

The Effects of School-Based Counseling Interventions on Students

Repeating the Ninth Grade

Regina Gavin Williams, Taheera Blount, Gregory Downing, Cherice Artis,

Damon Toone, Naiya Bethea

Department of Counseling and Higher Education, North Carolina Central University

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For questions related to this article, contact: Dr. Regina Gavin Williams, rwill233@nccu.edu

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Abstract

Individualized school-based counseling interventions focused on enhancing the college and career readiness of high school students identified as repeating the ninth grade was used in the study via a five-week intervention program. Using an N=1/A-B single-case research design, four college and career readiness self-efficacy factors were used to determine the components of the interventions and to assess participants' progress. Results of the study and implications for future school counseling research and practice will be shared.

Key words: college and career readiness, drop-out prevention, school counselors, academically at-risk, single-case research

Introduction

Opportunities to engage in academic and career preparedness are important components that will help to increase a student's access to post-secondary education and future careers. Research noted that United States citizens tend to correlate more education, such as receiving a college education, to an increased readiness for the workforce and economic competitiveness on a global scale (Phi Delta Kappan, 2018). It is further noted that by 2027, 70% of jobs will require a formal education or training beyond a high school diploma which enforces the need for more individuals to obtain a post-secondary credential (Unlocking Career Success, n.d.). Yet, there are some students that face multiple barriers to academic achievement and career development while in high school, thus decreasing their access to a post-secondary education, and hindering their college and career readiness. This includes students who are deemed as academically at-risk. The term *at-risk* is used to describe either a student or a group of students who are considered to have a higher susceptibility of failing academically or for school drop-out (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). This may result in students engaging in negative behaviors such as absenteeism, low academic performance, bullying, substance abuse, self-harm or physical violence, suicidal ideation, among other harmful behaviors (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2017).

School counselors are in a unique position to support students who are academically at-risk in an effort to get them back on track towards overall student success. According to the ASCA position statement regarding students who are at-risk, school counselors must be advocates for school-based interventions and mental health referrals before moving toward disciplinary measures and must also provide leadership that is proactive “in identifying,

preventing, and intervening with student at-risk behaviors” (ASCA, 2017, p. 39). Furthermore, school counselors are often key school personnel who work to ensure that all students are able to gain access to a high-quality education that is also safe and supportive, while also being in a unique position to share pertinent information to students who may access minimal access to both social and human capital (Bryan et al., 2011). Herein, school counselors who can provide responsive services to students, such as individual and group counseling, and create group lessons that provide psycho-education on the skills that can promote student success, can adequately support students who are at-risk for failing academically in helping them to get back on track (ASCA, 2017).

Research noted that students who accessed post-secondary planning assistance and college information from a school counselor were more likely to both apply and enroll in a postsecondary institution (Bryan et al., 2011; Engberg & Wolniak, 2014; McKillip et al., 2012). Thus, it is beneficial for school counselors to utilize intervention programming with at-risk students that focuses on college and career readiness in an effort to enhance their self-efficacy towards achieving post-secondary education and career achievement after high school. *College ready* can be described as being effectively prepared for postsecondary education training experiences that can lead to an attainment of postsecondary credentials such as an associate or bachelor’s degree, certificate, or a license (Achieve, Inc., n.d.). *Career ready* can be defined as one possessing both the content knowledge and key learning skills and techniques in order to begin one’s students in a career pathway (Conley 2010; Williams et al., 2018). An essential component of academically at-risk students’ feeling that they can enhance their college and career readiness appears to be connected to their own belief that they can pursue careers and attain access to postsecondary education (Williams et al., 2018). In this regard, school counselors

working with academically at-risk students can support them in improving their college and career readiness-self-efficacy.

The authors' purpose in conducting the present study was to examine the effects of individual, school-based counseling interventions on the college and career readiness self-efficacy of a sample of five students who have repeated the ninth grade at least once. The program in the study was entitled, *Discussing Realizing (and) Achieving Maximum Success* (D.R.E.A.M.S.) and it was designed to help support participants academically, social/emotionally, and in their career development, while also providing encouragement and strategies to aid them in getting back on track while in high school. The research hypothesis was focused on the effects of the participants' individual counseling interventions across the baseline and withdrawal phases using an A-B single-case research design.

