

BUILDING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY IN TEACHER AND COUNSELOR COLLABORATION

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With the current tide of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment, it is vital that educators and counselors incorporate strategies to meet the social and emotional needs of English-language learners. This case study investigated the impact of teacher practice and collaboration with counselors around culturally and linguistically responsive instruction for newcomer ELLs in a small urban high school over one academic year. Participants in the study included 9 teachers, counselors, and administrators interviewed individually by the researcher and 12 students who participated in focus groups. The researcher also conducted observations and took field notes throughout the year during both planning meetings and classroom instruction. Finally, the researcher analyzed documents including data from school climate surveys and audits. Using thematic analysis, the researcher first engaged in three rounds of coding in order to identify and refine potential key patterns across the data. Analytic memos were utilized as a way to begin the process of analysis. Later, the researcher triangulated between the different forms of data to corroborate themes and patterns. Findings suggest that school partnerships, distributed leadership, and collaboration can help generate a welcoming climate that addresses student needs both inside and outside the classroom.

In the current political climate, it is more important than ever that teachers, counselors, and administrators incorporate both classroom and schoolwide strategies to meet the learning, social, and emotional needs of refugee and immigrant students. A welcoming classroom and school culture is vital for English-language learners (ELLs), as this population is often stigmatized and many teachers feel ill-prepared

to support their learning needs (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Lucas et al., 2008). Students often come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and may not be oriented to school culture in the United States. Since research has shown that the “achievement gap” also masks a larger, cultural opportunity gap for students (Quaglia et al., 2010), schooling should help students develop their full academic, social, and emotional selves. Moreover, education policy makers frequently categorize students into subgroups, often creating false notions of homogeneity, particularly among ELLs, which can be detrimental to students if the result is that their needs are misinterpreted (Garcia et al., 2008). Educators and counselors who practice

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a more complex approach to diversity can help their students overcome these kinds of harmful generalizations, which may lead to the wrong kind of approach to supporting student needs.

Teachers and administrators alone cannot bear the burden of addressing student complexities in their classrooms. My goal was to research two questions: First, what are the most effective practices for working with students with diverse cultural and linguistic characteristics? Second, what are examples of instructional practices and collaborative partnerships that educators can implement in order to foster culturally and linguistically responsive classroom environments? By examining some of these practices through a case study approach, I hoped to provide a platform for educators to evaluate and discuss their own collaborative practices. Moreover, more exposure to practices in secondary settings opens up possibilities for examining specific strategies in later studies in more depth.

In framing my research, I drew upon Gee's (2008) sociocultural approach to literacy as vital to building the kind of community students need. According to this approach, literacy is not simply background knowledge for learning; it also draws on family and cultural resources to inform the approaches we use to teach students (Moll, 2014). Milner (2010) advocates that teacher training must address the ways that teacher practice is influenced by a teacher's mindset and beliefs. Educators must be mindful that "low expectations and deficit mindsets" affect the way students are served and must be challenged to think from an asset-based perspective when organizing their instruction (p. 15). Milner also addresses the need to challenge a "context neutral mindset" in education (p. 37). School-based personnel must address the specific environments in which they work and take them into account when designing instruction and interventions. Educators must consider the cultural and linguistic variation in the community of students and teachers in their schools as well as the racial differences among their students and how these may affect student identity and teacher approaches to instruction. More tools are needed to help teachers and counselors unpack the complexity of the students in their classrooms and to relate

to one another better and design interventions that will more fully support students' needs.

Another motivation for exploring school-based climate practices for ELLs is that these students often receive false referrals to special education and suffer from greater than average suspension rates. According to recent federal research on civil rights, Black students, Latino students, and ELLs experience the highest rates of suspension (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Although ELLs in elementary schools, for example, are suspended at lower rates than most other subgroups, the secondary school data reveal "an extraordinary increase in their risk for suspension" (Losen et al., 2015, pp. 4–5). Losen (2015) also noted the need for policy and practices to help address inequities in public education associated with exclusionary discipline practices. These exclusionary practices increase the need to examine classroom settings where school-based personnel are actively working to understand the successes and challenges associated with creating a welcoming environment.

