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Guidance counselors' perceptions of high school Family and Consumer Sciences programs: a case study of eight guidance counselors in Eastern Iowa

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Guidance counselors' perceptions of high school Family and Consumer Sciences programs: A case study of eight guidance counselors in Eastern Iowa

by

Valarie L. Betz

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Family and Consumer Sciences Education

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DEDICATION

Sometimes there is no path, more a dense jungle;
Sometimes the path appears impassable and needs to be cleared;
Sometimes the path is clearly paved, but not attractive;
Clearly, at all times we have the option of creating new paths.

This is dedicated to all of those people in my life
who have instilled in me a sense of adventure;
To those who have encouraged perseverance in the completion of tasks;
And, finally, to those who have modeled an appreciation for lifelong education.
Through your encouragement I hope to make a difference
in the lives of those with whom I work.

May this be motivation for all who dare to dream big.

*“Do not go where the path may lead;
go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”*
Ralph Waldo Emerson

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify and analyze themes related to the perceptions of high school guidance counselors regarding family and consumer sciences (FCS) courses to understand their potential influence on students. Utilizing a descriptive case study approach, the researcher interviewed eight guidance counselors from eastern Iowa to determine their perceptions and understanding of FCS programs.

The data analysis indicated these guidance counselors assume many duties and responsibilities in their roles assisting secondary level students in reaching academic, career and personal/social goals. Although the findings revealed guidance counselors have limited knowledge of the practice settings and opportunities available in FCS, guidance counselors are supportive of and believe in the value of FCS programming.

With the continued shortage of FCS education instructors, it is imperative to consider the role of the high school guidance counselor in influencing the career choices of students in FCS programs. This researcher encouraged local FCS instructors to be vigilant in providing guidance counselors with information and understanding necessary to accurately present FCS careers as a possible career choice to students; to encourage guidance counselors to promote FCS courses, educational opportunities, and career opportunities; to be themselves current on FCS information; and to utilize marketing strategies to educate counselors, students, and the community about the programs offered through FCS Education.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

The field of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007; Werhan & Way, 2006). Current totals of secondary level FCS teachers in the state of Iowa and five of its bordering states clearly illustrate this shortage (see Table 1.1). The survey targeted supply and demand figures of FCS teacher availability across the nation. Most states indicated a shortage of teachers to work with the numbers of students enrolled in their programs. The states reporting a “balanced” availability of FCS teachers indicated that positions in rural areas were difficult to fill (Werhan & Way, 2006). As a nation, secondary school programs report nearly one quarter (25%) of the total student enrollment in FCS courses. Compared to 2002-2003, FCS programs today are more gender equitable, and include a more diversified curricular focus to include both occupational and family-focused courses (Werhan & Way, 2006).

Table 1.1. Number of secondary level family and consumer sciences students and teachers: 2002-2003

States reporting	Number		FCS teacher availability status
	Students	Teachers	
Iowa*	44,000	623	Shortage
Illinois	43,951	1,370	Shortage
Minnesota	112,321	670	Balanced
Wisconsin	252,493	1,050	Shortage
South Dakota	11,604	117	Shortage
Missouri	202,129	595	Shortage
Nebraska	65,359	461	Shortage

Note: Adapted from Werhan & Way, 2006.

*Indicates updated data from the Iowa State FCS consultant, Adams, in 2007.

Family and consumer sciences programs are a curricular focus in many school districts as they respond to an increased number and degree of societal issues that FCS professionals are educated to address. Both school district leaders and FCS educator leaders have worked to promote the practical value of FCS education as it impacts young students who eventually become the practicing adults in tomorrow's society. In the study, *Body of knowledge of family and consumer sciences* (Baugher, Anderson, Green, Nickols, Shane, Jolly, L., et al., 2000), FCS educator leaders focused on the visionary elements of a new framework of FCS content to be used as a guide in addressing the needs of the emerging 21st century family. The identified elements include: education of individuals, families and communities in areas of wellness, technology, global interdependence, human development, and resource development/management (Baugher et al., 2000). In order to meet these needs, America's schools need to continue to address the recruitment and retention of qualified and licensed FCS teachers in the nation.

Significance of the Study

Educators in our nation's states are faced with unique sets of societal issues. Using the State of Iowa as a reference point, society continues to face the perennial challenges from the effects of poverty, educational issues such as drop out rates and quality education, teen pregnancy, parenting, financial illiteracy, employment concerns, population diversity, housing availability, health insurance coverage and many others. These concerns are reflected in the content of the FCS curriculum taught by FCS educators in middle and high school classrooms, and FCS leaders continue to address these perennial challenges in the education of future FCS leaders at the postsecondary level. The legacy of the profession is

one of responding to societal needs within a family/community framework. The uniqueness of the profession is demonstrated by an integrative approach that bridges the knowledge base of the profession with supporting disciplines to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities (Adams, 2001).

According to data presented through the State Data Center Program at the State Library of Iowa website (2008), in the year 2000, 46,671 families in Iowa were determined to be below poverty status (State Data Center of Iowa: Family Poverty, 2003). Related to this figure is the fact that, in 2006, 2,919 families were considered to be health uninsured (State Data Center of Iowa: Health Insurance, 2007c).

Living at poverty status raises concern in several areas by FCS professionals. In addition to health care needs, there is a great demand for professionals with education regarding obtaining other basic needs for survival. In Iowa, FCS professionals continue to be at the forefront in classrooms, helping children understand potential origins of their current economic status. These FCS professionals also help students understand what they can do to break out of the cycle of poverty and create a new start for themselves once they graduate from high school.

Education levels in Iowa were reported to have increased slightly over the past ten years. In 2000, of 1,895,856 Iowans, 36.1% earned a high school diploma, while 14.7% obtained a bachelor's degree in an advanced field of study. Ten years previously, the rates reported from the year 1990 indicated that, of 1,776,798 Iowans, 38.5% earned high school diplomas, while 11.7% obtained bachelor's degrees (State Data Center of Iowa: Educational Attainment, 2007a).

Food insecurity and hunger issues for the State of Iowa have increased significantly during the time period comparison from 1996-1998 to 2004-2006. In households reporting concerns regarding food insecurity, or difficulty obtaining enough food to support their families, a 43% increase occurred from 8.0% in 1996 to 11.4% of Iowa households in 2004. Where issues of satisfying hunger were found, 3.9% of households reported being hungry in 1996 whereas 3.5% of households reported being hungry in 2004—a 10% decrease (State Data Center of Iowa: Food Insecurity, 2007b).

In Iowa, home ownership numbers increased since the year 2000. Of Iowa's total 1,149,276 housing units (non-rental and rental), 73.2% of households reported home ownership compared to 71.8% in 1980 (State Data Center of Iowa: Home Ownership, 2002). In contrast, the number of individuals identified as “homeless” or “near-homeless” in Iowa in 1999 was close to 26,000, a figure that has remained stable since the middle years of the decade (IDOE, 2000).

According to data, diversity appears to be increasing in the state of Iowa. Even though the 2000 census indicated domestic migration into Iowa at 214, 941 individuals, during that same period of time, international immigration figures were reported to be at 38,160. Of the immigrants admitted to the United States for whom Iowa was reported as the “intended state of residence,” 3,984 immigrants represented 182 different countries (State Data Center of Iowa: Migration, 2004).

The population in Iowa by race/ethnicity also revealed change in the same 10-year time period. In the year 2000, of the population reporting one race alone, 93.9% were White compared to 96.9% in 1990. The Black/African American population was 2.1% in 2000, up from 1.7% in 1990 whereas the American Indian population was reported stable at 0.3%.

Asian population in Iowa increased to 1.3% in 2000 from 0.3% in 2000. One and three-tenths percent of the population reported being of some other race. The population of individuals possessing two or more racial backgrounds was 1.1% in 2000. Finally, Hispanic/Latino (of any race) revealed the greatest increase in population growth—with an increase of up to 2.8 % of the total Iowa population in 2000, from 1.2% in 1990. On the other hand, among White alone, “not Hispanic or Latino” classification, the total was 92.6% of the population in 2000, which decreased from 95.9% reported in 1990 (State Data Center of Iowa: Race, 2007d). Several books and population trend articles published in the previous decade indicated significant demographic changes in the state of Iowa (Baltes, 2004; Bloom, 2000; Cardinal, 1996; *CQ Researcher*, 2003; Davidson, 1996; Drummond ,2001; Silag, Koch-Bridgefurd, & Chase, 2001; Wharton & Castle, 1995).

Assuming the other individual states within the United States each experienced demographic shifts similar or greater to the aforementioned Iowa demographics, the various social agencies and institutions in the nation have been, are, and will continue to address a multitude of FCS related concerns. At the forefront of these social institutions are America’s educational facilities. The report, *Effectiveness of Secondary Family and Consumer Sciences Programs* (Browne, Myers, Gentzler, & Hausafus, 2006), provided evidence of a variety of studies which substantiate the impact of FCS programs at the secondary levels in areas of nutrition, child, family, and human development programs, and consumer and resource management.

This researcher has been employed as a high school FCS instructor in Iowa for 19 years. Due to the shortage of FCS teachers across the state, school districts have been forced to make a variety of adjustments in FCS programming to include sharing of FCS teachers

between school districts and building levels, reassignment of district personnel, utilization of creative certification processes, and full or partial elimination at both the middle and high school levels as program offerings are reconsidered. In recent history, part of this researcher's program fell victim to elimination due to the lack of availability of a highly qualified FCS instructor for a second position within the district. In a national survey conducted by Werhan and Way (2006), several respondents expressed concern that schools might be forced to close programs if the supply of teachers does not improve in the near future. The FCS leadership has recognized a need for change exists; this may include analysis of current methods being utilized at the secondary level in order to recruit quality pre-service candidates.

This researcher suggests that the guidance counselor employed by each local school district could be better utilized as an instrument for recruitment into FCS courses at the secondary level. The basic duties and responsibilities of the high school guidance counselor in Iowa are outlined in the guidelines provided by many professional associations, such as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), the American Counseling Association (ACA), and the Iowa School Counselors Association (ISCA). Included in those duties is a general description of the services a guidance counselor performs as a career counselor at the secondary level.

To better understand the relationship between the high school guidance counselor and recruitment of students into the FCS profession, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of guidance counselors regarding the FCS programs in their schools. The high school guidance counselor occupies a critical position assisting students with career

planning in school districts across the nation. The guidance counselor can be instrumental in promoting Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with a focus on Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) careers. There are several factors that influence career guidance offered by a counselor such as knowledge, awareness, and image of a specific career area (Bolan & Grainger, 2005; Erwin, Moran & McInnis: 1996, Inana, 1985; Woodard & Herren, 1995).

In the past decade, studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between the role of high school guidance counselors and their perceptions regarding specific career content areas (Bolan & Grainger, 2005; Erwin, Moran & McInnis, 1996; Woodard & Herren, 1995). Recommendations in each study revealed the need for providing guidance counselors with regular and current information and the understanding necessary to accurately present each specific content area as a possible career choice to students. It was also suggested guidance counselors hold opinions and beliefs that may influence the students in their recruitment and retention as professionals into a specific content area.

Erwin, Moran, and McInnis (1996) studied perceptions of high-school guidance counselors in the state of Tennessee to determine what makes a successful consumer and homemaking education program delivering essential living skills and an ideal home economics program that may also provide work skills through occupational education. The study was developed to gain insight as to why some FCS programs flourish and seem to be an essential and integral part of their school, while others have very low enrollment and face being phased out by the district. The study specifically focused on whether guidance counselors' knowledge about FCS is connected to their perceptions of FCS. This is especially important in a field in which change is inevitable. Study results indicated

guidance counselors perceive an unclear role and purpose of secondary FCS programs and a very strong reliance upon the individual FCS teacher to provide leadership for a successful program (Erwin et al., 1996).

Inana (1984) examined the relationship between high school guidance counselors' perceptions of and actual knowledge about career opportunities available in home economics (FCS) and the importance of providing counselors with updated information on current and projected opportunities in the FCS profession. Results of the study indicated that 85% of guidance counselors believed they were very knowledgeable in FCS career opportunities. However, when compared to projected employment trends and current opportunities, the guidance counselors' perceptions of FCS career opportunities were inaccurate (Inana, 1985).

Although this researcher expected new information to emerge from the current study, much of the framework was "fixed," grounded in prior data ascertained from the studies presented by Erwin et al. (1996) and Inana (1985). This study revisited selected conclusions and implications from these previous studies and examined the current perceptions of Iowa guidance counselors in their role as career advisors.

Purpose of the Study

Interviews with high school guidance counselors served as the primary source of data in this descriptive case study. The researcher used data from these participants to identify and analyze themes related to the perceived roles of high school guidance counselors in influencing students in their course selections, particularly family and consumer sciences courses. Eight guidance counselors from eight high schools in three eastern Iowa counties

provided a multidimensional picture of the diversity of responses that were formulated through a descriptive case study. The location of these counties is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Working Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that high school guidance counselors were familiar with the *ASCA National Standards* and the emphasis placed on the successful education of all students in each of its position statements (ASCA, 2004). It was also assumed that the guidance counselors would be more proactive in assisting students in pursuing FCS related careers if they knew more about FCS content.

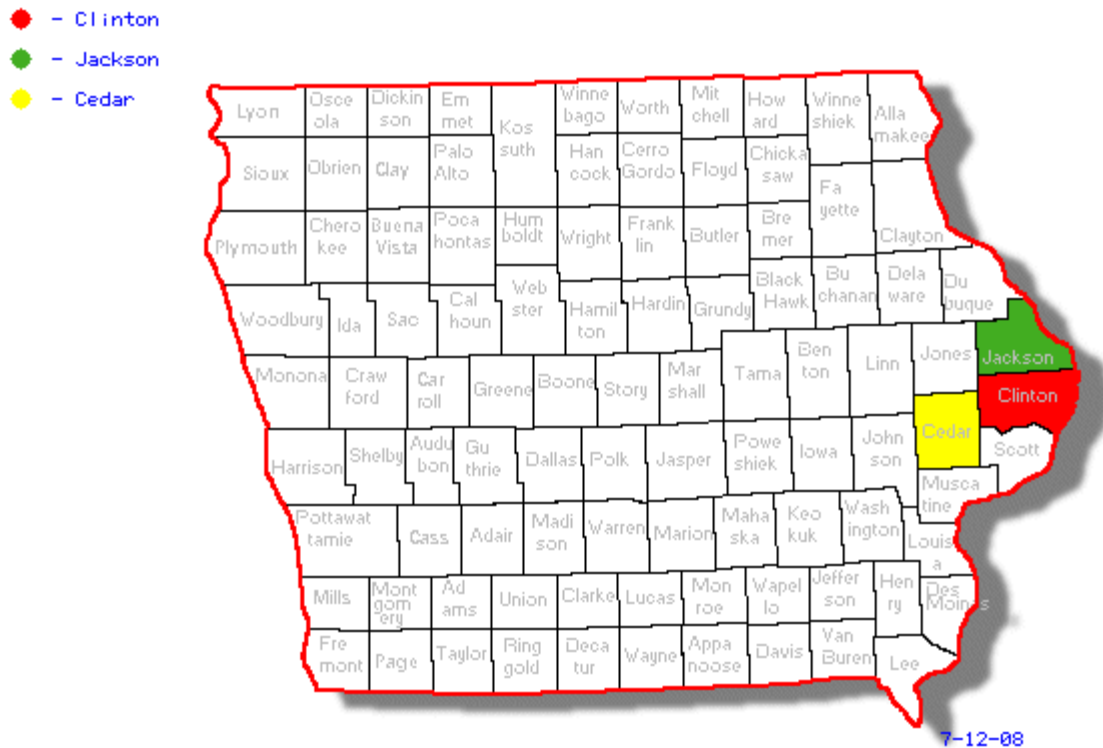


Figure 1.1. Eastern Iowa counties of participating high schools in the study

Research Questions

The role of the researcher included careful and sensitive listening to participants' responses to the interview questions. It was also understood that the culture of the two content areas are very different, and this required study on the part of the researcher to generate questions that would elicit honest and meaningful responses from the guidance counselors. The researcher facilitated an environment of comfort, respect, and understanding. The study addressed the following three research questions:

1. What information do guidance counselors have regarding FCS programs in the high school in which they are employed?
 - a. Curriculum: Names of courses, types of information delivered, type of program (comprehensive or occupational), academic credit, articulation agreements, dual enrollment;
 - b. Teachers: Certification, number, years of experience, professional development opportunities, and memberships;
 - c. Careers: Student organization, Family Career Community Leadership Association, and Career and Technical Education understanding, identify careers related to FCS, employment outlook, and needs assessment/career interest;
 - d. Enrollment: Increase or decrease or stable? Actual class sizes, gender numbers, and student abilities (special education, gifted and talented, legal provisions outlined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 504 plans);
 - e. What changes has the local FCS program experienced?
2. What perceptions are currently held by high school guidance counselors regarding FCS programs?

- a. Higher education or training for FCS career opportunities...name schools and programs. Certification of professionals, etc.;
 - b. Salaries earned by employees in FCS related careers;
 - c. Jobs/Careers requiring knowledge of FCS content;
 - d. How important is FCS education in a student's life at the high school level?
 - e. Gender issues/economic issues/academic issues;
 - f. School Reform: Emphasis on No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a reauthorization of federal programs aimed to improve the performance of U.S. school districts ...effect on FCS program enrollment;
 - g. Role of the FCS teacher in your building?
 - h. CTE, Perkins, School-to-Work
3. What role does the guidance counselor assume in determining enrollment in high school FCS programs?
 - a. Factors to consider when assisting students in course selections;
 - b. Which students do you recommend enroll in FCS programs? How do you discourage or guide in a different direction?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for the purposes of this study:

American Counseling Association (ACA): The American Counseling Association is a not-for-profit, professional and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest

association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings (ACA, 2008).

American School Counselor Association (ASCA): The American School Counselor Association is a professional organization whose members have a unique and distinctive preparation, grounded in the behavioral sciences, with training in clinical skills adapted to the school setting. The school counselor assists in the growth and development of each individual and uses his or her highly specialized skills to protect the interests of the counselee within the structure of the school system (ASCA, 2008).

Career and Technical Education: Career and technical education is about helping students, workers and lifelong learners of all ages fulfill their working potential. First and foremost it is about high school and college education that provides students with:

- Academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world, often called contextual learning.
- Employability skills, from job-related skills to workplace ethics.
- Education pathways that help students explore interests and careers in the process of progressing through school. (ACTE, 2008)

Carl D. Perkins Funding: For the purposes of this writing, according to the National Assessment of Vocational Education study, the most frequent uses of funds included: occupationally-relevant equipment, vocational curriculum materials, materials for learning labs, curriculum development or modification, staff development, career counseling and guidance activities, efforts for academic-vocational integration, supplemental services for special populations, hiring vocational staff, remedial classes, and expansion of tech prep programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Career and technical education also includes:

- Second-chance education and training for the unemployed and those seeking to upgrade their employability skills.
- Education to earn additional degrees, especially when related to career advancement.
- Corporate training, continuing education, skills upgrades and refresher courses for those already in the workplace. (ACTEonline, 2008)

Home Economics: Name previously assigned to the discipline area now referred to as Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) in the United States. The FCS career and technical service area seeks to empower individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society. The unique focus is on families, work, and their relationships (IFCS, 2007).

Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC): The Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling is an organization of counseling professionals dedicated to serving students as they explore options and make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. IACAC members are counselors, admission or financial aid officers, active retirees, or students who are concerned about the future of education in the State of Illinois and in the nation (IACAC, 2006).

Iowa School Counselor Association (ISCA): The Iowa School Counselor Association provides professional development to help school counselors develop their counseling programs and meet students' needs. ISCA offers opportunities for networking and collaboration that strengthen this work for students in Iowa (ISCA, 2008).

Vocational Education: Training designed to advance individuals' general proficiency, especially in relation to their present or future occupations. The term does not normally include training for the professions. Theorists in vocational training have emphasized that its

aim is to improve the worker's general culture as well as to further his or her technical training (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2001-07).

Vocational-Technical Education: The Perkins Act (1998) defined vocational-technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Vocational-Technical Education Change

- Vocational-technical education now incorporates both school-based and work-based learning business partnerships are key to successful programs
 - For most occupations, postsecondary education is essential
 - Vocational-technical education now encompasses postsecondary institutions up to and including universities
 - Vocational-technical education uses more and higher technology
 - Vocational-technical education uses cyberspace as a resource.
- (U.S. Department of Education, 2002)

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

This study was designed to identify and analyze themes related to the perceptions of high school guidance counselors regarding family and consumer sciences (FCS) courses to understand their potential influence on students. Several factors were considered in that process, including:

- The role of guidance counselors in public education;
- Career and technical education in Iowa;
- The Partnership for 21st Century Learning; and
- The relationship between FCS and guidance counselors.

Each factor is addressed in this chapter.

Role of Guidance Counselors in Public Education

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) position statement explains that, through extensive training, knowledge and skills, a professional school counselor will assist in the design of a rigorous and relevant academic and career plan for each and every student with the focus on student preparedness for future academic, career, and personal/social opportunities. The counselor will collaborate with students, families, and the educational community to ensure success in reaching each student's goals. Therefore, counselors may engage participants in activities such as decision-making, goal-setting, interest inventories, career awareness, college and post-secondary awareness, exploration and planning, and choosing appropriate courses for post-secondary options (ASCA, 2006).

To assist counselors in this task, the State of Iowa legislative session of 2005 required the State Board of Education to adopt a model core curriculum. As a result, local school

districts are required to identify a core curriculum, and each district must work with every 8th grade student to develop a plan for graduation that includes the elements of the core curriculum graduation, a career option, and a parental signature. The following year, the Iowa legislature added more specificity to the previous requirements. Beginning with the graduating class of 2011, each student is required to complete a core academic program that includes four years of English/language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social studies (sometimes referred to as 4-3-3-3). Courses are determined locally. Graduation requirements apply to all students, including students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (IDOE, 2007a; Kuhl, 2007).

In an effort to identify and address specific attitudes, knowledge and skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program, ASCA adopted and implemented the *ASCA National Standards for Students* (2004). The ASCA National Standards are classified into three domains:

Academic Development: Guide school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn. This domain includes standards for attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span, standards for completion of school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college, and standards for understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Career Development: Guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across the life span. This domain includes standards for acquisition of skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions, standards to assist students in employing strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction, and standards to understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

Personal/Social Development: Guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for personal and social growth as students progress through

school and into adulthood. This domain includes standards for acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others, standards for assisting students in making decisions, setting goals and taking necessary action to achieve goals, and standards for understanding safety and survival skills. (ASCA. 2004, pp. 5-10)

In addition to the *ASCA National Standards*, in its National Model, ASCA developed 36 position statements to reflect a variety of responsibilities expected of the guidance counselor. Despite the position statements, the role of school counselor remains unclear in many school districts (ASCA, 1996). Individual districts utilize their counselors in a variety of ways, depending upon local, state, and national demands. In many cases, the administration of a particular building may make the decisions regarding the duties and responsibilities of the guidance counselor (House, & Hayes, 2002; Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, & Skelton, 2006).

With an increased emphasis on accountability for student achievement in the public education system in the nation, school reform has become a focal point for school districts. Addressing student achievement, The Education Trust (1999, p. 2) reiterated that all students deserve to receive support to succeed academically and be prepared to select from a wide array of postsecondary options upon graduation. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC, 1997) stated that “School counselors should advocate for the educational needs of students and work to ensure that these needs are addressed at every level of the school experience” (p. 5).

The ASCA places special emphasis on the successful education of all students in each of its position statements. Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities are listed in the *Student Recruitment* section where the Association lists possible post-secondary career, career services, and educational institution exposure in the school setting. Itemized post-

secondary career options such as apprenticeship programs, athletic programs, branches of the military, career and technical education institutions, colleges and universities, and private schools are listed. Through this statement, the guidance counselor is responsible for the equitable hosting of recruiters, and thus, the exposure of all students to a variety of post-secondary career options.

Career and Technical Education in Iowa

Career and Technical Education (CTE) has a strong history in Iowa. CTE connects careers and education through the delivery of a broad understanding of all aspects of business, industry and labor (IDOE, 2008a). Iowa code identifies six career and technical service areas including Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE). FCSE empowers individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society. The unique focus is on families, work, and their relationships (IFCS, 2007). School districts across the state offer a variety of programs in both the comprehensive and occupational strands. Some school districts offer both strands of programs. This is encouraging, considering that the nation, as a whole, is reporting a shortage of FCS educators in school districts (Werhan & Way, 2006).

Statistics pertaining to FCS education positions within the state were provided by Adams (personal communication, 2007) who is the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Consultant in the Iowa Department of Education. Iowa recorded 623 middle and high school FCS teachers employed in the fall of the 2006-2007 school year. In 364 school districts in Iowa, 362 school districts either offered a program, shared a teacher or whole grade shared with a district that offers FCS. Iowa Code section 282.10 defined whole grade sharing as

...a procedure used by school districts whereby all or a substantial portion of the pupils in any grade in two or more school districts share an educational program for all or a substantial portion of a school day under a written agreement pursuant to section 256.13, 280.15, or 282.7(1). Whole grade sharing may either be one-way or two-way sharing. (IDOE, 2007c, Homepage)

Of the 623 schools offering FCS, 610 are public schools and 13 non-public schools. Data collected by the state revealed that nearly 44,000 students were served by FCS programs in the state. The beginning of the fall 2007-2008 school year, four available FCS teaching positions were advertised on the Iowa Department of Education's FCS website (Iowa Family and Consumer Sciences [IFCS] and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America [FCCLA], 2007).

In Iowa, retirement has been a factor contributing to the FCS teacher supply, with 19 retirements at the end of the 2003-2004 school year, 12 in 2004-2005, 23 in 2005-2006, and 17 in 2006-2007. Middle school programs and dual departments were cut in various districts across the state when teachers retired. In the past three years, four new FCS programs opened. One new FCS graduate was employed as a teacher in the fall of 2004-2005, and two new FCS graduates were employed as teachers in the 2005-2006 school year in the state. The two institutions that offer either teacher education degrees or endorsement programs in FCS are Iowa State University (Ames, Iowa), and Grand View College (Des Moines, Iowa). Clearly, the data indicate a concern regarding the availability of FCS teachers to fill positions within the state of Iowa (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007).

State high schools and community colleges have collaborated to articulate 11 Early Childhood/Child care programs, four Hospitality related programs, two Interior Design programs, one Fashion Merchandising, and five Culinary Arts programs to prepare students

for FCS related careers. Several community colleges offer “concurrent enrolled” courses for FCS in the areas of Early Childhood, Culinary Arts, Human Services and Education. One FCS “culinary academy” is offered at Des Moines Area Community College, and more are being developed across the state. Many FCS teachers across the state have included entrepreneurial components in their curriculum which include examples such as restaurants, catering, textiles design, and technology (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007).

Iowa CTE has partnered with the professional organization, American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) to assist in FCSE career planning by offering services for FCS educators. Additionally, the student organization, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), is offered in many FCS programs at the secondary level. Career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) provide a unique program of career and leadership development, motivation, and recognition for youth and adult students in secondary and postsecondary education who are or were enrolled in career and technical education programs (IDOE, 2008a). During the past three years, Iowa’s FCCLA school district membership has increased 25%, from 88 to 111, and student membership has grown from 2,144 to 2,724 (also a 25% increase) (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007). The following information is posted on the website of the Iowa Department of Education’s Career and Technical Programs Overview:

Career and technical student organizations are not ‘clubs’ to which only a few vocational students are members, but a CTSO is a powerful instructional tool that works best when it is integrated into the vocational curriculum and classroom by instructors who are committed to the development of the total person. CTSOs are referred to as "curricular" or "co-curricular," they are not “extracurricular.” Career and technical student organizations provide instructional strategies for students to develop, improve,

and expand leadership and occupational competencies related to a particular career interest. Other integration activities include serving as an extension of the classroom/laboratory instructional program which enriches and enhances classroom/laboratory learning. These organizations present organized activities for students to gain personal and leadership skills enhancing employability and preparation to become productive employees/employers, citizens and family members. (IDOE, 2008a, Homepage)

The FCCLA organization not only has local, district and state events, but also offers national and international networking options and experiences (FCCLA, 2008).

Students participating in career and technical student organizations have the opportunity to develop and enhance their leadership and citizenship skills within the context of career and program interests, which also enhances their occupational skills and future employability. These organizations provide students with opportunities in a caring, secure environment to participate in leadership initiatives, and to enhance their awareness of the role of community service and responsibility to governmental affairs (IDOE, 2008a).

Activities are designed to provide opportunities for student achievement in sound decision-making, positive professional appearances, and skill attainment. These experiences are enhanced through involvement of business, industry, and labor in a climate of positive interaction and cooperation. For many students, this is the only leadership opportunity they will experience during their educational careers. Communities, states, and the nation benefit, as well as the individual and their families (IDOE, 2008a).

Partnership for 21st Century Learning

To further support the mission of Career and Technical Education, Iowa's Governor, Chet Culver, recently announced a joint initiative with the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (the nation's leading advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into

education) to bring globally competitive 21st century teaching and learning skills to schools, educators, and students throughout Iowa (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills “serves as a catalyst to position 21st century skills at the center of U.S. K-12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills Mission Statement, 2004). The framework is based on the premise that there is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21st century communities and workplaces. The resulting vision is that, through this developed framework, U.S. schools will align classroom environments with real world environments by infusing the identified 21st century skills (see Figure 1).

This model includes promoting an understanding of academic core subjects at much higher levels through the intertwining of 21st century interdisciplinary themes of global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health literacy into the core subjects (Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2004). Further explanation of the model includes understanding the components of the framework.

Learning and innovation skills separate students who are and are not prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21st century and include: Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Communication and Collaboration. *Information, Media and Technology Skills* are necessary to survive in a technology and media-driven environment requiring access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale and include: Information Literacy, Media Literacy,

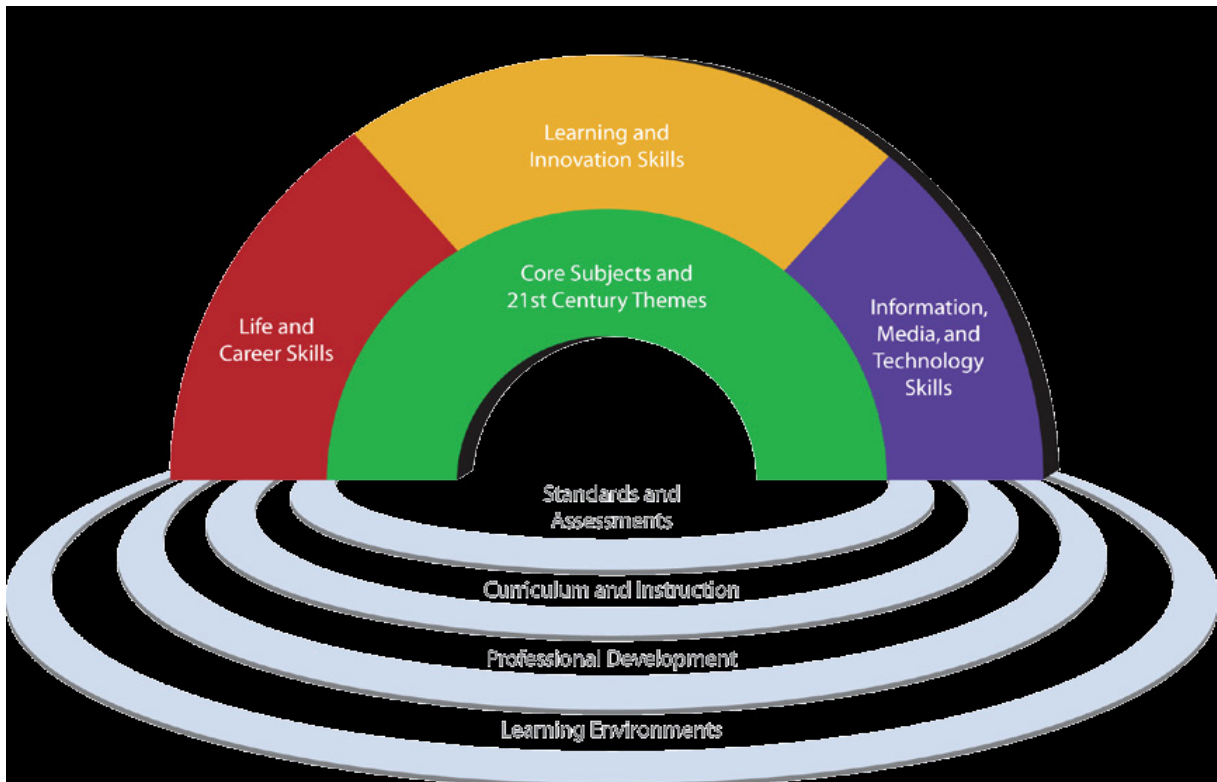


Figure 2.1. 21st century student outcomes and support systems (from Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2004)

and ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy. *Life and Career Skills* are essential in navigation of the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age and requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills, such as: Flexibility and Adaptation, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Productivity and Accountability, and Leadership and Responsibility (Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2004).

There is considerable overlap between the skills set suggested through the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS). The NASAFACS (AAFCS, 2008b) “provides the framework for national,

state, and local programs that prepare students for family life, work life, and careers in Family and Consumer Sciences by empowering individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society.” Specifically, there are standards and competencies addressing career, community and life connections (see Table 2.1). The skills suggested by the Partnership for 21st Century Learners strengthen the current emphasis on the standards and competencies offered through courses in the FCS content areas in America’s school districts.

Relationship between FCS and Guidance Counselors

The working relationship between the FCS profession and high school guidance counselors has been documented extensively in *The Journal of Home Economics*. The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences has recently provided a direct weblink to *HEARTH: The Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, History* hosted by Cornell University’s Mann Library (Albert R. Mann Library, 2008). Among other FCS artifacts, this collection provides full text documents from the *Journal of Home Economics/Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* from 1909-1980, directly accessible from the researcher’s home computer.

