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**A QUALITATIVE STUDY: STUDENT MOTHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
HOMOGENEOUS AND HETEROGENEOUS ADVISORY GROUPINGS IN
SECONDARY SETTINGS**

by
Vanessa R. Pellington

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
March 26, 2015

Dissertation Chair: Gloria Hill, Ed.D.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Clair Ann Ransom.

*Thank you for instilling in me a love of learning and
for your unconditional love and support.*

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Gloria Hill, Dr. Kara Ieva, and Dr. Nancy Vitalone-Raccaro, for their guidance and support through this journey.

I am especially grateful for all of the time and direction Dr. Gloria Hill, the chair of my committee, provided. Her professional insight and feedback created a challenging and rewarding learning experience that I will carry with me forever.

Many thanks to all of my students who have taught me more than they will ever know; I can only hope that I have touched their lives as much as they have shaped mine.

Finally, I am thankful to my husband, Sage Wagner, and my children for their love, support, and patience through this doctoral journey.

Abstract

Vanessa R. Pellington

A QUALITATIVE STUDY: STUDENT MOTHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOGENEOUS AND HETEROGENEOUS ADVISORY GROUPINGS IN SECONDARY SETTINGS

2015

Gloria Hill, Ed.D.

Doctor of Education

This qualitative research study explored the perceptions of young student mothers in high school regarding their experiences in homogeneous advisory groupings as compared to heterogeneous advisory groupings. An extensive review of the literature revealed a gap in research regarding the grouping methods for non-academic classes, such as advisory program groupings (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1998; Hallam, et al., 2004; Song, et al., 2009; Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). The purpose of this qualitative research study was to add to the body of knowledge that addresses the types of advisory grouping students perceive best meet their needs.

In this study, an analysis of the twelve in-depth semi-structured one-on-one student interviews highlighted the importance of relationships and commonality in advisory groupings. The findings revealed that the overall advisory experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groups were directly related to the relationships the participants had with their peers and their advisors. Additionally, the commonality of motherhood discussed by the majority of participants suggests that grouping subgroups of students with common interests or needs may be an important consideration when grouping advisories, especially when working with students at risk for not graduating from high school. It is imperative that regardless of the advisory structure or program in place, school administrators ensure that students are afforded the

opportunity to foster positive relationships with peers and advisors in non-academic settings such as advisory programs. For some students, participation in an effective advisory program could be the determining factor in the achievement of the goal of high school graduation.

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Chapter One

Introduction

There are multiple methods of grouping students academically and non-academically within educational settings (Hallam, Ireson, & Davies, 2004). In the United States, academic and non-academic grouping methods have historic roots in the education system (Galassi, Gullledge, & Cox, 1998; Song, Spradlin, & Plucker, 2009). Both methods of grouping continue to be used in schools today.

Academically, students are grouped using two predominate grouping methods: heterogeneous grouping and homogeneous grouping; within each method there are various structures. Heterogeneous grouping involves grouping students with varying abilities and/or ages together while homogeneous grouping involves grouping students according to ability and/or age (Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Goldberg, Passow, & Justman, 1966; Loveless, 1999; Song, et al., 2009). Both heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping practices have research based academic and social implications which need be considered when grouping students (Hallam, 2002; Hallam & Ireson, 2006; Molnar, 2002; Oakes, 1985; Preckel, Götz, & Frenzel, 2010; Shields, 2002; Slavin, 1987).

A method of non-academic grouping, known today as advisory programs, emerged in the late 1800s as educators in junior high schools grew to realize the need to guide students to become contributing citizens with well-rounded character (Cremin, 1961; Galassi, et al., 1998). While advisories began as a homeroom period, over the past century advisories have become more focused on guiding students by personalizing their learning, forming relationships with adults in the building and connecting students to the

school community as they prepare for their adult life (Ayers, 1994; Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1998; Poliner & Lieber, 2004).

As researchers collect data and compare advisory programs across the nation, the vast differences among structures including but not limited to the size of groups, the length and frequency of advisory sessions and how the students are grouped become more apparent (Galassi, et al., 1998; Goldberg, 1998). As with academic grouping, there are strengths and weaknesses among various structures of advisory grouping that should be considered when designing and implementing an advisory program at the secondary level (DiMartino, Clarke, & Wolk, 2002; Goldberg, 1998; Poliner & Lieber, 2004).

Academic Grouping

History. Early 17th century colonial American education began in a one room schoolhouse where students were schooled together in the same classroom regardless of age and ability, which today is referred to as heterogeneous grouping (Lloyd, 1999). This heterogeneous grouping of students was largely due to the fact that there were not many students in sparsely populated colonial America (Song, et al., 2009). With the influx of immigrants, colonial American education expanded as student populations began to grow and new schools were built. The new schools were larger and as a result teachers were able to group students by age and grade (Song, et al., 2009).

The first school to be grouped by grade level was opened in 1848 and by the 1860s nearly all city schools were organized in this homogeneous fashion (Kulik, Kulik, & Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1982). By the 1870s age-graded schools were engrained in American education. As American education continued to expand, the practice of further grouping students by ability was introduced in the early

1900s and has since become commonplace (Kulik, et al., 1982). Homogeneous grouping became a feasible way for growing schools to group students based upon their needs and abilities and is most common among secondary schools (Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Goldberg, et al., 1966; Loveless 1999).

Heterogeneous grouping. The practice of heterogeneous grouping which was introduced in the 1600s continues today and involves grouping students with a variety of abilities and/or ages together within a classroom and is most common in elementary settings (Loveless, 1999). Heterogeneous grouping in K-12 education settings includes multi-age classrooms, multi-grade classrooms and inclusion classrooms (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1997; Mack, 2008; Stanovich, Jordan, & Perot, 1998). Multi-age classrooms group students together from multiple ages and very similarly multi-grade classrooms group students together from multiple grades (Lloyd, 1999; Pratt, 1986; Song, et al., 2009). Inclusion classrooms include students with identified needs with students who are mainstream learners. Some examples of students that are placed in inclusion classrooms include English language learners, students with disabilities and gifted students (Liasidou, 2013; Preckel, et al., 2010; Rogers, 2007).

Academic implications. Heterogeneous groupings have been found to benefit all students included (Carter & Hughes, 2006; Downing & Peckham-Hardin, 2007; Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, & Palombaro, 1994; Levin, et al., 1987; Molnar, 2002, Peltier, 1997; Staub & Peck, 1995). Academic advantages of heterogeneous grouping include the inclusion of lower achieving students with teachers who hold expectations for all students at high levels as well as the opportunity for peer assistance where students can learn from one another and raise the achievement outcomes for all (Levin, et al.,

1987; Molnar, 2002). Although some argue that the heterogeneous grouping takes time away from the students at higher levels, research has found that there is no negative impact on the amount of time these students are engaged in learning (Hollowood, et al., 1994; Peltier, 1997; Staub & Peck; 1995). Additionally, students with special needs have been found to make greater academic growth in heterogeneously grouped inclusion classrooms than students with special needs placed in homogeneous classrooms (Wang & Baker, 1986).

Among the many advantages of heterogeneous grouping there are also disadvantages that have been identified. Students in heterogeneously grouped classrooms cited there were lower teacher expectations, less teacher feedback, reduced academic learning time, and less homework (Shields, 1994; Shields, 2002). Additionally, boredom within heterogeneously grouped education settings has been identified among both low achieving and high achieving students. Low achieving students cite boredom due to being over challenged and high achieving students complain of being under challenged (Preckel, et al., 2010). Furthermore, heterogeneous groupings are also thought of as being more difficult to teach since multiple abilities, ages and/or needs within one classroom require teachers to facilitate learning differently (Kulik, et al., 1982).

Homogeneous grouping. Homogeneous grouping, most commonly referred to as ability grouping, involves grouping students with similar abilities or needs. Students are placed into classrooms based upon their levels of ability and/or readiness (Kulik, 1992). The two most noted forms of ability grouping are between-class ability grouping and within-class ability grouping. Between class ability grouping occurs at the school level whereby classrooms are scheduled and formed to place students with like needs. Student

needs include social, emotional, physical, learning and language strengths and barriers (Rose & Meyer, 2006). Within-class ability grouping occurs at the teacher level whereby teachers group student with like needs together (Slavin, 1987).

Academic implications. The advantages of homogeneous grouping that are cited by researchers and practitioners revolve around providing targeted instruction. For example, high achievers are challenged when grouped with other high achievers, while low achievers receive remediation and a slower pace when group with other low achievers. In classrooms and schools without ability grouping, teachers teach to the middle and many of the students are not engaged or struggling (Slavin, 1987). Some research has indicated that when classrooms are homogeneously designed and structured to meet the requirements of students' needs that students benefit (Shields, 2002). Advocates of homogeneous grouping argue that it is easier for teachers to instruct students with similar needs and abilities (Kulik, et al., 1982).

The academic disadvantages of homogeneous grouping deal with concerns of tracking and perpetuating the achievement gap. In homogeneously grouped classrooms, there can be a negative impact on low achievers in classrooms with low expectations sentencing these students to a low track for the duration of their education. This permanent effect on tracking further increases the achievement gap (Molnar, 2002; Slavin, 1987). Overall, the risks associated with ability grouping have been found to outweigh the benefits (Braddock, 1980; Espoito, 1973; Hallam & Ireson, 2006; Kulik & Kulik, et al., 1982; Molnar, 2002; Welner & Mickelson, 2000).

Social implications. It wasn't until the end of the twentieth century that grouping began to be considered in the 1980s when Robert Slavin and Jeannie Oakes presented

research around issues of self-concept, peer relationships, access, and equity in homogeneously grouped settings (Oakes, 1985; Slavin, 1987; Slavin, 1988; Tieso, 2003).

Heterogeneous social implications. Socially, students without disabilities have been found to develop greater appreciation as well as empathy for students with disabilities when grouped heterogeneously in academic settings (Fisher, Sax, & Grove, 2000). Friendships at the secondary level are often formed based upon the classes students attend. Therefore, when grouped heterogeneously, students are more likely to form friendships with those of same and different ability levels. Improved social cohesion among students with a variety of abilities is another advantage of heterogeneous grouping (Hallam & Ireson, 2006; Kulik, et al., 1982). Additionally, the behavior demonstrated by all students, most notably the lower achieving students, is improved (Hallam & Ireson, 2006; Slavin & Karweit, 1985).

Additionally, some research indicates social disadvantages in heterogeneously grouped classrooms. For example, while students are grouped with students of various ages, gender, abilities and backgrounds, they are still inclined to socialize mostly with students from within the same abilities, ethnic backgrounds and social class (Hallam, 2002a; Hallam, 2002). Furthermore, there is a heightened potential for intragroup stigmatization whereby students label within their mixed group (Poole, 2008).

Homogeneous social implications. Homogeneous grouping has received scrutiny for a wealth of research which suggests that this method of grouping students supports social and economic inequalities along with fostering low self-esteem among students (Oakes, 1985; Simpson, 1999; Slavin, 1987; Slavin 1988). Grouping students homogeneously, according to Oakes (1985), “fosters low self-esteem among these same

students and promotes school misbehavior and dropping out” as well as “separates students along socioeconomic lines, separating rich from poor, whites from nonwhites” (Oakes, 1985, p. 40; Hallam, 2002). The attitudes of students in the lower tracks are negatively impacted by homogeneous grouping, and it has also been indicated that students from both low and high ability groups are stigmatized for low and high functioning (Ireson & Hallam, 2001). However, some research has found that homogeneous grouping by ability has a positive impact on gifted students (Fiedler, Lange, & Winebrenner, 2002; Molnar, 2002; Rogers, 2007).

Non-Academic Grouping

History. The concept of non-academic grouping for the purposes of students developing citizenship and character began in the late 1800s as junior high school educators began to identify the need for guidance programs to meet the need demands of the industrial era (Briggs, 1920; Cremin, 1961; Galassi, et al., 1998). By the 1930s, meeting the academic and non-academic needs of students became a joint venture for educators. As a result, the introduction of homeroom emerged as part of the junior high school day set aside to guide students. This introduction of homeroom was the first teacher advisory model (Galassi, et al., 1998). By the late 1960s, middle school advocates voiced and provided rationale that advisories were needed in middle schools citing the importance of personal and educational guidance to support academics. This marked a distinction between advisories and homerooms and from this point forward, the advisory structure was intended to support students academically through personal and educational guidance (Alexander & George; 1993; Galassi, et al., 1998; George & Oldaker, 1985). During the 1970s, high schools joined middle school advisory practices and began to

implement advisory programs across the nation in an effort to personalize learning at the secondary level, as promoted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals Model Project (Goldberg, 1998). Today advisory programs can be found in both middle schools and high schools across the nation (DiMartino, et al., 2002; Galassi, et al., 1998).