Moreover, I am interested in the role of non-cognitive factors in student success and the notion that "intelligence is embedded in both the environment and in socio-cultural processes" (Farrington et al., 2012, p. 4). As a result of this shift in thinking and evidence of the need to reform school climates, many schools and districts have developed metrics to measure social and emotional learning and climates in schools (Thapa et al., 2012). It is vital to create a safe environment for learning, particularly for newcomer emergent bilinguals who may have experienced trauma or difficulties prior to their arrival to the United States (Decapua & Marshall, 2011) in addition to racism or stereotyping upon arrival. Studies in counseling (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004, 2007; Colbert, 1996; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007) suggest that counselors are key to partnerships with both internal stakeholders and community members and can help bridge the cultural gap among schools, families, and communities. Researchers also show that the ratio of counselors to students may be correlated with student achievement (Lapan et al., 2012). Bryan and Holcomb-McCoy (2007) suggest that another task for researchers is to "implement collaborative field research to study what partnerships school counselors are

building, why and how they build them, and the outcomes of such partnerships” (p. 452). The present study is also, therefore, an attempt to explore the characteristics of school structures and the collaborative partnerships that may influence school climate and culture.

Method

The present study was completed over one academic year within an urban secondary school composed entirely of ELLs who at the time of the study had been in the country for four years or less. Approximately 10 languages were represented at the small newcomer school with 421 students in grades 9 through 12. The student body included 95% ELLs, 5% former ELLs; 8% of these were special education students. Boys accounted for 57% of the students enrolled, and girls accounted for 43%. The average attendance rate for the 2013–2014 school year was 85%. The student demographics consisted of 20% Asian; 29% Black, composed primarily of Haitian and African students; 38% Hispanic; and 13% who identified as White. There were approximately 25 staff members including two school counselors, a literacy coach, an assistant principal (AP) and principal, a business manager, two special education teachers, and several content area teachers, some of whom were TESOL-certified.

The school was identified during a pilot phase through a screening process that included observations and informal interviews. Through this process, I learned that the school had created culturally and linguistically responsive intervention practices with its students based on student screening in home language literacy. After the initial process, I conducted purposive sampling to identify a grade-level team of teachers and their counseling team who agreed to be observed both in meetings and in their classrooms. The rationale for studying the work of a grade-level team of counselors and teachers was that the results would reflect their common relationships working with a specific subgroup of students in the school.

Design

The study’s design was a qualitative case study exploring descriptive practices through observations and semi-structured interviews as well as the collection of school attendance

statistics, and district survey data from 2011 to 2015. In conducting fieldwork, I was on site approximately one to two days per week for the duration of the school year, approximately forty weeks. In order to explore the types of collaborative practices employed at the school, I observed approximately 14 teacher-team planning sessions and four counseling and teacher collaborative team meetings at two different grade levels. I listened and took detailed notes of what was being discussed in the meeting and in each teacher’s classroom. I observed 5 teachers in their classrooms either two or three times weekly to record teacher interactions with both students and teachers. I also interviewed a total of 9 teachers, counselors, administrators, and interns individually and conducted student focus groups with a total of 12 students to gather data from multiple stakeholders.

In order to protect confidentiality, all educator and student names used in the study are pseudonyms. Using field notes, I described educator interactions with students during and, in some cases, outside of formal instruction. These observations and interviews were triangulated with the school data and survey results, specifically from the New York City Department of Education Quality Review Guides and School Learning Surveys from 2013–2014 and 2015–2016. In the analysis, I coded for themes that emerged from the documents while capturing trends from school-based data.

Instruments

I created protocols for the semi-structured interviews based on the research questions for stakeholders who agreed to participate. These included teachers, the principal, the counseling team (made up of a school counselor, a social worker, and 3 social work interns). Additionally, two focus groups of students were purposively sampled from the ninth through the twelfth grades based on introductory conversations. From those students who were interested, I obtained informed consent from both them and their legal guardian(s).

