations for students whose disabilities were not obviously visible.

Ultimately, the confusion and frustration surrounding accurately identifying students in need of services can result in teacher burn out and negative attitudes, particularly in teachers who lack the training needed to implement classroom intervention strategies (King-Sears, Boudah, Goodwin, Raskind, & Swanson, 2004). As a result of professional role confusion and lack of disability training, counselors also experience confusion and frustrations in trying to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities (see Dahir, 2004; Frye, 2005; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Liberman, 2004; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003).

Purpose of this Study

By building on the studies by Frye (2005), Greene and Valesky, (1998), Milsom (2002), and Milsom and Akos (2003) which looked at school counselors' roles and training in regards to students with learning disabilities, this study examined school counselors' attitudes in light of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness of special needs students. In particular, this study focused on students who do not meet the eligibility of requiring services under IDEA, but who qualify only for special education services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For purposes of clarity, these students with milder learning disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but not the requirements of IDEA were referred to in this proposal as "504-only students." The goals of this study were to: (a) identify school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students; (b) examine the extent of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness school counselors have in regards to learning disabilities; (c) compare the attitude of school counselors with their background variables of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness of

learning disabled students; and (d) identify common themes in school counselors' responses to an open-ended comment question regarding school counselors' roles with students with learning disabilities. "Preparation" included the variables of areas of counselor certification, educational level, number of disability workshops completed, and the number of disability courses completed. "Field experience" included the variables of field experience in the area of education, field experience in the area of counseling, and field experience in the area of working with students with disabilities. "Personal Awareness" included the variables of personal experience with individuals with disabilities outside of the educational setting, having a personal diagnosis of a disability, and the self-perception of having a disability.

Importance of this Study

Keeping in mind the difficulties in the educational system surrounding the issue of learning disabled students, it seems likely that school counselors will encounter many of the same difficulties, and may perceive special education services in a negative light. Kauffman, Mcgee, and Brigham (2004) are of the opinion that the entire special education system has a public reputation as a dead end destination for special needs students. This finding is corroborated by other researchers who have found that attitudes towards special education vary depending on the context of the inquiry. In a study on the attitudes of elementary principals towards the concept of inclusion, Praisner (2003) found that principals' attitudes were extremely positive toward the general concept of inclusion, but negative toward the specifics of mandatory compliance such as the placement of students who have emotional/social needs, rather than just academic needs, into the regular education classroom. Smith and Smith (2000) found similar sentiments expressed by early childhood education teachers, who enthusiastically voiced support

for inclusion in general, but then followed up with negative comments pertaining to a lack of sufficient training, lack of school wide support, and a lack of adequate time.

The importance of the findings of my study include its ability to increase information on (a) school counselors' level of preparation regarding services to 504-only students with learning disabilities; (b) how school counselors feel about providing those services; and (c) how the variables of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness relate to counselor attitudes. All students with learning disabilities have been identified as having an increased risk of emotional and social difficulties (e.g., Arnold, et al., 2005; MacMaster, Donovan, & MacIntyre, 2002; Wenz-Gross & Siperstein, 1998). Researchers have estimated that nearly three million students have been identified as having learning disabilities (Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul, 2003). Even so, special needs students are virtually an invisible population in the field of counseling; yet, the need for counselor interventions such as social skills training, self-esteem building, conflict resolution practice, self-advocacy techniques, and support groups is well-documented (Alber, Heward, & Brooke, 1999; Pocock, et al., 2002). Thus, the results of this study can provide an understanding of the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students.

The field of special education is evolving at an incredible pace with the most recent research focusing on these several areas; scientific aspects of learning disabilities (Rourke, 2005), legal changes with regards to eligibility criteria (Keogh, 2005; Ysseldyke, 2005), and improved educational strategies (Healey, 2005). At the same time, there is a substantial lack of learning disability research in the field of counseling (Milsom, 2002). The continued placement of school counselors into positions that require an understanding and knowledge of special needs students indicates that counselor preparation, field experience, and awareness must be brought to the attention of the counseling community (Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom & Akos, 2002).

General Research Questions

The following general research questions were posed concerning how school counselors felt about the national requirement to provide services to students with learning disabilities and how school counselors felt toward special needs students. Also, these general research questions examined the demographic and personal profiles of each counselor in this study.

1. What are the attitudes of school counselors' toward providing services to 504-only students?
2. Are school counselors who have a certification in education more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have a certification in education?
3. Are school counselors who have a doctoral degree more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have a master's degree?
4. Are school counselors who have completed at least one disability course more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed at least one disability course?
5. Are school counselors who have completed at least one disability workshop more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed at least one disability workshop?
6. Are school counselors who have greater field experience in counseling, defined as five or more years of experience in the field of counseling, more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser

experience in counseling, defined as less than five years of experience in the field of counseling?

7. Are school counselors who have greater field experience in education, defined as five or more years of experience in the field of education more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser field experience in education, defined as less than five years of experience in the field of education?
8. Are school counselors who have greater field experience with students with disabilities, defined as five or more years of experience with students with disabilities, more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have less than five years of field experience with students with disabilities?
9. Are school counselors who have a personal awareness (having a diagnosed or perceived disability or being related to or closely acquainted with a person with a disability) of disabilities more positive toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have a personal awareness (having a diagnosed or perceived disability, or being related to or closely acquainted with a person with a disability) of disabilities.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses in this study derived from the general research questions included the following:

1. School counselors who have national certification in education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have certification in education.
2. School counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have a master degree in counseling.
3. School counselors who have completed at least one course on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any courses on learning disabilities.
4. School counselors who have completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any workshops on learning disabilities.
5. School counselors who have greater experience, defined as having five or more years experience in the field of counseling will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had less than five years experience in the field of counseling.
6. School counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had less than five years experience in the field of education.
7. School counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have

lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities.

8. School counselors who have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who have a disability, or who have been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities) will have a more positive attitude toward providing services to 504-only students, than school counselors who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who do not have a disability, or who have not been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities).

Assumptions of the Study

A basic assumption of this research was that the Attitudes towards Learning Disabilities Services Instrument (ATLDI) that was created for this exploratory study by the researcher is valid and accurately measures counselors' attitudes, beliefs, and feelings as they pertain to the role of the school counselor and 504-only students.

Also, the participants who completed the ATLDI were school counselors who answered the survey questions honestly and willingly.

Additionally, it was assumed that the participants in this study were currently employed in a school setting that has identified students with 504-only students.

Definition of Terms

Advocacy: The process of identifying unmet needs and taking appropriate actions to change the circumstances which are responsible for the inequities (Trusty & Brown, 2005).

ADA -Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for

individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications

(<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/q%26aeng02.htm>).

ASCA – American School Counselor Association: A professional organization that supports school counselor efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development, so they may achieve success in school and be prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society (<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/>).

Classroom Accommodations: Plans developed by teachers, to enable students with disabilities to have equal access to educational and extra curricular activities. These accommodations are designed to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to succeed. Typically accommodations and modifications include seating arrangements, testing modifications, homework modifications, the use of readers or taped materials, and accommodations in attendance policies (Smith, 2002).

IEP – Individualized Education Program: A written plan that describes the educational needs, goals and objectives that direct the placement, program, and evaluation for each child with a disability (Drasgow, Yell, & Robinson).

IDEA -Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Federal law previously known as P.L. 94-142, that requires all public schools to provide eligible children free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment possible (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.).

Inclusion: A policy of allowing students with disabilities to attend classes with their general education peers while receiving direct support from special educators (Hines, 2001).

Learning Disability: Hidden disabilities that affect students who usually have average or above average intelligence, but who cannot achieve at their potential (<http://www.ldaca.org/ld.htm>).

Major life activity: This includes functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.).

Otherwise qualified: Before students can be deemed eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a determination must be made that the student would be capable of performing the task if the disability were not present (Smith, 2002).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Sec. 504. (a) No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 7(20), shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any executive agency or by the United States Postal Service (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.).

Special Education: Providing instruction and related services to students who meet the criteria for one or more of 13 categories listed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Miller & Newbill, 1998).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the research and literature related to the roles and attitudes of school personnel, including school counselors, toward providing services to students with learning disabilities. This chapter is organized into four parts that build a conceptual framework for examining the laws, implementations, and attitudes of teachers and school counselors surrounding the issue of learning disabilities. The first section defines the term learning disabilities and the federal laws that mandate implementation of the services schools must provide to students with learning disabilities. Also, the section presents the classification of students with mild learning disabilities who are eligible only for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The second section analyzes the role and attitudes of teachers toward providing services to students with learning disabilities. The third section outlines the role of the school counselor according to the American School Counselor Association's national model. The fourth section examines school counselors' competencies in, and attitudes toward providing services to students with learning disabilities. The final section of this chapter outlines the importance of counselors providing services to 504-only students who have mild learning disabilities. The level of training in learning disability issues that counselors need in order to adequately provide these services, as well as a summary of the level of training in LD issues provided by universities will be presented.

History of Court Cases Pertaining to Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are defined as hidden disabilities that affect students who usually have average or above average intelligence, but who cannot achieve at their potential (<http://www.ldaca.org/ld.htm>). Presently, all children with disabilities are entitled by law to a

free and appropriate public education (H.R. 1350, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004). Depending on the severity of the learning disability, children with special needs may be eligible for services under three different federal legislative acts, namely, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) of 1975, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Each of these mandates was designed to either provide a free appropriate public education or to safeguard the civil rights of persons with disabilities.

According to Katsiyannis, Yell, and Bradley (2001), prior to 1975 it was common practice for students with disabilities to be excluded from public schools, while at the same time many of the students with disabilities who did attend school were not provided with an appropriate education. These authors believe that the Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which found that separate education for African American students is not equal education under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was the catalyst for parents and advocacy groups to utilize the courts as a means to force states to provide public education appropriate to each student's individual needs.

Implementation of appropriate education for students with learning disabilities slowly evolved over the next twenty years. Prasse (1988) has pointed out that an early court case involving special education took place in 1967 with *Hobson v. Hansen*, in which a U.S. district court determined that the District of Columbia school system's method for educational tracking of students was invalid. In an attempt to improve educational opportunities for African American students who were experiencing academic difficulties, the school had an approach of tracking based upon IQ scores. The unintended results of the tracking were that 90% of the students in the

low achievement class were African American. The judge ruled that because the average IQ test did not measure innate ability, tracking based on IQ scores was not acceptable and could be detrimental in the form of stigmatization.

Similar to *Hobson v. Hansen*, the case of *Diana v. State Board of Education* (1970) raised questions regarding the use of scores from IQ tests to make placement decisions. The ruling had a major influence on the enactment of federal special education laws concerning bias in assessment procedure, due process, parental involvement, and placement in the least restrictive environment (Aratiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda 2005). At issue in this decision was a parental complaint regarding the placement of Spanish-speaking students into classes for children with mental retardation on the basis of scores from IQ tests that were written in English. The results of this California case included requirements for students to be tested in their native language and in English, the elimination of culturally unfair items from tests used in assessments, and the requirement that assessment tests be developed to reflect the Mexican American culture.

According to Gallagher (2000) and Katsiyannis, Yell, and Bradely, (2001) the next significant advancement regarding equal opportunity being applied to children with disabilities was two landmark court cases in 1972, namely *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, and *Mills v. Board of Education*, both of which marked the beginning of a nationwide establishment of requiring schools to provide educational services to students with disabilities.

In the *PARC* decision, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (*PARC*) sued the state of Pennsylvania over the constitutional right to receive a public education in an environment appropriate to children's learning capabilities (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999). The impetus for this lawsuit was the outcry of parents and advocates after several mentally retarded

children, who were prohibited from public education, died while residing in a private facility paid for by the parents. The case was settled by a consent decree in 1972 making the state responsible for providing a free appropriate public education commensurate with a child's abilities. Not surprisingly, this case led to additional similar lawsuits throughout other states (Percy, 1992).

The case of *Mills v. Board of Education*, 1972 was a class action suit on behalf of seven African American children who had been excluded from receiving public education without review of their circumstances by the District of Columbia school system. The court decided that the students had been labeled as behavioral problems, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, or hyperactive without the benefit of alternate education or regular review (Daugherty, 2001). The court also determined that over 12,000 students in the District of Columbia were not receiving appropriate educational services. The court ordered the school district to implement a plan to identify students in need of services and a timeline for compliance. Daugherty noted that included in this plan were requirements for the school to inform parents of their right to a hearing, the rights of parents to view their child's records, and a prohibition of parents being responsible for any independent evaluative costs.

The implications of the decisions in *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* and *Mills v. Board of Education* established that all children are capable of benefiting from education, are entitled to a free education, and are entitled to placement that is as normal as possible; paving the way for the passage of future special education mandates (Wong, 1993).

The most notable change in special education laws occurred in 1990 when the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA became a comprehensive law that not only established federal funding to the

states, but also dictated how students with disabilities would be educated (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001). In 1997, the IDEA was amended to ensure that students with learning disabilities were educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Although many educators believe the least restrictive environment amendment called for full inclusion of all students into the regular classroom, Yell and Katsiyannis (2004) point out in an article clarifying appropriate student placement, that while the IDEA encourages inclusion, it also allows an individualized education program team to place students in a restricted setting if it is in the best interests of the child.

These authors explain that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team follow three steps in the placement of a student in special education beginning with an evaluation to identify a student's needs, followed by the development of an IEP based on the student's needs, and finally the placement decision. Yell and Katsiyannis emphasize that in determining the placement decision, the primary factor is the student's educational needs; however the IEP team must also consider any potential harmful effects to the student or the student's peers that could result from the placement of the student in the regular education classroom. Before the IEP team can determine that a student must be placed in a more restrictive setting, they must explore the use of supplementary aides and services such as pre-referral interventions, consultation, behavior plans, assistive technology, paraprofessionals, staff in-service training, resource rooms, and roaming teachers, all of which might enable a student to function in the regular classroom.

Altshuler and Koples (2003) point out that the 1999 revisions to the 1997 IDEA amendment expanded the categories of children with disabilities to include both development delay, and ADD and ADHD. The expanded categories increased the likelihood these students would receive services. Altshuler and Koples explain that previous to the revisions, none of IDEA's 13 categories of learning disabilities covered attention and hyperactivity issues. Without

legal requirements to address the needs of students with ADD and ADHD, although a few schools did provide accommodation plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, most either did not provide services to these students, or labeled them as having emotional disturbances or learning impairments. Altshuler and Koples go on to explain that under the revisions, students with ADD or ADHD can be included in the IDEA category of “other health impairment” if their academic performance is negatively affected by their attention difficulties. These authors also note that the 1999 revisions provide services for children with disabilities who are homeless or whose first language is not English.

As the nation became more familiar with the implementation of the IDEA, the populace began to demand improved schools and improved education for all students. In response, the Bush administration created the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002 as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA was first enacted in 1965 under President Johnson’s “Great Society” program and has been reauthorized approximately every five years, with the most recent occurring in 1994 (Trahan, 2002). According to Trahan, the NCLB regulations call for all teachers of core subjects to be highly qualified by the 2005-2006 school year, and for increased accountability for states and school districts.

Since its inception, NCLB has faced immense criticism. For example, Kauffman (2004) voiced objection with the NCLB goal of closing the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities, instead of between students receiving services and those who do not. According to Kauffman, good education makes students more heterogeneous and good special education helps students learn more than they would without it. Kauffman feels that it is impossible to narrow the gap between the average student and the average special education student without adversely affecting general education. Kauffman, Landrum, Mock, Sayeski, and

Sayeski, (2005) emphasized that the NCLB Act's goal of teaching all children well, and all children at the same time is an impossibility and sets children up for predictable failure. Mostert (2004) agreed with Kauffman, but adds that educators need to look beyond the government to empirical research to find interventions that work and banish those that do not. Mostert further asserts that there is empirical evidence showing that the indicators of increased behavioral disorders such as marital status, dysfunctional families, and poor parenting, cannot be remedied by teachers, but must be addressed within the home-- a task beyond the scope of well intention, well-funded, long term prevention programs such as Headstart. Further criticism of NCLB centers on unintended consequences such as less time to take advantage of teachable moments, higher dropout rates, and biases towards minority students (Paul, 2005).

504 Students

As the criticisms and controversies surrounding IDEA and NCLB continue, another population of students with learning disabilities frequently gets overlooked. There is a lack of studies in the counseling and educational literature on the role and attitudes of school counselors and students with learning disabilities who only qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and not under IDEA. The vast majority of existing studies focus on the population of all students with learning disabilities (e.g., Bowen, 1998; Carpenter & King-Sears, 1998; Glenn, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Meyers, 2004; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003; Scarborough & Deck, 1998; Wood Dunn, 2002). Because of the lack of studies on Section 504-only students, and because school administrators and general education teachers tend to rely on special education teachers to be the experts on students with learning disabilities, it is unlikely that many members of the educational field understand the specifics of Section 504 and special education laws (Fossey & Hosie, 1995).

This lack of general knowledge pertaining to Section 504 laws sometimes translates into a lack of services provided to 504-only students. Katsiyannis and Conderman (1994) point out that many school administrators incorrectly believe that compliance with IDEA automatically equals compliance with Section 504; consequently, the needs of some 504 students may be overlooked. Unlike IDEA, Section 504 does not provide a list of categories to determine eligibility, but rather refers to a substantial limitation in major life activities (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.) According to Smith (2001) major life activities include walking, talking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, performing manual tasks, sitting, reaching, stooping, and procreating.

Smith goes on to explain that in addition to learning, 504 covers physical conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, cardiac difficulties, orthopedic problems, and communicable diseases. Section 504 is not restricted to educational settings but applies to all public and private institutions that receive federal funds (Brady, 2004). Section 504 applies to all students who qualify for special education plus students with disabilities that do not require special education services such as ADD/ADHD, dyslexia, emotional/behavioral disorders, post traumatic stress syndrome, physical/sexual abuse, social maladjustment, suicidal tendencies, Tourette's syndrome, AIDS, asthma, hearing impairments, vision impairments, etc. (Brady, 2004; Katsiyannis & Conderman, 1994; Miller & Newbill, 1998). These students can have average and above average IQs, yet struggle academically.

As a result of the lack of appropriate services and the byproduct of academic frustrations, it is common for these students to experience emotional and/or behavioral difficulties (Bowen, 1998). Youths with poor reading skills have been found to have higher rates of depression and anxiety (Arnold, Goldston, Walsh, Reboussin, Daniel, Hickman, & Wood, 2005). Middle school

students with learning problems were found to have particular risks for higher stress, lower social support, and poorer adjustment than other students (Wenz-Gross & Siperstein, 1998). Even academically talented students with learning disabilities exhibited feelings of inferiority, an inability for perseverance in the pursuit of a goal, and a general lack of self-confidence (Reis, 2004). The emotional and behavioral difficulties of students with mild learning disabilities can mask the learning disability, and may end up being identified as the primary problem, thus exposing the student to ineffective classroom strategies and consequences designed to address behavioral and not learning issues.

Because all students who qualify for IDEA services automatically qualify for services under Section 504, and because IDEA requires an IEP whereas 504 requires a plan but not a written IEP, it may be easier for the needs of 504 students to be overlooked (Miller & Newbill, 1998). A second factor contributing to 504 students' risk of being underserved is that schools receive federal funds for providing services to IDEA students but not for providing services to 504 students (Smith, 2001).

One major encumbrance in obtaining services under 504 stems from the extra workload classroom accommodations create for teachers. Curtis (2005) discovered that many general education teachers resist providing services to special needs students due to unreasonable paperwork, lack of knowledge regarding special education laws, and lack of training in specialized teaching methods. Furthermore, under Section 504, it is the school personnel who determine if a student's impairment is a substantial limitation (deBettencourt, 2002), however Miller and Newbill (1998) point out that many educators consider mental impairments to be a matter of character or willpower that can be remedied by increased effort on the part of the student. Supporting this notion, Brady (2004) points to deficits in educators' ability to identify

learning disabilities and he maintains that many educators throughout the nation do not properly identify eligible students under Section 504 due to the mistaken belief that only IDEA students qualify for 504 services.