The site utilizes an engine by which this researcher was able to enter the search words “guidance counselor” to retrieve historical documents on the internet pertaining to this study. The search produced 228 matching terms in 115 full texts. Upon full examination of *The Journal of Home Economics*, it became clear that the first documented partnership between guidance counselors and FCS professionals was recorded in September of 1944. From 1944-1961, there was a tremendous emphasis relating to the importance of the guidance counselor

Table 2.1. NASAFACS standards and competencies

Area of Study 1.0: Career, Community and Life Connections	
<i>Comprehensive Standard: Integrate multiple life roles and responsibilities in family, work, and community settings</i>	
Content Standards	Competencies
1.1 Analyze strategies to manage multiple roles and responsibilities (individual, family, career, community, and global).	1.1.1 Summarize local and global policies, issues, and trends in the workplace and community that affect individuals and families.
	1.1.2 Analyze the effects of social, economic, and technological change on work and family dynamics.
	1.1.3 Analyze ways that individual career goals can affect the family's capacity to meet goals for all family members.
	1.1.4 Analyze potential effects of career path decisions on balancing work and family.
	1.1.5 Define goals for life-long learning and leisure opportunities for all family members.
	1.1.6 Develop a life plan, including pathways to acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to achieve individual, family, and career goals.
1.2 Demonstrate transferable and employability skills in school, community and workplace settings.	1.2.1 Analyze potential career choices to determine the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with each career.
	1.2.2 Demonstrate job seeking and job keeping skills.
	1.2.3 Apply communication skills in school, community and workplace settings.
	1.2.4 Demonstrate teamwork skills in school, community and workplace settings.
	1.2.5 Analyze strategies to manage the effects of changing technologies in workplace settings.
	1.2.6 Demonstrate leadership skills and abilities in school, workplace and community settings.
	1.2.7 Analyze factors that contribute to maintaining safe and healthy school, work and community environments.
	1.2.8 Demonstrate work ethics and professionalism.
1.3 Evaluate the reciprocal effects of individual and family participation in community activities.	1.3.1 Analyze goals that support individuals and family members in carrying out community and civic responsibilities.
	1.3.2 Demonstrate skills that individuals and families can utilize to support civic engagement in community activities.
	1.3.3 Analyze personal and family assets and skills that provide service to the community.
	1.3.4 Analyze community resources and systems of formal and informal support available to individuals and families.
	1.3.5 Analyze the effects of public policies, agencies, and institutions on the family.
	1.3.6 Identify ways individuals and families can influence change in policies, agencies, and institutions that affect individuals and families.

(Source: AAFCS, 2008a)

in recruitment into the profession, careers associated with home economics, the guidance counselor as a vehicle for improving public relations and professional image, as well as for resources available for collaborative use among guidance counselors and FCS professionals (Husted, 1948, p. 460; *News Notes*, 1947, p. 314; *News Notes*, 1953, p. 66; *Public Relations Exchange*, 1950, p. 297; Surra, Kooser, Rosfeld, & Cable, 1974, p. 13)

Some examples of topics linking the two groups include specific FCS activities hosted by the professional association of individual states with guidance counselors in attendance. Most of these involved a recruitment or career session of some type. The national association AAFCS (originally called American Home Economics Association (AHEA) reported the publication of regularly updated career brochures entitled, “Size Up Home Economics” (*JHE*, 1958, p. 121), “A Better Beginning” (*JHE*, 1953, p. 496), and “Take a Look at Home Economics” (*JHE*, 1955, p. 199). However, the publication most pointedly targeted toward the utilization of the guidance counselor in career planning in FCS was called “Home Economics—A Guidance Aid” (1955, p. 283). *The Journal of Home Economics* featured a 3/4-page advertisement of the FCS profession:

NEW-Guidance Aid on Home Economics Profession. An aid to guidance counselors, home economics teachers, homeroom teachers and others providing career information to secondary school students.

In chart and narrative this brochure outlines the variety of career opportunities in the home economics profession:

gives the personal characteristics, the interests, and the professional aptitudes or abilities needed for success in this profession:

lists the educational preparation necessary for the various types of home economics positions.

Designed to fit in a regular filing case. PRICE 25 cents. (*JHE*, 1955, p. 283)

In a later edition, *The Journal of Home Economics* enlisted the collaborative efforts of both FCS professionals and guidance counselors in assisting individuals in making career choices

related to the FCS profession through a full-page advertisement entitled, “Let’s Each Do Our Part” (*JHE*, January 1961, p.5). Since 1961, there have been other documented published efforts by Home Economics Related Occupations (HERO), Home Economics in Business (HEIB), and AHEA to create an awareness of career opportunities in home economics with specific documented recommendations by AHEA to distribute to guidance counselors in secondary schools.

Historical research has indicated there has been a strong working relationship between the FCS profession and high school guidance counselors. Only two published studies of more recent research was found specifically surveying guidance counselors’ responses to their role definition and perceptions of home economics secondary programs and career opportunities in FCS (Erwin, Moran, & McInnis, 1996; Inana, 1985). Do guidance counselors understand today’s FCS programs well enough to be advocates for students pursuing careers in the profession? Do high school guidance counselors collaborate with high school FCS teachers in educating students about careers in FCS? How can FCS teachers and guidance counselors work together to provide Career and Technical Educational opportunities for all interested students?

The lack of published information related to the collaboration between guidance counselors and FCS professionals since 1961 indicated a need for a current study to identify and analyze themes related to guidance counselors perceptions of high school FCS programs. If the high school guidance counselor does occupy a critical position in assisting students for future academic, career, and personal/ social opportunities, as indicated in the literature presented in this chapter, then FCS professionals need to take assessment of information guidance counselors have and perceptions held by guidance counselors regarding current

FCS programs in their schools. This will be important in relaying accurate and up to date information to students regarding career opportunities in FCS.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of qualitative research is to gain understanding of the meaning and nature of human experience. To do this, the researcher must interact with participants in the field (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1988). Through immersion in the data, emergent ideas surface in guiding future data collection.

This study was designed to identify and analyze themes related to the perceived roles of high school guidance counselors in influencing students in their course selections, particularly family and consumer sciences courses. It provides a multidimensional picture that captures the diversity of responses that have been formulated through a descriptive case study of eight guidance counselors from eight high schools in eastern Iowa. A descriptive study seeks to identify patterns or trends in a situation, but not the cause and effect (causal) linkages among its different elements (Merriam, 1988).

Descriptive studies help in generating hypotheses on which further research may be based. Qualitative data collection was the most appropriate for this study as this method most likely yielded data that allowed for a more holistic and complete picture of the perceptions of the guidance counselors. Data were collected from eight high-school guidance counselors in eight different school districts in three eastern Iowa counties over a two-month period (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1).

Nature of Case Studies and Guidance Counselors

The qualitative case study is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of

education (Merriam, 1988). Merriam (1988, p.18) explains, “Research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education.”

As a research design, descriptive research aims to examine events or phenomenon too deeply embedded to be extracted for study (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984). A case study was chosen as methodology in this instance because of the nature of the research questions (how and why), the minimum amount of control by the researcher of events surrounding the case study of guidance counselors, and the desired end product (a descriptive interpretation of phenomenon). The case study has many descriptive characteristics which lend itself to this study of guidance counselors (Olson, 1982):

- It can illustrate the complexities of a situation—the fact that not one but many factors contributed to it.
- It has the advantage of hindsight yet can be relevant in the present.
- It can include vivid material—analysis of audio-taped interviews, use of quotations, examination of collected physical artifacts, and observations.
- It can spell out differences of opinion and suggest how these differences have influenced the findings.

The descriptive case study in education presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study; they are neither guided by a hypothesis, nor motivated by a desire to formulate a general hypothesis (Lijphart, 1971). Descriptive case studies are useful, however, in presenting basic information about areas of education where little research has been conducted. Educational case studies are appealing because of their ability to examine

processes, problems, and programs in bringing about understanding to affect and/or improve practice (Merriam, 1988).

Participants, Population, and Demographic Sample

Because case study research is used to study qualitative problems, the most appropriate sampling form is called purposive (Chein, 1981) or purposeful (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Maxwell, 2005; Patton, 1980; 1990). Purposive sampling is the correct term to use when researchers seek participants who fit into a broad category and is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, or gain insight, thereby learning the most. Purposive sampling also seeks to find individuals who have relevant information about the topic being researched. Qualitative researchers make subjective judgments regarding the potential participants based on the likelihood that they will be able to provide the needed information (Patten, 2007). Sampling of this type occurs before the data are gathered (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Merriam, 1988).

Additionally, this study utilized a sample of convenience (also known as an accidental sample). The guidance counselors were selected from school districts in eastern Iowa, in geographical proximity to the researcher's office. This creates a biased sample, but will be noted in the limitations section of the study (Patten, 2007).

To begin, prior to conducting the study, approval to use human subjects for research was requested and granted by the Institutional Review Board at Iowa State University (copies of the approval and continuances appear in Appendix A). Eight high-school guidance counselors were invited to participate in a 90-minute digital voice recorded interview session. Participants were asked for additional follow-up time, if necessary, to clarify, extend or

further illustrate information from the initial interview. Previous to the initial interview, participants were mailed a packet containing informational correspondence, consent requests, and a demographic survey (see Appendix B & C). The participants were asked to complete the short demographic survey and consent forms and return them to the researcher via U.S. mail in the self-addressed, stamped envelopes provided. These forms were reviewed by the researcher prior to the interview session. Within two weeks following their interview, participants received a written copy of the (verbatim) transcribed interview session for their review. The interviewees were asked to report any changes or clarification of information to the researcher. None of the interviewees contacted the researcher with requests for changes.

Demographic Information

To write a descriptive case study, it was necessary to collect basic demographic variables from all guidance counselors before the interview. This enables the researcher to have time to familiarize herself with the participant and his/her school environment in preparation for the interview session. The demographic survey was sent to the guidance counselor well in advance of the interview. It was returned to the researcher and analyzed to obtain necessary background information. This survey requested information about the guidance counselor's experience and education levels, primary duties in his/her job description, student population, school building, course and program offerings, and professional memberships. This information was utilized in writing the case study results following the interviews.

Interview Process and Research Site

An interview is a method of data collection that may be described as an interaction involving the interviewer and the interviewee, the purpose of which is to obtain valid and reliable information (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Interviews are useful ways to obtain large amounts of data quickly. Utilization of more than one interviewee allows for a wide variety of information on the same topic.

One guidance counselor from each of eight schools was interviewed during a 90-minute session. The session took place in each guidance counselor's office, where there were few or no interruptions during the interview session. The inquiry was designed to be unobtrusive and non-controlling with no predetermined outcome. Interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. The researcher also took hand written notes. The session called for a brief review of the previously signed consent documents, clarification questions regarding the demographic survey, and time for remaining questions from the interviewee regarding interviewing format.

The interview sessions utilized a three-step strategy (Gottlieb, 1986). Each session began with the usual opening-game characteristics: greeting ritual, establishing rapport, etc. This was immediately followed by a statement that orients the respondent to the interview and given information about expectations regarding the interview and how responses would be used. In order to generate facts, opinions, and insights (Yin, 1994), the interview continued with the open-ended question "Tell me about the role you play in this building as a high school guidance counselor." The subsequent semi-structured (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) questions were conversational in an attempt to persuade the guidance counselor to discuss further something he/she mentioned in an answer such as, "Is the number of students

currently enrolled in FCS programs an increase, a decrease, or stable compared to previous years?” and, “To what do you attribute that phenomenon?” These responses were transcribed verbatim by the researcher immediately following the interview session.

Instrumentation

In a qualitative case study, the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1988). The case study researcher must possess a tolerance for ambiguity, a sensitivity to the case study variables and biases inherent to this type of research, and must be a good communicator. All of these characteristics can be improved through study, practice, and training (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994).

Interviews

In an effort to ensure content validity, a pilot case study was performed in early December of 2007. The participant was a 59-year old male guidance counselor with 37 years experience in various school districts in Iowa. He was an early educational mentor of the researcher when employed together in the same school district fifteen years ago. He was chosen as the pilot for several reasons: he has a congenial personality, was easily accessible because of scheduling and geographical proximity, and he has an extensive background experience in counseling. He has been employed most recently in a high school with a student population of over 1,500 students. The high school counseling duties in his school are shared by four faculty members.

The pilot study occurred on a Saturday morning from 9:00-10:30. Prior to his arrival, the counselor had been informed of the title of the research study, and the method of data

collection to be utilized, audiotape recording and a series of open-ended interview questions. He was told that this pilot study would be used to help develop relevant lines of questioning for future case study participants. There would be opportunity for discussion of the questions to include grammatical and definitional sentence structures, as well as organizational ordering of questions, and possible directional responses of future participants.

During the interview session, each of nine questions was read to the interviewee, and ample time was allowed for each response. A list of sub-questions, or probing questions had also been prepared in advance and this list was utilized by the interviewer to delve further into the responses offered by the interviewee. At the end of each question, the interviewer and interviewee engaged in casual discussion regarding the mechanics of the most recent question. Three additional open-ended questions were added to the list, and two of the original questions were modified to utilize language recognized by guidance counselors. The pilot interviewee reported that the interview session was similar to a professional development workshop and stated that he appreciated the opportunity to reflect upon the family and consumer sciences program in his school.

Prior to the pilot study, the researcher had researched and experimented with using a qualitative data analysis (QDA) program entitled Analysis Software for Word-based Records (*AnSWR*). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP, 2007) utilizes and recommends this program and offers this QDA free of charge to the public. The researcher simply downloads the program onto his/her personal computer and uses the site's support materials as necessary. There are several features which made *AnSWR* attractive for this research. It allows for structured codebook development, hierarchical coding structures, text coding, and intercoder agreement assessments. The researcher anticipated further research

utilizing yet another feature of this program being an output format which facilitates import into both quantitative and qualitative programs.

All responses were recorded on an antiquated cassette recording machine. The large and heavy machine required an extension cord, and the tapes needed to be turned after 45-minutes of interviewing, and the cassette tape motion was audible during the interview session. After the interview session, the researcher practiced transcribing the audio-taped interview session into the AnSWR program to determine if it would be necessary to hire a transcriptionist because of the levels of difficulty and time involved in the process. The actual transcription process took eight hours to complete. The researcher decided to transcribe the audio tapes from the actual research interviews herself. After the pilot interview was transcribed into the AnSWR program, the researcher practiced working with the data in the program. It was complicated and proved to be more time consuming than necessary for the little data to be analyzed. AnSWR has been designed for large-scale, multiple researcher projects (Drisko, 2003). The researcher determined *AnSWR* to be too large-scale for the amount of data to be analyzed for this project.

Because of the pilot, the following changes were made to the data collection process:

1. The purchase of a new audio-recording mechanism, the *Olympus VN-4100PC Digital Voice Recorder*. This recording device stores 144 hours of audio recording in four different folders and multiple files. A simple USB cable allows for quick and convenient download of the recording content onto the researcher's personal computer (PC). This proved to be essential in development of the case study database (Yin, 2003). Additional features included compactness and battery operation, as well as sharp voice recording quality, and an economical purchase price of \$45.00.

2. An adapted version of interview questions to reflect the discussion during the pilot study. The interview questions (see Appendix D-2) were modified to include topics the interviewer had not considered in the counseling process and were considered to be valuable for inclusion into the study.
3. The use of a basic Microsoft office spreadsheet to replace the *AnSWR* program as a data storage file. It was simple and easy to use.

For each case study, interviews were conducted with a guidance counselor from each participating high school. Seven of the eight high schools employed only one guidance counselor, but the eighth high school employs four guidance counselors. The researcher personally interviewed each guidance counselor in his/her respective office. Each interview was transcribed verbatim into a spreadsheet document and a different color coded text was applied to each for the analysis portion of the study. The interview process included the specific questions, possible probes, and open-ended questions (see Appendix D-2). The questions were designed to gather information about the three basic research questions involved in this study.

Observations

Guidance office

In addition to the interviews conducted with the guidance counselor from each school district, the interviewer made observations of the materials, supplies, equipment, and information posted in the guidance counselors' offices and student spaces. This was all noted separately. There was not a formal procedure for this data collection.

Family and Consumer Sciences department

As part of the research process, observations were conducted at each site within the family and consumer sciences department. The observations were formally recorded on a worksheet prepared by the interviewer (see Appendix D-3). Specifically, a 45-minute observation of each classroom was made noting components pertaining to the teacher, curriculum, physical space involved, and classroom features. It should be noted that the researcher was previously acquainted with most of the FCS teachers, but did not interact with them as a part of the study until after the interview with the guidance counselor in their school.

Documents

Documents studied in this research included artifacts offered by individual guidance counselors in emphasizing points made during the course of each interview. These included information about career portfolios, career pathways, Iowa College Access Network (ICAN) materials, a career website list, and an interest inventory. Additionally, course description guides (identified by a variety of titles), were distributed to the researcher from seven of the schools. The eighth school acknowledged that the guide was currently “in-print” and unavailable. In that school a teacher schedule was obtained.

Approval and Consent Protocols

Prior to conducting the study, approval to use human subjects was requested and granted by the Institutional Review Board at Iowa State University. All policies and procedures were followed according to the instructions from Iowa State University’s Internal Review Board (IRB). Copies of the IRB approval and continuances appear in Appendix A.

The IRB requested the use of official letterhead on the consent form used by participating school districts (see Appendix B-3 for the content of the consent form). Appendix D-1 contains a copy of the initial contact phone script utilized by the researcher. After initial verbal consent for participation was received, an informational packet was sent to the participants in early January as confirmation of participation.

Guidance counselors who agreed to participate in the study received a packet containing the initial contact letter (Appendix B-1), guidance counselor consent form (Appendix B-2), and demographics form (Appendix C). Guidance counselors were asked to complete the materials and return them to the researcher in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. Some of these forms were returned via U.S. Mail, and some were personally retrieved by the researcher.

Family and consumer sciences teachers agreeing to participate in the study were contacted via email to introduce the topic of the study and request a classroom observation. The researcher reviewed the purpose of the study with the FCS teachers during the course of the classroom observation and obtained written consent from each participant (see Appendix B-4 for the content of the consent form).

Data Collection Process

In summary the plan for this study was to follow these steps in data collection:

1. Make contact and distribute information to participating guidance counselors.
2. Collect preliminary documentation and consent forms from guidance counselors.
3. Interview guidance counselors.
4. Transcribe interview sessions.

5. Make contact and distribute information to participating family and consumer science teachers.
6. Collect consent forms from family and consumer sciences teachers.
7. Observe family and consumer sciences classrooms
8. Analyze interview transcripts, documents, and observations.
9. Make additional contact where necessary to clarify information or collect additional artifacts.

Credibility of the Researcher

The researcher is a FCS teacher with 19 years of high school experience employed by the same school district. After working as the only FCS instructor in that school for eight years, the district teamed with the local community college, The Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9 (MBAEA9), and neighboring AEA schools districts to receive the *Culinary Arts Youth Program Grant*, which expanded the FCS program to include an occupational foods program. The resulting programs necessitated the hiring of an additional six-tenths FCS staff position. For seven years this position was filled consecutively by two highly qualified FCS instructors. The eighth year, the district was unable to fill the position with a highly qualified FCS teacher, so utilized a long-term substitute teacher with a secondary history certification while advertising for a highly qualified FCS instructor. While on professional sabbatical, the researcher's school district committed to the hiring of a second highly qualified FCS professional to join the researcher for the 2008-2009 school year. The researcher considers this to be a vote of confidence for the FCS program and has filled the position to continue the strong focus on FCS curriculum in the district.

The researcher has also been a lead mentor for new staff members employed in the school district through the past ten years. This has proven to be an invaluable experience for the researcher personally, as well as professionally.

The researcher has worked collaboratively with members of the high school staff to provide a quality learning environment for all students and understands the value of a productive working relationship between the classroom teacher and the guidance counselor. The district guidance counselor has been utilized as a resource for collaborative instruction in the FCS classroom and has been a valuable member of the FCS program's advisory committees. The purpose of this study was to identify participating school district's guidance counselor's perceptions and understandings of FCS programs in their schools and to understand more about the role of the guidance counselor in those school districts.

Methods of Analysis

Single-case or within-case

A qualitative research design is emergent; data collection and analysis occurs simultaneously (Merriam, 1988). As participants are interviewed, new questions and insights will emerge. Data from each interview will be entered into the spreadsheet and the interviewer will begin identifying "units" of information that will eventually serve as a basis for identification of categories (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Maxwell (2005) suggests utilizing a conscious process of memoing, coding, and connection which must be planned and executed to answer research questions and address validity concerns.

Each interview was analyzed and coded in the spreadsheet. As the coding took place, conceptual categories began to emerge. These categories, or themes, developed from

recurring regularities in the data (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This researcher interviewed eight participants, and found saturation of categories and emergence of commonalities before the final interview session.

Cross-case

Multiple cases of guidance counselor interviews and data were required for this case study. The study was designed using replication logic (Yin, 2003) for multiple-case studies. Table 3.1 illustrates the characteristics of each of the eight participants, their schools, and district size. The eight guidance counselors were chosen from eastern Iowa high schools, each within a 45-mile radius from the researcher's office. One of the schools is a consolidated school district.

The eight case studies are a fairly homogeneous group, with the exception of School D, which is larger than the others, thereby sharing the guidance responsibilities with three other faculty members and School H in which the guidance counselor is simultaneously serving as the district's activities coordinator. The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) utilizes school enrollment data collected from each school district's Basic Education Data Survey (BEDS) document from the current school year (Grades 9-10-11) for sports classifications in the following school year (IHSAA, 2007). Although the figures originate within the IHSAA, these classifications are also used for other purposes in identifying school districts with similar enrollment sizes. To complicate matters, a few schools may actually be in two different classifications within the

Table 3.1. Guidance counselor participants

	Guidance Counselor (GC)							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Gender	F	F	M	F	F	F	M	F
Total years of counseling experience	26 years	5 years	10 years	1 year	12 years	7 years	18 years	1 year
Years in current school	22 years	5 years	7 years	1 year	4 years	7 years	13 years	1 year
Classroom teaching experience	15 years	None	1 year	7 years	12 years	None	8 years	10 years
Memberships	ACA, ASCA	None	ISCA	ACA, ASCA, ISCA	ASCA	ACA, ASCA, ISCA	ISCA, IACAC	None
District size	707	558	1,075	4217	1,654	904	671	345
High school grades 9-12	201-300	161	305	1400	700	307	330	101-200
Ratio of GC to students	1:349	1:250	1:305	1:350	1:315	1:307	1:330	1:316
Status	Full-time 7-12 GC only	Full-time 7-12 GC only	Full-time H.S. only GC only	Full-time H.S. only GC only	4/5 time H.S. only GC only	Full-time H.S. only GC only	Full-time 7-12, GC & Activities Director Duties	Full-time K-12 GC only

same school year, based on the specified athletic activity. For the purposes of this study, none of the participating school districts experienced “borderline” enrollment issues. The school districts in this study were classified as follows for the 2008-2009 school year by using the following criteria identified for basketball participation (see Table 3.1):

- Class 4A: Largest 48 schools across the state (enrollment 588-1940)
School District and Guidance Counselor D
- Class 3A: Next 64 (enrollment 291-575)
School District and Guidance Counselor E
- Class 2A: Next 128 (enrollment 155-291)
School Districts and Guidance Counselors A, C, F, G
- Class 1A: Remainder (enrollment 18-155)
School Districts and Guidance Counselors B, H

This study presents insights from each of the eight guidance counselor interviews, then offers a cross-case analysis leading to generalizations about the perceptions of those guidance counselors. The use of the cross-case analysis strengthens validity concerns in case study research (Creswell, 1998).

This research was a descriptive case study of eight high school guidance counselors in eastern Iowa. Both purposive and convenience sampling were used to select the participants in this study. To ensure content validity a pilot study was performed focusing on interview format and question design. Descriptive validity was established through triangulation of data between researcher and participants as well as among information collected in interview transcripts, classroom observations, and physical artifacts collected at the research sites.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify and analyze themes related to the perceived roles of high school guidance counselors regarding students in their course selections, particularly family and consumer sciences (FCS) courses. In this chapter, data are presented that were obtained from interviews with each guidance counselor, school district course handbooks which were collected at each site, and miscellaneous resources offered during the interview session and utilized by individual guidance counselors. Although the actual observations of the FCS programs in the schools were not the major focus of this study, the researcher arranged for a 45 minute observation of each school's FCS classroom to better understand the FCS programs discussed in each school interview.

This research used multiple methods to collect data. Each guidance counselor was interviewed for approximately 90 minutes and the information was archived in a small audio-digital voice recorder. The information was downloaded to the researcher's personal computer (PC) immediately following the interview session. The researcher personally transcribed the interview session verbatim and provided a copy to the corresponding guidance counselor for his or her approval. Course catalogs were analyzed to determine the formal names for the FCS course offerings and the curriculum content contained within each course. Other materials provided by guidance counselors were analyzed in order to obtain greater understanding of the purpose and value of the materials utilized by a guidance counselor in assisting students. The researcher designed a two-page worksheet to assist in

documenting observations in the FCS classroom specific to the teacher, the curriculum, and the physical environment.

Organization of the Data Analysis

Utilizing a descriptive case study approach, the researcher presents data collected from interviews with eight guidance counselors in eastern Iowa to determine their perceptions and understanding of FCS programs. Chapter 4 is organized into three sections. Each section presents data collected from interview sessions with eight guidance counselors, observations in eight FCS classrooms, and artifacts offered by guidance counselors during the interview sessions. The body of chapter 4 provides actual transcription segments from the interview sessions with the guidance counselors. The researcher has attempted to provide as clear a transcription as possible in sharing descriptive evidence of dialogue with the guidance counselors.

Descriptive Characteristics of the Respondents

The research sites were purposefully chosen. Using a replication logic for multiple-case studies (Yin, 2003), the eight guidance counselors chosen for this study represent a fairly homogeneous group, with the exception of School D, which is larger than the others, thereby sharing the guidance responsibilities with three other faculty members and School H in which the guidance counselor is simultaneously serving as the district's activities coordinator.

The guidance counselors in this case study were geographically located within 45 miles of the researcher's office. According to enrollment size, the study included one guidance counselor from a Class 4A school district, one guidance counselor from a Class 3A

school district, 4 guidance counselors from a Class 2A school district, and two guidance counselors from a Class 1A school district. There were two male and six female participant guidance counselors with guidance experience ranging from less than one year to 26 years. Two of the guidance counselors had no classroom teaching experience prior to serving in their current role as high school guidance counselor. Guidance counselor grade assignments varied from all students grades K-12, grades 6-12 or 7-12, and grades 9-12. All of the guidance counselors reported having a counselor to student ratio ranging from 1:250 to 1:349 regardless of their grade level assignments.

Regarding job description, guidance counselor G assumed the roles of both guidance counselor and activities director in his school district. All other guidance counselors assumed job descriptions as guidance counselor only. Guidance counselor F was four-fifths time employed. The remaining seven guidance counselors were employed in full-time guidance counselor positions. The guidance counselor in School D was the largest school in the study representing a 4A school district and reported duties most closely within the parameters identified in the ASCA national standards. Six of the eight guidance counselors were members of professional guidance counselor associations; two of the guidance counselors were not members of any professional guidance counselor association.

All of the guidance counselors in this study possessed more than one degree, certification, or endorsement except for Guidance Counselor F who had only K-12 counseling certification. Four of the guidance counselors had been employed in other job descriptions, two of them outside of education. Certifications and work experience of the counselors are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Certifications and work experience of the counselors in the study

	Guidance Counselor							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Certifications	Permanent Professional K-12 School counselor K-12 Music Coaching endorsement English endorsement	Social Work School social work endorsement Masters' Social Work (Pending)Masters' School Counseling K-12	5-12 School Counselor K-12 Physical Education Sociology Certification K-12 Athletic Coach	BA Elementary Education BS Speech/Hearing Science Masters Special Education Strategist I 7-12 Level I Resource (Pending)Masters School Counseling Rehabilitation and Student Development K-12 Endorsements K-8 Reading, K-8 Special Education National Board Certified Professional Teacher Standards Early Adolescence English/LA	BA K-12 Special education Masters K-12 Counseling Endorsements K-6 Behavior Disabilities K-6 MD/Moderate K-6 Multicategorical 4-9 MS endorsement	K-12 Counseling	BS Business Administration/Marketing and Physical Education Minor: Driver's Education Masters Counseling K-12	BA M.S. L/A Literature /Title I Reading/Math Class B-off teaching K-8 and 5-12 counseling Coaching authorization (Pending) Masters K-12 Vocational/Rehabilitative School Counseling
Other work experience		Working with Juvenile sex offenders 5.5 years		Retail		Substitute teaching	Coach Driver Education Instructor	

Research Questions

The following three questions provided direction for this study:

1. What information do guidance counselors have regarding FCS programs in the high school in which they are employed?
2. What perceptions are currently held by high school guidance counselors regarding FCS programs?
3. What role does the guidance counselor assume in determining enrollment in high school FCS programs?

Analysis of the Data

A qualitative research design is emergent; data collection and analysis occurs simultaneously (Merriam, 1988). As participants were interviewed, new questions and insights emerged. The interviews were immediately transcribed following the interview session. The transcriptions were mailed back to the interviewee for verification of data. Each interview transcript was analyzed and open coded in a spreadsheet document. As the coding took place, conceptual categories, or themes, began to develop from recurring regularities in the data (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These categories then were compared using axial coding to determine further connections to the research questions for the study.

Three themes emerged as being central to the focus of this study: the roles guidance counselors assume in their job descriptions, the knowledge guidance counselors possess regarding family and consumer science programs in their respective schools, and their perceptions about the family and consumer sciences programs in their respective schools.

There were distinct commonalities among all of the participants' interviews regarding duties and responsibilities performed by the high school guidance counselors in this study. The role of the guidance counselor is multi-faceted within these school districts. The guidance counselors were familiar with the FCS programs in their schools to varying degrees. The course handbooks provided the guidance counselors with written prompts many times during the course of the interviews. Finally, the guidance counselors in this study acknowledged that the FCS programs in their high schools are an integral part of the education of each student and, as such, were very positive when speaking of the FCS programs in their schools.

Duties and Responsibilities of High School Guidance Counselors

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) clearly articulates the role of guidance counselors in public school districts through their published position statement:

Professional school counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers, staff, parents and the community to ensure that all students have the opportunity to design a rigorous and relevant academic and career program. Professional school counselors design and implement a comprehensive school counseling program that includes educational and career planning activities for all students designed to assist students in reaching academic, career and personal/social goals. (ASCA, 2006)

The ASCA National Model has developed 36 position statements to reflect a variety of responsibilities expected of the guidance counselor. Despite these position statements, the role of the school counselor remains unclear in many school districts (ASCA, 1996).

Individual districts utilize their counselors in a variety of ways, depending upon local, state, and national demands. In many cases, the administration of a particular building may make

the decisions regarding the duties and responsibilities of the guidance counselor (House & Hayes, 2002; Monteiro-Leitner et al., 2006).

In an effort to identify and address specific attitudes, knowledge and skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program, ASCA has adopted and implemented the *ASCA National Standards for Students* (2004). These standards offer guidelines about expectations for students' academic success and the role of counseling programs in enhancing student learning. These standards are divided into three domains of development and, in the following sections, are identified within the text of the interviews with the guidance counselors in this study.

Personal/Social

The *ASCA National Standards* for personal/social development guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for personal and social growth as students progress through school and into adulthood (ASCA, 2004). The guidance counselors interviewed for this study acknowledged that they did assist students in achieving personal/social goals for themselves. These activities progress from an acquisition of self-knowledge and interpersonal skills, to the actual application of self-knowledge and understanding of safety and survival skills.

When reciting a list of activities she had engaged in since arriving at school that morning, Guidance Counselor A included:

Today, I met with a couple of students. One was very concerned about friends, the other one was having difficulty at home; he was very angry and so he felt he was going to lose control so he came in. And so I just sat down with him and helped him get himself together before he got in trouble somewhere in the hall or in a classroom. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D discussed her involvement in assisting students personally and socially more broadly:

I would say, on a typical day, maybe... 25% of my day is actual individual counseling...actual social/emotional issues in the individual planning. We do some conflict mediations with kids, but we have a person who is hired through a mental health agency who really handles most of our conflict issues, so we really don't handle much of that. I ran four focus groups yesterday on attendance and anger management at the elementary...and a lot of family team meetings like with Family Resources or DHS [Department of Human Services], something like that; they're outside of school, but they're during the school day. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

When speaking about her role in the school district's experience with students and recent suicides, Guidance Counselor E shared:

We deal with, and this school has had too many, you know we had one four years, no three years ago. Four years ago and he was in the middle school when I was there and prior to that we had a boy here at the high school and the age of our students now they are all still very well aware and actually this morning I had a student come in worried about a fellow student that's been through a divorce, and I told him she's on my list as soon as I get done. As long as I know she's in school she's ok. The kids know and I'm really proud of them, they know that I am here for that stuff...(Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C spoke of external factors motivating his students to seek his assistance:

Individually, too much of my work is crisis response, I'd much rather have it be preventative, but a large chunk, and that's all year, and I think this winter's been particularly bad. People just haven't been able to get out and it's been a long, grinding winter. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

Two other counselors acknowledged the personal/social component as a part of their daily job responsibilities, but did not go into detail with specific examples of their experiences. For the most part, the guidance counselors in this study discussed their roles in the academic and career domains. It would be important to note here that the

social/emotional domain for which guidance counselors are responsible is not the focus of this study.

Academic

The *ASCA National Standards* for academic development guide school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn (ASCA, 2004). The guidance counselors in this study shared a great deal of information about the role they play in assisting students in their academic development at the high school level. Their responses include methods utilized to meet standards to assist students in three areas: (1) acquiring attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span; (2) completing school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college; and (3) understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community (ASCA, 2004).

