THE ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARD CAREER COUNSELING

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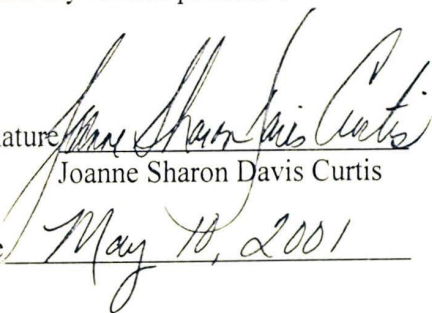College of Graduate Studies

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A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

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Joanne Sharon Davis Curtis

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband,

Charles Wade Curtis, Jr.

for his patience, love, and support throughout the past twenty-five years,

both in our pursuit of life and education,

and to my parents,

Richard Alfred Davis, Jr. and

Evelyn Anna Davis (1931-1994)

who have given me continued guidance and love.

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ABSTRACT

This research attempted to investigate college students' attitudes toward career counseling. The testing measurement used was the Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale (ATCCS) designed by Rochlen, Mohr and Hargrove (1999). Participants included forty-six college students attending Austin Peay State University's main campus that were enrolled in Psychology 2000 and Psychology 5600 courses, who were at least eighteen years old, and volunteered by signing up for the research study. Student participants were given career counseling, consisting of either a group career counseling session or the SIGI+ career counseling databank.

It was anticipated that students' perceptions of career counseling would differ on the basis of the modality used in the career counseling process. There was not a significant difference in students' attitudes based on the two treatment modalities of career counseling. Two separate t-tests were performed on the Stigma and Value subscales of the ATCCS. Implications for further research was provided.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

College students are required to decide on a major interest of study and develop a planned curriculum within their chosen major. Some college students are undecided about their choice of a college major and their future career plans. Current research on the decision making process of college students has shown that there is a desire for career counseling. Students that have already declared their major may still have some apprehension about their decision and may seek career counseling to confirm their future occupational choices. In 1977, Holland and Holland studied the characteristics of decided and undecided college students and found that these two groups of students were similar in measures of personality and decision-making ability but dissimilar in vocational attitudes. This study purposes to widen the study of undecided college students and focus on the attitudes of vocational career counseling in a sample of decided college students.

In 1985, Krumboltz purposed that choosing a future occupation was the most difficult task or choice for college students. Jones and Chenery's (1980) research focused on trying to develop techniques to assist the college student in making valuable career decisions. College students undecided career decisions were found to be associated with choice stage, identity, and career salience. The results indicated that a substantial portion of the students studied were comfortable about their undecidedness of career intentions.

Alexitch (1997) researched students' educational orientation and preferences for advising from their university professors. Findings demonstrated that students were not receiving the type of direction in advisement that they preferred. The results of Alexitch's study indicated that students who received only minimal developmental academics and

career advising preferred more frequent advising activities. Students that received longer and more frequent academic advising sessions with their professors reported having higher levels of satisfaction with the advising that they received. These advising activities included five categories; exploring institutional policies, career planning, personal development, teaching academic skills, and academic planning.

Barak and Friedkes (1981) studied the mediating effects of career indecision subtypes on career counseling effectiveness. The focus of their study was to detect a difference in two treatments of individual and group career counseling. Their results indicated that there was no significant difference between the type of career counseling and the personal effects of career decidedness.

There are multiple types of career decisions that need to be explored by college students and career counselors should develop viable ways of handling students' career indecisions. Confusion over how to approach students and help them in their choice of careers and occupations still exists. In order to help these students develop goals and become satisfied with their career plans, research into the helping styles of career counselors and the testing of college students should continue to be explored.

Clients are apprehensive in seeking help in career counseling issues. According to Murstein and Fontaine (1993), who questioned participants on reasons why clients consulted mental health professionals, the most frequent reasons clients sought help from mental health professionals was for mild depression and marital problems. Clients who spoke to mental health professionals for difficulties in work related situations, were few in comparison.

Slaney (1980) found through his research that there are several reasons why college students seek career counseling. College students request the assistance of career counselors to help them declare their majors. Other students may develop first and second choices for their majors and then seek advice from career counselors for these choices. College students who have declared their majors and decided on their career paths may also utilize career counseling to confirm these career decisions.

In 1988, Fitzgerald and Osipow focused their research on counseling graduate students' vocational aspirations. The research indicated a decline in graduate students who preferred to be employed in academic and vocational settings. The diminution of vocational psychology and career counseling may have a negative impact on student clients that seek career counseling by professional counselors. Career counseling is often viewed as less important in the field of counseling along with aptitude testing and interest inventories. Fitzgerald and Osipow (1986) documented the reduced emphasis on vocational areas by professionals in the field of counseling psychology using a questionnaire survey. Professionals that performed work in specific counseling areas reported time spent engaged in these activities. Counselors performed vocational counseling behaviors (70%), used vocational interest inventories (62%), and worked in group vocational counseling behaviors (36%), according to Fitzgerald and Osipow (1986).

Professionals that perform career counseling can affect the quality of the career counseling process. Pinkey and Jacobs (1985) reported that counseling psychologists are disinterested in career counseling. This finding suggests a lack of personal interest by professional counselors in career counseling and a larger interest in counseling clients with

personal problems. They suggest that this disinterest may be linked to the absence of collegial regulation and professional socialization of career counselors.

Coker (1994) studied three approaches to career counseling, group counseling, client-centered approach, and the contemporary methods of individualized career counseling. These career planning programs were reviewed to determine whether one form of career counseling was more effective than the other. The career counseling center offers the student educational opportunities and career options assisted by the center counselors. The client-centered approach offers methods to work through a client's emotional issues and to explore attitudes to develop self-understanding and career goals. In the individual career counseling session, the client is assisted by the career counselor in vocational development. All three approaches of career counseling have had positive effects in assisting the student client through the uncertainty of career aspirations and career transitions.