Another common 504 misconception is that only public schools are required to make accommodations for 504 students when in fact, not only are private and faith-based schools that receive federal funds mandated to address the needs of students with learning disabilities, their resource teachers must have the same qualifications as teachers in public schools, (Eigenbrood, 2005). Eigenbrood adds that according to federal regulations, it is the public school districts responsibility to identify and evaluate students with learning disabilities in private and faith-based schools. The complexities and misconceptions associated with Section 504 laws can continue to create obstacles beyond a student's elementary and secondary school years.

Madaus and Shaw (2004) stress that 504 requirements differ for secondary and postsecondary education, and caution parents, students, and teachers to prepare for the transition period by becoming knowledgeable about the changes. In particular, although all students within IDEA range must be admitted to secondary public schools, postsecondary admission is subject to the institutions' admission requirements regardless of age. Furthermore, postsecondary students must self-identify as having a disability within the first two weeks of school, and provide documentation to campus disability professionals (Madaus & Shaw, 2004)

Teacher Attitudes toward Inclusion

A review of teachers' reactions to the mainstreaming and inclusion movement reveals mixed results in teachers' attitudes. In a general sense, teachers are supportive of the idea of a least restrictive environment for students with special needs; however, when it pertains to actual classroom experiences, teachers' attitudes tend to be more negative. The majority of research

has treated the entire population of students with disabilities as a whole, combining physical, academic, and behavioral disabilities, as well as mild and severe levels of limitations (e.g., Daniel & King, 1997; Jobe, Rust, & Brisse, 1996; Pasierb, 1994; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Snyder, 1999). A very small percentage of the literature does differentiate types and severity of disabilities, but none of the published research has specifically examined the subset of 504-only students.

Studies from the 1980s and early 1990s focused on mainstreaming of special education students who spent a portion of their day in regular education classrooms. Later studies examined the concept of inclusion which focused on all students being educated in the regular classroom to the fullest extent possible. A comprehensive look at the findings of teacher attitudinal studies regarding both mainstreaming and inclusion showed high levels of controversy within the educational field, but most studies showed no conclusive data indicating positive or negative teacher attitudes (e.g., Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Hines, 2001; Jobe, Rust, & Brisse, 1996; Kauffman, 1991; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1994). The studies reporting negative teacher attitudes pointed to students being underserved (Braaten, 1988), insufficient academic skills of LD students, and a lack of significant changes in teachers' strategies and the school environments (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Zigmond & Baker, 1990), resistance of teachers to provide accommodations (Snyder, 1999), attitudinal discrepancies between principals and special education teachers (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999), insufficient training in collaborative and special needs teaching strategies for regular classroom educators (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2000; Monahan, Marino, & Miller, 1996; Stoler, 1992), and student dependence on special programs, modifications, and accommodations (Kauffman, McGee, & Brigham, 2004) as critical areas impeding successful inclusion practices.

In contrast to the studies delineating negative examples, a few researchers determined that inclusion could be successfully implemented. Studies which revealed promising results of inclusive practices highlighted regular education teachers exposing commitment to adapting new strategies and accepting increased workloads (Henning & Mitchell, 2002; King & Youngs, 2003). They also focused on examining teachers' attitudes toward specific included students rather than to the abstract concept of inclusion (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000). Finally, these positive findings revealed that successful inclusion resulted from good administrative support, adequate materials, personal resource time, and disability teaching skill training (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

By far, the vast majority of studies on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion focused on common teacher concerns and specific factors that would be necessary for inclusion to be accepted and successful, such as collaborative teaching, adequate resources, changes in organizational structures, adequate teacher training, administrative support, increased time for planning and paperwork, smaller class sizes, and paraprofessional assistants within the classrooms (e.g., Bateman & Bateman, 2002; Bruneau-Balderrama, 1997; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spangna, 2004; Crockett, 2002; Hines, 2001; Lanier & Lanier, 1996; Rea & Davis-Dorsey, 2004; Smith & Dlugosh, 1999).

A study by Stoler (1992) of nine high schools in a large suburban county revealed high school teachers who did not have special education training were most concerned about the regular education students not receiving the amount of attention they needed, fear about the medical requirements of the special education students, assurance that they would not be sued as a result of having special education students in their class, and the loss of classroom autonomy when the special education teacher was in the classroom.

Other attitude surveys, however, have shown less apprehension on the part of the regular education teachers. Through the use of two Likert scale surveys, The Inclusive Education Questionnaire (IEQ) and The Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES), Pasierb (1994) conducted a study of teachers, counselors, and administrators from three New Jersey school districts in order to measure their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with physical, academic, behavioral, and social disabilities in regular classrooms. Results indicated that counselors' attitudes were the most positive, administrators' attitudes were the most negative, and teachers' attitudes fell in the middle. In addition, Pasierb found the entire group of school personnel rated students' social deficit disabilities to be the most acceptable followed by physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and behavioral problem disabilities respectively. In a similar study Jobe, Rust, and Brisse (1996) mailed an attitude survey to almost 200 teachers in 44 different states. Their survey focused on management issues with special needs students, the benefits of inclusion, and teacher preparation. Findings from the survey indicated that teacher attitudes were fairly neutral toward inclusion and that special education teacher and teachers with in-service training had scored the most positive. In a comparison of teacher attitudes toward students with mild and severe disabilities, Cook (2001) asked 70 teachers from 10 different schools to nominate students into the differential expectation categories of indifference, rejection, concern, and attachment. His findings showed that teachers had the most negative attitudes toward students with mild disabilities, possibly because teachers had higher expectations for students whose disabilities were less visible.

Positive teacher attitude has been identified as one of the most critical factor in determining the success of inclusion (Parrish, Nunn, Hatstrup, 1982; Stoler, 1992), however often students with learning disabilities have been placed in large group instruction with teachers who

did not provide accommodations to meet their needs (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993). Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, and Lesar (1991) explored teacher reactions to the placement of increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities into the regular classroom. Through the use of an attitudinal survey which focused on teacher preparedness, redistribution of classroom resources, student instructional needs, and teacher roles, Semmel et al. ascertained that many regular education teachers felt inclusion of students with mild disabilities would significantly reduce the amount of instruction time available for the non-disabled students.

A synthesis of the research on teachers' attitudes by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) showed that although teachers with inclusive classrooms supported the idea of inclusion in general, they had negative attitudes resulting from a need for increased planning time, systematic intensive training, personnel assistance, adequate curriculum materials, and smaller class sizes. Wigle and Wilcox (1997) found results similar to Scruggs and Mastropieri confirming that due to a lack of adequate training on the development of classroom modification strategies, school personnel had entrenched negative attitudes toward providing accommodations to meet students' special needs. As research into the implementation of inclusive education continued, numerous researchers confirmed that lack of time, lack of training, and lack of administrative support were the most crucial obstacles in meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the regular classroom (Ford, Pugach, & Otis-Wilborn, 2001; Henning & Mitchell, 2002; Hines, 2001; Smith & Smith, 2000).

Role of the School Counselor

The passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, resulted not only in additional services for disabled students,

but also in an increased obligation for school counselors to address the needs of these students (Milsom, 2002). A major barrier to a successful counseling program is confusion as to the nature, function, purpose, and role of school counselors. This confusion is evident in the attempts of organizations, individuals, and professional associations to reach an agreement on the type of services that should be provided by the school counseling community (Dahir, 2004; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005). Regrettably, this lack of clarity regarding the role of school counseling has been an ongoing dilemma.

Historically, school counselors have had difficulty describing and defining their roles to principals, school personnel, and the general public (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Liberman, 2004; Murray, 1995). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, countless articles were published that attempted to define the role of the school counselor, most of which described a combination helper/consultant role (Ginter & Scalise, 1990). O'Dell and Rak (1996) attributed this role confusion to the lack of a clear definition of counseling by the profession even though ASCA had been responding to the need for clarification by publishing position statements in 1966, 1974, 1981, and 1990. It was hoped that school counselors would use these statements as tools in defining their role to school administrators (Carter, 1993). According to Carter, these position statements traced the evolution of the role of the school counselor as it moved through the stages of emphasis first on teaching, then as a resource, and finally, to development. Murray (1995) continued to detail the progression of school counseling duties as the theme of development expanded until almost every aspect of school operations fit under its umbrella.

A major point of contention regarding school counselors' responsibilities is the concern over school counselors performing dual roles, such as counselor/disciplinarian role conflict that can potentially destroy the trust of students. In numerous schools, other dual roles including

clerical duties, administrative tasks, hall monitoring and scheduling have also become common counselor responsibilities (Coll & Freedman, 1997; Murray, 1995). The roles of school counselors are usually determined by school principals, many of whom lack knowledge of appropriate counselor roles (Fitch, Ballester, & Marshall, 2001). A glaring example of administrators' misconceptions of the counseling field is the finding by Fitch et al., that one out of four administrators in Kentucky believed discipline to be a significant or highly significant counselor duty. To avoid the pitfall of being assigned inappropriate counselor duties, Foster, Young, and Herman (2005) caution school counselors to examine their daily work activities to determine if they are performing non-counseling-related activities and restructure their counseling program to include activities that consistently promote students' academic, career, and personal/social development. In a recent study on 500 school counselors in elementary, middle, and secondary schools, Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, and Solomon (2005) discovered that issues of role conflict, role incongruence, and role ambiguity still plague the school counseling profession. Through the use of a role questionnaire, Culbreth et al. explored factors contributing to role stress. Results of their study showed that elementary school counselors felt their jobs matched their expectations and had the lowest levels of role stress. These findings suggest that counselor educators should better prepare pre-service middle and secondary school counselors for the realization of the gap between pre-graduation perceptions and the true nature of actual professional experiences.

Through a review of school counseling literature and data from school visits, O'Dell and Rak (1996) discovered that problems with school counseling programs also involved lack of organization for service delivery, public misunderstanding of school counseling programs, and lack of leadership for program development. Following a 6-year study in which ten schools in

the Ohio area participated in ongoing in-service trainings to improve guidance programs, these authors concluded that a revitalized counseling program could be achieved by the development of effective leadership, a written program that included built-in self-evaluations, an integration of the guidance program into school curricula, a realistic assessment of available student services, referrals of severe problems to neighborhood resources, an emphasis on proactive rather than reactive approaches, and collaboration with administration, parents, private professionals, and community. Throughout the 1990s, not only did school counselor roles continued to experience difficulties in the areas defined by O'Dell and Rak, but also in areas resulting from societal changes, growing numbers of at-risk students, and a demand for school accountability (House & Martin, 1998; Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998; Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt, & Williams, 2000).

Many authors have supported the role of counselors assisting students to achieve academic success by addressing the personal and societal pressures in a child's life that contributed to his/her failure in school such as substance abuse, unprotected sex, dysfunctional families, delinquent behavior, and living in poverty (Capuzzi & Gross, 1996; Lecapitaine, 2000; Keys & Bemak, 1997; Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998). In response to the increased risks faced by children, schools were urged to mandate counseling positions beginning at the elementary level (Lenhardt & Young, 2001), and to adopt a comprehensive, developmental, preventive, collaborative school counseling model that could proactively address social issues (Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998; Lenhardt & Young, 2001; Meyers, Shoffner, & Briggs, 2002).

In time, the risk factors for school failure also began to include academic difficulties resulting from learning disabilities, particularly as the inclusion movement placed increased numbers of students with learning disabilities into the regular classroom. Greer and Greer (1995) assessed the special education issues and predicted that the inclusion movement would have a

major impact on the school counseling profession, as counselors would be expected to head the multidisciplinary team, coordinate input from various disciplines, present information to parents, and facilitate a partnership between the parents and the team. In order to be qualified to fulfill this new role, Greer and Greer acknowledged that counselors would need new information, training, and awareness of a wide array of issues and opinions. Scarborough and Deck (1998) agreed with those predictions and outlined a number of challenges school counselors would face as the inclusion movement grew. Their list focused on the need for counselors to change negative attitudes, to provide developmental and academic information, to expand their own professional identity development, and to create psychologically healthy school environments by acting as consultant, advocate, trainer, and humanitarian.

Traver-Behring, Spagna, and Sullivan (1998) emphasized that the collaboration and consultation role was critical in supporting the needs of students with learning disabilities, particularly as it pertained to acknowledging and eliminating the resistance of general education teachers unfamiliar with special needs students. For example, school counselors can assist general education teachers in obtaining outside resources, to arrange collaboration with special education teachers, and to promote acceptance of students with disabilities by their non-disabled peers.

ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs

In order to assist with the delineation of the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of school counselors, in 2003 the American School Counselor Association formulated a national model of guidance and counseling to serve as a standard for the profession (ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs, 2003). The basis of ASCA's model focused on the four distinct themes: (a) leadership, (b) advocacy, (c) collaboration and teaming, and (d) systemic

change. Leadership is established by school counselors working to close the achievement gap among students of color, poor students, or underachieving students, and their more advantaged peers. School counselors can become successful advocates by supporting every student's right to have specific needs addressed in order to achieve academic success. The theme of collaboration and teaming involves understanding and appreciating the efforts of others towards educating all students and being a resource to parents, the community and the school staff. Finally, systemic change results from school counselors' examination of critical data for obstacles which prevent students' access to an equitable rigorous curriculum that can increase postsecondary options. Also included in this model is an overriding theme of school counselors' obligation to meet the needs of, and advocate for all students. According to the ASCA National Model for School Counselor Programs (2003), a school counselor is a specially trained educator who is responsible for calling attention to school situations that defeat, frustrate, and hinder students' academic success, and who has the leadership ability to assess school needs, identify issues, and collaborate with others to develop solutions. To ensure that school counselors are able to fully implement all aspects of the specified themes, ASCA maintains that a qualified school counselor has state credentials, possesses a master's degree, and, if not a certified teacher, should have received training in student learning styles, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, students assessment and student achievement (ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs).

Social/Emotional Risks of 504 Students

The tremendous controversies surrounding inclusion can result in greater attention on the political/policy side and less attention on the individual student. At the same time laws are enacted and reviewed, policy changes are implemented, teachers and school districts are studied,

and students with learning disabilities are facing daily challenges and struggles in the classroom. Numerous researchers have explored the social emotional ramifications associated with special needs students and are in agreement that these children are at greater risk for depression, anxiety, poor peer relations, low self-esteem, family discord, behavior difficulties, loneliness, dropping out, substance abuse, crime, and suicide (e.g., Bender, Rosenkrans, & Crane, 1999; Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul, 2004; Huntington & Bender, 1993; Kavale & Mostert, 2004; Lardieri, Blacher, & Swanson, 2002; MacMaster, Donovan, & MacIntyre, 2000; Margalit, 1998; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2000; Tabassam & Grainger, 2002; Wenz-Gross & Siperstein, 1998). As is the case with most studies on learning disabilities, these studies looked at the entire learning disability spectrum with no differentiation between learning disability levels of severity or eligibility categories. Because students who qualify only under Section 504 are a subset of the learning disability spectrum, they are included in the literature on social/emotional risk; however, since many of them are underserved, held to higher expectations, and viewed most negatively by teachers (Bryant, Dean, Elrod, & Blackburn, 1999; Cook, 2001), it is conceivable that they are at an even greater risk of experiencing social and emotional difficulties.

One vital social/emotional area of concern regarding students with learning disabilities is their level of self-esteem. McInerney and McInerney (1999) found that adolescents with learning disabilities attributed their failures to internal sources and their success to external sources such as luck; consequently, their successes did not result in the advantage of increased self-esteem. Low self-esteem is a common theme throughout the literature on many different types of learning disabilities and can be extremely problematic for 504-only students. For instance, studies have shown that students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are at a particularly high risk of developing a negative view of themselves stemming from frequent failure, peer

rejection, and repetitive negative feedback (Tabassam & Grainger, 2002; Treuting & Hinshaw, 2001). Through case study interviews, Riddick (1996) found that the mothers of children with dyslexia reported low self-esteem to be the most damaging result of teachers' negative attitudes toward their child's disorder. MacMaster, Donovan, and MacIntyre (2002) contend that the diagnosis of a learning disability could either raise a child's self-esteem by allowing the child to see the disorder as limited in scope and manageable, or lower a child's self-esteem if others treat the child negatively. For example, Telzrow and Bonar (2002) report that children with non-verbal learning disorder (NLD), characterized by poor motor coordination, difficulty interpreting social cues and pedantic conversational skills, frequently receive negative reactions from peers in the form of harsh teasing or bullying, and have a high risk for suicide.

Another vulnerable area for students with learning disabilities is their self-efficacy beliefs which are based on their perceptions of being able to organize and implement the needed action for specific tasks (Klassen, 2002). In reviewing the literature on special needs students' perceptions of their abilities, Klassen found that students may seriously overestimate their abilities in one area while severely underestimating their abilities in another, thus resulting in a lack of appropriate academic preparation, difficulty monitoring self progress, and flaws in understanding assigned tasks. Organizational problems can carry over to the home as family members try to cope with the frustrations of completing homework and study assignments, extra-curricula activities, attention to siblings, and evening household routines (Brown & Pacini, 1989; Donawa, 1995; Lardieri, Blacher, & Swanson, 2002).

Students with learning disabilities and low self-esteem who are not identified or may not have received interventions can fall into a downward emotional/behavioral spiral leading to serious consequences. Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, and Hurley (1998) report a significant

increase in dropout rates for students with learning disabilities as they transition from middle school to high school. According to these researchers, strategies to assist all students in completing school include, tracking indicators of dropout predictors such as absences, tardiness, skips, and suspensions, assigning specific teachers to act as advisors for the same group of students throughout their high school years, reducing the number of out of school suspensions, and improving the relevancy of the curriculum. Bender, Rosenkrans & Crane (1999) caution parents, school personnel, and other professionals in the community to help nurture resiliency in students and to assess all students with learning disabilities for emotional well-being. Other researchers suggest providing developmental social skills training throughout the school, establishing an accepting classroom environment, and providing parent education to help promote a supportive home atmosphere (e.g., Elksnin & Elksnin, 2004; Lardieri, Blacher, & Swanson, 2002; Wenz-Gross & Siperstein, 1997).

A consideration of ASCA's four distinct themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systemic change (ASCA National Model, 2003), combined with the literature explaining the emotional risks of students with learning disabilities in general (e.g., Bowen, 1998; Glenn, 1998; Martinez & Semrud-Clikeman, 2004), and specifically of 504 students (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, Lesar, & 1991; Cook, 2001; Miller & Newbill, 1998) raise the question as to what school counselors can and should do to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities, as well as how school counselors feel about their roles in serving these students. An examination of the school counseling literature shows that various issues have been addressed separately such as school counselors' perceptions of their roles (Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2001; Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt, & Williams, 2000), reported counselor tasks (Lieberman, 2004; Murray, 1995; Scarborough, 2005; Tarver-Behring, Spagna,

& Sullivan, 1998), counselor preparation (Frantz & Prillaman, 1993; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003), implementation of national models (Dahir, 2004; Foster, Young, & Herman, 2005; Frye, 2005; Galassi & Akos, 2004; O'Dell & Rak, 1996), and specific strategies employed by school counselors (Bowen, 1998; Carpenter, King-Sears, & Keys, 1998; Scarborough & Deck, 1998; Thompson & Littrell, 1998).

Information that is missing from the literature, however, is a study of the school counselors' role in providing services to 504-only students in accordance with the ASCA National Model. In particular, research is needed to determine how much information school counselors have on the particular needs of 504-only students and how they can effectively address those needs. Furthermore, it seems important to examine school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students, and to discern the variables contributing to those attitudes.