The following dialogue segments illustrate some of the ways in which guidance counselors work to deliver services to meet the standards for the academic domain.

Teaching

The guidance counselors in this study interacted with students in a variety of ways. Their contact with students can be categorized primarily in three ways: large group classroom guidance (in another teacher's classroom), small group guidance (either in another teacher's classroom or in the guidance office), and individual guidance (usually within the guidance counselor's office). Note that unlike teachers assigned to individual classrooms

who refer to delivery of their lessons as teaching, the guidance counselors referred to their lessons with students as guidance sessions.

When asked if he engaged in any classroom teaching, Guidance Counselor C replied:

Yeah, there are different parts of counseling. There's individual counseling when you meet one on one, there's group counseling where you meet in groups and then one component that we're supposed to spend 20-30 percent of our time doing is classroom guidance, so...you're supposed to be going out into the classroom presenting information as a regular normal teacher...we don't get out as much as we should. Sometimes that's our lack of organization or just making it a priority to get out into the classroom more and the other reality is we're bogged down quite a bit with clerical—we can be bogged down with clerical and paperwork and just the simple fact of the phone ringing and emails and kids coming non-stop, so it's hard to get into the classroom, but we need to do more of it. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H was the district's K-12 counselor. She was excited about teaching the *Quest* curriculum to all of the seventh-graders in her district:

I teach seventh grade Quest so that's a class that we work with the social/emotional...working with emotions, how to manage your emotions, those kinds of things...I just have one class every other day for 80 minutes. I have nine seventh-graders; it's broken down into about nine per trimester and we just really work on how to manage emotions and negative things and positive things so that's...a very affective class.

Both large and small group instruction was valued by Guidance Counselor G;

Can I talk to you about our freshman orientation there a little bit in the fall with our career portfolio? What I do is go into every classroom and we talk about...we go through our registration basically. We talk about requirements and you know credits that students need and actually what we do in that career portfolio is they keep their own transcript in there...we meet with the juniors and seniors about twice a year as a large group for sure. Juniors and then all the freshmen and sophomores will meet at least once in a large group situation and then juniors and seniors individually visit always at least twice a year. (Interview, March 5, 2008)

When asked about other experiences with classroom instruction as a guidance counselor, he continued:

No, at this point, not really, I mean it's been more of myself going in and just doing a presentation with kids. When I first came, I actually taught a guidance expo class with seventh grade that I really enjoyed, but quite honestly, it just got tough to fit all those pieces together. And I miss that part of it, that was always kind of fun to go in and do that with the seventh grade kids, that was on a block so it was everyday. Every day, 85 minutes so that part I do miss. And you know it was always fun, it was always something different than what you do the rest of the day, you know, you're right, they do, it's some days you walk in and think "whoa" but it was fun, you know, it was fun. The part I really liked about it was you really get a chance to know those kids really, really well as seventh graders because you're going to be with them that next five years. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

A structured guidance program is offered by the largest school district in the study where Guidance Counselor D is employed. She was eager to be a part of her current school district employing four high school guidance counselors where the group was the first in the state of Iowa to have recently been chosen to receive the highly competitive RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program). This guidance counselor relayed the following about guidance instruction in the classroom:

We do classroom guidance. We have classroom guidance for all four grade levels, ninth grade, tenth grade, eleventh grade, twelfth grade. We go into, we're in trimesters here and we have like a modified block schedule so we have five periods a day for 70 minutes and I would say we rotate like full days, probably five days a trimester, so we kind of have a set classroom guidance curriculum that we use and we do ninth grade, then tenth grade, then eleventh grade, then twelfth grade for those chunks of days so we meet with each of them. I would say, on average, each grade gets about 3 days each tri, but we hit every kid in ninth grade, every kid in tenth grade, every kid as a senior because the seniors are set up a little differently. The one where we run into missing some is the eleventh grade because we go into the Economics course and most juniors take it but if you have a full schedule or something you could choose to do it as a senior so we get them at some point in time with that information, but it might not necessarily be when they are a junior. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B had been a high school guidance counselor for five years with a Masters degree in social work, an endorsement in school social work, and is working on her

Master's degree as a K-12 school counselor. She does not possess a teaching certificate or does not have any formal classroom teaching experience. When speaking of her teaching experience in the classroom as a guidance counselor, she has the following to say:

I go into all the classrooms, all the grade levels, and do guidance lessons. Actually, well, you're kind of supposed to like do a like I think they call it a dual teaching thing and I think it relates that if I were to do my career stuff, I have a paper that you have to write, so, last year we coordinated it with the English program, where she also had a careers paper, where she just took my paper and you knead it to her needs and my paper's just one page where I think hers is like three pages. But this year we have a new English teacher and that didn't quite work out and she was on maternity leave and plus with all the snow days everything got pushed back so she's not doing her research paper so I just went into the history class because they were in between chapters and mostly that's just...usually when I do my guidance stuff I just try to hit the exploratories cause those aren't such a need that kids don't need their grades on. I mean you still have to have a grade on them and they still have to meet eligibility but it's not as big as like me taking your English time and taking your math time which kind of gets a little hairy even at the high school level but at the high school level I mostly just go into the English classes. (Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F explains that it is challenging to get into the classrooms for her guidance lessons because the teachers are protective of their time:

What I do is go in during advisor time this year and talk to the kids about college, it depends upon the grade level, what I'm talking about, which I have enjoyed that because that gives me 20 minutes and I don't do it everyday and I haven't done it in the last month, but that's a time for me to go in and do a lot of the stuff that I want to do. Otherwise I go in during English or history because that's the only two areas that they're all grade level and I can only ask for so many days per year. (Interview, February 20, 2008).=

Most of the guidance counselors referred to their involvement in the classroom setting as “guidance instruction.” This includes opportunities to interact with students delivering the set standards of the guidance programs as well as collaborative activities with classroom teachers.

Scheduling

Most of the guidance counselors identify the mandates of Iowa's Model Core Curriculum as the foundation for beginning the scheduling process for incoming ninth graders to the local high schools. As a result of the State of Iowa legislative session of 2005, local school districts are required to identify a core curriculum and each district work with every eighth grade student to develop a plan for graduation to include the elements of the core curriculum graduation, a career option, and a parent signature (Iowa Department of Education, 2007a). The basic core academic program must include four years of language arts, three years of math, three years of science, and three years of social studies (sometimes referred to as 4-3-3-3). The specific courses are determined locally.

All of the guidance counselors revealed that they valued and referenced the eighth-grade four-year plan throughout high school in meeting the requirements of the Iowa Model Core Curriculum mandates. This guidance counselor explained the time and effort involved in the beginning phase of this process:

We are about to start that process. This makes it easy. Next Tuesday the entire eighth grade comes over here and they are divided into three groups, one in the library, one in the band room and one in the chorus room. The teachers are divided into three groups and they are mixed. They have the art teachers with history teachers with another group and they then go in and I have given them a list of things that they need to talk about what their program is about and how those students can be successful here. Then I also ask them if they are involved in, sponsor any activities, if they're the director of that activity then that's their time to they can also hit on that. Then they rotate the teachers so they get to hear from everybody. Last year some of the things that came out were pretty awesome. Our band teacher also presented at the same time that some of our coaches did and they talked about the misconception that you can't be in band and athletics at the same time and that had been really in the past a real problem. I don't know where it started from, but we're finally getting away from that. So they kind of tooth, nail and horns talked about that, that's the first step. Then that same evening the students come back here with their parents and we do the

overall parent orientation and we go through the course description booklet with parents, and all the courses and hit everything, I have quite a bit of a list and I tell them, the parents and the kids, you are going to have information overload you may not think of all your questions now, but come back and ask them. Then the very next day on Wednesday and Thursday I go back to the middle school and we start working in small groups. We have about 15 at a time and then we kind of hit some more scenarios of classes. That is Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday then the following, I don't know my days, Wednesday a group of high schoolers go over and they have a number of questions and I hand pick those high schoolers from all walks of life all departments and they will answer questions that the 8th graders have that I also have that have a general list of questions that I want them to hit on. Then the other guidance counselor and I go back the following Wednesday, Thursday and their four year plan is due and their pre-registration for their freshmen year is due. We then meet with any students who have filled it in incorrectly um maybe they have some extra questions and a lot of parents will just call us and they do. So that's our process. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

The following guidance counselors acknowledged the four-year plan as part of the registration process:

I think we've already met with the eighth graders four times, you know, every kid, and then we'll go back in the spring and we'll do the actual four year plan but I mean by then we probably have an idea what the kids are interested in and they kind of know what they like and they know what the classes are, and we go through and talk about...(Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008).

as well as:

We're going to be doing the registration. Of course all of the freshmen will have the four year plan they did last year. All the eighth graders will be doing the four year plan. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

and for new students enrolling in the district:

Well, first I would want to know if you were a freshman what courses you had selected for your four year plan since eighth graders must have that and then if I could get that information we could build on that as far as seeing what classes are the same... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C spoke of how the scheduling revolves around the required core courses:

Well, we register all eighth graders now in a week from now and once again they have to pick from either, they have four classes English, science, math and PE. We have an eight period day here so that leaves four more slots. If they are in band or chorus they have two more slots open. OK? So then they get their foreign language, that's seven out of the eight periods. If they want one study hall, their schedule is filled...(Interview, February 21, 2008)

When speaking of academic indicators for success, this guidance counselor utilizes the middle school grade point as a guide:

And I would look hopefully for a three point [grade point average to recommend foreign language courses] as a middle schooler. That's just one of the things I've found there's a difference there in motivation and in work habits. It makes a difference. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

And the beginning guidance counselor explained how she was learning to understand the four-year plan for registration as a continuing process for the student:

I'm still learning that process, but right now what we've done is we give out the new course description guide for the next year and we've done that already with the classes except for the eighth grade because it's kind of a bigger deal with the four year plan...and I have their four year plans from when they did it as an eighth grader. If they want to come in and look at that again, they can. I haven't had anybody, but I let them know that I have it and that if they want to look at it or if they want to change that plan they can. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Next, Guidance Counselor H revealed the complexities surrounding scheduling in her district because of the course sharing between three school districts. This required her to communicate regularly with the guidance counselors and administrators from the other two schools who shared programs:

...we have to communicate like if I were to send a kid to [another school] and you call over and see what their numbers are in that class before it gets accepted so there's a lot of communicating between the counselors and the

principals as to the numbers and the class sizes, which only happens when there's a semester change, but I spend a lot of time with that. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H talked about enforcement of eighth grade plans in the latter years of the four-year plan requirements set by the Iowa Model Core Curriculum requirements:

The kids will come in to see me for their schedules, if they want a schedule change, you know I talk to them as to why, how that is going to incorporate into their future plans, especially if they come in and want to schedule you know, they have a really rigorous class and they want art instead. Not that art's a bad thing, but is that what they need? And it's really hard to talk them back into they need to stay working hard and stay working rigorous, so that's probably the hardest part in getting them to do that. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F had a different idea of the value of the four-year plan for eighth graders:

Due to the new laws you have to have their pathway and their whole career plan which I think is absolutely ridiculous because no ninth grader knows what they're going to do when they're a senior. It's a lot of extra time on my part, but WHATEVER. We go through and I talk to them about their math, their science, their social studies, their English, we talk about foreign language, we talk about band and choir we talk about the yearbook if they want to do that and then we go into the process of all the other electives. Ninth graders don't get to take many electives. They're pretty well...they just don't get a lot of electives because a lot of things are based on prerequisite so the ninth graders are about the easiest to schedule planning (Interview, February 20, 2008).

The guidance counselors identified a variety of factors that are considered in the four-year plan for the eighth-grade students in each district. All of the guidance counselors were working to provide personalized assistance to each of the students in accomplishing that goal. It is acknowledged that one of the guidance counselors felt the ninth grade to be too early for developing this plan.

Testing

High school students in the state of Iowa participate in a variety of standardized testing opportunities. The No-Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Public Law (P.L.) 107-110) requires states as of the 2005-2006 school year to test all students in grades 3 through 8 and in at least one grade in high school in reading or language arts and mathematics every year. Starting with the 2007-2008 school year, states will also be required to test students annually in science in at least one grade in each of three grade spans (3-5, 6-9, and 10-12). This legislation calls for accountability from school districts in reporting the academic progress of their students. School districts identified as “needing assistance” are required to develop improvement plans, and districts must provide public school choice (Linn & Miller, 2005).

For the most part, school districts in Iowa will participate in the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) with their students grades K-8 and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) for students grades 9-12. School districts must report a contact person for the organization, distribution, and follow-up of the testing sessions.

Iowa students also participate in national standardized college entry exams such as American College Tests (ACT) or Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), or Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) (College Board, 2008). These exams assess high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. Some school districts serve as host sites for the administration of these exams. Other assessments are offered as comprehensive guidance resources to assist students in exploring career/training options, measuring current academic development and making plans for the remaining years of high school and during the post-graduation years. These include

assessments such as PLAN, WorkKeys, DISCOVER, COMPASS, MAPS, PLAN, or ASVAT (ACT, 2008).

This duty was acknowledged by some of the guidance counselors as a regular component in their job description. These guidance counselors served as the testing coordinators in their schools:

I am in charge of all standardized testing, ITEDs, MAPS, PSAT, PLAN, sometimes we offer the ASVAT. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

We did ITEDs; I'm also the testing coordinator, we do ITED testing in February, we just completed that...throughout the year it's ACT [American College Testing] prep cause there's test dates spread throughout during the year so we have ACT prep the week prior to each test date and we have afternoon sessions that we prep them with. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A served as coordinator, and went on to explain how she collaborated with students and teachers in the school to relay information regarding the testing:

With the ITBS [Iowa Tests of Basic Skills] I've been generally making the schedule and sorting the books, make the answer sheets getting that out to the teachers, then the sheets I was working on today, we have a half sheet that we give each student that shows their scores from previous years and then we just kind of go through again what the scores mean...what is proficient, what's not proficient...PSAT tests which is generally given each year... (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Guidance Counselor E worked with the curriculum director in her district in the administration of the exams:

We do all of the ITED [Iowa Tests of Educational Development] data collection, along with our curriculum director, do that where we disseminate all of the data back to the teachers and have them work with us on some of the item analysis and setting goals, along with the principal. (Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H expressed relief in passing the torch of responsibility for the exams to the curriculum director:

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills...I still have a hand in it, the help with the scheduling and getting the kids in classrooms and what teachers do what tests but our curriculum director takes care of it this year, so...in the past I think it was a duty that this counselor had but when I came in that was a duty the curriculum director wanted so I just gave it to her, which is fine. I'm like...do you want it? By all means, take it [laugh]. (Interview, March 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B served as the personal courier for the return of the exams:

I just got back from (town thirty miles away) running down our ITEDs. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008).

Guidance Counselor D was the only participant who did not mention contact responsibility with the administration of any exams. This was most likely because she was not responsible for administrative or clerical duties in her job description. It is, however, likely that she would be involved in the interpretation of testing results with students to whom she is assigned.

College planning

The college planning process was similar for most of the guidance counselors in this study. It began with the four-year plan with the eighth graders mentioned previously, and continued with a variety of tasks, both ongoing and seasonal in nature. These duties may include, but are not limited to: guidance instruction with students, meetings with parents, and coordinating with outside resources.

Guidance Counselor G had a great deal of experience with college planning because he was a third-year member of Iowa's College Planning Board. He preferred to utilize the services offered by the College Planning Board as described below:

They have taken over really a lot of the college planning for high schools. I mean they come in as representatives and they'll do sessions, for example, they come in and they do college readiness, college success, I'm going to have them come in and meet with my seniors in April. We're going to do a little program with our seniors just talking about getting ready for college, what's this really going to be like, you know, what changes are there really going to be cause for me that's a huge transition for kids out of high school so we're going to do a little program on that. They come in and do financial aid programs a couple of weeks ago, I had them come in and do a financial aid night for parents so parents could come in and file their FAFSA right there, it was really a neat deal. Parents just bring in all their information and within a half hour we'd have their financial aid forms all sent for them... (Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor E spoke of adjustments to her school's college planning routine for students:

We're going to be changing some things with juniors and seniors. We changed this year with our sophomores, we started with them where I did a college planner, they were each give, I think I have a spare one, a little book it goes through and talks about how to go to career fairs, what are questions you should ask at the career fairs. Here's some websites to start searching so we did that, we still do the course description book. Our students have four year plans and we keep them on file... We go through a large number of different careers... juniors and seniors we probably scare them a little bit with the fact that we do a prediction where are you one year from now?... We have more and more parents becoming more and more involved in helping their kids choose their courses; that has been a great change. (Interview, March 3, 2008)

and Guidance Counselor H talked about student responsibility in college planning:

I've already told juniors you guys need to take a test, an ACT test at some point this year. Work that into your schedules, here's the dates. You need to see it at least once this year, and don't expect a great score. It's up to them to register and to go so you know I just really push. I've been known to hunt one or two down to say "Did you sign up?" You know if I think they really need to, so that's kind of my role with that. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

The aforementioned interview segments represent a small sample of the roles assumed by the guidance counselors in this study in assisting students with college planning.

Assistance in this area varied depending upon the number of students assigned to the guidance counselor, the method of assistance preferred by the guidance counselor, and the programs in place for assisting students.

Career

Guidance counselors are also responsible for assisting students in the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable them to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across the life span (ASCA, 2004). This includes providing services to assist students in meeting the standards of four components: (1) in acquiring the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions; (2) in employing strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction; (3) in understanding the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work; and (4) in applying skills to achieve career goals (ASCA, 2004). Interviews with guidance counselors clearly indicate that they are engaging in a variety of activities to meet the standards of the career domain:

Guidance Counselor E explained her role in making the delivery of career information both fun and applicable:

We play a game with them the first time we go over there (the middle school) in the smaller groups and that's a little bit of a career type game and they'll have to go to different corners there and we just hand them the careers and then what classes do they think will help them in that career and then they're given another career and they do the same thing. We also do a vocabulary pre and post test and that's kind of fun...(Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F approximated the amount of time she spends in career planning with students:

Some days it's not enough, and some days it's too much. So, I don't know... I would probably say on a given day, who knows, it could be anywhere from 10-60 % of my day. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G had collaborated with his district's curriculum director to create career pathways for students to use in planning the direction of their coursework:

And one of the nice things we've done with the packet, the career pathways we put together is talking about the jobs split into the different areas of education, we've also taken our courses and we have listed for example say you're looking at a natural resources pathway, ok if you are planning to get a high school diploma, go out and get some specialized training, but go basically into the workforce here's all the coursework you need to take while you are here. If you are taking a one or two year program, these are the courses you need to be taking to kind of meet all your requirements for whatever you think you need to do. (Interview, March 5, 2008)

Making choices and looking to the future was a consideration Guidance Counselor C suggested to his students:

What you need to do is think about what you want to do when you grow up or have an idea of what you'd like to do spending your time, not even necessarily what do you enjoy doing and what are you interested in because all of these areas offer different things so I try to get them to think about where it is they want to go. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B preferred the personal touch when working with her students:

I like computers but I think it takes that whole personal part out of it and it might be some control issue with me too, that I at least have some control over what classes you are taking so I know where you're going, making sure you're taking the requisites that are required for some of the classes, because a lot of kids will try to sneak into those classes. That's not going to be caught on computer. I just think that even if I was in a big school, that one on one personal contact is better than that paper and pencil stuff. To me, that's sinking into my head and I can talk to your parents rationally, I can tell them what's going on; I don't want to be so far removed that I don't know who you are. And I think that's just sad, personally. How am I going to help you? (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G spoke of the value of starting the career planning process early:

Kids are going to change their mind a lot, you just kind of understand that but I don't think it's every too early to get them thinking and you know kind of getting them rolling on what they need to do and what I think has helped in the eighth grade is, at least in some respect, you really go through how important it is when you get to high school to start off well academically and get those grades going for you. I think that's been a plus cause I'm getting more and more kids, more conscientious about what is my class ranking, what is my class grade point average, those kind of things, so, that's been a big plus I think. (Interview, March 5, 2008)

When speaking to the new freshman or transfer student, Guidance Counselor H asked the students to look to the future as they make their career plans:

Well, I would ask you what you like to do, just do an informal, what's important to you, what would you like to see happen, kind of get an idea of if they understand, you know, if you are planning to be a doctor, do you realize that's eight years after high school, of schooling, you know, see if they understand those steps and not that I'm trying to scare them, but let's be realistic, and a lot of them don't have that concept of what do you mean I'd have to...? (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008).

This guidance counselor encouraged the junior and senior students to stay focused on their four-year plans and to exercise rigor in their final two years:

I think juniors and seniors they tend to get that attitude of I'm almost done, I want it easy, I just want to...you know, so just letting them know to stay rigorous and letting them know that four year plan you had as an eighth grader, you need to stick to that. I had a couple of conversations with seniors, oh come on let me have work release and SES where they partner with a teacher to make copies and do errands for the teacher and I said if you can take a physiology or if you can take something more rigorous in the area that you, I tried online classes have been a big one this year. I've been pushing those, I mean we've had the most sign up for a course through the colleges so just keeping them rigorous, really focusing on that...Eighth grade when we did the four year plan just getting them in touch with "here's the plan. Here's why you do it." So it's a different conversation. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, March 25, 2008)

Career interest inventories

Career interest inventories can be formal assessments or informal games used by guidance counselors to determine what career fields and jobs match students' personal strengths and personality types. There are a variety of interest inventories available for use by guidance counselors. The guidance counselors in this study reported using the computerized interest inventory program called *Choices Planner* designed by the Bridges Company (Bridges, 2008), and also paper and pencil assessments such as *SDS (Self-Directed Search)* available through Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. (Holland, 2000). A copy of this inventory was offered and obtained by the researcher from Guidance Counselor C during his interview session.

According to the designers of the *Bridges* software program, students will be “empowered with greater knowledge about their personal aptitudes, personality types, and learning styles” thus leading to greater understanding of their career choices (Bridges, 2008, p. 1). The advantage of the software program is that it allows students to compare, connect, and choose from a network of work and education options on-line. Similarly, the *SDS* interest inventory loosely classifies people into different personality types which match up to activities, competencies, occupational preferences and self-ratings to assist students in career planning (Holland, 2000). Once the paper and pencil test is completed, the student must take further steps to research on his own. The results are not networked in the same manner as the *Bridges* program.

Interest inventories were elements of focus for students in creating career plans in this school district:

The tenth and eleventh grade is focused more on career development and planning so they do a lot of interest inventories for careers to find out what careers they might be interested in, and then they research careers and schools and different things like that and then the seniors are broken down into categories based on a survey they take and we determine which students are interested in a two year college, a trade or technical school, or a four year school, just going into the work force or going into the military and then we tailor it and actually meet with those students in those groups so they are getting information that is really going to be beneficial to them. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F encouraged the younger students in her school to take some of the interest inventories more than once and to utilize more than one type of inventory:

...we work with the Choices Planner and I take them up there a couple of days a year and show them how to use the program and if they are interested they learn the knowledge where to find out what kind of salary you can make in a particular, career...I have each year at least the ninth and tenth graders do the three assessments for Choices Planner. Juniors and seniors are certainly reminded they can redo it and see if things have changed and how they feel about things...they also get a lot of data from the results of the PLAN and PSAT... (Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G shared that the inventory was completed by all students in a course required by all students in his school:

We have a core class, they call it, it's career and occupation related education. What we do there is, it kind of pieces some things together with what we try to do for careers. They use the Choices program... (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D used Choices as part of her guidance curriculum:

We use the Choices program, I don't know if you've heard of that, we do use aspects of that, so a lot of it is them doing interest inventory and some of it is self-directed, but that whole time is used on that. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Known also as *Bridges*, the Choices program was important to the students in this school:

I would say with that Bridges website just so the kids can see that it's an important website, it lets them know what's out there, um, the quality of life

assessment in here (guidance office) and then taking it in there [FCS classroom]... (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Interest inventories are brief assessments to assist students in narrowing the focus of their career search by identifying possible career goals that match their strong personal interests. Not all guidance counselors in this study reported utilizing interest inventories in their role assisting students in career planning. The guidance counselors who did encourage student use of the interest inventory report it is a valuable component of the guidance program. Students are encouraged to utilize a variety of available interest inventories, and to re-take the inventories as necessary.

Career websites versus books

Guidance Counselor E supplied the researcher with a copy of the career websites she encouraged students in her district to use in obtaining information about careers (see Appendix E). This list contains websites for students to access information about available colleges, on-line interest inventories, career clusters, college admission testing, Occupational Outlook Handbook through the U.S. Department of Labor, financial aid information, and job databases. The researcher accessed each of the websites and found them to have been recently updated and operable. Guidance Counselor E made this list easily accessible for her students:

Most of the students don't use the books anymore that it's much more beneficial that we actually go into the classrooms to teach them the websites because that's where they come in. They come in to use our computer, that's a student's computer (pointing across the room) out there and we've got the whole catalog there that they'd rather use. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G utilized a couple of books regularly and their library had a career planning center:

I guess I also just use a lot of my two year and four year books, I use a lot of Occupation Outlook Handbooks, in fact when our kids take the PLAN test as sophomores, I have from ACT, part of what we do when they get the score reports back is kind of fill out, kind of put together the pages of information that our kids do using the Occupational Handbook. We go through and research out of their interest inventory, so I use that a lot...sometimes I use reports from just different areas of the state...good job information on what are the hot jobs out there so to speak and what opportunities are out there...we have a career planning center that's back off of our library, we try to put a lot of material there for kids. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

This guidance counselor acknowledged that she utilized a couple of the books on her resource shelf, but noted that the majority of her career resources were available electronically:

Just looking at all those [books on shelves] those I probably have used the least this year than I have in a long time. But the book of Majors like I said is a good start, the College Handbook, and that basically goes through the colleges themselves and what they offer, what makes them special, things like that. Occupational Outlook Handbook is a good source. Just in general. Like I said, the website. College catalogs are now basically on-line as well. I remember this at one time, two shelves full of college catalogs and now it's down to less than one. All those electronically so now it's getting to be the place to go. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

This guidance counselor utilized a few career books in her office, but usually ended using an on-line website for information:

I like [local community college] book cause it also lists careers in that area so I like that book a lot. Oh, the military careers I also use, too, that one's kind of outdated so that's more the mechanical part so but I just try to see, like the rest of the careers books they don't tell you really what other jobs can be in there, but I do like [local community colleges] books as far as looking up different jobs that you can do under the same heading. Then it might give you an idea where to go online or something like that. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

The worldwide web has made career information easily accessible for students. An internet search can yield links to job resources by occupation or geographical location, college and general education resources, career information including degree programs, and career reference materials for interviewing, resume writing, and other job search information. The guidance counselors in this study confirmed electronic resources are currently utilized more frequently than hard copy resources, such as college handbooks and career textbooks. Electronic dissemination of career materials is quick and easy for students and does not result in paper accumulation for guidance counselors or students.

Career and apprenticeship fairs

Career and apprenticeship fairs were another avenue utilized by guidance counselors to share career opportunities available to students. These activities placed representatives from a multitude of careers together in one geographical location. These guidance counselors reported that they are most commonly held at local community colleges or in their own schools. When they were held at the local high school, the guidance counselor was responsible for organization of the event. This method of information delivery enabled students to quickly navigate from one representative to another to collect information about career opportunities matching their aptitudes, skills and interests.

Guidance Counselor B collaborated with two other local school districts to put on a shared career fair among their schools:

We just started to do a career fair with (local schools) and we did, that was our first year for that, which was in November so next year we will do that again, that will be in November the same time. Juniors go on a career fair, actually it's more of a college fair I believe in March... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A preferred to transport students to outside locations for both apprenticeship day and career fairs:

Next week I am going to be taking a group of probably 30 students over to [local town] for an apprenticeship day which will be fun. We take the juniors down to (local community college) for their career fair. I don't take a bus or anything but there is one [career day] at [local 4 year college] in the fall as well that some of the students will go up to with their parents...and there is one at [another local 4 year college] and I know one of the special ed teachers did go down this year with some of the students to the well, [local city] career fair... (Interview, February 13, 2008)

It takes a lot of time and energy, but the guidance curriculum in these schools offered both a career fair in the school district and participates in outside career fairs for all high school students:

We do career fairs; every other year we do a large career fair here in this building and then on the opposite years we take our junior class down to [local community college] for those...the career day here is all levels. And last year we took over the whole entire building. We had enough speakers come in that they took all the classrooms and then we split, we had large group presentations, we had universities come with their robotics team and then we had a motivational speaker come in and talk about skills for success. And so while the freshmen and sophomores were in there, juniors and seniors they had four sessions they could go to. Next year we may run it a little different so they can get more than four in (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Ok we take our sophomores down to [local community college] every year for a career day and we bring in speakers, that's actually our school to work coordinator helps to set that up...so that worked real well, and of course we do our junior career fair down at college...for the most part I don't go to a lot of college visits with the kids I mean sometimes I'll go to the local career fairs it if kind of fits into the schedule of where our kids will be at...what we'll do sometimes is like [local community college] will have like, oh, coming up pretty soon, we'll have a technical career day they had one down at [local community college], they'll have one at (local community college) here in April, but, so we'll make arrangements to use an instructor or myself to take a group down to that, kind of a smaller group like the one in [local community college] where metronics is their big area they're focusing on, [local community college] is going to bring one down on diesel and auto technology

programs and kind of specialized welding, other specialized programs so we'll do some of that...(Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H mentioned how she also benefited from attending the Apprenticeship Day held in a nearby community:

We have attended...I took all of the sophomore to [local community college] career fair and then next month March 17th all of the juniors are going to go, so yep, we've taken those and we went to Apprenticeship Day up in [local town] last Wednesday, I took ten kids that I thought would benefit from what they were saying. I benefited from it, I had no idea... (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C taught in a town just a few miles from the local community college. He believed that his students were already familiar with the information offered at the local career fair:

We had; we've gotten feedback from our students saying it wasn't all worth their while. And another thing is that we're so close that our kids are very familiar with that, but we've recently made the decision not to send our juniors there. For a couple of different reasons, like I said, we're so close that our students can go there and then the feedback wasn't all that great, they weren't getting so much out of it. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, March 11, 2008)

The school districts in this study all reported student involvement in career fairs as a means for obtaining information about available careers. Most of the schools hosted career fairs on their campuses, transported students off campus to area career fairs, or participated in a combination of the two. In addition to school sponsored career days, students were encouraged to attend career fair days on their own with their parents.

Job shadows

A job shadow is a worksite experience during which a student spends time one-on-one with an employee observing daily activities and asking questions about the job and

industry. A job shadow gives a student a meaningful introduction to the world of work and provides a context for understanding the connection between school and careers. Some of the goals accomplished through a job shadow include: identification of career interests, observation of daily routine of adult workers, awareness of skills required by particular jobs, application of communication skills, understanding characteristics of different work environments, and a beginning understanding of the connection between school, work, and achieving goals (Job Shadows, 2008).

The guidance counselor and the FCS teacher worked together in this district to create job shadow experiences for their students:

Careers class is just an exploratory into food, childcare, other service industries...they all have to do a job shadow, and that's a requirement so I do help her a little bit on that type of stuff. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

The school to work coordinator arranged for job shadows in this school:

Yeah, we do quite a few job shadows, a lot of them are set up by our school to work coordinator, actually. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

The job shadow is sometimes required by a school district for students as a component of the classroom or career guidance curriculum. In most cases the job shadow is offered as a supplemental source of career information and arranged between the student and the guidance counselor, a classroom teacher, a parent or other community member.

College representatives and college visits

College representatives collaborate with local school districts and guidance counselors to deliver information to students about specific college programs and career opportunities available after completion of those programs. College visits are available for

all types of postsecondary enrollment, including four-year colleges and universities and two year junior college programs. Typically, college representatives will contact individual high schools to set up informal meeting sessions with prospective students in the guidance office during the school day. Students will sit with representatives and discuss topics related to college choice including areas of interest, degree programs, geographical location, tuition costs, scholarship opportunities, and answer questions pertaining to living the college lifestyle. Once initial contact is made with a college representative, students are encouraged to arrange for a visit to the college campus where he or she can personally assess the resources available on that campus. The student will partake of college visits either during the school day (excused absence) or on a weekend day or high school holiday if they prefer not to miss a school day. The high school does not usually arrange for student visits or transport students for these college visits, but rather encourages parents to participate in assisting students in the college selection process.

College representatives were available to students all year in this high school:

From the college, not so much in the major, but I have college reps that come all year into the school. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

This school district provided excused absences for students who wished to make college visits during their junior and senior years:

I arrange college visits, they come to the office here, we arrange for the juniors to take two days and we allow our seniors three days of college visits that are excused. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

As a new high school guidance counselor, Guidance Counselor H also learned from the college representative visits to her school:

I definitely have colleges come in and I talk with the reps while they're here, what is it you're strong in so that if I have somebody come in right off and say I want to be a welder, I can say I do know [local community colleges] have a huge welding program. So I'm still learning those things as they come in so it's just talking to as many people as I possibly can so I know what to tell these kids and how to direct them. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

The high school guidance counselor serves as the host for college representative visits to the local high school. Students are notified in advance of college representative visits and are granted release time from classes to interact with those representatives to obtain information about the colleges they are interested in attending. Generally as a follow-up activity, students and parents will visit college campuses to see first-hand the curriculum and facilities available for the postsecondary education of the student.

There are many activities the guidance counselor facilitates in assisting students in their career selections. The amount of time spent on this domain varies from counselor to counselor and the guidance counselors do collaborate with other resources in the delivery of these services. Some of the resources utilized by guidance counselors in this study included fellow staff members, curriculum directors, career and apprenticeship fairs, interest inventories, job shadows, field trips, college representative visits, and computer assisted websites. Regardless of the resources used, the guidance counselors in this study also emphasized the importance of starting early by planning and being visionary in adherence to the four-year plan developed in eighth grade, and inclusion of rigor and relevance to meet career goals.