Hackett (1993) researched the role of career counseling and the effect the professional counselor had on the students as clients. The counselor's perceptions of career counseling determine and influence the counseling session. A lack of interest in a student client's vocational concerns can negatively affect the quality of the assessment and counseling process. These factors contribute to misconceptions and an oversimplification of the career counseling process by students have led to the simplicity of career counseling.

A preliminary investigation into client preferences and anticipations of career counseling by Galassi, Crace, Martin, James and Wallace (1992) provides information on

precounseling expectations. These expectations were conceptualized as preferences and anticipations. They found that clients who have a clear understanding of the career counseling process develop preferences toward their personal dislikes of career choices more often than those clients that do not possess a clearer understanding.

Orndorff and Herr (1996) studied declared and undeclared college students' career uncertainty and their involvement in career development activities. This research examined the concept of career uncertainty of college students and the need for counselors to direct the students to an acceptable choice of a college major. Their primary reason for seeking counseling from their college career centers was to receive guidance about choosing a major in college and subsequently a future occupational career. Even though declared college students showed a higher level of certainty about their choice of a major and their career choice, these students felt that they needed professional guidance and continued to seek career counseling for advice. According to Orndorff and Herr, a majority of traditional college freshmen and sophomores do not possess the self-understanding or the career awareness required to make educated career decisions.

Noncareer concerns often become topics in a career counseling session. Student clients' concerns involve issues that may be discussed in a mental health counseling session. Nonexploration stage career concerns that are relevant to the career counselor include retirement planning, advancement and updating career skills (Anderson & Niles, 1995). The career counselor may facilitate a career intervention counseling process that is based on exploration of related career issues to separate the personal counseling from the career counseling session (Betz & Corning, 1993).

Boyd and Cramer (1995) studied the framework of the counseling session as a contributing factor to the overall success of the session. By determining the personality type of the student clients using the Holland hexagonal model of personality types, Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, a more direct focus on the individual student's personality type is acquired (Boyd & Cramer, 1995). The career counselor should tailor the counseling sessions in order to match the personality types of that particular individual student. The personality types of the student client who sought group vocational counseling were studied by Kivlighan, Hageseth, Tipton and McGovern (1981). Their findings report that the client's personality type became a critical independent variable to consider in utilizing the treatment approach of a structured group vocational counseling.

Niles (1993a) studied the relationship between Holland personality types and preferences for career counseling. He reported that the career counseling environments college student clients prefer were consistent with the client's Holland personality type. Realistic and Enterprising personality types felt strongly that the style of the environment had a direct impact on counseling effectiveness. By recognizing the preference for career counseling experiences, the career counselor may develop counseling models with specific interventions for the client's personality.

Davidson and Gilbert (1993) view career counseling as an exploration of the student client's personal identity and meaning. The focus on the client's identity is crucial to the success, survival, well-being and future lifestyle of their chosen career. Survival through economic independence and establishing a lifestyle that is dependent on the career

are important concerns for the career counselor. These factors offer the student client the opportunity to expand their sense of personal identity.

Blustein, Ellis and Devenis (1989) studied the individual students' level of commitment to career choices. The development of a two-dimensional model to monitor the career choice procedure addressed the client's progress toward the commitment process and assessed the range of openness to the career counseling process. The development of the Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) by Blustein, Ellis and Devenis, offers researchers the opportunity to measure the student client's level of attachment. A follow-up study performed by Blustein, Walbridge, Friedlander and Palladino (1991) focused on the student's psychological separation and parental attachment in career decision-making. The findings suggested that emotional attachment and conflictual independence from a parent was positively related to progress in the career developmental process.

Snodgrass and Healy (1979) developed and studied career counseling procedures. Their approach was to improve counseling by identifying particular client goals and then developing treatments with specified objectives. Counselors provided individualized career counseling treatments to undergraduate college students. Pre- and post- treatments measured clients increased awareness of career decision making and planning along with the client's satisfaction with their career choices and decisions. Results indicated a significant satisfaction with self-awareness and career decision making for students guided by counselors. Snodgrass and Healy stated that most of the college students believed that career counseling had helped them develop more awareness about themselves, provided

confidence in making a career decision, and told them about factors to consider in making their career choice.

Another study, performed by Lucas, Gysbers, Buescher and Heppner (1988), examined career indecision in college students. The study focused on three areas of career decision making: lack of vocational identity, lack of occupational information, and barriers or obstacles in the choice of an occupational goal. They found that those college students who were undecided about their career choices had lower vocational identity than students with declared majors.

Jones, Gorman and Schroeder (1989) compared the effectiveness of college students who had received guidance from counselors and two different self-directed career search systems, the Career Key and the Vocational Preference Inventory. Students that completed the Career Key had a more basic understanding of how to direct their career choices by organizing information about oneself and how to utilize the Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance (Hopke, 1984). The researchers found those college students who were undecided about their career choice had lower scores in vocational identity and desired additional occupational information through career counseling.

Tracey (1992) reviewed client anticipations and preferences toward career counseling and correlated career counseling with personal counseling. The treatment used suggested that the two forms of counseling are related. This suggests that theories and previous research from personal counseling can be utilized in the career counseling process.

Role anticipations and preferences of college students toward counseling were

researched in 1988 by Tracey and Dundon. This study focused on the role preferences, anticipations, and behavior of students over the course of the treatment sessions. Student clients reported receiving more advice and having a closer professional relationship with their counselor than they anticipated before the counseling sessions. The findings indicated a strong significant covariation to exist between the constructs of anticipation and preferences.

VandeCreek and Angstadt (1985) studied the effects of student client preferences and anticipations in counseling sessions. The study asked participants to complete the Preference for Self-Disclosure Scale (PSDS), developed by VandeCreek and Angstadt, where professional counselors self-disclosed information in a videotaped counseling session. Results indicated that student clients whose anticipations were high gave more favorable ratings of professional counselors than those students that scored low on these scales. Student clients in a counseling session expect the professional counselor's role to become a multidimensional process that can be formatted to the personality type and expectations of the client.

