

BIBLIOTHERAPY:
AN EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS' ATTITUDES AND USE

by
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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Bibliotherapy has been shown to be a natural, appropriate tool for school counselors, supporting both student therapeutic concerns, as well as the academic goals of the setting. However, no prior research was identified that examined counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy or their use of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique in the schools.

This study proposed to determine (a) if school counselors differed in their use of or attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by student and counselor characteristics, and (b) if selected student and counselor characteristics predicted the counselors' use of or attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

The data were collected using an instrument developed for this study, the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale. Participants were members of the Alabama School Counseling Association (ALSCA). Of the 870 packets that were mailed to members, 250 usable surveys were returned.

The results indicated that counselors' use of bibliotherapy, as well as their attitudes toward bibliotherapy, differed significantly on one variable: predominant gender of the students served. Only one variable was found to significantly predict the counselors' use of bibliotherapy: the average age of the children served. Finally, two variables were found to significantly predict the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy: (a) the average age of the children served, and (b) the number of continuing education activities related to bibliotherapy in which the counselors participated in the past 12 months.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to two great men in my life—my Daddy, A. C. (Jack) Moore, Jr., and my husband, Jeff. My life has been richer because of their love. I will forever treasure the memories and the brief time that we shared.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Whether they capture our realization or not, therapeutic changes happen (Lampropoulos & Spengler, 2005). Moments in our daily lives, such as talking with a friend, engaging in a film or book, or even experiencing an unusual occurrence, impact us in a variety of ways (Lampropoulos & Spengler). The changes brought about by such experiences may include emotional reactions, sudden realizations, interpretations, revelations, processing of critical information, and other changes, many of which are likewise goals of traditional therapy (Lampropoulos & Spengler). As counselors provide professional intervention services for their clients, they must also recognize ways to enhance each client's self-help activities along with the help, support, and advice the client receives from his or her immediate environment (Lampropoulos & Spengler). One such category of intervention is bibliotherapy (Lampropoulos & Spengler).

Throughout history, people have commemorated their lives through narration, perhaps hoping to discover and define life's meaning through the process of the story (Cook, 2001). According to Sanders (1997), stories serve at least ten purposes in the lives of individuals. They serve to entertain, to build community, and help us view events from a different perspective (Sanders). Stories help us understand the consequences of behaviors, and they educate our desires (Sanders). They help us live in the moment (Sanders). Stories aid us in dealing with our struggling, our loss, and our grief (Sanders). They teach us what it is to be human, while helping us appreciate the wonder and mystery of our surroundings (Sanders).

The sharing of stories predates even literacy, itself, with poets and tellers of tales weaving the magic of the spoken word into experiences that are simultaneously individual and collective, vocalizing common pain, while promoting healing through the sharing (Berns, 2004). Such restorative powers of the oral traditions of storytelling continue to flourish in numerous universal means in every culture (Du Plock, 2005). Thus, the world's greatest literature resonates with humanity on a plane that is individual, while simultaneously communicating themes that permeate the soul of humanity collectively (McDaniel, 2001). It touches our lives, provides information, and delights the senses, all the while maintaining a freshness and animation even through multiple readings over the span of sometimes many years (McDaniel).

The process of bibliotherapy goes by many names, some of which include biblioeducation, library therapeutics, biblioprophylaxis, literatherapy, bibliocounseling, bibliopsychology, and tutorial group therapy (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Similarly, bibliotherapy may be defined in varied ways. These definitions appear along a broad continuum (Lu, 2008). At one end of the continuum the most rigid definitions emphasize the medical aspects of bibliotherapy (Lu). Examples include the practice of bibliotherapy in mental and medical hospitals (Jack & Ronan, 2008). At the other end of the continuum, definitions of bibliotherapy include less rigid definitions such as the sharing of literature to help a reader with a personal problem (Doll & Doll, 1997), helping with books (Jones, 2006), or the use of self-help materials (Brewster, 2008a).

In the 1930s Dr. William C. Menninger, a prestigious psychiatrist and founder of the Menninger Clinic, wrote descriptions of the use of bibliotherapy to treat mental illness and how it fit into a patient's treatment plan (Jones, 2006). Because bibliotherapy was considered a

medical treatment, the patient's physician was responsible for approving books and prescribing the reading assignments (Jones). According to Hynes and Hynes-Berry (1986), bibliotherapy as a clinical intervention involves a trained therapist or facilitator who initiates communication with the client using a selected piece of literature as a guide. The aim of bibliotherapy is to integrate the client's cognitive responses and emotions, resulting in change (Hynes & Hynes-Berry).

At the opposite end of the continuum, Doll and Doll (1997) contended that bibliotherapy involves sharing literature with a reader to assist in managing a personal problem. Jones (2006) presented the concise idea of bibliotherapy as helping by means of books. Dole and McMahan (2005) described the process as assisting others in dealing with their challenges through the sharing of a suitable book or other piece of literature. Smith (1989) defined bibliotherapy as healing through the use of literature. Gregory, Canning, Lee, and Wise (2004) called it a self-administered strategy that makes use of prepared materials to offer a means of self-help. Prater, Johnstun, Dyches, and Johnstun (2006) described it as the use of books to assist individuals in coping with problems and change, while Abdullah (2002) added that it is a tool to encourage personal growth. What is consistent is that all these descriptions focus on the help that is available to people through books (Prater et al.).

In its shortest meaning bibliotherapy is the therapeutic use of books (Jackson & Nelson, 2002) or treatment through books (Pardeck, 1990). In an expanded definition, bibliotherapy is a method by which helping professionals in the schools assist students in resolving difficulties by using sources of literature (Sullivan & Strang, 2003). Bibliotherapy is a noninvasive, child-friendly process that makes use of reading—a skill already familiar to school-age children (Sullivan & Strang). Bibliotherapy involves a literary protagonist who successfully resolves a problem that is similar to the one the reading child is experiencing (Gladding & Gladding, 1991).

Such problems may be emotional or developmental (Sullivan & Strang). Bibliotherapy includes the process by which the helper selects suitable literature and matches these readings to the needs of clients to aid them in developing self-awareness, insight into problems, skills related to solving a problem, and better perspective (Abdullah, 2002). Through bibliotherapy doors may be opened to an appreciation of fine literature while assisting students in managing real life problems, enhancing the likelihood of academic and social success (Prater et al., 2006).

Various genres of literature can be well suited for use in bibliotherapy with children. For instance, fairy tales, fables, and other works of fiction, self-help materials, and even song lyrics may be fitting (Jones, 2006). Children with special needs or very young children may benefit from taped books, predictable books, or picture books (Cook, Earles-Vollrath, & Ganz, 2006). Multicultural literature should also be considered (Cook et al.). Books should be provided that enable children to see characters who look like themselves (Powell-Brown, 2006). Similar to bibliotherapy, videotherapy may be appropriate for youth who have limited language skills or reading problems, or for those who simply dislike reading, but enjoy movies (Dole & McMahan, 2005). Activity books that provide space for the child to write, color, or draw to personalize his or her own feelings are also available (Carney, 2004).

Bibliotherapy is a tool that can stand alone in working with children or with other approaches to counseling, such as group therapy (Berns, 2004). Bibliotherapy is suitable for individual, small group, and large group counseling contexts (Cook et al., 2006). In these contexts, topics such as anger, social skills, family dynamics, and grief may be suitable (Steen & Kaffenberger, 2007).

In the school setting, bibliotherapy is appropriate for all grade levels of students (Abdullah, 2002). For instance, Borders and Paisley (1992) studied the relationship of a

bibliotherapy-based curriculum in fourth and fifth grade classrooms on cognitive abilities and social maturity, showing that children who received bibliotherapy had more gain than students in the comparison group who did not receive bibliotherapy. For children with disabilities, books depicting characters with self-determination can promote resiliency (Konrad, Helf, & Itoi, 2007). Konrad and Test (2004) even found that bibliotherapy using books such as *My Name is ~~Brain~~ Brian* (Betancourt, 1993) can lead middle school children to help compose sections of their own individualized education plan. Likewise, Peterson (2006) explored the use of bibliotherapy in providing for the needs of the emotional and social development of gifted students. Cook (2001) contended that because the literature is presented in a nonthreatening environment and gives the child a model through the character of the story, therapeutic stories not only help the child cope and solve problems, they also present the opportunity for a powerful relationship bond, strengthened by the involvement of both the counselor and the child as the book is shared.

Bibliotherapy can be used to intervene with children and adolescents facing countless types and degrees of problems and needs. For instance, bibliotherapy is useful in working with children and adolescents who have aggressive tendencies (Shechtman, 1999; Shechtman, 2000) or who need help regulating their emotions (Zambo, 2007). It is also suitable for children who have learning disabilities (Krickeberg, 1991). Branch and Brinson (2007) supported the use of bibliotherapy for youth who have incarcerated parents, while Krickeberg cited its appropriateness with young people whose parents are alcoholics. In addition, bibliotherapy can be effective with youth struggling with low self-esteem (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000). Peterson (2006) mentioned its suitability in working with young people with special needs related to giftedness. Bibliotherapy is useful in working with children and adolescents who are dealing with stress (Smith-D'Arezzo & Thompson, 2006) or those who are in trouble at school or have

been suspended (Schreur, 2006). Bibliotherapy is also an appropriate intervention with children of divorce, or with those who are placed in foster care, are adopted, or are adjusting to stepfamilies (Krickeberg). Other uses of bibliotherapy include working with children or adolescents who are members of a sexual minority (Vare & Norton, 2004), those struggling with grief related to the death of a loved one (Berns, 2004), or those who have experienced sexual abuse (Pardeck, 1990; Belcher, 1983).

Statement of the Problem

Because counselors in schools may be the first counselors that a child encounters (Erford, 2007), this study focuses on the attitudes that school counselors have toward bibliotherapy and their use of this intervention. For school counselors, bibliotherapy is a technique applicable for various needs (Stamps, 2003; Abdullah, 2002) and in all school grades (Abdullah). Also, bibliotherapy has been shown to be a natural tool for counseling within a school environment, supporting the academic nature and goals of the setting (Cook et al., 2006; Steen and Kaffenberger, 2007; Jackson and Nelson, 2002; Johnson, Wan, Templeton, Graham, and Sattler, 2000). In addition, students and faculty may regard the use of literature within a school counseling environment as natural and appropriate (Cook et al.). Likewise, school counselors may have access to library and classroom sources of a wide variety of children's literature across grade levels, devoted to a multitude of themes and plots (Jackson & Nelson). Therefore, as the literature suggests that bibliotherapy may be especially appropriate for working with children in a school setting (Abdullah; Cook et al.), bibliotherapy may be used in schools to assist in caring for students and in helping to heal elements in a child's life that are presently troubling (Gladding, 2005).

Although bibliotherapy is considered to be appropriate for use in school settings, little is known about the extent to which school counselors use bibliotherapy in their work with children. Furthermore, no research has been identified that examines school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy which may predict their use of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique. As Van Overwalle and Siebler (2005) indicated, attitudes influence thinking, serving as behavioral manuals persuading individuals to avoid or engage in certain behaviors. Attitudes are subjective, evaluative, and predispose an individual to act in a particular manner (Van Overwalle & Siebler). If school counselors have positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy, then they may be more likely to use bibliotherapy in their work with children.

A study examining school counselors' attitudes toward and usage of bibliotherapy was appropriate and justified as studies indicate that attitudes influence behaviors (Dijst, Farag, & Schwanen, 2008; Van Overwalle & Siebler, 2005). The literature suggests that bibliotherapy is an appropriate intervention for school counselors to use when working with students with a variety of situational needs (Cook et al., 2006). Yet, little was known about the extent to which school counselors use bibliotherapy and the variables that influence its use by school counselors. Because the attitudes of school counselors toward bibliotherapy may influence the extent to which they use bibliotherapy, it seemed reasonable to assess the relationship between school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy and their use of bibliotherapy, as well as variables that may have predicted those attitudes.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined school counselors' attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. Specifically, this study proposed to determine (a) if school counselors differed in their use of bibliotherapy when compared by characteristics of the counselors and the children they serve, (b)

if school counselors differed in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by characteristics of the counselors and the children they serve, and (c) if selected student and counselor characteristics predicted the counselors' use of bibliotherapy and their attitudes toward bibliotherapy. The following variables were examined that may have affected how school counselors' differ in their use of bibliotherapy, as well as their attitudes toward bibliotherapy: the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

Variables that were examined as possible predictors of school counselors' use of bibliotherapy included the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy, their years of experience as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the counselors, the number of children served for whom English is not the primary language, and the number of children served who have disabilities. Additional predictor variables were the number of courses in the counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed the counselors to information about bibliotherapy.

Variables that were examined as possible predictors of school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy include years of experience as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the counselors, the number of children served for whom English is not their primary language, and the number of children served who have disabilities. Additional predictor variables were the number of courses in the counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to

bibliotherapy, and the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed the counselors to information about bibliotherapy.

By identifying counselor attitudes and variables that may have influenced those attitudes, it was the goal of the researcher that this study would add to the professional literature information that will be helpful to future studies. Similarly, it was the researcher's intent that the study would help to promote a greater understanding of counselors' attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. Therefore, another goal of this study was to prompt future research involving counselors' use of bibliotherapy in working with children facing problems for which bibliotherapy may be beneficial.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Do school counselors differ in their use of bibliotherapy with students when compared by (a) the education level of the counselors, (b) the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (c) the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (d) the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and (e) the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors?
2. Do school counselors differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by (a) the education level of the counselors, (b) the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (c) the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (d) the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and (e) the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors?
3. Do (a) school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy, (b) years served as a school counselor, (c) the average age of the children served by the school counselor, (d) the number of

children for whom English is not the primary language, (e) the number of children served who have disabilities, (f) the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and (g) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy singularly or in combination predict their use of bibliotherapy?

4. Do (a) years as a school counselor, (b) the average age of the children served by the school counselor, (c) the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, (d) the number of children served who have disabilities, (e) the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and (f) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy singularly or in combination predict their attitudes toward bibliotherapy?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

H₀₁: School counselors will not differ in their use of bibliotherapy with students when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

H₀₂: School counselors will not differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

H₀₃: School counselors' use of bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by their attitudes toward bibliotherapy, their years of experience as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

H₀₄: School counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by years as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

Definition of Terms

Affective bibliotherapy: A type of literature-based counseling which focuses on the client experiencing the richness and complexity of life, characters, problems, difficulties, and situations that the literature presents to the reader (Shechtman, 1999).