There are a few noteworthy research studies that incorporate a slightly more comprehensive appraisal of school counseling and learning disabilities. One such study was conducted by Greene and Valesky (1998). They looked at counselors' attitudes towards providing services to the overall population of students with learning disabilities by utilizing a statewide survey of elementary, middle, and secondary school counselors in Florida. According to them, the need for such a study on counselors' attitudes was based on the findings of Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986), that the attitudes of professionals towards their tasks were a predictor of their successful performance. According to Bandura (1980), when individuals believe they are not capable of performing a task, they will avoid it; however, if they perceive that they are capable they will demonstrate persistent effort at reaching their goal. Thus, the basis of Bandura's self-efficacy theory can be applied to school counselors' comfort level in working

with special needs students. Demographic variables examined in the survey included years of counseling experience, special education courses taken, regular education courses taken with modifications for special education students, field experiences completed that included exceptional students, and days of in-service training about inclusion. Greene and Valesky's findings showed that elementary school counselors felt the most confident in the areas of consultation, the identification and evaluation process, and tasks related to teaching and lesson preparation. Of the demographic variables, number of special education courses, field experience, and in-service training had the highest predictive rankings. Limitations of their study included the fact it was the schools' principals who controlled disseminating the survey and the need to devise a method so that the questionnaires could be sent back anonymously as a group from the individual schools. Such a method of distribution and collection could allow for respondents being selected based on socially desirable responses and respondents uncertain about their administrators having access to their responses. A second limitation involved the decision to send the survey to teachers, assistant principals, and other school professionals. In order for the survey questions to be applicable to all respondents, questions could not be designed to specifically target school counselors, thereby focusing almost exclusively on academics over social/emotional components. Finally, the Greene and Valseky study was restricted to the state of Florida so that the findings are weak in terms of generalizability to other regions of the United States.

In contrast to the academic focus of the Greene and Valseky (1998) study, an ethnographic study by Frye (2005) looked exclusively at school counselor's involvement with special education students in terms of meeting their personal social/emotional needs. Frye gathered information from three school counselors through the use of structured interviews,

journals, and a survey instrument to investigate the strategies used and effectiveness of the guidelines of ASCA's national school counseling model in serving students with learning disabilities. Results indicated that the three counselors were following the national model by using collaboration with other school staff, collecting and monitoring data, teaching the guidance curriculum, planning individually with students, and providing advocacy and responsive services. Of particular interest was the three counselors' contention that the services they were providing were consistent with services they ordinarily would be providing to all students with and without learning disabilities. Additionally, Frye pointed out that all three counselors were familiar with the characteristics and needs of students with learning disabilities. Even so, results of this study revealed that all three counselors reported experiencing certain obstacles to providing services to special needs students. For example, the administrators played a major role in determining the counselors' duties with special needs students, and the counselors felt under-trained to work with the LD population, relied on other school staff or personal research for strategies to help special needs students, lacked adequate time to work with these students, believed the national model called for more data driven accountability, and required coordinated collaboration, teaming, and leadership within the school. Limitations of the study according to Frye (2005) included, not differentiating between students receiving IDEA and 504 services, the use of a very small sample size, the choice of purposeful sampling of counselors deemed excellent in their field, and a survey created by the researcher that was not a standardized measurement.

Frye's (2005) finding that school counselors do not feel adequately prepared to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities is consistent with the conclusion of previous researchers (Bowen, 1998; Glenn, 1998; Milsom & Akos, 2003; Scarborough & Deck, 1998;

Wood Dunn & Baker, 2002). School counselors' reliance on regular educators for information on learning disability is a repeated theme throughout the counseling literature; however, another repeated theme found in numerous other studies delineating counselors' tasks is the expectation that school counselors should provide information on the characteristics and needs of students with learning disabilities to other school personnel (Bowen, 1998; Cole & Meyer, 1991; Traver-Behring, Spagna, & Sullivan, 1998). The contradiction between what counselors are supposed to do and what they are capable of doing suggests that counselor preparation in the field of learning disabilities is a vital issue that needs to be addressed.

Preparation for school counselor involvement with special needs students was examined by Milsom (2002) through a random mail sample of 400 American Counseling Association (ACA) members who had been employed as school counselors in elementary, middle, and high schools during the time period of 1994 – 2000. Milsom's survey primarily addressed the activities performed by school counselors, how prepared school counselors felt to work with special needs students, the amount of education related to learning disabilities school counselors had received, and the relationship between the amount of education regarding learning disabilities and the comfort level of the counselors working with these students. Milsom's results showed that although school counselors were providing services to students with learning disabilities, most school counselors only felt somewhat prepared to provide services to these students, counselors who had experience with special needs students had higher comfort levels, and tremendous inconsistencies existed in school counselors' preparation in dealing with the LD population. According to Milsom, the findings of this study indicate that school counselors need to share in the responsibilities of bringing awareness of school counselors' need for additional courses on learning disabilities to universities' counselor education programs.

Milsom and Akos (2003) continued to explore the issue of counselor education programs' efforts in adequately preparing school counselors to address the needs of students with disabilities. By surveying counselor education programs, these authors assessed the types of courses and experiences provided, the differences between accredited and non- accredited counselor education programs, and the differences between specific courses on disabilities and regular counseling courses that incorporated disability issues into the class content. Their findings revealed that 43% of counselor education programs required specific courses on disabilities, while approximately 40% integrated disability training into other counseling courses, and only 25% of the counselor education programs required practical experience with individuals with disabilities. Milsom and Akos contend that, based on Milsom's (2002) findings that school counselors who complete courses addressing disabilities feel more prepared than those who do not, there is a strong possibility that school counselors who graduated from programs that require disability courses are more prepared than graduates from programs that only incorporate disability training into core courses. They also emphasized that in the area of required coursework and field experience on disabilities, no differences were found between educational programs that were accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), or the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and non-accredited programs. According to their mission statements, CACREP promotes professional competence through the development of preparation standards, encouragement of excellence in program development, and accreditation of professional preparation programs (<http://www.cacrep.org>), and NCATE seeks to ensure high quality teacher and other educator preparation programs through accreditation of education units in colleges and universities (<http://www.ncate.org>). In spite of these goals, Milsom and Akos found that these

organizations provide only limited guidelines in regards to disability training or experience. Finally, these researchers call attention to the fact that even though the field of counseling usually values practical experience; this does not appear to be the case in regards to students with disabilities. One limitation noted in this study indicated was that information was obtained through self-report by program coordinators rather than by individual course instructors who may have had more in-depth knowledge of the subject matter (Milsom & Akos, 2003). Also, the focus of the study was on the full spectrum of disabilities and did not specifically focus on learning disabilities.

The studies by Greene and Valesky (1998), Frye (2005), Milsom (2002), and Milsom and Akos (2003) provide important information regarding the role and preparation of school counselors providing services to all students with disabilities, but they do not address the unique circumstances and needs of students who are only eligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Presently, there are no studies in the counseling or educational literature that focus exclusively on the characteristics and needs of 504-only students. Consequently, the role of counselors in providing services to these students has not been sufficiently addressed. Even though school counselors receive no specific training or guidelines pertaining to 504 services, they are expected to assume a leadership role and provide vital information on this topic to other school personnel. The discrepancy between counselors' level of knowledge about disabilities, and ASCA's expectations could negatively affect school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students.

Because of the academic, social and emotional risks to 504-only students, it seems essential that school counselors have the knowledge necessary to feel confident in providing appropriate services to them. In particular, it seems important for school counselors to

understand the unique differences between 504-only students and IDEA students. For instance, mild learning disabilities are not readily visible; therefore teachers may hold 504-only students to higher expectations than students with more severe learning disabilities. Also, since 504 requirements do not mandate a written IEP plan, it is possible that the needs of these students could be overlooked or underserved. At the same time, even though schools do not receive federal funds for 504-only students, the required classroom accommodations create an increased workload for teachers. These students are the least studied population of students with learning disabilities, and potentially the most misunderstood. In the absence of accurate information, many teachers mistakenly believe that 504-only students simply lack effort, willpower, and character strengths (Miller & Newbill, 1998). Such negative misconceptions may render 504-only students vulnerable to the same social/emotional risks associated with more severe learning disabilities. Thus, in order for the school counseling field to honor its commitment to serve the needs of all students, further study of school counselors' roles, preparation, and attitudes toward working with 504-only students is essential.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the literature pertaining to the roles and attitudes of school personnel towards providing services to students with learning disabilities. The responsibilities of the schools in providing a free appropriate education for all students has been established by a review of the federal mandates such as, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (P.L., 94-142) of 1975, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. An examination of the landmark court cases pertaining to the educational rights of students with disabilities, in particular the cases of *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Hobson v. Hansen*, *Diana v. State Board of*

Education, *PARC v Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, and *Mills v. Board of Education* demonstrated the importance of school compliance with disability laws.

These disability laws essentially fall into two broad categories. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) pertains to the rights of students to be educated in the least restricted environment (LRE) possible. Eligibility for placement under IDEA is based upon a student meeting the criteria of at least one of more than thirteen categories of disabilities identified in the law. Federal funds are provided to schools so that the needs of IDEA students may be met. The second category of disability laws is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Both of these acts are designed to protect the civil rights of students not to be discriminated against because of disabilities. Eligibility for ADA and Section 504 is based upon a student's inability to perform a major life function such as learning. Although schools are required to provide services to students covered by ADA and Section 504, no federal funds are provided.

In an effort to comply with the disability laws, schools districts and school personnel have sought to implement programs and guidelines to ensure all students are receiving an appropriate education. The demanding complexities associated with implementation of special education programs such as identifying students with learning disabilities, evaluating students, determining correct student placement and securing cooperation of teachers, administrators, counselors, students and parents have in many cases stirred up controversy, resentment, and non-compliance. As a result of such an emotionally charged atmosphere, many members of the school systems adopted poor attitudes not only toward implementation of special education procedures, but also toward special education students as well.

A review of the attitudes of teachers regarding special education services revealed a mixed result of negative, positive, and neutral feelings toward inclusion, with the majority of teacher attitudes falling in a neutral zone. Common concerns contributing to implementation difficulties of special education federal mandates included increased workload for teachers, lack of learning disability training for regular education teachers, lack of support from administrators, and lack of collaborative efforts among school personnel.

Just as teachers and administrators struggle to implement, and understand the learning disability requirements, school counselors struggle with their own professional identities, role descriptions, and commitment to serve all students. The publication of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model for School Counselor Programs (2003) has helped the school counseling community by providing specific guidelines for school counselors to utilize in defining their roles for all students, including students with learning disabilities. Essentially ASCA's guidelines focused on the four themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration and teaming, and systematic change.

An area which was not covered by ASCA or the inclusion movement was the differentiation of severity and types of learning disabilities. Very little attention has been paid to students with mild learning disabilities who do not qualify for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, but who do qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is likely that this population of students is typically overlooked and underserved because the students who qualify under both IDEA and Section 504 have their needs automatically met through IDEA which has a stricter set of eligibility requirements, while the 504-only students who must be identified separately, may get lost in the system. Additionally, 504 students may be

ignored because classroom accommodations for these students require extra work for classroom teachers, yet schools do not receive any federal funds to assist with these accommodations.

ASCA's national model calls for school counselors to address the needs of all students. Research has shown that students with learning disabilities are at an increased risk for depression, anxiety, poor social skills, drug abuse, school failure, and suicide ideation. Teacher attitudes have been shown to be a predictor of how effective teachers are in meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities. Thus, attitudes are an important determinant of consequent behavior and a valid outcome or dependent variable. Research has also shown that regular education teachers and school counselors lack training in the area of learning disabilities and that a majority of school counselors depend on the regular education teachers and other school personnel as a knowledge base with special needs students. Finally, ASCA's theme of leadership specifically calls for school counselors to provide information and training to the school community in regards to students with learning disabilities.

Although federal requirements mandate a free appropriate education for all students, the needs of students with disabilities who only qualify for special education services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 seem likely to be overlooked. A review of the literature in both the field of education and the field of counseling reveals a multitude of studies on the topic of educational rights for students with disabilities; yet, there is a serious lack of literature pertaining to 504 students. Even so, the few studies that do exist indicate that 504 students face the same academic, social, and emotional risks as students with other types of disabilities. The American School Counseling Association has issued guidelines for school counselors to assume a leadership role in addressing the needs of all students with disabilities, however, the majority of counselor education programs do not require specific coursework or field experience

pertaining to disabilities. Historically, the issue of inclusion of special needs students has stirred controversy in the field of education.

In the absence of specific training from the field of counseling, it is likely that school counselors will rely on other educators for information and may also adopt similar attitudes, positive or negative, toward special education services. In order to better prepare school counselors to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, and 504-only students in particular, it seemed essential that a study on the roles, preparation, and attitudes of school counselors addressing the needs of 504-only students should be conducted.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in the study. Organization of this chapter incorporates subsections that explain the purpose of the study, research question, hypotheses, participant selection criteria, instrumentation and instrument development, data collection plan, and methods of data analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to students with learning disabilities who are receiving special education services exclusively under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The literature has suggested a number of factors that influence attitudes of professionals towards special education services (Bateman & Bateman, 2002; Frye, 2005; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003; Rea & Davis-Dorsey, 2004), in particular, the number of disability courses completed, the number of years of field experience with individuals with disabilities, the amount of counseling experience, the amount of educational experience, and the amount of personal experience with individuals with disabilities. By examining the relationship between school counselors' attitudes towards providing services to 504 students and their level of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness of individuals with disabilities, the results of this study may provide insight into school counselors' willingness and ability to provide services to special needs students.

General Research Question

The general research question that served as the overarching question for this study was stated as-- Are there differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services

to students with learning disabilities who are eligible for special education services only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the school counselors' levels of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses in this study were derived from the general research question. They included the following:

1. School counselors who have certification in education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have certification in education.
2. School counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have a master's degree in counseling.
3. School counselors who have completed at least one course on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any courses on learning disabilities.
4. School counselors who have completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any workshops on learning disabilities.
5. School counselors who have greater experience, defined as having five or more years experience in the field of counseling will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had less than five years experience in the field of counseling.

6. School counselors who have greater experience, defined as having five or more years experience in the field of education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had less than five years experience in the field of education.
7. School counselors who have greater experience, defined as having five or more years experience working with students with learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities.
8. School counselors who have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who have a disability, or who have been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities) will have a more positive attitude toward providing services to 504-only students, than school counselors who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who do not have a disability, or who have not been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities).

Participants

Participants in this study were members of the Southern Region of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). Participants were identified from the ASCA membership directory which lists approximately 18,000 members' email addresses, home addresses, telephone numbers and work settings. As ASCA membership is not restricted to school counselors, participants were chosen from the subset lists of K-12 school counselors identified by the southern geographical region. The membership directory is available on the ASCA website. The email addresses were entered into a generic electronic mailing list titled Attitudes

toward Learning Disabilities' Services Instrument (ATLDI). After the email addresses were entered into the electronic mailing list, no further identifying information from the participants was used. Participants were contacted directly through email by means of a mass email message. There are approximately 3,000 members of the southern region of ASCA who are school counselors. After allowing for non-respondents and inaccurate email addresses, the number of participants in the study was 332.

In order to provide descriptions of the participants and to assist future researchers developing studies in this area, personal information was gathered. Information regarding gender, ethnicity, years of counseling experience and preparation status was expected to contribute to differences in the attitude ratings of participants. Prior research has indicated that preparation and years of experience have been related to more positive attitudes toward inclusion (Greene & Valesky, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos). Currently, there is no research examining the impact of these variables on school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students.

Instrument Development

No other study has examined the differences in school counselors' attitudes regarding providing services to students with learning disabilities who are eligible for special education services only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. There have been other studies that examined the attitudes, backgrounds, and types of services provided to all students with learning disabilities regardless of eligibility classification (Frye, 2005; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003), but the instruments developed for those studies were not appropriate for this study. Specifically, Frye's study combined structured interviews, journals, and a survey instrument that included a vignette regarding severe learning disabilities. Greene

and Valesky's statewide survey focused on the general concept of inclusion and contained a number of questions pertaining to IEP plans which are not a requirement in providing services to 504-only students. Although the survey created and used by Milsom in her 2002 study did address school counselors' activities, comfort level, preparation, and practical experience with providing services to students with disabilities, it was designed for the full spectrum of disabilities covered by IDEA including autism, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, specific learning disabilities, mental retardation, orthopedic impairment, speech/language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, or some other health impairment which adversely affects education performance. Also, the Milsom and Akos study looked exclusively at school counselors' preparation in comprehensive disability education. In order to determine counselors' readiness to provide services to 504-only students with mild learning disabilities, it was necessary to utilize a survey instrument that had not been designed for a large spectrum of disabilities.

The Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities' Services Instrument (ATLDI; see Appendix A) was created specifically for this study with the purpose of (a) determining school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to students with mild learning disabilities covered only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (b) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the school counselors' level of preparation in learning disabilities, (c) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the school counselors' areas of certification (d) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and school counselors' level of field experience with persons with learning disabilities, and (e) determining if there are

differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and school counselors' personal awareness of learning disabilities.

The ATLDI is a 30-item survey divided into four parts. Section I pertains to participants' demographic and background information including gender, ethnicity, educational level, areas of certification, field experience in education and counseling, and personal awareness of individuals with disabilities. This information was used to construct the independent variables. Section II asked participants to respond to 15 statements describing school counselor roles by the use of a 7-point Likert scale with anchored responses at each end. The possible response range extended from inappropriate (1) to appropriate (7). Section III asked participants to respond to 12 opinion statements regarding classroom accommodations by the use of a 7-point Likert scale with anchored responses on each end ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Section IV asked participants to respond to three semantic differential categories as they relate to 6 statements pertaining to meeting the needs of 504-only students.

The semantic differential categories used in the instrument were selected from The Measurement of Meaning (Osgood & Suci, 1957), and The Aspects of Semantic Opposition in English (Mettinger, 1994). The semantic differential was developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum who believed that knowing the location on a continuum where a person classified an idea would indicate the meaning of that idea to the rater (Arnold, McCroskey, & Prichard, 1968) and thus, could be used to measure attitudes.

ATLDI Section I: Personal Information. The variables selected in the demographic information were chosen based upon research exploring preparation in terms of official education courses and workshops, field experience with special needs students, and personal awareness of having a disability or being closely acquainted with or related to a person with a

disability (Burke, & Sutherland, 2004; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber; Dahir, 2004; D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Vanleeuwen; Lusk, 1985; Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Deck, 1998; Snyder, 1999).

ATLDI Section II: Role of the School Counselor. Role confusion is a major issue in the field of counseling (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Liberman, 2004; Murray, 1995). Many authors believe that a major part of the school counselor's job involves assisting students to achieve academic success by addressing the personal and societal pressures in a child's life that contributed to the risk of school failure (Capuzzi & Gross, 1996; Lecapitaine, 2000; Keys & Bemak, 1997; Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998). Also, the American School Counselor Association has specified that school counselors are expected to meet the needs of all students including those with special needs (ASCA National Model, 2003). For many counselors, particularly those who are not certified teachers, providing academic based services may seem to be beyond their area of expertise or level of comfort. At the same time, the requirement at some schools for counselors to perform clerical or monitoring duties could cause counselors to feel overworked or undervalued. Such negative job related feelings could impact counselors' attitudes toward providing services in other areas.

Questions in Section II of the ATLDI were designed to examine how school counselors felt about the nature of their roles. The items included in this section pertained to the appropriate job description guidelines of the American School Counselor Association National Model for School Counseling Programs' (ASCA National Model, 2003), and documented school counselor tasks in the school counseling literature (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Coll & Freedman, 1997; Frye, 2004, Greene & Valesky, 1998; Milsom, 2002; Murray, 1995). These topics were selected to specifically explore school counselors' attitudes toward tasks relating to special needs students

that they were instructed to perform by national standards or school administrators, and the appropriate and inappropriate tasks they were currently performing. Questions 1 – 5 refer to appropriate and inappropriate counselor roles as defined by the ASCA National Model (2003). Questions 6 and 7 were based on select topics from a survey by Foster, Young, and Herman (2005) that identified school counselors' perceptions of work activities that promote students' success in the three areas defined by the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (NSSCP), academic, career, and personal/social. Questions 8 - 11 were selected from topics on the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005) which was designed to measure how school counselors' actually spend their time as opposed to how they would prefer to spend their time. Questions 12 and 13 were based upon a study on the implications that the inclusion movement would have on the school counseling profession (Greer & Greer 1995). In particular, Greer and Greer saw an increasing role for counselors on the multidisciplinary team as the team member most likely to be viewed by the parents as being understanding and non-threatening. Questions 14 and 15 were based on strategies used by counselors in Frye's (2005) ethnographic study on methods employed by school counselors who are currently meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the personal and social area. It was not within the scope of this study to determine the nature of school counselors' attitudes toward all their designated roles, but rather only to those roles pertaining to providing services to 504-only students. Answers from questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, that pertain to 504-only student services were included in the attitude scores. Answers from questions 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, that do not pertain to 504-only student services were disregarded, as they were included only for the purpose of reducing socially desirable responses.