Other

It was clear that high school guidance counselors performed many duties during the course of their school year. The *ASCA National Standards* provide direction for much of the

counselor's duties, and some of the areas may overlap; nevertheless, there still remained some unique duties assigned to guidance counselors by their individual school districts:

Clerical work

Then, let's see...I've been working on test scores, entering new students into the system, I took records out, and I'm recording their scores because we have ITBS coming up for grades 6-8 on the 25th. (Guidance Counselor A, February 13, 2008)

I take care of all the scholarships. I write letters of recommendation. I make sure our website is up with all the day to day announcements, scholarships that come in (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

...and the other reality is we're bogged down quite a bit with clerical--we can be bogged down with clerical and paperwork and just the simple fact of the phone ringing and emails and kids coming non-stop... (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008).

Weekly meetings

We do have weekly meetings, we are on our At-Risk team, so students that are on our at risk team or go to our alternative high school we have weekly meetings for them, I have the weekly special ed department meetings, and the meetings with AEA staff, and we have counseling department meetings every week and then we also have a team that's called CHAMP, it's called (School Name) Assistance Monitoring Program, and on that team, we're really fortunate, I think, we have our school resource officer, the woman who is employed by the mental health agency that does like all the conflict mediation, all the school counselors, an administrator, our school psychologist, the department chair for the at risk department, a substance abuse counselor comes into our building one day a week through a local agency, a juvenile probation officer, trying to think, there's maybe one more person, and we meet every week. Always good stuff for kids. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Teacher communications

A middle school meeting...between teachers and the principal sharing concerns about individual students that are probably not performing well...talked about things that we could do for those children...successes in

some instances that we have been working with. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Supervisory or sponsorship duties

I sit in on an ICN plus secondary ed class...Basically, it's a babysitting type thing. There were 20 students. (Guidance Counselor A, February 13, 2008)

...so we don't have any outside bus duty, hall monitoring, we do on early out Wednesdays try to get into the commons area where they eat lunch, um, right away, and it's usually for like 5 minutes just because it's hard for the teachers to get down the hallway when the kids and everybody are leaving at the same time on early out day. So, really, that's our biggest duty... (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

...a couple of things I can think of, they aren't very important to my job, but, we do, everybody in our district does have to do, so I guess when you are talking about duties for everyone, not just the school counselor, the teachers, the support staff, we do, everybody has to have a fall duty and a spring duty and during the fall it's during Homecoming so and you get to sign up so it could be like chaperoning Homecoming dance or it could be being available for the parade, you know, like manning the bus barn when they're, you know, making the floats, or working at the ping pong tournament or whatever. You have to sign up for one fall duty and then you have to do the same thing in spring with graduation, but everybody has to do that so it's kind of spread out equally and you get to choose. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Oh, I am also in charge of the National Honor Society so I have meetings every week with them. We have projects that we do. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Administrative duties

In her large 4A school district, Guidance Counselor D did not perform any administrative duties:

No, like I said, we haven't really been given any type of administrative duties... (Interview, March 11, 2008)

In their small school districts, the following two guidance counselors often served in administrative capacities:

I also in a small district take up a lot of the leadership roles and I like to call myself the assistant principal. I also have a lot of administrative duties assigned to myself which you won't find in a lot of the other schools. I'm not sure how I got that, but I think it was due to the previous principal. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

In my school, in this school district, there's the principal and there's the school counselor. I'm not listed as an administrator but there's often times where I play the role and fill the shoes of the principal when he is gone. I don't assign suspensions or anything like that but I deal with discipline when he is out of the office. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Exploring curriculum opportunities

We are the first school district in the state to implement Project Lead The Way, Engineering. We're the first certified site, we're kind of proud of that. We now have this year offered three engineering programs in Project Lead the Way and next year we'll offer two more...five of them. And...I've been real instrumental in that, actually I had to do a lot of recruiting to get students into that program. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Coordination with groups outside the school

I coordinate activities like we're having someone from (local support center) come in and she will talk to all the PE classes about sex and venereal disease. It depends on the year, we will have different speakers come in. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Professional development

To keep apprised of the goals outlined in the domains of the *ASCA National Standards*, as well as to obtain information regarding current information related to their counseling assignments, the guidance counselors in this study reported a variety of professional development opportunities available to them. They participate in professional

development within their local school district, within their local AEA's, within their professional counseling organizations, and as members of other professional groups.

Guidance Counselor G spoke of his involvement on the College Planning Board as a part of his professional development plan:

So it was fabulous, so that's a lot of what they do and being on the Board, there's twelve counselors from the state of Iowa that are on the Board and basically we just go there and help them with some ideas that would help them to improve some presentations down here and then it's valuable for me cause again we're picking each other's brains as twelve counselors saying what kinds of things are you doing in your program, yeah you always pick up little bits and pieces that way so that's probably been the most valuable thing for me, honestly. (Interview, March 5, 2008)

He continued with other professional development opportunities with which he is involved:

We meet in PLC's, myself and the elementary counselor. I don't know if you're familiar with that, professional learning communities. We have it set up as part of our staff development for our whole school so him and I we meet as a group and we basically just look and try to come up with things that we need to do to improve our programs. The other thing that we do, used to be four times a year, it's cut down to two times a year now, five of us school districts, we meet so all us counselors meet and then we go through kind of begin to talk about basically what are we doing in each other's programs and share ideas back and forth and things that we can do that way. I've been to ACT conferences, try to do that every year, don't get down to the Counselor Academy as much as I would like to just because of the activities' director position, to be honest with you, so I guess that's probably the extent of the staff development... (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D spoke of the strong counseling program developed by her colleagues and how she was attracted to the program:

So when I came here that was a really inviting piece for me because knowing that they kind of followed the same standards that I knew I wanted to work in was like, obviously meant to be, to me that was kind of exciting. So when I came here they had just found out not long before that they had won this award and I didn't actually go to the national conference, they went and presented it at the national conference, the counselors that were already here who are awesome, there are three of them, or actually two of them that went. [Head counselor] is still here and the other two left, so there's two new

counselors here this year, but anyway so when they came back was right when I was hired and so we kind of went through all the information as part of our new counselor training. [Head counselor] is really great and went through everything they presented and what they had to do to apply for the award, and you know, how they got it, all that kind of stuff, so that was kind of enlightening cause I learned a lot through that process of what they had gone through. It was like a three year process they had gone through to revamp our program and have it meet the national standards and how they were implementing here, what kind of data they were collecting, I mean just to do a program audit, all this information they hadn't really thought about so that was like my first step of professional development and then in the fall I went to the Iowa State Conference, the ISCA Conference, two of us went, we kind of go on a rotating basis, and then, Friday we will be attending the local [two] AEA counselor's conference, so I would say legitimate professional development that's organized, that would be two big things this year which is pretty good. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Following are comments from the same counselor regarding her membership in professional counseling organizations:

I mean, I'm new to the whole game so like for ASCA and ISCA and ACA, I do more with the school counseling ones than with ACA, but I am a member of ACA, but I mean to the point that I take part in the professional development part, I read the literature, I always do the voting and surveys and that kind of stuff so I mean it may be as active as I can be without being part of their board or something like that. (Interview, March 11, 2008).

This guidance counselor continued to speak of the Counseling Academy offered through the local AEA:

Our elementary counselor received a grant and went through that and I attended one of those sessions with her and I requested that the high schools, I said do you have anything for middle school and high school? You're doing these really great things with elementaries and data and we need something for high schools and she said I was not the only one to ask that so they got that going. It's been wonderful...This you know, to me is specific to any grade level but because we're all high school counselors, the conversations have strictly been around the needs of high school students...I mean it could be a short little meeting to very elaborate power points. As part of the Counselor Academy, we must report to our staff the pre and post documentation about what we're doing this year. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

This comment was from a first-year counselor who was trying to stay afloat:

I haven't had the opportunity to go to very much professional development because I'm still learning my duties here. So I went to that Counseling Academy and I learned some there but other than that, I've been here.
(Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Most of the guidance counselors in this study had participated in and spoke very highly of the effectiveness of the Mississippi Bend AEA (MBAEA) Counseling Academy developed in 2003 to provide staff development and support to area school counselors in order to implement the ASCA National Model and Standards. The MBAEA Counselor Academy has influenced the Iowa's Department of Education's consideration of staff development activities planned for Iowa counselors to support the development of effective, result-based comprehensive counseling programs across the state. The Model's operational structure includes the components of Foundation, Management and Delivery Systems, and Accountability. As mentioned previously, one of the school districts in this study was the first in Iowa to receive the highly competitive RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program) award as a result of the work in the Academy (Swanson, 2007).

Guidance Counselors' Knowledge about FCS Programs in their Schools

The high school guidance counselor occupies a critical position assisting students with career planning in school districts across the nation. The guidance counselor can be instrumental in promoting Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with a focus on Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) careers. There are many factors influencing the career guidance offered by a counselor including knowledge, awareness, and image of a specific career area (Bolan & Grainger, 2005; Erwin, Moran & McInnis: 1996, Inana, 1985; Woodard & Herren, 1995).

Curriculum

Defining FCS

In this study, guidance counselors were asked to identify formal programs or courses in their school with a curricular emphasis on empowering individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society. The unique focus would be on families, work, and their relationships. This definition of FCS was chosen as it is utilized by the Iowa's State FCS Consultant and is posted on the Iowa Department of Education Career and Technical Education's website (IFCS, 2007). The following are some of the guidance counselor responses, starting with Guidance Counselor

A:

Hopefully. And let's see we have a dynamic global society and (pointing to the schools' mission statement on the bulletin board above the desk) our mission up there, we ensure quality learning experiences for all students to reach their full potential in a dynamic global society. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

When asked initially about a specific program of study or courses, the same guidance counselor replied:

This year, no. The teacher was injured this past spring and has been out for the full year because the injury has not healed and is still painful and as a result we have had two women coming in and substituting. (One) had been an elementary teacher and the other one was our music teacher who retired last year. And so it's (laugh) they're cooking with the students, they're doing some personal, social things with especially the eighth grade. (Interview, February, 13, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B stated:

We do have a child development class, we do also have, now this is an elective college class, human development, that students can take, so that's on the ICN [Iowa Communications Network] and it's really early in the morning so we kind of tailored our family development class more toward that component to

meet the needs of the whole Perkins stuff for the family and consumer science program. But we do offer that class at the college level as well. Not a lot of them take it at the college level, they really enjoy the child development class, we brought in the babies so they all had to carry the babies and, you know, different things like that and that was you know quite an eye opener for a lot of these kids, so... (Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C responded:

We...offer a course called single survival in the family and consumer sciences department, family living, I don't know if that falls under those umbrellas, but that would be our closest...I would say possibly our health course would fall under that umbrella, and that's probably it. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D reported there were some courses which fit the definition, but was not aware of a formal program of study:

A formal program...I didn't know there was a formal program...I wouldn't say there's a formal program I would venture to think that there's some courses that involve that but being new, too, I'm not as familiar with their curriculum, so that's kind of hard for me to answer. We do have a couple of things that I'll just throw out there that in my mind I think might fit that category but like I said, I haven't spent a ton of time looking at their curriculum so I could be mistaken. We do have a program that's called multi-occupation co-op or something program, it's MOC, that's what we call it but it is for students, I don't want to say it's a school to work program but it's similar to that, it's for students who are working and taking a class that goes along with that so it's not just that they're working and getting credit and there's no supervision. They take a course that goes along with it and in that course they're going through a lot of work related skills in like dealing with the people that you work with and the interviewing and the writing of resumes and kind of surviving in the workforce... (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor E had some ideas about courses and a student organization which fit the definition and noted:

When you say formal study, would you say class or session of classes? Because when you say that I can think of a number of classes that definitely hit parts of that, um, definitely our family growth and development is going to hit very heavily that, a formal organization, the FCCLA that hits families, communities and living and then I look at some of our business classes, you've got workplace readiness and you have career seminar classes then you have a portion of that, but I don't know if you would say that builds you know your

freshman year you would take this, your sophomore year you would take that...I don't know. Child Development definitely hits the family...I would say that just certain classes hit bits of each thing. (Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F did equate the definition with a particular program or courses of study but continued to share information about a new program focused on small group attention for students:

No, we don't have a particular program. This year we started an advisor/advisee program where the students spend 20 minutes a day with a particular teacher. And the goal is the 9th grade will spend four years with this teacher, this teacher will hopefully have a good rapport get on line, look at their grades, contact parents if the students aren't doing well. We have some very good teachers that provide programs that are like that and we have others who do absolutely nothing. It's not a consistent school-wide program this year. I'd like to see next year we just didn't have time this year. We started it, we're just on our first year. Hopefully next year we can get some more data about things teachers can do. But as I said some teachers aren't going to do it, but others will do very good at it. (Interview, February 20, 2008).

Guidance Counselor G was surprised by the multiple dimensions of the definition, but was able to quickly identify courses equated with the definition:

[Referring to the definition] Holy cow. Whew. That's a mouthful isn't it? Well, I think first of all we have a couple of courses that directly address that (FCS teacher) teaches. I think child development would be one of those, we have a family living course and an independent living course. I think those three courses are very valuable. You know what we're doing in a family living, they talk a lot about what are the roles of families and what do families do to be successful, you know all those pieces and what role does each person in that family play and all those types of things, which I think is very important and I think those are very vital for our kids to have that understanding, now the drawback is not every student is going to be exposed to that because that's an elective course, you know. Could we do that so that was required? I wish, you know, seriously. I guess we've kind of done, it doesn't really address all those things, but we have a core class, they call it, it's career and occupation related education. What we do there is, it kind of pieces some things together with what we try to do for careers... (Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H was not familiar with the definition, but correctly identified a course with related curriculum content:

I guess I would say no. We do have the family wellness, other than that I would say no there isn't a set curriculum for that. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Following their initial responses to the programs or course offerings in their high schools which fit the definition provided by the researcher, the participants were prompted in their narration by informing them that was Iowa's Career and Technical Education's definition for the content area of the discipline Family and Consumer Sciences. Upon hearing that, guidance counselors all acknowledged that yes, indeed, the name for their program was Family and Consumer Sciences, and each either turned their attention to or continued their description of specific courses in the Family and Consumer Sciences department within their schools.

Course handbook

The course handbook for six of the schools confirmed that the formal name given to this particular program/department was Family and Consumer Sciences. The seventh guidance counselor did not provide a handbook (currently in print), but did offer a teacher assignment schedule for the upcoming school year and that schedule referred to the junior high school courses as Home Economics. The final school did not provide a handbook or a course schedule for the researcher. Each handbook contained a separate heading for the FCS content area under titles such as "Family and Consumer," "Family and Consumer Sciences," or "Family and Consumer Science." FCS teachers are responsible for writing the course descriptions for their programs in each district and the guidance counselor is responsible for

the assembly and distribution of the handbook. Table 4.2 provides a comprehensive list of FCS course offerings provided by schools in this study.

The course handbook is utilized by the guidance counselors as a component in the career planning process for students beginning with the eighth grade plan. Following are

Table 4.2. FCS courses offered in FCS programs in school districts participating in the study

Counselor	Foods/Nutrition	Families/Children	Other
A	-Foods I and II -Food Fundamentals (dual credit course)	-Family and Independent Living -Parenting and Child Care -Parenting II -Intro to Early Childhood Education (dual credit course)	
B	-General Foods -Advanced Foods	-Child Development	-Careers -Family and Consumer Science
C	-Foods and Nutrition I and II-Co-Ed Foods and Creative Cuisine -Meal Management-Edibles -Food Production-Exploring Professional Cooking -Safety and Sanitation -Chef Youth Apprenticeship Placement	-Single Survival -Family Living -Child Development	-Textiles and Clothing 1 and 2
D	-Foods and Nutrition -Principles of Baking -Food Production -Culinary Practicum	-Adult Living -Today's Family -Child Development 0-2 -Child Development (2-6)	-Housing and Home Furnishing
E	-Culinary Arts -Creativity with Foods	-Child Development	-Clothing Construction I and II -Housing
F	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
G	-Foods and Nutrition I and II -Food Production I and II	-Family Living -Child Development -Independent Living	-C.O.R.E. (Career and Occupational Related Education-required course for all students)
H	-Basic Foods I and II -Food Sanitation and Safety (ICN site at nearby school) -Chef's Apprenticeship I and II (ICN site at nearby school)	-Family Wellness -Parenting and Child Development -Living Skills	-Clothing Decisions and Construction -World of Work

excerpts from interviews with guidance counselors about their use of the course handbook:

It's pretty in-depth, and every kid gets it, every 8th grader, every kid gets it, one copy that they have to hold onto, it's the first thing that a new student gets when they come in and we really just urge them when we're handing them out to students when talking about it to really look through and read about the classes because their teachers put forth the effort to write what their expectations are and what the class is about, we want to make sure it's a good fit for them. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

This guidance counselor has made up a short “cheat sheet” with the names of the courses for her students because they don’t utilize the handbook as well as they could:

I have a sheet that I made up last year of what all ninth graders are allowed to take, what all tenth graders can take. That helped. That makes it a little easier so they can see what all elective choices are before they register so they know what's available. Cause you give them our course description book and a lot of them don't read it, they don't look at prerequisites, but if I give them the two page sheet of what they can take that kind of helps eliminate and then they can go through and look at those few choices of what they can take. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C used the course handbook to enable him to provide curriculum content to the students before they register for classes:

I don't know what's going on in the classes. There's a course description here but if a kid asks me specifically what they do in Edibles or Co-Ed foods I don't feel comfortable answering that question other than reading the course description and the course description book doesn't always reflect what's going on in the classroom. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

Curriculum offered in FCS courses

To better assist students in the career planning process, guidance counselors need to have an awareness and understanding of the curriculum delivered within the FCS courses in their schools. When asked about classes that they had observed within the FCS department, guidance counselors responded with multiple examples of FCS activities. These

observations varied depending upon the courses/programs offered within the individual schools and the degree to which the guidance counselors engaged in classroom visits:

This guidance counselor reflected on the Foods and Parenting curriculums:

In the Foods, it's going through the different types of foods, they do a bunch of different recipes, I know they've done the meat charts and I've seen the students do some actual demonstrations that they do on their own at the end of the term or something...This is kind of a unique year. Let's see. Oh, the food pyramid. They go into nutrition. I've seen them do that. I'm drawing a blank as far as any more in the foods area. As far as parenting, they basically will start with developmental type, with the young child and the developmental areas, how they grow, how they forward and then how the parent would deal with that. I know she brought, not SHE brought, but the students would bring in smaller brothers and sisters and that was fun. Rescuser, the baby (Laugh) that was always fun. There were two of them that she used. Guys and girls in both groups. And in the parenting she also got into the pregnancy and they read a couple of books, one based on a father, a young father, and the other a young mother and I think that at one time I think she also dealt with the abuse...I'm drawing a blank on the name, but the books there are three in a row. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

The following comments are from Guidance Counselor F who did not see the program often because the FCS instructor was only in the school three of eight periods per day:

Well, most of the classrooms, you would see them cooking or sitting around the long tables in there and they would be...A lot of the times whenever I've walked by they would be leaning over a table where she has different products, extra things. I'm not up there a lot, but sometimes, it smells really good. Do we get to have some? (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H also had difficulty identifying the curriculum content as the FCS teacher was shared between two school districts and had a complex schedule because of the sharing agreement:

Parenting, she has an exploratory 7th and 8th grade, I teach Quest and I guess she is on opposite days and I guess I don't know what she does in that exploratory with 7th graders. I think it's more of a cooking unit; it's not

anything like the family wellness end of it, but she goes through a cooking unit with them; healthy cooking unit is the term she used so...she has that let's see, what else does she teach? And you know some of those classes and I don't know what she teaches over at East Central if it is family wellness or if it is...I don't know I don't know. When she goes over there I don't know what her responsibilities are so... (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

The following comments are from a guidance counselor who observed the curriculum being delivered simply because she was introducing a new student to the class:

Well, actually the last time, the one that sticks out in my mind is when they were making gingerbread houses and I don't remember what class it was for, I think it was for a couple of them. So one of the last times I was up there would have been in one of the, I would assume, this year we had meal management and foods and nutrition, it would have been one of those two, but I guess I never asked specifically which one it was and that's what they were doing, so they were working in groups making gingerbread houses. The last time I was in a classroom that wasn't lab based, I guess I would say, it was child development, but it wasn't for any super-long chunk of time, it was actually introducing a new student and I guess I can't tell you exactly what they were doing, because I didn't spend enough time in there to know, but I do know it was hands on because I remember them I think they were cutting, doing something, so I don't know. Not that that helps, but I don't know. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B recalled her visit to the current FCS classroom and compared it to an experience she had in her high school as a student:

The general foods is your basic program, white sauce, I remember when they made white sauce, I don't know why, but I remember from my days when we made white sauce when I took it, so just the general, if you were to live independent, you know how to cook, how to make sure that you can make a healthy meal, your diet, I've seen that type of things, other stuff. (Interview, February 22, 2008)

The guidance counselors in this study were quick to reflect upon the parenting/child development and foods curriculums in their schools. They pointed out that the students enjoyed that curriculum and noted that the activities were of a “hands-on” nature. FCS curriculum extends far beyond that noted by the guidance counselors, yet throughout the

course of the interview, very little or no mention was made of content pertaining to personal finances, consumerism, housing, or design courses. Three of the guidance counselors had brief remarks about clothing construction courses and did not indicate fashion merchandising as a part of that curriculum. Table 4.3 illustrates the course names and curricular content delivered during the 45-minute observation session of the FCS classroom by the researcher.

Credits

High schools in Iowa offer a variety of avenues through which students may earn credits toward high school graduation and a jumpstart on their college careers. The most basic and *traditional method* of crediting is through the high school at which they are enrolled. Students are required to earn a specified number of credits to complete the requirements for high school graduation as set by the local school district.

A second option for students occurs when secondary levels *articulate* with postsecondary institutions to align curriculum to include the competencies required at each level consistent with specific occupational levels. This process requires formal agreements between both institutions to facilitate student transition to the postsecondary level and reduce curricular duplication (The Iowa Legislature, 2003). When this occurs, the students may receive *dual credits*, that is, credit from both the secondary and postsecondary institution. Some courses are taught at the high school campus before, during, or after high school hours while others are taught at the college campus during the day, evenings or on weekends. Participation in the dual credit program enables students to make substantial progress toward the college degree before finishing high school.

Table 4.3. Course names and FCS curricular content presented during observations

Counselor	Course Name	Content
A	Foods II	Return papers: review Read about chicken cutting Wash up Cut chicken Bake chicken Cleanup Read chicken chapter aloud-take turns around the room. Assigned homework questions over chicken reading.
B	Advanced Foods	Introduction: brief discussion of soup types Soup lab in small group kitchen labs Clean up
C	Professional Foods	Muffin evaluations-teacher led explanations Taste test in individual groups Class discussion of results; Presentation by group members Clean up
D	Meal Management	Continue garnish cuts from previous day. Index cards-directions for cuts Relish tray design and worksheet Photograph relish tray display Clean up
E	Culinary Arts	Review for Ch. 17 test on milk products: small group activity Complete grocery lab order Lab coming up on Wednesday Test Friday on dairy products
F	Independent Living	Intro-test on Tuesday Roommate topic-DIGS reading/discussion Video on apartment living with roommates Finish reading packet for homework
G	Foods II	Discussion of current events Introduction of assignment Design a Public Service Announcement for food safety: individual work
H	Family Wellness	Annie's story-review previous chapter Teacher reads story segments asks them to guess what's ahead Ch. 1.3. Daily Quiz Highlights of Ch. 1.3-group discussion Return papers Assign 2.1 Homework-news articles due

There are many postsecondary institutions available to students in eastern Iowa. The guidance counselors in this study are knowledgeable about the crediting processes involved when orchestrating student enrollment between institutions. The following observation excerpts illustrate the crediting opportunities available to students in FCS courses:

To increase rigor and relevance in courses in her district, Guidance Counselor E was inquiring into postsecondary enrollment options for her students:

When I say dual, that's what our articulated courses are...when I asked [local community college representative] what other schools are articulating and he said the family growth and development is one. (Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance counselor F explained that all of the courses in her school receive the same credit weight and goes on to explain that they only articulate with one local postsecondary institution and are willing to continue to work with them:

They all receive one credit for each class just like in any other program in our building except PE and choir... Well, we have articulation with [local community college]. And [local community college] is the only school that I know of that we have any...If a student wanted to take class, probably through [local community college] then if they wanted to, yes, we would let them if it worked out. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance counselor G described a successful partnership experience between the local community college and one of his former students:

Full credit. It's a full credit, just like any other course and that's all....Yes, through [local community college]), we have articulations, in fact [the FCS instructor] just finished up some of that too. We have had kids that have gone on, not anybody real recently here but have kind of dug right into the culinary arts program down through (local community college) with the Safety and Sanitation course they'll take here and kind of move on from there. We had one student that actually took some courses just took the college articulated courses, but, kind of the chef apprenticeship but I just, this was two years ago, excuse me I can't remember exactly what it was called now, but anyway, she took some of this coursework and then went right away into working in a restaurant right out of high school, so it worked out really well for her. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

The two new FCS teachers from this district have been quick to contact their local community college to make necessary adjustments to the current articulation agreements between this district and the local community college:

I know that [the FCS instructor] just met with [local community college] and I don't have all the stipulations on this, but she just revamped their partnership with [local community college], so she'll probably share that with you, maybe that process seeing how she worked with them a lot when she was in [her previous school], and so students in the past, if they had taken foods and nutrition, and meal management, and principles they could get credit through [local community college] for in my information there were two classes through [local community college], she thought that maybe once they had redone everything it was just one course but I haven't gotten that updated information from her yet for next year. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

The upcoming school year will offer a focus on offering dual credit opportunities for the students in this school district. The FCS program will be included in those efforts:

Full academic credit. A semester is 1/2 a unit and a full year... On these.... I don't think there are articulations. Not that I am aware of, at least... I think what's happening here next year is the dual-credit. Probably in foods, so if there is someone who wants to go on being a chef or working in a restaurant something like that, I think would be good. So I like the foods and then more depth in the foods, so probably greater variety to be better dealt with. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Creative articulation was described by the guidance counselor of this small school district:

We do have a child development class, we do also have, now this is an elective college class, human development, that students can take. so That's on the ICN and it's really early in the morning so we kind of tailored our family development class more toward that component to meet the needs of the whole Perkins stuff for the family and consumer science program. But we do offer that class at the college level as well. Not a lot of them take it at the college level, they really enjoy the child development class, we brought in the babies so they all had to carry the babies and, you know, different things like that and that was you know quite an eye opener for a lot of these kids... We used to with food and sanitation with (local community college) but that has since diminished, I think. I was this year able to get a student to take the first

course, the introductory to culinary arts down at [local community college] instead of doing the sanitation class cause we know he's going to (local community college) anyway for the culinary arts end so we just kind of started him off that way and as far as I know we have not renegotiated that agreement. Nobody has taken that class here yet so... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H tried to understand how the articulation process works, but finds it difficult as she is a first year counselor:

They do receive a credit for it toward graduation. There's 50 required for graduation so it is part of, it's an elective, so it does count...No, there's none for that class. We do have that here, but none for family wellness. Family wellness is not a dual credit. In order to be a dual credit here or to be recognized we have to have an articulation with the college, the teacher needs to have a masters degree in that area for it to count. So, and I don't know if [the FCS instructor] does, to be quite honest with you. She has a masters degree, but... (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Confusion erupted regarding articulation opportunities in this guidance counselor's school:

You can either count one semester as one credit or half a unit so um if they take one semester, I go by units, so we require 20.5 units to graduate, one semester is .5 units of credit...Not that I am aware of. I think at one point in time our child development, yeah, family and consumer sciences, I take that back. It [handbook] says that our foods class and child development are articulated, but I don't believe that they are. For example our accounting, if you get through our accounting I, accounting II here I know [local community college] puts it on their transcript. I've never seen [local community college] put a foods course on only because our instructor not having the proper credentials. I don't know if you can help me with that but I don't think our family and consumer sciences is...It says we are, but I don't think we are. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

In preparing students for FCS related careers, state high schools and community colleges have collaborated to articulate 11 Early Childhood/Child care programs, four Hospitality related programs, two Interior Design programs, one Fashion Merchandising, and five Culinary Arts programs. Several community colleges offer “concurrent enrolled”

courses for FCS in the areas of Early Childhood, Culinary Arts, Human Services and Education. One FCS “culinary academy” is offered at Des Moines Area Community College with more being developed across the state. Many FCS teachers across the state have included entrepreneurial components in their curriculum to include examples such as restaurants, catering, textiles design, and technology (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007).

Program types

Family and consumer science programs are comprised of two types, Comprehensive and Occupational. The standards and benchmarks for FCS programs in the state of Iowa are available on the CTE website (IDOE, 2008a). Some school districts in Iowa choose to offer one or both programs as part of their high school curriculum. The Comprehensive option includes: skills and knowledge in career, community, and family connections; consumer and family resources; early childhood, education, and services; facilities management and maintenance; family; family and community services; food production and services; food sciences, dietetics, and nutrition; housing, interiors, and furnishings; human development; interpersonal relationships; nutrition and wellness; and textiles and apparel. The Occupational options include: Clothing, apparel and textiles; food production and services; home furnishings; institutional home management; child care. Both options provide students with Iowa leadership, job getting, job keeping, entrepreneurship skills and knowledge and integrate model core course skills and knowledge (IDOE, 2008b)

As introduced in the definitions section of Chapter 1, understanding the terms vocational education and career and technical education are important to understanding FCS

programs. While FCS programs in Iowa are part of the Career and Technical Education Division in the Iowa State Department of Education, they are also known as vocational programs (see Definitions section, Chapter 1). The Carl D. Perkins Technical and Vocational Act of 1992 required vocational programs to be competency based and minimum competencies identified at the state level (IDOE, 2008b). As an option and through a carefully monitored process, local school districts may elect to develop their own competencies. This involves the use of a technical committee comprised of local members with interests in FCS content. In 1998, the Carl D. Perkins Technical and Vocational Act was revised and to be eligible for federal funds, school districts were required to revise their program sequences to meet the new guidelines (IDOE, 2008b).

Guidance counselors participating in this study were asked what they knew about the programs “Comprehensive” and “Occupational” in reference to the FCS programs in their local schools. They were also asked to explain whether the FCS programs in their schools might be “Career and Technical Education” or “Vocational” in nature. The researcher also inquired into their understanding of the Carl D. Perkins federal funding utilized in their schools.

This guidance counselor attempted to explain her understanding of the terms:

I have not and I guess when I hear the term occupational, frequently, because of our health occupation or MOC programs, but I have not... Career and technical to vocational. If you want my honest opinion I think we're dealing with terminology and we are a school district that is now pushing all students. They call it college readiness for all and we use again, the term college as vocabulary. To me that does not mean every student is going to a four year school, I don't promote that, I say are you going to need further education beyond these walls? Absolutely. Are we pushing you higher technical, is that terminology? Absolutely. As I go to all these different career things that I make myself known to, um, no longer can you just walk out of here and become employable and move up the ladders. It doesn't work that way

anymore. I have out here at [local business] [the owner] keeps calling me asking for students that he can help send to school, everything's computerized, to learn technical, so vocation, technology, we're dealing with preparing kids for career in a technical world. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Special education programs came to mind when Guidance Counselor H heard the term “vocational:”

I hear more of the vocation when we're working with a student with an IEP and getting their goals developed after high school. Career more with the 8th grade plan, the term is used more, I would say, with that, so I've also heard vocational used if it's a technical college where the kids are going to attend, so, yeah, I've heard it used in different areas. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

There was much confusion involved in this explanation of the terms. After comparing the terms to the confusion he perceived caused by the name change in FCS and tiptoeing through some of the other programs offered in his school, Guidance Counselor G finished his explanation with a projection of job availability for the technical areas in the future:

Well, I think it's, it can be confusing at times for some people if they aren't really up to speed, as they say, as to where things are at the time. I guess you could compare it a little to when the switchover when everyone was in that home economics mode [both laugh] you know and when it got switched to family and consumer science I thought ...jokingly, people used to give [FCS teacher] kind of a hard time just a little bit. What the heck, what are you called now? and just called that kind of thing a little bit, but I guess I compare it a little bit to that and I think some people, the vocational one I think is what maybe sometimes get people confused cause I think whatever reason, I think industrial arts and the ag get tied to that's vocational, you know, but I like the idea of what is career and technical now because I think that's exactly what it is because you know a lot of those courses now they've changed, they've changed dramatically in terms of careers that are available in them, again go back to skills, which to me the skills in technical kind of align there a little bit you know that's what it really is you know, I mean for example I grew up on a farm. My God, farming isn't even close to being what it was when I was growing up, you know nor neither are a lot of the rest of these, you know. The scary part is when you talk about one of the technical areas in ten years 60% of the jobs aren't even there now that there will be in

10 years, you know? I mean so it's changing so dramatically in those areas, I think that's made it so difficult for kids to some respect too because of so many different options out there for them and I think it's hard for them to sometimes know what is going to be that right fit for me. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D acknowledged her ignorance in describing the terminology as it relates to the FCS program in her school:

Yeah, obviously we hear those words, but I've never had anyone actually sit down and say, well our program is this and it's comprehensive and you follow through and I've never had anyone in the department come and talk to me about it, or you know. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

This guidance counselor had already been questioned in a recent interview regarding his understanding of the terms:

Comprehensive or occupational? I've heard of the words, but I don't know what it necessarily means in connection with...I consider career and vocational ed...I was in an interview yesterday at [another school] and they asked me what technical...I don't know what it is, does that mean technology courses? Or is technical the same as vocational? I don't know if they're...I guess I don't know either. To me, career counseling, my career domain covers technical and vocational and apprenticeships and military and college-bound...the whole gamut, so I don't know what technical or I guess I would assume technical and vocational are synonymous to me. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A tried to explain that it has to be one or the other in identifying the program definitions:

*I guess probably synonymously. Probably the idea of career that would include the vo tech, but I guess that's the way I would approach it, career and vo tech. Not career tech **and** vo tech. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)*

Perhaps it is best to keep things simple as Guidance Counselor B explained in her description of the terms (note that she also slipped up in her reference to FCS programming

and called it Home Economics. It was her course handbook that referred to the junior high program as Home Economics):

I don't know that there's a difference outside of one uses computers and one you use a hammer. I don't know, I mean, I tend to break things down into its simplest form. Vocation to me is vocation, whether it's business...I'm not quite sure why home economics is under that either, um, I don't really understand all of that either, but with the Carl Perkins stuff, I think it gets pretty technical...They do, but I don't think any of them know what it is either. I think we're all kind of not 100% sure what it is because when I think of the business classes, the technical stuff, like ok, our computer classes ok that makes sense to me. When I think of vocational, I think, ok that's ag, that's the mechanic stuff I can understand that, but I can't see how the home economics program falls under that. I mean you use technology in home economics so why isn't that part of the technical part of it. I don't get that. (Interview, February 22, 2008)

Having experienced the complexities involving Perkins reporting for the federal government, this guidance counselor was happy to pass the responsibilities off to the curriculum director in her district:

Yeah, well, I work with the Perkins, [name of local Perkins coordinator] is ours, she takes care of the Perkins grant and as far as making sure all the numbers are coded for each course to do a follow through to see ok, how many students took, of course, all four core of family and consumer science, and then to find out which department is going to get the money. I don't know if that's done, I'm assuming that's done in each district kind of different, differentiated. But as far as some of the changes, I guess I'm probably not as up to date as what I need to be...I think I tend to want to stay out of the Perkins Grants because we do have [curriculum director] doing it, partly because I have too many things coming across this desk sometimes I want to give a few of these things up. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

This school district will be hosting a mock interview day for the juniors and seniors in their school through funding provided by the Perkins Grant:

I think it's Perkins money that we're using for this. Tomorrow we're having a mock interview day for our junior and seniors and [FCS instructor] has been involved through teaching this in her, I don't know which class, it might be family wellness and mainly for juniors and seniors so it wouldn't be a family

wellness class where they're doing a resume, a cover letter, and we're bringing in businesses ...a variety, I think that was Perkins money that we're doing this with. We are, the kids are going to come in, we're going to have an interview, we're going to make a lunch for the people that come and mainly just to get the kids some experience in that interview process, so... (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Some FCS teachers became possessive of the funding provided through the Perkins Grant. Guidance Counselor A shared a personal story and explained the value of the monies provided to the local programs:

Sometimes...[Laugh] it's a joke with a former teacher...it was always "HER" stuff. And when you wanted to use it you had to make sure you had her approval to use her stuff. Which was purchased with the Perkins money and I'm sure that happens quite often, but it's been an opportunity for the departments to kind of fill in with some pretty nice stuff. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

The guidance counselors in this study stumbled a bit when asked their descriptions of the terms commonly used when referring to FCS content. Staying attuned to the many changes occurring in career and technical education and the profession of FCS education can be challenging and requires a great deal of effort on the part of staff and administration.