Bibliotherapy: The therapeutic use of literary works as a healing intervention in counseling (Gladding, 2005).

Clinical bibliotherapy: The use of literature by a skilled and trained therapeutic practitioner such as a counselor, therapist, or psychologist, most often taking place in a structured setting, to help clients who have experienced moderate to serious emotional problems, behaviors, or situations (Abdullah, 2002; Cook et al., 2006; Gladding, 2005).

Cognitive bibliotherapy: Therapy in which written material is suggested to the client to be read outside of counseling sessions or with little or no therapist contact. It is believed that from the literature the client will draw the conclusions, information, solutions, or experiences he or she needs (Shechtman, 1999).

Developmental bibliotherapy: The use of books to help students in their normal health and development (Abdullah, 2002) with any number of typical problems and circumstances they face (Gladding, 2005).

Interactive bibliotherapy: Counseling sessions in which the client is involved in activities that help him or her reflect on what has just been read. Such involvement may include activities such as journaling or discussion (Palmer, Biller, Rancourt, & Teets, 1997, as cited in Abdullah, 2002; Anderson & MacCurdy, 2000, as cited in Abdullah, 2002; Morawski & Gilbert, 2000, as cited in Abdullah, 2002).

Institutional bibliotherapy: Bibliotherapy with clients who are typically distraught and often disturbed. This type bibliotherapy is traditionally instructive and didactic (Gladding, 2005).

Professional school counselor: A skilled helper specifically trained in school counseling with unique qualifications and skills to address students' academic, personal/social and career development needs (ASCA, n.d.).

Assumptions

This study reflected the following assumptions:

1. By being members of the Alabama School Counselor Association (ALSCA), the participants in the study will be professional school counselors.
2. The survey will be answered honestly by the participants.

3. The sample of participants will include school counselors with varying degrees of experience, education, training, professional development experiences, and with differing ages of children and school environments in which they work.

Limitations

This study will reflect the following limitations:

1. The population is limited to school counselors who are members of the Alabama School Counselor Association (ALSCA). This limits generalizability beyond Alabama and to Alabama school counselors who are not ALSCA members.
2. The study relies on a self-report method of data collection. It is possible that participants may respond in a manner that they believe to be socially desirable.
3. Selection of limited variables under investigation in the study is based upon those judged most cogent for the purpose of the study. Other unknown variables that influence use of or attitudes toward bibliotherapy may not have been included.

Organization of the Study

The dissertation is presented in five chapters. Chapter I presents the problem, states the research questions and research hypotheses, and reviews pertinent considerations for the study. Chapter II offers a general overview of bibliotherapy and reviews the relevant literature regarding the use of bibliotherapy as an intervention with children. Chapter III describes the methodology used in selecting participants, the instrumentation used in the study, and methods of collecting and analyzing the data. Chapter IV reports the results of the study, and Chapter V discusses the results and implications of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Counseling is a profession unequivocally linked with personal and societal wellness (Gladding, 2005). The profession is enlightened by a myriad of creative traditions that help practitioners better understand human nature (Gladding). The counseling field now recognizes the value of employing the arts into the helping process, especially works of literature, such as novels, poetry, and song (Pearson, 2003). The writings of poets, biographers, novelists, therapists, and clients themselves can be a key to be used for unlocking the understanding of human nature (Gladding). When used in combination with the work of a trained professional, bibliotherapy can enhance a client's therapeutic experience (Tussig & Valentine, 2001). As such, the relationship between healing, health, and literature is substantial (Gladding).

Bibliotherapy is an umbrella term including a variety of ways in which books can be used to help individuals with their problems (Brewster, 2008a). It is a means by which literature can be used to aid individuals who are experiencing emotional and social difficulties (Du Plock, 2005). Current literature indicates that books do make a difference in the lives of people (Jones, 2006). Literature has the ability to communicate not only with individuals, but collectively to span across cultures (McDaniel, 2001). Both fiction and nonfiction literature have the potential to give readers models from which they may be able to draw insight into human nature and life's challenges. From the insight gained through bibliotherapy, readers are given the opportunity to restory their own lives (Du Plock).

Bibliotherapy has been implemented by a variety of helping professionals including counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers (McCoy & McKay, 2006), teachers, and librarians (Abdullah, 2002; Cook et al., 2006). In the school setting, school personnel tend to have compassion for the young people with whom they work, while simultaneously being passionate about their work (Cook et al. 2006). With the challenges of today's society, implementation of ways to assist children and adolescents in facing those challenges is crucial (Cook et al.). According to Cook et al., teachers, school counselors, and librarians are examples of helping adults who can intervene by using bibliotherapy in the schools to assist youth as they face life's demands. Bibliotherapy can lead to enjoyment of fine literature while aiding students in coping with life circumstances, thereby enhancing the potential for success (Prater et al., 2006). Writings can touch lives and hold attention after many readings (McDaniel, 2001), and when incorporated into traditional approaches to therapy, may outlast the relationship with the counselor (Lampropoulos & Spengler, 2005). By already possessing an understanding of children's social, emotional, and academic needs, school faculty can be key players in making bibliotherapy successful (Cook et al.).

Children and adults respond to favorite pieces of literature time and again (McDaniel, 2001). Literature written especially for young people provides a natural means of allowing them to recognize internal and external resources and to develop coping strategies for dealing with their realities (Nicholson & Pearson, 2003), however disturbing those realities may be. Children's literature, therefore, can be a powerful force in a young person's life, inspiring, instructing, and encouraging the child, thus producing life-changing results (McDaniel).

Historical Development of Bibliotherapy

“Stories are the threads that hold together the fabric of our lives” (Cook, 2001, p. 67).

Books have for hundreds of years been silent therapists for multitudes (Du Plock, 2005). Many children and adolescents are similar to J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter in that they have survived personal losses such as the loss of a parent (Markell & Markell, 2008). To help them cope with problems in their own lives, these youth often identify with literary characters in the books they read (Markell & Markell). The manner in which fictional persona manage their problems may help real life young people cope with their concerns (Markell & Markell). Possibly the majority of individuals actually find their first encounter with therapy not with a professional counselor or therapist, but in the words on a page (Du Plock).

Historical evidence illustrates bibliotherapy’s longstanding usage (Sullivan & Strang, 2003). From Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to Native American oral traditions, stories have served key positions in cultural heritages of all people (Cook, 2001). In cave art, ethnic dance, and troubadours’ songs, people throughout history have celebrated their lives and their stories, perhaps in an attempt to understand the meaning of their own existence (Cook).

Historically, the Greeks are noted for their recognition of the power of literature (Jones, 2006; Cook, 2001). Several authors (see Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Zaccaria & Moses, 1968, as cited in Du Plock, 2005) cite the inscription above the ancient library at Thebes, “The Healing Place of the Soul,” or as another translation provides, “The Medicine Chest of the Soul” (Jones, 2006), as an early reference to the use of literature for therapeutic gain. Brewster (2008a) added that inscribed above the doorways of many other Greek libraries was the message that within was medicine for the soul. The notion that literature can be a palliative to ease the human spirit has origins in ancient society (Brewster).

Another early source of therapeutic reading and one of the most widely used such books is the Bible. Other writings from various religions are utilized in a similar way (Lampropoulos & Spengler, 2005). The Bible's account of David's lamentation over the death of his son in the Old Testament and the acknowledgement that Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus are passages often cited as examples of grief literature; however, such writings during some periods of history were the property of the Church and were not widely available for consumption (Johnson, 2004).

Irvin Yalom (Yalom, B., 1998) stated that the history of psychology began with Dostoevskii, Tolstoy, and other writers, observing that Freud, himself, gleaned his insights, not from his scientific research, but from the wealth of his understanding of philosophy and literature. Similarly, the plays of Shakespeare and the stories of other writers provide therapists with a better understanding of the human experiences of conflict, turmoil, anguish, and self-revelation (Shechtman, 1999).

Bards and storytellers also gave voice to universal human experience and emotions by weaving stories, expressing the emotions of life, and thus promoting healing (Berns, 2004). Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, as early as 1812, began collecting oral traditional literature throughout the German countryside, the archetypes of our present day *Harry Potter* (Johnson, 2004). Although originally written for adults, their stories of *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Hansel and Gretel* became among the first fairy tales for children, and many contained children's first exposure to grief literature (Johnson). In such tales, symbolic meanings can be of great importance, and things are not always what they appear (Johnson).

A great deal of psychological connotation has been applied to fairy tales (Oaklander, 1988). Regardless of one's personal views on the attributes of such interpretations, fairy tales continue to have great meaning, value, and charm for children (Oaklander). Folk and fairy tales

alike, as with any true art form, well up from the deepest places of humanity, encompassing the enormity of all the conflicts, toil, joys, and grief that the human race has ever endured (Oaklander, 1988). Bettelheim (1991) stated that the following is the precise message children receive from fairy tales:

that a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable,...an intrinsic part of human existence—but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious... ‘Safe’ stories mention neither death nor aging, the limits to our existence, nor the wish for eternal life. The fairy tale, by contrast, confronts the child squarely with the basic human predicaments (p. 8).

Fairy tales are singular in that they are artistic works that have the potential of being fully understood by a child, unique in a way that no other art medium is (Bettelheim, 1991). Because fairy tales address universal themes such as fear, hate, love, loneliness, and isolation, the messages are timeless (Oaklander, 1988). However, as with all true art, the deepest meaning will be special for each individual, and yet, also varying for the same individual at diverse seasons in his or her life (Bettelheim). Therefore, children can derive new truths, time after time, from the same narrative, given the particular interests and needs of their present situations, and when given opportunity to do so, they will return to the same story when circumstances dictate the need to expand upon old truths or replace them with new meanings (Bettelheim).

For instance, Johnson (2004) pointed out that in the Grimm brothers’ tale of *The Handless Maiden*, the young woman’s hands are made whole by her weeping. Similarly, when a person grieves, he or she may feel a part of the self is missing, and just as the maiden, the

individual enters the dark forest where, with the help of others and through hard work, grief can be processed (Johnson).

In a similar way, we are spontaneously attracted to anecdotal truths to help us instruct our children on life, coping, and solving problems, as early childhood education abounds in the foundational use of literature in curricula (Cook, 2001). In fact, much of the early literature printed for young people foremost served the goal of teaching moral and religious standards (Johnson et al., 2000).

Early American history also bears witness to the popularity of the belief in the power of the written word and its ability to transform lives. This belief is exemplified in early schoolbooks such as *The New England Primer* and the *McGuffey Readers* which not only taught children skills necessary for reading, but were also fortified with moral and spiritual axioms aimed at enhancing character, values, and personal strength (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993), although themes such as death were presented in a somewhat frightening manner. For instance, in 1890 the McGuffey reader contained the following: “Thy days are numbered as are these figures. Be therefore obedient to thy parents lest death and sorrow do befall thee” (as cited in Johnson, 2004).

Topics presented in children’s literature have undergone a transformation over the past few centuries (Jones, 2001). The fictional persona also appreciably varies from one historical age to another; however, basic themes are transparent (Belcher, 1983). For instance, the Victorian age stories by Dickens are classics, focusing attention on abused children (Belcher). Consider, also, that during the Victorian Age when death at early ages was not uncommon, children’s literature reflected this uncertain quality of life (Jones). For example, Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*, Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, and Spyri’s *Heidi* all present death of children among the characters

in a fashion representative of the times in which the characters were set (Jones). Louisa May Alcott also dealt with death in her semi-autobiographical books *Little Women* and *Little Men* (Johnson, 2004). The character of Beth in Alcott's *Little Women* tells her sisters, "I have a feeling that it was never intended I should live long: . . . I think the tide will go out easily" (Alcott, 1947, pp. 489-490).

In America, bibliotherapy initially gained distinction in the early 1900s as librarians, working alongside medical doctors, employed literature in treating the mentally ill (Lu, 2008). It was not until 1916, however, that a Unitarian minister, Samuel Crothers, introduced the word bibliotherapy, defining it as a process in which troubled individuals were united by books (Jones, 2006).

Shortly after, in the early 1920s at the Tuskegee, Alabama, U. S. Veterans Administration Hospital, chief librarian Sadie Peterson Delaney utilized literature to aid in the psychological and physical treatment of African American veterans (Jones, 2006). Employing a holistic practice, these war veterans were encouraged through bibliotherapy to connect with a broad community of ideas (Jones). According to Jones, for her groundbreaking work Delaney was given international credit, and for 34 years she lectured at numerous notable events on the benefits of bibliotherapy.

Beginning around the 1920s infant mortality rates were decreasing, and adults were expected to live longer lives (Jones, 2001). Books of the day for children reflected this expectation, as well, and strides were taken to ensure that children lived a happier, more carefree life than did children of an earlier period of history (Jones). Subsequently, as indicated by Jones, it was common for literary children to possess great freedom to have adventures without supervision of adults. Most real young people were protected from death and were rarely present

at funerals (Jones). If death was mentioned in children's books, it was more to explain a situation a character was in than to illustrate realistic expressions of grief (Jones).

In response, however, to early attempts at presenting children with realistic literature, and in an effort to protect young people from less suitable, demoralizing works of literature, Edwin Starbuck and others focused their efforts on the identification and evaluation of books for young people, producing the first of such lists in 1928 (Johnson et al., 2000). By 1946 similar efforts were underway at listing suitable literature for children who were thought to be maladjusted (Johnson, et al.).

Two other early twentieth century promoters of bibliotherapy were Drs. Karl and William C. Menninger (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993) of the renowned Menninger Clinic, a group psychiatric clinic (Jones, 2006). Dr. William Menninger edited a book in 1937 detailing the benefits and techniques involved in bibliotherapy based on the usage at their clinic (Jones). His work contained some of his own writings, as well, one of which described the purpose, prescription plan, and treatment of an individual using bibliotherapy (Jones).