ATLDI Section III: Opinions on Classroom Accommodations. The questions in this section asked participants to indicate their views on various classroom accommodations designed to help students with learning disabilities to have an equal opportunity to receive an appropriate education. In order to cover a full spectrum of classroom environments, specific accommodations were selected from the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE, 2001) guidelines, and faculty surveys from K-12, and higher education (Bryant, Dean, Elrod, & Blackbourn, 1999; FAPE, 2001; Nelson, Dood, & Smith, 1990; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, & Brulle, 1999). Questions 6, 8, 9, on note and test taking were common to all four sources. Questions 4 which pertains to allowing tests to be taken in a separate but supervised room was similar to an item listed in the FAPE guidelines (2001), a study by Nelson, Dodd, and Smith (1990) on the differences in faculty willingness to provide accommodations based upon academic divisions, and from a study on rural general education teachers opinions of accommodations (Bryant, Dean, Elrod, & Blackbourn, 1999). Question 5, involving technological assistance and the perceived fairness of accommodations was analogous to an item on a survey conducted by Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, and Brulle (1990) of higher education faculties' attitudes towards providing services to students with learning disabilities. Question 2, which relates to allowing students to dictate answers into a tape recorder, was selected from the FAPE guidelines and Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, and Brulle's higher education faculty survey. These authors point out that the university faculty were reluctant to provide this service even though they had overwhelmingly supported the broader concept of the use of technology in examinations. They speculate that the teachers were dissuaded by the extra amount of grading time that this accommodation would require, as this study also found a large majority of faculty members spent less than 30 minutes per week making accommodations. Questions 1, 3, 7, 10,

11, 12, were all comparable to FAPE recommendations requiring substantial teacher time and were selected for the ATLDI survey to increase the variance in the responses.

Section IV: Reaction Statements. The questions in this section asked participants to indicate the level of their reaction to general concepts pertaining to providing services to 504 students. Each question was followed by the same five sets of semantic differential adjectives taken from Osgood and Suci (1957) and Mettinger (1994). The purpose of providing multiple responses to each question was to distinguish between the various types of positive or negative reactions. A person's reluctance to perform services to special needs students stemming from a lack of preparedness is quite different from reluctance due to the difficulty of the task. Post hoc analysis was used to examine the rank order of the types of negative reactions. Specific information explaining the reasons for negative attitudes can be utilized to pinpoint the type of corrective adjustments needed for successful services to students with learning disabilities, such as developing more teacher friendly strategies, increasing disability training, providing opportunities for greater field experience, and enhancing the understanding of disability services.

The ATLDI survey concluded with an open-ended question inviting participants to share their comments, thoughts, opinions, and experiences in regard to providing service to 504-only students. A grounded theory research method (Glaser, & Strauss, 1967) was used to analyze the results and to identify major themes.

Data Collection Plan

All procedures and protocols related to data collection were reviewed and approved by the University of New Orleans Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB). After receiving approval, data was collected from school counselors listed in the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) online directory.

Data were collected anonymously via SurveyMonkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>) which is an on-line survey and data collection service. The Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument (ATLDI) was developed for use as an on-line survey through SurveyMonkey.com. The creation tools and a secure electronic link were created through which respondents accessed the survey. Although the total population of potential participants was identifiable by means of their electronic mail addresses before data collection, the ATLDI did not contain questions that could reveal the identity of individual respondents. The data collection tool, SurveyMonkey, did not provide any mechanism for identifying participants.

School counselors from ASCA's southern region were included. After the southern region list of school counselors had been identified, their email addresses were entered into a generic electronic mailing list titled *ATLDI*. This electronic mailing list only contained the electronic mail addresses of ASCA school counselors and no other identifying information was collected.

Potential participants for the *ATLDI* were contacted by a generic mass electronic message requesting participation. The electronic message included a brief description of the study, a statement regarding participant anonymity, and a consent form to participate in the study. The message also provided directions for accessing the *ATLDI* via a secure electronic link generated by SurveyMonkey. Thus, participation in the study was completely voluntary and anonymous. No identifying data were collected from the participants, nor were their responses assigned identifying characteristics.

After the participants accessed the on-line version of the *ATLDI* they were requested to complete a demographic information sheet and the 30-item *ATLDI*. All potential participants were sent two generic mass electronic messages thanking those who had already participated and

reminding those who had not. The electronic reminder was sent in weeks 3 and 6 of the study. The end of the study was announced by a final generic mass message indicating that data collection has been completed. The final message also thanked all those who chose to participate. Also included in the final message was a statement notifying participants of the opportunity to request an email copy of the final results of the study.

Data Analysis

In order to identify variables that can impact school counselors' attitudes towards providing services to 504 students, data analysis for this proposed study used descriptive statistics, ANOVA and MANOVA. Because of the increased number of comparisons in all the analyses, a conservative alpha level of $p < .01$ was employed to control the Type 1 error rate.

Hypothesis 1

School counselors who have certification in education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have certification in education.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 3 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between counselors who have certification in education and school counselors who did not have certification in education. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F .

Hypothesis 2

School counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have a master's degree in counseling.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 4 of Section I, and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who had a doctoral degree in counseling and school counselors who had a master's degree in counseling. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995).

Hypothesis 3

School counselors who have completed at least one course on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any courses on learning disabilities.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 7 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities and school counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple

variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995).

Hypothesis 4

School counselors who have completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any courses on learning disabilities.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 7 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities and school counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995).

Hypothesis 5

School counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of counseling, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of counseling.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 6 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of

Section IV of the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who have greater experience, defined as more than five years of experience in the field of counseling and school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of counseling. In order to counteract the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995).

Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F

Hypothesis 6

School counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of education, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of education.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 5 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years in the field of education and school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than five years in the field of education. In order to counteract the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F .

Hypothesis 7

School counselors with greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities.

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from question 9 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who have had at least five years of field experience working with students with learning disabilities and school counselors who have less than five years field experience working with students with learning disabilities. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F .

Hypothesis 8

School counselors who have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who have a disability or who have been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities) will have a more positive attitude toward providing services to 504-only students, than school counselors

who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who do not have a disability or who have not been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities).

Data Analysis

Data for this hypothesis were gathered from questions 10 – 15 of Section I and questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, questions 1-12 of Section III, and questions 1-3 of Section IV of the Attitudes toward Learning Disabilities Instrument. A MANOVA was used to compare the results of the items between school counselors who had a personal awareness of disabilities and school counselors who did not have a personal awareness of disabilities. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995).

Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F .

The methodology for this study was designed to examine the differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504 students and the differences in school counselors' areas of certification, educational levels, number of courses on learning disabilities completed, field experience in counseling, field experience in education, field experience in working with students with disabilities, and personal awareness with individuals with disabilities.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to students with learning disabilities who are eligible for special education services only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This study did not examine counselors' attitudes toward students who were eligible for special education services outside of Section 504. The differences in attitudes were examined based upon the school counselors' levels of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness. Additionally, this study endeavored to ascertain whether there were differences among school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students with learning disabilities based on characteristics of certification, educational level, number of disability courses completed, number of disability workshops attended, amount of field experience in education, amount of field experience in counseling, amount of field experience working with students with disabilities, and amount of personal awareness with individuals with disabilities.

The goals of this study were to (a) identify school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students; (b) to examine the extent of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness school counselors have in regards to learning disabilities; and (c) compare the attitude of school counselors with their background variables of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness of learning disabled students. "Preparation" included the types of counselor certification, educational level, and the number of disability courses completed. "Field experience" included the variables of field experience in the area of education, field experience in the area of counseling, and field experience in the area of working with students with disabilities. "Personal awareness" included the variables of personal experience with individuals

with disabilities outside of the educational setting, having a personal diagnosis of a disability, and the self-perception of having a disability. This chapter reports characteristics of the sample and results of the data analyses.

Characteristics of the Sample

The sample for this study was drawn from the members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) who were listed as school counselors in grades K-12. Criteria for participation included membership in the Southern Region of ASCA, email address listed in the ASCA's membership directory published on its website, and a working email address. Of the 2700 email addresses listed in ASCA's Southern Region K-12 grade level, 432 were returned as undeliverable and were eliminated from the potential pool, yielding a sample of 2,268 potential participants. Surveys were returned by 363 participants, representing a return rate of sixteen percent (16%). Thirty one of the surveys were incomplete; therefore the number of usable returned surveys was 332. Descriptive data for participants' gender appear in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	#	%
Female	300	90.4
Male	32	9.6
Total	332	100

The overwhelming majority of the respondents were female (90.4%), which closely approximates the gender composition of the American School Counselor Association which has a total female to male ratio of 80% to 20%. This female to male ratio of school counselors is also similar to the composition of secondary and elementary public school teacher ratio of 75%

female to 25% male (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *The Condition of Education 2005* (NCES 2005-094), Special Analysis).

Participants were asked to identify their ethnicity. Their responses are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	#	%
African American	26	7.8
Asian American	1	0.3
Cau/Eur American	287	86.4
Hispanic	10	3
Native American	2	0.6
Other	6	1.8
Total	332	100

Note. Responses to “other” included the self-described nationalities of Russian, Jamaican, Spanish, and Black West Indian

Most of the respondents identified themselves as Caucasian/European (86.8%). African Americans made up the second largest ethnic category, while representing less than 10 percent of the sample (7.8%). Of the remaining categories, 3% of the sample identified themselves as Hispanic, while less than 1% was represented by Asians and Native Americans. Respondents who selected the ethnic category of “other” represented fewer than two percent of the participants and included the self-described nationalities of Russian, Jamaican, Spanish, and Black-West Indian.

Respondents were asked to select all currently held certifications. As it is common for members of the counseling profession to hold multiple certifications, totals for frequencies of responses exceeded the total number of respondents. Nationally Certified School Counselor had

the highest representation among the respondents (86.5%). Certified teachers were represented by less than half (37.8%) of the survey participants. Approximately twenty-one percent of the participants were Nationally Certified Counselors, while Licensed Professional Counselors comprised only 12.3%. Social worker and school psychologist represented 1.5% and just under one percent (.9%) respectively. Those who identified themselves as others made up nearly 14.8% of the sample and held numerous other certifications including Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, Ministers, and Registered Nurses. Approximately 28.3% of the respondents held certification in both education and counseling. The areas of certification appear in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Certification

<i>Certification</i>	<i>#</i>
LPC	41
NCC	71
Certified Teacher	128
Nationally Certified Schools Counselor	288
Social Worker	5
School Psychologist	3
Certified Teacher and School Counselor	94
Other	49

Note. Responses to "other" included Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Minister, and Registered Nurse.

Participants were asked to indicate their current work setting by the school levels of elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary, or other. The majority of the respondents (119) indicated that they currently worked at the elementary school level. The number of participants working at the middle and secondary level were similar with approximately 18 and 21 percent

respectively. Slightly more than two percent of the respondents held positions at the postsecondary level. Exactly 7% selected other as their current work setting. The frequency of their responses is listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Work Setting

<i>Work Setting</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Elementary	119	36.0
Middle	60	18.0
Secondary	71	21.0
Post Secondary	7	2.0
Other	23	7.0
No response	52	16.0
Total	332	100

Note. Responses to “other” include LMFTs, Administrators, Students and Educational Diagnosticians

A second characteristic of current work setting for which participants were asked to respond was type of school system. The overwhelming majority of respondents (65%) were from public school systems. The respondents from parochial and private school systems together comprised less than 10% of the sample, with approximately 5% and 3% respectively. The frequency of the participant responses is listed in Table 5.

Table 5 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Type of School System

<i>School System Type</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>
Public	217	65.0
Parochial	15	5.0
Private	10	3.0
No response	90	27.0
Total	332	100

Level of education was a characteristic for which participants were asked to respond. Their responses appear in Table 6. The vast majority of participants held master's degrees (90.6%). Respondents holding doctoral degrees were substantially lower, comprising only 6% of the sample. Approximately 3% of the sample consisted of individuals whose highest earned degrees were at the bachelor level. The no response category accounted for less than 1% of the sample.

Table 6 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Levels of Education

<i>Education Level</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>
Bachelors	11	3.3
Master's	299	90.1
Doctorate	20	6.1
No response	2	.6
Total	332	100

Participants were asked to indicate the number of years of field experience they had acquired in the areas of education, counseling, and providing services to students with disabilities. Based upon prior research exploring educational field experience (Smith & Dlugosh,

1999), participants in the field of education were divided into the categories of those with less than five years experience and those with five or more year's experience. The compositions of these two educational groups were almost equal. Participants with less than five years of educational experience comprised approximately 43.7% of the sample, while those with five or more years of educational experience made up 48.5%. In the field of counseling, 32.5% of the respondents had less than five years of experience, while almost twice that many (59.6%) had five or more years of experience. The percentages for participants who had provided services to students with disabilities were extremely close to the percentages of participants who had experience in the field of education, as 35.5% of the participants had less than five years experience in education, while 62% of the participants had five or more years of experience. Descriptive data for participants' responses appear in Table 7.

Table 7 *Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Years of Field Experience*

<i>Field Experience Years</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>		
<i>Education</i>				
Less than 5 years	145	43.7		
5 or more years	161	48.5		
No response	26	7.8		
Total	332	100	332	
<i>Counseling</i>				
Less than 5 years	108	32.5		
5 or more years	198	59.6		
No response	26	7.8		
Total	332	100	332	
<i>Providing Services to Students with Disabilities</i>				
Less than 5 years	118	35.5		
5 or more years	206	62		
No response	8	2.4		
Total	332	100	332	

Participants were asked to indicate if they had a personal awareness of disabilities. Responses by type of personal awareness of disabilities appear in Table 8. Only 4.5% of the participants identified themselves as having a diagnosed learning disability. That same percentage of participants indicated that they had a physical disability. Nearly 10% of the respondents believe they had an undiagnosed learning disability. Approximately one half of the sample (52.1%) indicated that they were related to someone with a learning disability, while

almost three quarters of the respondents in the sample reported being closely acquainted with an individual who had a learning disability. Approximately 30% of the participants were related to a person with a physical disability, while 52.1% indicated that they were closely acquainted with an individual with a physical disability. As a result of participants having the option of selecting all or none of the types of personal awareness of disabilities that applied, the totals of frequencies and percentages do not equal the total number and percentages of respondents. Descriptive data for participants' responses appear in Table 8.

Table 8 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Types of Personal Awareness of Disabilities

<i>Type of Personal Awareness</i>	<i>#</i>
Have a Diagnosed Learning Disability	15
Believe they have an Undiagnosed Learning Disability	33
Related to a Person with a Learning Disability	173
Close Acquaintance to a Person with a Learning Disability	250
Have a Physical Disability	15
Related to a Person with a Physical Disability	98
Close Acquaintance to a Person with a Physical Disability	173

Preparation in the field of disabilities based on the number of disability courses and/or disability workshops completed was a characteristic for which participants were asked to respond. The percentage of participants who had completed at least one disability course (64.2%) was almost equal to the percentage of participants who had completed at least one disability

workshop (64.8%). The percentage of participants who had not completed any disability courses was 27.4%, while the percentage of respondents who had not completed any disability workshops was slightly lower with 16.3%. The frequency of the participants' responses based on the number of disability courses or disability workshops is presented in Table 9.

Table 9 Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Number of Disability Courses and Workshops Completed

<i>Type of Disability Training</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Disability Course</i>		
Zero	91	27.4
1 or more	213	64.2
No response	28	8.4
Total	332	100
<i>Disability Workshops</i>		
Zero	55	16.5
1 or more	215	64.8
No response	62	18.7
Total	332	100

Test of Hypotheses

In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). All tests of hypotheses use a conservative alpha level of $p < .01$ to control the Type 1 error rate.

Research Question

The general research question for this study was, Are there differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to students with learning disabilities who are eligible for special education services only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the school counselors' levels of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness?

Instrumentation

The Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument (ATLDI; see Appendix A) was created specifically for this study by the researcher with the purpose of (a) determining school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to students with mild learning disabilities covered only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; (b) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the school counselors' level of preparation in learning disabilities; (c) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the school counselors' areas of certification; (d) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and school counselors' level of field experience with persons with disabilities; and (e) determining if there are differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and school counselors' personal awareness of disabilities.

The ATLDI is a 30-item survey divided into four parts. Section I pertains to participants' demographic and background information including gender, ethnicity, educational level, areas of certification, field experience in education and counseling, and personal awareness of individuals with disabilities. This information was used to construct the independent variables. Section II asked participants to respond to 15 statements describing school counselor roles by the use of a 7-point Likert scale with anchored responses at each end. The possible response range extended from inappropriate (1) to appropriate (7). Section III asked participants to respond to 12 opinion statements regarding classroom accommodations by the use of a 7-point Likert scale with anchored responses on each end ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Section IV asked participants to respond to 3 semantic differential categories as they relate to 6 statements pertaining to meeting the needs of 504-only students.

Test of Hypothesis 1

Research hypothesis 1 stated that school counselors who have certification in education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have certification in education.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who had certification in education and school counselors who did not have certification in education was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants responses on ATLDI items 3 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to identify which items contributed to

the significant multivariate F . The comparisons of means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 10. A higher mean score indicates that counselors had more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students.

Table 10 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 1

Item	Certified Teachers		Not Certified Teachers		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					1.06	.38	.05			
1. Analyze standard tests	5.66	1.66	4.95	1.89						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings	5.52	1.56	5.44	1.54						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions	5.76	1.51	5.54	1.45						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD	3.84	1.83	3.89	1.76						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students	5.02	1.74	5.05	1.59						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs	6.48	.97	6.46	.87						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD	5.94	1.31	5.83	1.26						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities	5.61	1.63	5.33	1.78						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD	6.50	0.86	6.40	1.03						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD	6.49	9.13	6.42	1.09						
Accommodations					1.67	.07	.06			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions	6.03	1.31	6.11	1.23						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder	5.47	1.59	5.44	1.59						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home	5.94	1.49	5.89	1.53						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor	5.46	1.59	5.60	1.60						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes	5.99	1.49	6.02	1.17						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects	5.17	1.64	4.86	1.78						

Table 10 Continued

Item	Certified Teachers		Not Certified Teachers		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations					1.67	.07	.06			
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.09	1.26	5.89	1.43						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.74	1.37	5.5	1.64						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.71	1.46	5.8	1.43						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.38	1.60	5.15	1.53						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.44	1.00	6.23	1.23						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.86	1.47	5.83	1.44						
Reaction Statements					2.14	.01	.09			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.36	1.88	4.49	1.69				.28	.60	.00
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.55	1.74	4.05	1.70				6.55	.42	.00
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.86	1.84	4.33	1.92				2.59	.11	.01
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.36	1.78	3.10	1.65				.03	.87	.00
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.20	1.94	4.42	1.73				.67	.41	.00
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.17	1.56	5.07	1.45				.02	.88	.00
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.21	1.44	4.65	1.58				3.16	.08	.01
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.45	1.49	4.67	1.60				14.48	.00	.04
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.28	1.77	4.37	1.55				.11	.74	.00
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.28	1.60	5.08	1.50				.86	.35	.00
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	4.90	1.97	4.76	1.90				.00	.95	.00
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.52	1.20	4.05	1.90				1.43	.23	.00
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.73	1.99	4.29	1.99				1.27	0.26	.00
3D. Burdensome – Easy	3.97	1.96	3.77	1.85				.03	.86	.00
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.88	2.05	4.87	1.84				.38	.54	.00

To test Hypothesis 1, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who have certification in education and school counselors who did not have certification in education.