In 1980, Tinsley, Workman and Kass sampled college students about their expectations regarding counseling. Results indicated that women college students possessed a stronger expectancy than men in a counseling environment. Women also expected the counseling session to be a more positive experience than men expected it to be. Overall, client expectations yielded results that the professional counselor should be directive, empathic and an expert in the field of counseling.

Tinsley, Tokar and Helwig (1994) reviewed college students' expectations of

career counseling. The Expectations About Counseling-Brief Form (EAC-B), developed by Tinsley, Workman and Kass (1980), was used to rate the students positive and negative anticipated experience. Students that held relatively positive expectations about career counseling possessed significantly higher levels of involvement than those students that held more negative expectation.

Pyle and Stripling (1976) researched the relationship of career maturity and student participation in a career development computer-based System of Interactive Guidance and Information (SIGI) session. The Career Maturity Inventory (CMI), developed by Crites (1961), was used to measure career choice attitudes and career choice competencies. Pyle and Stripling's results suggest that the career counselor needs to manage the computer and to use it as part of the complete career counseling process. The individualized approach of the SIGI system was designed to provide the student with specific career information relevant to the student's particular needs and could be the factor that led to the success of the SIGI treatment.

Rule and Gandy (1994) studied college students' attitudes toward counseling in 1976 and 1989. In the two comparable studies, patterns influenced by societal norms were evident. In 1976, with the emphasis on self-exploration and emergent feminism, Rational-Emotive therapy replaced traditional counseling as an approach. The values in 1989 shifted to a goal-orientation outer-directed focus. The behavioral approach corresponded with the students' expectation of the counselor's professional responsibility.

Blazina and Watkins (1996) focused on male attitudes toward psychological help-seeking advice in counseling. Men have higher scores on success, power and competition

variables than women. Shifts in power from the male client to the female counselor result

after the client divulges personal informational desires and express feelings in the session.

The career counselor has to respond to the power issues that men may feel in a career

counseling session (Blazina & Watkins, 1996). Robertson and Fitzgerald (1992) also

studied attitudes of men toward traditional forms of counseling. The researchers utilized

the Holland typology of six categories of personality and correlated the measure with the

UNIACT, Unisex Edition of the American College Testing Interest Inventory, developed

by Prediger and Lamb (1981), with the seven types, Technical, Science, Creative Arts,

Social Service, Business Contact, and Business Detail. Findings indicated that men with

higher masculine attitudes preferred nontraditional counseling environments over the

traditional counseling processes. Wilsch, Mahalik, Hayes and Nutt (1995) studied men's

gender role conflicts and attitudes toward psychological help-seeking. Participants in this

study completed the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS), developed by O'Neil, Helms,

Gable, David and Wrightsman (1986), after viewing a counseling session that was either

emotion-focused or cognition-focused. Findings from this study indicated that men who

scored high on gender role conflict and viewed the session that was based on emotions

had more negative attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help.

Attitudes toward seeking psychological counseling were examined in a cross-

cultural study by Furnham and Andrew (1996). The researchers used the Fischer and

Turner (1970) Pro-Con Attitude Scale (FTPCAS), to determine the variables that were

significant predictors of clients' attitudes. Clients who had previous psychotherapy held

less positive attitudes toward seeking professional counseling, while clients who had just

immigrated to Britain recently held more positive attitudes toward psychotherapy.

A study by Sanchez and Atkinson (1983) focused on Mexican-American attitudes toward the use of professional counseling. The testing instrument, the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help (ATSPPH), developed by Ruiz, Casas and Padilla (1977), revealed that females in the study expressed more positive attitudes toward utilizing professional counseling services than males. Those Mexican-Americans who had a strong commitment to their culture had fewer favorable attitudes toward counseling than those with a weak commitment.

Tata and Leong (1994) researched the help-seeking attitudes of Chinese-Americans. The Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPH), was used to determine if Chinese-American students who were more acculturated within American society would have a more positive attitude toward professional psychological help than those students who were considered lower in acculturation. Results indicated that the four independent variables of gender, acculturation, social-network orientation, and individualism were significant predictors of overall attitudes toward seeking out professional psychological help within the college environment. The variable groups that included women and Chinese-Americans who were more acculturated were more likely than men to hold positive attitudes toward counseling.

Research studies on the attitudes of clients seeking counseling has been the focus of many studies. The incorporation of the computer as a professional tool in the career counseling process is a major focus of researchers and is of importance to this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Presuppositions that underlie the decisions of counselors and clients to utilize the computer in career counseling have been studied by Krumboltz (1985). These presuppositions include reasons for using the computer as opposed to using the career counselor as a viable resource, and the high tech advantage of the computer as a tool in career counseling. According to Krumboltz, the computer should be used to stimulate career choices for the client.

Computer-assisted career guidance systems (CACGS) have incorporated educational information and career decision making, offering occupational alternatives, and providing a form of career counseling assessment that has become a reliable form of career counseling and valuable guidance resource (Sampson et al., 1990). The development of CACGS was due to a shortage of trained career counselors (Pretorius, Heyns & Broekmann, 1991) and the growing acceptance of the computer. An effective career counseling system would incorporate the use of both the computer and the career counselor. According to Pretorius, Heyns and Broekmann, participants in their study indicated a preference for the CACGS to explore occupations due to the vast knowledge in the computer-based system, the systematic approach of the computer, and the impersonal character of the computer. It was suggested by the students surveyed that counselors were effective in providing feedback to the students about the career options offered by the computer system.