Many children's initial experience with grief involves the death of an animal (Markell & Markell, 2008). Interestingly, one of the first, modern pieces of children's grief literature was written in 1938 by Margaret Wise Brown and entitled *The Dead Bird*. According to Johnson (2004), the message of the text was simple: "The children found a dead bird. They wrapped it up. They buried it. They said some words and felt sad. They brought flowers for a few days. Then they forgot" (p. 293). Thirty words, yet the passage brought about adult recognition of children's grief and how bibliotherapy can benefit hurting young people (Johnson). Also, the 1939 John Gunther story of his own son's death in *Death Be Not Proud* reached both older children and adults (Johnson).

Throughout the 1940s professional literature included several articles focusing on the psychological validity of bibliotherapy (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Literature for children and adolescents also gained new sources (Johnson, 2004). For instance, in the twentieth century new books reflected death such as Pearl Buck's 1942 book, *The Big Wave* (Johnson). Then came the graphic reality of World War II that was captured in *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952), and in the same year E. B. White's classic, *Charlotte's Web*, spun a tale of grief as well (Johnson).

In 1949-1950 Caroline Shrodes, in her dissertation, further promoted the psychological impact of bibliotherapy (Jones, 2006) by giving a definition of bibliotherapy that clarified the interaction between the reader and a piece of literature under the supervision of a helping professional (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Shrodes's definition continues to impact modern thought concerning bibliotherapy (Pardeck & Pardeck). According to Shrodes, the process of bibliotherapy mirrors the major developmental sequences of psychotherapy. As the reader finds himself or herself in a similar situation to that of the literary figure, identification and projection happen naturally; as the fictional character finds a resolution to his or her problem, the reader experiences abreaction and catharsis; and as the reader reflects on and internalizes the literary work, insight occurs (Jones).

In 1963 use of bibliotherapy evolved further as Hannigan and Henderson led extensive research involving the therapeutic benefits of bibliotherapy in working with young people who abused substances and were close to their parole dates (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Pardeck and Pardeck emphasized that the studies by Hannigan and Henderson are among the earliest research to focus on bibliotherapy's usefulness as an intervention in helping individuals work through their adjustment and emotional difficulties in a treatment setting.

Following the Hannigan and Henderson studies, according to Jones (2006), Rhea Joyce Rubin in the 1970s edited what were to become classics, *Bibliotherapy Sourcebook* and *Using Bibliotherapy: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. Jones continued, stating that through these volumes Rubin attempted to answer a question first posed in 1939 by Alice Bryan—Can there be a science of bibliotherapy? In her work Rubin added to the understanding of bibliotherapy, presenting scientific evidence of its effectiveness (Jones).

Prior to Rubin's work, bibliotherapy had been classified as either (a) the art of bibliotherapy, including an implicit, developmental, nonmedical approach used by librarians and others not trained as mental health providers; or (b) the science of bibliotherapy including an explicit, diagnostic, clinical/institutional model implemented exclusively by qualified mental health professionals (Jones, 2006). Through her books, Rubin attempted to present scientific evidence and experimental data to support the claims that bibliotherapy had merit in the realm of science, as well as in the field of art (Jones). Rubin went on to indicate that between 1950 and 1978 more than 400 professional journal articles dealt with the topic of bibliotherapy, including related procedures, preparation, objectives, theories, components of therapy, and usage with clients (Lampropoulos & Spengler, 2005). Many studies, such as the meta-analyses of Cuijpers and Gregory et al., Floyd, and Apodaca and Miller (as cited in Jones), have since documented the value of bibliotherapy as a clinical tool (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993).

The 1960s and 1970s brought more attention to bibliotherapy and suitable books for use of bibliotherapy in working with youth. This was especially true with literature involving the theme of grief. When *Sesame Street's* Mr. Hooper passed away in the 1970s, Mr. Fred Rogers of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* appeared on the television program to comfort Mr. Hooper's on-screen and off-screen friends by publicly explaining death and commemorating the life of Mr.

Hooper to multitudes of young children (Carney, 2004). Carney indicated that the trust and rapport Mr. Rogers spent years establishing with his young audience made his discussion of a painful topic safe as he helped children understand and cope with their loss. Later in the 1970s, The Dougy Center in Portland, Oregon, opened, which today remains the flagship of 200 therapy centers focusing on children's grief (Johnson, 2004). In addition, Vietnam, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's *On Death and Dying*, and Rabbi Earl Grollman's *Talking about Death: A Dialogue between Parent and Child* also impacted the 1960s and 1970s helping to focus attention on the topic of grief (Johnson) with as much frank description as the earlier books of the 19th Century had, but without the unequivocal Christian and moral overtones of earlier years (Jones, 2001).

According to Johnson (2004), important pieces of children's literature of the 1960s and 1970s included Coburn's *Anne and the Sand Dobbies* (1965), a new edition of Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1962), and Smith's *A Taste of Blackberries* in 1973. Child characters facing a death in modern literature may question or even express anger at God. For example, a young character in Smith's *A Taste of Blackberries*, in which a child dies after being stung while picking blackberries, states, "...it was hard to think about God when something as small as a bee could kill your best friend" (Smith, 1988, p. 75). Similarly, a teenage Tony in Mayfield's *I Carried You on Eagles' Wings* (1991) cries out, "What sort of God was there? What sort of God let people die of horrible diseases? What God at all?" (pp. 127-128)

Johnson (2004) stated that the last 25 years have produced a flood of books for children centering on the topic of death and grief, including Donna O'Toole's K-12 curriculum, *Growing Through Grief* series that has won the praise of educators. Books for children by children are also growing in number (Johnson). Several changes, however, can be seen in children's grief books: (a) the wealth of diversity among grief literature, (b) public expectation of specialization

of grief topics, (c) large quantities of available resources, and (d) the acceptance that children's literature dealing with grief now has increased even more after the tragedy of September 11, 2001 (Johnson).

Modern literature for children and adolescents has addressed many additional topics. For instance, according to McCoy and McKay (2006) bibliotherapy can be culturally affirming for students. Bibliotherapy may also be a meaningful intervention with youth who are attempting to cope with a parent's mental illness (Tussing & Valentine, 2001), alcoholism (Krickeberg, 1991), separation (Abdullah, 2002; Pardeck, 1994), divorce, foster care, adoption (Abdullah, 2002; Krickeberg; Pardeck), or stepfamilies (Krickeberg; Pardeck). Bibliotherapy is also a promising tool for serving the needs of gay and lesbian teens in the school setting (Vare & Norton, 2004).

Nicholson and Pearson (2003) discussed the power of children's literature to address childhood fears, while Gregory and Vessey (2004) recommended bibliotherapy to help students with bullying, and Shechtman (1999) advocated using bibliotherapy to treat childhood aggression. Bibliotherapy may also be helpful in working with students who have learning disabilities (Krickeberg), to enhance reading comprehension, self-concept, (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000), and to encourage appropriate behaviors (Regan & Page, 2008; Sridhar & Vaughn) and emotions (Regan & Page; Sullivan & Strang, 2003). Forgan (2002) recommended bibliotherapy to teach problem solving skills. Prater et al. (2006), discussed implementing bibliotherapy with at risk students, while Schreur (2006) promoted its appropriateness in working with suspended students.

In addition, as literature has the potential to be encouraging, empowering, enlightening, and transforming bibliotherapy can be useful in working with abused children (McDaniel, 2001).

It can also help children be attentive to threatening scenarios, identify any private victimization, be reassured that they are not different, find that there are others have faced similar situations, and seek help (McDaniel).

In helping sexually abused children solve their existing problems, bibliotherapy helps a young person to invent new ways of coping simultaneous to the literary child learning coping mechanisms (Honig, 2000). By becoming familiar with stories of child abuse, the child has the opportunity to see that just as the literary character who is abused is not bad, neither is the real life child bad (Belcher, 1983). Play therapist Paris Goodyear-Brown's *Gabby the Gecko* (2003) tells the story of the guilt that Gabby felt after the wizard put his spell on her. However, Carey the Kangaroo counselor provided a safe place where Gabby could tell her story (Goodyear-Brown). Bibliotherapy, therefore, can be used in two distinct ways: as a preventive tool and in helping children solve existing problems (Krickeberg, 1991).

The passing on of stories, whether oral or written, is a timeless, nonthreatening attempt for each generation to transfer meaning, values, wisdom, problem solving, coping, and life skills to the upcoming generation (Cook, 2001). However, as society, and simultaneously, the world of children, has become more problematic, the situations and challenges children find themselves encountering have also become increasingly complicated (Johnson et al, 2000). Simply focusing on children's moral development by employing literature in which the protagonists' difficulties appear to magically work out at the conclusion merely is not applicable for children co-existing in a world with issues related to prejudice, divorce, alcohol and drug abuse, violence, AIDS, suicide, physical and sexual abuse, and teen pregnancy (Johnson et al). And yet, allowing children to compare the magical and fanciful solutions of fairy tales to the dilemmas in which children find themselves may be enlightening, for children are not fooled by the happily ever

after endings; it is the opposing principles of the adults who are in charge of children's true worlds that perplex them, not the unambiguous, black-and-white values read about in fairy tales (Oaklander, 1988).

In response to the real life problems of modern-day children, bibliotherapy has noticeably evolved and expanded to encompass a great number of stories whose characters face graphic, lifelike situations that are not always resolved in a happy ever after finale (Johnson et al., 2000). Today's young readers of such books will perhaps encounter hope and comfort that will be of meaning in their real, present-day world (Johnson et al.).

Using Bibliotherapy with Children

Rationale for Using Bibliotherapy with Children

Children, being innately curious, thirst for knowledge and understanding in their lives. The journey from childhood into adulthood seems to be incredibly challenging for many youngsters. Bibliotherapy offers counselors in the school environment a strategy that combines the academic side of reading, literature, and the acquisition of knowledge (Johnson et al., 2000) with the therapeutic side of counseling (Shechtman, 1999).

Bibliotherapy may help enhance reading comprehension, build self-worth, or improve conduct for students with learning and behavior problems (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000). As Shechtman (1999) observed, "Children and adolescents do not like therapy, but they do love stories and films" (p. 40). Juvenile literature is rich with characters who confront virtually the same issues as young people in current society (Nicholson & Pearson, 2003). Indeed, storytelling enables one to understand oneself, as well as others, as our world increasingly becomes more multiracial and multicultural (Lennox, 2000). A meaningful story yields the opportunity for the child to identify with the protagonist and to be empowered by the hardships

and victories of this character (Nicholson & Pearson). When used in conjunction with creative follow-up activities which support a tie between the character and the child, children's books become a valuable counseling tool for assisting youth in implementing strategies for dealing with their personal struggles (Nicholson & Pearson). Bibliotherapy frees and energizes youngsters to invent new ways to cope with their troubles (Honig, 2000).

Children often need models to aid them in processing scary and difficult feelings (Cook, 2001). Literature that stimulates the child's ability to recreate settings and plots of the reading allows the young person to enter the world of others. This experience often helps heal the real life hurt, worry, or resentment the child may be experiencing (Honig, 2000). Therefore, bibliotherapy is useful not only as a technique for treating clinical struggles, but also as an aid in fostering growth and adjustment (Pardeck, 1990). Such processes are of paramount importance in today's world (Nicholson & Pearson, 2003). Children can find encouragement at school by knowing they have help in managing the many concerns they face (Powell-Brown, 2006). By matching children to literature that depicts situations similar to those they are encountering, children can recognize that there are adults in the school setting who care about them (Powell-Brown).

Developmental Theorists

When addressing children's concerns, it is important to consider the work of various developmental theorists. Erikson (1963), for instance, examined the fundamental childhood eras of infancy, toddlerhood, early childhood, and middle childhood. Erikson's studies also addressed the developmental goals of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry, as well as views of competency, purpose, self-control, and hope. Erikson found that all of these components are essential for children to establish healthy egos. However, childhood problems, such as grief over

the loss of a significant individual in a child's life, can be detrimental to such development (Carney, 2004).

Children experiencing significant emotional distress may become prisoner to powerful feelings, finding it difficult to break free from being overwhelmed, a concept sometimes referred to as frozen blocks of time (Carney, 2004). For instance, according to Carney, children attempting to process complicated emotions can benefit from the freedom to work through their feelings. Therefore, bibliotherapy involves assisting individuals as they cope with problems and change, and as a tool to encourage personal growth (Carney).

Bibliotherapy can aid in bringing a child's concerns to the forefront, encouraging personal expression, analyzing the child's beliefs and behaviors, identifying with a literary persona, facilitating relaxation (Orton, 1997, as cited in Prater et al., 2006), providing information, giving insight, discovering new interests (Stamps, 2003), prompting communication, presenting new attitudes and values, creating the awareness of universality of experience (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993), encouraging catharsis, and learning and experimenting with solutions in a fun, non-threatening environment (Orton, 1997, as cited in Prater et al.).

Maslow (1954), in his hierarchy of needs (physiological, safety, sense of belonging and love, self-esteem and self-actualization) stressed that it was necessary for each stage to be established before progressing to the next (Carney, 2004). Although Maslow did not stipulate appropriate ages for each level, it seems reasonable that as an individual matures, advanced stages are appropriate (Carney). However, for those experiencing crises such as those involving death or loss, emphases may shift to lower stages on Maslow's hierarchy (Carney). Children, especially, may feel frighteningly vulnerable (Carney).

Literature can be a creative intervention to assist youth in working through social and emotional difficulties (Dole & McMahan, 2005). As indicated by Dole and McMahan, bibliotherapy is appropriate along a wide spectrum, from helping youth work through their everyday problems to meeting special needs of those with significant emotional problems. Similarly, bibliotherapy is appropriate for young children and teens in a classroom setting, promoting developmentally appropriate opportunities for dialogue and problem solving activities (Dole & McMahan).

As Piaget (1952) in his studies of stages in learning found, young children may need concrete explanations. For instance, when working with children grieving the loss of a significant individual in their lives, the word *wake* may invoke images of the deceased person waking up (Carney, 2004). Similarly, young children may not process the concept of death as permanent (Carney). Helping a child understand that the body completely stops working or using the comparison of the metamorphosis of a butterfly may assist children in understanding death and family beliefs that may involve the afterlife (Carney). Piaget is also credited with the thought that play is child's work (Carney). Indeed, play can be a tool in children's ability to process troubling emotional experiences (Carney).