Advisory programs. Advisory programs are a means of personalizing the high school experience for students. Advisory programs are structured in a manner whereby students are grouped with a small group of peers and an adult advisor over an extended period of time so that every student is known well by one adult in the school (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, Gullledge, & Cox, 1997; Galassi, et al., 1998; Juvonen et al., 2004; Poliner & Lieber, 2004; Van Ryzin, 2010). In traditional high school settings, teachers are expected to teach content and often only feel capable of teaching content; however, as Darling-Hammond (2006) argues, our teaching needs to adapt to the new social conditions of our global world and personalize learning for all students. Advisory programs create a structure whereby time is set aside for teachers to serve in the capacity of an advisor and focus on teacher-student relationships.

In secondary schools the support from teacher-student relationships lessens from that which students are accustomed in elementary school (Van Ryzin, 2010). Advisory programs have been identified and implemented among secondary schools as a means of personalizing learning and engaging students by focusing on “tightening connections between students and their learning environments” (McClure, Yonezawa, & Jones, 2010, p. 3) to improve student connectedness to school and increase social, emotional and academic performance (Poliner & Lieber, 2004).

Structure. While advisory programs vary by school, they generally take place during a scheduled time set aside during the school day; however, the frequency varies depending upon the structure. The structure of an advisory program refers to the length and frequency of the advisory meeting time. “The lowest common denominator of advisory programs seems to be that they take place at a designated time within the school day with some frequency” (Galassi, et al., 1998, p. 2). Some schools have advisory time embedded into the daily schedule while other schools schedule advisory time weekly, bi-weekly or monthly (Galassi, et al., 1998; Johnson, 2009).

Regardless of the scheduled advisory time, the advisory model facilitates a structure in which students know that they have at least one adult in their high school that is invested in their social, emotional and educational growth and well-being so that secondary students will engage and connect to school (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Castleman, & Littky, 2007; Clarke & DiMartino, 2004; Gewertz, 2007; Jenkins, 2002; Quint, 2006). Advisory programs are non-academic and generally encompass activities and discussions intended to foster supportive relationships, community building and academic success (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Poliner & Lieber, 2004; Schoenlein, 2001; Wood, 1990).

Grouping. Literature is replete with recommendations for structuring advisories (Galassi, et al., 1998; Johnson, 2009; Quint, 2006); however, the research on how students are grouped for advisories is left largely unaddressed. Some advisory groupings that are referenced in the literature include across-grade, same-grade, upperclassmen mentoring underclassmen, same gender, and whole school when there is a small student body. While practitioners are grouping advisory students using a variety of methods, there is very little research supporting the type of groupings, specifically heterogeneous

and homogeneous groupings, which students perceive to best meet their needs (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Lambert, 2005).

Homogeneous advisory groups for student mothers. There are many subgroups of students within high schools making it possible to group advisory students heterogeneously or homogeneously. For the purposes of this study, the focus is on young student mothers in high school. While teenage birth rates have declined, in 2011 the birth rate for females ages 15-17 was 15.4 per 1000 and for females ages 18-19 it was 54.1 per 1000 (Martin, Hamilton, Ventura, Osterman, & Mathews, 2013, p. 8). Research has indicated that adolescent childbearing results in negative outcomes for both the mothers and their children; teenage mothers and their babies are more likely to experience health, educational, economic and social risks (Effenbein, 2003). However, “teen mothers who are able to remain connected to their high schools have fewer subsequent births during adolescence, better long-term economic outcomes for their family and better behavioral, social and academic development of their children (Sadler, Swartz, & Ryan-Krause, 2007, p. 122). Since the goal of advisories is to connect students to school by personalizing their educational experience, this study delves into the perceptions that young student mothers have about their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to add to the body of knowledge that addresses the type of advisory groupings that students perceive to best meet their needs. This researcher will explore the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as

they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings.

Research Questions

This study deals with one overarching research question: What are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings?

Within the scope of the overarching research question, this study will delve into the perceptions young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings in terms of the following sub questions:

1. How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?
2. How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?
3. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?
4. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research study will contribute to further research as well as educational practice in the following ways.

Research. There has been much qualitative research on students' perceptions of homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping for content area classes. There has also been a significant amount of research regarding the benefits of student advisory programs as a means of personalizing learning and the various grouping structures that are used in schools. However, there is limited research on the students' perceptions of advisory homogeneous groupings and heterogeneous groupings. This study will explore perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. Not only will this study contribute to the research on grouping students in education, but it will also contribute to the literature about the structures of advisory programs. This qualitative research may serve as a means of establishing validity of homogeneous and/or heterogeneous grouping in advisory programs.

Practice. This study compares young student mothers' experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings through their perceptions as gleaned through one on one interviews. The insightful nature of interviews foster the "perceived causal inferences and explanations," and provides insight into how the students perceived their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous grouped advisories (Yin, 2009, p. 102). The findings will either "confirm past information or diverge from it" (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). That said, the perceptions gleaned through this study may influence how the research site, a high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey,

continues to refine grouping of advisories as well as the manner in which other practitioners decide to group their student advisories. Additionally, suggestions for new questions regarding grouping other subsets of students in advisory programs may be proposed and explored based upon the findings in this study.

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative research is comprised of interviewing female student mothers in high school to explore the perceptions that they have as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. There is only one advisory group of student mothers at the high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey and therefore the entire population will be sampled. Sampling the entire population with predetermined characteristics is a purposive sampling technique known as total population sampling (Total population sampling, n.d.). There are 18 students in the advisory group homogeneously grouped for student mothers. The total population will be sampled so that the number of participants in the study appropriately reflects “the range of participants,” (Seidman, 2013, p. 58). Furthermore, total population sampling will contribute to statistically significant results (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). While all student mothers will be sampled from the advisory group designated for student mothers, it is often difficult to generalize findings elsewhere; however, the use of “logic and reasoning” can assist in creating an argument for generalizing findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 209). Logic and reasoning will assist the researcher in the process of describing whether the conclusions from this research study can be applied elsewhere. For the purposes of this study, the conclusions which are drawn from the student mothers’ perceptions of homogeneously versus heterogeneously grouped advisories may be used to

extend the findings to other targeted student populations with specific needs present (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

While qualitative data, such as interviews, is “the best way to learn about people’s subjective experience,” there are potential limitations to be considered such as researcher bias (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 23). As a teacher at the high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey with first hand advisory experience, it is important that I separate my beliefs about groupings and advisories from the research. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012) “it is neither possible nor desirable for the researcher to eliminate all biases or expectations,” (p.16). However, it is imperative that I do not impose my beliefs and expectations on the interviews and that I am attentive to how my beliefs and expectations could impact what I “see and hear” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 16).

To further minimize bias, all interviews will be audio-taped and interviews will be transcribed to ensure the researcher includes all responses regardless of what the interviewer deems as significant. Additionally, member checking will be used to ensure that the researcher interprets the participant feedback appropriately (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Finally, peer debriefing, a process whereby committee members review and question the study to ensure “interpretation beyond the researcher” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192) will be utilized as a supplemental measure to minimize bias.

There are drawbacks to face-to-face interviews that must also be considered. These deal with perceptions, questioning methods and probing. Interviewer bias, whereby the interviewer reveals personal beliefs, is more likely with a face-to-face interview. It is critical that the interviewer be cognizant of interviewer bias in an effort to avoid

revealing beliefs to the interviewee which could taint the responses (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). In addition, to limit the bias that can result from the manner in which the questions are asked, all questions will be standardized by wording the questions the same for each interviewee. All the questions will be scheduled so that the interviewees are all asked the questions in the same order. Standardizing and scheduling the interviews will help to address the potential limitations of face-to-face interviewing (Creswell, 2009; Seale, 2012).

Probing also needs to be considered when interviewing. Oftentimes it is necessary for the interviewer to use probes to communicate to the interviewee that you are interested in their responses and would like to hear more. Probing can be more reliable when the probes are predetermined prior to interviewing. Steering probes, confirmation probes and elaboration probes will be developed for this study so that the probing is consistent among all interviewees therefore creating more reliable results (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Steering probes will be used to bring the conversation back to the topic when a participant's response "goes off track" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 140). The interviewer will also use confirmation probes by repeating or summarizing what was heard to confirm the interview response was appropriately understood. Finally, elaboration probes will be used by the interviewer when the interviewee shares something of particular interest but the response lacks adequate details (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized in the following manner. Chapter I provides an introduction to the study as well as an overarching background on the research problem. It establishes the need for research on homogeneously and heterogeneously grouped

advisory programs, provides a purpose for the study, outlines the research questions and addresses the significance of the study as well as the limitations. Chapter II is a review of the literature on the grouping practices in education as well as the structures of advisory programs and the benefits and weaknesses of each. This literature review presents the rationale for exploring the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory grouping. Chapter III describes the methodological design of the study supporting the research question. Chapter IV presents the data from the interviews in connection to the research question that was compiled in NVivo 10. Finally, Chapter V summarizes the research conducted, discusses the findings, draws conclusions and provides implications for further research and practice in education.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Literature is replete with studies on heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping for academic classes at the secondary level; however, there is limited research on the grouping methods for non-academic classes, such as advisory groupings (Galassi, et al., 1998; Hallam, et al., 2004; Song, et al., 2009). This research study explored the perceptions of young mothers as they compared their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. There was one overarching research question addressed in this study: What are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings?

Within the scope of the overarching research question, this study further explored the perceptions young mothers in high school have as they compared their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings in terms of the following sub questions:

1. How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?
2. How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?
3. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?

4. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?

This essential study contributes to the research on grouping students in non-academic settings by providing qualitative data on student perceptions of advisory grouping methods. The perceptions of the student mothers as gleaned through the research questions served as a means of establishing validity of homogeneous and/or heterogeneous grouping in advisory programs. Additionally, the findings provide recommendations for practitioners on effective grouping methods for advisory groupings.

Organization of the Literature Review

This review of the literature focuses on research in the field connected to the grouping of advisory programs. There are many interconnected topics related to the grouping of advisories. Specifically, this review will focus on five topics which appeared recurrently throughout the review of literature. The five topics addressed in this literature review include student issues at the secondary level, student mothers, school counseling, advisory programs and grouping students. This review of the literature is a thematic review. For the purposes of this research study, the five topics presented and analyzed throughout this review of literature are connected and applied to two overarching themes central to advisory programs at large: relationships with peers and adults in school and graduation from high school (Dale, 1995; Galassi, Gullledge, & Cox, 2004; Kilby, 2006; Shulkind & Foot, 2009).

The first section of the review concentrates on student issues at the secondary level which are a driving force behind the advisory program model. The subsections of

student issues at the secondary level include school connectedness and student dropouts. School connectedness hones in on student-teacher relationship, student engagement and scheduling. The subsection on student dropouts focuses on student parents, causal factors of dropping out and the overall impact on society. These two student issues, school connectedness and student dropouts, are the purpose of many secondary advisory programs (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 2004; Shulkind & Foot, 2009).

The second section of the literature review focuses on student mothers as they are the subjects of this research study. Specifically, this section centers on school connectedness and support of student mothers. The third section of this literature review discusses school counseling since the advisory program model grew out of school counseling and both remain interconnected. This section specifically addresses the historical context of school counseling and the responsibilities of school counselors are presented.

The fourth section of this literature review deals explicitly with advisory programs because this research study explores grouping practices in advisory programs. Much like the third section on school counseling, the fourth section on advisory programs hones in on the historical context of advisory programs as well as the advisor responsibilities.

The fifth section of this review of the literature explicitly addresses grouping of students. Homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping is presented as is grouping by gender; all three grouping methods are an intricate part of this research study. Finally, the literature review concludes with a summary and analysis of the findings and a synthesis

of how the literature review supports the research on grouping students in non-academic settings.

Student Issues

Advisory programs have been identified and implemented in schools as a means of personalizing learning and engaging students. These programs have been found to personalize learning and engage students by “tightening connections between students and their learning environments” (McClure, et al., 2010, p. 3) to address student issues (Poliner & Lieber, 2004). Specifically, school connectedness and dropping out are two interconnected student issues which advisory programs at the secondary level have worked toward addressing (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1998; Poliner & Lieber, 2004). Therefore, a review of the literature on school connectedness and dropping out is necessary as they are the fundamental purpose of advisory programs (Dale, 1995; Galassi, et al., 2004; Kilby, 2006; Shulkind & Foot, 2009).