Method

Research Design

An A-B single-case experimental research design (SCRD) was utilized in the present study. The components of an A-B single-case design were A= baseline phase and B= treatment phase. In a single-case research design, repeated measurement of the dependent variable over time starts at the baseline prior to the initiation of treatment and continues throughout the intervention (e.g., daily or weekly basis). The independent variable is typically the treatment intervention (Heppner et al., 2008; Williams, 2016). Moreover, multiple measurements are typically taken within a time-series format where the participants also serve as their own control or comparison condition (Heppner et al., 2008; Williams, 2016). In regard to this study, the baseline (A) was conducted over the course of one week and the treatment (B) was given once per week over the course of four weeks. Lenz (2015) recommended that an N=1 research design

should be replicated at least three times before being generalizable. In this regard, having five participants was an essential component to the generalizability of the study.

Participants

The five participants involved in the study attended a large, public high school in a southeastern urban city. The students were identified by their school counselor, one of the authors, as students who were academically at-risk and in need of student support services. Of the five participants, two identified as Latino male (n=2), two identified as Latina female (n=2), and one identified as African American male (n=1). These five participants had less than six academic credits and were repeating the 9th grade for the first time. The five participants were involved in a psychoeducational counseling group which was focused on enhancing college and career readiness and drop-out prevention. The school counselor identified the students selected for the group, all of whom have repeated the ninth grade at least one. The psychoeducational group was divided into two small groups of seven students each. Of the 14 students involved in the counseling groups, the five participants opted to be included in the research portion of the study and received written consent from their parent/guardian. Each small counseling group was facilitated by two of the investigators, making a total of four investigators serving as group facilitators of seven students.

Counselors and Counselors -In-Training

There were four investigators involved in the intervention program. The four investigators worked in pairs as facilitators of two small psychoeducational counseling groups. The investigators are described herein.

The primary investigator was an African American female with a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in school counseling, and a doctor of philosophy in counseling

and counselor education. She was a counselor educator who worked at a historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the southeastern United States. She was also a licensed clinical mental health counselor (NC), a National Certified Counselor, and a licensed school counselor (GA). Her professional experience has included college access programming, community-based and private practice clinical mental health counseling, and student services in higher education. She previously served children and adolescents from underserved backgrounds, a significant number of whom were in foster care. She has had previous research experience including designing and delivering an A-B-A SCRCD for high school students transitioning out of foster care.

The second co-investigator was an African American female with a bachelor's degree in social work, a master's degree in school counseling, and a doctor of philosophy in counseling and counselor education. She was a counselor educator who works at an HBCU in the southeastern United States. She served as a school counselor for six years and a licensed clinical mental health counselor for ten years. She has worked extensively with individuals from marginalized backgrounds over the past 20 years. As a counselor educator, she has taught professional issues and ethics, advanced school counseling, school counseling leadership, and internship in counseling. She has published research on group-based strategies for school counselors engaged in drop-out prevention.

The third co-investigator was an African American male school counseling graduate student at an HBCU in the southeastern United States at the time of the intervention. He possessed a bachelor's degree in political science and served as a graduate assistant for the counselor education program. He had over 13 years of experience serving as a college advisor and as a mid-level professional in admissions at a research one institution.

The fourth co-investigator was an African American female school counseling graduate student at an HBCU in the southeastern United States at the time of the intervention. She possessed a bachelor's degree in psychology and served as a graduate assistant for the school of education. She had experience working with children in primary care facilities as a teacher and teacher assistant.

Instrumentation

College and career readiness self-efficacy. The College and Career Readiness Self-Efficacy Inventory (CCRSI; Baker & Parikh Foxx, 2012) was completed by the five participants throughout the A-B phases of the study. The CCRSI is based on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, particularly as it related to the self-efficacy concept, and Savickas' (2011) career constructivist theory. There are 14 items on the CCRSI with scores ranging from 14 to 70, with response choices on a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5 points) to strongly disagree (1 point). The content of the 14 items consisted of both broad contextual goals (e.g., *I know how to set goals for myself*) and specific goals (e.g., *I know how to get the financial aid needed for post-high school education*) (Williams et. al, 2018). Higher scores on the CCRSI indicated a higher level of participants' college and career readiness self-efficacy.