For instance, for a child to work through a death, a 1996 Harvard study (as cited by Carney, 2004) found that children need the following: (a) sufficient information, without which they may be inclined to make up a story, often more scary than real, to fill in missing information; (b) addressing of their fears such as being left uncared for if someone else dies; (c) assurance that the death is not their fault, especially at ages four to five when children typically sense they possess fantastic abilities to affect occurrences; (d) an adult to listen and validate their feelings; and (e) help in dealing with intense emotions that often are too great to express such as

anger, anxiety, sadness, or guilt. Carney also indicated that adults should realize that although it is natural to want to protect a child, one can only help the child express his or her emotions in safe ways such as by drawing, writing, or playing. Bibliotherapy and accompanying activities may provide developmentally appropriate ways for children to process complex thoughts and feelings (Carney).

Just as a void occurs when someone or something of value within a person's universe is gone, children's responses to such loss can occur when they contain their feelings, resulting in their amalgamation in an internal loss pot or holding tank (Berns, 2004). However, according to Berns, for children for whom the loss may be their first such encounter, life experiences may not yet have taught them positive ways in which to cope with loss. Like Harry Potter and many other fictional characters, children and youth often find that grief is a complicated process in which they may feel not only longing and sadness, but also guilt, anger, and regret (Markell & Markell, 2008). The loss, for instance, of parents may be synonymous of the loss of other things such as love, attention, and caring role models (Markell & Markell). Berns also added that children may be afraid to hope again and may fear being devoured by the pain of the loss they presently suffer. Because the adults in their lives may also be experiencing their own feelings of loss and grief, children may find it difficult to turn to others for reassurance (Berns).

Through books children are able to discover appropriate ways to express themselves. For example, in *Tough Boris* (Fox, 1998), Boris, a fearless pirate, cries and cries at the death of his parrot, suggesting that he, even though he is tough, acts like many others who may have lost a pet. Such books are meaningful in helping children understand it is okay to feel and convey grief. However, along with grief can come anger and guilt, such as is examined in *The Accident* (Carrick, 1981) in which Christopher's dog, Bodger, dies. Therefore, many children's books can

help young people recognize and work through not only sadness at the loss of a pet, but also other emotions that may be associated with loss (Corr, 2004).

Educational Goals

For children, the implications on how they may be assisted through bibliotherapy are varied. Bibliotherapy can be an appropriate channel for helping children work through problems and challenges, while simultaneously enhancing academic success and multicultural awareness. For instance, in a school setting, bibliotherapy may be a therapeutic tool used by school counselors that likewise promotes goals of the educational system, making it an especially appropriate intervention for students. Prater et al. (2006) stated that bibliotherapy can be instrumental in helping students vocalize their concerns and talk about problems, examine their thoughts and actions, and gain information useful to problem solving in a way that is relaxing, fun, and helpful in decreasing their anxieties.

Social Values

Because today's students live in a world of uncertainty, children face a myriad of complex situations, from integrating character and values themes such as honesty and respect to serious social issues such as racism, substance abuse, and grief (Stamps, 2003). Developmental bibliotherapy helps to address such concerns before the child actually encounters them, while other uses of bibliotherapy, such as clinical bibliotherapy, help children who are already facing serious problems (Stamps, 2003).

Childhood Fears

Nicholson and Pearson (2003) emphasized that fears once faced by children only when they entered adolescence are now haunting young children. Owen (1998, as cited by Nicholson & Pearson) stated that fears of drugs, weapons, and shootings have replaced animals, monsters,

and frightening dreams in children as young as age seven. However, bibliotherapy provides children with characters with whom they can identify and the opportunity to apply what they learn from such characters into their real life experiences, so that somewhat scary children's literature that includes positive resolutions can actually promote self-assurance rather than anxiety (Nicholson & Pearson).

Multicultural Implications

Bibliotherapy can also be used in promoting multicultural themes in school settings. For example, Thorn and Contreras (2005) offered the reminder that the rise in the United States in recent years of Latino immigrants puts more demands on counselors in school systems to assist through intervention strategies in the transitions faced by these arriving children. Similarly, Lenox (2000) stated that school professionals are confronted with the task of preparing children to succeed in the world that will be their future, a place that is ever more becoming increasingly multiethnic and multicultural.

Literature is a powerful source in helping to promote a better awareness, comprehension, and appreciation of self and others, and of ethnic and cultural diversity (Lenox, 2000). It can help tear down barriers once built by perceived differences and erect bridges based on understanding (Lenox). Therefore, elementary school children in their early developmental stages are at a pivotal time in life to have included in their curriculum topics dealing with respect and appreciation for diversity (Lenox). Storytelling can be the preparation for young people to live in harmony with others from different cultural backgrounds in the dynamic world of the present and that of the future (Lenox). Through a counselor's deliberate selection of literature, children can be exposed to numerous viewpoints, varied traditions, and a host of different beliefs, customs, and ideas (Lenox). Literature can provide children a powerful means of

realizing a future in a world in which the expected way of being involves acceptance of diversity (Lenox).

Metaphors, attitudes, beliefs, expressions, and other nuances are presented in a purer form in multicultural literature, potentially supplying information relating to specific cultures (Freitag, Ottens, & Gross, 1999). Bibliotherapy, itself, is used in many cultural groups, thereby presenting children with culturally-natural coping mechanisms (Freitag et al.). Therefore, as Johnson et al. (2000) pointed out, all young people, including minority children, potentially can gain from bibliotherapy. As stories involve the understanding of self, others, and the story, itself, by augmenting that purpose to include diversity, stories become an agent by which to better understand the diversity of life (Lenox, 2000).

Literary selections appropriate for such goals include works of folktales, legends, myths, and other works of fiction. Through deliberate choosing of books, the helping adult has the unique opportunity to reveal to young people multiple points of view, varying belief systems, and a spectrum of ideas, customs, and traditions, preparing children for a future of hope in an open world (Lennox, 2000).

Types of Literature Suitable for Bibliotherapy with Children

Belcher (1983) described three types of children's literature suitable for bibliotherapy. The oldest, fairy tales, often temper the trials faced by the characters with an ending in which the main character lives happily ever after. Bettelheim (1991) concurred with Belcher's stance on the significance of fairy tales, and stated that this genre, more than any other, begins "where the child really is in his psychological and emotional being" (p. 6). Bettelheim maintained that fairy tales help children understand what is happening inside their conscious selves so that they can

better deal with the activities of the unconscious. Fairy tales pose problems that typically require struggles to overcome (Bettelheim).

The second type of children's literature appropriate for bibliotherapy involves children's classics. Dickens, for example, described challenges children of his own time period faced (Belcher, 1983). Children's classics from the 1800s and early 1900s reveal a time in which children often closely witnessed death, evident in orphaned child protagonists such as Spyri's *Heidi* (1880) and Burnett's Mary in *The Secret Garden* (1911).

A third type of works available for bibliotherapy is modern stories (Belcher, 1983). Belcher stated that contemporary literature can frequently be effectively related to older pieces of writing, often with effective outcomes. For example, the fairy tale *Cinderella* has modern counterparts in stories such as Murphy's 1977 book, *Silver Woven in My Hair* (Belcher, 1983).

Implementation of Bibliotherapy with Children

Implementation of bibliotherapy with children has several formats. For instance, bibliotherapy may be used with an individual child, in a small group or classroom, by a teacher, librarian, or counselor, in a classroom setting, library, or office (Cook et al., 2006). For young people with special needs, audio books, Braille versions of texts, books with large print (Pardeck, 1994), picture books, and books with predictable endings may be helpful (Cook et al.). Goals may include the following: (a) dispersing information and offering insight, (b) promoting discussion, (c) helping a child see alternative solutions, (d) communicating values and attitudes, and (e) helping children see the universality of their individual situations (Pardeck, 1994).

Jackson and Nelson (2002) listed the following ways in which therapists may use childhood literature to benefit their clients: (a) to promote a positive sense of self, (b) to encourage learning about the world in which we live, (c) to aid in coping, (d) to share insights

into difficulties, (e) to affirm the thoughts and emotions of the child, (f) to encourage discussion, (g) to teach awareness of others facing similar trials, (h) to aid in brainstorming possible solutions, (i) to communicate attitudes and values, and (j) to assist the child in finding purpose. In addition, the authors indicated that in school guidance programs, bibliotherapy is a means of enhancing the child's developmental program already in existence by attending to the student's social and affective development (Jackson & Nelson).

Several steps are involved in the process of bibliotherapy. First, the counselor should promote a therapeutic relationship with the child that includes confidence and trust (Pardeck, 1994). Children who do not feel this rapport may have difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings (Prater et al., 2006). Second, various helping adults should be identified such as teachers, social workers, school nurses, counselors, and others who could also be resource individuals for the child (Prater et al.). Third, parents or guardians should be recognized as additional sources of support; however, caution should be exercised if these adults contribute to the child's problem (Prater et al.). Also, the helping adult should define the problem the child is facing, targeting the specific challenges the problem poses for the child (Prater et al.). Next, goals and activities, along with a suitable plan of action, should be structured to deal with the problem (Prater et al.). The helper should evaluate whether bibliotherapy could be useful in helping the child address the problem (Prater et al.). At this stage, also, the adult decides if individual, small group, large group or a classroom guidance setting would be most effective in helping the child tackle the problem (Prater et al.).

Selection of suitable literature. Once the appropriateness of bibliotherapy as an intervention has been determined and the setting has been established, the helper embarks on one of the most critical steps in the bibliotherapy process, selection of appropriate books (Prater et

al., 2006; Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000). For instance, Sridhar and Vaughn (2000) pointed out that the topic of the book chosen should be similar to the child's problem and that the child should be able to identify with the protagonist of the book. Also, Pardeck (1990), as well as Pardeck and Pardeck (1993) reminded counselors to consider not only the child's chronological age, but also his or her emotional age or level of maturity. Pardeck maintained that most youth find characters their own age to be more interesting.

Stamps (2003) suggested that the helping adult select a book with the child (or children, if a group) in mind. Consideration should be given to appealing illustrations, especially in working with the very young (Stamps). Careful selection of literature involving an examination of story content, elements of humor or surprise, and believable literary figures is also imperative (Stamps). During or after the reading, questions are to be asked, not to test the young person on the content, but to ensure identification (Stamps). Time and freedom are given for the child to process the piece and explore opinions, emotions, fears, and outcomes associated with the problem addressed (Stamps). Questions for discussion may be sparked by the reading (Stamps). Time should be given for closure before moving on to another activity (Stamps).

Relating to the age appropriateness of a piece of literature, Pardeck (1990) stated that books suitable for preschoolers need a simple format and plenty of illustrations, whereas books for older children should include more development of the characters. For teenagers, Pardeck suggested the possibility of adolescent novels with more chapters. Pardeck also reminded therapists to be aware of any special needs the child may have pertaining to reading. In addition, he encouraged counselors to consider talking books, or recordings of books, when children might have struggles with reading the texts. Gilles and Pfannenstiel (2000) added that the language and the story itself should be a factor for counselors to consider in selecting appropriate books, as

well as the universal appeal of the book, the essence of the book's meaning, and what responses from the client the book is likely to promote. Oaklander (1988) indicated that different books may be deemed appropriate for different sessions.

In a study involving older youth conducted by E. Jones (2001), children themselves provided the following checklist of suggestions for book selections to be used for bibliotherapy: (a) a story that is easy to read with few overly descriptive passages; (b) a plot told in chronological sequence with a defined setting; (c) more dialogue and less narrative structure; (d) first- or third-person narration throughout; (e) a limited number of child characters; (f) opening chapter sentences that hook the reader; (g) realistic plots; (h) a limited number of pictures, if any, thereby allowing children to create their own visualizations; (i) inclusion of grief both in emotional and behavioral expression; (j) incorporation of some emotional scenes so the reader can express personal grief without losing face; (k) presentation of appropriate levels of information and potential coping tactics the reader can apply; and (l) a hopeful ending; and (m) a hardback copy that the reader will find easier to hold open, especially since most individual healing reading by children takes place when the child is in bed (Jones).

Before a book is used with a child, the counselor should become well acquainted with it (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000). Also, counselors must realize that a particular book will affect children differently, partly because of children's uniquenesses and their individual life experiences (Sridhar & Vaughn). Therefore, some children will appear more moved by a book than other children (Sridhar & Vaughn). Prior to using bibliotherapy, the counselor should first develop rapport with the child in which the presenting problem is discussed openly and the topic explored (Pardeck, 1994). After such time, bibliotherapy may be a useful tool in helping children openly discuss, process, and explore their feelings (Sridhar & Vaughn).

Picture books are often written for younger children and read by or with an adult, while chapter books are typically read by older children, alone (Prater et al., 2006). Book selection should include consideration of the child's reading ability and developmental stage, treatment of the topic of concern, realistic portrayal, believability and literary integrity of the main characters, and literary value (Prater et al.). Pardeck (1994) adds that it is important that the text imparts reasonable hope.

Introducing the book to the child. After careful selection of the reading materials, the helping adult should be sensitive to the child's feelings in presenting the book to the child (Prater et al., 2006). Younger children may be fine with having a single book introduced to them; on the other hand, adolescents may prefer to choose from a number of titles (Prater et al.). Regardless, Sridhar and Vaughn (2000) suggested that the counselor should give the young person some introduction to the book in the early stages of bibliotherapy. This introduction may include discussing the theme of the work and then allowing the youngster to connect with the book by making predictions or looking for similar life experiences (Sridhar & Vaughn). The child may also be encouraged to brainstorm about creative ways that he or she would be interested in portraying the story after the reading is completed (Johnson et. al., 2000).

Reading the selection. While reading, the counselor should assist the child in making identification with the character to whom the child relates (Pardeck, 1990; Nicholson & Pearson, 2003) and help the child to recognize similarities (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000). During this identification process, Pardeck (1994) reminded therapists to be sensitive to the child's needs. Questioning techniques and discussion that aid in the child's self-observation and contemplation are valuable at this point as the counselor guides the young person in gaining insight from the character (Sridhar & Vaughn), such as pointing out the literary character's coping mechanisms.

Then, the child can make connections to his or her own life (Nicholson & Pearson). Questions should include a wide range of various levels of thinking skills including those that require evaluating, synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting (Johnson et. al., 2000). However, it is important that the counselor not encourage any false hope (Pardeck, 1994). With older students who may not read the book all in one sitting, journaling to record thoughts and feelings while reading, collecting quotes from the reading, or both, may be therapeutic and provide insight to both the young adult and the counselor (Johnson et. al.).