School connectedness is a multi-faceted student issue which includes factors such as student-teacher relationships, student engagement and scheduling; all of these factors contribute to the students believing that they are cared for as individuals by adults in their school (Blum, 2005a; Clarke & DiMartino, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Keefe, 2005; Van Ryzin, 2010; Whitlock, 2006). Secondary students dropping out is another student issue which has many causal factors including characteristics of the student, characteristics of the family, characteristics of the school and academic achievement (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Rumberger, 2011; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). These causal factors impact students nationwide, and even more so student parents, especially student mothers which results in a cost to society

at large (Fessler, 2003; Hotz, McElroy, & Sanders, 2005; Levine & Painter, 2003; Rumberger, 2011; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). It is important to review the literature on school connectedness and student dropouts as both are critical factors directly connected to the overarching themes in the research questions of this study: relationships with peers and adults in school and graduation from high school.

School connectedness. “School connection is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals” (Blum, 2005, p. 1). School connection is important because when students feel connected to school they are more motivated to experience positive academic outcomes as compared to students who feel no connection to school (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Chung-Do, Filibeck, Goebert, Arakawa, Fraser, Laboy, & Minakami, 2013; Klem & Connell, 2004; McNeely & Falci, 2004; Schaps, 2003; Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006; Sullo, 2007). School connectedness has a domino effect: as school connection increases often academic success increases. Therefore, it is more likely students will continue coming to school (Blum & Libbey, 2004). As students transition into high school, many begin to feel disconnected from school. Disconnectedness to school has been linked to concerns of student-teacher relationships, student engagement and scheduling (Clarke & DiMartino, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hayes, Nelson, Tabin, Pearson, & Worthy, 2002; Keefe, 2005; Van Ryzin, 2010; Whitlock, 2006). School connectedness in an embedded topic of this research study as the primary focus is on student perceptions of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings which will be addressed with interview questions on relationships and graduation from high school in the research at hand. Ultimately since school connectedness is a primary function of

advisory programs, it is imperative to have a fundamental understanding of these student issues when researching the students' perceptions of advisory grouping methods regarding student issues.

Student-teacher relationships. Student-teacher relationships in traditional high school settings are most often defined by teachers delivering content to students, however, Darling-Hammond (2006) avows that teaching needs to adapt to the new social conditions of our global world. Darling-Hammond (2006) further asserts that it is no longer adequate for teachers to solely deliver content; teachers must begin to fill different roles to better meet the needs of students. Relationships are a key factor when motivating students to learn (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Jenkins (2002) cites the importance of caring for students as individuals, not just as students. These varying perspectives on student-teacher relationships are experienced by most students.

The role of teachers is important in terms of caring for students as individuals; Keefe (2005) says that teachers are most effective when they serve a dual role: learning facilitator and advisor. This dual teacher role of learning facilitator and advisor enhances student-teacher relationships and in turn, school connection (Keefe, 2005; Quint, 2006). When students are known well by at least one adult in a high school who is personally invested in their education, they are more likely to connect to school (Black, 2002; Felner & Seitsinger, 2007; Quint, 2006; Wilson, 1998). Student-teacher relationships, as supported by the dual role of the teacher identified in this review of the literature, inform this study. This qualitative research relies on student perceptions to glean insight into the student-teacher relationships which are a primary focus of advisory programs (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1997; Galassi, et al., 1998; Juvonen et al., 2004; Poliner

&Lieber, 2004; Van Ryzin, 2010). This dual role of the teacher will be considered as the perceptions of student relationships in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings are analyzed in this research study.

Student engagement. Student engagement is connected to academic success; when students feel they are cared for by others in the school they are more likely to be engaged. This, in turn, has a positive impact on academic success (Blum, 2005; Quint, 2006). Klem and Connell (2004) report that up to 60 percent of students are disengaged from school. “Students cannot succeed in high school by remaining passive recipients of knowledge, waiting for graduation. Existing structures do not promote engagement” (Clarke & DiMartino, 2004, p. 23). Teachers are more likely to respond in a positive manner to students who are engaged than they are to students who are disengaged which further impacts student connectedness (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Since teachers generally respond in a more positive manner to engaged students, the disengaged students need to be offered ways to engage with teachers and the school community. The disengagement from school is what drives advisory programs and is connected to the overarching themes of the research at hand: relationships with peers and adults in school and graduation from high school.

Students need to be provided opportunities to participate in activities with teacher participation. Working alongside teachers during activities helps students to build connections with their teachers and positively impacts student engagement (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Grossman & Bulle, 2006). The structure of comprehensive high schools does not promote a climate conducive for student engagement which further contributes to student disconnectedness from school (Clarke &

DiMartino, 2004; Copland & Boatright, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006). If student-teacher relationships are underdeveloped then student engagement may suffer; again, further contributing to areas of concern around relationships with peers and adults in school and graduation from high school. The literature reveals the growing concern that student engagement goes hand in hand with the relationships students have with peers and adult in school. Therefore, it is important to consider student engagement when discussing the development of relationships in different advisory groupings throughout this research study.

Scheduling. Comprehensive high schools serving all students face obstacles presented due to their size which impact student connectedness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Copland & Boatright, 2006). Many comprehensive high schools have large class sizes which minimize the ability of teachers to build relationships with each student and communicate with parents (Carbone, 1999; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Davison Aviles, Guerrero, Howarth, & Thomas, 1999). Structuring programs and services to support student relationships with adults and peers is critical for school connectedness; students report smaller class sizes help to create stronger teacher-student relationships (Chung-Do, et al., 2013).

School counseling and advisory programs assist comprehensive high schools as they meet the scheduling obstacles by supporting students in a more personalized manner (American School Counseling Association, 2014; Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1998; Kilby, 2006; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). While school counseling and advisory programs work toward addressing concerns related to relationships and high school graduation, scheduling and class sizes can interfere, especially in comprehensive high

schools. The scheduling obstacles presented in the review of the literature bring to light many of the issues that may be present in the comprehensive high school where the study will be completed; these obstacles will be used to inform the study.

Student dropouts. High school student dropouts are a nationwide concern (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Balfanz, 2009; Rumberger, 2011; United States, 1983, U.S. Department of Education, 2011; U.S Department of Education, 2013). The U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2013) reported a status dropout rate of seven percent in 2011. “The status dropout rate represents the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a General Educational Development [GED] certificate)” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p. 1). Dropout statistics are controversial and vary depending upon the measurements used; “driving the debate are questions about what data are used to calculate the relevant statistics and who is considered a ‘graduate’” (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009, p. 79).

Considerations regarding the inclusion or exclusion of inmates, armed forces members, immigrants and GED holders in sample coverage of dropouts must be addressed in order to obtain a significant measure (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Heckman and LaFontaine (2010) report that after considering the biases in dropout reporting, the overall national dropout rate is between 22 and 25 percent. The biases in dropout reporting indicate the huge issue around high school graduation. The influence of advisories on high school graduation will be addressed in this research study through the perspectives of student mothers regarding the advantages

and disadvantages of heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping methods, and therefore it is necessary to review the literature on student dropouts as it will inform the study.

Student parents. Student parents are more likely to drop out of high school than their peers without children (Fessler, 2003; Levine & Painter, 2003; Pillow, 2004). The majority of research, however, regarding student parents, centers on student mothers (Hotz, et al., 2005). Earlier research suggested that teenage pregnancy was a causal factor for student mothers to drop out of high school (Levine & Painter, 2003; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009, p. 85). More recent research conducted by Hotz, McElroy and Sanders (2005) contradicts the findings and suggests “a small negative but statistically insignificant effect of childrearing on teenage mothers’ probability of earning a traditional high school diploma.” Fletcher and Wolfe (2008), however, found that teenage pregnancy decreases the likelihood of student mothers “graduating with a traditional high school diploma by 5 to 10 percent” (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009, p. 85). Similar to the status dropout rate for the overall student population, the dropout rate for student mothers is also dependent upon the data used to calculate the dropout rates (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009, p. 85). Biases must always be considered, and for the purposes of this research study, the biases of high school dropout reporting are important as it influences the general theme of high school graduation. The subjects of this research study are student mothers and therefore the literature regarding student parents and high school graduation will be used to inform the study.

Causal factors. Causal factors of dropping out of high school that have been identified by researchers include characteristics of the student, characteristics of the family, characteristics of the school and academic achievement as measured by exit

exams; all of which generally contribute to a long “process of disengagement from school” (Berkold, Geis, & Kaufman, 1998; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; Bridgeland, et al., 2009; Rumberger, 2011; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009, p. 84). Student and family characteristics are what the students bring to the schools. The research indicates characteristics common among high school student dropouts include poor school performance, truancy, disciplinary issues, becoming a teen parent and employment outside of school (Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999; Rumberger; 2011; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009; Warren & Lee, 2003). Characteristics common among families of high school student dropouts include socioeconomic status, occupation and income of the parents, parental involvement, and family stability; all of which influence school mobility which is a predictor to dropping out (Cameron & Heckman, 2001; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999; Rumberger, 2011; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). While schools may not be able to influence family characteristics of students, they can provide structures to support students; one structure being advisory programs.

Characteristics of school and academic achievement as measured by exit exams are influenced by educational practitioners and public policy; No Child Left Behind (2001) says that school characteristics can and do impact students’ decisions to dropout. Furthermore, Rumberger (2011) asserts that school characteristics also influence student academic achievement (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Characteristics of schools which report higher dropout rates include low quality teachers, high pupil-teacher ratio and large school size (Rumberger, 2011; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). Finally, exit exams required for graduation are another causal factor for high school students dropping out (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). These exit exams are designed to measure academic

achievement of students; the term academic achievement refers to student acquisition and performance of academic content and skills (Armstrong, 2006; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Cunningham, 2012; Peterson, Woessmann, Hanushek, & Lastra-Anadon, 2011). While the exit exams are not likely to influence average students in deciding to drop out, they do influence low-performing students in deciding to drop out (Dee & Jacob, 2007; Jacob, 2004; Warren, Jenkins, & Kulick, 2006). The aforementioned causal factors of dropping out of high school are also closely related to the purpose behind many advisory programs working toward graduation for all high school students and therefore are significant to this research study.

Impact on society. Student dropouts create costs which ultimately impact society as a whole and include “lower tax revenues, greater public spending on public assistance and health care and higher crime rates” (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009, p. 87). Public assistance among high school dropouts is also a concern to society at large; included within public assistance is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, housing assistance and health insurance. Belfield and Levin (2007) found that the overall average public assistance lifetime cost per high school dropout on the United States economy is \$240,000. Single mothers who dropped out of high school account for 57% of TANF recipients, 18% of food stamp recipients and 80% of housing assistance recipients among the non-elderly (Waldfogel, Garfinkel, & Kelly, 2007). Public assistance for health insurance is also higher for high school dropouts than high school graduates; “aggregated over a lifetime, a conservative valuation of the health losses associated with the 600,000 18-year-olds who failed to graduate from high school in 2004 is \$88.3 billion dollars” (Muennig, 2007, p. 19; Muennig, 2008). Waldfogel, Garfinkel

and Kelly (2007) contend that United States could annually save anywhere from \$7.9 billion to \$10.8 billion on public assistance if more high school students graduated and fewer students dropped out.

While high school dropouts are more likely to rely on public assistance, they, in turn, generally contribute less in federal and state income taxes. High school dropouts are more likely to be unemployed; on average the lifetime earning of a high school dropout is \$260,000 less than a high school graduate (Rouse, 2007). Rouse (2007) emphasized that high school dropouts result in lower tax revenues; high school dropouts pay approximately 42 percent of federal and state income taxes as compared to high school graduates. This translates to a loss in tax revenue of nearly \$60,000 over the lifetime of every high school dropout (Martin & Halperin, 2006; Rouse, 2007).

Higher crime rates are also associated with dropping out of high school (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). The United States has the highest rate of incarceration worldwide which is overrepresented by large numbers of high school dropouts; high school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than high school graduates (Bridgeland, et al., 2006; Martin & Halperin, 2006; Nichols & Loper, 2012; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). Inmates who are dropouts represent nearly 70 percent of the nation's jails (Harlow, 2003; Western & Pettit, 2010). The United States prison systems costs \$70 billion per year and given that more than two thirds of inmates are high school dropouts, this impacts society (Western & Pettit, 2010). The review of literature regarding the impact dropouts have on society is significant for this research because this societal burden could be lessened if more students were able to graduate from high school; many types of advisory programs are equipped with the tools and resources to support students as they work toward

graduation. Student mothers' perceptions regarding the impact of advisory programming on graduating from high school will be explored in this research and therefore the impact that dropping out of high school has on society is important to this study.

