

Annotated Bibliography: LGBTQ Cultural Immersion

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Beck, M. J. (2018). "Lead by Example": A phenomenological study of school counselor-principal team experiences with LGBT students. *Professional School Counseling, 21*(1), 1-13.

This phenomenological study examined four principal-school counselor teams to explore their successful work with LGBT students. The literature review covered past research on school counselor-principal collaboration and their roles in working with LGBT students. Although the body of research is growing concerning fostering these relationships, the researcher attempted to find successful and practical examples. The research cited is current. The participants included ten professionals comprising four principal-counselor, principal-counselors, or principal-counselor-counselor intern teams. Either the counselor or the principal from each team had been contacted because they had been recognized at the national or state level for creating a safe and inclusive space for LGBT students. The researcher collected data via a demographic form and three rounds of audio interviews using open-ended questions. The researcher found four themes implemented by the teams to create an inclusive school space for LGBT students: learning through storytelling; leading by example including the subthemes being a role model and risk taker and educating others; creating intentional partnerships including the subthemes knowing expertise and limitations, developing a shared vision, and finding support; and pushing the system including the subthemes facilitating important conversations, challenging mindsets, and planning strategically for change. The findings from this phenomenological study are limited but helpful for the purpose of showing successful school interventions to create a comfortable space for LGBT students. There are limitations to the study. As the researcher mentioned, all participants were white. There was zero cultural or racial diversity and little geographic diversity (three of four teams were located in the Midwest). Additionally, the overarching themes are not all replicable. Learning through storytelling and leading by example were successful when principals or school counselors in the study identified as gay or transgender. These professionals could share their stories as a way to create comfort with the topic. This type of leadership is not available to all counselors or principals.

Bidell, M. P. (2012). Examining school counseling students' multicultural and sexual orientation competencies through a cross-specialization comparison. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 90*, 200-207.

This study aimed to explore the multicultural and sexual orientation counselor competencies of second year, master's-level school counseling students as cross-examined with community agency students. This 2011 article cites recent literature covering the increased level of harassment experienced by LGBTQ youth and heightened risk of problems such as mental health problems, violence, substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, and homelessness but noted the gap in research and evaluation of school counselors' sexual orientation competencies. The sample included 164 second year, master's-level students studying either school counseling or community agency counseling. All participants were enrolled in one of four (at the time) CACREP accredited counseling programs. Students were recruited during their internship or field placement course and all students present those days chose to participate. Each participant received an informed consent form and information sheet, demographic questionnaire, a modified version of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS) developed by the researcher in 2005, and the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale

(MCKAS), developed by Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Rieger, & Austin in 2002. The researcher found that school counseling students reported significantly lower levels of multicultural and sexual orientation counselor competencies as compared with community agency counseling students. It is important to note the limitations: the assessments were not used to examine transgender counseling competencies and the quantitative nature of the assessments are unable to detect the subtle and complex ways school counselors may approach counseling advocacy. The information from this study is pertinent when considering the experience of people who identify as LGB may not have been sufficiently supported by their school counselors due to the lack of counselor competency. It is also pertinent as a future school counselor. The researcher notes the importance of these findings for counselor educators but regardless of education, school counselors must examine their own biases and competencies for the academic, mental health, and holistic wellness of all students. Unfortunately, the researcher fails to provide the questions asked by the SOCCS and MCKAS and fails to report to the validity and reliability of the assessments. It is difficult to know if the participants' competencies were properly assessed.

Goodrich, K. M., & Luke, M. (2009). LGBTQ responsive school counseling. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 3(2), 113-127.

This position paper proposed LGBTQ Responsive School Counseling as a way for school counselors to address the needs of LGBTQ students. The literature reviewed was current and comprehensive. The authors covered the definition of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling framework (CDSC) and noted that LGBTQ students are one population that remain underserved and at-risk in schools. They also noted that it had been a decade since the special edition of *Professional School Counseling* on LGBTQ students. That would be a good resource to see how literature has changed since the early 2000s. The authors propose the implementation of LGBTQ Responsive School Counseling, grounded in the ASCA National Model. The four tenets are as follows: "(a) school counselors have a professional and ethical duty to address the needs of LGBTQ students as individuals, to advocate for LGBTQ students collectively, and to engage systemic change in schools to facilitate healthy development for LGBTQ students; (b) LGBTQ student identity and experience does not occur in a vacuum and therefore needs to be considered within the context of other intersecting identities (race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability status, religious affiliation, etc.) across the CDSC program; (c) all four Delivery System components can include LGBTQ Responsive School Counseling activities, including curriculum, student planning, counseling, and systems support activities; and (d) the activities comprising LGBTQ Responsive School Counseling will vary across school settings and student contexts based on the unique and interfacing needs of both." The Delivery System components are flexible depending on the needs of the school but include curriculum (either classroom guidance or community or professional education), student planning (establishing the counselor's office as a safe and resourceful place and facilitating conversations about self-advocacy), counseling (individual or group and with the counselor's own self-assessment of biases, recognition of the importance of inclusive language and LGBTQ-affirming vocabulary, familiarity with applicable theory, and knowledge of the unique needs of LGBTQ students), and systems support (working to ensure school literature uses inclusive language, executing school and community activities related to the LGBTQ experience, having an awareness of the impact of the larger school environment on LGBTQ students). The authors conclude that implementing LGBTQ Responsive School Counseling is a way to execute the mission of professional school counselors to serve the needs of all students. Implications from this article include the necessity