In order to facilitate observations, I utilized the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) (Powell & Rightmyer, 2011) to guide my observations, focusing specifically on the areas of (a) classroom caring and teacher dispositions, (b) classroom climate and

physical environment, (c) pedagogy, and (d) sociopolitical consciousness. This tool enhanced my examination of what, if any, best practices surfaced around student relationships, the physical classroom environment, and efforts of the teachers to counter negative stereotypes and images. In addition, I collected classroom photos and documents that aligned with practices.

Analysis

Each observation was recorded, stored and coded in NVivo. The data collected from these observations displayed the assessment and instructional strategies that teachers utilized to understand and become knowledgeable about their students in both formal and informal ways and, where possible, student reactions to these strategies. After coding for the research questions, I looked for themes that emerged around collaboration and partnerships. After one round of coding in which I identified segments of texts that corresponded to emerging codes, I wrote analytic memos, which, Emerson et al. (2011) suggest, help the researcher to step back from the field and develop broader themes and arguments. I used the memos as both a reflective and analytic tool and as a support in identifying the first round of codes. I conducted a second and third round of coding to further refine the codes for the most salient themes that emerged as Saldana (2013) suggests in his recommendations for “themeing the data” (p. 175). For example, I reviewed the observation data in classroom instruction for evidence of a welcoming classroom culture that also challenged issues of discrimination and encouraged critical thinking about culturally sensitive issues. In the coding process, I reviewed interview and focus group data in order to identify potential themes about counselor, teacher, and student perceptions of the classroom environment, cultural sensitivity, and teacher-counselor partnerships. As an additional step in the process, I triangulated interview, focus group, and school survey and auditing data in order to identify recurring themes.

Issues of Internal Validity

In order to counter my role and bias as a researcher and observer, I employed member checking for the final draft of the study, a recommended way to provide participants an

opportunity to engage with the data and identify any errors (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). I invited the educators and key students involved in the study to read the draft and ensure quotations accurately represented their point of view, particularly for the interview and focus group data. The software NVivo assisted me to triangulate data from multiple sources to ensure that the themes that emerged were represented through multiple data points. For example, themes that only relied on interview data from one stakeholder and were not also supported by other kinds of data were not included in the final analysis.

Results

The results of analysis showed that effective practices for working with students with diverse cultural and linguistic characteristics in this setting existed in three major areas: school climate, school leadership, and school-based support structures. I present these themes and the supporting evidence from interview and focus group data, observations and field notes, and, where applicable, document analysis. Moreover, in response to the research question exploring examples of potentially effective partnerships, the results showed that counselor-teacher partnerships emerged as a theme of potentially effective school practice, particularly from interviews among all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators and students. A few key characteristics of strategies and partnerships emerged from the study that may help inform potentially impactful school-based practices to support student learning and emotional well-being.

School Climate

As discussed, the difficult transitions that many newcomer students, particularly ELLs, must undergo as they enter American high schools is overwhelming, compounding the social and psychological stressors that all adolescents already experience. First and foremost, the data from the study showed that all students interviewed in their early years of placement felt supported by teachers and counselors in everything from social and emotional support to filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA). Students disclosed,

both individually and in groups, that the social worker and counselors on staff were a source of support whenever needed. One student, Fatima, recognized that this kind of support did not occur everywhere:

One example is my counselor, Ms. Li. She is actually helping us for all the college things, for FAFSA, for plan [*sic*] for college. How to do all that. I have a cousin. He go [*sic*] to the other school. It's April already and no one helps them to do their college application[s], their FAFSA. Usually, I have to go over there, and I help my cousin for that. When I asked them, "Your teachers did not help?" he said, "They don't care."

Fatima was grateful for the support and recognized that, at times, this was a unique experience compared to what her friends and family in neighboring schools faced. All of the students in the focus group were able to name some kind of support that they had received from the counselors or the teachers and the ways that it helped them navigate their high school experience.