There were four factors included within the CCRSI, each with separate factor scores that was included within the data analyses. These factors included: (a) college knowledge (e.g. *I know and understand the post-high school education application process*; 5 items; score range of 5 to 25); (b) positive personal characteristics (e.g. *There are also other persons who can help me achieve my goals*; 4 items; score range of 4 to 20); (c) academic competence (e.g. *I know how to prepare for a test successfully*; 3 items; score range of 3-15); and (d) potential to achieve future goals (e.g. *I believe I have the potential to succeed in the right post-high school education*

situation; 2 items; score range of 2-10). An exploratory factor analysis indicated that the four CCRSI factors accounted for 51% of item variance (Baker et al., 2017), and a confirmatory factor analysis identified the CCRSI four-factor model as an appropriate model (Martinez, et. al, 2017).

Participants in the study completed the pre-CCRSI as a part of the baseline (A), and completed the CCRSI once per week over the course of four weeks during the treatment phase (B), for a total of completing the CCRSI five times throughout both phases of the study. In some instances, there were participants who failed to complete the CCRSI for the week due to school absenteeism. This has been noted in the results section and is reflected in our visual analyses of the data for each participant.

Procedure

Framework for customized interventions. The framework for the customized interventions used in this study was entitled, *Discussing Realizing (and) Achieving Maximum Success* (D.R.E.A.M.S.). The customized interventions for each participant served as the independent variables. The conceptual framework that supported this study consisted of the Social Cognitive Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), Cognitive Information Processing (CIP; Peterson et al., 2002) Approach, and the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model (ASCA, 2019). The SCCT was beneficial in helping participants develop positive post-secondary aspirations. Moreover, this theory served as the development and evaluation of customized individual counseling interventions. Secondly, the CIP Approach was used to provide career resources and handouts that were derived from the model and were utilized in the interventions (i.e. The Individualized Learning Plan or ILP). The

ILP was used during the initial meeting with each participant in an effort to establish at least three mutual goals and related activities each participant can work on during the intervention. The ASCA model served as the delivery component of the customized individual counseling interventions for each participant. The focus here was to help participants to think about their future plans post-high school, as well as help them work towards their academic, career, and social/emotional goals that align with these plans.

Customizing strategies. The D.R.E.A.M.S. interventions were aligned with the North Carolina Professional School Counselor Standards which indicates that “North Carolina Public Schools will produce students who will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and post-secondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century” (North Carolina Professional School Counselor Standards, 2008). One of the main objectives of D.R.E.A.M.S. was to help participants who are marginalized in education to improve their self-efficacy in being able to achieve college and career readiness. The activities and desired outcomes that were listed on the ILP (Peterson et al., 2002) indicated each participant’s career and post-secondary educational needs which were based on the CCRSI (Baker et. al, 2012) pre-treatment scores that were collected during the baseline phase (A). The baseline phase occurred a week prior to the beginning of the intervention within the treatment phase (B). The customized strategy topics identified in the study included the following: (a) creating an Individualized Learning Plan; (b) academic records review; (c) building aspirations/goal setting; (d) career exploration; (e) post-secondary options/exploration; (f) academic success; (g) study skills; (h) test-taking strategies; and (i). time management.

Data collection. During Week 1 (Baseline A), the group leaders administered the CCRSI (pre-treatment/baseline data; Baker & Parikh Foxx, 2012) in-person to participants

following an orientation session held at their school and after their parent/guardian submitted a signed consent form indicating their approval of their participation in the study. The intervention (treatment phase B) was conducted over 4 weeks for each participant. During the treatment phase, each participant completed the CCRSI and submitted it to facilitators prior to the end of each meeting. Herein, each participant completed the CCRSI a total of one time during the baseline (A) phase, and four times during treatment (B) phase. At the conclusion of the intervention, participants were to be taken to a national college fair that was being held locally, followed by being taken to dinner. However, the occurrence of the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic caused the fair to be cancelled and for the participants' school to be closed.

Data analysis. Visual analysis and descriptive statistics were utilized in the study. Visual analysis is the traditional method for analyzing single-subject data using line graphs for each experiment. This is the preferred mode for examining single subject data. For the visual analysis, each of the five participants' CCRSI scores across the baseline and treatment phases for each of the four CCRSI factors were reflected on a line graph (see figures 1-5). Total CCRSI scores for each participant was also reflected on a line graph as well (see figure 6).

Descriptive Statistics aids in the visual analysis of findings by summarizing patterns across data phases (Auerbach & Zeitlin, 2014). Herein, the investigators included the descriptive statistics for all five participants as one collective group, separated by the four CCRSI factors (see table 1). When establishing credibility, the investigators documented any unforeseen changes in the participants' circumstances and behaviors that could have influenced the findings. In doing so, it enhanced controlling for threats to the internal validity of the study (Hott et al., 2015; Williams, 2016).