Kivlighan, Johnson, Hogan and Mauer (1994) studied the users of computers for career counseling, since the computers rise in popularity as a form of career counseling

services. Most universities and colleges incorporate CACGS in their career counseling procedures and have had positive results with the system, however, those institutions that do not utilize CACGS are restricting the quality of career services for their student clients according to Sampson, Shanasarian and Reardon (1987).

Kapes, Borman and Frazier (1989) evaluated two CACGS, Discover, produced by the American College Testing program, and SIGI, the System of Interactive Guidance and Information. Kapes, Borman and Frazier concluded that CACGS need to incorporate other career guidance programs or activities and should not become the sole focus of the career counseling session. They found that students who were involved in a CACGS and a career development course showed greater advances in career development than students who were involved without the support of the class. Lenz, Reardon and Sampson (1993) researched CACGS according to Holland's theory of vocational choice and found that computer based career interventions are effective as long as CACGS are not used as a global uniform treatment, but only to augment the career counseling process by considering the personality of the individual student clients. Research to support the CACGS programs has been conducted and studies on college students' perceptions toward career counseling have been performed. The social stigma of these two computer systems, Discover and SIGI, have generated results that indicate that the involvement of a career counselor is vital to ensure that the human qualities of attractiveness and trustworthiness are effective in the career counseling process that utilizes CACGS (Sampson et al., 1992).

Garis and Niles (1990) examined the effectiveness of a CACGS for undecided

university students. Students were required to use the SIGI PLUS system for a minimum of two hours. Participants responded favorably to the SIGI PLUS as a career counseling tool.

Peterson, Ryan-Jones, Sampson, Reardon and Shahnasarian (1994) compared the effectiveness of three CACGS, the SIGI, the SIGI+, and the DISCOVER systems. Three constructs were measured, analysis, synthesis, and computer effect. The results indicated no practical differences in effectiveness. All three CACGS systems were rated positively by most student participants on all three constructs. Students who held a strong desire for career information rated these computer systems more favorably than those students who did not possess a strong desire.

Gerardi and Benedict (1988) studied the SIGI computer information system to provide students with career information. Their findings suggest that the CACGS should be used as part of an overall career counseling system. The usefulness of the computer as component of the decision-making process in the student's career development should be a goal of the career counselor.

CACGS should facilitate the career decision making skills of individuals by providing a generalized framework through a step by step process (Gati, 1996). The CACGS should augment the career counselor by offering the student career information. The professional career counselor must recognize the CACGS as a tool in the overall career guidance process.

A study performed by Mau, Calvert and Gregory (1997), examined the effects of career interventions on vocational cognitive integration. This occupational integration is

the ability of college students to assimilate vocational constructs into a cohesive cognitive schema. According to this study, the authors linked this vocational cognitive integration with career behaviors. The study compared computer-based career development systems, the Vocational Card Sort (VCS), developed by Dolliver (1967), the Self-Directed Search (SDS), developed by Holland (1994), and the System of Interactive Guidance and Information Plus (SIGI+). Results indicated that college students were positive about all three treatment programs. Further results indicated that these instruments were equally effective in stimulating occupational choices and options for the students. Mau, Calvert and Gregory indicated that computer career systems are becoming widely accepted due to frequent exposure to computer technology by college students.

Zemel and Hanna (1991) compared the effects of a career development workshop and a computer-based guidance system on career maturity of college students. The results of the research found that students who utilized career computer guidance systems were satisfied and developed a higher level of career maturity than non-CACGS users. Students that used the SIGI system formulated more occupational goals and considered a larger number of different occupations than the control group of non-CACGS users that only utilized the career counseling center. The authors noted that the purpose of a computer based career guidance system is to enhance career counseling sessions, not to replace the career counselors. Marin and Splete (1991) found that a CACGS was most effective when the career counselors were involved with the student's decision making process. Cox and Thoreson (1977) studied the personality characteristics of career counselors and the requirement that these professionals possess strong relationship and information-giving

skills in order to be effective advisors for their clients.

Niles (1993b) studied the timing of counselor contact between the career counselor and the adult client. He reported that a post intervention session with a career counselor after a client utilized a CACGS program reduced career indecision, offered a plan for implementing career choices, and provided the opportunity to explore other career dilemmas or options. Further results by Niles indicated that a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviors of the college students was to provide counselor contact throughout the computer counseling sessions.

Career interventions and treatments include individual counseling, group activities, computer-based applications, and self-administered inventories. Individual counseling was found to be the most effective treatment of career counseling (Whiston, Sexton & Lasoff, 1998). The CACGS programs, determined to be the most cost effective form of career counseling (Whiston et al., 1998) is increasing in popularity among college students. The SIGI system of career counseling has been shown to provide the client with positive effects in decision making and for learning skills necessary to choose an academic major for college students (Cochran, Hoffman, Strand & Warren, 1977).

Rochlen, Mohr and Hargrove (1999) studied and developed an instrument for assessing the attitudes college students have toward career counseling. According to Rochlen et al., "the study of attitudes may increase knowledge regarding individuals' decisions about whether and when to seek career counseling" (p. 196). Rochlen et al. hypothesized that a college student's attitudes toward career counseling would affect his or her career decision making. The understanding of how attitudes affect college

students' choices in the career decision making process and how students' attitudes help them decide when to seek career counseling were concerns for the researchers. The Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale (ATCCS; Rochlen et al.) was developed specifically to measure these attitudes.

Research into the effectiveness of career counseling for college students has been documented and explored. However, little information and research have been performed on college students' attitudes toward the career counseling process, and the perceived value and stigma that is related to career counseling.