Student Mothers

Student mothers are a subgroup in high schools across this nation. In 2011 the birth rate for females ages 15-17 was 15.4 per 1000 and for females ages 18-19 it was 54.1 per 1000 (Martin, et al., 2013, p. 8). Over the past several decades our nation's approach to student mothers has changed. Prior to the 1970s, teenage pregnancy was not a concern for public education; however, in 1972 the Education Amendments Act changed the face of education for student mothers (Pillow, 2004). High school student mothers, both pregnant and parenting, were given rights in public schools in 1972 when Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act was passed which prohibited discrimination against student mothers. However, despite this, student mothers are still less likely to graduate high school than their peers due to the fact that in many cases educational disadvantages precede the pregnancy (Fessler, 2003; Hofferth, Reid, & Mott, 2001; Levine & Painter, 2003; Pillow, 2004; SmithBattle, 2006; Turley, 2003; Upchurch & McCarthy, 1989).

In many instances, young student mothers refocus their efforts in school and become more engaged in school after giving birth because they realize graduating from high school will create more opportunities for them (Camarena, Minor, Melner, & Ferrie, 1998; Casserly, Carpenter, & Halcon, 2001; Pillow, 2004; Schultz, 2001; Spear, 2002). "The pathway to a high school diploma is fragile and beset by students' tenuous connections to school and by competing demands and responsibilities" (SmithBattle,

2006, p. 131). Therefore, school connectedness and support is critical for student mothers in high school (Kalil & Ziol-Guest, 2007; Pillow, 2004; SmithBattle, 2005). The review of literature on the services student mothers receive through school as well as school connectedness influence this research study's overarching themes of relationships with peers and adults in school and graduation from high school.

School connectedness and support. Kalil & Ziol-Guest (2007) cite the shortcoming of research on student-teacher relationships, school connectedness and academic achievement for student mothers as compared to the robust research on the like for non-parenting peers. Sadler, Swartz & Ryan-Krause (2007) report that “teen mothers who are able to remain connected to their high school have fewer subsequent births during adolescence, better long-term economic outcomes for their family and better behavioral, social and academic development of their children” (p. 122). While research has captured the significance of school connectedness for teenage student mothers, school programming and support services have struggled to identify the exact support this population needs to become or remain connected to school (Camarena, 1998; Geronmus, 2003; SmithBattle, 2005; SmithBattle, 2006). This inability to identify the appropriate supports needed for student mothers is interconnected to relationships with peers and adults in school and graduation from high school both of which are two themes of this research study.

While it is common for student mothers in high school to work toward high school graduation and desire college education, these plans are often overshadowed by low teacher expectations and the absence of college preparation and advising which has been found to contribute to student mothers losing hope for their aspirations (Farber,

1989; Kalil, 2002; SmithBattle, 2006). Furthermore, there is an imbalance of support for student mothers as it has been identified that student mothers receive more support for their roles as mothers than they do for their roles as students (Camarena, et al., 1998). SmithBattle (2005) asserts that the inconsistencies in support systems for teenage mothers stem from the gaps in research that have not captured the “voices and perspectives of teenage mothers and their families” (p. 831). The incomplete understanding of the perspectives of teenage mothers has led to the development of public policy and programming design in high schools that SmithBattle (2005) has found to be “inconsistent with the complex realities of young mothers’ lives” (p. 831) (Clemmens, 2003; Geronmus, 2003; Schultz, 2001). The literature reveals a fragmented understanding regarding student mother needs and effective support systems. This further validates that the perspectives of student mothers still need to be heard and understood in a manner that will create better support systems for these students as they work toward high school graduation.

School Counseling

School counseling, as defined by the American School Counselor Association (2014) is to “help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring today’s students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.” School counseling has evolved since it was first introduced at the start of the 20th century; the roles and responsibilities of school counselors have grown (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003). This has created ambiguity regarding the role of the guidance counselor and has been found to undermine the ability of school counselors to maximize their ability to successfully help students

with academics, social needs and careers (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Hoyt, 1993; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Paisley & Mahon, 2001; Schenck, Anctil, Smith, & Dahir, 2012; Schmidt, 2003). Over time school counseling has evolved; the evolution of school counseling must be considered when dealing with research of advisory programs in secondary schools as advisory programs are rooted in school counseling (Tocci, Hochman, & Allen, 2005).

Historical context. School counseling was introduced to education in the early 1900s primarily as vocational guidance. The primary purpose of developing school counseling was to support students as they transitioned from school to the job force, oftentimes facilitating job placement (Aubrey, 1992; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003; Super, 1955). Frank Parsons introduced the idea of matching the aptitudes and abilities of students with the requirements of occupations to further support an appropriate post-school job placement (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002; Schmidt, 2003). Jesse Davis developed the first school counseling program in Detroit, Michigan which focused primarily on preparing students for vocation (Pope, 2009; Schenck, et al., 2012). During World War I, the placement of recruits began to rely upon an intelligence scale developed by Alfred Bonet which shortly thereafter began to be used in school counseling (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Super, 1955).

In the 1920s school counseling first began to influence curriculum with John Dewey's introduction of the stages of cognitive development (Dewey, 1963; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Dewey (1963) argued that schools needed to provide educational experiences appropriate for the age and stage of cognitive development. Then in the 1930s Williamson elaborated upon Parson's aptitudes and abilities job placement

matching and developed the trait and theory factor whereby counselors began to provide students with information while motivating and influencing students to achieve their best through vocational or post-secondary planning (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003; Williamson, 1939). The 1940s brought a great shift to school counseling. Carl Rogers (1942) and Abraham Maslow (1968) moved the focus of school counseling from psychoanalytical and behavioral guidance to a humanistic approach whereby counselors facilitate the client and the client grows as a person and develops capacity to self-actualize and find meaning in life (DeCarvalho, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Hansen, 1999; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003).

By the 1950s, the need for increasing the number of school counselors was supported when the American School Counselor Association was formed in 1952 and began promoting the profession and providing professional development and research regarding school counseling (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Then when the National Defense Education Act (1958) was passed, school counseling was further supported by federal dollars to provide every high school student with school counseling; there was an emphasis placed on school counselors keeping records, providing information, securing placements and following up with their students (Baker, 2000; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Poppen & Thompson, 1974). This was put into place so that gifted students would be identified and guided to college ensuring the United States could develop future scientists and mathematicians (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; NDEA, 1958).

During the 1960s, school counseling further expanded to focus on the whole student and include every student; recommendations for counselors to utilize varying approaches to meet the needs of students at all levels were presented and amendments

were made to the National Defense Education Act (1958) and the Vocational Education Act (1963) to support these changes in school counseling (Cobia & Henderson, 2003; Herr, 2002; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Wrenn, 1962).

The 1970s, 1980s and 1990s significantly changed the role of school counselors and added aspects to this profession that began to define what 21st century school counselors have become (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). During the 1970s, school enrollment declined and as a result many schools reduced the number of school counselors (Mercer, 1981). Additionally, as the number of school counselors decreased, the roles of the counselors were expanded. Free public education for all children became a reality, and special education became an added responsibility for school counselors; counselors became responsible for being part of the Individual Education Plan process (Humes, 1978; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003).

The 1980s brought the push for accountability and testing after A Nation at Risk was published which added the oversight of testing to the role of the school counselors. Then in the 1990s career guidance was emphasized and added to the role of the school counselor through the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (H.R. 2884, 1994; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Nuemark, 2004). The start of the 21st century was met with No Child Left Behind (2001) which further contributed to the push for accountability and standardized testing which greatly impacted school counseling (Lewis, 2005).

School counselor responsibilities. Most 21st century school counselors now fills many roles and responsibilities that were added to the profession throughout the 20th century; however, it is important to note that while the roles and responsibilities have expanded few have been removed (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Lewis, 2005; Schenck,

et al., 2012; Schmidt, 2003). A school counselor's role should be focused on developing and implementing an effective guidance curriculum, student planning services, student support systems, and responsive services, all of which have the potential to influence student connectedness; however, additional services such as organizing testing, administering testing and supervising lunches or study halls often pull from the primary responsibilities of school counselors and minimize student connectedness (American School Counseling Association, 2003; American School Counseling Association, 2014; Cobia & Henderson, 2003). Counselors cannot fulfill every responsibility that has been added to their job descriptions; to meet the needs of their students, they need support from other staff members who have frequent interactions with the students (Davis & Garrett, 1998; Killin & Williams, 1995; Lambie & Williamson, 1994). The historical context of school counseling is critical to the study because advisory programs grew from changing roles and responsibilities of the school counseling profession. Additionally, school counseling, as it manifests itself today, is concerned with both student relationships and graduation from high school, both of which are themes of this research study.

Advisory Programs

Advisory programs have been developed as a structure to support student connectedness and enhance student-teacher relationships during a scheduled time so that students can learn more about themselves and others as they work toward post-secondary life (Dale, 1995; Galassi, et al., 2004; Kilby, 2006; Shulkind & Foot, 2009). Advisory programs provide a structured time for a small group of students to work with an adult advisor over an extended period of time so that every student is known well by at least

one adult in the school (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1997; Galassi, et al., 1998; Osofsky, et al., 2003; Van Ryzin, 2010). Advisory programs have been identified as one measure for schools to distribute school counseling among other adults in schools and provide more services conducive to student connectedness for all students (Tocci, et al., 2005). For the purposes of this research study regarding advisory grouping methods, which is framed around the two themes of relationships with peers and adults as well as high school graduation, it is imperative to review the literature on the historical context of advisory programs and advisor responsibilities.

Historical context. Components of advisory programs date back to the late 1800s when junior high school educators recognized the need for guidance programs to become embedded into the daily schedule to better prepare students during the industrial era (Briggs, 1920, Cremin, 1961; Galassi, et al., 1998; Myrick, Highland, & Highland, 1986). Homerooms were established in the early 1900s so that teachers could meet with a group of students daily and guide them (Galassi, et al., 1998; Myick et al., 1986). The homeroom model, also known as the first teacher advisory model, was present in schools through the mid-20th century until advisory programs began to be developed as the roles and responsibilities of school counseling grew and as there was a shift toward all staff members being equally responsible for the personal and educational guidance of students (Galassi, et al., 2004; Gruhn & Douglass, 1947; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Lewis, 2005; Mac Iver & Epstein, 1991; Schenck, et al., 2012).

Advisory programs were first formally implemented in middle schools during the early 1970s primarily in response to the middle school reform movement and IDEA's Individual Guided Education Act; since then advisory programs have gained momentum

(Galassi, et al., 2004; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Mac Iver & Epstein, 1991; Oakes, 2000). Advisory programs were expanded to secondary schools during the 1970s to promote school connectedness (Goldberg, 1998). At the start of the 21st century, advisory programs were included as a reform strategy in *Breaking Ranks in the Middle: Strategies for Leading Middle Level Reform* published by the National Association of School Principals in 2006 (Tocci, et al., 2005). Currently there are advisory programs across the nation at junior high schools and high schools (DiMartino, et al., 2002; Galassi, et al., 1998). Over time, relationships and high school graduation have become the core of most advisory programs.

Advisor responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of advisors facilitating advisory programs vary greatly across schools and are dependent upon the design and implementation of every program (Anfara, 2006; Galassi et al., 2004; Poliner & Leiber, 2004). The inconsistencies among advisory programs which influence the roles and responsibilities of advisors include scheduling, planning time for advisories, administrative support and curriculum (Niska & Thompson, 2007; Wilson, 1998). There are many different categories and types of advisory programs operating in schools nationwide (Galassi, et al., 1998). Galassi, Gullege, & Cox (1998) have identified three categories of advisory groups which include affective need programs, academic need programs and administrative need programs. The roles and responsibilities of an advisor are influenced by the type of advisory program. These inconsistencies must be considered because the ability to measure the effectiveness of advisory programs has been at the mercy of the varying types of advisory programs.

Galassi, Gullege & Cox (1998) further break down each category of advisory groups into types, and it is important to note that many programs pull from each category resulting in an overlap. The affective need programs have four different types: advocacy, community, skills, and invigoration (Galassi, et al., 1998). An advocacy program emphasizes the development of a strong advisor-student relationship. A community program places a great emphasis on peer relationships and providing a school environment where students have a place to belong. Skill programs focus on non-academic skills, such as life skills, developmental guidance and communications which will transfer into academic setting and life. An invigorating program emphasizes an informal school environment whereby students can relax and refocus before entering the academic classroom. There is often an overlap of types of affective need programs (Galassi, et al., 1998).

Academic need programs and administrative need programs are generally more structured and do not have multiple types as seen in affective need programs. Academic need programs provide a time for students to work on their academics which transfer across all content areas such as independent reading, study skills and standardized test preparation. Finally, administrative need programs mirror traditional homeroom periods. These programs deal with housekeeping responsibilities such as material distribution, announcements and school assemblies (Galassi, et al., 1998). Again, there may be overlap among the categories and types of programs which makes it very difficult to clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of an advisor as it varies depending upon the category and type of advisory (Anfara, 2006; Galassi et al., 1998; Poliner & Leiber, 2004).