Follow-up activities. According to Prater et al. (2006), numerous supportive activities to preface, accompany, and culminate the reading experience are encouraged. Follow-up activities are crucial in culminating the experience for the child as a form of expression of the learning and growth taking place and to encourage the bibliotherapy to be viewed as personal and meaningful (Abdullah, 2002). Activities can be used to supplement the readings and add meaning to the bibliotherapy process (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). The adult may suggest an activity or present several and allow the young person to choose one or more that he or she finds appealing (Pardeck & Pardeck). Activities chosen should be implemented with the goals of giving additional details and insight, encouraging more verbal interaction with the child, discussing attitudes and values, creating the awareness that the child's situation is not unique, and looking for reasonable solutions (Abdullah).

For instance, introducing any new vocabulary words prior to the reading could enhance a child's understanding of the content (Prater et al., 2006). Allowing the child to predict the plot based on available clues from the title, pictures, etc., can help to engage the child (Prater et al.). Older youth may benefit from journaling or collecting quotes as they read (Johnson et al., 2000). After the reading, the child may wish to confirm, modify, or rework his or her initial predictions

of the plot (Prater et al.). Such involvement should allocate occasions for the child to articulate personal feelings about the story or voice questions the child may have (Prater et al.). Some young people find art (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000), puppetry, or creative writing (Pardeck, 1990), of value. Still others may be drawn to games, or other cognitive strategies, or other creative activities; however, the follow-up actions are necessary (Sullivan & Strang, 2003).

For example, the child can compose a “Dear Abby” letter for a literary figure (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Children can also draw scenes from the book, or create a time line (Pardeck & Pardeck; Pardeck, 1990) or a movie script based on the plot of events (Pardeck & Pardeck). Other potential activities include (a) allowing the child to role play or act out powerful scenes from the book, (b) engaging in a children’s round-table discussion related to a choice the literary protagonist has made, (c) using magazine words and pictures to create a collage related to the story’s theme and plot, (d) creating a mobile depicting key events or characters from the work, (e) writing a letter to a book character either from the child or from one literary character to another, (f) discussing character strengths and weaknesses, or (g) keeping a diary of one of the literary figures (Pardeck, 1994). Character weaves, in which the child compares the setting of the literary protagonist to his or her environment by exploring differences in topics such as climate, and population, may help the child feel more connected to the book character (Prater et al., 2006). Writing a new ending or a part II to the story, sculpting or making a poster depicting an element of the book, or listing similarities and differences between themselves and a character are still more activities that can accompany reading (Prater et al.).

Naturally, the child’s age and maturity level should be factors in choosing fitting activities (Pardeck, 1994). However, once expressions of catharsis have been exemplified by the

child, either verbally, written, or in nonverbal forms such as art, the young person may begin realizing insight and healing (Abdullah, 2002). In addition, a post-session evaluation may be helpful, as may be a parent conference (Sullivan & Strang). When used in conjunction with creative follow-up activities that support a tie between the character and the child, children's books become a valuable counseling tool for assisting youth in implementing strategies for dealing with their personal struggles (Nicholson & Pearson, 2003).

Appraisal. The final step in the use of bibliotherapy is to appraise the results the intervention has had on the child (Prater et al., 2006). Each phase of the process should be evaluated, looking for areas where improvements or adjustments might have been made (Prater et al.). Considerations should be in terms of what worked well, as well as what needed modification and alteration (Prater et al.).

Group Work

"The Invitation" by Silverstein (1974, p. 9) is often used as a beginning ritual in many groups. Children should be invited, but never forced to be part of a story group (Berns, 2004). Often, children who may initially sit on the outside of a story group will eventually engage. The counselor's job is to offer an open door, invite members to participate, provide guidance and support (Berns).

Jones (2001) offered the reminder that it is extremely improbable that any two young people will react to a text in the same way. The story, therefore, with which the child identifies, will not be the same as the page's written word, for the child will have impressions created by variables such as the youngster's proficiency of language, cognitive skills, creativity, life experiences, ability to produce visual images of the narrative in his or her mind, and the capability to identify with characters and situational elements of the book (Jones).

Limitations of Bibliotherapy

Although a means by which youth can be helped to identify both internal and external tools and coping strategies (Nicholson & Pearson, 2003), bibliotherapy may be best suited for use in conjunction with other therapeutic methods (Pardeck, 1994). Pardeck went on to state that bibliotherapy is meant to be an adjunct to treatment, not the primary treatment itself. However, Pardeck noted that bibliotherapy is helpful in aiding children in identifying their emotions and for fostering a client's trust with the counselor. In addition, Abdullah (2002) added that while bibliotherapy has obvious value for clients in promoting self-understanding in terms of their individual thoughts, behaviors, and characteristics, the effectiveness of its usage may be somewhat limited by the child's ability level and willingness to participate, along with the availability of materials. Prater et al. (2006) noted that in addition to unavailable literature on certain topics, some students are not willing or ready to read. Abdullah also pointed out that for bibliotherapy to produce maximum benefits, the therapist and the child must be willing to move beyond surface issues. Briggs and Pehrsson (2008) added that a counselor having background knowledge of human development is critical in order to appropriately match the literary selection with the client. They also cautioned that some clients who have a history of academic problems may experience anxiety when introduced to bibliotherapy (Briggs & Pehrsson).

Bibliotherapy Research

According to Adams and Pitre (2000), one of the problems related to bibliotherapy is the limited amount of research that has been done on the topic. Prater et al. (2006) stated that although many professionals support the utilization of bibliotherapy in school settings, more research is needed to confirm the effectiveness of bibliotherapy, especially in regard to juvenile literature. However, a 1988 study by Starker (as cited by Adams & Pitre) questioned

psychologists concerning their attitudes, practices, and experiences with use of self-help books. A related study by Starker, also in 1988 (as cited by Adams & Pitre), surveyed psychologists on their attitudes, theoretical orientations, practice, and experience involving the use of bibliotherapy with clients. Sixty-nine percent of those responding indicated that some clients with whom they had used bibliotherapy had benefited from the interventions (as cited by Adams & Pitre). A study by Adams and Pitre (2000) surveyed therapists in Ontario and found that 68% of those responding indicated that they recommended books to clients.

Brewster (2008b), in a qualitative study in the United Kingdom, concluded that most depressed people could benefit from bibliotherapy, and that the infrastructure needed to supply reading materials was in place through public libraries. Apodaca and Miller (2003) conducted a meta-analysis involving the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in working with individuals who had problems with alcohol. Their study indicated that bibliotherapy is likely to be helpful to problem drinkers (Apodaca & Miller). Studies involving bibliotherapy for children include an examination of multicultural themes of fictional bibliotherapeutic children's books for children of divorce (Freitag et al., 1999). Freitag et al., stated that indigenous literature related to divorce often contains information as to how children in different cultures may experience and cope with the divorce of their parents, citing differences, for instance, involving the degree to which authors presented out-of-wedlock relationships as socially acceptable.

The literature indicates that bibliotherapy is a widely used helping technique that is recommended for use by professional school counselors. Yet, little is known about the extent to which professional school counselors use bibliotherapy in their work. Attitude theory suggests that persons are more likely to engage in activities toward which they have positive attitudes. As Van Overwalle and Sibley (2005) indicated, attitudes are subjective, evaluative, and predispose

an individual to act in a particular manner (Van Overwalle & Siebler). For professional school counselors, their attitudes toward bibliotherapy may influence the extent to which they use bibliotherapy in their work with children. This study will address a gap in knowledge about professional school counselors' use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

Current Study

This research investigated the extent to which school counselors use bibliotherapy and if their use of bibliotherapy differed when compared by (a) the education level of the counselors, (b) the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (c) the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors (d) the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and (e) the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

Furthermore, this research explored variables that might predict the counselors' use of bibliotherapy. The predictors variables used included (a) years of experience as a school counselor, (b) the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy, (c) the number of children served for whom English is not their primary language spoken in the home, (d) the number of children served who have disabilities, (e) the number of courses in the counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and (f) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed the counselors to information about bibliotherapy.

This research also explored variables that might predict professional school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy. The following variables were used as predictor variables: (a) years of experience as a school counselor, (b) the average age of the children served by the counselors, (c) the number of children served for whom English is not the primary language, (d) the number of children served who have disabilities, (e) the number of courses in the counselors'

graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and (f) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed the counselors to information about bibliotherapy.

Years of Experience as a School Counselor

In a study of the use of bibliotherapy in clinical practices, Smith and Burkhalter (1987 as cited in Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993) found that more experienced therapists were more likely to use bibliotherapy. Also, a study by Adams and Pitre (2000) found that among therapists and counselors in Ontario, those with more than 10 years experience in counseling were significantly more likely ($p < 0.05$) to use books with clients than those with less experience. Years of experience was assessed by a question asking the length of time each participant has served as a school counselor.

Exposure to Bibliotherapy

Van Overwalle and Siebler (2005) indicated that learning is enhanced as existing knowledge is modified to include fresh information provided by one's environment. Carrier (2009) stated that two factors contributing to behaviors are knowledge and attitude. Heuristic processing suggests that attitudes can be impacted by positive experiences and salient situations in one's past or based on information from perceived experts, trusted individuals, or one with whom the person has had a pleasant relationship (Van Overwalle & Siebler). Therefore, the extent to which school counselors had been exposed to bibliotherapy was considered in terms of the impact this might have on professional school counselors' use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

The school counselors' exposure to bibliotherapy was measured by questions asking (a) the number of workshops, conferences, and other continuing education opportunities the

participant had attended in the past year that related to bibliotherapy; (b) the number of courses in their graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy; and (c) the participant's highest level of education, as the higher the earned degree, the more opportunities the participant would have had for exposure to bibliotherapy in a course.

Age of Children Served

The average age of the children served by the counselors and the counselors' work setting was included in the study as the literature suggested that bibliotherapy is appropriate for use in every school grade (Abdullah, 2002). It was anticipated that the use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy might differ depending on the school setting. For example, *The ASCA National Model* (Bowers & Hatch, 2005) recommended that school counselors working with elementary students spend a larger percentage of their time involved in classroom guidance activities than the percentage of time that school counselors serving in middle schools or high schools were recommended to spend in classroom guidance. Therefore, elementary school counselors might have had more opportunities to use bibliotherapy than counselors serving middle- and high-school students. The average age of the students served by the counselors was used as a predictor of both use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy. If school counselors have had more opportunities to use bibliotherapy with younger children, then the average age of the children served might be predictors of their use of bibliotherapy, as well as their attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

Student Socioeconomic Status

The literature suggested that increasing numbers of students in U. S. schools are at greater risk of school failure because of social, economic, and family stress factors (Prater et al., 2006). Literature can be used in bibliotherapy to aid young people in allowing them to deal with

sensitive concerns related to these problems (Prater et al.). Economically disadvantaged students may benefit from bibliotherapy not only in helping them deal with their real life struggles, but also by exposing these students to reading, literature, and the power of books (Prater et al.). No research, however, has examined whether or not school counselors' use of bibliotherapy differs depending on the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children they serve. Furthermore, no research has explored the relationships that may exist between students' socioeconomic status and school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

Students with Disabilities

The literature suggested that school counselors can use bibliotherapy in working with students who have disabilities (Cook et al., 2006). Furthermore, bibliotherapy is often used as a method for helping students without disabilities comprehend the variety of disabilities that may exist in their class, school, or other environments (Cook et al.). By aiding in reducing students' sense of discomfort when confronted with differences in their classmates, students are more likely to include others who have disabilities (Cook et. al.). Although bibliotherapy has been described as having value for use with students with disabilities, no research has explored the relationship between the number of students with disabilities served and school counselors' use of bibliotherapy. Furthermore, no research has investigated whether attitudes towards bibliotherapy are influenced by the number of students with disabilities served by school counselors. This research study, therefore, examined the extent to which the number of children with disabilities served predicted school counselors' use of bibliotherapy and their attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

Race and Language

According to Cook et al. (2006), bibliotherapy is a useful tool for working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. When providing bibliotherapy, it is important to have a wide variety of multicultural literature to ensure that every child views some character in a book who looks like himself or herself (Powell-Brown, 2006). Children need to be able to see themselves in both the appearance and the lives of the protagonists of the books they read (Powell-Brown). According to McCoy and McKay (2006), literature crafted through a cultural lens can be motivational. The occasion to view one's personal experience as normal supports the concept that culturally affirming bibliotherapy should be considered as a therapeutic intervention to be used with children and youth of diverse cultural heritages (McCoy and McKay).

No research has examined relationships that may exist between race, language status, and the use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy among school counselors. This research explored whether school counselors differ in their use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy depending upon the race of the majority of the children they serve. Furthermore, the number of children served for whom English is not their primary language was also included to help predict the school counselors' use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

Perceived Reading Level of Students

The increase of reading problems in the United States has caused a sense of alarm in adolescent literacy that demands immediate solutions (Fisher and Ivey, 2006). According to Fisher and Ivey, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) information from 2002 indicates that almost 70% of the 8th grade students tested could not tell the purpose of a reading passage and give details and examples to support their opinions. Konrad, Helf, and Itoi (2007)

maintain that employing a strategic approach in the selection and use of children's literature in the school setting can address both self-determination and literacy skills in students.

Teachers have noted that at-risk students tend to avoid reading (Powell-Brown, 2006). According to Schreur (2006) effective programs for at risk students involve placing the students in a positive, caring environment, and helping them engage in and identify with the curriculum. As students analyze characters in literature, they begin to think critically about themselves, as well (Schreur). Engaging in bibliotherapy can help students understand and solve problems while simultaneously improving reading comprehension (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000).

In order for the child or adolescent to recognize maximum benefits from bibliotherapy, one of the responsibilities of the counselor is to choose books appropriate for the reading level of the students (Prater et al., 2006). However, many youth find reading difficult and disheartening (Powell-Brown, 2006). Young people who struggle to read are typically insecure in their ability and may be reluctant to read (Powell-Brown). No research had previously examined the relationship between perceived reading levels of students and the use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy among school counselors. This research study, therefore, explored whether school counselors differ in their use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy depending on the perceived reading levels of their students.