School climate survey data confirmed teacher, student, and family satisfaction in terms of school climate. In 2013–2014, the school survey showed that 86% of students who responded felt that their school offered a variety of

programs, classes, and activities to keep them interested in school, and 90% of them said that they felt welcome in their school. Eighty-two percent of students felt safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria. Ninety-eight percent of parents who responded were satisfied with the education that their child was receiving. Moreover, teachers were satisfied with the safety of the learning environment. For example, 97% of teachers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that order and discipline were maintained in the school, and 90% of those said that they could get help to address student behavior issues. One hundred percent said that they felt safe and that most students treated adults with respect.

The survey design changed slightly under a new district administration in 2014-2015; however, issues related to school culture remained positive overall, even with a different cohort of students. Students reported that they felt that teachers meaningfully acknowledged their cultural background in terms of the curriculum and in communication practices with families. Of all the students who responded to five specific sub-questions about trust in 2014-2015 (Table 1), 90% agreed or strongly agreed with statements about positive perceptions of emotional and physical safety.

Table 1

2014-15 District Learning Environment Survey: Student Responses to Statements about Trust.

Survey Statement	% Strongly Agree/Agree	% Strongly Disagree/Disagree
I feel safe and comfortable with my teachers at this school.	92	8
There is at least one adult in the school that I can confide in.	87	13
My teachers treat me with respect.	94	6
When my teachers tell me not to do something, I know they have a good reason.	94	6
My teachers always keep their promises.	87	13
My teachers will always listen to students' ideas.	94	6

Leadership

According to data in the interviews, one of the key factors in establishing a strong school climate was the principal, who was herself the child of immigrants and a former bilingual teacher and social worker. She explained how, as an assistant principal in collaboration with the former principal, she incorporated her counseling team as a building block of the school's culture in order to deal with difficulties of immigration and also of loss:

The way that we run our school is with the understanding that [many of] our students have been separated from their parents because of their immigration story, and they suffer losses. Losses of the relationship with their mom, grandma, or losing those people that they are attached to when they come here. They lose their parents. They've suffered trauma, death, all the things you see in the newspaper. You realize that school has to do a lot of things that an American family would do, because they don't know the system. They don't know how to navigate.

The principal here addressed the need to have experts in the building who can help students, particularly those who have experienced trauma, to deal with their emotions. Often, the effects of student trauma affected the adults as well. The principal described the importance of self-care for teachers as well as students in maintaining a positive and welcoming culture in the school.

In addition to principal leadership, there was a clear role for teacher leadership in the school, with teachers leading meetings across both grade-level and discipline teams and committees. The school leader provided not only structured support in counseling and social and emotional well-being but also opportunities for teachers to learn and take on leadership roles.

Social and Emotional Support Structures

In a district document the auditor wrote that an area for celebration in the school was the existence of "structures for a positive learning environment, inclusive culture, and student success." According to interviews and focus group data, the counseling team and their interns also offered support groups. These

included a variety of themes. One, for example, was targeted to students who had experienced the loss of a parent or family member. A social work intern reflected on her experience leading such a group:

They're in very different places and a lot of them have just lost a parent. I think it's important we're like a team and I'm keeping tabs on who could use more support. Some students are saying "Oh, I'm already accepting this loss ...," and other people are saying that they're not sleeping because it's so fresh in their mind. ... I try to check in with the students afterwards if it seems like it's really tough for them in the group.

Students in the focus group said both the individual and the group counseling sessions were helpful to them as sources of support.

The social worker also helped facilitate peer mediation as part of a restorative justice program. Sometimes she chose students who struggled themselves with conflict and asked them to help her resolve other conflicts. For example, one student translated for another student who was struggling with anger management. Afterward, the student told the social worker this experience helped her: "You know, Miss, with me helping you do that, I just figured out how to do it [for] myself." As a result of this experience, the counselor often involved students in some aspect of the conflict mediation process to help them consider how strategies work in action. These and other experiences from the study showed that the counseling team served to supplement family networks and provide relief from social and psychological stressors that may impede student learning, growth, and development in the school or classroom setting.