The results of the three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 11. The findings revealed no significant differences between counselors who were certified teachers and counselors who were not certified teachers in each of the subsets of questions related to roles, Wilks' $\Lambda = .952$, $F(1,15) = 1.057$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .048$, and accommodations, Wilks' $\Lambda = .941$, $F(1,12) = 1.672$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .059$.

MANOVA results did reveal significant differences between counselors who were certified teachers and counselors who were not certified teachers on the dependent variables in the reaction statement subset, Wilks' $\Lambda = .908$, $F(1,15) = 2.137$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .092$.

Table 11 MANOVA Results for Counselors who were Certified Teachers and Counselors who were not Certified Teachers

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	P	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.952	1.057	15	.397	.048
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.941	1.672	12	.072	.059
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.908	2.137	15	.008 *	.092

Based on the significant results of the MANOVA for reaction statements, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each reaction statement dependent variable as a follow-up test. Results of the ANOVA analyses on the reaction statements are displayed in Table 12. Fifteen ANOVA procedures were conducted and resulted in significant differences for only one item. The dependent variable "Unprepared/Prepared" of reaction statement 2 pertaining to school

significant F . On this item, counselors who were certified teachers rated this item higher in positive reactions than counselors who were not certified teachers, $F(1, 15) = 36.646, p < .01$.

Table 12 ANOVA Results for Counselors who are Certified Teachers and Counselors who are not Certified Teachers

<i>Item</i>		<i>MS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>η</i> ²
Reaction Statements						
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students						
1A	Unproductive – Productive	.93	1	.28	.60	.00
1B	Anxious – Calm	2.18	1	.66	.42	.00
1C	Unprepared – Prepared	8.97	1	2.59	.11	.01
1D	Burdensome – Easy	.08	1	.03	.87	.00
1E	Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	2.24	1	.67	.41	.00
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans						
2A	Unproductive – Productive	.06	1	.02	.88	.00
2B	Anxious – Calm	7.91	1	3.16	.08	.01
2C	Unprepared – Prepared	36.65	1	14.48	.00 *	.04
2D	Burdensome – Easy	.31	1	.11	.74	.00
2E	Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	2.07	1	.86	.35	.00
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students						
3A	Unproductive – Productive	.01	1	.00	.95	.00
3B	Anxious – Calm	5.58	1	1.43	.23	.00
3C	Unprepared – Prepared	5.14	1	1.27	.26	.00
3D	Burdensome – Easy	.12	1	.03	.86	.00
3E	Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	1.32	1	.38	.54	.00

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Test of Hypothesis 2

Research hypothesis 2 stated that school counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have a master's degree.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling and school counselors who have a master degree in counseling was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants responses on ATLDI items 3 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). The means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 2 are presented in Table 13.

Table 13 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 2

Item	Doctoral Degree in Counseling		Master's Degree in Counseling		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					1.276	.216	.059			
1. Analyze standard tests	5.45	1.73	5.26	1.85						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings	5.80	1.88	5.34	1.6						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions	6.50	.76	5.64	1.54						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD	4.60	1.5	3.86	1.86						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students	5.45	1.50	5.07	1.64						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs	6.40	.68	6.43	0.99						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD	6.10	1.07	5.93	1.33						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities	5.20	1.51	5.48	1.67						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD	6.20	.95	6.47	0.99						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD	6.20	.89	6.47	1.01						
Accommodations					1.694	.067	.062			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions	6.05	1.10	6.02	1.25						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder	6.00	1.15	5.40	1.60						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home	6.60	.94	5.86	1.52						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor	5.65	1.60	5.51	1.66						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes	6.50	1.28	6.05	1.31						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects	5.00	1.78	4.96	1.70						

Table 13 Continued

Item	Doctoral Degree in Counseling		Master's Degree in Counseling		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.10	1.25	5.97	1.41						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.85	1.09	5.61	1.50						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.50	1.85	5.80	1.39						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.10	1.86	5.16	1.69						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.00	1.56	6.41	1.02						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.45	1.64	5.93	1.37						
Reaction Statements					.851	.620	.040			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.85	1.84	4.42	1.84						
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.65	1.57	4.29	1.83						
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.95	1.88	4.65	1.87						
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.50	1.76	3.31	1.75						
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.50	1.76	4.39	1.85						
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.85	0.99	5.13	1.57						
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.35	1.23	4.92	1.61						
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.30	1.42	4.99	1.64						
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.10	1.25	4.23	1.69						
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.55	1.23	5.21	1.57						
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.40	1.79	4.99	1.94						
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.60	2.14	4.44	1.98						
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.15	1.81	4.63	2.03						
3D. Burdensome – Easy	4.00	1.81	4.01	1.92						
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.35	1.81	5.09	1.89						

To test Hypothesis 2, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling and school counselors who have a master's degree in counseling.

The results of all three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 14. The findings revealed no significant differences between counselors who have a doctoral degree in counseling and school counselors who have a master's degree in counseling for any of the subsets of questions related to roles, Wilks' $\Lambda = .941$, $F(1,15) = 1.276$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .947$, accommodations, Wilks' $\Lambda = .938$, $F(1,12) = 1.694$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .062$, or reaction statements Wilks' $\Lambda = .960$, $F(1,15) = .851$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .040$. Although there were no significant differences in the subsets of "roles" and "accommodations," mean scores for both counselors who had a doctoral degree and counselors who had master's degree subsets both were relatively high-- indicating positive attitudes toward all the items by both groups of counselors. Mean scores for the subset of "reaction statements" were moderately high for both counselors who had a doctoral degree and counselors who had a master's degree, indicating somewhat of a positive attitude for all items.

Table 14 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who had a Doctoral Degree and Counselors who had a Master Degree.*

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.941	1.276	15	.216	.947
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.938	1.694	12	.067	.062
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.960	0.851	15	.620	.040

Test of Hypothesis 3

Research hypothesis 3 stated that school counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students for school counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities and school counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants' responses on ATLDI items 3 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). The comparisons of means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 3 are presented in Table 15.

Table 15 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 3

Item	1 or More LD Courses		Zero LD Courses		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					1.01	.45	.05			
1. Analyze standard tests	5.27	1.88	5.03	1.90						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings	5.63	1.56	5.37	1.68						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions	5.79	1.43	5.54	1.64						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD	4.05	1.85	3.53	1.81						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students	5.08	1.60	5.10	1.72						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs	6.47	0.95	6.25	1.04						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD	5.99	1.25	5.74	1.47						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities	5.49	1.74	5.51	1.46						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD	6.49	1.00	6.37	.90						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD	6.52	0.97	6.36	0.99						
Accommodations					.82	.63	.03			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions	6.08	1.20	5.96	1.30						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder	5.41	1.63	5.46	1.51						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home	5.87	1.53	5.98	1.41						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor	5.49	1.70	5.59	1.50						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes	6.06	1.27	5.97	1.42						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects	5.05	1.68	4.64	1.75						

Table 15 Continued

Item	1 or more LD Courses		Zero LD Courses		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.01	1.35	5.95	1.45						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.68	1.45	5.51	1.45						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.81	1.37	5.76	1.52						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.18	1.37	5.76	1.52						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.42	1.09	6.31	.96						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.95	1.36	5.78	1.45						
Reaction Statements					1.43	.13	.07			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.58	1.83	4.21	1.75						
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.46	1.75	3.88	1.82						
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.83	1.80	4.04	1.89						
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.38	1.77	2.97	1.57						
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.49	1.84	4.15	1.63						
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.33	1.51	4.80	1.54						
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.01	1.62	4.68	1.54						
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.13	1.61	4.56	1.55						
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.28	1.63	3.90	1.65						
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.33	1.56	4.99	1.47						
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.20	1.85	4.62	1.95						
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.58	1.96	3.90	1.95						
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.86	1.89	4.05	2.13						
3D. Burdensome – Easy	4.11	1.84	3.53	1.88						
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.26	1.83	4.77	1.84						

To test Hypothesis 3, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who had complete at least one course on learning disabilities and school counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities. The results of all three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 16. The findings revealed no significant differences for counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities and counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities for any of the subsets of questions related to roles, Wilks' $\Lambda = .950$, $F(1,15) = 1.007$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .050$, accommodations, Wilks' $\Lambda = .967$, $F(1,12) = .818$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .033$, or reaction statements Wilks' $\Lambda = .931$, $F(1,15) = 1.434$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .069$. Although there were no significant differences in the subsets of "roles" and "accommodations," mean scores for both groups were moderately high indicating positive attitudes toward all the items by all counselors. Mean scores for counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities trended slightly, but not significantly, higher for approximately 80% of the items in the subsets of "roles" and "accommodations" than the mean scores of counselors who had not completed any courses in learning disabilities. Mean scores for the subset of "reaction statements" were slightly higher than average for both counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities and counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities, indicating somewhat of a neutral attitude for all items. Overall, there was a trend toward higher scores when counselors had at least one course in LD.

Table 16 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who had Completed at Least One Course on Learning Disabilities and Counselors who had not Completed any Courses on Learning Disabilities.*

Subsets	<i>Wilks' A</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.950	1.007	15	.448	.050
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.967	0.818	12	.632	.033
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.931	1.434	15	.130	.069

Test of Hypothesis 4

Research hypothesis 4 stated that school counselors who have completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any workshops on learning disabilities.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who had completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities and school counselors who have not completed any workshops on learning disabilities was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants' responses on ATLDI items 3 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). The means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 4 are presented in Table 17.

Table 17 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 4

Item	1 or More LD Workshops		Zero LD Workshops		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					1.05	0.39	0.059			
1. Analyze standard tests	5.20	1.89	5.20	1.74						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings	5.65	1.54	5.52	1.60						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions	5.76	1.46	5.59	1.63						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD	4.08	1.82	3.41	1.79						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students	5.17	1.60	4.65	1.67						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs	6.39	1.02	6.52	0.82						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD	6.00	1.22	5.61	1.46						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities	5.45	1.66	5.61	1.60						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD	6.47	0.98	6.50	0.95						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD	6.48	0.98	6.57	0.84						
Accommodations					0.88	0.63	0.04			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions	6.12	1.19	5.87	1.41						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder	5.50	1.57	5.26	1.62						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home	6.02	1.35	5.59	1.80						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor	5.62	1.64	5.39	1.58						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes	6.13	1.21	5.98	1.46						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects	5.04	1.67	4.50	1.79						

Table 17 Continued

Item	1 or More LD Workshops		Zero LD Workshops		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.04	1.39	5.74	1.48						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.70	1.44	5.44	1.49						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.97	1.29	5.28	1.58						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.25	1.65	4.59	1.72						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.45	1.04	6.24	1.01						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.97	1.36	5.80	1.48						
Reaction Statements					1.62	.02	.09			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.48	1.78	4.43	1.85						
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.30	1.71	3.74	1.90						
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.67	1.79	3.98	1.97						
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.23	1.70	3.26	1.63						
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.43	1.79	4.37	1.72						
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.20	1.49	4.96	1.57						
2B. Anxious – Calm	4.89	1.56	4.70	1.59						
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.94	1.59	4.63	1.57						
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.14	1.62	3.93	1.41						
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.31	1.53	4.89	1.53						
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.10	1.82	4.41	2.09						
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.44	1.92	3.87	2.06						
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.63	1.95	4.09	2.11						
3D. Burdensome – Easy	3.95	1.82	3.57	1.86						
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.11	1.78	4.67	2.06						

To test Hypothesis 4, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who had completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities and counselors who have not completed any courses on learning disabilities. The results of all three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 18. The findings revealed no significant differences for each of the subsets of questions related to roles, Wilks' $\Lambda = .886$, $F(1,15) = 1.052$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .059$, accommodations, Wilks' $\Lambda = .922$, $F(1,12) = .879$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .040$, or reaction statements, Wilks' $\Lambda = .832$, $F(1,15) = 1.622$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .088$. On the "reaction statements," both groups of counselors gave low ratings for the item "burdensome/ease" as it pertained to counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team, and counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students.

Table 18 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who had Completed at Least One LD Workshop and Counselors who had not Completed Any LD Workshops*

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.886	1.052	15	.393	.059
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.922	0.879	12	.632	.040
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.832	1.622	15	.021	.088

Test of Hypothesis 5

Research hypothesis 5 stated that school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of counseling, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have less experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of counseling.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who have greater experience in the field of counseling, than school counselors who have lesser experience was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants' responses on ATLDI items 3 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F . The comparisons of means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 5 are presented in Table 19.

Table 19 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 5

Item	5 or more yrs Counseling Experience		Less than 5 yrs Counseling Experience		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					1.28	.22	.06			
1. Analyze standard tests										
	5.39	1.82	4.89	1.97						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings										
	5.65	1.62	5.51	1.46						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions										
	5.74	1.47	5.59	1.66						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD										
	3.87	1.88	4.07	1.76						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students										
	5.21	1.62	4.88	1.66						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs										
	6.43	1.04	6.38	.88						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD										
	6.03	1.32	5.80	1.27						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities										
	5.45	1.73	5.52	1.64						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD										
	6.43	1.01	6.49	.95						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD										
	6.44	1.05	6.49	.93						
Accommodations					.71	.74	.03			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions										
	5.99	1.32	6.06	1.10						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder										
	5.49	1.64	5.38	1.51						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home										
	5.95	1.49	5.83	1.49						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor										
	5.52	1.72	5.53	1.62						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes										
	5.98	1.45	6.07	1.17						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects										
	5.07	1.69	4.80	1.80						

Table 19 Continued

Item	5 or More Yrs Counseling Experience		Less than 5 Yrs Counseling Experience		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.08	1.37	5.83	1.42						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.75	1.47	5.52	1.42						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.84	1.49	5.71	1.33						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.19	1.73	5.08	1.69						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.38	1.11	6.41	.99						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.91	1.46	5.93	1.22						
Reaction Statements					2.25	.01*	.10			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.34	1.92	4.60	1.66				1.44	.23	.01
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.38	1.85	4.19	1.67				.75	.39	.00
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.83	1.82	4.25	1.86				7.06	.01*	.02
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.16	1.80	3.50	1.56				2.79	.10	.01
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.23	1.90	4.61	1.63				3.06	.08	.01
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.22	1.66	5.12	1.39				.27	.61	.00
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.05	1.64	4.75	1.52				2.46	.12	.01
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.16	1.62	4.68	1.64				6.08	.01*	0.02
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.30	1.72	4.12	1.53				.76	.38	.00
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.22	1.63	5.28	1.47				.10	.75	.00
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.01	1.99	5.06	1.82				.04	.84	.00
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.55	2.03	4.25	1.93				1.53	.22	.01
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.80	2.03	4.40	2.20				2.79	.10	.01
3D. Burdensome – Easy	4.04	1.95	3.83	1.86				.81	.37	.00
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.09	1.95	5.11	1.76				.01	.91	.00

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

To test Hypothesis 5, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who have greater experience in the field of counseling than school counselors who have less experience in the field of counseling. The results of all three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 20. The findings revealed no significant differences related to “roles” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .938$, $F(1,15) = 1.275$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .062$, and “accommodations” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .972$, $F(1,12) = 0.709$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .028$

MANOVA results did reveal significant differences for the reaction statement subset, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .896$, $F(1,15) = 2.245$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .104$.

Table 20 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who have Greater Experienced (defined as five or more years experience in the field of counseling) and counselors who have Lesser Experience (defined as having less than five years experience in the field of counseling).*

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.938	1.275	15	.217	.062
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.972	0.709	12	.743	.028
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.896	2.245	15	.005*	.104

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Based on the significant results of the MANOVA for reaction statements, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each reaction statement dependent variable as a follow-up test. The results of the ANOVA analyses on the reaction statements are presented in Table 21. Fifteen ANOVA procedures were conducted and resulted in significant differences for one item. The dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” of reaction statement 1 pertaining to school counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students contributed to the significant F . On this item, counselors who had greater experience rated this item higher in positive reactions than counselors who had lesser experience $F(1, 15) = 7.061$, $p < .01$.

Table 21 *ANOVA Results for Counselors who have Greater Experienced (defined as five or more years experience in the field of counseling) and Counselors who have Lesser Experience (defined as having less than five years experience in the field of counseling).*

<i>Item</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Reaction Statements					
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students					
1A Unproductive – Productive	4.85	1	1.44	.23	.01
1B Anxious – Calm	2.38	1	0.75	.39	.00
1C Unprepared – Prepared	23.78	1	7.06	.01	.02
1D Burdensome – Easy	8.24	1	2.79	.10	.01
1E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	10.03	1	3.06	.08	.01
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans					
2A Unproductive – Productive	.67	1	.27	.61	.00
2B Anxious – Calm	6.31	1	2.46	.12	.01
2C Unprepared – Prepared	16.14	1	6.08	.01	.02
2D Burdensome – Easy	2.08	1	.76	.38	.00
2E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	.26	1	.10	.75	.00
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students					
3A Unproductive – Productive	.14	1	.04	.84	.00
3B Anxious – Calm	6.10	1	1.53	.28	.01
3C Unprepared – Prepared	11.46	1	2.79	.10	.01
3D Burdensome – Easy	3.0	1	.81	.37	.00
3E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	.05	1	.01	.91	.00

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Test of Hypothesis 6

Research hypothesis 6 stated that school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of education, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had less experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of education.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who have greater experience and school counselors who have had less experience was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants' responses on ATLDI items 5 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to identify which items contributed to the significant multivariate F . The means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 6 are presented in Table 22.

Table 22 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 6

Item	5 or more yrs Educational Experience		Less than 5 yrs Educational Experience		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					1.04	.41	.05			
1. Analyze standard tests										
	5.35	1.87	5.00	1.88						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings										
	5.59	1.62	5.60	1.51						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions										
	5.88	1.43	5.57	1.58						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD										
	4.04	1.88	3.88	1.80						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students										
	5.24	1.58	5.02	1.71						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs										
	6.50	0.91	6.37	1.03						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD										
	6.02	1.27	5.85	1.39						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities										
	5.57	1.64	5.41	1.74						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD										
	6.48	0.94	6.45	1.03						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD										
	6.45	1.02	6.47	1.00						
Accommodations					1.97	.03	.08			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions										
	5.94	1.31	6.11	1.18						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder										
	5.44	1.63	5.40	1.58						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home										
	5.94	1.55	5.85	1.52						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor										
	5.45	1.80	5.62	1.53						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes										
	5.90	1.57	6.14	1.06						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects										
	5.12	1.65	4.83	1.80						

Table 22 Continued

Item	5 or More Yrs Educational Experience		Less than 5 Yrs Educational Experience		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.06	1.39	5.92	1.40						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.67	1.44	5.61	1.52						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.67	1.58	5.90	1.26						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.22	1.72	5.07	1.69						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.46	1.04	6.35	1.08						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.88	1.48	5.97	1.28						
Reaction Statements					2.19	.01*	.10			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.42	1.91	4.52	1.72				.23	.63	.00
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.52	1.72	4.06	1.82				5.14	.02	.02
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.35	1.92	4.93	1.73				7.73	.01*	.03
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.43	1.76	3.12	1.69				2.47	.12	.01
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.35	1.83	4.45	1.80				.23	.63	.00
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.30	1.61	5.12	1.49				1.10	.30	.00
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.17	1.52	4.70	1.67				6.68	.01*	.02
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.34	1.48	4.62	1.72				15.35	.00*	.05
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.37	1.68	4.12	1.59				1.85	.18	.01
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.39	1.47	5.12	1.64				2.27	.13	.01
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.16	1.97	4.83	1.88				2.30	.13	.01
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.70	2.03	4.08	1.91				7.68	.01*	.03
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.01	1.97	4.22	2.02				12.03	.00	.04
3D. Burdensome – Easy	4.21	1.94	3.66	1.84				6.41	.01*	.02
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.21	1.92	4.92	1.82				1.80	.18	.01

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

To test Hypothesis 6, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who have greater experience and school counselors who have lesser experience. The results of the three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 23. The findings revealed no significant differences on each of the subsets of questions related to “roles” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .949$, $F(1,15) = 1.043$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .051$, and “accommodations” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .925$, $F(1,12) = 1.973$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .075$

MANOVA results did reveal significant differences between counselors who have greater experience and school counselors who have less experience on the dependent variables in the “reaction statement” subset, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .898$, $F(1,15) = 2.193$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .102$.