FCCLA

The student organization Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is offered in many FCS programs at the secondary level. Career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) provide a unique program of career and leadership development, motivation, and recognition for youth and adult students in secondary and postsecondary education who are or were enrolled in career and technical education programs (IDOE, 2008a). During the past three years, Iowa's FCCLA school district membership has increased from 88 to 111 (a 25% increase) and student membership has

grown from 2,144 to 2,724 (also a 25% increase) (M.A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007).

The FCCLA (2008) identified the purposes of the organization:

- To provide opportunities for personal development and preparation for adult life;
- To strengthen the function of the family as a basic unit of society;
- To encourage democracy through cooperative action in the home and community;
- To encourage individual and group involvement in helping achieve global cooperation and harmony;
- To promote greater understanding between youth and adults;
- To provide opportunities for making decisions and for assuming responsibilities;
- To prepare for the multiple roles of men and women in today's society;
- To promote family and consumer sciences and related occupations. (p. 1)

In the current study, only one of the participating school districts provided FCCLA for its students interested in FCS content:

Guidance Counselor E spoke very highly of the FCCLA program in her high school:

[The instructor] does a very nice job with that program. Those kids do a number of things. Right now it's females, and I know she would like to have more males in that program, but they have done a variety of activities, one of the ones that they just did for us, for the staff, they just served us, we have Thursday, every Thursday the staff gets together and somebody provides treats and they've done that for us, they've baked all the goodies and set the tables and decorated and so on. And they've done field trips, they've done a number of activities....and every year they set up booths of all the organizations and [the FCS instructor's] students do that. They also, they're a club that promotes window painting at homecoming down in the businesses. But fundraisers, I know they have fundraisers every year, but I can't tell you because we have so many. [When my daughter] got involved in it there appeared to be some students that maybe didn't feel they fit in some of the other clubs and this was one that was just so welcoming to anyone that wanted to be in it. You know FFA has a huge club here, but the students have to take the FFA classes, even though the FCCLA the students take from that, let me think of some other clubs, it just is so welcoming of everybody. Anybody could join. I think even some of our students that learning disabilities and some of the special needs kids that may not seem to have fit in some of the other clubs like FFA pulls in and does a great job with those kids. I don't know...maybe partly because of how [the instructor] runs it.
(Interview, March 3, 2008)

During the FCS classroom observation, the instructor inquired into the possibility of creating a FCCLA chapter in the participating schools. FCS instructor H replied that she had an FCCLA program in one of the two districts in which she is a shared instructor before she began the shared FCS assignment between school districts. She thought the logistics would be difficult now and, because no one ever suggested that she provide it in both school districts, she had not had a program in either one of them. FCS instructor G expressed interest, but was not eager to begin the process. Since the interview, School District A has hired a full-time FCS instructor for the 2008-09 school year, highly qualified in FCS content, who has experience at her previous school district having created a FCCLA program there. The FCS instructors in the remaining high schools in this study did not express interest in working with FCCLA in their programs.

FCCLA provides many opportunities for students to develop and enhance their leadership and citizenship skills within the context of career and program interests which also enhances their occupational skills and future employability (IDOE, 2008a).

Students

As a nation, secondary school programs report nearly 25% of total student enrollment in FCS courses. Compared to 2002-03, FCS programs today are more gender equitable and include a more diversified focus to include both occupational and family-focused courses (Werhan & Way, 2006).

In the State of Iowa Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Certified Annual Report (IDOE, 2007b), the Iowa Career and Technical Division reports on preparation for nontraditional training and employment, partnerships with community colleges for

multicultural programming, peer mentoring relationships for students in non-traditional careers, sharing and developing resources for recruiting, enrolling, retaining, and graduating students in career areas nontraditional for gender, underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and students with disabilities, technical assistance to community college staff to provide equity/diversity support for special populations, and ensuring awareness of middle and high school girls of nontraditional programs (IDOE, 2007b).

Gender

Boys are encouraged to try the FCS courses in these schools:

I don't have genders on this, I'm not even sure our program...yes it does, I know it does, but our secretary usually would be the one to pull up that data. I think for the most part we do have more females but we do have several males in the classes, especially the cooking...No, I would probably say that there are more girls, but we've always had boys, probably not so much the parenting, but I have encouraged a lot of boys to take independent living cause I think it would be very good for them. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

What's been neat is, you know I don't want to sound sexist, but we get a lot of boys in that, that's awesome, in fact sometimes we have more boys in that foods class than we do girls, you know and I think that's cool. I remember doing that. I remember taking foods when I was in school. At the time I thought what am I doing in here, but what a valuable piece that was so you know it's been a great thing, I think, for our kids. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Parenting would probably be female-dominated, but the foods probably could be close to 50/50. I guess I've never looked at the statistics there. The family living depends on the year and it depends on the senior class. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B perceived that the males are the better cooks in her school:

Honestly, it's 50/50. I really see a lot of the guys doing the foods classes, but a lot of our male students ...awesome cooks, really awesome cooks. Females...doing pretty good, but it's funny how you see the guys wanting them, when I schedule them it's always "Hey are you going to take the foods

classes? Let's take the foods class together." And I'm like, oh my gosh, you guys are like a bunch of women [GC laughs]. (Interview, February 22, 2008)

...some of the guys, I push boys into foods, probably more than girls because they're going to be on their own and they're ones not so much known for their cooking skills, so I say, why don't you take foods. You know, so I push boys into foods. Well, I encourage them... (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 22, 2008)

These guidance counselors were careful not to stereotype when they assist students in their course selections:

And I have had a lot of girls who have chosen to take woods, or take autos, or whatever, and I don't necessarily want to say it surprises me, but I'm not like "Oh my God, you want to take that class: but it registers in my mind and it's kind of like that whole blue eyes/brown eyes experiment in that you know what I mean? [both laugh] But it makes me wonder sometimes when I catch me thinking about it, then I...but more so not because I can't believe she's going to take the class I'm more thinking about it as how is she going to be perceived by the teacher also. (Guidance Counselor D Interview, March 11, 2008)

I try not to be sexist when it comes to industrial arts and family and consumer sciences classes. I try to say, hey if a girl wants to take welding, go ahead and take welding. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Table 4.4 illustrates the course names and gender distribution in the FCS classes observed by the researcher. In the FCS curriculum and working with Carl D. Perkins reporting documents female students are considered to be non-traditional gender types in the foodservice content areas. Of the six observed foods-related classes, five courses show more females than males enrolled. This would be considered increased enrollment of nontraditional students in a foods-related course, or career area. The opposite is true of the other content areas in FCS where males are considered nontraditional gender types. Of the two non-foods related courses observed, males were fewer in number. This is considered to be traditional gender enrollment in FCS content courses.

Table 4.4. Course names and gender distribution in FCS classes observed

Counselor	Course Name	Gender Distribution
A	Foods II	6 Males 8 Females
B	Advanced Foods	12 Males 5 Females
C	Professional Foods	4 Males 7 Females
D	Meal Management	6 Male 10 Female
E	Culinary Arts	8 Males 9 Females
F	Independent Living	4 Male 5 Female
G	Foods II	2 Male 7 Female
H	Family Wellness	10 Male 14 Female

Enrollment

Guidance counselors address a variety of factors related to enrollment when scheduling students into FCS courses. In the following section, guidance counselors discussed issues surrounding the minimum number of students needed to offer and teach a class in their schools, as well as factors controlling the maximum number of students allowed in the FCS courses.

Citing safety and equipment restrictions, this guidance counselor points out that sometimes the classes in her school are smaller in student size than others:

ALL COURSES are to have a minimum of 15, that doesn't always happen and there's one class that is an exception in our entire building, that's welding and that's because we don't have 1. the safety 2. we only have 14 welders so we can't put any more than 14 in there, but all classes are to have 15. Her advanced clothing is smaller and I think that is probably okay because it is advanced and they need more teacher attention in moving into more advanced

skills so it's kind of hard; the maximum is 24 and that's a pretty full class down there. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H explained that one of the FCS courses was overbooked due to scheduling complications between the three sharing school districts:

Yep, and right now she has a huge class; it was overbooked, so she has like 32 kids right now which is huge. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

In this school, the FCS teacher has input into the size of the foods class that she teaches:

This semester foods I has 14 in it which is what she wanted as a max for our cooking lab. Foods II has 16 and I could have had over 20 and I had to take some kids out because it's just too many for the lab. And she taught independent living and we have 9 in that...Like I said, I could have well over twenty in there this year. But, no, more than likely next year numbers won't be that high...14 she felt was enough for her lab situation. So, the 16 was pushing it. So, I took most of the 9th graders out, figured they could take it another time. But I made sure that juniors and seniors were the ones left in the class...: I think the enrollment numbers are very good for her program. Some years when more classes were offered there were some classes that had less numbers, but the numbers for this year are very good. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

In this school, the administration, guidance counselor, and FCS teacher work together to determine the class sizes in FCS courses:

There are cap sizes. Yes, they do fill up. Yes, they probably do go over their cap sometimes, um, [our department chair] and our cap size is actually determined by our administrator and then there's kind of a certain number, level of number that you can kind of go over, but I know that [guidance department chair] has been in constant, I shouldn't say constant, but has had a lot of communication, I think mostly with [FCS instructor] in regards with them getting too big or how many people she can really have for safety concerns, you know, and things like that. And we've really tried to keep them where they need to be, but really, truthfully, and especially this year, and I don't really know being new I guess I don't know for sure, I haven't been through it enough, but I do know that we had major budget cuts last year, so I know, just across the board, we lost an art position, a PE position, and I want to say maybe a math position but I mean there were just some major cuts like some positions that weren't refilled when people retired, we lost a language

person, ah, kind of a lot, so all of our classes are full. It's not, there's not one section that has like any more openings than another department, so I would say predominantly every single department, every single class is full.
(Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Reflecting upon the previous FCS teacher's request to keep class sizes manageable, Guidance Counselor A shared:

That's what she liked it to be held at. We generally tried to stay in that area, but sometimes we were one or two over, especially in the foods area. And I think there are just 18 chairs in the room, but sometimes we could move in extra seats if we needed to...And it was the magic number. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Guidance counselor A recognized the need for efficiency in teacher to pupil ratios. Her school district takes a second look when enrollment numbers are small for a course:

Generally, when enrollment is at 6 we take a closer look. That's kind of our magic number, the flag goes up. Okay, something's got to happen here.
(Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Guidance counselor B noted what happened when FCS teachers offer curriculum that appeals to the students in an effective format:

And you know, only in a couple years, honestly, is really what she's done and it's amazing cause at first she only did it part time and then she was yelling at me cause I was putting 30-40 kids in her class and I'm like "I'M SORRY!! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU!!" Like I think you need to be thinking about being a full time teacher. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

...and continued:

I mean I have to shut half her classes off by the time I even get to the junior class for scheduling and it's funny, it's just really funny, cause I was just like...when I first started talking about her taking up taking the classes, I was like oh do this and do that you know, and she was like well why don't we look at this and look at that and I'm like do you have any idea how many kids you're going to get in those classes? She's like oh, it won't be that bad and I'm like okay...then I'm like how many can you have cause I've shut you off at 30. She says, "That's too many!!!" (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Minimum class sizes are determined (approximately) in advance by the school districts in this study. Maximum class sizes were determined by issues related to safety, available equipment, classroom management, and size of facility. The guidance counselors in this study reported class enrollment is also determined by student attitudes regarding teacher characteristics and the offering of an appealing curriculum. When enrollment numbers are smaller than determined minimum class sizes, the course is typically not offered that semester. Table 4.5 depicts the total enrollment for the FCS courses observed by the researcher on the site visit. (Note: the researcher waited 10 minutes in the hallway with the 24 students in School H while the FCS instructor traveled from her shared district assignment with a nearby school. This was a daily occurrence and the students were well-behaved while they waited for their instructor. A teacher from an adjacent classroom supervised the students from his doorway).

Table 4.5. Total enrollment for the FCS courses observed during site visit

Counselor	Course Name	Total Enrollment for Course
A	Foods II	14
B	Advanced Foods	17
C	Professional Foods	11
D	Meal Management	16
E	Culinary Arts	17
F	Independent Living	9
G	Foods II	9
H	Family Wellness	24

Ability level

The Iowa Department of Education recognizes diversity in the United States to be a “national treasure” (IDOE, 2008d). Teachers in Iowa are encouraged to use information about diverse learners to create a classroom learning environment respectful of individuals of diversity. Some of those students include those in need of alternative education, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, English language learner instruction, gifted and talented curriculum, homeless assistance, and I-JAG (Iowa Jobs for America’s Graduates) workplace information (IDOE, 2008d).

Students with disabilities are also addressed through the Iowa Department of Education Special Education Division (IDOE, 2008g). In order to gain access to the general education curriculum, school districts are required to provide alternate forms of assessment in accommodating students who have been identified with special needs. Some of these special accommodations include assistive technology, audiology aids, autism, visual impairment, brain injury, health, learning disabilities, and mental health (for a complete list see Programs and Services, 2008f).

The following guidance counselors encouraged students with special needs to enroll in FCS courses:

Yes. I do know we have several special ed students. I do know that at least in the past that has always worked out very well because the teacher would go in and the teacher...those are classes that special ed kids can take and be successful in with some assistance. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D started to describe a working relationship between the FCS teachers and special needs instructors and continued to share that the FCS courses contain a mixture of students with varying abilities:

I would say that there is a variety, I know that, to be honest, I guess I don't know exactly how this works. I know that there are a couple sections of the courses that are offered to like our BD our behavior disorder department um within special ed teaches some type of, I don't know what you call it, like if this year they're teaching principles of baking or whatever and I don't know how this works, but I don't think that that one in particular has any involvement with another teacher, you know what I mean? In the past I think they've offered some sections possible team taught or I don't know, I don't think it's happening this year, but I know some of our kids in our moderate program or a little bit more severe and profound they've done some like teaming between the department and teachers to offer some classes to them but I don't think this year there's maybe that partnership going on, but I could be mistaken, I could just not know about it or it could be just because we have two new teachers you know and they just did their thing this year and relationships will evolve and kind of change over the years, but I think for the most part all of the ability levels are represented. I mean I can think of kids in my mind that are, you know, in the top 5 % of their class that are in there for next year and I can think of some who maybe struggle a little bit more with things and have an IEP or something like that, um, so I think that there's probably a pretty ok mix, but I'm not sure, I'm not in there so I don't see like the whole conglomeration of kids so I don't know if as teachers they would necessarily think that, you know, but I don't know for sure. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

This guidance counselor explained that there is a tendency for students with special needs to gravitate to the FCS courses, and finished with acknowledgement of a variety of student ability levels in FCS courses:

I would say yeah. I would say that there is a tendency for our, I don't know if I want to say at-risk, but some of our marginal kids tend to gravitate toward the family and consumer sciences. I don't know if they are more user-friendly or if they're perceived to be an easy class, or if maybe it's seen as not so academic so maybe they see it as an opportunity to, it's not so much bookwork, although like I said, in that first course, it's a lot of bookwork. So I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing but at the same time I think teachers are in a tough position because they have so many marginal kids, then they have some kids who are very serious about it, it's hard to manage all of those kids and I don't want to say it's a weed-out course, but in some ways it kind of is. I mean if you're serious about it, you'll do it and buckle in and reap the benefits of it the second semester when you get Creative Cuisine, the third semester Edibles, and then Professional Foods... A wide variety. Our college bound students to special ed. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

This FCS course was large, but the guidance counselor perceived the curriculum is important for all students:

Actually, the class that she has now, which is a large class, it just worked out that all of the kids with IEP's are in there so she at least has four. Four of them are in an IEP and it's going well. And I think that's a class that those kids really need cause those are skills that they are going to take and use after high school. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Family and Consumer Sciences Education empowers individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society. School districts across the state of Iowa offer a variety of programs in both the comprehensive and occupational strands (Iowa Family and Consumer Sciences, 2007). FCSE does and will continue to address a multitude of FCS related concerns (Browne, Myers, Gentzler, & Hausafus, 2006). FCS content offers something for everyone.

Teachers

The most obvious recurring theme which emerged the study by Erwin et al. (1996) of Tennessee secondary level guidance counselors' perceptions of home economics (FCS) programs was the role of the home economics (FCS) teacher. Most guidance counselors spoke of the teacher and the program within their schools as "meshed together, so that both contributed to the other's identity" (Erwin et al., 1996, p. 19). They spoke about the teacher's role in terms of visibility for home economics (FCS) programs, changing parent's perceptions of home economics (FCS), marketing home economics (FCS) to students, and methods for teaching practical living skills (Erwin, et al., 1996).

This researcher used those responses as an outline for inquiry about the FCS teachers in the school districts in the study. During the course of the interviews, the guidance counselors shared a variety of ideas about these FCS teacher colleagues in their schools.

Guidance Counselor A spoke of the desirable characteristics of a quality FCS teacher:

I guess an open, caring person, umm one that's willing to deal with some, what will I call it? "touchy" issues, I guess, probably in parenting and in family living. Probably willing to do some sharing. Definitely knowledgeable about their area. Someone that's flexible. [LAUGH]. Can develop a relationship with the students. I think that's important also... hopefully they will be out of the classroom periodically, and interrelating to the rest of the staff. Willing to get to know the other staff, um serving on committees, possibly, would be important. And to even trying to relate probably some of the class work to some of the other areas, some of the other disciplines, could be a possibility as well. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

This guidance counselor shared that her school's FCS teacher has the personality for the job, good management skills, and flexibility:

...the kids really like (FCS instructor). She tells it like it is which I think is important in that position cause some of the kids will come in and they'll have a question just to see if they can get her to blush or embarrass her ; she's not easily embarrassed. I think she's definitely the personality for that position, so... And her classroom management skills are excellent and that's important when you are, have that group work and kids are working on a project at a different pace and she does a very, very good job of managing that... [FCS instructor] is very flexible and if a kid needs to work on something or see her, she would come early or stay late to do that so depending upon her schedule... (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Sharing a FCS teacher between districts makes communication challenging, but she is perceived as knowledgeable and caring about her program:

Our former teacher retired this past year and since our teacher now is only here three periods a day I don't see her, but when I have had conversations with her I think she is very knowledgeable and pretty caring about her program. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance counselor E described the structure provided to the FCS classroom through the leadership of the instructor:

You would see a fairly structured class even though it's that's partly because of the instructor. It is pretty tightly run but kids know what they're doing. If kids think that they're going to take any of [FCS teacher] classes as a slough off, you know easy, easy yeah, they quickly learn not, in fact it is a class that has demands... [FCS teacher] is strict you're not going to deal with any messing around in there. [FCS teacher] will offer assistance, she is also one that does not, how can I say this, you're not going to have the freedom to go on ahead. She definitely has check-offs, such as the sewing and you must do this and check with me before you move on. If you do, you're in big trouble. And when I say big trouble, kids know it, they just don't, you're probably going to end up ripping something out or something. So you know, fairly structured for sure. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

New instructors with new levels of excitement for the FCS content bring new opportunities for students in this district:

I would describe, well I would say that both of them, like I said I've only known them for a little while and they're new too, so it's not like I know them very well but I would say that both of them seem very excited to be in that position and to be here and I would say that they're both very hands on everything that I've ever seen them doing or talking about seems to be something very hands on which I think is very appealing to a lot of students. I think from what I have gathered with just briefly talking with [FCS teacher] about with what she was preparing with [local community college] that means that they're trying to bring, you know, more opportunities for our students. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C spoke of the power of influence an instructor has when he/she teaches courses in the program at both the middle and high school levels:

Actually, one of the advantages that [FCS instructor] has is that she has the kids in middle school, so she either makes those connections or she burns those bridges... Yeah, and so does our art teacher, so does our computer tech teacher, and so does our business instructor so a lot of times, the groundwork's already been, it's a done deal. And I hear those comments a lot "Oh, who's teaching..." I hear those comments a lot when we're registering. Who teaches that class? (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Table 4.6 provides the gender, years of instructor experience, certifications and other career experience of the FCS teachers in the 45-minute classroom observation sessions. The guidance counselors in this study addressed a variety of personal attributes and leadership characteristics personified by the FCS teachers in their schools. There are 142 years of combined FCS teaching experience among the FCS instructors in this study. In addition, the FCS teachers have a variety of other work-related experiences.

Table 4.6. Gender, years of instructor experience, certifications, and other career experience of the FCS teachers

Counselor	Gender	Years of FCS instructor experience	Certifications	Other career experience
A	Female	None	Elementary Education	Substitute Teacher Third and Fourth grade elementary education teacher-34 years
B	Female	4 years	Speech theatre undergraduate Psychology undergraduate 5-12 special education Masters special education FCS endorsement (Spring 2008)	Special Education Teacher 13 years
C	Female	7 years	FCS Education 6-12	Substitute Teacher Truck driver Retail Management-women's clothing Volunteer Hospice Unit
D	Female	20 years	FCS Education 6-12 Coaching Endorsement English Minor	
E	Female	31 years	Vocational FCS Education 6-12 Masters of Interdisciplinary Studies Counseling endorsement Health Endorsement	Small business owner
F	Female	32 years	FCS Education 6-12 Health Endorsement	Clerk for family auction service Ag surveyor
G	Female	25 years	FCS Education 6-12 Masters Teaching and Learning with Technology	Substitute Teacher Secretary/Bookkeeper Family Farm
H	Female	23 years	FCS Education 6-12 Health Endorsement	

Program changes

In the study *Body of Knowledge of Family and Consumer Sciences* (Baugher et al., 2000), FCS educator leaders focused on the visionary elements of a new framework of FCS content to be used as a guide in addressing the needs of the emerging 21st century family. Those identified elements include education of individuals, families and communities in areas of wellness, technology, global interdependence, human development, and resource development/management (Baugher et al.).

In this study, guidance counselors were asked to reflect upon changes that the local FCS program has gone through since they have been employed in their school districts. The following segments from guidance counselors share some of those FCS program changes.

This guidance counselor remembered her earlier years, and the strong emphasis on the clothing and textiles curriculum offered by the FCS program in this school:

The main change I've seen is in the sewing area. That umm I can remember some students doing some fantastic sewing projects. Some of the young men. I remember one guy made a suit one of the first years I was here. That was unbelievable! [Laugh] I'm going WOW! (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Because the teacher was shared in this district, the FCS program changes included cutting the clothing and textiles course:

I guess I would like to see it a little bigger in our building than what it is just because it's been shortened so much that I don't think we have a broad program and it's certainly not her fault but I know comments like we won't be seeing sewing back in our district that's a class that when we're on limited periods we won't be seeing sewing. Not many people sew anymore. We just don't get the kids who are interested in it, sewing. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

In sharp contrast to the aforementioned FCS programs, this school district not only offered a beginning clothing course, but also expressed interest in an advanced program:

Adding the advanced clothing, but as far as any major changes there haven't been any that I am aware of. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008).

Change was welcomed in this district after 25 years with the same FCS instructor:

She was here before me and she started out part time. I'm going to guess 25 years. I know total she has 22 years I think of experience...No, I think the change will be good. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

The FCS teachers in this program addressed the current needs of their students by revising the curriculum offered by their programs:

I know that [FCS instructors] have kind of gone through and reaming out some of their stuff so what they're going to offer next year is going to be different and I'm not familiar with it yet, but I know that there is a, that they're changing one of the courses, Adult Living, and it's going to be called Today's Families so I presume that she's changing some of the things that she's going, that are included in it, so I would think that that would be a little bit different. So one would be called Adult Living and the one after it would be called Today's Families and I would say, really, for the most part that would be the two that would focus on that, rather than incorporating little bits and pieces of that... So they're changing meal management to food production and that is offered on an alternate year basis also so the other class that we didn't have this year, is called Creative Cuisine and that will be back next year and then they offer a baking class, Principles of Baking, that's offered on an alternate year and I guess, taking a step back, Creative Cuisine is going to be out of the picture next year and it's going to be a culinary Practicum, so that's a new class for us. I don't know specifically what it will all entail but I do know that the suggestion has been that it would be just for students who are really considering going into the culinary field... (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

She continued with information regarding the recent remodel of the FCS facility:

I don't know a lot about it, being family and consumer sciences, but I think the facility is amazing! Just as an outsider, and I don't think our students even, well I haven't been in that class, but I don't know if the students realize how beneficial that is or how, I don't know if I want to say how lucky they are to have it, because everybody should, you know, have a good facility, but... (Interview, March 11, 2008)

It is worth noting, this researcher discovered that all of the school districts in this study had similar facility designs to house their FCS programs. The design of the physical facilities of all programs, except two, contained work space for three types of activities within the classroom: activities in desks or on tables, kitchen laboratory units, and sewing machines/dressing space/storage.

The FCS facility in school C had been recently remodeled in the traditional residential kitchen design with a wall separating the FCS classroom and lab space. There was no evidence of clothing and textiles equipment although both the guidance counselor and course description book verified the offering of clothing and textiles courses. The FCS facility in school D represented the recent commercial kitchen remodel with the newest and most up-to-date facilities and equipment and had walls separating the three spaces. There was no area for clothing and textiles curriculum because the FCS program did not offer these courses. After renovation, the third room in this program would serve as the on-site restaurant for the occupational foods program. It would include new equipment, new FCS instructors, and a new curriculum articulated with the local community college.

The six remaining FCS facilities were traditional one room designs of varying size, without floor to ceiling dividers of any type. Room space was divided by built-in or mobile room dividers such as bookshelves, storage units, sewing machine cabinets, kitchen laboratories, or arrangement of desks to face the opposite direction of the other work spaces. It should be noted that, of these facilities in the traditional one room design, both FCS facility A and F were dated by either the condition of the structure of the room, the condition of the laboratory cabinetry, or the condition of the equipment and supplies found within. The researcher observed that FCS facility F had Formica countertops and stove units dated to the

1950s, as well as stained and weathered vinyl tablecloths on the classroom work tables. This is one of the facilities included in a shared FCS teacher assignment. FCS facilities B and G had participated in face-lifts within the past 10 years. Facilities D and F were located on the second floor of the high school. Facilities B and E were located below ground level, although each had natural lighting from outside windows. The others were located on ground level.

Regarding program changes, in general, this guidance counselor summarized her perception of the image change in FCS in her school:

It's not how when you think of family and consumer science, oh it's just women you know let's be Beaver's mom and stay at home and clean the house and make food and it's not like that. And I like that she really let's them explore different things I mean they bring in wild game, they do a turkey fry, they do a lot of great stuff... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

The guidance counselors most frequently addressed concerns related to staffing of the FCS teachers in the school. School District A does not have a full-time, highly qualified FCS instructor. The position is filled by two long-term substitute teachers rotating the duties every three weeks. They are not highly qualified FCS instructors. School District B has a FCS teacher with four years experience in FCS completing her endorsement Spring 2008 after working as a special education instructor for 13 years. School Districts C, D, and F employ teachers new to their district in the 2007-08 school year, although they each have many years of experience in FCS classroom instruction. School Districts E, G, and H have veteran instructors who have spent their entire FCS careers in those districts with combined 79 years of experience between them. The FCS teachers in school districts F and H are

shared between two school districts. Table 4.7 provides a breakdown of the FCS teachers according to their role and employment in their district.

The FCS curriculum and physical facilities improvements were also mentioned in identification of the changes in the local FCS programs. Guidance Counselor E reported no changes to the FCS program during his tenure of 13 years.

Guidance Counselors' Perceptions of FCS Programs in their Schools

Importance

The state of Iowa continues to be faced with the perennial challenges due to the effects of poverty, educational issues such as dropout rates and quality education, teen pregnancy, parenting, financial illiteracy, employment concerns, population diversity, housing availability, health insurance coverage, and many others (State Data Center of Iowa, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2007a, b, c, d). Efforts to address these concerns are reflected in the content of the FCS curriculum taught by FCS educators in middle and high school classrooms. The legacy of the FCS profession is one of responding to societal needs within a family/community framework. The uniqueness of the profession is demonstrated by an integrative approach that brings the knowledge base of the profession and of supporting disciplines together to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities (Adams, 2001).

Table 4.7. Gender, years of teaching experience, district assignments, contract, and total staff experience of the FCS teacher participants

Counselor	Gender	Years of instructor experience	Years of FCS instructor experience in district	School level assignment	Number of schools in district	FCS Teacher in Study Contract Time	Total FCS staff for district in study
A	Female	0 (long-term substitutes in place)	0 (long-term substitutes in place)	High/Middle	1	Full-time	1
B	Female	4	4	High/Middle	1	Full-time	1
C	Female	7	1	High	1	Part time (.6)	1.6
D	Female	20	1	High	1	Full-time	4
E	Female	31	31	High	1	Full-time	1.5
F	Female	32	1	High	2	Part time (.5)	0.5
G	Female	25	25	High	1	Full-time	1
H	Female	23	23	High/Middle	2	Part time (.5)	.5

The guidance counselors in this study shared their thoughts regarding the importance of FCS programming in their assigned high schools. According to Guidance Counselor B, family and consumer science programs prepare students with survival skills:

...but you have a school like mine, that's very rural, agricultural based, we still have a lot of stay at home moms, um you do have a lot of students that do come from a single-parent family, that don't, you know they need survival skills; they need family and consumer science. Family and consumer science teaches those survival skills. (Interview, February 22, 2008).