Results

Visual Analysis

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 present line graphs for each phase and CCRSI factor (i.e. college knowledge, positive personal characteristics, academic competence, and potential to achieve future goals) of the intervention for each participant. Beginning with week 2 of the D.R.E.A.M.S. program, after rating their college and career readiness self-efficacy prior to participating in the intervention (i.e. treatment phase) provided by the investigators, participants continued to rate their own college and career readiness self-efficacy using the CCRSI instrument following each counseling session. CCRSI total scores for each participant are also reported in Figure 6. Although individual differences can be seen from week-to-week, there are general patterns to be noted across all five participants. On average, participants had the most improvement in *positive personal characteristics* with an average score of 15 points to 16.24 points across the baseline to treatment phases, and the improvement in *academic competence* with an average score of 11.33 points to 12.24 points across the baseline to treatment phases. Moreover, on average, participants had a decrease in the *college knowledge* factor with an average score of 15.20 points to 14.29 points across the baseline to treatment phases.

Participant 1. Participant 1 had expected variability for this type of study (i.e. no outliers and small standard deviation throughout each phase). In particular, the visual analysis indicates that there was significant change in *college knowledge*, *potential to achieve future goals*, and *academic competence* between the baseline and treatment phases. Further analysis is necessary to determine if other differences exist.

Participant 2. There was little to no response variability for Participant 2 except for a significant change in *positive personal characteristics* between the baseline and treatment

phases. Moreover, participant 2 rated himself high in *academic competence*, leaving no room for improvement from the baseline to treatment phases for this factor.

Participant 3. Participant 3 had high variability as indicated by an outlier in the treatment phase. The outlier is indicated by participant 3's school absence during week one of the treatment phase. In particular, participant 3 had a significant change in *positive personal characteristics* between the baseline and treatment phases. Further analysis is necessary to determine if other differences exist.

Participant 4. Participant 4 had high variability as indicated by an outlier in the treatment phase. The outlier is indicated by participant 4's school absence during week three of the treatment phase. In particular, participant 4 had a slight change in *potential to achieve future goals* and *academic competence* between the baseline and treatment phases. Further analysis is necessary to determine if other differences exist.

Participant 5. Participant 5 had high variability as indicated by an outlier in the treatment phase. The outlier is indicated by participant 5's school absence during week one of the treatment phase. Moreover, participant 5 experienced the most significant improvement in *academic competence*, *college knowledge*, and *positive personal characteristics* during week 3 of the treatment phase.