However, one role that is independent of the category or type of advisory program is the responsibility of the advisor to facilitate the process of students being known well by at least one adult in the school (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1998; Galassi, et al., 2004; Osofsky, et al., 2003; Van Ryzin, 2010). Finally, Shulkind and Foote (2009) assert that advisors of advisory programs should be responsible for promoting open communication, caring about the students, demonstrating and facilitating problem solving and supervising the academic progress of the students. Relationships, a theme throughout this research study, are the foundation of the advisory model, regardless of the category or type of advisory program. The varying roles and responsibilities among advisors in advisory programs may influence how student mothers in this study perceive homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous grouping and therefore must be considered.

Grouping Students

Grouping methods for advisory programs that have been identified in the literature include across-grade, same-grade, upperclassmen mentoring underclassmen, same gender and whole school when the student population is small enough (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Lambert, 2005). While there are ample recommendations in the literature for grouping advisory programs there is a gap in the literature regarding the most effective method of grouping students (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Galassi, et al., 1998; Galassi, et al., 2004; Johnson, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Quint, 2006) which further supports the need for this research study.

Homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping. Literature is replete with the benefits and drawback of heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping in academic classes; however, research on grouping students homogeneously or heterogeneously in advisory programs remains largely unaddressed (Hallam, 2002; Hallam & Ireson, 2006; Oakes, 1985; Preckel, et al., 2010; Shields, 2002; Slavin, 1987; Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). Homogeneous grouping involves grouping students according to ability, need and/or age while heterogeneous grouping involves grouping students with varying abilities, needs and/or ages (Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Goldberg, et al., 1966; Loveless, 1999; Song, et al., 2009). The limited research discussing the benefits and drawbacks of homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping methods for advisory programs impacts the structuring of advisories (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Lambert, 2005; Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). This research study focuses on the perceptions for student mothers regarding different advisory grouping methods and the impact grouping may or may not have on relationships with peers and adults and high school graduation. As gleaned through the review of the literature, research is needed on the grouping methods of advisory programs so that educators can begin to make informed decisions when planning and organizing advisory groupings.

Gender grouping. Grouping advisories by gender has received little attention from researchers although gender issues within advisory programs have been identified (Hoffman & Whitney, 1998; Putbrese, 1989; Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). Putbrese (1989) asserted that although both males and females benefit from advisory programs, females benefit more than males. Hoffman and Whitney (1998) stated that advisory programs are beneficial in students' development of self-confidence regarding gender.

Research has provided evidence that there is a relationship between gender and advisory programs; however, researchers have yet to uncover the ways grouping by gender influences student relationships with peers and adults and high school graduation.

More recently, a qualitative study was conducted at the middle school level by Weilbacher and Lanier (2012) which sought to understand the impact of grouping students by gender on developing trust, a sense of openness and the tenet of confidentiality in advisory programs. This study revealed that grouping by gender had several benefits. Some of the benefits identified include facilitating a safe environment whereby same gender concerns could be discussed openly, building confidentiality among students, and developing relationships (Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012).

While benefits were identified, the students and teachers perceived that same gender advisory programs were more effective when the gender of the students and the advisor were the same (Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). The findings of this study support MacLaury's (2000) findings which indicate that students need to be comfortable with the entire peer group and advisor before they can openly and honestly discuss adolescent health concerns and make personal decisions regarding the concerns. Same gender advisory groups may create a forum whereby students are comfortable to address adolescent issues openly (Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). While Weilbacher & Lanier (2012) found benefits associated with same gender advisory grouping, more research is needed to support their findings (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Hoffman & Whitney, 1998; Putbrese, 1989). The literature reveals that there may be benefits to grouping by gender. This research study will contribute to research regarding the benefits, or lack thereof, of grouping by gender.

Conclusion

This thorough review of the literature captures the historical context of school counseling in relation to the development and evolution of advisory programs in secondary schools. As the roles and responsibilities of school counseling grew and comprehensive high schools became commonplace, advisory programs were introduced and honed to meet the new demands and issues students were presented (Anfara, 2006; Davis & Garrett, 1998; Galassi, et al., 2004; Gruhn & Douglass, 1947; Killin & Williams, 1995; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Lewis, 2005; Poliner & Leiber, 2004; Schenck, et al., 2012; Schmidt, 2003). While school counseling and advisory programs have worked toward addressing student needs, student issues remain an integral part of most secondary settings.

As reviewed in the literature, school connectedness and student dropouts are two major student issues faced in secondary schools today. Most types of advisory programs work toward supporting school connectedness and ultimately high school graduation. However, due to the variety of advisory programs implemented in secondary schools, the influence of advisory programs has yet to be fully uncovered. Specifically, the manner in which students are grouped among advisory programs has been left largely unaddressed in the literature. This research study seeks to contribute to this gap in the literature by exploring the perceptions young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This research study was designed to explore high school student mothers' perceptions of homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groupings. The methodology that was used in this study is described in this chapter.

Research Problem

Advisory programs have been part of secondary schools since the 1970s (Goldberg, 1998) and are used as a structure for students to form relationships within the school to support the completion of high school (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Clarke & DiMartino, 2004). A review of the literature reveals numerous recommendations for developing and structuring advisories (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002). Some of the common grouping methods for secondary advisory programs include across-grade, same-grade, upperclassmen mentoring underclassmen, same gender and whole school when the school body is small; however, the impact grouping methods have on students is left unaddressed (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Lambert, 2005). There is a gap in the literature regarding students' perceptions of advisory grouping. This study sought to fill this gap.

This study deals with one overarching research question: What are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings? For the purposes of this study, heterogeneous grouping is grouping students with varying abilities and/or ages together

and homogeneous grouping is grouping students with like abilities and/or ages (Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Goldberg, et al., 1966; Loveless, 1999; Song, et al., 2009).

Within the scope of the overarching research question, this study will delve into the perceptions young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings in terms of the following sub questions:

1. How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?
2. How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?
3. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?
4. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to add to the body of knowledge that addresses high school students' perceptions of advisory groupings. This researcher will explore the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings.

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is a research method used to explore and understand social or human problems by way of how individuals make meaning of the problem (Creswell, 2009). Seidman (2013) avows that “social abstractions like ‘education’ are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work and lives are the stuff upon which the abstractions are built” (p. 9). As the focus of qualitative research is on the experiences of individuals, qualitative research studies focus on the depth of a situation rather than the breadth. Qualitative research often focuses on a small number of participants to explore a situation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Researchers and scholars who use qualitative research methods maintain that while quantitative research turns humans into numbers in an attempt to make meaning of a situation, qualitative research instead, more appropriately, uses the words of humans to understand a situation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Vygotsky (1987) asserted that the words people use to tell their stories are microcosms of their consciousness and therefore are more powerful than numbers in many instances. People, when asked to talk about an experience, demonstrate that they know a lot as people have the natural ability to “symbolize their experience through language” (Bertaux, 1981, p. 39).

The research questions were used to guide this qualitative study (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Total population sampling was used among an advisory group for student mothers at a high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey. These student mothers participated in a heterogeneous advisory group comprised of males and females, some of whom were not pregnant. Upon pregnancy and/or motherhood, these students were offered and accepted placement in a homogeneous

advisory group for student mothers. There were 18 student mothers enrolled in the advisory group for student mothers. Upon sampling all 18 students, four students were not eligible to participate in the study because they joined the group at the beginning of their freshman year of high school and therefore did not experience a heterogeneous advisory group. Of the 14 remaining eligible students two students declined to participate in this study. Twelve students participated in the study; six students were in 11th grade and six students were in 12th grade.

Creswell's (2009) definition of qualitative research was used when conceptualizing the qualitative methodology for this research.

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or group ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. (p. 4)

This research study specifically employed a phenomenological qualitative research design (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013; Yin, 2009) to explore the research questions at hand which “offers a method for accessing the difficult phenomena of human experience” (Giorgi, 1997). The phenomenological nature of this study was that it was designed with the intention of exploring the “subjective understanding” (Schutz, 1967, p. 20) of the participants which is a central goal of scientific psychology (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Seidman, 2013). The study was designed to work toward understanding the participants' experiences from their points of view as lived experiences (Seidman, 2013; Streubert & Carpenter, 2002). However, since it is never possible to fully understand another person's point of view, the researcher worked toward a subjective understanding “to come as close as possible to understand the

true 'is' of our participants' experience from their subjective point of view" (Seidman, 2013, p. 17).

Giorgi's (1997) phenomenological qualitative research methods were applied to the methodological design of this study:

1. Collection of verbal data;
2. Reading of the data;
3. Breaking of the data into some kind of parts;
4. Organization and expression of the data from a disciplinary perspective; and
5. Synthesis or summary of the data for purposes of communication to the scholarly community.

The utilization of Giorgi's phenomenological qualitative research methods was appropriate because "each of the steps allows for procedural variations, so the way of interpreting each step is neither exclusive nor exhaustive" (Giorgi, 1997). Furthermore, the research protocol for this study was designed, piloted and then modified based upon the pilot testing to ensure that the interviewing design used to collect the verbal data "supports the objectives of the study"(Seidman, 2013, p. 42) appropriately and adequately (Maxwell, 2012).

Data Collection Site

This research was conducted at a high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey with a population comprised predominantly of Hispanic and African American students. This high school has an advisory program which began in September 2009 as an initiative funded through a Federal Smaller Learning Communities Grant. The rationale

provided in the Federal Smaller Learning Communities Grant (New Brunswick High School, 2007) application paints a clear contextual picture of the high school:

Eight hundred five of our 1,213 students failed one or more courses during 2006-2007. During 2007-2008, 722 of our 1,187 students have already failed the first marking period of one or more courses. At New Brunswick High School there is a direct correlation between students' academic failure and disciplinary issues/suspensions. New Brunswick High School's suspension rate is almost 50% higher than the state's average. During 2006-2007, 323 students at New Brunswick High School generated over 3,470 suspensions. 9th graders alone had received 535 suspensions by January 2007. This year, with the implementation of the Freshman Academy, we have seen a 29% decrease in the number of 9th grade suspensions (from 535 to 326) to date.

Attendance-related issues (absences, tardiness, and cuts) continue to plague student achievement and discipline. Our dropouts tend to be students who have experienced significant attendance issues, academic failures or behavioral issues. During the 2006-2007 school year the dropout rate was 7.3%, up from 6.6% in 2005-2006. 58% of these dropouts came from the freshman class. Our projected dropout rate for a four-year period has increased from 26.4% to 29.2%.

Within the Federal Smaller Learning Communities Grant (New Brunswick High School, 2007) grant application, the advisory program for this high school was defined as follows:

Advisories provide a set time in each student's schedule to address his or her overall progress with help from a faculty advisory and group of peers. The Advisory will address the need to change the nature of traditional teacher-student relationships into one of support and advocacy for individual students and their family. Although many students at New Brunswick High School currently receive individual attention through support programs (Play-it-Smart, AVID, JROTC, Peer Leadership, after-school tutoring), others never take advantage of these resources. The Advisory will serve as a support program for *all* students. The Advisory program will provide all students with the opportunity to improve their study skills; focus on their academic goals; and learn the value of service to the community, leadership and personal responsibility; while instilling in them a sense of self-esteem, teamwork, and discipline. Students in Advisories will be heterogeneously grouped by grade level. Certified staff members, including guidance counselors, administrators, and teachers, will serve as advisors to groups of no more than 12-15 students in each Advisory.

When this high school was awarded the Federal Smaller Learning Communities Grant in 2008, an advisory program was developed and implemented in September 2009.

The advisory program in this high school meets daily for twenty minutes. Ninth grade students are heterogeneously placed in groups of twelve to fifteen students and partnered with a certified staff member in the high school to serve as the advisor for the four years of high school. After running the program for one school year in which students were exclusively heterogeneously grouped, some groupings were modified the following school year. In September 2010, targeted advisories were formed for student mothers, students with behavioral issues, and students with truancy issues. Each subpopulation aforementioned began attending the advisory group to which they were homogeneously assigned. This high school was an ideal site for research because there are heterogeneously grouped and homogeneously grouped advisory groups. Permission from the data site was granted by the superintendent (Appendix A).