Gender of the Students

Increasingly, in the United States, young boys are indicating that they do not enjoy reading (Sax, 2007). According to Carrier (2009), research on gender differences as related to performance in school is evolving. In traditional classroom experiences, girls tend to perform at higher levels (Carrier). A study conducted by Carrier suggested that boys' scores for comfort level in the traditional classroom were lower than girls'. Research on gender differences has

shown that girls are described as more likely than boys to be verbal-emotive, and possess the abilities to multi-task and sit still, descriptors more suited to traditional classroom learning (Carrier). On the other hand, boys tend to be more physically aggressive, impulsive, and drawn to special-kinesthetic learning (Buzhigeeva, 2004; Gurian & Stevens, 2005; King & Gurian, 2006; Van de gaer et al., 2007; as cited by Carrier).

From 1980 to 2004 the National Education Association (NEA) conducted a demographically representative study of America's children and youth that suggested that girls are more likely to read than boys (Sax, 2007). The study also seemed to indicate that the gender gap has increased to the point that reading for enjoyment has turned out to be an indicator of gender identity (Sax). Additionally, boys' brains develop differently from girls', and for many boys it may not be developmentally fitting to read at young ages (Sax). For instance, it appears that the language center in the brains of many five-year-old boys look similar to those of a three-and-a-half year old girl (Sax).

Although studies have suggested that gender differences related to reading exist, no prior research was found that explored the relationships that might exist between gender and the use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy among school counselors. Therefore, this study investigated whether school counselors differ in their use of and attitudes toward bibliotherapy depending upon the gender of the majority of the children they serve.

Other Data to Be Collected

Demographic information about the counselor and the students served was also collected to describe the sample population. Therefore, questions involving the gender, age, and school setting of the counselor were included in order to give information related to the population for the study.

Conclusion

The literature indicates that bibliotherapy is a tool appropriate for use with children. The research related to bibliotherapy has been scant, particularly with its regard to use in school settings. No literature was found describing the extent to which bibliotherapy is used with school counselors in their work with the children they serve. Therefore, this study will contribute to the existing professional literature by addressing these groups in regard to school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy and the frequency with which they use this intervention.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

While bibliotherapy may be helpful in counseling children, counselors may differ in whether they use bibliotherapy as an intervention with children. This study examined school counselors' attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. Specifically, this study proposed to determine (a) if school counselors differ in their use of bibliotherapy when compared by characteristics of the counselors and the children they serve, (b) if school counselors differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by characteristics of the counselors and the children they serve, and (c) if selected student and counselor characteristics predict the counselors' use of bibliotherapy and their attitudes toward bibliotherapy.

Research Questions

The study examined the following research questions:

1. Do school counselors differ in their use of bibliotherapy with students when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors?
2. Do school counselors differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the

race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors?

3. Do school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy, years served as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy singularly or in combination predict their use of bibliotherapy?

4. Do years as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, and the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy singularly or in combination predict their attitudes toward bibliotherapy?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

H₀₁: School counselors will not differ in their use of bibliotherapy with students when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

H₀₂: School counselors will not differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

H₀₃: School counselors' use of bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by their attitudes toward bibliotherapy, their years of experience as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

H₀₄: School counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by years as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

Participants

Participants were members of the Alabama School Counseling Association (ALSCA) using a membership list provided by the Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA). Participants in the study included 870 ALSCA members.

Instrumentation

The data were collected using an instrument developed for this study, the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale. The Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale was constructed based upon review of the literature about bibliotherapy. The instrument was a 5 point Likert scale with possible responses ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The items represent attitudes toward bibliotherapy as expressed by perceptions of bibliotherapy as a positive therapeutic tool for use with children, interest in bibliotherapy and the sharing of bibliotherapy resources, and the belief that reading is important in the development of children.

The development of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale began with the development of a pool of 40 potential items; however, 15 items were removed as being too similar, resulting in an initial scale of 25 items. Next, the scale was reviewed by three professional counselors, each chosen for his or her experience in the use of bibliotherapy with children. The three expert reviewers independently evaluated the 25 items on the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale and submitted written suggestions to the researcher. After reading the reviews, two items were removed from the scale, bringing the number of items on the initial instrument to 23.

A pilot study was conducted to explore the psychometric properties of the instrument. Prior to data collection for the pilot study, the university Internal Review Board was sent a copy of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale and a draft of a cover letter to be sent to participants, along with an explanation of the intended use, participants, and research project. The Internal Review Board approved the instrument, letter, and the pilot study.

The initial scale was sent to 75 members of the Alabama School Counselor Association (ALSCA) and 25 members of the Alabama Mental Health Counselors Association (ALMHCA)

using a membership list provided by the Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA). These two divisions of ALCA were chosen because their members would be likely to work with child clients. Selection of pilot study participants was random. The 100 randomly selected members of ALCA were sent by U. S. postal mail the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale, a cover letter, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of the completed instrument. The participants were asked to respond to the items of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale using a 5-point Likert scale with the following values: 1 (*Strongly Disagree*), 2 (*Disagree*), 3 (*Neither Agree nor Disagree*), 4 (*Agree*) and 5 (*Strongly Agree*). For the pilot study, possible scores could range from one to 115, with higher scores representing more positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy. The pilot study resulted in 34 returned surveys, 32 of which were usable.

The psychometric properties of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale were examined using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*. Internal consistency was assessed using item-to-total correlations. The item-to-total correlations of the pilot study data ranged from .54 to .92 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Item to Total Correlations

Item	Correlation with Total Score
1	.647**
2	.538*
3	.548*
4	.626**
5	.659**
6	.669**
7	.727**
8	.650**
9	.684**
10	.653**
11	.723**
12	.779**
13	.548*
14	.730**
15	.913**
16	.855**
17	.680**
18	.671**
19	.744**
20	.768**
21	.538**
22	.787**
23	.786**

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

All item-to-total correlations were significant ($p < .05$), indicating that the items appeared to be measuring the construct, attitudes toward bibliotherapy. In addition, a Cronbach alpha reliability analysis using all 23 items resulted in a reliability coefficient of .95.

Pearson Product Moment correlations were used to examine inter-item correlations (see Appendix A). Multiple items were highly correlated ($> .70$). A review of these items resulted in three items being removed from the instrument due to their similarity to other items in the scale. The first item removed was item number 6, “I am interested in learning more about

bibliotherapy.” The next to be removed was item number 9, “I am interested in talking with other counselors about the use of bibliotherapy.” The final item removed was item number 14, “Children’s literature is a helpful tool in working with some children.” The removal of these items resulted in reducing the number of items to 20 (see Appendix B). For the final instrument, scores could range from 20 to 100, with higher scores representing more positive attitudes. A Cronbach alpha reliability analysis of the 20 retained items yielded a reliability coefficient of .94.

In terms of face validity, the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale appears to be measuring what it purports to measure. The use of the literature to develop the initial items, as well as the involvement of expert review, lends credibility to the content validity of the instrument. The item-to-total correlations suggest that the instrument measures the construct, attitudes toward bibliotherapy. Data from the final study will be subjected to factor analysis for further exploration of the construct validity of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of .94 shows that the instrument has excellent reliability.

In addition to the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale, the study included a 17 item survey asking for characteristics of the counselors, their use of bibliotherapy, and characteristics of the children they serve (See Appendix C).

Methods

Prior to data collection, the university Internal Review Board was supplied with a copy of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale, the 17 item survey, and a cover letter (See Appendixes A, B). Upon the approval of the university Internal Review Board, the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale, the 17 item survey, a cover letter, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of the survey was sent by U. S. postal mail to each participant.

Data Analysis

Hypotheses One and Two were tested using a 2 (education) X 2 (predominate student gender) X 2 (predominate student socioeconomic status) X 2 (predominate student racial/ethnic group) X 3 (perceived student reading ability) ANOVA for each hypothesis. Counselors ($n = 3$) who indicated that their education was “other” were not included in the analyses. Level of education was collapsed into two categories: (a) counselors with master’s degrees and (b) counselors with post-master’s degrees. Predominant student gender was categorized by the majority gender ($> 50\%$ male or female) of the children served. Predominant student socioeconomic status was based on whether or not 50% or more of the students qualified for free or reduced lunches and was categorized as “Yes” or “No.” Predominant student racial/ethnic groups were collapsed into two categories (White and nonWhite), and this variable was defined as having a student body in which more than 50% of the students fit into either of these two categories. Perceived reading ability was defined as (a) below grade level, (b) on grade level, or (c) above grade level.

Hypothesis Three was tested using stepwise regression analysis. The outcome variable was the school counselors’ use of bibliotherapy as measured by the number of times they used bibliotherapy in their work with children in their schools during the past 12 months. The predictor variables were (a) attitudes toward bibliotherapy, (b) their years of experience as a school counselor, (c) the average age of the children served by the school counselor, (d) the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, (e) the number of children served who have disabilities, (f) the number of courses in the school counselors’ graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or (g) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

Hypothesis Four was also tested using stepwise regression analysis. The outcome variable was the attitudes toward bibliotherapy as measured by the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale. Predictor variables were (a) years as a school counselor, (b) the average age of the children served by the school counselor, (c) the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, (d) the number of children served who have disabilities, (e) the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or (f) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study examined school counselor attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

H₀₁: School counselors will not differ in their use of bibliotherapy with students when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

H₀₂: School counselors will not differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by the education level of the counselors, the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors.

H₀₃: School counselors' use of bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by their attitudes toward bibliotherapy, their years of experience as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

H₀₄: School counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by years as a school counselor, the average age of the children served by the school counselor, the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, the number of children served who have disabilities, the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy.

Participants

Participants invited to take part in the study were members of the Alabama School Counseling Association (ALSCA) using a membership list provided by the Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA). The population was all 870 members of ALSCA. Each participant was mailed a survey packet that included a letter of consent, a 17 item survey, a copy of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale, and a return envelope. Of the 870 packets that were mailed to members, 269 were returned. Of those returned, 19 were deemed unusable due to the responder indicating that he or she was not currently serving as a school counselor. These 19 surveys were excluded from the study. This left 250 surveys for a usable response rate of 29%.

The majority ($n = 199$) of the counselors were female; the remainder ($n = 12$) were male. Thirty-nine participants chose not to indicate their gender. Racial/ethnic identification was as follows: White ($n = 208$), African American ($n = 35$), and Other ($n = 5$). Four of the five participants who selected "Other" specified a particular racial/ethnic group. Two of the participants wrote in "Asian" or "Amerasian." One participant wrote in "American Indian." One participant wrote in "White/Hispanic." Two individuals did not respond to the question regarding racial/ethnic group.

The counselors ranged in age from 26 to 67 ($M = 47.09$, $SD = 10.45$), with five not providing their ages. The counselors were also asked to indicate the number of years they had worked as school counselors. The number of years worked as a school counselor ranged from 1 to 35 ($M = 11.39$, $SD = 7.58$). Nine participants did not respond to this item.

The highest level of education was reported by 247 of the participants. The majority ($n = 185$) had master's degrees, followed by educational specialist degrees ($n = 51$) and doctoral degrees ($n = 8$). Three individuals marked "Other" as their highest level of education.

The counselors were asked two questions involving their work settings: (a) grade levels served, and (b) school type. In regard to grade levels served, 108 of the counselors indicated that they worked in a school that served only elementary students, 26 indicated that their school served only middle school students, and 63 indicated that their school served only high school students. Twenty-seven of the participants indicated that they worked in a K-12 or a P-12 school setting. Twenty four participants reported their school setting as "Other Combination." Two participants did not respond to this item. Types of school setting were as follows: (a) public school ($n = 231$), (b) private school ($n = 10$), and parochial school ($n = 4$). Two individuals did not respond to this item.

Counselors were also asked which racial/ethnic group represented the majority of the children they served. One hundred eighty-four identified "White" as the racial/ethnic group of the majority of the children they served, while 58 participants signified that the majority of the children they served were African American. One participant marked "Hispanic/Latina/Latino." Seven participants did not respond to this item.

To determine the socio-economic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, participants were asked whether or not 50 percent or more of the children they serve

qualified for free or reduced lunches. The majority ($n = 134$) responded “Yes” and 110 answered “No.” Six participants did not respond to this item.

The counselors were asked the typical reading ability of the children they serve. Typical reading abilities reported were as follows: (a) on grade level ($n = 167$), (b) below grade level ($n = 41$), and (c) above grade level ($n = 33$). Nine participants did not respond to this item.

The counselors were also questioned regarding the gender of the majority of the students they served. Most ($n = 111$) reported the majority of the children they served were female, and 82 indicated that they served more male students. Fifty-seven participants did not respond to this item.

The participants were asked how many times they had used bibliotherapy during the past 12 months. Use ranged from 0 to 700 times ($M = 31.62$, $SD = 75.31$). Twenty-one participants did not respond. Also, the counselors were asked how many workshops, conferences, and other continuing education opportunities they had attended during the last 12 months that involved topics related to bibliotherapy. Answers ranged from 0 to 7 ($M = .67$, $SD = .98$). Seven counselors did not respond to this item.

When asked how many children they had served in the past 12 months for whom English was not the primary language, responses ranged from 0 to 946 ($M = 201.09$, $SD = 72.40$). Ten counselors did not respond to this item. In regard to how many courses in their graduate studies exposed them to bibliotherapy, responses ranged from 0 to 30 ($M = 1.31$, $SD = 2.31$). Fifteen did not respond to this item. The counselors were also asked how many children having a disability they had served in the past 12 months. Responses ranged from 0 to 500 ($M = 34.35$, $SD = 48.04$), with 15 counselors not responding to this item. Finally, the counselors were asked the average

age of the children served. The range was 5 to 18 ($M = 11.22$, $SD = 3.50$). Nineteen counselors did not respond to this item.

Instrument Validation

Using data from the current study, the psychometric properties of the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale were explored using factor analysis. Specifically, principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to assess the construct validity of the instrument. The factor analysis indicated that the instrument is a robust measure of attitudes toward bibliotherapy. The results of the factor analysis can be found in Table 2.

Using the criteria of Eigen values > 1 , three factors were identified, with items associated with each factor having factor loadings of .40 or higher. These three factors accounted for 69.86% of the variance associated with the participants' responses to the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale. Factor One was titled Efficacy of Bibliotherapy, Factor Two was titled Counselor use of Bibliotherapy, and Factor Three was titled Counselor Interest in Bibliotherapy. Except for item 14, all items were clearly identified with only one factor. Item 14 loaded on both Factors One and Two, with the strongest association being with Factor Two. In addition to factor analysis, the reliability of the instrument was also assessed using results from the current study. The reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach's alpha of .94.