Figure 1. Participant 1

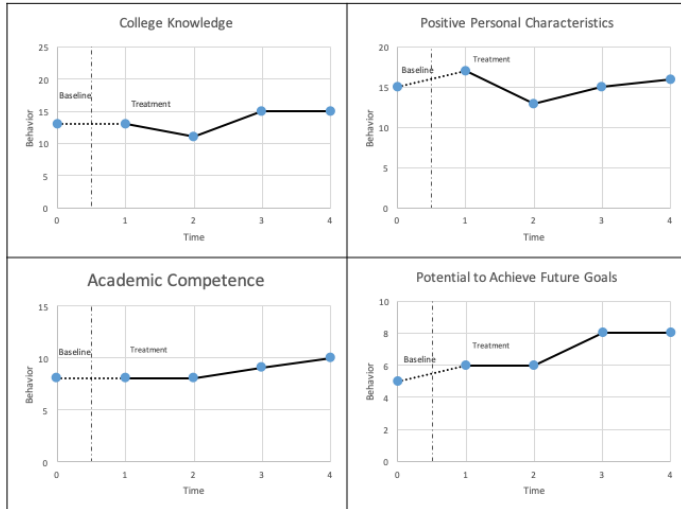


Figure 2. Participant 2

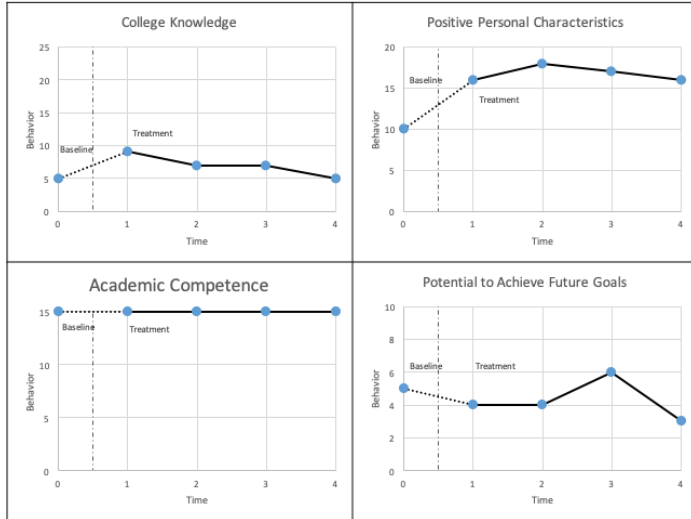


Figure 3. Participant 3

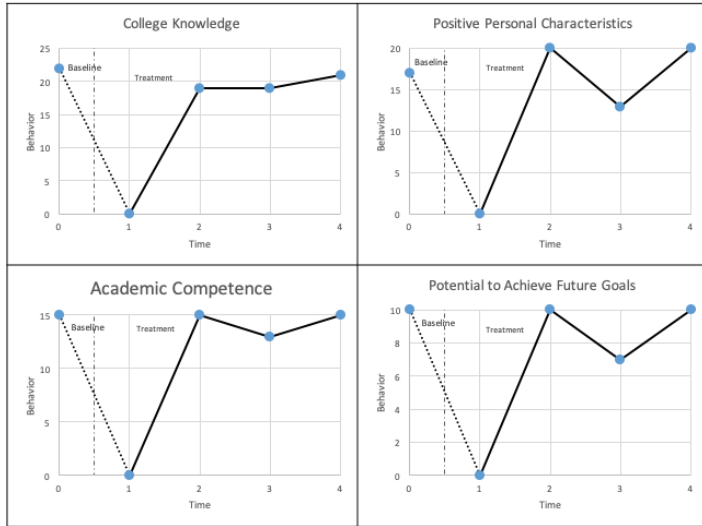


Figure 4. Participant 4

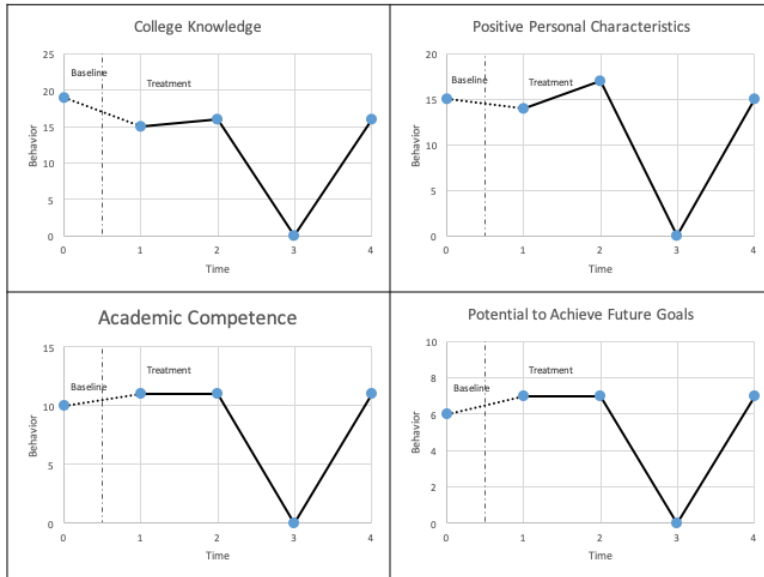
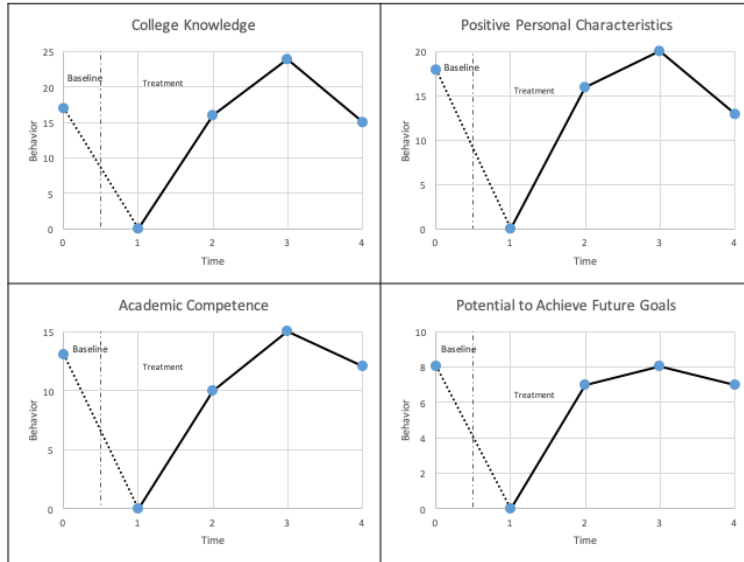