This study examined the effectiveness of two career planning programs for students and the attitudes of these students toward career counseling. The career counseling programs that were explored are the use of the career service center in a group career counseling program and the use of a CACGS, the SIGI+ computer based career program. This study examined the attitudes of declared undergraduate and graduate psychology college students and their exposure to career counseling programs. The attitudes of college students toward the perceived value and stigma as related to career counseling and their satisfaction with the career exploration process was monitored. It was the purpose of this study to examine the CACGS and have the student clients apply the information obtained to real life situations. The hypothesis for this study is that students' perceptions of attitudes toward career counseling would differ on the basis of the modality used in the career counseling process.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 46 students, 16 males (35%) and 30 females (65%) from undergraduate and graduate psychology classes at the main campus of Austin Peay State University. Twenty-five participants (54%) were 18 to 24 years old, 9 participants (20%) were 25 to 31 years old, 6 participants (13%) were 32 to 38 years old, 5 participants (11%) were 39 to 45 years old, and 1 participant (2%) was 46 years old. The demographic breakdown consisted of 5 participants (11%) who considered themselves to be African-Americans, 1 participant (2%) reported to be Asian-American, 38 participants (83%) reported to be Caucasian, and 2 participants (4%) reported to belong in the Other category.

Students were informed that participation was voluntary for this research study. Participants in Group 1 were obtained by recruitment from a graduate psychology course, PSY 560, Theories and Counseling in Career Development. This course provides a survey of theories of career development, methods of developing a career information program, and procedures for providing personal, social, educational and vocational information (APSU Graduate Bulletin 2000-2001). Requirements for this course included utilization of the SIGI+ career decision making program by the students. Participants were recruited by volunteering after completion of the SIGI+ program.

Participants in Group 2 were obtained by recruitment from an undergraduate psychology course, PSY 2000. Orientation to Psychology, provides information for the student to derive the greatest benefit from the psychology program and helps the student

achieve his or her career aspirations in the field of psychology (APSU Undergraduate Bulletin, 1999-2000).

Procedures

All information concerning this proposal was presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), of Austin Peay State University to determine that the study was ethical in its treatment of prospective participants. After approval from the IRB, the researcher began to solicit participants from the PSY 2000 and PSY 5600 classes. Informed consent forms were given out to all participants who volunteered for the study. The informed consent forms, see Appendix A, explained that the purpose of the study is to examine students' attitudes toward career counseling. The consent form stated that all information obtained will be kept confidential. At no time would individual participants be identified nor will anyone other than the researchers have access to the responses. After the informed consent sheet was explained, all participants were given a demographic sheet to complete.

The demographic sheet asked the age, sex and the race of the participant. The demographic data sheet is provided in Appendix C. Further questions asked the status of the participant with 37 participants (80%) reported to be undergraduate and nine participants (20%) reported to be graduate students. The breakdown in the educational status of the underclassmen listed one participant (2%) as a freshman in college, 11 participants (24%) considered themselves to be sophomores, 18 participants (39%) reported to be juniors, and 7 participants (15%) were reported to be seniors. Twenty-four participants (52%) reported previously utilizing the Career Counseling Center at

Austin Peay State University. Thirteen participants (28%) reported using the services of another Career Counseling center and 33 participants (72%) reported not using another center.

The demographic results of the two groups were compared. The participants of Group 1 (N = 9) consisted of students whose ages ranged from a minimum age of 23 to a maximum age of 41, with the mean age 32 and standard deviation of 7.34. The participants of Group 2 (N = 37) consisted of students whose ages ranged from a minimum age of 19 to a maximum age of 46, with the mean age 25 and standard deviation of 7.50. The gender of the participants in Group 1 consisted of 2 participants (22%) reported to be male and 7 participants (78%) reported to be female. The gender of the participants in Group 2 consisted of 14 participants (38%) reported to be male and 23 participants (62%) reported to be female. Participants of Group 1 reported their race as 1 African-American participant (11%), and 8 Caucasian participants (89%). Participants of Group 2 reported their race as 4 African-American participants (11%), 1 Asian-American participant (3%), 30 Caucasian participants (81%), and 2 participants (5%) listed their race as Other. No other personal information was asked of the participants.

Career counseling treatments were divided into the two groups, Group 1 and Group 2. The counseling session of each group lasted approximately one hour. Members of Group 1 were provided the opportunity to explore the SIGI+ computer-based CACGS program. These participants used the computers at the career counseling center on the Austin Peay State University campus. The requirements for Group 1 were for each participant to complete the SIGI+ computer career research program.

The SIGI+ computer system was designed by the Educational Testing Service to assist college students in exploring their career options, evaluating occupational data, and formulating career plans. The SIGI system, extensively field tested and revised since 1967, is considered to be a values-based system, students access information through values clarification exercises (Heppner, 1985). The SIGI+ was reprogrammed to appeal to a more diverse student population, to focus on college demographics, popular attitudes and economic situations of the non-traditional student (Norris, Shatkin & Katz, 1991). A comparative analysis of the impact of the SIGI and the SIGI+ system was performed by Reardon et al. (1992). Participants rated both systems comparably with a slight preference, not statistically significant, of the SIGI+ over the SIGI system. The developer of the SIGI system, Martin Katz, designed the software for the intention of the students to engage in informed career decision-making processes (Heppner & Johnston, 1985).

Accessing the SIGI+ system is individually determined by the college student as to the area of interest and the length of time spent in one area. The SIGI+ system contains these nine components:

1. Introduction: an overview of the SIGI+ program.

2. Self-assessment: evaluates work-related values, interests and skills.

3. Search: creates a list of occupations based on the self-assessment and the educational level identified.

4. Information: provides answers to the occupations identified.

5. Skills: identifies skills required for the identified occupations.

6. Preparing: provides information details for selected occupations.

7. Coping: provides advice and information on practical concerns.

8. Deciding: provides a format to evaluate occupational choices.

9. Next Steps: provides goals and details for subsequent steps for follow-up use

    (Katz, 1993; Kivlighan, et al., 1994).

Group 2 was offered a group counseling session with a career counselor at the

Austin Peay State University's Counseling Center. The career counselor at this session

explained the aspects of career counseling. Topics discussed by the counselor included

the purpose of assessing the student's individual family occupational background, the

reason for having the student complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and the

importance of the SIGI+ computer program as a career counseling tool.