Table 2

Factor Analysis Results for the Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor One</u>	<u>Factor Two</u>	<u>Factor Three</u>
I believe that children can gain insight from fictional characters	.85		
I believe that children can learn alternate solutions to their own problems from fictional children	.81		
I believe that children can often identify with fictional children who are facing similar problems	.79		
Children can learn meaningful problems-solving techniques from children's literature	.76		
Bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns	.73		
I see using children's literature in counseling as promoting children's well being	.64		
I find that many children enjoy stories	.62		
Bibliotherapy can address academic concerns	.61		
Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children	.60		
Children's literature is a favorite tool in my work with children		.85	
I own children's books that I can use as a resource in my work		.84	
I often use children's books in my work with children		.83	
I have used supplementary activities related to books in my work with children		.79	
I am familiar with children's literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling		.76	
I find that many children appreciate the inclusion of children's stories in their sessions	.40	.73	
I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other counselors			.84
I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested counselors			.82
I am interested in learning more about supplemental activities (e.g., art, diaries) to be used in conjunction with bibliotherapy			.81
I am interested in lists of book titles appropriate for specific problems that children may present in therapy			.74
Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me			.69

Results

The counselors' use of bibliotherapy ranged from zero to 700 times in the past 12 months ($M = 31.62$, $SD = 75.31$). Mean responses by use can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Use by Counselor and Student Characteristics

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Education		
Master's Degree	32.63	68.03
Post-Master's Degree	29.63	98.42
Student Gender		
Male	44.97	85.11
Female	14.46	34.40
Student Socioeconomic Status		
Full Lunch	38.57	94.68
Free or Reduced Lunch	27.06	57.69
Student Racial/Ethnic Group		
White	35.47	83.08
Other	21.17	47.05
Student Perceived Reading Ability		
Below grade level	12.58	34.92
On Grade Level	39.26	87.85
Above Grade Level	18.40	29.58

Hypothesis One was tested using a 2 (education) X 2 (predominate student gender) X 2 (predominate student socioeconomic status) X 2 (predominate student racial/ethnic group) X 3 (perceived student reading ability) ANOVA. The results of the ANOVA can be found in Table 4. The counselors' use of bibliotherapy differed significantly on one variable: predominant

gender of the students served. School counselors who served predominately boys ($M = 44.97$, $SD = 85.12$) used bibliotherapy more often than those who served primarily girls ($M = 14.45$, $SD = 34.50$).

Table 4

ANOVA Results for Use of Bibliotherapy

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η_p^2	<i>p</i>
Education	1	1.21	.007	.274
Student Gender	1	9.73*	.056	.002*
Socioeconomic Status	1	.51	.003	.475
Student Racial/ethnic Group	1	.70	.004	.405
Student Reading Ability	2	1.05	.013	.354
Error	164			
Total	171			

* $p < .01$

The counselors attitudes toward bibliotherapy scores ranged from 29 to 100 ($M = 84.39$, $SD = 11.89$). Mean responses by attitudes can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Mean Attitudes by Counselor and Student Characteristics

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Education		
Master's Degree	84.82	12.28
Post-Master's Degree	84.02	10.66
Student Gender		
Male	87.94	10.14
Female	81.28	13.08
Student Socioeconomic Status		
Full Lunch	84.72	12.03
Free or Reduced Lunch	84.51	11.89
Student Racial/Ethnic Group		
White	84.72	12.11
Other	83.51	11.40
Student Perceived Reading Ability		
Below grade level	81.49	12.46
On Grade Level	85.28	12.46
Above Grade Level	83.84	10.73

Hypothesis Two was tested using a 2 (education) X 2 (predominate student gender) X 2 (predominate student socioeconomic status) X 2 (predominate student racial/ethnic group) X 3 (perceived student reading ability) ANOVA. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 6. One variable was significant: predominant gender of the students served. School counselors who served predominately boys ($M = 87.94$, $SD = 10.14$) had more positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy those who served primarily girls ($M = 81.28$, $SD = 13.08$).

Table 6

ANOVA Results for Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η_p^2	<i>p</i>
Education	1	.021	.000	.886
Student Gender	1	13.55	.075	.000*
Socioeconomic Status	1	.003	.000	.958
Racial/ethnic Group	1	.347	.002	.557
Reading Ability	2	.500	.006	.608
Error	164			
Total	171			

**p* < .001

Hypothesis 3 was tested using stepwise regression analysis (see Table 7). Only one variable was found to predict the counselors’ use of bibliotherapy: The average age of the children served. As the age of the children served increased, the use of bibliotherapy decreased. This variable accounted for 9% of the variance associated with the counselors’ use of bibliotherapy. Table 7

Predictors of Counselors’ Use of Bibliotherapy

Variable	<i>R</i> ²	β	<i>SEB</i>	<i>t</i>
Average Age	.09	-6.71	1.57	-4.26*

**p* < .001

Note: Variables not included in the model were attitudes toward bibliotherapy, years of experience, the number of children served in the past 12 months for whom English was not the primary language spoken in the home, the number of students served in the past 12 months with disabilities, the number of graduate school courses exposing the counselors to bibliotherapy, and the number of continuing education opportunities about bibliotherapy to which the counselors were exposed in the past 12 months.

Hypothesis Four was tested using stepwise regression analysis (see Table 8). Two variables were found to predict the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy: (a) the average age of the children served, and (b) the number of continuing education activities related to bibliotherapy in which the counselors participated in the past 12 months. As the age of the children served increased, the attitudes toward bibliotherapy decreased. This variable accounted for 26% of the variance associated with the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy. The number of continuing education activities explained an additional 2% of the variance in attitudes toward bibliotherapy. As the number of continuing education activities increased, attitudes toward bibliotherapy increased.

Table 8

Predictors of Counselors' Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy

Variable	<i>R</i> ²	<i>β</i>	<i>SEB</i>	<i>t</i>
Average Age	.26	-1.53	.20	-7.500*
Continuing Education	.02	2.00	.74	2.725**

p* < .001, *p* < .01

Note: Variables not included in the model were years of experience, the number of children served in the past 12 months for whom English was not the primary language spoken in the home, the number of students with disabilities served in the past 12 months, and the number of graduate school courses exposing the counselors to bibliotherapy.

Summary

This study examined school counselors' attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. The counselors' use of bibliotherapy differed significantly on one variable: predominant gender of the students served, with counselors who served predominantly boys using bibliotherapy significantly more often than those who served primarily girls. The counselors' attitudes toward

bibliotherapy also differed on one variable: predominant gender of the students served. School counselors who served predominately boys had significantly more positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy than school counselors who served primarily girls.

Only one variable was found to significantly predict the counselors' use of bibliotherapy: the average age of the children served. As the age of the children served increased, the use of bibliotherapy decreased. Finally, two variables were found to significantly predict the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy: (a) the average age of the children served, and (b) the number of continuing education activities related to bibliotherapy in which the counselors participated in the past 12 months. As the age of the children served increased, the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy decreased. As the number of continuing education activities increased, counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy also increased.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bibliotherapy is a counseling intervention that may be appropriate for use in working in school settings with school-age children (Abdullah, 2002; Cook et al., 2006; Gladding, 2005). School counselors often provide the first counseling services that many children encounter (Erford, 2007). Although bibliotherapy is considered to be suitable for use in school settings (Abdullah; Cook et al.; Gladding), little is known about the extent to which school counselors use bibliotherapy in their work. Also, no research has been identified that explores school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy. Therefore, this study examined the attitudes that school counselors have toward bibliotherapy and their use of this intervention.

The study examined (a) if school counselors differed in their use of bibliotherapy when compared by characteristics of the counselors and the children they serve, (b) if school counselors differed in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by characteristics of the counselors and the children they serve, and (c) if selected student and counselor characteristics predicted the counselors' use of bibliotherapy and their attitudes toward bibliotherapy. Participants in the study were members of the Alabama School Counseling Association (ALSCA) using a membership list provided by the Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA).

The first null hypothesis was as follows: School counselors will not differ in their use of bibliotherapy with students when compared by (a) the education level of the counselors, (b) the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (c) the socioeconomic status of

the majority of the children served by the counselors, (d) the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and (e) the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors. The counselors' use of bibliotherapy differed significantly on one variable: predominant gender of the students served. School counselors who served predominately boys used bibliotherapy more often than those who served primarily girls.

The second null hypothesis was the following: School counselors will not differ in their attitudes toward bibliotherapy when compared by (a) the education level of the counselors, (b) the gender of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (c) the socioeconomic status of the majority of the children served by the counselors, (d) the race of the majority of the children served by the counselors, and (e) the perceived typical reading ability of the children served by the counselors. One variable was significant: predominant gender of the students served. School counselors who served predominately boys used bibliotherapy more often than those who served primarily girls.

The third null hypothesis was as follows: School counselors' use of bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by (a) their attitudes toward bibliotherapy, (b) their years of experience as a school counselor, (c) the average age of the children served by the school counselor, (d) the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, (e) the number of children served who have disabilities, (f) the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or (g) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy. Only one variable was found to predict the counselors' use of bibliotherapy: The average age of the children served. As the age of the children served increased, the use of bibliotherapy decreased.

The fourth null hypothesis was the following: School counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy will not be predicted, singularly or in combination, by (a) years experience as a school counselor, (b) the average age of the children served by the school counselor, (c) the number of children for whom English is not the primary language, (d) the number of children served who have disabilities, (e) the number of courses in the school counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy, or (f) the number of continuing education experiences in the past 12 months that exposed school counselors to bibliotherapy. Two variables were found to predict the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy: (a) the average age of the children served, and (b) the number of continuing education activities related to bibliotherapy in which the counselors participated in the past 12 months. As the age of the children served increased, the counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy decreased. As the number of continuing education activities increased, counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy increased.

Discussion

Previous research (Van Overwalle & Siebler, 2005) involving attitude theory suggested that persons are more likely to engage in activities toward which they have positive attitudes. As Van Overwalle and Siebler indicated, attitudes are subjective, evaluative, and predispose an individual to act in a particular manner. The current study explored whether professional school counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy predicted the extent to which they use bibliotherapy in their work with children. Given the theoretical association between attitudes and engagement in activities, it was expected that attitudes toward bibliotherapy would be predictive of use. However, in this study, attitudes were not a significant predictor of counselors' use of bibliotherapy. Some counselors who had positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy did not indicate a high amount of use of bibliotherapy. This could be explained by the age of students the

counselors served. To support this idea, some counselors who currently work with older students wrote notes on their surveys that they had previously worked in elementary schools where they used bibliotherapy more often. This is sustained by the findings of the current study which indicated that age of the children served was a predictor of not only attitudes toward bibliotherapy, but use, as well. In addition, the *ASCA National Model* (Bowers & Hatch, 2005) and the *Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Alabama Public Schools (State Plan)* (Alabama State Department of Education, 2003) both suggest that counselors in elementary schools spend a larger percentage of time in classroom guidance activities than counselors serving middle school or high school students. Additionally, some counselors wrote in on their surveys that their prescribed duties left little time for the use of bibliotherapy. Therefore, counselors' duties with younger children may provide more opportunity for use of bibliotherapy.

Next, prior research (Smith & Burkhalter, as cited in Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Adams & Pitre, 2000) found that more experienced therapists were more likely to use bibliotherapy than therapists with less experience. Therefore, this study examined whether years experience would serve as a predictor for counselor attitudes toward or use of bibliotherapy. In this study, years of experience did not act as a predictor for school counselors' attitudes toward or use of bibliotherapy. There may be increases in the scope of children's literature suitable for bibliotherapy presently available with which recent graduates may have come in contact. Certainly there has been an increase in the amount of therapeutic children's literature suitable for use by school counselors in recent years. Likewise, counselors completing recent counselor education programs of study may have encountered more children's literature either suitable for bibliotherapy or written specifically with a therapeutic intent than more seasoned counselors

encountered in their earlier studies. If so, the veteran counselors may have found other reliable methods for managing children's presenting concerns.

Van Overwalle and Siebler (2005) found that information from perceived experts, trusted individuals, or one with whom the person has had a pleasant relationship positively influences attitudes. Also, Carrier (2009) found that a person's knowledge and attitudes can promote positive behaviors. Thus, the current study explored school counselors' exposure to bibliotherapy by questions asking (a) the number of workshops, conferences, and other continuing education opportunities the counselor had attended during the past year that related to bibliotherapy; (b) the number of courses in counselors' graduate studies that exposed them to bibliotherapy; and (c) the counselors' highest level of education, because as the higher the earned degree, the more opportunities for exposure to bibliotherapy in coursework. Only one of these three variables was a significant predictor for counselors' attitudes: the number of continuing education activities. As the number of continuing education activities increased, counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy increased. This was an expected finding. The finding that exposure to bibliotherapy in formal coursework did not predict use was unexpected. Perhaps coursework that references bibliotherapy does not always provide the same level of exposure and promotion that a continuing education opportunity focusing on bibliotherapy might. Perhaps workshops and conferences may examine suitable materials for bibliotherapy more closely than a course schedule might allow.

Prior research involving gender differences, such as a study by Sax (2007), suggested that boys' brains develop differently from girls', so that for many boys it may not be developmentally fitting to read at young ages. The study by Sax also seemed to indicate that the gender gap has increased to the point that reading for enjoyment has turned out to be an indicator of female

gender identity. Similarly, from 1980 to 2004 the National Education Association (NEA) conducted a demographically representative study of American children and youth that suggested that girls are more likely to read than boys (Sax, 2007). In the current study, school counselors who served predominately boys used bibliotherapy more often than those who served primarily girls. Likewise, school counselors who served predominately boys had more positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy than those who served primarily girls. Given the research suggesting that girls are more likely to read, this finding was unexpected. However, while girls might look to reading to find answers on their own, boys might need to be prompted to do so, and thus, have more interaction with a school counselor through books. Also, while girls' interest and ability involving reading might be typically higher, counselors might look to bibliotherapy to address both academic and therapeutic concerns.