of inclusive language and knowledge of the unique needs of LGBTQ students. During my cultural immersion project, I will need to examine my own use of language before and during my interviews. This paper is not a study but a position paper. I do not have a major critique of this paper, I agree that LGBTQ Responsive School Counseling sounds effective for LGBTQ students. Ideally, I will be able to provide responsive school counseling for every student and introduce school-wide and classroom guidance that speaks to the needs of all cultural groups.

McCullough, R., Dispenza, F., Parker, L. K., Viehl, C. J., Chang, C. Y., & Murphy, T. M. (2017). The counseling experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming clients. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 95*, 423-434.

This study explored the counseling experiences of 13 transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) individuals. The literature discussed the discrimination and struggle faced by TGNC individuals, the negative and positive experiences with mental health practitioners (MHP) reported by TGNC individuals, and the lack of research available on the TGNC experience of counseling or psychotherapy. The participants of the study were 13 individuals who self-identified as TGNC recruited from the internet. The demographics of the participants were diverse in race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, education level, relationship status, and religion/spirituality. The participants were given an electronic informed consent and demographic questionnaire, then could elect to provide an email address to be interviewed. All 13 participants elected to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted an average of 40 minutes. The interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded. The researchers utilized member checking and investigator triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. Four main themes emerged: MHP selection process, transaffirmative approach, transnegative approach, and support systems beyond mental health services. The MHP selection process included selecting MHPs that the participants identified with, whether the MHP identified as TGNC or a certain race. Participants also reported weeding or testing out MHPs with interviews by testing their reactions to certain language. The transaffirmative approach was described by participants in two ways: therapeutic alignment through affirmation or behavior that increased connection and trust, and advocacy including MHPs' education of themselves and others and the use of a social justice counseling approach. Transnegative approaches were characterized by lack of knowledge surrounding TGNC issues, experiential invalidations including microaggressions such as the refusal to use correct pronouns, and intersectional insensitivity experienced in the way that MHPs would focus on a participant's TGNC or racial identity but not the intersection of identities. Participants' support systems outside of counseling included church or religious communities, LGBTQ centers, leather/sex-positive communities, family, friends, other TGNC individuals or support groups, and the internet. Overall, TGNC participants found counseling important for their overall health but were cautious in navigating these experiences. The findings about intersectionality reveal a key idea: humans are not one identity. As a counselor, I must be wary of identifying a client only as a client who identifies as trans, or a food-insecure client, or a client with a learning disability. Humans contain multitudes and are never one identity. The only critique I have for this article is the inability for researchers to speak with participants face to face. I would imagine the researchers would have gathered further information from an in-person interview.

Simons, J. D. (2018). School Counselor Sexual Minority Advocacy Competency Scale (SCSMACS): Development, validity, and reliability. *Professional School Counseling, 21*(1), 1-14.

This study was conducted to develop the School Counselor Sexual Minority Advocacy Competence Scale (SCSMACS). The literature discussed the need for a school counselor sexual minority competency scale, including the findings from the Bidell (2012) study. Because ASCA mandates that school counselors must be advocates for all students, a measure was needed. The literature reviews existing assessments that measure aspects of school counselor LGB advocacy but notes the lack of assessment available to measure school counselor LGB competence as it relates to model school counseling. The researcher recruited the study's 400 diverse school counselor participants using email, Facebook, LISTSERVs, school counselor associations, and school counselor certification bodies. Developing the SCSMACS evolved through three stages: generating items, reducing items, and conducting principal component analysis (PCA) and reliability and validity testing. After the development of the test, participants' completion of the test, and further analysis, the researcher determined the SCSMACS to be a valid and reliable tool used to assess school counselor LGB advocacy competence. Implications of this scale include the ability to self-assess competencies in order to educate oneself and limit one's own biases. My only critiques come from the nature of the questions as a counselor-in-training. Questions ask if the participant has done certain activities, such as "I advocate for LGB students by assisting with their individual progress through appropriate school experiences." I have not done that because I have not had the opportunity to yet, but I believe I would in the future. I wonder if this scale skews in favor of counselors with more experience because they have had greater opportunity to enact change.