The Iowa state FCS consultant made a big impact on Guidance Counselor B when she spoke about the importance of FCS curriculum in high school students' lives:

The family and consumer science class I think now has started to regain some of that momentum, and I don't know who, I just remember a lady last year that I went to a meeting about that and she was very, very passionate about consumer science and how important it is for a well-rounded student. And when I think a well-rounded student, she made a very good point and I just always keep thinking that in the back of my head when I talk to students. Cause if you want a well-rounded student that is not just your math and science and history, that is your student that can go out and interview and knows how to conduct themselves properly in an interview or knows how to do a job search or those types of skills that you need when you graduate from high school or if you ever lose your job you're not going to learn that in geometry, you're not going to learn that in no child left behind. So, I think for me, she was very passionate about that and I think with her passion and you know working with Iowa State on them trying to get students more involved in the family and consumer science thing going into that and looking for doors that are open ...school districts will eat you up in a heartbeat if you have that, you know it's just a free for all. You can have the pick for where you want to go. So I think now administration is starting to come around and say hey you know we do need to think about well-rounded students, that's what colleges are looking at, you know, "great you have algebra, but let's look at it as a whole person and their contexts and what society is going to need from them." And I think it's starting to gain that momentum back. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor E valued FCS courses as a part of the high school curriculum and continues to push for rigor and relevance within them:

The ideal program I do think anymore in high school we need to be pushing our students doing a bigger job of transitioning, positioning, she does a fantastic job of transitioning to life, but are we transitioning to preparing college level. Can we articulate college courses can we get into more apprenticeship programs, (local community college instructor) from [local community college] was one of our apprenticeship presenters two years ago for the apprenticeship program and I visited with [FCS teacher] quite a bit when I came back from that and I knew that we had some students that were interested in the culinary arts. I think that's a big portion of that, we help those students and maybe part of it is she's a one man team, it is always very difficult when you have just one person to do that bridging across to a career, but I'd like to see that. But I think as far as the individual courses, I think family and consumer, she calls them child development, I think it's a phenomenal course, but I would like to see it again, push kids, like culinary arts pushing them to apprenticeships. What can child development push kids to? Maybe go from that to teaming with our social studies teachers, psychology, developmental psychology ... (Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D reflected on the value placed on FCS programs in her district as they recently hired two new FCS teachers with multiple years of teaching experience between them to fill vacancies in a newly remodeled commercial foodservice facility:

...in my mind I am thinking they are at least attempting to get quality people, not just you know, the newest person that they can get that would be the cheapest... I don't know a lot about it, being family and consumer sciences, but I think the facility is amazing! Just as an outsider, and I don't think our students even, well I haven't been in that class, but I don't know if the students realize how beneficial that is or how, I don't know if I want to say how lucky they are to have it, because everybody should, you know, have a good facility. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

The FCS curriculum was also valued by Guidance Counselor G, who shared her awareness that it provides students with skills for independence and confidence to participate in daily activities:

Foods courses, I mean Foods I and II and food production I and II, so, and those, again, very valuable pieces and I think who doesn't? Everybody eats, so you know everybody needs to have that exposure, that experience and in our expos in our 8th grade where we teach sewing for example, just sew a little button on your shirt, or whatever, everybody needs to have that skill. The skill to at least, you know, become independent. I think that's what we

really, when we're really looking at it, what do we want? We want kids that are prepared in a lot of ways, but we want kids to go out there and be independent and be able to feel good about the things they can accomplish and do and a lot of those are simple and daily types of things, but to me those things develop the confidence in our kids to make that jump to whatever the next step is, whatever that they're going to do and it's a building block system, kind of, all those things in place. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G continued to suggest he would welcome state mandates for FCS curriculum to address issues facing families and children:

I think in the ideal setting you would have those courses required for every student, particularly in this day and age, um, family living and child development are very huge just because we're seeing so many more dysfunctional families, and we're just seeing so many more patterns of not knowing how to impact, not knowing how to handle those things, you know, in terms of child development issues, those things. That's a part that I think is really missing to be honest with you and again, you know, how do they do that? I don't know. Again, I think as high schools unfortunately, we're tied into different things that we have to do but I guess, to me, I don't know if this would ever be able to happen, but if the state could come out with something, mandate something like that, you know, ok here's a families course that you all do need to have in your schools and maybe even a set curriculum, I don't know. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

The guidance counselors in this study considered FCS programming to be an important component of the high school curriculum. Students are offered opportunities to build self-confidence and acquire survival skills for independence. FCS programming must be rigorous and relevant to meet the demands required by society. New teachers with high levels of enthusiasm are recognized by guidance counselors as strengthening school programs and appreciated by students. One guidance counselor's idea of the value of the importance of FCS programming was confirmed through a session listening to the state FCS consultant. Many of the guidance counselors in this study would like to see FCS

programming required of all students' four-year plans. In fact, one guidance counselor went so far as to suggest that FCS programming should be mandated by the state of Iowa.

Employability and life skills

As introduced in Chapter 2, Iowa's Governor, Chet Culver, recently announced a joint initiative with the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the nation's leading advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into education, to bring globally competitive 21st century teaching and learning skills to schools, educators and students throughout Iowa (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Nevertheless, there is considerable overlap between the skills set suggested through the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences. The NASAFACS (AAFCS Homepage, 2008) "provides the framework for national, state, and local programs that prepare students for family life, work life, and careers in FCS by empowering individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society." The skills suggested by the Partnership for 21st Century Learners strengthen the current emphasis on the standards and competencies offered through courses in the FCS content areas in America's school districts.

The guidance counselors in this study were asked to identify employability skills and life skills gleaned by students through the FCS programming offered in their schools. The participants were able to list many examples of FCS related skills.

Guidance Counselor E identified communication, cooperation, safety, following rules, and working as a family unit as a focus:

Employability skills. Definitely the social/emotional ones of having to communicate with other students, having to take directions both from the

instructor and from other students. If you're working in a lab with four students you have to help each other, what have you put in that recipe, what ingredient, so those are big ones. Cooperation skills. I think those are the big ones. The employability skills when you compare it to other departments because they have to work in groups I think you would have employers come in and say I want students with those skills versus the book skills. They want, that's why people lose their jobs cause they can't get along in those groups, the students that struggle in those programs typically are some of the students that do not have some of the best social skills cause they aren't able to get along, aren't able to follow directions, I didn't stop at Point A and check off with (the instructor), I went on ahead and she made me rip this whole thing out, now I'm mad at her, well had you followed the directions it wouldn't have happened and it would have been the biggest and the best...I know that she's used examples like if a conflict would come up she would use that as an example, an immediate teaching example that in reality you're going to be working with partners or you're going to be working on a team and whatever you choose as a career you're going to have difficulty there but off the top of my head I can't think of some direct teaching that she would do. I know the safety is direct teaching and she would be relating that no matter what career you had, you must pay attention to safety rules and not only that but she uses that as a life skill, when you are driving you must follow the rules as you would in this classroom...That comes right off the top of my head, the ability to follow directions, the life skills, the ability to again work, I'm going to repeat myself so many of the career skills are the life skills and she talked in FCCLA, I know she talked about working as a family, lots of give and take just as there is in a classroom, so ... (Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor H perceived that the communication and teamwork will be valuable for them when they attend college:

Definitely. I mean the transferable skills that she's teaching them, I mean, yeah, depending upon what they want to go into, yeah, communicating as a team, um yeah, to get a task done, you know, all of those things are things that they are going to need when they go into, you know the business world. So yes...Yeah, and that's why it's so highly recommended to take you know the kids that go to college those that go to college they need to know how to fend for themselves, cook and sew and even if it's just a button, so definitely. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F saw life skills as the focus of the FCS courses more so than employability skills:

I'm not so 100% sure of employability, but for some of our students, the Independent living is a very good class for them for our seniors who will be out maybe on their own and I think in this class it helps them, you know, checkbooks just a lot of skills needed to be on your own that they don't have or were aware of until they took this class...Life skills, yeah...rather than employability skills I would say. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C viewed FCS courses as providing practical life skills:

And Rachael Ray and there's always going to be a need for food and what a need profession if you can just get kids to think about what a great skill, a lifelong skill, you know you're going off to college. I tell them that all the time when I speak to my freshmen, "You know I ate a lot of frozen pizza and macaroni and cheese when I was at college when if in high school I'd have just made a decision to take on of those culinary arts classes...or even out on a date...I don't mean to promote dating, but to cook a nice meal for your mom or dad or a date, that's a pretty good asset. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

FCS content develops the whole person for everyday life, not necessarily just a career

according to Guidance Counselor G:

Well, I think sometimes people get in the mode of, well it's the core, again I'm all for that but I think there's quite a few pieces to the puzzle here a bit and I think some people get in that mindset that those are things that are going to make us successful and sure they are, but you got to be careful and not forget the other types of things that are developing that whole person and if you don't do those kinds of things I think it's real dangerous because now you're creating a robotic type of person as I see it that is just not flexible. A person that is kind of rigid and only knows certain ways that they can do things or go. I'm not wording that very well, but I think those types of things are, you know, I mean think of all those that aren't necessarily in a career that involves family and consumer science, but where do we use that everyday, what we do, you know. I mean go back to child development and adolescent psychology and all the courses I use in my career, well hey do you think you aren't using those every single day in what you're doing? (Interviewer laughs) You know what I mean? (Guidance Counselor G, Interview March 5, 2008)

FCS courses might be different from other content areas in a traditional classroom

because of the steps or guidelines students follow in the coursework and the teamwork skills

that will transition into the workplace later in their lives as suggested by Guidance Counselor

D:

Well, I wouldn't necessarily...I shouldn't say that...at first I was going to say it wouldn't be really different from the other courses but I guess in a manner it is, like obviously the teamwork is, like working with a group of students and having that teamwork as a key skill that they would learning for when they entered the workforce. I would think just with it being more hands on and having, I would hope, I would think, more like steps, I don't want to say rules, but steps to follow or guidelines or whatever that maybe doesn't happen as much as, and I don't want to say a more traditional classroom but like in a history course, but I would think that that would help them to be entering the workforce or whatever they would end up doing eventually. I would hope they would be entering the workforce [both laugh]. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A identified the 21st Century Work Skills listed in their school's course handbook as correlating with the FCS content offered in her school:

I'm thinking of the family living. That they did go through budgeting, and things like that that would be very important for later on. I don't think they got into the general business classes of mortgages, cars, things like that. And so, that might be about it...Probably. In our course directory, that would be the 21st Century skills (thumbing through directory). There's a list here...But Literacy skills, application skills, problem-solving. I'm on page 12...Well, yes, I think that family and consumer sciences would...team building because they work together in groups. They have to collaborate and share. Hopefully they learn to respect and you know, the problem-solving, the invention steps. So, sure. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

The multi-occupations (MOC) program offered in Guidance Counselor C's school district partners with FCS careers in the working world:

I think they do a nice job of explaining and letting kids know about sanitation and the importance of their appearance and resume building and interview skills. I think we do a pretty good job there across the board...I guess what I could say is that I guess our vocational strands have been encouraged and emphasized to teach employability skills within their own areas. And a lot of that has been bringing in guest speakers from people within their own areas to talk about what they are looking for, what is expected. We also have an MOC program so once our kids get through their 2-3 years of a strand if they wanted to jump into MOC, they'll try to place them in a job, an occupation in

the family and consumer science area or in business and that MOC program also has a class period where they meet for a period a day before they go out to work and that's what they primarily focus on. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B identified FCS employability and life skills content as being more valuable than algebra in transitioning into both life and the college environment:

I don't think you need to know algebra, but I think you need to know how to cook...well, I think that they're well they're taught time management is a big thing, they're taught teamwork, they're taught job responsibilities in different areas, conflict resolution, social skills which are huge; I mean when you're in a group with people that you've never had class with before, you're a freshman with juniors and seniors you know you've got to learn to mix and mend with everybody else, it's no different than getting a new job and you being the new one on the totem pole and learning your way around and the hierarchy of your little community, so called ...I think anything that requires a person to get a job, I think that they're exposed to, I'm not so sure in the careers...well, yeah...in the careers they're getting interviewing experience, the resume writing experience, how to conduct yourself out in the public as a representative of (this school district), I think they're getting a valuable lesson in everything that they're, you need to sell yourself out to an employer, or future employer...I, I think they're simultaneous, I mean are you going to get that in geometry? Probably not. But do you need geometry? Well it depends upon what you're going to go into. You might be the most brilliant engineer but if you can't write a resume, shake somebody's hand and look them in the eye...what good are you? So I think for that whole transition into life and transition into even college. A lot of these students go on college interviews, they go on scholarship interviews...the career class in doing just even the family and consumer science intro class will give you that knowledge, so I think, I mean, I think it's invaluable what you learn in family and consumer sciences. (Guidance Counselor B, February 22, 2008)

While the guidance counselors had a difficult time distinguishing between the employability skills and life skills offered through FCS programming, they did acknowledge them as synonymously important skills for students to obtain in high school for both immediate and long-term usage in their lives.

FCS career considerations

In a study by Inana (1985) entitled, *Perceptions of guidance counselors regarding career opportunities in home economics*, the relationship was examined between high school guidance counselors' perceptions of and actual knowledge about career opportunities available in home economics (FCS) and the importance of providing counselors with updated information on current and projected opportunities in the home economics (FCS) profession. The Maryland guidance counselors participating in Inana's study were asked about their perceptions regarding career opportunities in home economics (FCS) related occupations, specifically, of job prospects for home economics graduates based on highest degree held by the home economist and area of home economics specialization and sources from which guidance counselors receive information on career opportunities in home economics.

While interviewing the guidance counselors in eastern Iowa, this researcher found the guidance counselors to be knowledgeable about many career resources available for students. Previously in this chapter, there was specific discussion and excerpts from interviews regarding those career resources. Guidance counselors also offered information about their perceptions of salaries, job availability, and post-secondary education opportunities available for students interested in pursuing FCS related careers.

Salary

When asked what salaries students might expect to earn in FCS related occupations, Guidance Counselor G acknowledged he did not know, but knew what resources to use to assist students:

Well, probably not enough (Both laugh) like the rest of us, but you know, I guess I don't know that fully, to be real honest with you. Like a chef in a

restaurant I guess right off the top of my head, I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly what they do make, I'd have to look that up, check that out, I don't have that off the top of my head... (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Both Guidance Counselors D and F agreed, and they also assist students in being resourceful in finding career information for themselves:

I guess I don't know for sure about the salaries, I could maybe give you in general, but it would be like me making an assumption. I have no idea if they would be accurate and I wouldn't probably give that information to a student, it would be something that I would have them research or you know, help them through that process. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Well, what I tell the kids is, we work with the Choices planner and I take them up there a couple of days a year and show them how to use the program and if they are interested they learn the knowledge where to find out what kind of salary you can make in a particular, career. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Job availability

The guidance counselors were asked about their perceptions of job availability in FCS careers. Guidance Counselor H said she has utilized ideas that she got from websites:

I worked a lot on a few websites...ONET is one of them, there's another one, career something.org and ...there's a multitude, just a multitude of careers that are out there for kids in those areas. You know you want to send anyone who's going to do any kind of social work needs to go through and hear about all of those things, so it's huge. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

However, when asked specifically about job availability for students interested in careers related to the skills and knowledge taught in her school's parenting course, she hesitated:

...for the parenting class? Any kind of nanny, babysitter and if they do anything and we have a lot of kids that are excellent babysitters here. I would say any kind of childcare, daycare, teachers, even. When I was a teacher the one skill I wasn't taught was, I wasn't a parent yet, so I did a lot more parenting than I did teaching some days so that was something that I had no idea ... (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D spoke of the reputability of careers related to FCS content:

I think they're reputable jobs, I think they're good jobs, obviously, that's me personally so I don't know I haven't had a student who wants to go into that area... (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor D had a very specific plan for assisting students in researching job availability in FCS related careers:

Yeah and it's huge and with our students one of the biggest things we do in our section of classroom guidance is to go over the top 25 fastest growing jobs, the top 25 highest paying jobs, you know, whatever, and we always have the discussion with kids that more than 50% of them are like a training/certificate program, a two year program, I would say 75% of them involve some type of technology, I mean that's just a big thing and the fact that most of them are in health care but it's interesting for the kids to see that and realize that it's not always lawyer and doctor and those big jobs that are always kind of out there presented to you as maybe something you should strive for. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C thought students may perceive job availability based upon community visibility in available FCS career options:

I think there's concern that I think they see all the Hardees, MacDonaldis, and see those employees where they can't always see the chefs or the nutritionists or the dieticians, and so I do think that maybe a lack of knowledge or an awareness to where family and consumer sciences can lead in terms of a career...and that's where our emphasis returns as a school to more opportunities that lay ahead, that aren't visible, or don't already know about. I also think, realistically, that we're going to have to worry about income, they're probably going to have to move outside of (local town) or rural Iowa areas. Now that is my perception, I may be wrong that they're going to have to move to larger cities to find some of those opportunities whether it's financial, or just a job. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

The study by Inana (1985) revealed that counselors are not very knowledgeable about job prospects for individuals holding a home economics (FCS) specialization. Although not very knowledgeable about job availability in FCS related careers, the eastern Iowa guidance

counselors acknowledged their ignorance and were willing to utilize a variety of available resources to assist students in finding the information.

Postsecondary education opportunities

To follow-up regarding job availability in FCS related career areas, the guidance counselors participating in this study were asked about postsecondary educational opportunities related to securing jobs in FCS related careers.

Guidance Counselor C identified a few educational programs available in the state of Iowa:

I think, yeah I think community colleges, technical schools and I've always been aware of [state college] family and consumer science program, but outside of [state college] family and consumer science program I would have to do research and sit on the computer and say you know there are other programs in other states and is there another program in Iowa outside of [state college]? (Interview, February 21, 2008)

According to Guidance Counselor G, there are more options available for students interested in FCS content than the traditional four-year college programs:

What you need in the world today...when I first came here the big push in this district was for everybody to get four year degrees and I'm not against that either, obviously, but on the other hand there are a lot of good jobs out there with two year degrees and the skill types of programs...I think some people get offended and think I'm saying that I'm against the four year degrees. I'm not at all, but I also think we have to get in the mindset that that's not the only thing out there too. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008).

Guidance Counselor F acknowledged that she did not know as much as she should about educational opportunities for FCS related careers:

Well, I now probably [state college] is probably the best program in the state. It's been a very long time I don't think I've ever had any student who actually wanted to major in it [FCS] so that's probably one area I don't know as much as I do in other fields because I haven't had the students who come in and we haven't investigated as much with it...I've had a lot of students over the years

who've done the culinary arts program not anybody in the last two years, but for awhile there we were on a roll. Several student go into that I had one student a couple of years ago that went to the New York culinary Arts Academy, I mean so that was pretty cool. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Most of the guidance counselors in this study spoke broadly about topics regarding FCS related careers. These counselors indicated they were not familiar enough with the career aspect of FCS specifically to discuss with confidence. They were, however, prepared to assist students with conducting more detailed research about current and projected job trends in FCS related careers.

Collaborative efforts

The working relationship between the FCS profession and high school guidance counselors has been documented extensively in *The Journal of Home Economics*. The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS, 2007) has recently launched *HEARTH: The Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, History* hosted by Cornell University's Mann Library (2007). Therefore, the researcher conducted a full examination of the journal articles published during that time period. From 1944-1961, a tremendous emphasis was placed on the importance of the guidance counselor in recruitment of professionals in careers associated with home economics, with the guidance counselor as a vehicle for improving public relations and professional image as well as making resources available for collaborative use among guidance counselors and FCS professionals (Husted, 1948, p. 460; *News Notes*, 1947, p. 314; *News Notes*, 1953, p.66; *Public Relations Exchange*, 1950, p. 297; Surra, Kooser, Rosfeld, & Cable, 1974, p. 13).

Since 1961, there have been other documented published efforts by Home Economics Related Occupations (HERO), Home Economics in Business (HEIB), and AHEA to create an awareness of career opportunities in home economics with specific documented recommendations by AHEA to distribute to guidance counselors in secondary schools. However, only two recently published studies were found specifically surveying guidance counselors' responses to define their role, and perceptions of home economics secondary programs and career opportunities in FCS (Erwin, Moran, & McInnis, 1996; Inana, 1985).

In the current study, eastern Iowa guidance counselors were asked to discuss their collaborative efforts with FCS teachers in their schools. In an effort to better prepare herself to work with students during the registration process, Guidance Counselor H said she had asked the FCS teacher in her school to clarify the FCS course descriptions:

You know, just in doing schedules, kids ask me what's in that class. Well, this year being my first year, I opened up the course description book and read it and then I would talk to her about that, tell me more about what this means and she would explain that to me. Mainly just letting me know what she does so I can explain it to the kids when they ask me...it would be neat to do that. I would say with that Bridges website just so the kids can see that it's an important website, it lets them know what's out there, um, the quality of life assessment in here, and then taking it in there. Yeah, I could definitely see that happening. And the way we do with the electives we have with our 7th grade since I have them for a trimester and she has them for a trimester it is kind of team teaching, just not at the same time. (Interview, February 25, 2008)

Stated again, collaboration between the guidance counselor and the FCS teacher is important in understanding the content of the courses in the FCS program. Guidance Counselor C wanted to know more about the curriculum delivered in the FCS courses, therefore, he encouraged the FCS teachers in his school to share information with him:

And this is what we offer and give a little bit more in-depth detail because I don't know...I don't know what's going on in the classes. there's a course

description here but if a kid asks me specifically what they do in Edibles or Co-Ed foods I don't feel comfortable answering that question other than reading the course description and the course description book doesn't always reflect what's going on in the classroom, so I don't know quite how to answer that other than communicating clearly to one another and as I said maybe providing an opportunity to...I feel I'm very approachable and I am very welcoming to have them come in and say hey if a kid is asking me about your program, what do I need to be telling them? (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F saw an overlap between the curriculum delivered in FCS courses and that provided by the guidance standards:

When our advisor time, we have some curriculum and we get into some bullying and those are the big things especially ...We could talk about bullying 24/7 and I'm not sure we... (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A viewed herself as a support person for both the FCS teacher and students in her school:

Ahh, in discussing students possibly, yes...I guess just being available to that teacher. Working with individual students and individual personalities with a new teacher a question of concern to be available there to help out in many instances. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Drawing upon real life experience, Guidance Counselor B joined the FCS teacher in her school to be a guest speaker to the students about her personal life experiences:

I'm a mother of three so she always asks me to come down and talk about childbirthing and I say, ok it hurts, don't do it! She ...and (FCS teacher) such a grandma figure that says "It's the most wonderful pain you'll forget about." I'm like "Right...NO YOU WON'T" [Laugh] ok, here's [FCS teacher] version how it's all lovely roses and beautiful, it's a miracle and blah blah blah and here's me, "You bleed, you hurt, it stretches your body out and you look like hell." [Both laugh] AND IT HURTS!...no I haven't, usually I'm just more with people when I go down to her class outside of her just asking me to talk with the kids about a few things, kind of like a guest speaker kind of thing, but no, I haven't really team taught anything... [GC laughs]. (Interview, February 22, 2008)

When taken a step further, Guidance Counselor E shared an idea for collaborative efforts between departmental staff in her school:

She has an absolutely phenomenal health class here. Phenomenal. I'm thinking of all the things she and [the FCS instructor] can do together. We need to get our departments together. (Interview, March 3, 2008)

The guidance counselors in this study collaborated with FCS colleagues to clarify course descriptions to better understand FCS curricular content when assisting students in their academic and career planning. Guidance counselors viewed themselves as support staff regarding their work with teachers to address individual student concerns. Because they viewed FCS and guidance standards as overlapping in some content, they had served as guest speakers in FCS classrooms assisting in the delivery of curriculum. One guidance counselor suggested having more opportunities for collaboration among total school staff in delivering overlapping areas of curriculum in an interdisciplinary design.

Factors affecting FCS programming

To gain a better understanding of decisions related to local FCS programming in individual school districts, guidance counselors were asked the following question: “How do current educational issues and trends relate to the emphasis on FCS offerings in this building?” In specific responses to this question and throughout the course of the interviews, many topics began to arise as factors potentially impacting individual FCS programs. Factors were identified from both internal and external sources to the individual school districts, and were defined by one or more federal, state, or local decision-making teams. Many of these factors were identified by more than one high school guidance counselor, creating a thematic emphasis on a specific current educational issue or trend.

Competition for electives

The most frequently identified factor affecting FCS programming was the competition for elective credit courses on the individual student schedule. The school districts in this study required students to complete a minimum identified number of credit hours before graduation from high school. Graduation credits vary from school district to school district (see Table 4.8). Included in these credit hours are courses in the core content areas, mentioned previously in this chapter, and credit hours in the elective content areas. Elective graduation credits are included in the curriculum to provide an opportunity for each student to explore areas of interest that are not included in the required core course content required by individual school districts. Elective credits may be chosen by students based on their talents, personal interests, and goals for future careers.

Table 4.8. Credit hours required to graduate in each school district

Credits needed to graduate	School District							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Total	54	NA	41	50	52	NA	48	50
Required Core	34	NA	25	28	28	NA	30	31
Elective	20	NA	16	22	24	NA	18	19

While an identified number of core content credits are required, there is usually a large number of a variety of core content courses offered in each school district. Some of the courses may become elective when a student has fulfilled the required minimum core content credits required for graduation. Other than electives in the core content areas, the school districts in this study offer electives for students in career and technical education

(agriculture, family and consumer sciences, industrial technology, business, health), fine arts (art, band, choir, drama), world languages, multi-occupations programs, or post-secondary enrollment options with educational institutions to include correspondence courses and/or dual credits (as discussed previously). The following excerpts reveal the guidance counselors' views about competition for elective courses versus slots in the students' schedules.

Guidance Counselor F saw only a few opportunities for elective courses in each student's schedule due to the core requirements set by the state of Iowa and followed by her local school district. It is a current problem that will accelerate in the upcoming years:

In the family and consumer science? Competition for elective hours... We have tons. Tons. And next year I see is going to be interesting and I'm not going to try to predict what the outcomes are. But our band and choir have always a half a credit and next year they're going to a full credit each, so that means for the majority of our kids cause we do have four core classes for the majority of them and they have to have PE, so some of their elective that they would have had open they are going to have to make a choice now. So I'm not sure how this will affect all of our elective programs and family and consumer sciences are an elective strand. Honestly I have no clue what's going to happen...I see it as a factor for several of our teachers and what they offer, cause our band and choir numbers are pretty high and that's just and plus because of an 8 period day and we have so many kids who take a foreign language that's going to have to be added as far as their regular if they want to do the four year, or even two years and then we have a yearbook and those kids...so I don't know, we'll see... (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C compared the competition for elective course enrollment to putting together a basketball team. He emphasized that any program must be strong to warrant hiring additional staff in a content area to make it even stronger:

They generally have lower numbers, in terms of kids who are wanting to get into family and consumer sciences competing against foreign language, band, chorus, art, business, computer, industrial arts. So you have fewer kids ...If you don't have enough kids to warrant offering the course, it will be cut. So I

mean, you know, scheduling-wise if you only have eight kids in the class and it's scheduled into the slot that it potentially could conflict with...so it's kind of a vicious cycle with, so it's kind of low man on the chain, or low program on the chain and that's why if the program's strong and there's numbers to warrant hiring another full-time teacher or to have it in a slot where there aren't going to be any conflicts, it's a good thing, so the district and the community and the teachers need to be top-notch to get, it's just like a basketball team and they have to build that program and if it's not strong, it's going to be continually pushed downward. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

In order to appeal to the interests and needs of all the students in their school district, there are many elective course offerings in the course descriptions books of each school district. Not all of the electives are offered each semester, as enrollment interest and numbers dictate which courses will be on the schedules. Increased Model Core Curriculum requirements by the state, local district school board mandates, and high levels of student interest within the parameters of a limited number of schedule slots make it challenging for students to plan their four-year plan of study.

Introduction of new curriculum

School districts have a responsibility to stay up-to-date on current educational opportunities for their students. In order to address rigor and relevance for the students, it is common for school districts to delete, revise, and even add new curriculum content to the existing course description book. In most cases, the school's curriculum director works with individual teachers and departments in this effort; however, in some cases, another person in the district may be responsible for the curriculum changes.

Guidance Counselor E was eager to share the details of the new curriculum she initiated in her school district:

We are the first school district in the state to implement Project Lead The Way, Engineering. We're the first certified site, we're kind of proud of that.

We now have this year offered three engineering programs in Project Lead the Way and next year we'll offer two more...five of them. And, I've been real instrumental in that, actually I had to do a lot of recruiting to get students into that program. A lot of them didn't have a clue as to what engineers did, literally did not, especially females so first year I begged four students, four girls to take the class and now we're in our third year of it and we are almost a 50/50, 50% which has been just huge, we have a lot of students going on and those kids get college credit through Iowa or Iowa State if they perform and get...they have to get above 85% on their coursework and then they take a final exam and have to score above a 70 to get college credit. So that's been great... (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

She continued to address the researcher's question related to the possibility of the new curriculum as a threat to FCS programming in her district:

[The FCS instructor] would tell you yes. Do I? There are some students that maybe if they didn't have say the engineering that may have chosen one of hers, yeah it's one of the hard things when you offer something else, you know, where those students and that's why, ok, maybe they would have been our students that had automatically taken AutoCAD and mechanical drawing and then that doesn't take from her program. Her numbers have not changed in the three years that we have offered the engineering. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

In her role initiating new curriculum, the guidance counselor's action in this school district was perceived by the FCS teacher as a threat. The FCS teacher saw the new curriculum as being yet another elective choice for the students to consider, perhaps even forcing the student to eliminate FCS course offerings planned in his or her schedule.

Multi-Occupational (MOC) or Work Study programs

Some high schools in Iowa offer a multi-occupational career program or work study program for students who are interested in getting an early start on their career pathway while they are in high school. These programs are generally available to senior high school students who have developed a clear career goal and have taken appropriate foundation courses that prepare them for the workplace. The programs vary within school districts, and

consist of a supervised work environment that is specific to the student's career interest; the work location is generally in the community as an extension of the school program. It may be paid or unpaid employment and there may be classroom courses offered one or more days per week in addition to the employment outside of the school. Individual arrangements for placement are made between the student, the school district, and the cooperating employer at the worksite. The guidance counselors in this study speak highly of their MOC and work study programs.

Guidance Counselor G acknowledged that his school's FCS program could be competing with the MOC program for student enrollment. He defended the MOC program as important for students who need career and employability training, but emphasized that his administration considered rigor and relevance to be a main focus for students:

*Well, that's a very good question to ask cause yeah, at times. I think the one we really have to protect is our courses with kids cause sometimes you get in a spot with kids, for example, well I don't know if I want to take a 4th year physics...I'd rather take a work study this or this. Yeah, that can get a little interesting. We've had to really protect that a little bit. Has it affected our electives? Yeah. To some extent, but our staff's been pretty good about that I think they really do see the value of work study and a lot of our teachers have gone through, a couple of years ago we had training in the businesses where, you know, they'd actually spend time in those businesses and kind of pick up on ideas to incorporate in their classes in terms of the things that they are doing, so I think all of those things have helped to, our staff to see the importance of that and we really hit rigor and relevance pretty hard and you've heard all those things I'm sure, but our administration's been pretty good about keeping on the edge of things we need to keep doing and I guess I could be prejudiced, but it seems like it's been working pretty well for us.
(Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)*

Guidance Counselor D explained the importance of the classroom component in her school's MOC program:

We do have a program that's called multi-occupation co-op or something program, it's MOC, that's what we call it but it is for students, I don't want to

say it's a school to work program but it's similar to that, it's for students who are working and taking a class that goes along with that so it's not just that they're working and getting credit and there's no supervision. They take a course that goes along with it and in that course they're going through a lot of work related skills in like dealing with the people that you work with and the interviewing and the writing of resumes and kind of surviving in the workforce. And then they're also working outside of school and getting credit for that so kind of hits some of the work stuff. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C viewed the MOC program in his district as an extension of the career and technical education programs:

That MOC's focus...it's a really good program, and what we're trying to do is for all of those kids who are not college-prep or for those who might even be, is that we're trying to get those kids to be a completer and then go into MOC and go to work. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance counselors viewed the MOC programs in their schools as contributing to the school district's overall focus on providing employability skills for their students. Perhaps MOC programs are a threat to specific FCS courses on the student schedule; however, guidance counselors generally viewed MOC programs as partnering with, and even as an extension of, the career and technical education programs to strengthen the employability skills of their students.

College courses

Guidance counselors identified enrollment in college courses for credit while still in high school as an attractive option for many high school students. The Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Act of 1987 allows 11th and 12th grade students to enroll part-time in classes at eligible community colleges, state universities or private colleges, and universities. Students who take college courses may earn dual credit (high school and college) for the courses and, in some cases, the high school may pay the cost of tuition,

textbooks, materials, and fees up to \$250 (IDOE, 2008e). The specific purposes of the PSEO Act are to promote rigorous academic pursuits and provide a wider variety of options for students.

Guidance Counselor G spoke about the popularity of college courses in her school district:

We also have a big number of kids taking college classes, this semester we had 52 kids, juniors and seniors, actually taking college classes. It's, I think, 74 courses if I remember right that we actually have through various avenues, some of them are online courses, some of them are through our ICN, some of them are actually at the college... (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Especially important to high school students is the fact that their local high schools pay the tuition for them to enroll in college courses:

And like you know, I would think a lot of them the college credit, having it paid for. It's not so much getting the college credit, but having it paid for is a huge thing to them. Obviously there's an advantage to having to being able to get some credit through like [local community college but also, it's like a very tract-specific area, you know, like it's a credit in a culinary arts program, which if you're going off to the [local college] that's not going to transfer to anything that's going to benefit you. No, you know what I mean? so that, I think, entices kids more, especially if they think they don't know for sure what they want to do they say ok, I could take this psych course or I could take this and it's very general it will probably follow me anywhere , um, we have more of a partnership this year with Ashford it's kind of a new thing, um, and they're actually coming onto our campus and they're teaching classes and um, I think that is easier for us, it makes it easier access for kids cause they don't have to have transportation or it's not just them taking it at night or they follow our schedules, same days off, you know, that kind of stuff, and because it's a 4 year university it transfers a little easier than a community college, so... (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G's school required a minimum grade point average before students are allowed to take college courses:

We have some guidelines that we have in terms of, for example, some of our courses need to be taken here first before the others, like a calculus for

example, has to be taken with use and then you can take the college calculus from there. We have put a grade point average, tried to tie that to it a little bit just because I think we want to be careful to not put students in a position where it's not going to be a good thing for them because if a student does poorly it can affect a lot of things for them... (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A perceived that offering college preparatory courses might affect some of the enrollment in FCS:

There's quite a push now we're going into a lot of dual-credit classes. I had mentioned that the foods would be a dual credit. I think college prep might affect some of the enrollment in FCS. Because of the opportunity to take classes for college credit. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Enrolling in college courses while in high school is attractive for students in high school. Methods of delivery vary from online courses, to attendance on college campuses, to participating through the ICN (Iowa Communications Network) in a classroom on a high school campus. Some students perceived it as a wise choice economically as the high school pays the tuition for their courses, and it gives them a head start on their postsecondary educations. College courses, according to Guidance Counselor A, could also be perceived as affecting enrollment in FCS courses.

Regional and career academies

In order to provide high school students with programs and courses that are not generally available in their local high schools, regional and career academies have been established across the nation. In the state of Iowa, career academies are a defined sequence of studies offered to high school students through an agreement or contract between their high school and a community college (IDOE, 2008c). Regional academies are “educational institutions established by a school district to which multiple schools send pupils in grades

seven through twelve. A regional academy shall include in its curriculum advanced-level courses and may include in its curriculum vocation-technical programs” (Iowa Telecommunications & Technology Commission, 2003, p. 4). While the academies may provide FCS programming, in many cases, the academies have been developed to address teacher shortages, provide equitable opportunities for rural and /or non-traditional students, and enhance educational opportunities for all students (Pfitzenmaier, Campbell, & Nagel, 2001).