Another example of a school support structure was the advisory class, a classroom environment where students met three times per week in a classroom setting, set goals, and got to know one another. They participated in academic projects to support learning together but also to foster trust and communication. One student described this class as having a positive influence on her. In describing this teacher, she said more generally, "One thing that I noticed about my teacher[s], they have a lot of patience. ... I don't really see, ever in four years that any

of my teachers have lost patience in a student because he don't [sic] understand, or he don't [sic] speak English." In addition to providing social and emotional support, the advisory class provided a structure to promote college and career preparation. The advisory class, through its emphasis on college readiness and by fostering trust and relationships, allowed teachers to explore challenging themes with students. For example, students explored the controversial topic of gender in advisory class by creating a group collage, which was the product of intense discussion and activity according to students and teachers. One student said the activity challenged gender stereotypes and what a man or woman "cannot or should not do." One of the seniors, an Arabic-speaking student, cited this as one of the most influential projects of his high school career:

This one changed our minds about the way we think about women. I support women in everything. They should be in every place as a man. This project gave me more ideas and thoughts about women, for example, "How should we treat the women in our society?"

The advisory class, by providing a foundation of social and emotional support, allowed students to explore more controversial themes that required trust in order to discuss them with one another.

Counselor-Teacher Partnerships

Partnerships in classroom instruction. Through my research and interviews with teachers, it became clear that counselors played a role in shaping differentiation for students and behavior in the classroom. This is best illustrated through a story told by a teacher. Annie, a science teacher, referred to the support of counselors in her attempts to help a student cope in one of her classes. Annie described this experience:

I know that you probably know Viktor. We'll use him as an example. He has been seeing one of the interns, and I feel like he's changed a lot since the beginning of the year. Last year we had a student pass away, and he had graduated already, but he was close with Viktor. They had been friends. ... so he was profoundly affected by this friend's

death. ... He was just disruptive every day in my class. I couldn't figure out how to help him stay focused and not think about his friend. I tried everything. Nothing was working, because he was traumatized from this experience. At this point, I was at the end of my rope. Guidance had been working with him this whole time, and it was a really slow process. It took months. They communicated this to me. I feel like they helped him cope. They helped him come up with strategies ... instead of exploding. There are times when I can see him getting angry and frustrated, and before he would just storm out or create a big scene and yell, but now he doesn't. He's not disruptive, at all. He's doing all of his work. He's like a model student. He participates. He contributes to the class community.

This anecdote is one of several that demonstrated ways that members of the school counseling team worked with students and with teachers to help students self-regulate. In this example, Viktor benefitted from his teacher and counselor's partnership: their collaboration led to a strategy that could help him cope with his grief over his friend's death and continue to participate in classroom instruction in a meaningful way.

The instructional coach helped clarify further how teachers worked with counselors to understand and support social and emotional needs in the classroom:

Sometimes, the guidance people are able to explain some behavioral patterns also that then inform differentiation. Having that understanding makes it possible for us to see, "This kid has this issue." Let's think about what we're asking, what we're demanding of the kid[s] when they're in class and make sure that it's reasonable, and make sure that they can still be successful even with all of this stuff happening in their life [sic].

An additional example of this kind of teacher-counselor partnership described by the instructional coach was exhibited in the way that the teachers and counselors worked together to monitor student behavior in classrooms and in the hallway. Often, they would patrol the hallways between classes to get a sense of how

students were interacting with others. For example, Amin, a student in the ninth grade, was unable to sit in the classroom for more than a few minutes at a time. It became clear through hallway and classroom monitoring that Amin required additional interventions. The coach described his situation:

He's one of those kids that he runs away from you when you say, "Hi." He's 11. We found out he's not 14 or 15. ... He came to our school when he was 10. He should have gone to elementary school instead of a high school. ... A lot of times he would run around in the hallway and this would contribute to presenting patterns of behavior. That provides data [to us].