To answer the questions outlined in the research study, the research was collected from the students in the advisory group designed for student mothers. This group is conducted by a clinician from *School Bases Youth Services Program (SBYSP)* and the Director of the *Parent Infant Care Center (PIC-C)*. The SBYSP is an initiative which started in New Jersey in 1998 and works to provide a range of services for adolescents within the school environment. The services are intended to support adolescents as they complete high school and prepare themselves to lead mentally and physically healthy lives. Services are provided to address mental health, employment, educational support, child care, parenting and substance concerns (SBYSP). PIC-C is program at the high school which began in 1992 to support high school students with children in their efforts to continue their education and graduate from high school. Students who participate in PIC-C receive childcare, transportation, counseling and case management service. While

the research was conducted at this high school, the targeted advisory group for mothers from which participants have been selected, is conducted by the Director of PIC-C and a SBYS clinician.

Sampling and Selection of Study Participants

As asserted by Krathwohl and Smith (2005), this phenomenological qualitative research study was comprised “of a few individuals” (p. 127) and therefore “determining the boundaries” (p. 127) of the study was relatively easy. Sampling the entire population with predetermined characteristics is a purposive sampling technique known as total population sampling and was used because the size of the population was very small (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2012; Seidman, 2013; Total population sampling, n.d.). Seidman (2013) asserts that there needs to be “sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants” (p. 58) and therefore the researcher used total population sampling as a sampling technique to ensure that there were sufficient numbers. This sampling approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the participants which would have been compromised if the entire population were not sampled.

Recruiting participants. Participants were recruited from the advisory group for student mothers at a high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey. The researcher coordinated with the advisor of the advisory group for student mothers to set a time to come in and meet with the potential subjects. When the researcher met with the advisory group, the researcher verbally described the research study and handed out an initial Informed Consent to all student mothers which included a brief description of the study as well as commitment requirements (Appendix D). The researcher also fielded questions

from participants. Participants were asked to return the Informed Consent within one week to their advisor.

Selecting participants. The researcher collected Informed Consent forms from the advisor. Every student mother who returned the official Informed Consent was considered. In order to be eligible the participant must have participated in an advisory group which was heterogeneously grouped prior to enrollment in the advisory group for student mothers which was homogeneously grouped. Upon receiving the Informed Consent forms, the researcher confirmed that each participant had previously attended a heterogeneously groups advisory section prior to joining the homogeneously grouped advisory section for students mothers. While all 18 student mothers were sampled, only 14 of the 18 were eligible to participate; the 14 eligible participants were previously part of a heterogeneously grouped advisory section in the high school. Of the 14 eligible student mothers, two declined to participate. Twelve out of 18 student mothers who were enrolled in the advisory for student mothers were selected for the research study.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality was an important consideration of this research study. Each participant was randomly assigned a number. Data collection tools which included interview protocol, audio recorded interviews, field notes and self-memos were free of any names or identifiers and relied solely on the participant numbers. Audio recordings of interviews did not include the names of the participants. No names appeared on data tables; only participant numbers were used. Data were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office as well as a password protected computer file. To protect against accidental disclosure, all Informed Consents and assignment of participant numbers were stored separately from the data in a different locked cabinet in

the researcher's office. Only the Primary Investigator and Faculty Advisor had access to the data. Upon completion of data collection, the master list containing the names of study participants and assigned study numbers were destroyed (all files deleted) thereby eliminating any link between participants and their responses (Creswell, 2009, p. 91; Seidman, 2013, p. 73). Only the data remained; it will be kept for a minimum of five years before being destroyed.

Strategies of Inquiry

Semi-structured in-depth interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interview protocol was used in this study. "The method of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing applied to a sample of participants who all experience similar structural and social conditions gives enormous power to the stories of a relatively few participants" (Seidman, 2013, p. 59). The proposed study was dependent upon the perceptions of student mothers as they recalled their experiences in heterogeneous advisory groupings when compared to homogeneous advisory groupings. Therefore, it was imperative to glean an in-depth understanding of the participants' views and experiences to "construct the meaning of the situation" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) assert that "in-depth interviews are among the best way to learn about people's subjective experience" (p. 23). Seidman (2013) maintains that "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). The semi-structured in-depth interviews used in this study created an interview setting which was focused yet able to take on "a shape of its own" (Bogdan & KnoppBilken, 2007, p. 103) with a sense of openness for participant experiences to be told (Maxwell, 2012; Seidman, 2013).

Interview process. This phenomenological qualitative research study used the interview process as a singular method of inquiry. “A cardinal rule of research is to match the tools you use to the questions at hand” (Rubin & Rubin, p. 50, 2012). The researcher designed an interview protocol (Appendix B) with 18 open-ended questions to develop an understanding of the research questions at hand by extracting the views of the participants (Creswell, 2009). All interviews were scheduled and took place at the high school. Each interview was one-on-one, facilitated by the researcher and conducted with a student from the advisory group for student mothers. At the beginning of each interview the purpose of the study was explained. Every interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Pilot testing. Prior to conducting interviews with research participants, the interview protocol was pilot tested with three teachers at the high school, all of whom were familiar with the heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping of advisory programs. The researcher met individually with each participant at a predetermined location and time. The interview protocol initially designed to answer the research questions in this study was followed while each participant was interviewed with the purpose of testing the research questions and practicing interviewing skills (Creswell, 1998; Seidman, 2013; Weiss, 1994). Throughout each pilot test, the researcher took notes. “After completing the pilot, researchers can step back, reflect on their experience, discuss it with their doctoral committee and revise their research approach based on what they have learned from their pilot experience” (Seidman, 2013, p. 42). Subsequent to completing the pilot testing, researcher notes were reviewed and adjustments to the interview protocol were made accordingly.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Qualitative research turns “the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos the to the self” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). The data collection and analysis of this research study relied on recorded interviews, field notes and self-memos to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants. “The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration” (Yin, 2009, p. 115). Collecting data through recorded interviews, field notes and self-memos provided this researcher with multiple sources of evidence to gain a greater understanding of participants’ perceptions and experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2009).

Recorded interviews. To increase the reliability of the research study, following data collection and initial data analysis, study participants were invited for member checking for the purpose of validating study findings. All of the interviews with the study participants were recorded and transcribed. The audio recordings of the interviews were kept in a password-protected file to which only the Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor had access. Data and audio recordings of interviews were also saved on a separate flash drive and kept in a separate locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator’s office. Pursuant to the Institutional Research Board requirement, recordings will be destroyed after a five-year period.

Field notes. While recording the interviews, the researcher also relied on the use of field notes to help the researcher stay focused on what the participant shared (Seidman, 2013, p. 82). Not only do field notes help the researcher to remain focused, but they also

limit the researcher from interrupting the interview and potentially interrupting the participant's train of thought, especially when something of great interest is shared (Seidman, 2013). This researcher took field notes during all interviews on the interview protocol guide to capture the researcher's thoughts and experiences during each interview (Bogdan & KnoppBilken, 2007).

Self-memos. Self-memos were used by the researcher throughout data gathering and analysis to capture the researcher's thought process and "store ideas" (Glaser, 1978, p. 83) that present themselves as well as "facilitate reflection and analytic insight" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 8; Creswell, 2009). Glaser (1978) asserts that the practice referred to as "stop and memo" (p. 83) can serve as the foundation for the interpretation of the data. Maxwell (2012) emphasizes that memo writing is an important tool that helps the researcher record ideas on papers so that the researcher is able to recall "important insights" (p. 8) as needed. The researcher used a notebook to record self-memos and dated each memo as another form of data collection.

Method of observation data analysis. The researcher approached the qualitative data inductively, allowing the significance of the research to emerge through reducing the text (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2006; Seidman, 2013; Wolcott, 1990). In-depth analysis of the interview data was completed after all of the interviews were conducted and transcribed so that meaning from one participant's interview did not taint another participant's interview (Seidman, 2013, p. 116). The researcher used Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to reduce and analyze the data so that all data were "safely stored, categorized, and easily retrievable" (Seidman, 2013, p. 134).

The CAQDAS this researcher used was NVivo 10 to store, code, organize and sort data for analysis (Creswell, 2009; NVivo, 2012).

The data analysis procedure this researcher used follows Creswell's (2009) qualitative analysis process and Giorgi's (1997) phenomenological qualitative research methods. First, the researcher organized and prepared the data by transcribing interviews, typing field notes and self-memos and uploading to NVivo 10. Transcripts were checked for obvious mistakes (Gibbs, 2007). Then, the researcher read all of the data to develop a "general sense of the information" (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). In doing so, the researcher continued to write and record self-memos to store ideas that emerged while developing a general sense. The third step taken was the development of a qualitative codebook in NVivo 10 to begin to bring meaning to the information at hand. All of the data collected was categorized and nodes were created using a qualitative codebook in NVivo 10. Using NVivo 10, coding was then used to generate categories, also known as themes, which were "shaped into a general description" (p. 189) due to the phenomenological nature of this study (Creswell, 2009). The researcher then began the process of writing and describing the themes, referred to as areas of focus, to make meaning of the data.

Methodological Considerations

There are several important methodological strategies that must be considered and ultimately applied to research studies to protect participants and ensure that research is credible and reliable. Every qualitative study has its own specific validity threats to consider and "trying to apply all the ones that are feasible might not be an efficient use of your time" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 243). Therefore this researcher considered the validity

threats specific to this study and then applied strategies that were most appropriate.

Threats specific to this study include trustworthiness, validity and reliability.

Trustworthiness. This researcher considered trustworthiness when designing and implementing this research because of the qualitative nature. In qualitative studies trustworthiness is the concern for the procedure of the study (Guba, 1981; Maxwell, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize the importance the explicitly outlining and describing the data collection, analysis and interpretation. Doing so creates an auditable study whereby a fellow researcher can easily follow the process used by the researcher during data collection, analysis and interpretation (Guba, 1981). This research study was designed and described in detail so that it is an auditable study which contributed to the trustworthiness of the study

Validity. The researcher worked to create a valid research study by developing rich data and including respondent validation and peer debriefing (Maxwell, 2012; Seidman, 2013). The interviews were all transcribed verbatim, which ensured that the researcher did not just include what she felt was important and/or significant. Respondent validation, also known as member checking, was used to be sure that the meaning and perspectives of participant feedback was interpreted appropriately. The process of member checking also assisted the researcher in identifying misunderstandings from the observation set (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Peer debriefing was used as a strategy whereby committee members reviewed and questioned the study to ensure “interpretation beyond the researcher” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192) which further contributes to the validity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally, the Hawthorne Effect, a condition where study participants respond or perform differently because of the unstated demands of being subjects of a study was considered (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 58). Some of the demands include the desire to please and anxiety regarding evaluation (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996; McDonald, 2005). This researcher minimized the potential of the Hawthorne Effect by reducing demands. The researcher was a staff member at the high school where study participants were recruited. While the researcher worked to administer advisory materials she had no contact with any of the participants prior to this research study. The absence of a relationship with study participants minimized the demands of the Hawthorne Effect, such as the participants' desire to please and anxiety regarding evaluation (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996; McDonald, 2005).

Reliability. The rationale for using in-depth, semi-structured interviews as a strategy of inquiry is for the researcher to ultimately understand how our participants make meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2013). Different methods of inquiry have different interpretations of how researchers should go about understanding the experiences of others. Exclusively using in-depth interviews “can avoid tensions that sometimes arise when a researcher uses multiple methods” (Seidman, 2013, p. 5). This researcher relied on in-depth interviews supported by the use of field notes and self-memos. Additionally, the researcher worked toward ensuring reliability by clearly defining and documenting the procedures used throughout the study (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009). Additionally, as recommended by Gibbs (2007) transcripts were checked for mistakes prior to data analysis to further ensure reliability. The researcher used self-memos during the coding process to continuously compare the data with the codes to

avoid altering the meaning of the codes (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007). Finally, the consistency of the coding in NVivo was set to a criterion of 80 percent or greater. Setting a level of coding consistency contributes to creating a reliable qualitative study (Creswell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Chapter Summary

The methodology of this research study was presented and discussed in this chapter. A phenomenological qualitative research design was used. Research was conducted at a high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey. The researcher used purposive total population sampling and conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with student mothers enrolled in the advisory group for student mothers. Methodological considerations were outlined and discussed. The observation set included interviews, field notes and self-memos. In the following chapter the observation data set are analyzed.

Chapter Four

Findings

This qualitative research study explored the perceptions young mothers in high school have regarding their experiences in homogeneous advisory groupings as compared to heterogeneous advisory groupings. In this chapter, the researcher restates the purpose of the study, the research questions and the methodology as a concise framework to present the findings. The findings are presented using areas of focus in relation to the research questions.

Purpose of the Study

An extensive review of the literature revealed a gap in research regarding the grouping methods for non-academic classes, such as advisory program groupings (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Galassi, et al., 1998; Hallam, et al., 2004; Song, et al., 2009; Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). While there is abounding research regarding homogeneous groupings as compared to heterogeneous groupings for academic classes, the limited research on grouping methods for non-academic classes drives this qualitative research study. This study explored the perceptions of young mothers as they compared their experiences in heterogonous and homogeneous advisory program groupings. Ultimately, the purpose of this qualitative research study was to add to the body of knowledge that addresses the types of advisory grouping students perceive best meet their needs.