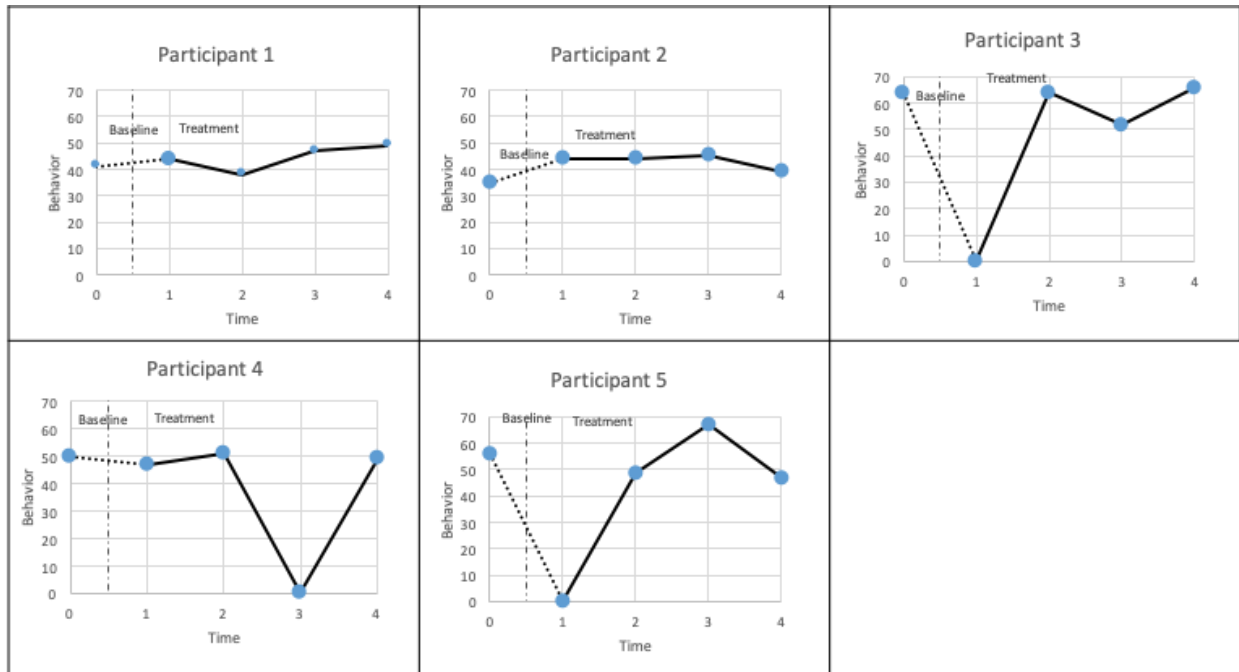
Figure 5. Participant 5



Total CCRSI Scores

Total scores for the College and Career Readiness Self-Efficacy Inventory (CCRSI; Baker & Parikh Foxx, 2012) were recorded based on the CCRSI that participants were asked to take across the baseline and treatment phases. On the Pre-CCRSI (i.e. baseline score), participant 1 scored a 41, participant 2 scored a 35, participant 3 scored a 64, participant 4 scored a 50, and participant 5 scored a 56. Participant 1 experienced score improvement with an average CCRSI total score of 43.8 (2.8-point increase). Participant 2 also experienced score improvement with an average CCRSI total score of 41.4 (6.4-point increase). Participant 3 experienced a slight decrease in CCRSI total score with an average score of 61.5 (2.5-point decrease). Participant 4 also experienced a slight decrease in CCRSI total score with an average CCRSI score of 49.25 (.75-point decrease). Participant 5 experienced a slight decrease in CCRSI total score with an average score of 54.75 (1.25-point decrease). Figure 6 shows the results of the total CCRSI scores for all five participants.