All participants were given the testing instrument once during the semester.

Participants in Group 1 were administered the Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale

(ATCCS), developed by Rochlen, Mohr and Hargrove, after completion of the SIGI+

program. The ATCCS was given to Group 2 after completion of the career counseling

requirements for the PSY 2000 course. The ATCCS is provided in this thesis as

Appendix D. All participants were given unlimited time to complete the inventory. The

tests were stapled with the participants' demographic sheet for evaluation and statistical

analysis.

After completion of the ATCCS testing instruments, all students that participated

were given the opportunity for further information on career counseling. Participants

were given a signed participation in a research study sheet to be used for extra credit at

the discretion of the psychology course instructor.

Measure

The testing instrument was the Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale

(Rochlen, Mohr & Hargrove, 1999). This instrument consists of 36 self-reporting items

with two subscales that measure the Value and Stigma related to career counseling. Items

are rated on a Likert scale by participants that choose either: 1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat

disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree. A higher score on the Value scale indicates

greater value placed on career counseling by the participant. High scores on the Stigma

scale reflect the participants increased stigma associated with career counseling.

Approximate time to complete the scale was 20 - 40 minutes.

Reliability and validity information was provided by the developers (Rochlen,

Mohr & Hargrove, 1999). Reliability was reported as internal consistency reliability with

values ranging from $r = .80$ $r = .90$. Values from the Pearson product moment correlation

coefficient for both subcales scores yielded $r = .80$ ($p < .001$) for test/retest methods.

Validity results were also reported. Discriminate validity, the demonstration of low or

negative correlations with variables that are dissimilar, was provided by non-significant

correlations between the Value and Stigma subscales. This negative correlation was

reported as ($r = -.45$, $p < .01$). Means, standard deviations, and internal consistency

values are listed for five studies provided by the original researchers, in Table 1.

Table 1

Means. Standard Deviations and Internal Consistency Estimates for the ATCCS Subscales

	Study 1			Study 2			Study 3			Study 4			Study 5		
	M	SD	I	M	SD	I	M	SD	I	M	SD	I	M	SD	I
V	25.37	4.78	.86	26.70	4.07	.85	24.35	5.54	.90	25.98	4.89	.85	27.87	3.29	.86
S	14.00	4.67	.83	11.63	2.90	.80	13.85	4.58	.83	14.95	4.77	.80	13.20	4.04	.80

Note. ATCCS = Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale; V = Value; S = Stigma; I = Internal Consistency Estimates.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study evaluated the difference between the two counseling modalities in students' attitudes toward career counseling. The two subscales measured perceived Value and Stigma as related to career counseling. These two subscales provide information in general help-seeking attitudes, decision-making styles, and satisfaction with a career treatment. Two separate t-tests were computed to determine if there was a significant difference between the two treatments in the participants' responses on the Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale (ATCCS). An alpha value of $p > .05$ was used to determine a level of significant difference between the two samples for both t-tests. The hypothesis, students' perceptions of career counseling would differ on the basis of the modality of counseling, was not supported by the data.

The group that utilized the SIGI+ counseling treatment (M = 29.67, SD = 1.94) rated Value higher than the group that utilized the group counseling treatment (M = 29.57, SD = 2.82). This difference was not significant $t(46) = 0.099$, $p < .05$, two-tailed. Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected. These results are listed in Table 2.

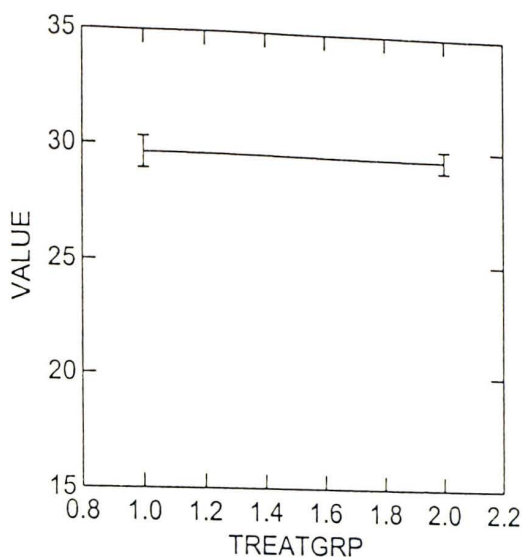Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for the t-test on the attitude of Value.

Group	N	Mean	SD
1	9	29.667	1.936
2	37	29.568	2.824

Note. 1 = graduate students; 2 = undergraduate students.

An illustration of these mean scores for this t-test is provided in Figure 1.

The sample group that utilized the SIGI+ counseling treatment (M = 10.44, SD = 2.45) rated Stigma lower than the sample group that utilized the group counseling treatment (M = 11.29, SD 3.63). This difference was not significant t(46) = -0.666, p < .05, two-tailed. Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected. These results are listed in Table 3.

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations for the t-test on the attitude of Stigma.

Group	N	Mean	SD
1	9	10.444	2.455
2	37	11.297	3.628

Note. 1 = graduate students; 2 = undergraduate students.

An illustration of these mean scores for this t-test is provided in Figure 2.
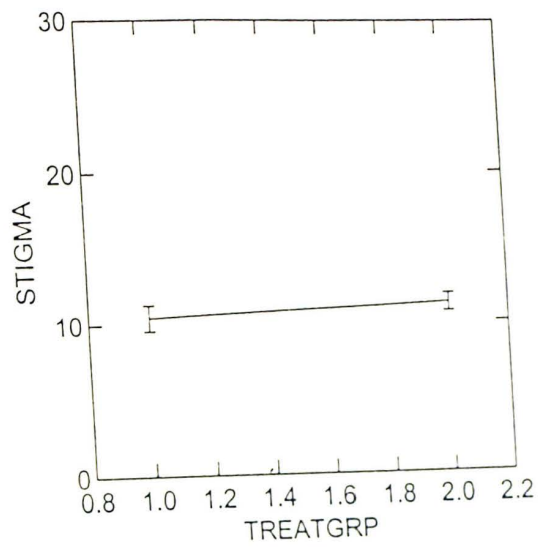
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the modalities of career counseling to investigate if college students' attitudes toward career counseling differed based on the group treatment. The independent variable in this study was the type of career counseling. The dependent variables were college students' attitudes toward career counseling (ie., Value & Stigma).