Table 23 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who have Greater Experience, (defined as five or more years experience in the field of education) and Counselors who have Lesser Experience, (defined as having less than five years experience in the field of education).*

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.949	1.043	15	.411	.051
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.925	1.973	12	.026	.075
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.898	2.193	15	.007*	.102

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Based on the significant results of the MANOVA for “reaction statements” an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each “reaction statement” dependent variable as a follow-up test. The results of the ANOVA analyses on the “reaction statements” are displayed in Table 24. Fifteen ANOVA procedures were conducted and resulted in significant differences for five items. The dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” of “reaction statement 1” pertaining to school counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team, the dependent variable “Anxious/Calm” of “reaction statement 2” pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans, the dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” of “reaction statement 2”

pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans, the dependent variable “Anxious/Calm” of “reaction statement 3” pertaining to school counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students, and the dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” of “reaction statement 3” pertaining to school counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students, all contributed to the significant F . On all of these items, counselors who had greater experience in the field of education rated these items higher in positive reactions than counselors who had less experience. The dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” was shown to be significant in each of the three subsets of the “reactions statements” pertaining to “counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team,” “counselors assisting teachers in preparing accommodations for 504-only students,” and “counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students.” The dependent variable “Anxious/Calm” was shown to be significant in two of the subsets of the reactions statements, “counselors assisting teachers in preparing accommodations for 504-only students,” and “counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students.” All five of the significant items pertain to counselors’ self-efficacy in providing educationally based services to 504-only students, indicating a trend toward higher self-efficacy scores when counselors had more than five years experience in the field of education.

Table 24 *ANOVA Results for Counselors who have Greater Educational Experience and Counselors who Lesser Educational Experience*

<i>Item</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
Reaction Statements					
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students					
1A Unproductive – Productive	.780	1	.234	.629	.001
1B Anxious – Calm	16.120	1	5.144	.024	.017
1C Unprepared – Prepared	25.660	1	7.729	.006	.025
1D Burdensome – Easy	7.362	1	2.472	.117	.008
1E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	.770	1	.233	.629	.001
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans					
2A Unproductive – Productive	2.671	1	1.102	.295	.004
2B Anxious – Calm	16.935	1	6.676	.010	.021
2C Unprepared – Prepared	38.971	1	15.345	.000	.048
2D Burdensome – Easy	4.978	1	1.848	.175	.006
2E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.473	1	2.270	.133	.007
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students					
3A Unproductive – Productive	8.506	1	2.300	.130	.008
3B Anxious – Calm	29.897	1	7.677	.006	.025
3C Unprepared – Prepared	47.822	1	12.026	.001	.038
3D Burdensome – Easy	23.003	1	6.408	.012	.021
3E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	6.316	1	1.796	.181	.006

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Test of Hypothesis 7

Research hypothesis 7 stated that school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the of field of working with students with disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than 5 years experience working with students with disabilities.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who have had at least one year of field experience working with students with disabilities and school counselors who have not had any field experience working with students with disabilities was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants' responses on ATLDI items 9 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. . In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to see which items contributed to the significant multivariate F . The means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 7 are presented in Table 25.

Table 25 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 7

Item	5 or more yrs Disability Experience		Less than 5 yrs Disability Experience		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					0.75	.73	.04			
1. Analyze standard tests										
	5.32	1.85	5.01	1.94						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings										
	5.57	1.63	5.61	1.55						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions										
	5.74	1.50	5.70	1.54						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD										
	3.94	1.88	3.90	1.8						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students										
	5.20	1.63	4.92	1.64						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs										
	6.43	1.02	6.43	.87						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD										
	5.99	1.29	5.82	1.37						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities										
	5.51	1.65	5.51	1.68						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD										
	6.52	.88	6.36	1.14						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD										
	6.50	.95	6.42	1.08						
Accommodations					1.75	.06	.06			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions										
	6.00	1.26	6.08	1.19						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder										
	5.50	1.63	5.35	1.50						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home										
	6.00	1.45	5.79	1.54						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor										
	5.52	1.72	5.58	1.52						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes										
	6.01	1.45	6.13	1.07						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects										
	5.08	1.67	4.80	1.81						

Table 25 Continued

Item	5 or More Yrs Disability Experience		Less than 5 Yrs Disability Experience		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.10	1.34	5.86	1.43						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.68	1.47	5.60	1.43						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.90	1.40	5.62	1.42						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.26	1.66	4.97	1.76						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.47	0.95	6.26	1.17						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.94	1.35	5.89	1.42						
Reaction Statements					2.16	.01*	.18			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.50	1.85	4.30	1.67				1.22	.27	.00
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.49	1.73	4.02	1.72				1.43	.23	.00
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.96	1.77	4.00	1.19				5.75	.02	.02
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.36	1.82	3.02	1.50				.10	.92	.00
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.33	1.87	4.23	1.79				2.39	.12	.01
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.25	1.54	4.93	1.38				.38	.54	.00
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.18	1.48	4.57	1.51				10.39	.00*	.03
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.36	1.52	4.6	1.6				13.94	.00*	.04
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.43	1.74	4.17	1.46				4.89	.03	.02
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.29	1.54	4.97	1.57				.67	.41	.00
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.03	1.87	4.61	1.98				1.71	.19	.00
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.40	2.02	4.13	1.85				1.07	.30	.00
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.77	1.93	4.12	2.02				4.15	.04	.01
3D. Burdensome – Easy	4.04	1.94	3.58	1.85				2.50	.12	.01
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.03	1.88	4.65	2.06				.68	.41	.00

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

To test Hypothesis 7, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items between the two groups of counselors. The results of all three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 26. The findings revealed no significant differences for each of the subsets of questions related to “roles” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .965$, $F(1,15) = .750$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .035$, and “accommodations” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .937$, $F(1,12) = 1.745$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .063$.

MANOVA results did reveal significant differences between counselors who have greater experience in the field of disabilities and school counselors who have lesser experience in the field of disabilities on the dependent variables in the reaction statement subset, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .819$, $F(1,15) = 2.157$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .181$.

Table 26 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who have Greater Experience, (defined as five or more years experience in the field of disabilities) and Counselors who have Less Experience, (defined as having less than five years experience in the field of disabilities).*

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.965	.750	15	.732	.035
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.937	1.745	12	.057	.063
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.819	2.157	15	.008*	.181

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Based on the significant results of the MANOVA for reaction statements, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each reaction statement dependent variable as a follow-up test. The results of the ANOVA analyses on the reaction statements are presented in Table 28. Fifteen ANOVA procedures were conducted and resulted in significant differences for 2 items. The dependent variables “Anxious/Calm,” and “Unprepared/Prepared” of reaction statement 2 pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans,

contributed to the significant F . On both of these items, counselors who had greater experience in the field of disabilities rated these items higher in positive reactions than counselors who had lesser experience, $F(1, 15) = 10.389, p < .01, F(1, 15) = 13.937, p < .01$. Both of the significant items pertain to counselors' self-efficacy in providing educationally-based services to 504-only students, indicating a trend toward higher self-efficacy scores when counselors had more than five years experience in the field of disabilities. Although there were no significant differences in the subsets of "roles" and "accommodations," mean scores for both counselors who have greater experience and counselors who have lesser experience subsets were slightly above average-- indicating fairly neutral attitudes toward all the items by both groups of counselors. One notable exception to the overall neutral ratings can be found in the "roles" subset in item number 7, "developing academic accommodation plans for students with LD." Mean scores for both counselors who have greater experience and counselors who have less experience in the field of disabilities were moderately low-- indicating negative attitudes toward this item by both groups of counselors. This trend toward negative attitudes on educationally-based items is further corroborated by a post hoc examination of the correlations between item 7 of the "accommodations" subset and item 2 of the "reaction statement" subset. The correlations between "Accommodations" item 7 and "Reaction Statements" item 2 are listed in Table 27. It shows highly significant correlations on all the dependent variables between the two items.

Table 27 Correlations of Item 7 of the “Accommodations” Subset and Item 2 of the “Reaction Statements” Subset

Item		Developing academic accommodations for students with LD		
		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
2	Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans			
2A	Unproductive – Productive	.451**	.000	332
2B	Anxious – Calm	.298**	.000	332
2C	Unprepared – Prepared	.327**	.000	332
2D	Burdensome – Easy	.285**	.000	332
2E	Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	.409**	.000	332

Note: ** denotes significance at the .001 level

Table 28 *ANOVA Results for Counselors who have Greater Experience in the Field of Disabilities and Counselors who have Less Experience.*

<i>Item</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Reaction Statements					
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students					
1A Unproductive – Productive	4.105	1	1.221	.270	.004
1B Anxious – Calm	4.614	1	1.433	.232	.004
1C Unprepared – Prepared	19.555	1	5.751	.017	.018
1D Burdensome – Easy	.029	1	0.10	.922	.000
1E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	7.924	1	2.390	.123	.007
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans					
2A Unproductive – Productive	.900	1	.377	.540	.001
2B Anxious – Calm	25.265	1	10.389	.001	* .031
2C Unprepared – Prepared	35.047	1	13.937	.000	* .041
2D Burdensome – Easy	13.148	1	4.888	.028	.015
2E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	1.625	1	.672	.413	.002
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students					
3A Unproductive – Productive	6.193	1	1.709	.192	.005
3B Anxious – Calm	4.183	1	1.068	.302	.003
3C Unprepared – Prepared	16.530	1	4.149	.042	.013
3D Burdensome – Easy	9.075	1	2.502	.115	.008
3E Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	2.356	1	.676	.412	.002

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Test of Hypothesis 8

Research hypothesis 8 stated that school counselors who have a personal awareness of disabilities (school counselors who have a disability or who have been closely acquainted with a person with disabilities) will have a more positive attitude toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities.

The null hypothesis that anticipated no difference in the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students between school counselors who have a personal awareness of than school counselors who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities was tested using three separate MANOVAs by comparing the participants' responses on ATLDI items 10-15 of Section I, items 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, of Sections II, item 1-12 of Section III, and items 1-3 of Section IV. . In order to minimize the potential of an inflated error rate resulting from multiple variables, a Bonferroni correction was utilized to adjust the alpha level down to .01 (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). Univariate ANOVAs were used as post hoc tests to determine which items contributed to the significant multivariate *F*. The comparisons of means and standard deviations for each item and statistical results for Hypothesis 8 are presented in Table 29.

Table 29 Means and Standard Deviations for Items and Statistical Results for Hypothesis 8

Item	Personal Awareness of Disability		No Personal Awareness of Disabilities		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Roles					2.13	.01*	.09			
1. Analyze standard tests								4.13	.04	.01
	5.35	1.84	4.87	1.95						
3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings								2.51	.11	.01
	5.64	1.63	5.32	1.52						
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions								4.76	.03	.01
	5.82	1.44	5.40	1.70						
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD								2.66	.10	.01
	4.02	1.83	3.63	1.87						
10. Assist in identifying special needs students								4.57	.03	.01
	5.21	1.62	4.77	1.61						
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs								.01	.94	.00
	6.44	.92	6.43	1.09						
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD								20.47	.00*	.06
	6.10	1.23	5.35	1.47						
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities								1.66	.20	.00
	5.56	1.66	5.30	1.66						
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD								.09	.77	.00
	6.46	0.99	6.43	.97						
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD								.02	.90	.00
	6.47	0.99	6.45	1.01						
Accommodations					1.19	.29	.04			
1. Provide both oral and printed directions										
	5.99	1.27	6.15	1.12						
2. Allow student to dictate answers into a tape recorder										
	5.39	1.64	5.62	1.38						
3. Provide two sets of books, so that one set may be kept at home										
	5.98	1.46	5.70	1.58						
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor										
	5.52	1.70	5.59	1.47						
5. Allow student to tape record class notes										
	6.05	1.31	6.02	1.41						
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects										
	5.02	1.73	4.73	1.72						

Table 29 Continued

Item	Personal Awareness of Disabilities		No Personal Awareness of Disabilities		Multivariate			Univariate		
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	ES	F	p	ES
Accommodations										
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape	6.00	1.41	6.00	1.31						
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests	5.67	1.49	5.59	1.38						
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes	5.81	1.40	5.73	1.49						
10. Provide page numbers to help student find answers to in-class assignments	5.14	1.75	5.15	1.51						
11. Give directions in small steps	6.35	1.14	6.50	.76						
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page	5.93	1.35	5.88	1.49						
Reaction Statements					.72	.76	.03			
Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team										
1A. Unproductive – Productive	4.46	1.85	4.50	1.79						
1B. Anxious – Calm	4.34	1.80	4.22	1.81						
1C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.72	1.85	4.46	1.91						
1D. Burdensome – Easy	3.26	1.76	3.48	1.68						
1E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	4.42	1.82	4.32	1.85						
Counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans										
2A. Unproductive – Productive	5.27	1.56	4.95	1.51						
2B. Anxious – Calm	5.01	1.56	4.74	1.65						
2C. Unprepared – Prepared	5.11	1.59	4.74	1.70						
2D. Burdensome – Easy	4.28	1.70	4.09	1.52						
2E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.30	1.55	5.09	1.55						
Counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students										
3A. Unproductive – Productive	5.08	1.95	4.90	1.82						
3B. Anxious – Calm	4.52	1.99	4.21	1.93						
3C. Unprepared – Prepared	4.78	2.00	4.41	2.02						
3D. Burdensome – Easy	4.06	1.91	3.87	1.88						
3E. Ethically Questionable – Justifiable	5.16	1.87	5.01	1.86						

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

To test Hypothesis 8, three separate, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to compare the results of the items for counselors who have a personal awareness of a learning disability and school counselors who do not have a personal awareness of a learning disability. The results of all three MANOVA procedures are reported in Table 30. The findings revealed no significant differences for counselors who have a personal awareness of a disability and counselors who do not have a personal awareness of a learning disability for any of the subsets of questions related to “accommodations” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .957$, $F(1,12) = 1.185$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .043$, or “reaction statements,” Wilks’ $\Lambda = .967$, $F(1,15) = .724$, $p > .01$, $\eta^2 = .033$. Although there were no significant differences in the subsets of “accommodations” and “reaction statements” mean scores for both groups were moderately high, indicating positive attitudes toward all the items by both groups of counselors.

MANOVA results did reveal significant differences between counselors who have a personal awareness of learning disabilities and counselors who do not have a personal awareness of learning disabilities in the “roles” subset, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .908$, $F(1,15) = 2.219$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .092$.

Table 30 *MANOVA Results for Counselors who had completed at Least One Course on Learning Disabilities and Counselors who had not Completed Any Courses on Learning Disabilities.*

Subsets	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Roles (Items 33-47)	.908	2.129	15	.009*	.092
Accommodations (Items 48-59)	.957	1.185	12	.292	.043
Reaction Statements (Items 60-74)	.967	.724	15	.760	.033

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Based on the significant results of the MANOVA for “roles,” an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each “role” dependent variable as a follow-up test. The results of

the ANOVA analyses on the “roles” dependent variables are shown in Table 31. Fifteen ANOVA procedures were conducted and resulted in significant differences for only one item. The dependent variable “Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD,” contributed to the significant F . On this item, counselors who have a personal awareness of learning disabilities rated this item higher in positive reaction than counselors who do not have a personal awareness of learning disabilities, $F(1,15) = 20.474$, $p < .01$.

Table 31 *ANOVA Results for Counselors who have a Personal Awareness of a Disability and Counselors who do not.*

<i>Item</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Roles					
1 Analyze Standardized Tests	14.36	1	4.13	.04	.01
3 Advocate for students at IEP meetings	6.44	1	2.51	.11	.01
6 Collaborate with teachers on instructional interventions	10.77	1	4.76	.03	.01
7 Develop academic accommodation plans for students with LD	9.00	1	2.66	.10	.01
10 Assist in identifying special needs students	11.94	1	4.57	.03	.01
11 Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs	.01	1	.01	.94	.00
12 Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with LD	34.03	1	20.47	.00*	.06
13 Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities	4.55	1	1.66	.20	.00
14 Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with LD	.09	1	.09	.77	.00
15 Provide small group social skill counseling to students with LD	.02	1	.02	.90	.00

Note: * denotes significance at the .01 level

Results of Responses to the Open-Ended Comment Question

The ATLDI survey concluded with an open-ended question inviting participants to share their comments, thoughts, opinions, and experiences in regard to providing service to 504-only

students. Of the 332 participants who completed and returned the ATLDI survey, 59% chose to respond to the open ended question. Through the use of a grounded research method (Glaser, & Strauss, 1967) the responses were analyzed resulting in the identification of nine themes. The themes are listed in Table 32.

The most prominent theme that emerged from this question involved counselor preparation in learning disability issues. Of the 195 counselors who chose to answer this question, 27% felt they lacked the training necessary to adequately provide services to 504-only students. A similar theme emerged regarding counselors' roles in which 11% of the participants felt counselors should not serve as the chair of the multidisciplinary team. The American School Counselors Association's guidelines state that counselors should serve as members on the multidisciplinary team, but that they should not be the chair of the team. Even so, only 8% of the participants reported that they were currently serving as the chair, while 13% indicated that they participate in the development of accommodation plans. This study could have been enhanced by direct demographic questions regarding school counselors' current duties and responsibilities pertaining to meeting the needs of 504-only students.

Other noteworthy themes included counselors reporting that providing LD related services was overly time consuming (16%,) and that a team approach is preferred (11%). Also of interest were two themes related to counselors' perceptions of classroom teachers which showed 12% of the participants felt teachers resisted complying with the 504 accommodation plans, while 6% of the respondents thought teachers lacked adequate 504 training. Finally, 4% of the counselors who responded to the open-ended question noted that their schools provided very few 504 accommodations.

Table 32 *Themes of Open-Ended Question Inviting Comment on Opinions, Feelings, Experiences*

Theme	#	%
Counselors lack training in LD	53	27
Counselors should not chair the multidisciplinary team	21	11
Providing 504 services is overly time consuming	31	16
Believe a team approach is best	22	11
Counselors who are currently chairing the multidisciplinary team	15	8
Counselors who are currently engaged in developing accommodation plans	25	13
Believe accommodations need to be decided on a case by case basis	21	11
Believe 504 is being applied to students who are not qualified for services	20	10
Counselors whose schools discourage providing 504 services	8	4
Believe teachers resist providing 504 accommodations	23	12
Believe teachers lack training in LD	12	6

Note: percentages are based on the 195 participants who chose to respond to the comment question.

Summary

This chapter presented the characteristics of the participants and the results of the study. The first research hypothesis that anticipated differences between the attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students of counselors who were certified teachers and those who were not certified teachers was partially supported in this study. Through the use of the responses of all 332 participants, comparisons were conducted on items in the three categories of “roles,” “accommodations,” and “reaction statements.” Items in the category of “reaction statements” resulted in significant differences between counselors who were certified teachers and those who were not certified teachers only on the dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” of reaction statement 2 pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in preparing 504 accommodation plans. No significant differences were found on any of the other fourteen dependent variables between counselors who were certified teachers and those who were not. Items in the categories of “roles,” and “accommodations” also resulted in non-significant differences between counselors who were certified teachers and those who were not.

The second research hypothesis that anticipated differences between counselors who have a doctoral degree and counselors who have a master's degree was not supported in this study. No significant differences were found between counselors with doctoral degrees and counselors with master's degrees.

The third hypothesis on differences between counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities and counselors who had not completed any courses on learning disabilities was not supported in this study. No significant differences were found. Although there were no significant differences in the mean scores of any of the subsets, the moderately high ratings indicated positive attitudes toward all the items by both groups of counselors, that is, all counselors seem to be in agreement on appropriate counselor roles, classroom accommodations, and opinions on reaction statements. Mean scores for counselors who had at least one course on learning disabilities trended slightly, but not significantly, higher for nearly 80% of the items on the subsets of "roles" and "accommodations." Overall, there was a trend toward higher scores when counselors had at least one course on learning disabilities.