Figure 6. CCRSI Total Scores Per Participant



Statistical Analyses

Descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Overall Descriptive Statistics for Participants

All Students	n		Mean		10% Trim Mean		Median		SD		CV	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
College Knowledge	1	4	15.20	14.29	15.20	14.29	17	15	6.57	5.17	0.43	0.36
Positive Personal Characteristics	1	4	15	16.24	15	16.24	15	16	3.08	2.33	0.21	0.14
Academic Competence	1	4	11.33	12.24	12.20	12.24	13	12	3.11	2.68	0.27	0.22
Potential to Achieve Future Goals	1	4	6.80	6.76	6.80	6.76	6	7	2.17	1.89	0.32	0.28

Discussion

The current study examined the effects of individual, school-based counseling interventions on the college and career readiness self-efficacy of a small sample of five students who have repeated the ninth grade at least once using an A-B single case design. This design revealed that this intervention was overall most effective for increasing participants' *positive personal characteristics self-efficacy* and *academic competence self-efficacy* with an average score of 15 points to 16.24 points across the baseline to treatment phases, and in *academic competence self-efficacy* with an average score of 11.33 points to 12.24 points across the baseline to treatment phases. This comes as no surprise as participants indicated that they were more

motivated to improve academically in an effort to graduate with their peers and have a better chance at gaining access to potential career and educational opportunities post- high school. Furthermore, participants appeared to have a strong desire to improve their goal-setting skills and identify supportive adults who can help them to achieve both their short-term and long-term goals.

On average, participants had a decrease in the *college knowledge self-efficacy* factor with an average score of 15.20 points to 14.29 points across the baseline to treatment phases. Thus, little change was shown for this factor. This could be due to the overwhelming nature of being introduced late to the post-secondary education process, particularly when one has yet to discuss any part of it; as well as not feeling confident in one's current academic performance in order to be eligible for many post-secondary education opportunities. Research also indicated that the fear of college loans, family economic roller coasters, immigration status, parental pressures, and lack of confidence in their abilities inhibits many young people from starting down a path without a sense of purpose or direction (Bryan et al., 2011; Engberg & Wolniak, 2014; McKillip et al., 2012). Moreover, closing the information gaps appears paramount in the very first steps in the college planning process (Dahir, 2020).

Limitations

Chronic absenteeism had a potential negative impact on participants' college and career readiness self-efficacy. Some of the participants in the program had school absences and tardies as the counseling groups took place during school hours, which sometimes caused them to miss the group and/or school. Missing either a group session or a school day altogether appeared to impact the way they viewed their ability to achieve or gain access to post-high school success. Moreover, there was limited opportunity for dependent variable observations across the two

SCRD phases. Essentially, it would have been helpful to have more time to collect data over the two phases which may have allowed the independent variable to be more effective.

Recommendations for Future School Counseling Practice

According to the American Counseling Association Position Statements (2017), school counselors are expected to work collaboratively with stakeholders including teachers, parents, families, and school administration to implement school counseling programs that identify students that might be at risk of dropping out of school. Herein, there are future practice recommendations that are worth noting for school counselors who are working with students who are deemed as academically at-risk. According to Lovelace et al. (2017) and Reschly et al. (2014) school counselors could use engagement data with academic and behavioral screening and monitoring that are part of the comprehensive school counseling program. This can aid school counselors in developing and using early warning signs systems to help them identify students who are academically at-risk (ASCA, 2017). This will also aid school counselors in providing primary prevention services for students who are academically at-risk. School counselors can also deliver components of the ASCA Model via direct student services in order to create customized, individual counseling interventions for these students. For instance, school counselors can develop a tailored academic plan with the student. Within the academic plan, the student will need to identify classes in which they are failing so that the school counselor can assist the student with developing academic strategies to counteract academic failure. Moreover, the school counselor can collaborate with teachers to devise a plan for the student, such as making up any missed assignments at the discretion of the teacher. By engaging in this collaborative effort, students will understand the importance of adhering to the guidelines as established in the tailored academic plan.

In an effort to increase the college knowledge self-efficacy of students, it is recommended that school counselors promote a college-going culture within their school. This will require school administrator, teacher, family, and community collaboration. One key element would involve *all* students having equal access to a rigorous curriculum. Other components of the college-going culture should include skill building and college programming. Skill building might encompass skills such as time management, goal setting, study skills or self-advocacy training. Examples of college programming can include college fairs, financial aid workshops, and college student panel discussions. School counselors can also utilize online tools and resources such as EVERFI, MyPlan.com, CFNC.org, The O*Net Interest Profiler, and BigFuture™ to help students explore career and post-secondary options. It is further recommended that school counselors participate in continuing education opportunities such as local, state and national conferences and workshops to stay abreast of current trends related to access to post-secondary education, specifically for diverse student populations.