Research Questions

This study focused on one overarching research question: What are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings?

Within the scope of the overarching research question, this study delved into the perceptions young mothers in high school had as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings in terms of the following sub questions:

1. How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?
2. How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?
3. What do young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?
4. What do young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?

Research Methodology

The researcher conducted a phenomenological qualitative research study using purposeful total population sampling to develop an understanding of the twelve participants' perceptions as they compared their experiences in heterogonous and homogeneous advisory program groupings (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013; Yin 2009). Heterogeneous grouping involves grouping students with varying abilities and/or ages together while homogeneous grouping involves grouping students according to ability and/or age (Ellison & Hallinan, 2004; Goldberg, et al., 1966; Loveless, 1999; Song, et al., 2009). Participants were recruited

from the advisory group for student mothers at a high school in an urban setting in central New Jersey. To be eligible for this study, participants must have been enrolled in a heterogeneously grouped advisory section in which they were grouped at random with other students regardless of abilities prior to joining the homogeneously grouped advisory section in which they were grouped using the student mother commonality. Additionally, all participants must have returned a signed Informed Consent. All participants were part of the homogeneous advisory. There were twelve participants in all that met all participant criteria.

The researcher developed a semi-structured, in-depth interview protocol; the interview protocol was pilot tested with three teachers at the high school where the research was conducted, all of whom were familiar with the heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping of advisory programs. Using researcher notes from the pilot testing, adjustments were made to the interview protocol. Then the researcher scheduled one-on-one, face-to-face, audio-recorded interviews using the revised interview protocol with every participant.

Findings

The findings were developed using the qualitative codebook by generating categories, also known as themes (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). The findings in this chapter are presented using areas of focus in the following order: relationships in heterogeneous advisory groupings, relationships in homogeneous advisory groupings, comparison of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings, advisory programs as a support for high school graduation and overall advisory grouping participant recommendations and preferences. These areas of focus frame the findings in a manner which relates to the

overarching research question: what are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings? Specifically, each area of focus presents the findings so the four research sub questions are addressed as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Areas of Focus in Relation to Research Questions

Overarching Research Question: What are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings?		
Research Sub Questions	Areas of Focus	
Relationships	RQ1: How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?	Relationships in heterogeneous advisory groupings
	RQ2: How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?	Relationships in homogeneous advisory groupings
Grouping: Advantages and Disadvantages	RQ3: What do young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?	Comparison of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings Advisory programs as a support for high school graduation
	RQ4: What do young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?	Overall advisory program participant recommendations and preferences

The findings were categorized using NVivo 10 and each interview question represented a node. The nodes were then used to generate the five areas of focus. Table 2 presents an overview of the findings which are described in detail in this chapter.

Table 2

Overview of Findings

Relationships in Heterogeneous Advisory Groupings				
Question	Participant Reponses (n)			
Q1. Description of group	Positive feedback (10)		Negative feedback (4)	
Q2. Relationship with advisor	Positive feedback (8)		Negative feedback (4)	
Q3. Relationship with peers	Positive feedback (7)		Negative feedback (5)	
Q4. Stand out moment	Celebration (7)		Activity (5)	
Relationships in Homogeneous Advisory Groupings				
Question	Participant Reponses (n)			
Q5. Description of group	Positive feedback (10)		Negative feedback (2)	
Q6. Relationship with advisor	Positive feedback (9)		Negative feedback (3)	
Q7. Relationship with peers	Positive feedback (7)		Negative feedback (6)	
Q8. Stand out moment	Celebration (3)		Activity (9)	
Comparison of Heterogeneous and Homogeneous Advisory Groupings				
Question	Participant Reponses (n)			
Q9. Benefits of heterogeneous	No benefit (2)	People (6)	Help (2)	Freedom (2)
Q10. Miss most from heterogeneous	Nothing (1)	People (7)	Programming (4)	
Q11. Miss least from heterogeneous	Nothing (2)	People (6)	Programming (4)	
Q12. Benefits of homogeneous	Nothing (1)	Commonality (10)	Fun (1)	
Q13. Enjoy most about homogeneous	People (4)	Programming (8)		
Q14. Enjoy least about homogeneous	People (4)	Programming (6)	Physical space (2)	
Advisory Programs as a Support for High School Graduation				
Question	Participant Reponses (n)			
Q15. What advisories offer	Time to relax (2)	Academic support (8)	Does not help (2)	
Q16. How advisories help participant	Academic support (4)	Help with baby (2)	Help with baby/ academics (2)	Advisor (2) Not helpful (3)
Q16a. Plan to graduate	Yes (12)	No (0)		
Overall Advisory Program Participant Recommendations and Preferences				
Question	Participant Reponses (n)			
Q17. Grouping supports graduation	Yes (6)	No (6)		
Q18. Preference: Homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping	Homogeneous (7)	Heterogeneous (3)	Unsure (2)	

Findings related to relationships in heterogeneous advisory groupings. The findings in this section focus on participants' perceptions of experiences and relationships in their heterogeneous advisory groups. Participants were asked questions one through four during each interview. The questions refer to the term "Pathways." Pathways is the term used by the school to identify the advisory program.

Interview question one. The first interview question asked to participants is as follows: Based upon your experiences, how would you describe your first Pathways group where you were grouped among students with a variety of needs and backgrounds? The first Pathways group was a heterogeneous group. The participants presented both positive and negative feedback when describing their experiences in heterogeneous advisory groups. The students who discussed the heterogeneous group as a positive experience made references to friendships, having fun, the advisor, time for homework, freedom to "hangout," and time to learn about the development of babies. The students who had negative feedback regarding the heterogeneous advisory group made references to disorganization, nonparticipation and lack of topics related to needs.

Positive feedback toward heterogeneous advisory group. Of the twelve participants, ten referenced positive feedback toward their experiences in their heterogeneous advisory groups. Three of the ten students mentioned fun, friendships and advisors in tandem.

Participant 1: Well, in my first Pathways group it was umm like mostly everybody I knew already so it was like easy and I used to get along with everybody. Well, we only um had like. We were just talking and like we would have fun. Like we

would like with the teacher we would like do games and get along and try to get everybody along.

Participant 3: Like it was like fun kind of because we were all in the same grade you know so we were all going to graduate together and umm we were going to be together throughout the four years and our teacher she was really like, like she was really understanding and she would umm she would give us advice and tell us what things we should do to prepare to go the college.

Participant 4: I actually enjoyed it because I had friends in there automatically. And then it was easy to make new friends that were like the people I know. Like with the people that I already did know, it was easy to make friends with them cause it would be me and my friends and you would just go up to them. So, like I had more confidence in making friends.

Time for homework, which was mentioned by three participants, was also a positive associated with the heterogeneous advisory group.

Participant 5: They were, they were some of them I know so it didn't feel awkward but I liked it because they helped me with homework and they helped me with advice; especially my Pathways teacher.

Participant 6: That Pathways was umm I like it because we, when the teacher, we made games or he say do the homework that you didn't do for classes. Like he always; he was good.

Participant 10: It was different. Cause we did like like in like we would do like work that all the Pathways did and then we would talk about it and after that she would give us a minute to do like homework or something like that.

Two participants portrayed positive feedback towards the heterogeneous group due to the ability to “hangout” or “do whatever.”

Participant 8: Umm, it was ok. It was a calm like Pathways. There was no issues there. Umm everybody just talked to each other and it was like a hangout place basically.

Participant 11: Umm. I mean we would just like do whatever we wanted and umm. What else would we do in there? We could like bring stuff to eat in there and do stuff like that. And like you could go late if you wanted to and here you can't.

One participant shared positive feedback making references to learning how babies develop and how to care for babies.

Participant 2: Good because umm we used to talk about life, how babies grow, umm what the best thing we could do to get them safe.

One participant shared that the heterogeneous group was good, but did not share any specific examples or reasoning.

Participant 7: Umm, it was nice.

Negative feedback toward heterogeneous advisory group. Of the twelve participants, four shared negative feedback regarding the heterogeneous advisory group mostly due to disorganization, nonparticipation and lack of topics related to needs.

Participant 9: Umm, as very separated like not a lot of interaction with each other.

Participant 11: Umm. If like you could like we would be able to go to different Pathways too if we wanted to like to hang there for a while.

Participant 12: Umm. Actually the first group was everybody doing what they wanted. It doesn't have that like somebody sleeps somebody does chit chats so like it wasn't organized. The activities that we do but we finished that or sometimes nobody wants to do it so when we were supposed to just participate we do in our group everybody is sleeping and doing the same thing.

Participant 1: Umm, it was like, well we just never talked about that. Like we only just said that umm like school and that's it. We never hit topics about our needs.

While some students viewed the ability to “hangout” as a positive, there were students who associated “everybody doing what they wanted” as a negative. For example, Participant 8 described the heterogeneous advisory group using positive feedback such as “a calm like Pathways” with “no issues;” overall a “hangout place.” On the other hand, Participant 11 shared negative feedback regarding the heterogeneous advisory group using descriptors such as “everybody doing what they wanted” “it wasn't organized” and “everybody is sleeping.”

Interview question two. The second interview question asked to participants is as follows: How would you describe your relationship with your advisor in this first Pathways group? Participants shared either positive or negative feedback regarding their relationships with their advisor in the first Pathways group. The students who had positive feedback about the relationship with their advisor in the heterogeneous advisory groups made references to the advisors being “nice,” giving advice, and still talking to one another after leaving the group. The students who shared negative feedback about the relationship with their advisor in the heterogeneous advisory groups made references to

the advisors as being comparable to a regular classroom teacher who offered limited conversation and enforced activities.

Positive feedback regarding relationship with advisor. Of the twelve participants, eight discussed positive aspects of the relationship with their advisors from the heterogeneous advisory group. Five of the participants described the advisors as being “nice” and made mention of continuing to talk even though they are no longer in the heterogeneous advisory group.

Participant 1: Umm, she was nice. She was like, cause we would like, she was really nice. She would was always telling us like stories and about her and everything. Umm, we get along. And we still talk right now. Like every time I see her I still say, “hi.”

Participant 2: Umm, she was good. She was nice to me and like she always helped me and every time I need to talk to her she calls me when I tell her. And she still looks for me even though I’m not in her Pathways.

Participant 5: It was good and he didn’t treat me like a young teen mom. He just treated me like other normal high school students. It was nice being with him.

Participant 8: Uh, he was very nice. He didn’t really like bother you or anything. Like it was good. Like, we got along. He liked to get along with all the students and he respected everyone so it was nice.

Participant 10: She was like really really nice. Yeah and then she like understand me because I was pregnant when I was in her Pathways for a little. So, yeah, it was nice and we would talk about like things like what we did and what we like. Like that.

Three of the eight participants shared positive feedback regarding the relationship with their advisors and talked about the advice and motivation that their advisors provided them.

Participant 3: Umm I think our relationship was like really strong because umm throughout my freshman year when I wasn't doing so good she would always like give me advice and stuff and then umm she was there when like I was pregnant and yeah she was there most of the time for me.

Participant 7: Yeah and she was always saying that we have to accomplishment that we have to do that we want to do.

Negative feedback regarding relationship with advisor. Of the twelve participants, four discussed the relationship with their advisors in the heterogeneous advisory groups by providing negative feedback. These participants specifically made reference to the advisors as being comparable to a regular classroom teacher. Participants also mentioned limited conversation between participants and advisor as well as the advisor pushing activities onto the group which were not always welcomed by participants.

Participant 4: Umm, She would like try to push us to do the little activities that you have to do in Pathways. She would like like try to push us to do it and then like we would really just didn't pay mind to her.

Participant 9: Not really good because we didn't really get to talk a lot like together about anything. Separated. Like not tight.

Participant 11: The same as a regular teacher. It was ok. I mean, I don't know. We weren't like really close. Like we would like have discussions about anything but it wouldn't be sometime close.

Participant 12: We don't have like good communication cause everybody does uh whatever.

Interview question three. The third interview question asked to participants is as follows: How would you describe your relationships with your peers/classmates in the first Pathways group? Participants responded to question three with either positive or negative feedback regarding their relationships with peers/classmates in the heterogeneous advisory group. The students with positive feedback about their relationships with peers/classmates in the heterogeneous group shared about their friendships with one another. The students with a negative feedback concerning their relationships with peers/classmates in the heterogeneous group shared about the absence of communication among peers within the advisory group.