The fourth hypothesis on differences between counselors who had completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities and counselors who had not completed any workshops on learning disabilities was not supported in this study. No significant differences were found. Both groups of counselors selected low ratings for the item "burdensome/easy" regarding counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team, and counselors serving as 504-only student consultants to the school staff.

Research hypothesis 5 on differences between counselors who have greater experience in the field of counseling and counselors who have lesser experience in the field of counseling was partially supported in this study. Items in the dependent variable "Unprepared/Prepared" of

“reaction statement 1” pertaining to school counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team resulted in significant differences between counselors who have greater experience in the field of counseling and counselors who have lesser experience in the field of counseling.

Research hypothesis 6 on differences between counselors who have greater experience in the field of education and counselors who have lesser experience in the field of education was partially supported in this study. Significant differences were found on the following 5 dependent variables: “Unprepared/Prepared” of “reaction statement 1” pertaining to school counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students, “Anxious/Calm” of “reaction statement 2” pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans, “Unprepared/Prepared” of reaction statement 2 pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans, “Anxious/Calm” of “reaction statement 3” pertaining to school counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students, and “Unprepared/Prepared” of “reaction statement 3” pertaining to school counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students. The dependent variable “Unprepared/Prepared” was shown to be significant in each of the three subsets of the reactions statements, “counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team,” “counselors assisting teachers in preparing accommodations for 504-only students,” and “counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students.” The dependent variable “Anxious/Calm” was shown to be significant in two of the subsets of the reactions statements, “counselors assisting teachers in preparing accommodations for 504-only students,” and “counselors serving as consultants to the school staff on the characteristics of 504-only students.” All five of the significant items pertain to counselors’ self-efficacy in providing educationally-based services to

504-only students, indicating a trend toward higher self-efficacy scores when counselors had more than five years experience in the field of education.

Research hypothesis 7 on differences between counselors who have greater experience in the field of disabilities and counselors who have lesser experience in the field of disabilities was partially supported in this study. Significant differences were found on the dependent variables of “Anxious/Calm,” and “Unprepared/Prepared” of reaction statement 2 pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in developing 504 accommodation plans. Both of the significant items pertain to counselors’ self-efficacy in providing educationally-based services to 504-only students, indicating a trend toward higher self-efficacy scores when counselors had more than five years experience in the field of disabilities. In contrast to the high self-efficacy scores for counselors with greater experience in the field of disabilities, mean scores for both groups of counselors on the “roles” subset in item number 7, “developing academic accommodation plans for students with LD,” were moderately low-- indicating overall negative attitudes toward this item, that is all counselors seem to feel somewhat unprepared to adequately develop classroom accommodation plans for 504-only students.

Research hypothesis 8 related to differences between counselors who have a personal awareness of disabilities and counselors who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities was partially supported in this study. Significant differences were found on the dependent variable, “counselors serving as members of the multidisciplinary team” in the “roles” subset.

The results detailed in this chapter are discussed in Chapter 5. The relationship between the findings of this study and existing research will be presented. Information pertaining to limitations of this current study and implications for future research are presented.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Included in chapter five are a summary and a discussion of the findings from this study. The results of the study are discussed in terms of prior research and limitations. Implications for the study for school counselors and the counseling profession are provided. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify school counselors' attitudes towards providing services to students with learning disabilities who are receiving special education services exclusively under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Additionally, this study determined if there were differences in school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to students with learning disabilities based on the counselors' level of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness of disabilities. In particular, this study examined a number of factors that the literature has suggested influence counselor attitudes towards special education services (Bateman & Bateman, 2002; Frye, 2005; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003; Rea & Davis-Dorsey, 2004) such as, the number of disability courses completed, the number of years of field experience with individuals with disabilities, the amount of counseling experience, the amount of educational experience, and the amount of personal experience with individuals with disabilities.

Discussion of Findings

Under federal requirements, all federally funded schools are required to provide services to students with disabilities. The American School Counselors Association's (ASCA) model for school counseling programs stipulates that school counselors ensure appropriate educational services are provided to all students (ASCA National Model, 2003). Furthermore, ASCA's Position Statement specifically calls for school counselors to serve on the multidisciplinary team that determines plans and placement for students with learning disabilities (ASCA Position Statement, 2004). In order to be a contributing member of this team, it seems important for school counselors to have a basic understanding of learning disabilities; yet, most counselor education programs do not require courses on disabilities or field experience with special needs students (Milsom & Akos, 2003). Prior research has indicated that preparation and years of experience have been related to more positive attitudes toward inclusion (Greene & Valesky, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003). Findings from these studies also indicate that many school counselors feel unprepared to provide individual services to students with learning disabilities (Milsom, 2002), and believe providing services associated with inclusion is an area outside of their training and expertise (Greene & Valesky, 1998).

By building on the studies by Frye (2005), Greene and Valesky, (1998), Milsom (2002), and Milsom and Akos (2003), which looked at school counselors' roles and training in regards to students with learning disabilities, this study examined school counselors' attitudes toward the appropriateness of school counselors' roles, their viewpoints on different classroom accommodations, and their reactions to specific LD related responsibilities. In particular, this study focused on the population of students with milder learning disabilities, who qualified for services only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as these students were the

least visible and least studied of students with learning disabilities. For the purpose of clarity, these students with milder learning disabilities were referred to in this study as 504-only students. No other research has examined the differences in school counselors' attitudes regarding providing services to 504-only students.

The Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Services Instrument (ATLDI) was created by me specifically for the purpose of: (a) determining school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students; (b) determining if there were differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the counselors' level of preparation in learning disabilities; (c) determining if there were differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the counselors' areas of certification; (d) determining if there were differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the counselors' level of field experience with persons with learning disabilities; and (e) determining if there were differences between school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students and the counselors' personal awareness of learning disabilities.

Discussions of Findings for Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that school counselors who have certification in education will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have certification in education. The findings of this study partially supported the hypothesis and showed significant differences between the two groups. For the past few decades, there has been an ongoing debate in the school counseling profession over the need for school counselors to have prior teaching experience (Peterson, Goodman, Keller, & McCauley, 2004; Quarto, 1999; Smith, 2001). Although there has been a growing trend to

eliminate this requirement (Peterson et al. 2004); at the present time, 22 states require school counselors to have some prior teaching experience (American Counseling Association, 2003). The findings of this study indicate that the significant differences between the two groups of counselors exist solely with regards to counselors' self-efficacy in providing services to 504-only students. Participants' responses to the reaction statement pertaining to school counselors assisting teachers in preparing 504 accommodation plans revealed that counselors who were certified teachers rated this item significantly higher than counselors who were not. It is important to note however, that a significant difference between the two groups was found for only one of the fifteen items and may indicate the presence of a Type 1 error. For all other items, no differences were found between counselors who were certified teachers and those who were not. This finding is also partially supported by the responses to the open ended survey question which asked participants to share their opinions regarding the counselor's role with 504-only students. Of the 195 participants who responded to this question, 27% stated that they did not feel adequately prepared to develop accommodation plans, and 6% reported encountering teachers who were not adequately prepared for this task. None of the respondents reported difficulties with any other educationally-based task. Since less than one third of the respondents indicated feeling unprepared to develop classroom accommodations, it seems reasonable to assume that those individuals could obtain the skills necessary for this task by attending a workshop or in-service training on classroom accommodations.

There were no significant differences found between the two groups of counselors with regards to the appropriateness of school counselors' roles, and the counselors' agreement ratings for certain classroom accommodations. Overall, both groups of counselors rated the items in these first two subsets as moderately high, indicating positive attitudes and agreement toward

these items. Historically, school counselors have experienced difficulty describing and defining their roles to other school personnel and the general public (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Liberman, 2004; Murray, 1995). In order to assist with the delineation of the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of school counselors, in the American School Counselor Association formulated a national model of guidance and counseling to serve as a standard for the profession (ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs, 2003). The results of this study suggest that there is a strong consensus for school counselors' support of ASCA's guidelines. This finding is corroborated by several previous studies that determined school counselors have been successfully supporting ASCA's model (Campell, & Dahir, 1997; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Milsom, 2002; Scarborough, 2005).

Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that school counselors who have a doctoral degree will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have a master's degree. No significant differences were found between the two groups of counselors for any of the three subsets. A limitation to these findings relate to the percentage of participants within each group of counselors. There were 301 counselors in this study who had a master's degree, while only 20 counselors had a doctoral degree. It is possible that the small number of doctoral participants biased the findings.

Overall, both groups gave predominantly high ratings to all items, indicating positive attitudes toward all the subsets. The only exception to this occurred on the item in the reactions statements regarding counselors developing accommodation plans. For this item, both counselors with doctoral degrees and counselors with master's degrees rated this item low on the degree of burdensome/easy. This low rating is corroborated by the participants' comments on the open-

ended survey question pertaining to personal experiences that indicated 16% of the 195 participants who answered this question stated that developing accommodations was overly time consuming; 27% felt unprepared to effectively implement this task. Many of these counselor reactions are similar to those of general educators. In a study on teacher attitudes, Curtis (2005) discovered that many general education teachers resist providing services to special needs students due to unreasonable amounts of paperwork, lack of knowledge regarding special laws, and lack of training in specialized teaching methods.

Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that school counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any courses on learning disabilities. The findings of this study did not support the hypothesis. A review of the literature indicated a need for counselors to obtain additional training in order to provide services to all students. Greer and Greer (1995) predicted that counselors would be expected to head the multidisciplinary team, coordinate input from various disciplines, present information to parents, and facilitate a partnership between the parents and the team. These authors also acknowledged that counselors would need new information, training, and awareness of a wide array of issues in order to fulfill such a role. In a similar fashion, Scarborough and Deck (1998) listed a number of challenges that counselors would face as the inclusion movement grew, including providing developmental and academic information, changing negative attitudes toward disabilities, and expanding their own professional identities. Similarly, Milsom (2002) found that school counselors who had completed courses on disabilities felt more prepared than those who did not.

Although significant differences were not found, the findings of this hypothesis do show that both groups of counselors gave high ratings to these items indicating overall positive attitudes regarding roles and accommodations.

In addition, mean scores for counselors who had completed at least one course on learning disabilities trended slightly, but not significantly, higher for approximately 80% of the items in the subsets of “roles” and “accommodations” than the mean scores of counselors who had not completed any courses in learning disabilities. Overall, there was a trend toward higher scores when counselors had at least one course in LD.

A possible explanation as to why this trend was not large enough to be significant may be that more than one course in LD is necessary before significant differences can be detected. A review of the open-ended comments revealed that just over one fourth (27%) of the respondents felt they did not have sufficient training to provide services to students with LD. The American School Counselors Association’s National Model clearly states that a qualified school counselor has state credentials, possesses a master’s degree and, if not a certified teacher, should have received training in student learning styles, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, students’ assessment, and student achievement. It seems that even though school counselors support ASCA’s guidelines, some counselors may not be receiving enough specialty training to feel confident about their role with special needs students.

Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that school counselors who had completed at least one workshop on learning disabilities will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have not completed any workshops on learning disabilities. The findings of this study did not support the hypothesis. As was the case with Hypothesis 3, the

literature review did indicate that counselors would need additional training to meet the challenges of addressing the needs of all students (Greer & Greer, 1995; Scarborough & Deck, 1998). Even so, no significant differences were found between the two groups of counselors. In addition, the ratings of both groups of counselors indicated support for almost all of these items. In addition, both groups agreed that developing accommodations was burdensome. This finding coincides with the open-ended survey question pertaining to personal experience in which 16% of the participants stated that providing 504-related services was overly time consuming.

Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 stated that school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of counseling, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of counseling. The results of this study partially supported this hypothesis. Counselors with more experience in counseling gave higher ratings to on the reaction subset than counselors with lesser experience in counseling. Counselors with more experience in counseling reported feeling more prepared and calmer towards their roles as chair of the multidisciplinary team, assistant to teachers in developing accommodations, and serving as consultant to the school staff regarding 504-only students than counselors with lesser experience. Overall, counselors with more experience in counseling seemed to have a higher self-efficacy in providing educationally-based services to 504-students. This finding is supported by the research of Greene and Valesky (1998) who concluded that field experience in counseling was one of the predictive demographic variables in school counselors' levels of self-efficacy.

Discussions of Findings for Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 stated that school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of education, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have had lesser experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of education. The findings of this study partially supported this hypothesis and showed significant differences between the two groups of counselors. Counselors with more experience in education selected higher ratings on items pertaining to preparedness and confidence toward providing services to 504 students than counselors with less experience in the field of education. Overall, counselors with more experience in education seemed to have a higher self-efficacy in providing educationally-based services to 504 students. This finding is supported by Greer and Greer (1995) who predicted the inclusion movement would have a major impact on the school counseling profession, as counselors would be expected to head the multidisciplinary team, coordinate input from various disciplines, present information to parents, and facilitate a partnership between the parents and the 504 team. Traver-Behring, Spagna, and Sullivan (1998) emphasized that school counselors would need to feel comfortable supporting the needs of students with learning disabilities by acknowledging and eliminating the resistance from general education teachers unfamiliar with special needs students. The American School Counselors Association maintains that a qualified school counselor will either have teacher certification or will have received training in student learning styles, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, and student assessment and achievement (ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs, 2003).

Discussion of Findings for Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis 7 stated that school counselors who have greater experience, defined as five or more years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities, will have more positive attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who have less experience, defined as less than five years experience in the field of working with students with learning disabilities. The findings of this study supported the hypothesis and showed significant differences between the two groups of counselors. Counselors who have more than five years experience working with students with disabilities selected higher ratings for items pertaining preparedness and confidence in providing educationally-based services to 504-only students. As was the case with the two previous hypotheses, educationally-based items such as developing accommodation plans seemed to be less anxiety producing for counselors with greater disability experience than for counselors who had less disability experience. This same pattern can be found in the mean scores of the subsets related to roles and accommodations. Although overall, both groups of counselors rated these items slightly above average indicating positive attitudes toward providing disability services, scores on the items relating to preparation and confidence in educationally-based services were lower, but not significantly so. In general, there was a trend for counselors with less disability experience rating training and self-efficacy items lower than counselors with more disability experience.

This finding is corroborated by Milsom (2002) who determined that most of the school counselors providing services to students with learning disabilities felt only somewhat prepared to provide these services. Milsom also discovered that counselors who had experience with special needs students had higher comfort levels toward meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Even so, Milsom reported that only 25% of counselor education programs required

practical experience with individuals with disabilities. The findings of an ethnographic study by Frye (2005) uphold the results of Milsom's study. Frye's research documented a successful implementation of the American Counselors Association National Model in a Florida elementary school. Frye emphasizes that a key factor in the success of the three counselors in the Florida study was their familiarity with the characteristics and needs of students with learning disabilities. Milsom and Akos (2003) note that in the area of required coursework and field experience on disabilities, no differences were found between educational programs that were accredited by either CACREP or NCATE, and non-accredited programs. There appears to be a contradiction between the services counselors are expected to provide, and the services counselors feel capable of providing. This contradiction suggests that counselor preparation in the field of learning disabilities is a vital issue that needs to be addressed.

Discussion of the Findings for Hypothesis 8

Hypothesis 8 stated that school counselors who have a personal awareness of disabilities will have a more positive attitude toward providing services to 504-only students than school counselors who do not have a personal awareness of disabilities. The findings of this study partially supported the hypothesis and showed a significant difference between the two groups of counselors. Counselors who had a personal awareness of disabilities rated the item pertaining to school counselors serving on the multidisciplinary team higher than counselors who did not have a personal awareness of disabilities. Both groups of counselors gave high ratings to all the other items in the subsets, indicating positive attitudes towards these items.

It is important to note that a significant difference was found only on one item. Since the significant item related to counselors being a part of the team that administers LD services, counselors with a personal awareness of disabilities may have higher expectations of the

potential benefits of having counseling input on the multidisciplinary team. There is a lack of information in the literature regarding the impact of personal awareness of disabilities on the attitudes of counselors toward providing LD services. There is however, research on parents' perceptions of special education services. The literature seems to indicate that parents of children with learning disabilities feel strongly about obtaining appropriate services. Green and Shinn (1994) determined that parents had reservations about having their children reintegrated into the regular classroom out of concerns over the loss of LD services. Other studies show that parents are serious about obtaining adequate LD services. Leiter and Krauss (2004) in examining the level of parental satisfaction with LD services reported that parents who were offered the full scope of their rights were most likely to be satisfied with the services received. Lake and Billingsley (2000) identified several factors that contributed to parental dissatisfaction with special education services including the school personnel's inability to sufficiently answer parents' questions, lack of parental knowledge, and frustrations resulting from negative attitudes of the members of the multidisciplinary team. As the composition of the group of counselors who have a personal awareness of learning disabilities could include a substantial number of parents, it is possible that this group regarded the inclusion of counselors on the multidisciplinary team as a plus in obtaining appropriate services for their children. Future research regarding counselors who have a personal awareness of learning disabilities seems warranted.

The open-ended comment question elicited an extremely strong response as 195 of the participants not only chose to answer this question, but many of them also gave extensive and elaborate answers. The majority of the comments focused on school counselors' support of the guidelines of the American Counselor Association National Model (ASCA), yet many participants reported feeling unprepared on the lone issue of the educationally-based tasks of

developing classroom accommodations. ASCA's guidelines indicate that school counselors should be members of the multidisciplinary team and should be specially trained in educational issues (ASCA National Model for School counseling Programs, 2003). Participants' responses to the comment question revealed that many counselors lack the specialized training. It is important to note that ASCA does not promote or require school counselors to be certified teachers, but rather emphasizes that school counselors should have some type of educational background or training. The prevailing tone of the responses to the comment question centered on counselors' feelings that without the educational training, the duties of serving on the multidiscipline team seemed frustrating, eroded self-efficacy, and interfered with other counseling duties. In spite of the frustrations and difficulties reported by some of the respondents on the comment question, all of the responses were supportive of ASCA's guidelines. The source of the negative comments seemed to lie in the absence of the specialized training needed to serve on the multidisciplinary team. Therefore, it appears that if all of ASCA's guidelines are followed, including the specialized educational training, there is overwhelming support for the implementation of ASCA's guidelines for addressing the needs of all students.

Limitations

Limitations of this study relate to sampling bias, collection of the data, and the design of the survey instrument. The first limitation that may have had an impact on this study involved sampling bias. As a result of participants not being required to respond to or to complete the ATLDI survey, members of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Southern Region who chose to respond to the sample may not have been representative of the entire population of ASCA members. In addition, the members of ASCA's southern region who chose to respond to the ATLDI survey may not have been representative of the national population of

ASCA members, or of the national population of school counselors. A further sampling bias limitation centered on sample representativeness, since the only persons who answered the survey were ASCA members, a group committed to professional development, who had internet and email access and skills. Sampling bias may have resulted as a result of necessity for respondents to have some knowledge of technological skills in order to complete the survey. Difficulties in sample characteristics include the disproportion of males (10%) to females (90%) in both the survey sample respondents and the membership of the American School Counselors Association. In a similar fashion, there was a disproportion in both the survey sample respondents and ASCA membership of counselors with doctoral degrees (6%) and counselors with master's degrees (90%).

A limitation associated with all email surveys involved refusal to respond due to privacy concerns. Additionally, it may have been common for individuals to delete email surveys resulting in the necessity for repeated contact attempts. Response rates might have been increased by the use of personalization of the addresses with the names of participants, but the lack of anonymity may have carried the risk of participants answering with socially desirable responses, and this approach, therefore, was not utilized.

Limitations in the design of the ATLDI included question construction. The survey instrument may not have accurately measured school counselors' attitudes, beliefs, and feelings regarding providing services to 504-only students. The ATLDI was also limited in its ability to account for changes in opinion that may have occurred over time and therefore could only measure the attitudes of respondents at the time that they answered the survey.