The average age of the children served was the single predictor variable for counselors' use of bibliotherapy. As the age of the children served increased, the use of bibliotherapy decreased. Similarly, the average age of the children served was the strongest predictor variable of counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy. This may be due to the levels of cognitive development as suggested by Piaget. For instance, a counselor may find it difficult to explain a situation or concept to a young child in developmentally appropriate concrete terms. Thus, the counselor may use literature to help the child understand. However, in working with older children who are able to reason in more abstract ways, a counselor may sense that older children can understand without the aid of bibliotherapy.

No prior research was identified that explored relationships between counselor attitudes toward or use of bibliotherapy and student socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, student race/ethnicity, or students' perceived reading level. The current study did not establish a

significant association between these independent variables and counselor attitudes toward or use of bibliotherapy.

Implications and Recommendations

1. As literature suggests that bibliotherapy is an appropriate and helpful intervention in working with students, and as this study suggested that participation in continuing education activities was a significant predictor of counselor attitudes toward bibliotherapy, especially when combined with the age of children served, more continuing education opportunities for counselors on the topic of bibliotherapy may be needed. Workshops that address the use of bibliotherapy, especially that with older students, might prove beneficial in promoting positive attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy with counselors who serve these youth. Counselors, therefore, may wish to consider participating in continuing education activities that provide information regarding bibliotherapy with older children and adolescents.
2. Literature for younger children is typically shorter and can often be read in one sitting with a child or group of children, while literature for older children and adolescents often involves longer selections. This might help explain why age of the children served is a predictor of both counselor attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. As literature for older children and adolescents is often lengthy, school counselors working with older students might be less likely to use bibliotherapy because of time constraints and the availability of shorter age-appropriate literary works. Therefore, counselors may need access to book lists of suitable titles appropriate for use with older children and adolescents on a variety of topics (i. e. grief, divorce, self-esteem) that can be read in short sessions. Also, counselors may need more exposure to literature suitable for bibliotherapy with older children and youth. Perhaps availability of more continuing education opportunities in which existing suitable literature is accessible for examination might

help to address this need and encourage use. Counselors in school settings might consider consulting with the school librarian for help in identifying existing books suitable for bibliotherapy with older students. In addition, professional counseling organizations may need to solicit input from school counselors who are using bibliotherapy with older students for suggestions of book lists and ideas for use. Likewise, more literature specifically written to address therapeutic concerns of older children and youth may need to be published.

Future Research

1. As the findings of this study conflict with previous studies, replication of the current study should be conducted to validate these findings.
2. The present study focused on the school counseling organization of only one state. Future research needs to be conducted in other states or using a national random sample to increase generalization of the findings.
3. The current study focused only on school counselors who were members of the Alabama School Counselors Association. Future research could include school counselors throughout the state, whether or not they have membership in the state organization.
4. Future studies might also focus only on elementary school counselors, as age of children was the single predictor variable involving counselors' use of bibliotherapy.
5. As the average age of the children served is a significant predictor of counselors' attitudes toward bibliotherapy and counselors' use of bibliotherapy, future studies are needed to determine if this, in part, stems from the differences in duties of school counselors serving younger students and the duties of school counselors serving older students. For instance, *The ASCA National Model* (Bowers & Hatch, 2005) suggested that elementary school counselors spend a greater portion of their time involved in classroom guidance activities than was suggested for middle

school or high school counselors. Such activities might explain age of children being a predictor of counselors' use of bibliotherapy with students.

6. As the current study findings suggested that school counselors who served predominately boys used bibliotherapy more often than those who served primarily girls and that school counselors who served predominately boys had more positive attitudes toward bibliotherapy than those who served primarily girls, and as that was an unexpected finding, future research might further explore the impact of gender on counselor attitudes and use. For instance, school counselors could be asked if they use bibliotherapy more with boys or more with girls.

7. Much variance was unexplained regarding predictors of school counselors' attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy. Therefore, further research should include new variables. Possible variables of interest for future research studies include the following: (a) the division of counselors' time between classroom guidance activities, small group counseling, and individual counseling; (b) the division of counselors' time between counseling activities in the academic, career, and personal/social domains of development; (c) the percentage of time counselors spend in each of the following delivery components as outlined by the *ASCA National Model* and the *Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance State Model for Alabama Public Schools (State Plan)*: the school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support; (d) topics typically addressed in sessions with students (i.e., grief, divorce, anger management, college and career planning); and (e) the percentage of school counselors' time spent on noncounseling duties (i.e., lunchroom duty, bus duty, scheduling, administrative duties); (f) whether counselors typically use bibliotherapy to serve therapeutic or academic needs; (g) the type of service in which they most often use bibliotherapy—classroom guidance, small group

counseling, or individual counseling; (h) whether counselors tend to read literature in sessions or give assignments for reading to be done by the child between sessions.

8. Future research might expand the term “children’s literature” to “literature for children and adolescents” to clarify encompassing literature suitable for older children and adolescents.

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Appendix A
Inter-Item Correlations

Inter-Item Correlations

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	-	.79***	.63***	.63***	.37*	.38*	.31	.25	.34
2	.79***	-	.70***	.65***	.16	.20	.11	.13	.16
3	.63***	.70***	-	.63***	.31	.35	.21	.26	.37*
4	.63***	.65***	.63***	-	.30	.40*	.35*	.16	.16
5	.37*	.16	.31	.30	-	.86***	.84***	.58**	.64***
6	.38*	.20	.35	.40*	.86***	-	.85***	.56**	.78***
7	.31	.11	.21	.35*	.84***	.85***	-	.68***	.69***
8	.25	.13	.26	.16	.58**	.56**	.68***	-	.67***
9	.34	.16	.37*	.16	.64***	.78***	.69***	.67***	-
10	.23	.08	.36*	.33	.56**	.72***	.67***	.64***	.85***
11	.31	.02	.17	.32	.77***	.77***	.79***	.61***	.74***
12	.54**	.54**	.28	.46**	.25	.25	.30	.43*	.35*
13	.32	.38*	.29	.22	.05	.00	.06	.33	.20
14	.68***	.55**	.45**	.53**	.41*	.27	.43*	.38*	.34
15	.65***	.53**	.47**	.46**	.60***	.57**	.65***	.62***	.60***
16	.49**	.39*	.34	.43*	.62***	.52**	.63***	.43*	.52**
17	.32	.38*	.38*	.38*	.18	.19	.34	.38*	.36*
18	.39*	.27	.24	.51**	.22	.23	.42*	.27	.20
19	.35	.35	.29	.68***	.28	.37*	.51**	.36*	.27
20	.39*	.40*	.29	.65***	.28	.38*	.51**	.40*	.33
21	.34	.31	.17	.44*	.09	.11	.12	.07	.07
22	.46**	.50**	.46**	.62***	.48**	.36*	.52**	.32	.32
23	.48**	.51**	.45**	.41*	.30	.20	.34	.36*	.32

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Item	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	.23	.31	.54**	.32	.68***	.65***	.49**	.32	.39*
2	.08	.02	.54**	.38*	.55**	.53**	.39*	.38*	.27
3	.36*	.17	.28	.29	.45**	.47**	.34	.38*	.24
4	.33	.32	.46**	.22	.53**	.46**	.43*	.38*	.51**
5	.56**	.77***	.25	.05	.41*	.60***	.62***	.18	.22
6	.72***	.77***	.25	.00	.27	.57**	.52**	.19	.23
7	.67***	.79***	.30	.06	.43*	.65***	.63***	.34	.42*
8	.64***	.61***	.43*	.33	.38*	.62***	.43*	.38*	.27
9	.85***	.74***	.35*	.20	.34	.60***	.52**	.36*	.20
10	-	.81***	.31	.23	.21	.52**	.45*	.37*	.18
11	.81***	-	.40*	.27	.35*	.64***	.60***	.38*	.30
12	.31	.40*	-	.76***	.54**	.74***	.65***	.63***	.62***
13	.23	.27	.76***	-	.31	.55**	.36*	.74***	.23
14	.21	.35*	.54**	.31	-	.69***	.73***	.44*	.64***
15	.52**	.64***	.74***	.55**	.69***	-	.80***	.62***	.60***
16	.45*	.60***	.65***	.36*	.73***	.80***	-	.58***	.72***
17	.37*	.38*	.63***	.74***	.44*	.62***	.58***	-	.44*
18	.18	.30	.62***	.23	.64***	.60***	.72***	.44*	-
19	.31	.40*	.63***	.33	.60***	.60***	.68***	.53**	.87***
20	.32	.41*	.68***	.38*	.65***	.62***	.67***	.58***	.84***
21	.02	.12	.68***	.38*	.52**	.42*	.55**	.34	.80***
22	.36*	.46**	.59***	.47**	.76***	.68***	.76***	.54**	.58***
23	.32	.36*	.78***	.66***	.68***	.76***	.77***	.68***	.65***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Item	19	20	21	22	23
1	.35	.39*	.34	.46**	.48**
2	.35	.40*	.31	.50**	.51**
3	.29	.29	.17	.46**	.45**
4	.68***	.65***	.44*	.62***	.41*
5	.28	.28	.09	.48**	.30
6	.37*	.38*	.11	.36*	.20
7	.51**	.51**	.12	.52**	.34
8	.36*	.40*	.07	.32	.36*
9	.27	.33	.07	.32	.32
10	.31	.32	.02	.36*	.32
11	.40*	.41*	.12	.46**	.36*
12	.63***	.68***	.68***	.59***	.78***
13	.33	.38*	.38*	.47**	.66***
14	.60***	.65***	.52**	.76***	.68***
15	.60***	.62***	.42*	.68***	.76***
16	.68***	.67***	.55**	.76***	.77***
17	.53**	.58***	.34	.54**	.68***
18	.87***	.84***	.80***	.58***	.65***
19	-	.95***	.72***	.75***	.61***
20	.95***	-	.74***	.70***	.61***
21	.72***	.74***	-	.51**	.61***
22	.75***	.70***	.51**	-	.77***
23	.61***	.61***	.61***	.77***	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Appendix B

Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale

Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale

Directions: Please respond to the items below using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Children can learn meaningful problem-solving techniques from children's literature. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Bibliotherapy can address academic concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am interested in learning more about supplemental activities (e. g., art, diaries) to be used in conjunction with bibliotherapy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I am interested in lists of book titles appropriate for specific problems that children may present in therapy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other counselors. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested counselors. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I often use children's books in my work with children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I own children's books that I can use a resource in my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Children's literature is a favorite tool in my work with children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I find that many children appreciate the inclusion of children's stories in their sessions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I have used supplementary activities related to books in my work with children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I believe that children can often identify with fictional children who are facing similar problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I believe that children can gain insight from fictional characters. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I believe that children can learn alternate solutions to their own problems from fictional children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I find that many children enjoy stories. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I see using children's literature in counseling as promoting children's well being. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I am familiar with children's literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix C
Bibliotherapy Survey

Bibliotherapy Survey

<p>My gender is Female Male</p> <p>The racial/ethnic group that best represents me is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> African American<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latina/Latino<input type="checkbox"/> White<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <p>My age is _____ years</p> <p>I have been a school counselor for _____ years</p> <p>My highest level of education is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Master's<input type="checkbox"/> Ed. S.<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <p>The school setting in which I work is primarily a/an:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Elementary school only<input type="checkbox"/> Middle school only<input type="checkbox"/> High school only<input type="checkbox"/> K-12 or P-12<input type="checkbox"/> Other combination, please describe _____ <p>My school setting can best be described as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Public<input type="checkbox"/> Private<input type="checkbox"/> Parochial<input type="checkbox"/> Other? Alternative setting? <p>Which racial/ethnic group represents the majority (over 50%) of the children you serve as a school counselor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> African American<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latina/Latino<input type="checkbox"/> White	<p>Do over 50% of the children you serve qualify for free or reduced lunches?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<input type="checkbox"/> No <p>What would you consider to be the typical reading ability of the children you serve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Reading below grade level<input type="checkbox"/> Reading on grade level<input type="checkbox"/> Reading above grade level <p>Which gender represents the majority (over 50%) of the children you serve as a school counselor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Male<input type="checkbox"/> Female <p>During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you used bibliotherapy in working with children in your school? Please indicate number: _____</p> <p>How many workshops, conferences, and other continuing education opportunities have you attended within the past year that involved topics related to bibliotherapy? Please indicate number: _____</p> <p>How many children have you served in the past 12 months for whom English is not the primary language spoken in the homes? Please indicate number: _____</p> <p>In how many courses were you exposed to bibliotherapy in your graduate studies? Please indicate number: _____</p> <p>How many children with disabilities (e. g. physical, learning) have you served in the last 12 months? Please indicate number: _____</p> <p>What is the average age of the children you serve? Please indicate number: _____</p>
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Appendix D
Participant Letter

123 Elizabeth Ave.
Phil Campbell, AL 35581
August 15, 2009

Dear:

I am a doctoral student at The University of Alabama, a former school counselor, and a member of ALCA and ALSCA. I am currently working on my dissertation, chaired by Dr. Jamie Satcher. As part of my dissertation research, I am measuring school counselors' attitudes toward and use of bibliotherapy.

For the purpose of this study, bibliotherapy is defined as the therapeutic use of literary works as a healing intervention in counseling (Gladding, 2005), the sharing of literature to help a reader with a personal problem (Doll & Doll, 1997), helping with books (Jones, 2006), or a method by which helping professionals in the schools assist students in resolving difficulties by using sources of literature (Sullivan & Strang, 2003). It may include the use of fairy tales, fables, other works of fiction or nonfiction, self-help materials, poetry, song lyrics, taped books, picture books, or activity books.

I am seeking your assistance through your participation in a research study of this topic. Your participation in this study will involve your responding to the attached attitude scale comprised of 20 items about your use of and perceptions about bibliotherapy and a survey consisting of 17 questions. I anticipate that the attitude scale and the survey can be completed in less than ten minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may elect not to participate or to end your participation at any time. Your responses are to be anonymous; therefore, please do not place any identifying information on the survey.

While there is no direct benefit to you from your participation in this study, your participation will contribute to research that may have benefit to the practice of bibliotherapy and to the field of school counseling. There are no known risks associated with your participation.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact me at the following e-mail address (karen929@hiwaay.net) or by telephone at 205.993.5219. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at 205.348.5152.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this research study. Once you have completed the survey, you may return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please detach the consent letter from the survey prior to returning it and retain the consent form for your records. By completing and returning the survey, you give your consent to be a research participant.

Sincerely,

Karen Moore Townsend