Furthermore, school counselors can utilize classroom guidance activities to enhance students' college and career readiness, particularly for those students who are academically at-risk (Whiston et al., 2011). Research noted that when school counselors provide college and career knowledge utilizing the ASCA model framework, it has shown that they not only decrease the knowledge gap, but school counselors also become advocates for systemic change (Poynton et al., 2021). Therefore, in using the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success (ASCA, 2014) and ASCA lesson plan template, school counselors can identify specific standards and facilitate lessons that focus on topics related to career and post-secondary education exploration, ways to financially afford a post-secondary education, post-secondary education requirements, and cultural differences in the post-secondary education environment (Hooker & Brand, 2010).

For example, school counselors can provide a psychoeducation session on the importance of having a plan for postsecondary options, introduce the world of work and discuss the importance of having life goals in order to become productive adults of society. Afterwards, school counselors can have students complete a career assessment to understand which occupations better suit their interests. School counselors can also provide improved exploration of career and post-secondary options to help enhance student's potential to achieve future goals, particularly for students who are academically at-risk. In this regard, it is important for school counselors to engage students in exploring the benefits of attending a post-secondary education institution (e.g., a trade school, 2-year college, or four-year institution, etc.) and connecting this to future academic majors and career opportunities.

Reducing chronic absenteeism is another important step in enhancing the college and career readiness and academic competence of students who are at-risk. Providing mentors for this population of students has been proven to be an effective intervention (Weinberger et al., 2018). Mentors can consist of members of the school staff, local business partners, community volunteers, and other supportive adults. Another strategy might include increasing parent/guardians' involvement by both offering parent/guardian workshops and ensuring that they can identify school personnel with whom they feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Moreover, school counselors can work to reduce chronic absenteeism by providing in-service training for teachers on topics such as understanding the student as a whole being, strengthening the student-teacher relationship, or how to incorporate social-emotional learning into their curriculum.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are a few noted recommendations for future research utilizing a SCRD model that may aid in enhancing individualized interventions with students who are academically at-risk. First, in using the D.R.E.A.M.S. model as a common framework, including additional independent variables that might potentially enhance the college and career readiness and academic development of students who are academically at-risk can be created. Additionally, given the limited opportunity for dependent variable observations across the two phases (A-B) in the current study, creating more time to collect data over the two phases can allow for the independent variable to be more effective in a replication of the study. This could be further improved by using a more sophisticated SCRD such as using one a withdrawal phase (i.e. A-B-A) or a SCRD with multiple baselines (e.g., A-B-A-B) which could both increase the observation data points and potentially provide multiple outcomes (Williams et al., 2018). Furthermore, the constructs used in D.R.E.A.M.S. derived from the four CCRSI factors proved to be useful in helping students who are deemed as academically at-risk. Therefore, it would be advantageous to use the same approach involved in this study with other diverse populations in an effort to see if it might improve the college and career readiness self-efficacy of more populations of students.

Conclusion

School counselors who purposefully facilitate the academic, post-secondary and career needs of high school students who are academically at-risk can be an essential part of improving their overall success. Creating customized school-based counseling interventions that can respond to the individual needs of students who have repeated high school grade levels may increase their college and career readiness self-efficacy and might even reduce the number of students who dropout of high school altogether. Using an A-B single-case research design, this study showed that participants who were academically at-risk needed additional support in

improving their college and career readiness self-efficacy. In this regard, school counselors can strive to improve their *college knowledge self-efficacy* by introducing this population of students to early exploration of post-secondary opportunities that are both in-depth, long-term and individualized in nature.

In regard to *academic self-efficacy*, the results of the study showed that there can be improvement in this area for students who are deemed academically at-risk through skill-building in the areas of individualized academic planning, improving time management skills, academic goal-setting, utilizing study and test-taking skills, and examining academic records. A majority of the participants in the study were also able to enhance their positive *personal characteristics self-efficacy*. Thus, school counselors working with this specific population can help students identify supportive adults within their network who believe in their potential for success and can help them to set and achieve their short-term and long-term educational and career goals. This in turn can help students to enhance their belief that they have the potential to succeed in the right post-high school situation; in other words, helping them to enhance their expectations in their *potential to achieve future goals self-efficacy*.

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