Monitoring Amin's hallway behavior led to a conversation between the counselor and teacher to address the concern about his school age and develop an alternate plan that they could bring to the principal to address his behavior.

One counselor also described the importance of her role in following up with teachers and encouraging informal conversations to learn more about what's happening during the school day: "They know my door is always open. If they have any issues with a student, they know they can come here and talk about it to come up with solutions, to deal with the situation." This kind of informal support was also bolstered by the formal weekly meeting with counselors and teacher teams described in the next section.

Structured Collaboration between Counselors and Teacher Teams. In addition to the cultivation of these informal relationships, an integral part of the school ecology at the school site was the structured collaboration between teacher teams and the counseling team. Resoundingly, in interviews with teachers, administrators, and students, the role of the counseling team working with teacher teams was identified as a structure and practice that was essential to the school. The social worker was assigned to the ninth and tenth grade teams to provide more social and emotional support and to adapt to students' circumstance upon their entry into the school. Whereas the ninth and tenth grade teams focused more on the gateway experience of the newcomer students as they adapt to their new environment, the eleventh and twelfth grade teams focused on helping

students negotiate the path to college and career. One teacher described the difference in grade levels:

Ninth and tenth grade is a lot more big picture in terms of how kids are feeling. Are they feeling like this is a place where they can learn? Are their needs being met? Do the kids have what they need at home? There's a lot more of a focus on the individual students' situation[s] and what they, maybe, are dealing with at home and how that can impact the classroom.

Thus, with the different focus at different grade levels, the guidance counselor worked more intensively with the eleventh and twelfth grade teams. All of these teams met once per week to discuss specific students and action plans on how to support them. In addition to regular meetings, the counseling and teacher teams also followed up on issues that came up via email, in the hallways, and through the school's record-keeping and data system. In addition, there were separate weekly meetings where counselors discussed and strategized around the issues. In this way, they built their own community to help them troubleshoot the more difficult issues.

Jaime, the Social Studies teacher emphasized the importance of this collaboration as a former para-coordinator with the counseling team: "Caren is the person assigned to our team. This is my eighth year working with her, you know? Caren is so valuable to this school, I can't even express it." Periodically, collaborative counselor and teacher teams invited parents to a meeting, particularly with students they identified as at risk of dropping out. The goal of the meetings was not to denigrate the student but rather to provide him or her with more avenues of support and bring the family into partnership in this process.

The purpose of one such meeting I observed was for the teachers and counselors to collaborate with the family of one struggling student, Juan, who was having serious attendance issues. They brought in the parent to help bolster support for that student and provide a community approach to problem-solving for his needs. Jaime, the social studies teacher, led the meeting since he was the Spanish speaker on the team. He began with introductions and then translated in Spanish for Juan's mother

and from Spanish to English for the teachers throughout the session. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to talk about Juan's absences and some of his other issues and to discuss a solution.

All the teachers spoke during the meeting to contribute their impressions. The English teacher contributed first in the meeting: "When Juan comes to class he can be very helpful, but one of the things we're experiencing is that we can't help Juan because he doesn't come to class." Annie, the science teacher, spoke about science class to the group: "I've taught Juan since last year—what I've seen is a big change." She then turned to Juan.

I remember you were doing a project and you memorized everything. ... I noticed that you worked hard to do that presentation to make sure it was good. This year I don't see that same effort from you. In fact, I only saw you three times in the last month.

Gina, the math teacher, spoke next: "I am Juan's math teacher and advisor. He is pleasant and does work sometimes. But often he is absent, or, when he is here, he is late and leaves class a lot."

Jaime translated for Juan's mother who went on to say she had been back for only 15 days from the Dominican Republic. She said that one of the main reasons that Juan did not come to school was that he felt bad about his lack of education compared to other students. She also reminded the teachers that Juan was 17 years old and that she had to be there for her younger children. Often, Juan found it easier to join his father working in construction than to go to school. The mother said that she had many conversations with him, that she understood that he was embarrassed, but that he should know that the school wouldn't discriminate against him.