A review of the literature was conducted to investigate research in to the reasons why college students seek career counseling (Slaney, 1980). The literature described a number of studies including developing techniques to assist the student in making career choices, career indecisions of college students, studying college students' career uncertainty, and career counseling procedures (Anderson & Niles, 1995; Barak & Friedkes 1981; Boyd & Cramer, 1995; Coker, 1994; Jones & Chenery, 1980; Lucas, Gysbers, Buescher & Heppner, 1988; Murstein & Fontaine, 1993; Orndorff & Herr, 1996; Snodgrass & Healy, 1979). Further research investigated college students and their preferences for career counseling, their expectations of the career counseling sessions, and their attitudes toward career counseling (Alexitch, 1997; Galassi, Crace, Martin, James & Wallace, 1992; Hackett, 1993; Holland & Holland, 1997; Krumboltz, 1985; Tinsley, Tokar & Helwig, 1994; Tinsley, Workman & Kass, 1980; Tracey & Dundon, 1988; VandeCreek & Angstadt, 1985).

Several studies examined the attitudes of college students toward counseling (Furham & Andrew, 1996; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992; Sanchez & Atkinson, 1983; Tata & Leong, 1994; Wilsch, Mahalik, Hayes & Nutt, 1995), which included a diverse

population consisting of American male attitudes, cross-cultural attitudes of British participants. Mexican-American and Chinese-American clients. Students' career choice attitudes were studied utilizing different inventory scales. The Career Maturity Inventory (CMI). the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS), the Fischer and Turner Pro-Con Attitude Scale (FTPCAS), and the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help (ATSPPH) were used to discuss attitudes.

In this study, the development of the Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale (ATCCS) by Rochlen, Mohr and Hargrove (1999) was used to assess the attitudes college students have toward career counseling. The understanding of how these attitudes affect college students' choices in the career decision making process was researched using the two different treatments of modalities. Contrary to the hypothesis, two separate t-tests indicated that there was no significant difference in attitudes between the treatments that were offered, the SIGI+ or the group career counseling session.

A major limitation of this study was the sample size of the SIGI+ treatment group ($N = 9$) and the group that participated in the group career counseling session ($N = 37$). If this study was replicated with a larger sample, it is possible that significant outcomes could result. Perhaps college students could be recruited through the career counseling center instead of through the psychology department to increase the sample size.

A confounding factor of college students' attitudes could have been the source of the sample itself. By recruiting from only psychology students enrolled in two courses involved in career counseling, the students that participated in this study could have skewed attitudes toward career counseling. Perhaps students from other departments,

such as mathematics, biological science or the arts would offer different attitudes toward career counseling. To compensate for this factor in future research, recruitment for participation should be opened to all students at the university.

Further studies could include a more in-depth group career counseling treatment consisting of having the students actually complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator with feedback from the career counselor as to the results of the test. Another option to widen the research, is to add another modality of treatment perhaps as an individual career counseling session with a career counselor.

By examining graduate students as well as undergraduate students' attitudes toward career counseling, this researcher did provide information to further validate the ATCCS developmental research. Since the developers only sampled undergraduate students in their five studies, the research procedure of including graduate students in the current study could be beneficial to the developers of the instrument. Further research involving the ATCCS should examine the consistency of the Value and Stigma scales as purposed by the researchers.

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LIST OF REFERENCES

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The following material contains the purpose of the investigation, the procedures to be used, risks/side effects and benefits of your participation in this study, and what will happen to the information collected as part of the research project in which you are participating. This form is intended to provide you with information about this study. You may ask the researchers listed below about this study or you may call the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, Box 4517, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN 37044, (931) 221-7881, with questions about the rights of research participants.

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY

The Attitudes of College Students Toward Career Counseling.

2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Joanne S. Curtis, Graduate Student, Austin Peay State University, Psychology Department, Clarksville, TN, (931) 221-7451.

FACULTY SUPERVISOR

Dr. LuAnnette Butler, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN (931) 221-7229.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to investigate college students attitudes toward career counseling. Research is being conducted to fulfill degree requirements for the Master of

Science in Guidance and Counseling.

4. PROCEDURES FOR THIS RESEARCH

You are being asked to participate in a research study. If you agree to participate, you will be given a demographic questionnaire to be filled out and a testing instrument to complete. The demographic information will contain questions regarding your age, your gender, your race, your status as a student and whether you have utilized a college career counseling center. All data collected from this study will be anonymous to protect your privacy. The only people that will have access to the original surveys will be Joanne S. Curtis, the Principal Investigator and her Faculty Supervisor, Dr. LuAnnette Butler from the Psychology Department at Austin Peay State University. The data will be kept in a locked file with only the Principal Investigator and the Faculty Supervisor having access to the information. If at any time during the study you decide not to continue to participate, simply turn blank questionnaires. If information data are eventually published or presented, it will be done so in a way that will not reveal your identity.

5. POTENTIAL RISKS OR BENEFITS TO YOU

There are no known risks involved in participating in this study. You will be provided with a participation in a research study voucher slip to present to your instructor. Extra credit may be granted at the discretion of your instructor.

6. INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

I have read the information about this study, why it is being done, and any benefits or risks involved. I understand that I do not have to participate in this study, and my

refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of rights. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent for my participation at any time during the study. If I choose to remove myself from the study, that choice will be respected. I agree to participate in this study and understand that by agreeing to participate I have not given up any of my human rights. I understand that the study is being conducted by Joanne S. Curtis, a graduate student at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN under the supervision of Dr. LuAnnette Butler, a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN. I have been informed orally and in writing of the procedures to be followed and about any discomfort or risks which may be involved. I understand that if at any time I have any questions regarding my participation in this study, I may contact Joanne S. Curtis at (931) 221-7451. I have been told that I am free to terminate my participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form to keep for my records.

I understand that by completing the survey forms I am agreeing to participate in the present study being conducted under the supervision of a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Austin Peay State University. I have read the procedures described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description for my records.

Austin Peay State University
Institutional Review Board

October 16, 2000

Joanne Curtis
c/0 Dr. LuAnnette Butler
APSU Box 4537
Clarksville, TN 37044

RE: Your application dated October 16, 2000 regarding study number 01-016: The Attitudes of College Students Toward Career Counseling (Austin Peay State University)

Dear Curtis:

Thank you for your recent submission. We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. I have reviewed your request for expedited approval of the new study listed above. This type of study qualifies for expedited review under FDA and NIH (Office for Protection from Research Risks) regulations.

Congratulations! This is to confirm that I have approved your application through one calendar year. The consent form submitted with your application is approved. You must obtain consent from all subjects, but signed written consent is not required. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subjects research. These policies can be viewed at: www2.apsu.edu/www/computer/policy/2002.htm. The full IRB will still review this protocol and reserves the right to withdraw expedited approval if unresolved issues are raised during their review.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before October 16, 2001, unless closed before that date. Enclosed please find the forms to report when your study has been completed and the form to request an annual review of a continuing study. Please submit the appropriate form prior to October 16, 2001.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Linda Freed or Sarah Lundin-Schiller (221-7881; fax 221-7304; email: grants@apsu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Again, thank you for your cooperation with the APIRB and the human research review process. Best wishes for a successful study!

Sincerely,

Dr. Parris R. Watts
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C

Demographic Data

Age of participant_____

Gender of participant_____

How would you define your race?

African-American Asian-American Caucasian Hispanic Native-American Other

Are you an undergraduate student at Austin Peay State University?

Yes_____   Or   No_____

What year would you be considered in school?

Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Graduate

Have you utilized the services at the Career Counseling Center at Austin Peay State University?

Yes_____   Or   No_____

Have you previously utilized the services of another Career Counseling Center?

Yes_____   Or   No_____

APPENDIX D

ATTITUDES TOWARD CAREER COUNSELING SCALE

Below are statements pertaining to career counseling. Read each statement carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree by using the following scale:

1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

Please express your honest opinion in rating the statements. There are no 'wrong' answers, and the only right ones are the ones you honestly feel or believe. It is important that you answer every item. Please circle the answer choices.

1. I could easily imagine how career counseling could be beneficial for me.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

2. Having to see a counselor to talk about career related concerns is a sign of

    indecisiveness.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

3. If I were having trouble choosing a major. I would not hesitate to schedule an

    appointment with a career counselor.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

4. If I was in a career transition. I would value the opportunity to see a career counselor.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

5. If a career related dilemma arose for me. I would be pleased to know that career

    counseling services are available.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

6. With so many different ways to get help on career related decisions, I see career counseling as relatively important.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

7. Talking to a therapist regarding career issues is a sign of weakness.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

8. I fear the negative stigma associated with seeing a career counselor.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

9. In all likelihood, a career counseling experience for me would be quite depressing.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

10. My feelings about counseling in general would make me hesitant to see a career counselor.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

11. Working with a trained counselor might be a helpful way to feel more confident about career decisions.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

12. Career counseling can be an effective way to learn what occupation is best suited for my interests.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

13. If I was seeing a career counselor, I would not want anyone to know about it.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

14. Seeing a career counselor to discuss career issues is a very private matter that should not be discussed with anyone.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

15. Career counseling is a valuable resource in making a career choice.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

16. I would be too embarrassed to ever schedule an appointment with a career counselor.

    1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

APPENDIX E

Scoring the Attitudes Toward Career Counseling Scale

To score the two subscales, sum the items from each of the two scales. High scores on Value indicate an overall greater perception of the value of career counseling; high scores on Stigma indicate a heightened stigma attached to career counseling.

Factor 1: Value of Career Counseling = 8 items

Item numbers that indicate Value: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 15.

Factor 2: Stigma Related to Career Counseling = 8 items

Item numbers that indicate Stigma: 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16.

Item no.	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	.57	-.17
2	-.17	.50
3	.60	-.18
4	.68	-.18
5	.66	-.25
6	.68	-.19
7	.27	.59
8	-.17	.68
9	-.35	.62
10	-.34	.64
11	.63	-.34
12	.71	-.28
13	-.12	.65
14	.11	.54
15	.60	-.31
16	-.15	.50

VITA

Joanne Sharon Davis Curtis was born in Portsmouth, Virginia on November 19, 1956. She attended public schools in the city of Virginia Beach graduating from Princess Anne High School in June, 1974. She attended Norfolk General Hospital's School of Radiologic Technology and eventually received her Associate in Applied Science degree from Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach Campus. She enrolled in the European Division of the University of Maryland in the winter of 1991. She received her Associate in Arts, emphasis in German Studies and a Bachelor of Arts, major concentration in Psychology in May, 1994. In 1995, she moved to Clarksville, Tennessee. In the fall of 1998, she entered Austin Peay State University to pursue the Master of Science degree with a major in School Guidance and Counseling. In May of 2000, she received her Master of Human Relations degree from University of Oklahoma. Her School Counseling degree will be conferred in May, 2001. She is presently employed as a Substitute Teacher for the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System and as a Radiologic Technologist for the Premier Medical Group in Clarksville, Tennessee.