Another design limitation involves open-ended questions. Questions in this survey regarding years of experience and amounts of training were asked in an open-ended fashion

rather than through the use of a mutual exclusive “drop down menu.” Some participants used phrases such as, “I have my degree in special ed.” rather than exact numbers in their answers. These responses were omitted from the data. A further design limitation was the omission of knowledge-based questions. Although items in the survey solicited respondents’ perceptions of confidence in delivery services to special needs students, no questions were included to measure the respondents’ level of disability knowledge. As a result, participants who rated themselves high in their confidence to provide services may have been lacking in knowledge necessary to provide those services. Therefore, generalizations of the results are limited to self-perceptions regarding participants’ abilities in providing services. Finally, survey design was a limitation in items that duplicated demographic information. Questions pertaining to personal awareness of disabilities included being related to persons with disabilities as well as being acquainted with persons with disabilities. These questions could result in a duplication of responses as being related to a person with disabilities may automatically include being acquainted with a person with disabilities.

Implication for School Counselors and Counselor Educators

The results of this study were intended to bring greater awareness to both the school counseling community and to counselor education programs of the role and preparation of the school counselor in providing 504 services. By building on previous studies of school counselors and students with disabilities (Frye, 2005; Greene & Valesky, 1998; Milsom 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003), the results of this study contribute to the knowledge base of the counselor’s responsibilities for addressing the needs of all students. The findings of this study indicated that virtually all of the counselors who responded to the ATLDI strongly support the guidelines of the American School Counselor Association National Model. On all items related to counselors’

roles in providing services to 504-only students, the counselors in this study agreed with ASCA's directives. Keeping in mind that less than half of all school counselor education programs require training related to disabilities (Milsom, 2002), it is not surprising that this study found counselors' only concerns regarding 504-only students to be issues of feeling unprepared and anxious about services related to the development of classroom accommodations. In spite of feeling unprepared, these counselors still agreed upon the necessity of those services.

By looking at the results of this study against the backdrop of ASCA guidelines, counselor education programs could examine the school counseling curriculum to see if additional training or field experience is needed to adequately prepare school counselors to address the educationally-based needs of all students. This would be especially important for students who are not trained in pedagogy as K-12 teachers, but want to work as K-12 school counselors.

Due to the academic, social, and emotional risks to students with learning disabilities (Bender, Rosenkrans, & Crane, 1999; Bryan, Burstein, & Egrul, 2004; Kavale & Mostert, 1998; MacMaster, Donovan, & MacIntyre, 2000; Tabassam & Grainger, 2002; Wenz-Gross & Siperstein, 1998) it seems essential that school counselors possess the knowledge necessary to feel confident and be capable of serving as advocates for students with disabilities. ASCA stipulates that school counselors should work on behalf of students to eliminate obstacles to academic success so that all students may have access to a quality curriculum (ASCA National Model, 2003).

Findings of this study indicated that counselors reported negative attitudes in the area of developing accommodation plans for 504-only students. This suggests that tasks related to curriculum issues might be source of frustration for many school counselors. Furthermore, in

light of studies which revealed that regular classroom teachers lack knowledge pertaining to students with learning disabilities (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2000; Monahan, Marino, & Miller, 1996; Stoler, 1992), it seems imperative for school counselors to be adequately prepared to collaborate and consult with teachers and to serve as a prominent member of the multidisciplinary team.

A final implication of the results of this study pertains to the school counselors themselves. The findings suggest that counselors who have completed several LD workshops felt more confident in their abilities on educationally-based services for 504-only students. In the absence of prior training, it seems likely that counselors who elect to attend LD workshops may increase their confidence level in providing services to special needs students. Clearly, this result should serve as an indication of the value workshops have for learning the needed aspects about LD services.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should continue to focus on school counselor training and the role of the school counselor with 504-only students. In particular, future studies should focus on the social, emotional, and academic needs of 504-only students, as well as the strategies school counselors can employ to meet those needs. In addition, there is a need for more research on teachers' attitudes towards 504-only students, as well as the impact those attitudes may have on students emotionally and academically.

The continued placement of school counselors into positions that require an understanding and knowledge of the needs of students with learning disabilities indicates that counselor preparation, field experience, and personal awareness must be brought to the attention of the counseling community (Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom & Akos, 2002). In addition to

counselor's attitudes toward 504 services, future research should also focus on the extent of counselor knowledge in the field of learning disabilities. In particular, research should look at the long term impact that working with a population for which one has not been trained has on counselors.

Further, the responses to the open-ended question in this survey revealed a number of areas that merit further study including, the appropriateness of school counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team, school counselors developing accommodation plans, and the ability for school counselors to advocate for students and still maintain a positive relationship with other school personnel.

A replication of this study using a more representative sample of the nation's school counselors would be beneficial. A paper and pencil survey used along with an electronic survey would help to ensure that counselors without email and internet access and counselors who were not members of ASCA would also be included in the sample. In addition, qualitative studies of school counselors' experiences with 504-only students could greatly enhance an in depth understanding of the counselors' role. Qualitative studies on the experiences of 504-only students and their families would also provide deeper insight into the particular needs of these students.

In light of the national push (NCLB) towards increased accountability within the school systems, it would be beneficial if the counseling community had research findings that demonstrated school counselors' success in the elimination of academic inequities, and the closure in the achievement gap among students of color, poor students, or underachieving students and their more advantaged peers.

As this study suggests--school counselors feel the most uncomfortable in dealing with educationally-based task, research is needed on the impact this lack of confidence has on counselors' ability to successfully advocate for students especially in regards to obtaining appropriate accommodations on high stakes testing. In particular, it is important to explore college counselors' ability to successfully advocate for students taking the SAT, ACT, or other entrance or admission exams. In a similar sense, future studies could also examine whether school counselors have the knowledge and confidence necessary to advocate with school administrators to secure appropriate counselor duties within the school.

Conclusions

This study examined the impact of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness on school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504 students with learning disabilities. The goals of this study were to: (a) identify school counselors' attitudes toward providing 504 services; (b) to examine the extent that preparation, field experience, and personal awareness of disabilities had on those attitudes; and (c) to compare the attitudes of school counselors based on various demographic differences.

Findings of this study indicate that school counselors overwhelmingly support the guidelines set forth in the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) National Model for school counseling programs. Included in ASCA's model is a description of school counselors as being specially trained educators who are responsible for calling attention to school situations that defeat, frustrate, and hinder students' academic success, and who have the leadership ability to assess school needs, identify issues, and collaborate with others to develop solutions. In addition, ASCA maintains that school counselors have state credentials, possesses a master's degree, and if they are not certified teachers, they should have received some training in student

learning styles, classroom behavior management, curriculum and instruction, student assessment and student achievement (ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs, 2003).

The findings of this study demonstrated that although school counselors overwhelming support ASCA's guidelines, few have the full credentials outlined by the ASCA model. A majority of the counselors in this study had little or no educational training and reported feeling unprepared to address educationally-based tasks such as developing classroom accommodations, or acting as a consultant to the school staff on learning disability issues. In contrast, one third of the participants in this study had educational training and reported feeling prepared and confident about all areas of academic and disability services. These results support the conclusions of previous research which indicated that counselor preparation and years of experience were found to be related to more positive attitudes toward inclusion (Greene & Valesky, 1998; Greer & Greer, 1995; Milsom, 2002; Milsom & Akos, 2003). Findings from earlier studies also show that many school counselors feel unprepared to provide individual services to students with learning disabilities (Milsom, 2002), and believe that providing services associated with inclusion is an area outside of their training and expertise (Greene & Valesky, 1998).

The open-ended question requesting counselors' comments regarding 504 services elicited an overwhelming response. More than one half of the total number of participants chose to answer this optional question. Their feedback indicated high levels of frustrations over their role with special needs students. The comments echo the findings in this study regarding counselor preparation and confidence.

The most prominent theme to emerge from the open-ended question was that counselors felt that they lacked adequate training on learning disabilities. Other noteworthy themes related to this perceived lack of sufficient preparation including, counselors' beliefs that it is not

appropriate for them to chair the multidisciplinary team, and the opinion that 504 responsibilities were too time consuming. Many of the counselors who had no training in education reported that they had been assigned as chair of the multidisciplinary team and were expected to coordinate the development and implementation of accommodation plans. In addition, some counselors reported that teachers seemed to lack knowledge about learning disabilities and often times resisted providing classroom accommodations. Some of these counselors had ethical concerns about their role as monitor of teacher compliance of the accommodation plans. These counselors reported that the duty to monitor teachers created an adversarial relationship with some faculty members. In addition, a small number of counselors revealed that their schools discouraged providing services to 504 students. Others stated that they thought the 504 system was being abused by too many ineligible students being allowed to receive 504 accommodations.

Responses to the comment question also contain positive themes indicating successful implementation of ASCA's guidelines. Clearly, school counselors' experiences in providing 504 services and their roles within the school system is an area that requires further research. This study touched upon a few of the issues involving students with mild learning disabilities, and the role of the school counselor. It seems apparent that school counselors are eager to share their thoughts and take part in efforts to improve schools' abilities to address the needs of all students, while also enhancing the school counseling experience.

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Appendix A

ATLDI

ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING DISABILITIES INSTRUMENT

SECTION I: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please provide the following personal information:

1. Gender:

☐ Male
☐ Female

2. Ethnicity:

☐ African American
☐ Asian American
☐ Caucasian/European American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Native American
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Other _____

3. Background:

Please check all that apply

☐ Yes ☐ No Certified Teacher
☐ Yes ☐ No Certified School Counselor
☐ Yes ☐ No Employed as a School Counselor
☐ Yes ☐ No LPC
☐ Yes ☐ No NCC
☐ Yes ☐ No Social Worker
☐ Yes ☐ No School Psychologist
☐ Yes ☐ No Currently employed in a public school
☐ Yes ☐ No Currently employed in a private or parochial school

Current work setting – Please check all that apply

☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ Secondary ☐ Post Secondary ☐ other

4. Highest Degree Earned

☐ Bachelor ☐ Master ☐ Doctorate

5. ☐ Total number of years of teaching experience
6. ☐ Total number of years of counseling experience
7. ☐ Number of learning disability courses taken
8. ☐ Number of workshops on learning disabilities taken
9. ☐ Number of years of field experience with students with disabilities (include practicum and internship)

Please check all that apply

10. ☐ Yes ☐ No Have you been diagnosed with a learning disability?
11. ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you believe you have an undiagnosed learning disability?
12. ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you closely acquainted with anyone who has a learning disability?
13. ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you related to anyone who has a learning disability? If so, what is the nature of the relationship? _____
14. ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you have a physical disability?
15. ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you related to anyone who has a physical disability? If so, what is the nature of the relationship? _____

SECTION II: THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The following statements regarding students with learning disabilities pertain to 504-only students who for the purpose of this study are defined as students who do not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, but who do qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for accommodations given by the regular education teacher within the regular classroom. An IEP is an Individualized Education Program that utilizes a written plan to describe the educational needs, goals and objectives for each child with a disability.

Please read the descriptions of school counselor roles and indicate the extent to which you feel the role is an inappropriate or appropriate role for a school counselor. Your selections should reflect your own personal opinions on the appropriateness of the role for a school counselor independent of the expectations of your school, national standards, or professional organization's model.

ROLE

	Inappropriate							Appropriate						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
1. Analyze standardized tests.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
2. Maintain all students' educational records.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7			

3. Advocate for students at IEP meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Handle scheduling of all new students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Perform disciplinary actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Collaborate with teachers on instructional intervention strategies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Develop academic accommodation plans for students with learning disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Coordinate standardized testing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Develop orientation activities for students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Assist in identifying special needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Provide small group counseling in regards to academic needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Serve on the multidisciplinary team for students with learning disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Provide counseling support groups for parents of students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Provide small group self-esteem counseling to students with learning disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Provide small group social skill counseling to students with learning disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION III: BELIEFS REGARDING CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

The following statements regarding students with learning disabilities pertain to 504-only students who for the purpose of this study are defined as students who do not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, but who do qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for accommodations given by the regular education teacher within the regular classroom.

Please read the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement regarding classroom accommodation for 504-only students. Your agreement ratings should reflect your personal opinions independent of the expectations of your school, national standards, or professional organization's model.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
1. Provide both oral and printed directions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							

2. Allow student to dictate test answers into a tape recorder.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Provide two sets of books so that one set may be kept at home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Give tests in separate room supervised by a proctor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Allow student to tape record class notes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Do not take points off for misspellings in content area subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Allow the use of books on audio tape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Allow student to give oral answers on tests.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Provide student with a copy of the notes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Provide page numbers to help student find the answers to in class assignments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Give directions in small steps.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Provide student with the same number of problems, but put fewer on each page.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION IV:

The following statements regarding students with learning disabilities pertain to 504-only students who for the purpose of this study are defined as students who do not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, but who do qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for accommodations given by the regular education teacher within the regular classroom.

Please circle the number that matches the extent of your reactions to the following statements.

- School Counselors chairing the multidisciplinary team which determines plans and placement for 504-only students

Unproductive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Productive
Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Calm
Unprepared	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Prepared
Burdensome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Easy
Ethically Questionable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Justifiable

2. Teachers providing classroom accommodations to 504 students

Unproductive	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Productive
Anxious	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Calm
Unprepared	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Prepared
Burdensome	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Easy
Ethically Questionable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Justifiable

3. School counselors serving as consultants to the school staff regarding the characteristics of 504-only students

Unproductive	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Productive
Anxious	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Calm
Unprepared	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Prepared
Burdensome	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Easy
Ethically Questionable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Justifiable

Please use the space below for any comments you may have regarding your opinions or experiences with 504-only students and/or 504 accommodations.

Appendix B

Electronic Messages to Participants

First Electronic Message to Participants

Dear School Counselor,

I would like to request your assistance with my dissertation study titled *The Impact of Preparation, Field Experience, and Personal Awareness on Counselors' Attitudes toward Providing Services to 504 Students with Learning Disabilities*. I have developed a survey (Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument or ATLDI) that asks school counselors to respond to statements regarding providing services to 504-only students with learning disabilities. 504-only students are students with learning disabilities who qualify for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but who do not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As a result, 504-only students are eligible only for classroom accommodations provided by the regular education teacher within the regular education classroom. I plan to use the data from the survey to examine the differences in school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students based upon various levels of the counselors' preparation, field experience and personal awareness of disabilities.

All information that you provide is anonymous; there will be no way of identifying you after you submit your answers. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

If you are willing to assist me with this important step in my study, please click the following link to connect to the ATLDI:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=188071774927>

Completion and electronic submission of the ATLDI will indicate your consent for participation in this study.

If you are not connected automatically, then you can cut-and-paste the link into the address box on your web browser and then press enter.

Your answers on this survey and the comparisons of ratings of school counselors' attitudes will provide important information regarding school counselor's attitudes, beliefs, and training in regards to working with students with learning disabilities. The data may also assist in shaping the curriculum of future school counseling programs, and help in defining school counselors' roles within the school system.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence. The risks associated with this study are minimal. Some individuals may tire while answering the questions. If you would like additional information about this study or if you would like to discuss any discomforts you may experience, please send your request to the principal investigator for this study, Dawn Romano, at dironsid@uno.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Louis V. Paradise, by email, louis.paradise@uno.edu or by telephone, 504-280-6026, for more information regarding this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation,

Dawn M. Romano, M.Ed., NCC, LPC
Doctoral Candidate
University of New Orleans
348 Bicentennial Education Building
University of New Orleans, Lakefront Campus
2000 Lakeshore Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70148
504-280-6026
dironsid@uno.edu

Second Electronic Message to Participants

Dear School Counselor,

If you have already participated in this study by completing the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument (ATLDI), thank you again for your participation.

If you have not had the opportunity to participate, please take approximately 20 minutes to read the following information and follow the hyperlink to complete the ATLDI.

I have developed a survey (Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument or ATLDI) that asks school counselors to respond to statements regarding providing services to 504-only students with learning disabilities. 504-only students are students with learning disabilities who qualify for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but who do not qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As a result, 504-only students are eligible only for classroom accommodations provided by the regular education teacher within the regular education classroom. I plan to use the data from the survey to examine the differences in school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students based upon various levels of the counselors' preparation, field experience and personal awareness of disabilities.

All information that you provide is anonymous; there will be no way of identifying you after you submit your answers. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

If you are willing to assist me with this important step in my study, please click the following link to connect to the ATLDI:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

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If you are not connected automatically, then you can cut-and-paste the link into the address box on your web browser and then press enter.

Your answers on this survey and the comparisons of ratings of school counselors' attitudes will provide important information regarding school counselor's attitudes, beliefs, and training in regards to working with students with learning disabilities. The data may also assist in shaping the curriculum of future school counseling programs, and help in defining school counselors' roles within the school system.

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Thank you in advance for your participation,

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348 Bicentennial Education Building
University of New Orleans, Lakefront Campus
2000 Lakeshore Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70148
504-280-6026
dironsid@uno.edu

Final Electronic Message to Participants

Dear School Counselor,

Thank you to everyone who participated in my dissertation study titled *The Impact of Preparation, Field Experience, and Personal Awareness on Counselors' Attitudes toward Providing Services to 504 Students with Learning Disabilities* by completing the Attitudes Toward Learning Disabilities Instrument (ATLDI). The study, which ran from February 15, 2006 to March 31, 2006 has now been concluded.

The data from the survey has been used to examine the differences in school counselors' attitudes toward providing services to 504-only students based upon various levels of the counselors' preparation, field experience and personal awareness of disabilities.

If you would like to receive a copy of the final results, please send an email request to Dawn Romano at dironsid@uno.edu.

If you would like additional information about this study or if you would like to discuss any discomforts you may have experienced, please send your request to the principal investigator for this study, Dawn Romano, at dironsid@uno.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Louis V. Paradise, by email, louis.paradise@uno.edu or by telephone, 504-280-6026, for more information regarding this study.

Thank you for your participation,

Dawn M. Romano, M.Ed., NCC, LPC
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Appendix C

IRB Approval

*University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans*

Form Number: 03Feb06

(please refer to this number in all future correspondence concerning this protocol)

Principal Investigator: Louis Parache

Title: Professor

Department: Educational leadership, counseling, and foundations

College: Education

Project Title: The impact of preparation, field experience, and personal awareness on counselors' attitudes towards providing services to section 504 students with learning disabilities

Dates of Proposed Project Period From: 8-15-06 to 8-14-07

Approval Status:

☐ Full Board Review

☒ Approved Date: 2-8-06

☒ Expedite

☐ Deferred Date:

☐ Exempt

☐ Disapproved Date:

☐ Project requires review more than annually. Review every _____ months.

*approval is for 1 year from approval date only and may be renewed yearly.

1st continuation Signature of IRB Chair

Date:

2nd continuation Signature of IRB Chair

Date:

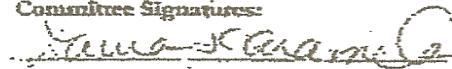
3rd continuation Signature of IRB Chair

Date:

4th continuation Signature of IRB Chair

Date:

Committee Signatures:



Laura Scaramella, Ph.D. (Chair)

Patricia Jenkins, Ph.D.

Anthony Kontos, Ph.D. (Associate chair)

Richard B. Speaker, Ph.D.

Gary Talarchek, Ph.D.

Kari Walsh

Kathleen Whalen, LSW

L. Allen Witt, Ph.D.

Version 2.1 2/8/06

VITA

Dawn M. Romano earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science in 1982, and certification in Secondary Social Studies Education in 1984 from the University of New Orleans. She earned a Master of Education degree in Counselor Education in 1995 from the University of New Orleans and completed the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education at the University of New Orleans in May 2006.

She is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), National Certified Counselor (NCC), and Board Certified LPC Supervisor. Dawn is a member of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES), Association for Specialist in Group Work (ASGW), Louisiana Multicultural Counseling Association (LMCA), Counselors for Social Justice, Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA).

Dawn has experience as a middle school teacher and a PK-8 school counselor. She has presented at local, state, national, and international conferences on a wide array of counseling topics including school counselor roles with learning disabled students, legal and ethical issues in counseling, positive psychology techniques for middle school students, HIPAA record keeping, managing suicidal clients, executive and life coaching, ethical dilemmas in counseling children, and Jungian sandplay techniques. Dawn also has published articles on positive psychology techniques for K-12 career counseling, and Jungian sandplay techniques.