After some discussion, the teachers reminded Juan that many of the students in school were older and that they would like to help him if he were willing. Upon being asked about his struggles in school, Juan said, "Sometimes I don't feel like coming all day to school." Caren clarified that one of the contributing factors to Juan's reluctance to attending school was the length of the school day.

Their schools close at noon [in the Dominican Republic]. So, Juan, you're

not used to it. ... We need to figure out how to push you to get up and get to school, get you through the whole day. ... It feels good when you're in school doing the work ... and you were very proud of it. You can come to my office when you come to school. Is that cool? [Juan nods.] That will be a start. The more you come to school the more you're going to develop those skills, the more of a chance you're going to be successful. ... You're going to gain your confidence.

After escorting Juan and his mother out, Caren returned to debrief with the teachers. "Juan has to bring his mom home," she said with a sigh. "That's part of the problem. Will he come back? I hope so. Even if it's 2 p.m., I told him, come back to school just to get a class in." By sharing some of the challenges that Juan was having in school during this meeting, Caren served as a mediator to help bridge the understanding among the teachers, the parent, and the student, particularly around Juan's struggle with his transition from the Dominican Republic to the United States.

This meeting displayed the kinds of partnerships required in helping students get support and encouragement and take responsibility for their actions. The vignette displayed evidence of one type of culturally responsive collaboration that has contributed to the welcoming school climate described by the various stakeholders who were interviewed. Caren had been meeting regularly with Juan and his teachers to help him change his behavior and improve his literacy skills. The special education teacher, Jeff, met with him to provide foundational literacy instruction. Although Juan resisted at first, he participated more over time. Despite the initial interventions, both instructionally and with the social worker, the challenges loomed large. Juan started to miss school with increasing frequency. Beyond his reading struggles, his mother had been in the Dominican Republic since he first came to the United States, and his father had been raising him and his siblings alone. The community coming together—parent, student, teachers, counselor—helped to facilitate a discussion on how to improve his situation.

In other cases the counselor was a bridge to creating family partnerships with teachers,

who could potentially advocate or intervene in a positive way on behalf of the student. For example, a student named Lyon was distressed because his father wanted him to enroll in another borough's school after they moved out of their neighborhood. Jaime went to the father as an advocate to convey what the school meant to Lyon. It turned out that the father and son had not spoken about his feelings. Coming from a traditional Muslim family structure and with traditional norms of masculinity often exhibited in American culture, Jaime served as a broker to help Lyon convey his emotions. The counselor and the father also spoke about the situation. Eventually, Lyon was able to stay. Both of these collaborative team interventions and "data exchanges" helped both teams operate more effectively to support students alongside families.

Discussion

The results of the present study showed that, at this site, there was evidence of school structures, interventions, and partnerships designed to help newcomer ELLs accomplish academic goals, overcome emotional obstacles, and develop more fully as individuals. Among the themes that emerged was that leadership was a key factor in developing a welcoming environment. The principal created strategic schedules that opened up possibilities for collaboration. She also created a common planning time for the counselor-teacher collaborative teams to meet. Another factor was her choice to allocate specific resources to fund an additional part-time counselor. At this school, the administrator also helped forge relationships with universities to recruit intern social workers to work with students. Moreover, the administrator understood the importance of teacher support, which she provided by facilitating collaborative dialogue between counselors and teachers. The research supports the value of professional learning communities among teachers and their impact on instruction (Darling Hammond et al., 2009; Ronfeldt et al., 2015; Vescio et al., 2006). This study revealed that counselors working alongside teachers to engage in collaborative dialogue further enabled staff to deal better with the challenges faced by their students and to learn strategies for coping with their students' losses.