Guidance Counselor C was aware of opportunity provided in the regional academies in the state of Iowa:

I don't know if it's for family and consumer science, but there's a lot of talk about these regional academies because so many of these programs have been cut, are diminishing, especially in smaller school districts where [local community colleges] will have an academy for family and consumer sciences or industrial tech, so I think there's some opportunity. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

While none of the schools participating in this study were involved in providing programs within the formal definition of the “academy”, two of the smallest school districts currently shuttled students each hour daily to share both courses and instructors in most departments.

Honors courses

Another factor affecting enrollment in FCS courses in the high schools in this study was the availability of honors courses. Though not necessarily perceived as a “threat,” students taking honors courses in high school have been considered by some guidance counselors to take a different career path in education than those pursuing career and technical education programs of study.

Guidance Counselor D shared a reason why honors students choose honors courses over the other elective courses in this school district:

We do also have where all of our AP courses and all of our Honors courses are on a 5 point scale where everything else is on a 4 point so I think sometimes if you're super high in your class you gravitate towards that too. um, but usually the kids who are really making that a priority are the kids that are maybe top 1-10 in their ranking or something like that. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

In this school, honors students took more college preparatory courses which filled their schedules, leaving little room for other courses:

It's more difficult for them [honors students] to do so simply because generally their schedules are full with college preparatory classes, and it's not a requirement to take anything in the family and consumer sciences strain.. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

All students attending school in the same district have the same number of minimum credit requirements to fulfill before graduation from high school. When a student opts to pursue honors courses, according to guidance counselors, it is likely that they will continue to choose a sequence of courses that contributes to a higher grade point average and is related to college preparedness rather than a focus on life skills or employability.

Iowa Model Core Curriculum and No Child Left Behind

As mentioned previously in this chapter, the Iowa Model Core Curriculum and No Child Left Behind legislative efforts have called for increased accountability in rigor and relevance in a student's program of study. The eastern Iowa guidance counselors shared their thoughts regarding these two and other current educational issues and trends related to the emphasis on FCS offerings in their schools.

Guidance Counselor E explained how the requirements of Iowa's Model Core Curriculum had affected the programming choices in his school:

Well, I'm thinking in terms of where it's gone for us with the core requirements, you know, with the four years of English and three math, three science, three social studies, that type of thing, I guess. Let's be honest about it, we got some, especially seniors, that in the past probably would not have been taking that 4th year of English, not necessarily saying that's good or bad, I just think that's real and maybe not that third year of math or science whatever the case might be, so what were they taking? well, I think that opened up obviously when they take technical career courses or industrial arts or courses in family and consumer science, band and music, those types of things, our art classes, so I think has been a, I mean it's forced kids to make some choices and that has cut down some numbers that I believe, some of our elective courses and has that been a concern? Yeah, our elective teachers have expressed that with good reason, you know, I think we've worked hard to keep those things. Our school to work, we've already talked about has become a piece of that too and I guess the unfortunate thing is and you hear this from some of our kids is you know, let's take a kid that wants to go into engineering for example, we know you got to take math, science as much as you can in fact we have those kids try to get through two semesters of college calculus before you graduate from high school, which is all great because it's going to prepare them for that career but what we've now done is forced them to make some choices on some other pieces and that gets tough because you'll get a student who, you know, I'd like to go and take an art class, I'd like to go in and take this foods class and sometimes it just doesn't work for them. Now one of the things we've done to specifically address those things with those kids is offered early bird PE. This is our second year of doing that to free up to do some of that but it's tough, it really truly is so I think that is where the state mandates have really had an impact on all of our different programs. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselors C and D acknowledged that additional required core content compete with electives in their students' schedules:

I guess Model Core Curriculum, I could see being a competitor because we've added requirements to our math and science so their junior and senior year that's another slot that's being taken away. I would say that's a threat. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

I would say it, well you know, in general, yeah, it's the schedule, but I would say with all of the core requirements they have to get in from the state and then like what our Board has set up that it could be difficult. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Because there was not a specific content exam for family and consumer sciences content, this guidance counselor offered why FCS might be perceived as less important:

No Child Left Behind could be perceived because test scores are so important and there's not a family and consumer science test so how important is it? So, yeah, I guess that's legitimate to say that those two trends aren't necessarily that good for the vocational strands. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

According to Guidance Counselor A, a focus on rigor and relevance may force students to choose core content rather than elective classes:

I'm sure the No-Child Left Behind has had an impact. And the key terms are the relevance and the rigor. We're hearing more and more about the rigor. That again may be where rather than some of the elective classes where students will need to take. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Accountability in testing means school districts make choices related to offering vocational programs according Guidance Counselor B:

...but the last four years that I've been here I think that with no child left behind has impacted even all the vocational programs. I mean that's just a given because you know you have to be a certain percentage in your math, science, reading. You have to do that for whatever reason for whoever came up with that idea. Whatever, that's fine, I think has really hit those programs really hard... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance counselors recognized that increased core requirements compete with electives in their schools. With an increased focus on rigor and relevance, and limited resources, school districts are forced to make choices regarding elective programming. Guidance counselors did not discuss the interdisciplinary nature of FCS related curriculum and core content.

Shortage of FCS instructors

The field of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007; Werhan & Way, 2006). As shown in Table 1.1, the state of Iowa and five of its bordering states experienced a shortage in 2002-2003. The survey targeted supply and demand figures of FCS teacher availability across the nation. Most states indicated a shortage of teachers to work with the students enrolled in their programs. The guidance counselors in this study discussed how the FCS teacher shortage may affect local FCS programming.

This guidance counselor recognized that FCS teachers are hard to find and was willing to learn the content and work in an FCS teaching position, if necessary:

You know, I knew there was a shortage because when I interviewed for this job there happened to be a (local) family and consumer science position which I was not qualified to apply for, but it was a half-time family and consumer science, half time English which I was qualified for, but they knew they were not going to get somebody who was qualified for both, so I was going with the English background. I didn't really want the job, because I didn't really know, but I thought that I could learn. I could learn, I could learn, I could teach myself and then I ended up getting this job, so...but I knew there was a shortage because the principal called and said do you want an interview, knowing that I had English, so...Yeah, I thought I could teach myself within a few months and I knew a family and consumer sciences teacher who was willing to help me out. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F understood there currently is a FCS teacher shortage and pondered about the future of the profession:

...but I kind of wonder where are the teachers going to be in ten years? Who will be teaching the programs? I've never had a student interested in majoring, so, I mean, I'm sure they're out there but are there enough? Some of the strand areas like industrial tech, ag, there are just not teachers out there to teach it. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A spoke of the effort to fill the FCS vacancy in her school district:

Mid-year is always tough. And I think in the field of family and consumer sciences I'm sure most jobs they're going to fulfill a year. So that midyear... tough, I don't think there are that many graduates in family and consumer sciences anymore. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C was personally involved in the interview process to fill vacancies in his school district:

You know this. There is such a shortage, there is just such a shortage, I mean I've sat in on the interview process and so we're lucky to have an applicant, lucky to have an applicant, let alone have an applicant who isn't currently interviewing at three or four different schools, so we're not able to have a huge pool to select from so then when we do have one that we'd like to have, there's no guarantee that we're going to get them. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B discussed the possible retirement of her FCS teacher in the near future:

Yeah, well I don't want her to retire because I can't find anyone else to take her job [GC laughs]. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

As indicated by the guidance counselors, filling FCS teaching vacancies has become a challenging task. In Iowa, retirement has hit the profession hard, with 71 retirements since the end of the 2003-2004 school year (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007). One of the participants inquired into the future availability of FCS teacher educators and perceived the availability status as bleak. Before accepting her current position, Guidance Counselor H considered assuming the role of an FCS instructor and attempting to learn the skills and knowledge required for the job in another school district offering the position.

Complexities regarding shared instructors and programs

One of the school districts in this study currently shared an FCS instructor and program with another school district (see Table 4.7). Another school district in this study currently shared only the FCS teacher with another school district. The sharing of instructors and programs has created a number of concerns regarding delivery of the FCS curriculum. As mentioned previously, the shared program and teacher means the teacher will arrive in the subsequent school 10 minutes after the class period has started, and students are generally waiting patiently in the hallway for her arrival. Shared instructors mean there are: two facilities for the instructor to manage; two school districts in which to become familiar; two sets of separate course offerings; and the loss of an FCCLA program. In the following section, guidance counselors share their perceptions of other effects of shared FCS instructors and programs.

According to Guidance Counselor H, sharing FCS programs and teachers with other school districts meant reducing the elective offerings from “required” to “strongly recommended” for students, and resulted in additional coordination between school districts:

I think the biggest one was when it went from a full time position to a half time position and it was cut from being required to strongly recommended. I think that was probably the biggest change in that program...So, overall, enrollment has not gone down because of that, but within the classes, the need for the cut has not been because of a lack of interest...uh huh, especially with the electives and we share with [two local school districts], so we bus kids to and from all schools. So she might have a class that's not just made up of our kids, but a little bit of [the neighboring school], a little bit of (the neighboring school), if they've chosen it as an elective. So we share. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

She continued and pointed out that shared programs are opportunities for students that would not be there if the programs were eliminated:

It's just more opportunities for the kids. I think they connect better with a teacher for English, they have that opportunity where if it was just us it's one teacher. Whether you cook with her or not, or you understand the way she's teaching, they have that choice. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

According to Guidance Counselor F, sharing teachers meant fewer FCS electives in these school districts:

I guess I would like to see it a little bigger in our building than what it is just because it's been shortened so much that I don't think we have a broad program and it's certainly not her fault but I know comments like we won't be seeing sewing back in our district that's a class that when we're on limited periods we won't be seeing sewing. Not many people sew anymore. We just don't get the kids who are interested in it, sewing. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Well, she offered a clothing technology class and we didn't have enough to take it, so it was offered and there's an interior design and housing class which we did not have did not have enough students to take it. And a child care and parenting class which normally we would always offer that had a different name, but that one isn't being offered this year. And I know our principal, we really would like to get the Kirkwood Culinary Career Academy...in fact it was in our book last year, but when our teacher retired we didn't offer it. And she's obviously, our teacher now, isn't here long enough to teach the program, so anyway... (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F also suggested that FCS programs with shared teachers do not present an attractive feature regarding the FCS program:

It doesn't look very good when you have your teacher who teaches in two different districts. Or a teacher who is split between two buildings in your district. I mean, that's not a high encouragement factor. (Interview, February 20, 2008)

When asked by another guidance counselor about the possibility of sharing her district's FCS instructor, Guidance Counselor B was very protective of her FCS teacher:

We have a lot of school districts that will call in and ask if we have a teacher and I'm like yeah. Well, can we share? And I'm like [FCS instructor] is not going to want to share. She's got her own, you know she's set in her ways, got

her own program that she's building... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G spoke about separating his duties as both the district's activities director and guidance counselor:

I think it was just a concern you know from the Board a little bit that actually what I did was kind of went to the Board and kind of explained how I would try and make these two work and how we would try and fit these pieces together. But, they were very supportive of that and it wasn't a problem, they just...I mean they were concerned about the guidance and where that would go and rightly so, you know. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

In addition to challenges related to shared FCS instructors and programs mentioned previously in this chapter, the guidance counselors also identified the need to reduce and eliminate FCS electives, declining requests to share FCS instructors with other districts, and negative public perceptions regarding the sharing of FCS instructors. Guidance Counselor G also spoke about his personal experience sharing his time in his roles as both guidance counselor and activities coordinator in his district. However, Guidance Counselor H did point out the positive side of sharing FCS programs and instructors; both offer opportunities for students to enjoy and benefit from the FCS content when this arrangement might not have otherwise been logistically plausible.

Student perceptions

Guidance counselors from eastern Iowa shared their concern regarding student perceptions of FCS programs and of the profession of teaching in general. There are many factors contributing to, or deterring from, an individual student's preference for FCS courses. In the following dialogue, the guidance counselors discussed the factors contributing to their students' perceptions of FCS courses in their schools.

Guidance Counselor G remarked the students in his district perceive teaching, in general, to be a less attractive career path for their futures:

I think what I'm seeing, just a trend with my kids, fewer and fewer of those kids would say to you hey I want to be a teacher... Why aren't kids going into teaching? You know a couple of things that I hear, and I'm laughing because you know what the first thing is they say? Well I see all those kids around me I don't want to have to deal with that [GC laughs] or kids say, Oh I know what I'm like, I wouldn't want to have to deal with something like that. You know it's kind of funny, I laugh at them a little bit. I think money. This day and age kids where can I get everything, where can I get the big money where can I get created a little bit of that society here and I think a little bit is how can I make money, but not have to work that hard to do it? Excuse me for saying that, but I think there's a little bit of that there, you know, well I know one thing we really try to hammer on is that work ethic and working hard and I think I guess I appreciate that about a lot of our kids, I really do. I think a lot of kids do have that, but on the same hand, the same kids have big expectations, and that's ok but I also think that you've got to understand that sometimes it is about working hard, you know, doing what you're doing, but I don't know, ten years ago I was seeing 6-7-8 kids out of the senior class that, you know that probably would go that way. (Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B perceived the mandatory teacher evaluations in the state of Iowa are a deterrent to the profession of teaching:

...and I do think that has some part of it but you know you don't have to teach in Iowa and I know that whole Tier I, Tier II, Tier III thing and that whole stuff that you have to do for two years before you get your certificate. I know that that has an impact on a lot of the students who have gone on to college and have picked education as their major and have come back. I do know that that has had a huge impact on a lot of students. So you know I think a part of that whole scare tactic for just teaching in general you know I think if that could get taken care of, you know, why not? (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

Perhaps a lack of funding and emphasis on the FCS content by school districts contributes to an overall level of student ignorance regarding career choices, as suggested by Guidance Counselor C:

I just think some of our vocational um areas have been under-funded and not stressed enough the past decades and so I'm not sure our students leave high

school with an understanding there are opportunities out there in those areas. I think schools, high schools in particular have been guilty of saying "You're college bound and so you're going to be a doctor, a teacher, a lawyer, a business person" and we're not really exposing them to, once again, to the opportunities that lie in the field. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Personal teaching styles assumed by FCS teachers may contribute to the enrollment level in those courses, as offered by Guidance Counselor E:

She's strict. You'll have some that say I'm not going to take a class again. You'll have others that I love that class I want to take more. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C shared his students' frustration with the previous teachers' lack of classroom management skills:

The previous two years were rough, they were not happy with, with, the instructors. I mean we had one teacher a year ago who had her degree from (state college) I think from 1969 and had not been in the classroom since the early 70s and it was chaos, it was absolutely chaos, and I think it set the program back a little bit. Kids were frustrated because there was very little classroom management and it was just out of control so I think it's taken a big step forward this year with the person we've hired, she's a very good communicator, very open, very welcoming, I think a lot of students like to be creative and explore the different areas of what she's teaching. (Interview, February 21, 2008)

When asked what students think of FCS courses in their schools, Guidance Counselors B and A replied:

As long as they can eat, they like it. If it's an easy A, they want it. ..It's fun, it's...I think for the girls it's a good way for them to really understand what their life is going to be like as a wife, as a single parent, possibly...um what is all out there...To me it seems like men know more about financial parts, having an apartment, owning a car and different things like that where I think our girls are finally understanding what it all entails when you finally get out into the real world... (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

They'll come in with questions. Comment wise, with an elective they're treating it as kind of an exploratory thing, he foods sounds like it might be fun

and I think the fun aspect is probably how they approach most of the classes.
(Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

It is likely that, because the responses in this section were sequenced to follow discussions about the FCS programs and complexities regarding shared FCS instructors and programs, FCS teaching became a focus of the student perceptions. The guidance counselors shared that students seem to be interested in pursuing education as a career less frequently than in previous years, perhaps due to their personal experiences in classrooms participating in situations of classroom management or personal teaching styles displayed by individual instructors. Guidance counselors heard dialogue about FCS courses not only from students in their schools regarding the ease of the work in the class, but also from students who view FCS courses as fun, interesting, and exploratory in nature.

Parent perceptions

Guidance counselors were asked how they would address parental inquiries regarding the value of FCS programs in their high school student's program of study. While most of the guidance counselors had never been in a position to defend the value of FCS programming, they offered potential responses in case the need might arise. The two guidance counselors who shared they had responded to parental inquiries, focused on the value of the life skills presented in FCS programming, and the importance of recognizing FCS courses and careers as viable in their student's program of study.

Guidance Counselor D suspected that some parents may find FCS courses to be unnecessary for a student's high school program of study although she had never personally experienced this scenario:

I would think that there's got to be some people that think that. I've never actually had any parent say that, I've never had a parent think, "Are you kidding me, my kid is going to be in foods over comp research or something, you know what I mean? I've never had that happen,...First I would figure out why they were asking the question, you know, are you surprised that your child is taking this or, you know, for the most part when my students are taking their classes we have a conversation about why they're taking that, so I kind of know that, so going into the conversation I would probably have a little more head's up, you know, or just talk to the parent about the importance of having a well-rounded education and you know that kind of stuff... (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F said she would consider the individual student involved when parents question the value of FCS courses in her school:

It would depend for me, I guess, on who I'm talking to. I'm not sure and no offense to the family and consumer science program, but it depends, I have college bound kids and we have so many periods in a day and yes, I'm going to steer them to psychology, sociology classes, the more college bound classes but not every student is going to a four year college, so therefore I have lots of students that I can steer into you know, family and consumer classes... (Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor E remarked she is prepared to address the validity of FCS programming in her school district:

They are very vital. They're very vital to, because not every student has the ability to take that course partly because of the courses they are enrolled in don't allow enough spaces in the day to get it but for the students that are taking those courses, they are vital, they are very important. Whether it be a student that is going to go into culinary arts as a career it is a vital stepping stone so that they have a clue as to what they're doing. Child development, I talked about that earlier, is a course that I wish we could have every student take, could we put part of it down at the middle school level so that even a portion of it is covered, thinking ahead, that's a vital class, are other classes life survival classes? No, but then we do have a lot of classes that aren't life survival that teach skills, and these do. (Guidance Counselor E, Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor A also offered how she would address parents who perceive FCS programs to be non-vital to a high school student's program of study:

I would say that they (parents) really need to step back and take a look. Particularly depending on the individual student as to what lies ahead for them and what skills they could develop from some of the programs, some of the classes. And, hopefully, give their child a chance to explore something different. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

Contrary to what parents might think, Guidance Counselor G remarked that FCS courses are rigorous and relevant to a student's program of study:

Well, it's interesting, I'll just give you what the general tone of what I get you know we're coming in and looking at students' schedules and they'll make the comment well you know now that it's their junior/senior year, they've got a tough schedule we're (the parents) going to let him take foods cause that's an easy course and that's kind of, ah, they don't have to work very hard, that kind of thing and I'll say well, you know, you may not realize it but here's what we do in foods classes, it's not just sitting back there and cooking it's a lot of the nutrition, a lot of health a lot of other information, we go through a book, you know and (the instructor) goes through lots of different things. She does and I think people are a little surprised when they, so I guess, not as much as it used to be but I guess that mindset might still be out there and let's go and cook some food and let's eat you know, that's all we got to do, you know, so yeah it is still there to some extent. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Guidance Counselor B remarked she was confident in her response to parents about the value of FCS programming:

I would say, well, how are you doing right now in your cooking, your daily chores, and in your finances? And most, "Oh I'm find." And I'm like "Oh really...how much credit card debt have you accumulated? Did you learn that in geometry? Oohh, bet you now you learned that in college biology, didn't you?...I said then to tell me who taught you to read your car lease? Who taught you how to buy a car? (Interview, February 22, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C believed it is important for students to explore the content in FCS courses:

I've had a few comments like that [parents opposed to FCS courses for their student's program of study]. I just, I guess it's pretty easy to counsel, or as a counselor to make an argument there's definitely, like with a child development course, or foods strain, or fashion merchandising, the opportunity to work in retail. There's so much opportunity, and maybe it's

not necessary, but it's smart to at least be exposed or have an opportunity to explore those. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

Ignorance about FCS program content is common in this school according to

Guidance Counselor H:

I think parents don't know what the curriculum is in there and I think they need to ask that question, you know, what skills are you going to teach my child and once they hear the skills are daily skills I think the kids need...I think that would change their mind. I think they think of it as a cooking class so my child already knows how to cook, so ok it's not the whole curriculum she (the teacher) goes through those units so I really think those are skills the kids could use here. (Guidance Counselor H, Interview, February 25, 2008)

When addressing the value of FCS content to a high school student's program of study, guidance counselors realized there may be some parents who are strongly opposed to the inclusion of FCS courses or may question the how vital they are or are not. The guidance counselors suspected this may be because of the rigor and relevance associated with the discussion regarding required core courses or ignorance related to their knowledge of FCS curriculum in the courses offered at the high school. Guidance counselors considered each individual student and their program of study when engaging in conversations with parents and promoted the exploration of content within the FCS content.

Scheduling – Alternating years and prerequisites

High schools in the state of Iowa operate on a variety of school day and school year schedules. Two of the more common high school schedules divide the 180 required annual school days into the more traditional two semester terms with two quarters each, and another divides the school year into trimester terms. Most schools operate mid-August through the end of May. Some examples of daily schedules are the traditional seven or eight period day, repeated each day for a term, a block schedule which offers four 90-minute blocks repeated

each day, or eight 90-minute blocks repeated every other day. Still other variations may occur from the previous types to include fewer or more class periods, and/or a combination of shorter and longer class periods.

Prerequisites are required courses that must be taken and passed before taking other courses in a sequence of courses. The subsequent course generally builds upon the skills and knowledge developed in the previous courses in a progressive manner. Additional complications in scheduling are the practice of offering courses on an alternative year basis to fill classes, and offering a variety of courses for all students. Guidance counselors must be familiar with the impact of all of these scheduling logistics when serving as academic advisors for students.

Guidance Counselor D addressed challenges from offering courses in alternating years with two FCS instructors on her high school staff:

You know what I mean, but there's only two of them [FCS instructors] and I don't know in the past how many people have been employed in the department, if that has changed or if they're hoping to gain a person or a number, I know that's obviously why some of the courses are offered on an alternate year and kind of switch off cycle which is nice. Once again, it's kind of the double-edged sword, it's hard for kids to keep track of when you can take what but then at the same time they have other options that flexibility that they can take something else, do whatever they want to choose. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

She continued to give an example of how alternative scheduling had impacted scheduling for one of her student advisees:

Well, I wouldn't necessarily say flexibility, they do because there is a progression and they have to have foods and nutrition before you can take like meal management which will be food production, so there is a progression of how you have to take them but because they're on alternating years, this student in particular has kind of recently explored this option and had taken foods and nutrition, hadn't taken meal management, next year as a senior was thinking ok I'll take meal management and the baking and you know what I

mean and meal management isn't going to be offered next year so I wouldn't necessarily say flexibility cause they'll have to go through and revamp their schedule so that he could get that in and for him it actually ended up taking out a core course that he's going to end up making up next year, so, which works out fine but I just wanted to make sure that his parents were aware that you know we will be taking this out and he knows that he has to take it next year. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Scheduling can be a concern when working with students and four-year plans that are developed in the eighth grade. Many guidance counselors work with electronic scheduling programs to place students into courses. The systems require guidance counselors to plug in a skeleton of required courses, or schedule around sections with larger enrollment. This may result in offering courses only as a single section, such as honors or more advanced specialized core and elective courses. When desired courses conflict on a student's schedule, hand-scheduling individually becomes necessary, but may result in eliminating one of the courses from the student's program of study. This complexity is further compounded by the need to schedule some courses offered in a sequence or an alternating year basis.

Budget

Financing school programming is a concern in all school districts in Iowa. Great effort is put into planning a budget to meet the needs of the entire school district. The smaller size school districts in Iowa have a difficult time balancing these demands on a limited budget, and often find themselves in a position to do creative programming to make ends meet.

When asked about the reason behind a part-time FCS teacher shared between two districts, Guidance Counselor F offered:

Probably part budget, partly because some of her numbers might have been down, but she's been over at the middle school for the past several years.
(Interview, February 20, 2008)

In response to an inquiry about cutting FCS programs, Guidance Counselor G answered:

Unfortunately I guess it comes down to again, schools being tied to budgets a little bit or schools being tied to you know we got to keep up with state standards or you know we have to do things that we gotta do and I think sometimes maybe that people don't think these things are important, but unfortunately, those things get put down the totem pole. Once again, very very dangerous in my estimation. (Interview, March 5, 2008)

When asked about diversifying the FCS curriculum offered in her school district, Guidance Counselor A responded:

I think it would be something that would be of interest and I've had maybe one or two people that have mentioned that they've used interior design, but in a smaller system like this it is very difficult if you have one or two people in a class. Financially, it's not going to fly. (Guidance Counselor A, Interview, February 13, 2008)

For many of the reasons discussed previously in this chapter, elective programs such as FCS are the most likely to be cut or eliminated. The guidance counselors in this study perceived FCS programming to be very important to a student's program of study and viewed cutting and elimination these programs as a mistake, or a very dangerous practice.

Suggestions for marketing FCS programs

Erwin et al. (1996) and Inana (1985) discussed the implications of their research and made strong recommendations for continued marketing of FCS programs. While Inana (1985) focused specifically on strategies involving guidance counselors, Erwin et al. (1996) broadened the scope, and included individual schools and teachers in the promotional process as well as the need to educate guidance counselors regarding available resources related to

FCS related content and careers. The following guidance counselors discussed the value of marketing and promoting programs within their schools, school districts, and communities.

Guidance Counselor E spoke about the emphasis on promotion of programs within her school:

Our principal just talked to our teachers about, you know, there's a discussion about as we add new courses where do the students go and what's getting cut and he said you do have to promote and you have to sell your programs if you want to stay alive. Our art department probably does one of the best jobs here because they are constantly putting up kids' work...it's in the hallways, it's in the everywhere and kids see that and they want to be a part of that... And with [local newspaper] here being one of the best involving school things, there's no reason for not having something going on with the school. (Interview, March 3, 2008)

Guidance Counselor F commented that promotion of FCS is a moot point if school districts have budget problems and eliminate FCS programs for this reason:

I don't know if you can do anything to promote it, I mean the job security for somebody who went into the program, but then again it isn't job security because of funding and if schools are having to make the teachers half-time, which in some of the areas we are, who wants to teach when you spent all of that money on a college degree and oh yeah we'd love to have you four periods a day and then you can go down the street 30 miles to teach a few periods at another school, so I don't know. (Guidance Counselor F, Interview, February 20, 2008)

Guidance Counselor G mentioned he would like to see some visual marketing materials produced by the FCS department to share with his students:

Just a second here, but you know what I would like to see? I don't know if this would be from the state or the actual department but there is... to actually get us some information that looks something like that [points to wall chart] that would list a lot of the family and consumer science careers and I don't know quite how you'd do it, but not only list those careers, but also being able to link how those core courses fit in with that, if I'm making sense? To be real honest, those kinds of things like posters those kinds of things get in front of kids are pretty effective, I find. You know what I mean. (Interview, March 5, 2008)?

He went on to explain specifically how the FCS content and career pathways information would make a nice poster display for the walls:

You know what I would suggest? I think this is great [referencing the AAFCS pamphlet], but what I would suggest is something to get out to schools that would be even bigger in that kind of a format to hang up around the building maybe even, and I think this is fine I don't mean it that way, but I think that catches kids' attention that way a little bit more and, like for example I'll always hand out and we'll just start there, but I always hand out to kids information on the state school requirements that comes in a one page thing. I think those kinds of things are pretty effective. Maybe take these careers and maybe when you put it on that handout, maybe break them down into these are careers that you could get right out of high school, these are careers that you could get...you know that type of thing. At least for me, cause that's what our kids are kind of geared to a little bit, but I don't know, I'm just throwing out an idea, but I think, and you know what, put a little color to it and do it that way, have it a handout that you could get into kids' hands to be able to see that kind of thing...Well, I think that would be an effective way of doing it, I really do. I mean, no offense, but if you hand this (brochure) to a kid they're not going to look at it, they're not going to probably...I'm not trying to offend anybody by saying that. (Guidance Counselor G, Interview, March 5, 2008)

Promotion and marketing of programs occurs simultaneously with the classroom instruction according to Guidance Counselor D:

Which that I think is the key thing, if you, not that you should have to promote your department, but I think that you make that, you actually make yourself do that, I think that the kids, it's just another way that the kids have access to learning about what it's all about. (Guidance Counselor D, Interview, March 11, 2008)

Guidance Counselor C would be in favor of offering a special informational evening session to promote the vocational courses in his school:

Yeah, I mean they've got to advocate for it, they've got to be the leader of that department, and recruit, and sell because they are competing with those other areas. As a counselor, I see that the kids come here and they take that first course and sometimes that first course makes or breaks them...I wouldn't be opposed to offer a vocational strain night where teachers make a sell to those incoming eighth graders and say, hey listen, here are the strains, it's a big decision. Here's what my program can offer you. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

According to Guidance Counselor B, when there is a shortage of FCS teachers, it is difficult to promote FCS programs:

I think it's just advertising. Advertise, advertise, advertise. But if you are [experiencing a shortage of FCS teachers] that's a problem and you need to saturate the market so you don't have that problem. (Guidance Counselor B, Interview, February 22, 2008)

One idea for promotion of FCS programs, said Guidance Counselor C, is to bring in guest speakers holding employment in FCS related careers to expose students to available opportunities:

And I think we need to be active, as educators within our area or specialty we need to promote and recruit students and educate them as to what are the possibilities within that huge area of family and consumer sciences and bring in working professionals other than ourselves to tell kids, you know, firsthand to tell what their experiences are and opportunities that are out there. So I'm not sure if we're doing a good enough job. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008).

He continued to suggest that students should take advantage of job shadows into the community to see firsthand, careers related to FCS content:

I also think there's a lot of opportunity to work with businesses and combine our resources and expertise if we could work with more businesses in our area. We've talked about sending each of our vocational students out instead of sending them in, but sending them out a day or two for an hour like in a job shadow and looking at the many very multi-faceted parts and positions that are included in family and consumer sciences, so I think there is opportunity right now as a counselor I think there's probably more opportunity to expand these programs than in the previous seven or eight years. (Guidance Counselor C, Interview, February 21, 2008)

The researcher took notes regarding the visual displays of posters, bulletin boards, and curricular materials in both the FCS classrooms and the guidance counselors' offices. While the guidance counselors' offices offered no visual displays of FCS content, the FCS classrooms displayed posters with a heavy emphasis on foods related information such as the

food guide pyramid, portion sizes, individual food groups, food handling tips, food safety, nutrients, tablescares and other FCS topics including respect, drugs, common sense, clothing, reciprocal teaching strategies, harassment, character counts, success, attitude, and bullying. The FCS classroom in School District E displayed many FCCLA posters and a poster specifically entitled, "Becoming an FCS Teacher." This was the only school district in the study with an FCCLA chapter. School District H had a bulletin board display entitled, "The making of a chef," with color photos of a chef's visit to the classroom late in the first semester.

The guidance counselors offered many ideas regarding promotion and marketing of the FCS courses, and content including visual displays such as posters. Classroom activities led by the instructor included guest speakers in the content area, job shadows to expose students to FCS related careers, and special informational meetings with the public. The guidance counselors also shared concerns about budgeting and the FCS teacher shortage.

Summary

This descriptive case study examined the roles and responsibilities of eight eastern Iowa high school guidance counselors related to assisting students to prepare for future academic, career, and personal/social opportunities. The study also gathered information and perceptions the guidance counselors had regarding the FCS programs in their schools.

Information was presented from multiple data sources, including interviews with each guidance counselor, school district course handbooks collected at each site, and miscellaneous resources offered during the interview sessions and utilized by individual guidance counselors. Although the actual observations of the FCS programs in the schools

were not the major focus of this study, the researcher arranged for a 45-minute observation of each school's FCS classroom to better understand the FCS programs discussed in each school interview.

Analysis of the data suggested guidance counselors assume a critical role in assisting students in their high school course selections and, ultimately, their career choices. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the study and research findings, examines the relationship of the research findings and prior research, and concludes with a discussion of implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter considers the implications of the case study of eight guidance counselors in eight high schools in eastern Iowa regarding the roles they assume in their positions, the information they have about FCS programs in their schools, and the perceptions they hold regarding those FCS programs. The chapter is organized to first provide an overview of the case study and research findings. Next, the relationships to the research findings are linked to prior research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Study

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that guidance counselors occupy a critical position in assisting students in preparing for future academic, career, and personal / social opportunities (American School Counselor Association, 2006). Evidence was provided to illustrate examples of the tasks outlined in the national standards adopted and implemented by the *ASCA*, as well as information regarding the responsibilities of guidance counselors provided in position statements developed by *ASCA* (2006).

Iowa code identifies Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) as one of six career and technical service areas in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) department of the Iowa State Department of Education (Career and Technical Programs Overview, 2007). FCSE empowers individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society. The unique focus is on families, work, and their relationships (IFCS, 2007).

In Iowa, increased emphasis on accountability for achievement in the public education system has led to legislative initiatives such as the Model Core Curriculum and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The Life and Career Skills components of the 21st Century Student Outcomes and Support Systems (2004) are essential in navigation of the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age, and require students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills (Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2004). There is considerable overlap between the Life and Career Skills components of the 21st Century Framework and the FCS National Standards.

Historically documented from 1944-1961 in the archives of *HEARTH: The Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, History*, hosted by Cornell University's Mann Library (2007), there has been a strong working relationship between the FCS profession and high school guidance counselors. Evidence of this relationship includes news briefs, articles, and advertisements relating to the utilization of guidance counselors as recruiters for the profession in careers associated with home economics, the guidance counselor as a vehicle for improving public relations and professional image, and resources available for collaborative use among guidance counselors and FCS professionals (Husted, 1948, p. 460; *News Notes*, 1947, p. 314; *News Notes*, 1953, p. 66; *Public Relations Exchange*, 1950, p. 297).