Second, teacher-counselor collaboration opened the possibility of designing classrooms

where newly arrived immigrants felt respected by their classmates and safe discussing different points of view. The use of home language proved a useful tool not only in supporting English literacy but also in affirming and validating other linguistic perspectives and forms of cultural knowledge, an approach aligned to research based on the importance on drawing on funds of knowledge (Moll, 2014). The staff planned the classroom environment to be cooperative in order to help students who were struggling. This dynamic was evident in content area classrooms and advisory classes as well as support groups. In addition, students who were interviewed talked about the counselor's role in helping them cope with everyday occurrences. In their interviews teachers provided examples of how they worked with counselors to identify strategies that would help some students function better in classrooms. Data from the present study corroborate some of the research on the importance of self-regulation in learning for adolescents. For example, one previous study found that metacognitive self-regulation is an important predictor of school achievement in adolescents (Bakracevic, Vukman, & Licardo, 2010).

Third, counselors took the lead in constructing valuable partnerships that helped create a welcoming environment for both students and families. Research shows that teacher-counselor-family partnerships can be a useful model for schools to support student growth (Bryan & Henry, 2012). In addition, building a culturally and linguistically responsive approach to these partnerships is essential to supporting the strengths and needs of newcomers (Aydin et al., 2012). The counseling team worked collaboratively with teachers, students, administrators, and families to find ways to (a) impact learning in the classroom, (b) increase attendance, (c) develop and deliver social and emotional supports through individual and group counseling or peer mediation, (d) conduct outreach and partner with families to construct meaningful interventions to support them and their child's success in school, and (e) develop strategies to support college and career readiness for families unacquainted with the higher educational systems of the United States. The partnerships that emerged from the study were a direct response to the needs of the students and families in the community. They were sustained by

the dedication of counselors and educators, but they were also a testimony to the structures that administrative, counselor, and teacher leadership put in place that allowed for the planning, design, and maintenance of such strategies on a daily basis.

Although previous studies explored the format that such productive partnerships may take, this study helped surface examples of practices in schools to share and discuss with other practitioners. For example, by meeting regularly, staff had the ability to share knowledge and differentiate support. Often, counselors were the first ones to learn more about the student's home life, and they then made efforts to integrate knowledge about and from families with knowledge from teachers and classrooms. The present study revealed that this knowledge was often used to problem-solve issues that arose or to support the use of home language and family knowledge in the classroom. The assignment of a counselor to an individual grade-level team helped to limit counseling caseloads and increased opportunities to get to know students and families better. These interactions ranged from hallway monitoring and informal check-ins to formal counseling sessions and support or bereavement groups. In classroom instruction, the use and integration of home languages into the curriculum and classroom acknowledged diverse learning and cultural practices and fostered open discussion. Finally, teachers and counselors collaboratively encouraged routines and norms built to create a safe environment for expressing difference and communicating in the school. In summary, the present study and insights gained from a glimpse into the practices and points of view in one school community can help build stronger, more productive partnerships that leverage the relationships between counselors and teachers, relationships which can be overlooked in the busy environments of traditional school settings.

Limitations and Future Research

Due to the scope of the research project, the limitations of the present study included the small number of participating subjects in a single school setting with its own specific instructional context. Thus, the results of this present case study are not generalizable across schools. Since I recruited participants with a purposive sampling at the school level, there was no way

to assess the differences between the cohort of teachers and counselors interviewed and those in the school who did not volunteer to participate in the study. Therefore, one implication of the present study is the need to conduct future research with other teacher teams and counselor collaborators to see what additional promising practices or challenges emerge for newcomers in different contexts and school settings as well as different teams. An additional implication for future research would be to study the types of systemic obstacles and challenges schools face when implementing partnership programs as a way to better inform practice.

Despite the limited scope of this study, the data from this school site as well as staff and student experiences provided insight into strategies that can be used to design responsive interventions for newly-arrived immigrant students to create not only a strong learning environment but also one that is welcoming for students in ways that are meaningful to families. The story of these teachers at a school designed for newcomer ELLs can ignite dialogue among educators in various school settings about the kinds of structures and factors that promote change in school climate and help establish stronger partnerships both internally among staff and externally with families and the larger community.

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