Since 1961, results from two studies were published specifically surveying guidance counselors' responses to their role definition and perceptions of home economics (FCS) secondary programs and career opportunities in FCS (Erwin, Moran, & McInnis, 1996; Inana, 1985). These studies focused on sources of career information used by guidance counselors, perceptions of job prospects in home economics (FCS) related careers, and

guidance counselors perceptions about what makes a successful consumer and homemaking education program, and what an ideal home economics (FCS) program should look like.

The lack of published information related to the collaboration between guidance counselors and FCS professionals since 1961 indicated the need for a current study to identify and analyze themes related to guidance counselors perceptions of high school family and consumer sciences programs. If the high school guidance counselor does occupy a critical position in assisting students for future academic, career, and personal/social opportunities, then FCS professionals need to take assessment of information guidance counselors have and perceptions held by guidance counselors regarding current FCS programs in their schools. This information is important in relaying accurate and up-to-date current trends to students regarding career opportunities in FCS.

This case study identified guidance counselors as an integral part of the high school environment. Within their individual high schools, guidance counselors assume many roles based on a number of factors. Within the guidance profession, the primary focus of the guidance counselor is on meeting the national standards as defined by the *ASCA*. Nevertheless, guidance counselors perform many duties as assigned by their local districts and illustrated in the dialogue transcriptions presented in Chapter 4.

The research sites were purposefully selected. The guidance counselors in this case study were geographically located within 45 miles of the researcher's office. According to enrollment size, the study included one guidance counselor from a Class 4A school district, one guidance counselor from a Class 3A school district, 4 guidance counselors from a Class 2A school district, and two guidance counselors from a Class 1A school district. There were two male and six female guidance counselors who had guidance experience ranging from

less than one year to 26 years. Two of the guidance counselors had no classroom teaching experience prior to serving in their current role as high school guidance counselor. Guidance counselor assignments varied from all students in grades K-12, grades 6-12 or 7-12, and grades 9-12. All of the guidance counselors reported they had a counselor to student ratio ranging from 1:250 to 1:349, regardless of their grade-level assignments. Guidance Counselor G assumed the roles of both guidance counselor and activities director in his school district. Guidance Counselor F had a four-fifths employment contract. The remaining six guidance counselors were employed in full-time guidance counselor positions. The guidance counselor in School D (i.e., the largest school in the study representing a 4A school district) reported having duties most closely within the parameters identified in the ASCA national standards.

A qualitative descriptive case study approach was applied in this research. Data rich in content and depth were collected from a variety of resources, including semi-structured interviews with the eight guidance counselors, observations from the FCS programs within each participating school, and physical artifacts collected from the interview sites. The researcher's role was that of the primary researcher. Although the FCS programs were not the primary focus of this study, the observations presented in Chapter 4 contributed to the researcher's personal understanding of the programs that were discussed in the interviews with guidance counselors. The physical artifacts were offered by guidance counselors as supportive evidence of their work with students. The course handbook was offered by six of the school districts.

The data analysis employed open coding of each interview transcript. As the coding took place, conceptual categories, or themes, began to develop from recurring regularities in

the data (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These categories then were compared using axial coding to determine further connections to the research questions for the study.

The descriptive case study framework enabled a detailed examination of the responses of guidance counselors, physical artifacts, and FCS classroom observations in this study. The case study methodology offered both a holistic and detailed description of the roles guidance counselors assume in their high schools, their knowledge about the FCS programs in their high schools, and their perceptions about those FCS programs.

Findings

Similar to the conclusions reported in two previous studies of guidance counselors' perceptions of FCS programs (Erwin, Moran, & McInnis, 1996); Inana, 1985), the results in the current study revealed that guidance counselors had limited knowledge of the practice settings and opportunities available in FCS programs in their high schools. The findings of the study are presented based on the three research questions used to design this study.

FCS program information given by guidance counselors

Research Question 1: What information do guidance counselors have regarding FCS programs in the high school in which they are employed?

The guidance counselor can be instrumental in promoting Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with a focus on Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) careers. There are many factors influencing the career guidance offered by a counselor including knowledge, awareness, and image of a specific career area (Bolan & Grainger, 2005; Erwin, Moran & McInnis, 1996; Inana, 1985; Woodard & Herren, 1995).

Curriculum

When asked about the definition of family and consumer sciences education and asked to list specific examples of curriculum in their high schools, the guidance counselors in this study most commonly identified foods and parenting curricular content. Very little reference was made to the other curricular areas found within FCS education. The course handbook distributed to students served as a resource for general course descriptions. The guidance counselors often referenced these handbooks to assist students to plan their schedules. The FCS teachers were consulted regarding clarification of specific curricular content to better inform students who inquired about the content. In this study, most guidance counselors were familiar with the crediting options offered for students interested in post-secondary opportunities while attending high school. The guidance counselors were less confident discussing the FCS program types—comprehensive or occupational. They were not aware of any distinguishing features of vocational or career and technical program emphasis. Carl D. Perkins was a familiar concept, but guidance counselors were not fluent in discussing the topic. Some referred to how the federal funding accompanying the grant was spent in their districts. The student FCCLA organization was offered only in one of the eight school districts in this study.

Students

With the exception of two foods classes, the data collected in observations of FCS classrooms in this study supported the data of traditional gender enrollment; that is, there are more females enrolled in FCS courses than males, although most guidance counselors believed their enrollments closer to 50/50 male/female. The guidance counselors

acknowledged they did encourage or even “push” males into taking the courses because they contained valuable information and skills to practice in their everyday lives. The enrollment numbers varied among school districts due to decisions made involving administration and teachers. Safety issues appeared to be the driving force behind what was considered to be a “full room” and maximum student enrollment in a course. The guidance counselors agreed that FCS courses offer curriculum for every student. The FCS classrooms in this study contained a variety of student ability levels—from special needs to honors.

Teachers

The eight FCS teachers in this study had a combined 142 years of teaching experience in their schools. Their guidance counselor colleagues addressed a variety of personal attributes and leadership characteristics personified by the FCS teachers. This finding supports a study by Erwin et al. (1996) that described the FCS teacher and program as meshing together and contributing to the other’s identify.

Program changes

When asked about program changes undergone by the local FCS program in their schools, the eastern Iowa guidance counselors reflected on changes in curriculum offerings, FCS staff changes—including a year vacancy and shared FCS teachers and programs with nearby school districts, facility remodeling, and image changes. One guidance counselor perceived no changes in the FCS program in the length of his tenure.

Perceptions of guidance counselors regarding FCS programs

Research Question 2: What perceptions are currently held by high school guidance counselors regarding FCS programs?

Importance of FCS programs

FCS programming was perceived by all the guidance counselors in this study as an important component of the high school curriculum. Students are offered opportunities to build self-confidence and acquire survival skills for independence. FCS programming must be rigorous and relevant to meet the demands required by society. New teachers with high levels of enthusiasm were recognized by guidance counselors as strengthening school programs and appreciated by students. One guidance counselor's idea of the value of the importance of FCS programming was confirmed through a session listening to the state FCS consultant. Many of the guidance counselors in this study said would like to see FCS programming required of all students' four-year plans. In fact, one guidance counselor went so far as to suggest that FCS programming should be mandated by the state of Iowa.

Employability and life skills taught

While the guidance counselors had a difficult time distinguishing between the employability skills and life skills offered through FCS programming, they did acknowledge them as synonymously important skills for students to obtain in high school for both immediate and long-term usage in their lives.

FCS career considerations

Most of the guidance counselors in this study spoke broadly about topics regarding FCS related careers. They were asked about salaries, job availability and postsecondary educational opportunities for FCS related careers. They were not familiar enough with the career aspect of FCS to voice their opinions confidently. However, they were prepared to

assist students with researching more about current and projected job trends in FCS related careers.

Collaborative efforts

The guidance counselors in this study collaborated with FCS colleagues to clarify course descriptions to better understand FCS curricular content when assisting students in their academic and career planning. Guidance counselors viewed themselves as support staff regarding their collaboration with teachers to address individual student concerns. Because they viewed FCS and guidance standards as overlapping regarding some content, they served as guest speakers in FCS classrooms to assist in the delivery of curriculum. One guidance counselor suggested having more opportunities for collaboration among total school staff in delivering overlapping areas of curriculum in an interdisciplinary design.

Factors affecting FCS programming

To gain a better understanding of decisions surrounding local FCS programming, guidance counselors were asked about current educational issues and trends that relate to the emphasis on FCS offerings in their schools. In a specific response to this question and throughout the course of the interviews, several topics began to arise as factors potentially impacting individual FCS programs. Factors were identified from both internal and external sources to the individual school districts, and were defined by one or more federal, state, or local decision-making teams. Several factors were identified by more than one high school guidance counselor, resulting in a thematic emphasis on a specific, current educational issue or trend. The factors identified included: (a) the competition for electives in high schools; (b) introduction of new curriculum, multi-occupational (MOC) or work study programs, college

courses, regional and career academies, honors courses, Iowa Model Core Curriculum and No-Child Left Behind legislation; (c) shortage of FCS instructors; (d) complexities regarding shared instructors and programs, e.g., student perceptions and parent perceptions; (e) scheduling logistics; and (f) budgeting concerns. All of these factors were perceived by guidance counselors as having a potential impact on FCS course offerings.

Marketing FCS programs

Erwin et al. (1996) and Inana (1985) discussed the implications of their research and made strong recommendations for continued marketing of FCS programs. While Inana (1985) focused on strategies involving guidance counselors specifically, Erwin et al. (1996) broadened the scope by including individual schools and teachers in the promotional process as well as a continued emphasis on educating guidance counselors regarding available resources on FCS related content and careers. The guidance counselors in this study spoke about the value of marketing and promoting programs within their schools, school districts, and communities which included visual displays such as posters, classroom activities led by the instructor including guest speakers in the content area, job shadows to expose students to FCS related careers, and special informational meetings with the public. They also shared concerns about budgeting and the FCS teacher shortage.

Roles of guidance counselors

Research Question 3: What role does the guidance counselor assume in determining enrollment in high school FCS programs?

According to the data presented in Chapter 4, there was much diversity in daily responsibilities assumed by the high school guidance counselor participants in this study.

Analysis of the interview transcripts identified various roles and responsibilities high school guidance counselors have in meeting the guidelines of the *ASCA National Standards for Students* (2004). In addition to adherence to the standards outlined by *ASCA*, high school guidance counselors assumed a variety of other duties as assigned by their local school districts.

To assist students in reaching academic, career and personal/social goals, these Eastern Iowa guidance counselors designed and implemented a variety of comprehensive school counseling programs that include educational and career planning activities in those domains identified by *ASCA* (2004). Although not the focus of this study, guidance counselors assisted students in developing personal/social goals for themselves in self-knowledge, interpersonal skills, and the actual application of self-knowledge and understanding of safety and survival in the world.

To meet the standards of the academic domain, guidance counselors implemented strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn. Some examples include teaching or guidance instruction provided by guidance counselors to students both individually and in small or large groups. Using the Iowa Model Core Curriculum guidelines, guidance counselors worked with eighth-grade students to develop four-year plans for use during their high school years. Using the four-year plan as a framework, guidance counselors continued to work on college planning with students throughout their high school careers. Most of the guidance counselors in this study were also responsible for accountability regarding the students' academic achievement. This involved giving many different tests, and guidance counselor responsibilities varied from partial

coordination of testing sessions to partial involvement in scheduling, packet assembly, organizational duties, and other logistical details.

Guidance counselors in eastern Iowa also implemented strategies and activities to address the career domain standards designed to assist students in developing skills to enable a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across one's lifespan. They encouraged students to use a variety of career interest inventories to determine career fields and jobs to match their personal interests, strengths and personality types, and assisted students to locate electronic career websites and/or hard copy career resource books to access information about available colleges, interest inventories, career clusters, college admission testing, occupational outlook handbooks, financial aid, and job databases. Guidance counselors also arranged for job shadows for students to experience one-on-one time with an employee occupying a career position in which the student expressed an interest to learn more about the job and the industry, and they arranged for college representatives to visit the high schools and interact with interested students, as well as urged students and parents to partake of college visits. Guidance counselors were also engaged in a variety of other duties not outlined in the *ASCA* (2004) National Standards, such as clerical duties, meetings, communications, supervisory or sponsorship roles, administrative, curricular, and professional development.

Relationship between Research Findings and Prior Research

The following research findings in the current study are related to prior studies.

1. Data from the state of Iowa clearly indicate there are a number of issues facing the members of the state today, including the perennial problems of the effects of poverty,

educational issues such as drop out rates and quality education, teen pregnancy, parenting, financial illiteracy, employment concerns, population diversity, housing availability, health insurance coverage, and many others (State Data Center of Iowa, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2007a, b, c, d).

2. FCS content addresses the current issues facing members of society. The legacy of the profession is one of responding to societal needs within a family/community framework. The uniqueness of the profession is demonstrated by an integrative approach that brings the knowledge base of the profession and of supporting disciplines together to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities (M. A. Adams, personal communication, September 20, 2007).
3. Guidance counselors do assume many duties and responsibilities in their roles assisting students in the design of a rigorous and relevant academic and career plan for each and every student with the focus on student preparedness for future academic, career, and personal/social opportunities (ASGA, 2006).
4. Guidance counselors do occupy a critical position through their duties addressing the personal/social, academic, and career domain standards for students:
 - Development of the 8th grade four-year plan
 - Scheduling
 - Testing
 - College Planning
 - Promotion of exploratory career opportunities such as interest inventories, career websites and career resource books, career and apprenticeship fairs, job shadows, college representatives and college visits, speakers
 - Parent and student interaction sharing perspectives regarding FCS content
 - Understanding and clarification of FCS curricular content

- Postsecondary educational crediting opportunities and educational programs
- Support of equal opportunities for all students

Implications for Practice

This case study brought forth several implications that were particularly evident in the data collected and reported in Chapter 4.

1. Guidance counselors do assume many roles in their school districts.

In this study, guidance counselors in smaller school districts experienced more diverse and extensive roles and responsibilities than those in larger districts. While interviews with the guidance counselors have clearly illustrated their many duties and responsibilities in the high school environment, guidance counselors do have a responsibility to deliver comprehensive academic and career instruction for all discipline areas as a focus of the *ASCA* national standards. High school guidance counselors are strongly encouraged to continue collaborative efforts to obtain information and understanding necessary to accurately present FCS careers as a possible career choice to students.

- Attend and/or host career and apprenticeship fairs, and encourage job shadows for students to provide exposure to FCS professionals employed in those careers.
- Promote and provide access to career interest inventories, websites, computer software, and other resources to expose students to FCS careers.
- Host college representatives and encourage students to visit postsecondary institutions offering career education in FCS content.
- Coordinate with postsecondary institutions to understand how articulation and dual credit opportunities can promote FCS career recruitment at the high school level.
- Work with the local FCS teacher in development of the course descriptions and understanding the FCS curriculum taught in the high school course handbook.

- Volunteer to serve on the FCS Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee
 - Assist middle and junior high school guidance counselors in activities developing the 8th grade student four-year plans. This would include exposing 8th graders to possible FCS career opportunities.
 - Display posters and provide access to literature related to FCS postsecondary educational opportunities, work skills, and the FCCLA student organization.
 - Accept and initiate opportunities to team with the FCS instructor to deliver curriculum overlapping between FCS National Standards and ASCA National Standards.
 - Offer freshman orientation sessions for students and their parents with opportunity for FCS teachers to promote their curriculum.
 - Promote FCS courses and careers as a viable option for *all* students.
 - Work to understand how scheduling can encourage attendance in FCS courses.
2. High school students need to be aware of the professional development opportunities available in FCS related careers, including the specialization careers.

FCS teachers have a responsibility to ascertain which computerized career information systems and hard copy career reference books are used in their high schools, preview and read the FCS career information for accuracy and comprehensiveness to see if it reflects projected employment trends. When necessary, FCS teachers should notify school guidance counselors of errors.

3. Although they have limited knowledge of the practice settings and opportunities available in FCS, guidance counselors are supportive of and believe in the value of FCS programming.

Recruitment strategies should capitalize on the above perceived value and continue to target guidance counselors to ensure they have the information and understanding necessary to accurately present FCS careers as a possible career choice to students.

- Invite FCS professionals currently in specializations to be guest speakers in classroom where guidance counselors are invited guests.
 - Invite guidance counselors to be members of FCS advisory councils.
 - Provide guidance counselors with current and up to date information about FCS content and careers.
 - Invite guidance counselors to FCS conferences and meetings.
4. Guidance counselors may need encouragement promoting FCS courses, programs, educational opportunities, and career opportunities.

Opportunities should be explored with guidance counselors. Efforts should aim to update counselors on curricular content and career opportunities and provide for increased interpersonal contact between the counselor and FCS teacher. The emphasis should be on working together to provide information for students.

- Periodic workshops specifically for counselors sponsored by FCS teachers.
 - Continued collaborative efforts between the local FCS teacher and guidance counselor.
5. Local FCS teachers need to be current on FCS information
- It is the responsibility of the FCS teacher to attend local, state, and national FCS professional gatherings to stay current on issues and trends related to the FCS curricular content.
 - The FCS teacher should be familiar with available career information to determine if the FCS content area is accurately represented, particularly in salary, job availability, and postsecondary educational opportunities.
 - FCS teachers should continue to learn more about the field of FCS through continued educational programs related to the specialized content areas as well as education in general.
 - Collaboration between FCS teachers to share activities in the secondary classroom.
 - Understanding the relationship between the Model Core Curriculum Standards and the core content taught within the FCS classroom.

- Learn more about how the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the FCS National Standards are interrelated and pose a promotional opportunity for FCS classrooms.
6. Local FCS teachers should utilize marketing strategies to educate counselors, students, the community about the programs offered through FCS Education.

It is the responsibility of practicing FCS educators to ensure high school students have sufficient direction and information about FCS careers to make informed career decisions. The FCS profession has a strong history of collaboration with guidance counselors. Because the high school guidance counselor does occupy a critical position in assisting students for future academic, career, and personal/social opportunities, then FCS professionals need to take assessment of information guidance counselors have and perceptions held by guidance counselors regarding current FCS programs in their schools. This will be important in relaying accurate and up-to-date information to students regarding career opportunities in FCS.

- Ensure local FCS program focuses on skills and values which are necessary for success within the workplace and home setting.
- Provide for visible integration of core curriculum into FCS curriculum and practice.
- Incorporate into FCS curriculum the 21st Century Workplace Skills to stress skills that underlie ALL occupations.
- Publicize to parents, community, students, school staff about opportunities available in FCS.
- Publicize local, state, and national events with relevance to FCS content.
- FCS teachers should be aggressive in assuming leadership to capitalize on the strong support by guidance counselors of FCS programming in their high schools.
- Educate the general public, students and staff about definitions and terminology used in our programs and legislative efforts allied with FCS programming.

- Stay up-to-date and current on FCS topics.
- Ensure FCCLA visibility in every high school.
- Promote collaborative efforts between local, state and national FCS teachers.
- Increase efforts towards gender equity opportunities in FCS-related content.

Limitations

Unlike random sample surveys, case studies are not representative of entire populations. This study was conducted and written to have broad generalizations based on case study evidence. Although this study was limited to eight schools in eastern Iowa, it is possible other guidance counselors may possess the same knowledge and perceptions about FCS programs. However, it must be noted that these findings may or may not be generalizable to guidance counselors in other locations. Therefore, a broad quantitative analysis that is regional, statewide, or nationwide should be conducted.

It should be noted that none of the guidance counselors in this study visited the FCS classrooms regularly. It is also important to note that the data were collected during one 90-minute interview session with each participating guidance counselor.

As the researcher was the primary instrument used in this study, potential personal bias must be noted. As a high school FCS instructor, the researcher has had considerable personal experience with several school guidance counselors during her tenure. It should also be noted that the researcher was acquainted with the FCS teachers in study, but did not interact with them as part of the study until after the interview with guidance counselors in their schools. Finally, none of the guidance counselors in this study had prior background in family and consumer sciences education.

Recommendations for Future Research

This case study suggests that, based on the standards developed by the ASCA (2006), guidance counselors assume a critical role in the design and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program that includes educational and career planning activities for all students designed to assist students in reaching academic, career and personal/social goals. Future research directions for the FCS profession could include:

- Studies to include evidence / examination of collaborative efforts between FCS educator alliance groups and high school guidance counselors.
- Closer examination of career information utilized by high school guidance counselors to determine accuracy of information presented for FCS related occupations/ careers. (career websites, college material, specialization, pamphlets, career fairs information, career textbooks, government documents)
- Research studies of state and national guidance counselor /FCS relations.
- Focus on promotional marketing strategies through State Department of Education, Professional Organizations, and the student organization FCCLA, and postsecondary educational institutions offering FCS courses and programs.

APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

DATE: January 24 2008

TO: Valarie L. Betz
c/o Dr. Robert Bosselman, 31 MacKay Hall

CC: Dr. Robert Bosselman
31 MacKay Hall

FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator
Office of Research Assurances

TITLE: **Guidance Counselors' Perceptions of High School Family and Consumer Sciences Programs in Iowa**

IRB ID **07-640** **Study Review Date: 20 December 2007**

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Assurances
Vice Provost for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4267
FAX 515 294-4566

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed this project and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b). The IRB determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application**, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.
- **Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuing Review and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes**, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please be sure to **use the documents with the IRB approval stamp** in your research.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. **Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption**, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

ORA 06/07

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

DATE: 25 March 2008
TO: Valarie L. Betz
 2748 222nd Street, Dewitt, IA 52742
CC: Dr. Robert Bosselman
 31 MacKay Hall
FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator
 Office of Research Assurances
TITLE: **Guidance Counselors' Perceptions of High School Family and Consumer Sciences Programs in Iowa**
IRB ID: 07-640
Date for Continuing Review: 24 March 2008

Institutional Review Board
 Office of Research Assurances
 Vice Provost for Research
 1138 Pearson Hall
 Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
 515 294-4267
 FAX 515 294-4566

IRB ID 07-640

Approval Date: 25 March 2009

The Chair of Institutional Review Board of Iowa State University has reviewed and approved the modification of this project. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

Your study has been approved according to the dates shown above. To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use the documents with the IRB approval stamp** in your research.
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by completing the "Continuing Review and/or Modification" form.
- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses**, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Research investigators are expected to comply with the principles of the Belmont Report, and state and federal regulations regarding the involvement of humans in research. These documents are located on the Office of Research Assurances website [www.compliance.iastate.edu] or available by calling (515) 294-4566.

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office of Research Assurances, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

DATE: 20 June 2008

TO: Valarie L. Betz
2748 222nd Street, Dewitt, IA 52742

CC: Dr. Robert Bosselman
31 MacKay Hall

FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator
Office of Research Assurances

TITLE: **Guidance Counselors' Perceptions of High School Family and Consumer Sciences Programs: A Case Study of Eight Guidance Counselors in Eastern Iowa**

IRB ID: 07-640

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Assurances
Vice Provost for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4267
FAX 515 294-4566

Approval Date: 19 June 2009
Date for Continuing Review: 24 March 2009

The Chair of Institutional Review Board of Iowa State University has reviewed and approved the modification of this project. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

Your study has been approved according to the dates shown above. To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use the documents with the IRB approval stamp** in your research.
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by completing the "Continuing Review and/or Modification" form.
- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses**, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Research investigators are expected to comply with the principles of the Belmont Report, and state and federal regulations regarding the involvement of humans in research. These documents are located on the Office of Research Assurances website [www.compliance.iastate.edu] or available by calling (515) 294-4566.

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office of Research Assurances, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

APPENDIX B. CORRESPONDENCE AND CONSENT DOCUMENTS

B-1. Formal Contact with Respondents

2748 222nd Street
DeWitt, IA 52742

January 1, 2008

Dear Guidance Counselor

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study entitled “*Guidance Counselors Perceptions of Family and Consumer Science Programs in Iowa.*”

Enclosed you will find a copy of the *Informed Consent Document* that will need to be signed by both you and an official representative of your school district, most likely, the superintendent. Thank you for doing this. I felt it would be best if you informed your district of the study in which you will be participating. This permission form is required to be on file by Iowa State’s Review Board before I can officially continue my research. I have also enclosed a copy of the *Demographics* form to be completed by you, the guidance counselor.

The signed permission form (page 3) and the demographic survey sheet may be returned to me via the self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed in this packet. Of course, I would appreciate their return as soon as possible. It takes a couple of weeks for official approval from Iowa State after they receive the permission form.

I look forward to meeting and working with you. If you have any questions you may contact me at 563-212-9151 or jvzmbetz@iowatelecom.net

Sincerely

Valarie L. Betz

B-2. Informed Consent Document: Guidance Counselors**Title of Study: Guidance Counselors Perceptions of High School Family and Consumer Sciences Programs in Iowa****Investigator: Valarie L. Betz**

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to expose and analyze themes related to the perceived roles of high school guidance counselors in influencing students in their courses selections, particularly family and consumer sciences (FCS) courses. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a high school guidance counselor.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for one month and will consist of three parts: a short written demographic survey, one audiotaped 90-minute interview session at your school (or other site at your convenience), and a follow-up opportunity for you to proof the transcribed written dialogue from that session.

The audio recordings will take place during the 90-minute session and will be erased following the submission of the research project. Your responses will remain confidential and you may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

RISKS

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks: There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there will be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing valuable information about the relationship between guidance counselors and the family and consumer sciences programs in Iowa high schools.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Identifiers will be kept with the data. The researcher and her faculty research committee will have access to this data. The data will be retained until submission of the research project, at which time the audiotapes will be erased. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Valarie L. Betz (563)659-9151 or Dr. Robert Bosselman at Iowa State University (515)-294-7474
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent) (Date)

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

(Participant's Signature) (Date)

School District Representative (printed) _____

(School District Representative Signature) (Date)

(Name of School District)

B-3. School District Consent

March 13, 2008

This document gives permission for Valarie Betz to perform research in our school district for her doctoral dissertation at Iowa State University entitled "Guidance Counselors Perceptions of Family and Consumer Sciences Programs in Iowa." We understand that Ms. Betz will be interviewing a guidance counselor and observing a family and consumer sciences teacher in our building as part of her research.

Permission granted March 13, 2008

(School District Representative)

(Title)

B-4. Informed Consent Document: FCS Teachers**Title of Study: Guidance Counselors Perceptions of High School Family and Consumer Sciences Programs in Iowa****Investigator: Valarie L. Betz**

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to expose and analyze themes related to the perceived roles of high school guidance counselors in influencing students in their courses selections, particularly family and consumer sciences (FCS) courses. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for one 45 minute class period. The researcher will observe and take notes during this 45 minute class period.

RISKS

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks: There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there will be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing valuable information about the relationship between guidance counselors and the family and consumer sciences programs in Iowa high schools.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Identifiers will be kept with the data. The researcher and her faculty research committee will have access to this data. The data will be retained until submission of the research project, at which time the audiotapes will be erased. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Valarie L. Betz (563)659-9151 or Dr. Robert Bosselman at Iowa State University (515-294-7474)
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent) (Date) _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

(Participant's Signature) (Date) _____

APPENDIX C. SCHOOL COUNSELOR DEMOGRAPHICS

School Counselor Demographics

Gender (please circle): **Male** **Female**

Years of experience as a school counselor _____ as a classroom teacher _____

Years in your current building/s: _____

Your current school counseling position (please check the most accurate one):

_____ Full-time, one building	_____ Half-time, one building
_____ Full-time, two buildings	_____ Half-time, two buildings
_____ Full-time, more than two buildings	_____ Half-time, more than two buildings
_____ Other	

Memberships in professional school counseling organizations (check all that apply):

_____ **ACA** _____ **ASCA** _____ **ISCA**

_____ **Other** _____ **No memberships**

District and building information: If you work in more than one high school, please provide demographic information for each school. If you also work in an elementary, middle or junior high school, please report demographic information ONLY on the high school.

District student enrollment (please check one). If you are in a unified or consolidated district, please additionally check here _____.

_____ Under 500	_____ 1,501 – 2,000	_____ 10,001 – 15,000
_____ 501 – 1,000	_____ 2,001 – 5,000	_____ 15,001 – 20,000
_____ 1,001 – 1,500	_____ 5,001 – 10,000	_____ more than 20,000

Building student population (please check one):

_____ 0 – 100	_____ 201 – 300	_____ 401-500	_____ 601 -700
_____ 101 – 200	_____ 301 – 400	_____ 501-600	_____ 700+

Counselor/Student Ratio: _____

(Adapted from Mishak, D.A. (2007). An investigation of early career and veteran Iowa elementary school counselors and their classroom guidance programs. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Iowa, Iowa City. Appendix B).

**APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT PHONE SCRIPT, INTERVIEW QUESTIONS,
AND OBSERVATION FORM**

D-1. Recruitment Phone Script

My name is Valarie Betz. I am a graduate student from Iowa State University. I am interested in obtaining perspectives of guidance counselors in Iowa regarding the family and consumer sciences programs in their high schools. Your perspective is important and this is an invitation to share your views with me in an approximate 75-90 minute interview session.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing valuable information about the relationship between guidance counselors and the family and consumer sciences programs in Iowa high schools.

These are planned during the upcoming spring semester. I will come to your school or a near-by location convenient for you. The information you share will be confidential and will be used to assist me in writing my dissertation. For now, I would like to put you on my list of interviewees and I will contact you again in January regarding the specifics of your interview. The interviews will be conducted in February.

Would you like to be contacted at this telephone number? Do you prefer email contact?

D-2. Guidance Counselor Interview Questions

Throughout the course of this session, we will be focusing on answering ten questions. At times, depending upon your responses, I may ask some subquestions related to the main focus questions. By the time we finish, there will probably be more than ten total questions asked. If at any time you are unsure of an answer, you may do your best to tell me as much as you do know about the question. If at any time you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may choose not to respond. A simple “pass” or “no comment” will suffice.

1. Tell me about the role you play in this building as a high school guidance counselor.
 - A. Professional Title
 - B. Professional education and credentials
 - C. Professional associations
 - D. Daily duties
 - E. Occasional duties
2. Does this high school offer a formal program and courses with a curricular emphasis on empowering individuals, and strengthening family and communities?
 - A. Program name...Home Ec, FCS
 - B. Course names
 - C. Curricular Content
 1. Information delivered
 2. Comprehensive or Occupational
 3. Academic Credit
 4. Articulation agreements
 5. Dual enrollment
 6. FCCLA
3. Suppose I walked into one of the FCS classrooms, what would I see?
 - A. Instructor
 1. Enthusiasm
 2. Teaching Style
 3. Student perception of
 4. Certification/Experience Level
 5. Professional development
 6. Memberships
 7. Reputation
 8. Role in the building or classroom
 - B. Students
 1. Gender
 2. Numbers
 3. Abilities
 - C. Curriculum/Activities
 1. Hands on
 2. Engaging activities
 - D. Physical Environment
 1. Arrangement of physical space
4. In your opinion, what do you think the ideal high school FCS program would look like?

5. In its history, what changes has this local FCS program gone through?
 - A. Enrollment
 - B. Gender
 - C. Curricular emphasis
 - D. Name Change
 - E. Student Abilities
6. How do current educational issues and trends relate to the emphasis on FCS offerings in this building?
 - A. School reform
 - B. No Child Left Behind
 - C. Perkins
 - D. School to Work
 - E. Career and Technical Education
 - F. Vocational Education
 - G. I am curious about your understanding of career and technical education. In what ways is it similar to or different from the former vocational education title?
7. Some parents would say that FCS programs are not vital to a high school student's program of study. What would you say to them?
 - A. How important are FCS courses to a student's program of study at the high school level?
8. Tell me what you know about career opportunities available to students who enjoy the FCS content?
 - A. Higher education
 - B. Technical school
 - C. Apprenticeships
 - D. Salaries
 - E. Job Availability related to FCS content
 - F. Employment outlook
 - G. Career instruction/Career interest inventories
 - H. Needs assessments
 - I. Where do you obtain information about jobs related to FCS content?
9. Have you collaborated with FCS instructors to deliver services to students in this building? In what ways?
 - A. What ideas do you have for further collaborative efforts?
10. Suppose I was assigned to you as a new freshman student in this high school. What steps would you take to help me select my courses for the year?
11. What resources have you utilized in obtaining information about FCS programs?
12. Anything you would like to add to this discussion that we haven't already covered?

D-3. Observation Form**Family and Consumer Sciences Classroom**

CRITERIA:	NOTES:
Teacher	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years of FCS Experience 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years of Other Teaching Experience or Career Background 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education / Certifications 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm 	
Curriculum	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course name 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of Program (Comp or Occ.) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Content 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Methods 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCCLA 	
Physical Space	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating type and arrangement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall Displays 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Displays 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization 	
Classroom	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender of students 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of students 	

APPENDIX E. HELPFUL WEBSITES

(provided by Guidance Counselor E for District Guidance Staff)

<http://collegenavigator.ed.gov>

www.myfuture.com/toolbox/workinterest.html [Go to “Assess Yourself”]

www.nycareerzone.org/graphic/index.jsp [Explore career clusters]

www.collegeboard.com/splash/
[College MatchMaker can help you investigate colleges and majors throughout the country]

www.actstudent.org
[ACT site offers information on test prep, financial aid, college search, etc.]

www.bls.gov/oco
Occupational outlook handbook
[Search hundreds of careers for information about training, income, projected job availability, etc.]

www.monster.com or www.careerbuilder.com
These are ‘help wanted’ websites. Companies advertise for positions that are available. You can search these to find out what types of jobs are available now in your area of interest, where these jobs are located, what the qualifications would be, etc.

www.mymajors.com
This site matches your abilities and interests to subjects that you might choose as a college major. You can then see what types of jobs are available to people with degrees in that field.

www.acinet.org or www.careervoyages.gov
LOTS of information about careers, job skills, and education. Also includes career videos, resume tutorials, financial aid information.

www.act.org/wwm
World of Work map lets you choose a career field and simply click on it for more information.

<http://www.knowhow2go.org/>

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