Positive feedback regarding relationships with peers/classmates. Of the twelve participants, seven shared positive feedback regarding their relationships with peers/classmates. The students who shared positive feedback about the relationships they had with their peers/classmates in the heterogeneous advisory group discussed friendliness.

Participant 1: We all used to get along. Like they're all nice and umm we were like umm we were all friends. Plus like how we started all switching, like now we don't have connection no more.

Participant 5: We all got along. We were all friendly to each other. We all got to know each other good. Most of us became friends. Every time we needed something they were there.

Participant 8: Umm, I liked it because like we all got along. There was no issues and I don't know we were just like all friends so it was nice.

Participant 11: I was good because I knew them, so yeah. Hmm, friendly relationship.

One participant out of the twelve participants made reference to the advisory group as a family.

Participant 3: Umm we had a good relationship because we also had like classes together so it was just like another class we had together. Like we would all talk. It was like I don't know. It was like a family in our class.

Negative feedback regarding relationships with peers/classmates. Of the twelve participants, five shared negative feedback regarding their relationships with peers/classmates. The students who discussed negative aspects regarding their relationships with their peers/classmates in the heterogeneous advisory group all commented on the lack of communication within the group.

Participant 1: Well, there was only one friend I had in the Pathways that I know since I was a freshman. The other students, they never talked to me or anything.

Participant 10: Oh, I had some friends but not I didn't talk to all of them cause they were quiet or they had their own friends that they would talk to.

Participant 12: We don't have like good communication cause everybody does uh, whatever.

Participant 9: I would describe it regular cause like I see them every day so you know just like a hi but nothing like really close like to really talk to them about things that I might be going through.

Interview question four. The fourth interview question asked to participants is as follows: Please take a moment to think about your time spent as part of this first Pathways group. Share a moment or experience that stands out most.

The participants shared about a celebration or an activity when discussing a moment or experience that stood out most when thinking about their time spent as part of the heterogeneous advisory group. The students who shared about a celebration talked about holidays, baby showers and birthday celebrations. The students who shared about an activity discussed activities specific to advisories as well as other group activities.

Celebrations. Of the twelve participants, seven shared about celebrations such as holidays, birthdays and baby showers when asked to share a moment that stood out most from their time spent in the heterogeneous advisory group.

Participant 1: Umm, I remember when umm we were doing Secret Santa and we were umm the teacher had me so she we didn't know she would always ask what are you going to have a boy or a girl and [name] like never let me see her so she bought me like this duck suit and it was so cute and that's what I always remember.

Participant 4: Umm. When we were celebrate each other's umm birthday at the end of the month. That was fun because we all go to bring in snacks. And on holidays, too, we got to do like Secret Santa. And things like that we got to have a little party in Pathways.

Participant 5: Umm, like when I was about to leave for home instruction they remembered and did like a little party for me. Yeah.

Participant 7: When we did the tree for Christmas.

Participant 10: Well, we celebrated like everyone's birthday and we like we took something to share with them. Yeah.

Participant 12: I think that what I like most was the birthdays we celebrate.

Activities. Of the twelve participants, five participants shared about activities that stood out most to them when they were asked to share about a moment or experience that stood out most regarding their heterogeneous advisory groups. All of the activities students referenced were whole group activities. The activities shared by participants which were specific to advisories include Teambuilding Day and Steps to Success; however, other group activities, such as Hangman, were also mentioned.

Participant 2: When we used to come in the classroom she always used to put the books so we could read it and we would be like, ugh, again, we gotta read and then she would get like mad or something and say, "That's why you come to my class."

Participant 3: Umm, I don't know. Umm, I think it's when we would have Teambuilding Day in Pathways so we did activities. And our Pathway's teacher she would bring in like snacks for us and stuff like bagels.

Participant 8: We used to play hangman all together. Any games.

Participant 9: Hmm. The activity we made one time umm when we umm went over like like steps we take for success.

Participant 11: Umm, when we had that extended Pathways for more than 80 minutes or something.

Summary of findings. When analyzing the data from the first four interview questions regarding relationships in heterogeneous advisory groupings, some trends were identified. Before the trends are discussed, it is important to note that ten students shared positive feedback regarding the heterogeneous group while four students shared negative feedback. This indicated that two students had both positive and negative feedback about the heterogeneous advisory group they experienced. Of the ten students who shared positive feedback regarding the heterogeneous advisory group, six of those students also discussed the relationship with their advisor using positive feedback and shared positive feedback regarding their relationships with peers/classmates. Furthermore, two of the students with positive feedback about the heterogeneous group identified positive components of their relationship with their advisor; however, shared negative feedback regarding relationships with peers/classmates. Regarding the four students who shared negative feedback about the heterogeneous advisory groups, the two who did not also have positive feedback shared that there was lack of relationship with the advisor and also conveyed negative feedback about their relationships with peers/classmates in the group. The participants came from different heterogeneous advisory programs and therefore had different advisors.

Findings related to relationships in homogeneous advisory groupings. The findings in this section focus on participants' perceptions of experiences and relationships in their homogeneous advisory groups designated for student mothers. Unlike the heterogeneous advisory groups where participants came from different groups with

different advisors, in the homogeneous advisory group all participants share the same advisors. In the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers, there are two advisors; one advisor is a clinician from *School Bases Youth Services Program (SBYSP)* and the other advisor is the *Director of the Parent Infant Care Center (PIC-C)*.

Interview question five. The fifth interview question asked to participants is as follows: Based upon your experiences, how would you describe your current Pathways group where you are grouped among students with similar needs? The current Pathways group is a homogeneous advisory group whereby all participants currently participate. The participants presented both positive and negative feedback toward the homogeneous group. When describing their homogeneous advisory group based upon personal experiences, the participants presented both positive and negative feedback toward the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. The students who discussed the homogeneous advisory group using positive feedback made references to the commonality of motherhood and the people in the group. The students who shared negative feedback when describing the homogeneous advisory group discussed issues related to not knowing peers well and students from different grade levels.

Positive feedback toward homogeneous advisory group. Ten of the twelve participants shared positive feedback toward the homogeneous group. Nine of them discussed the commonality of motherhood as a positive when describing their homogeneous advisory group for student mothers.

Participant 1: It's umm easier and umm you get more along with people because like you get what you're going through and you could actually ask them for advice. Like, oh what do you do with your baby when you're doing this or what's

happening. Like, it's more connection and like there's actually something to talk about.

Participant 2: Good because like now I feel better because umm I'm not the only mother and I feel more like I don't know how to say it, like, like you know how you feel alone if you're the only mother around other students that are not mothers or fathers. I don't know.

Participant 4: Umm. It's easier to get along with them cause like we all have something in common, which is being teen moms. And we can all talk can about things that happen between us than talking with someone who's not a teen mom.

Participant 5: It's ok. I mean we all we all don't talk to each other but some of us do and the girls I get to interact with actually they are in the same situation so I don't feel lonely. And I know I'm not the only one.

Participant 8: Well we all know what we all go through because we all experience the same things day by day so we like understand each other and what we go through.

Participant 9: It is much better because we talk about things we all have in common and things we're going through. Hmm. You don't feel left out like because we're all mothers. In the other one like you might have been like the only teen mom in the classroom so you fell like really left out.

Participant 10: Now like this Pathways now we like talk about our children like our goals. We share like many stories of us and how our children have grown.

Yeah.

Participant 11: Umm. I would say it's in the middle between good because yeah we're all mothers and we talk about stuff about our children but then I don't like it cause that's the only thing we talk about.

Participant 12: Uh, I think now I participate more in the group and I got like the topics that they have are interesting because our advisor and also I think we like talk more and we more like group together because it's not like. We are more mature. It's like that.

One participant commented that the homogeneous group was better than the heterogeneous group because of some of the nice people and the activities.

Participant 7: Umm, more nice than the other one because we do a lot of activities and fun and some people some others are nice. There are not but I just talk with the nice ones.

Negative feedback toward homogeneous advisory group. Of the twelve participants, only two shared negative feelings toward the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers and these comments entailed not knowing their peers well due to different grade levels and different class schedules.

Participant 3: Umm. Like it doesn't feel the same because there's like we're all in different grades so like umm when we need to go to like an assembly we have to go by ourselves because not everyone is in the same group, like grade. That's all. Umm like it just doesn't make it as close because some of these girls we don't see each other throughout the day and with my old Pathways like we would see each other because we're all in the same grade.

Participant 6: Sometimes I don't feel comfortable because I don't know too many. Some girls and I just know [name] and [name]. Umm, so sometimes it's boring.

Interview question six. The sixth interview question asked to participants is as follows: How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor? When participants described their relationships with their current advisors in the homogeneous advisory group they shared positive and negative feedback. The positive feedback regarding relationships with the advisors included receiving advice from advisors, having understanding advisors, being able to talk with the advisors and forming mutual respect. The students who shared negative feedback about the relationship with their advisors in the homogeneous advisory group discussed a lack of trust, interaction and/or conversation with their advisors.

Positive feedback regarding relationship with advisor. Of the twelve participants, nine participants shared positive feedback about the relationship with their advisors in the homogeneous advisory group. Among the positive feedback, some participants identified with the advice that they received from the advisors, some liked that they could talk with their advisors, some shared that their advisors were very understanding and one participant commented on the mutual respect for one another. The participants who commented positively on the advice received from their advisors shared the following responses.

Participant 1: Um, she's nice and she gives us good advice and she knows how to tell us things and she knows that we're moms so she like umm always tells us the same thing and we all get along. Well, in the other one she had to give us like different advice to everybody and like it's different. In this one it's more easier.

Participant 3: Umm, I think it's strong because she's also a mother so like she knows what we go through. Like we can ask her for advice or she'll, like she helps us see what's good and what's not good like what time they should be sleeping. Nobody else tells us this and she does.

Participant 7: Because she shows us with uh positive character and when we do something wrong she tells us.

The participants who made reference to the ability to talk with their advisors as a positive component of the relationship made the following comments.

Participant 4: It's better than the last one. I can actually, like, talk to her. And, like, have more, like, of a better relationship with her than with my old one.

Participant 9: I would describe it way better than the last one because with this advisory advisor umm I get to like talk to her like want to and she talks to us. Like we feel comfortable talking to her about our stuff, our personal stuff.

Participant 10: Yeah because I have Ms. [name] and she's like the counselor so we get to talk to her and explain like what's going on with me. Yeah.

Participant 6: She's nice because she, like say when I have to do homework and they are playing games and I say, "Miss, I have to do my homework," and she says, "Yeah, ok, you can do it."

Participant 12: I think it's good because I need to have a good relationship with her and also she's the teacher of my baby so I think we make like a good connection. If we're gonna be late we need to let her know and those things so we are good. I think I have a good relationship with her.

Finally, there was one student who shared about the mutual respect between the students the advisors.

Participant 8: Umm. We respect each other and we're polite to each other.

Negative feedback regarding relationship with advisor. Three of the twelve participants shared negative feedback regarding the relationship with their advisors in the homogeneous advisory group. The participants' comments made specific mention of a lack of trust, interaction and/or conversation which were credited as negative.

Participant 2: I guess good, but like I haven't talked to her that much because I just know her now. I didn't know her the other time.

Yeah, I can tell her like my stuff, but I still don't feel like trust.

Participant 5: Well, there's a couple. We have Ms. [name], Ms. [name]. Umm there's two other womans. Umm, me and Ms. [name] are good. We've known each other for like four to five years. Umm, me and [name] are ok I guess. The other ones are ok. I really don't interact with them. I really interact more with Ms. [name].

Participant 11: Umm. We barely talk.

Interview question seven. The seventh interview question asked to participants is as follows: How would you describe your relationships with your current peers/classmates in this Pathways group? Participants described their relationships with the peers in their current homogeneous advisory group designed for student mothers with either positive or negative feedback regarding. The students with positive feedback about their relationships with peers/classmates in the homogeneous group discussed the connections formed due to motherhood. The students who shared negative feedback

concerning their relationships with peers/classmates in the homogeneous group discussed a lack of connection.

Positive feedback regarding relationships with peers/classmates. Of the twelve participants, seven discussed positive feedback regarding relationships with their peers. Many specifically made reference to motherhood connections.

Participant 1: We all get along. Like, they're all like moms so we all get along. It's easier to be with people that you have the same with because you like umm have a better connection and better things and stuff.

Participant 2: Good. They all my friends. They all talk to me. Some of them we even hang out and like if I don't know something like about the baby, if he gets sick or something I will ask one of them and they will tell me what to do. We help one another.

Participant 4: Umm, it's easy to make friends with them just because we have something in common. And it's easy to get along with them cause like we could just ask them a question about the babies if their baby's older than mine. I can ask them a question like "How did you do this" when your baby was like acting up and things. And they will give me advice. And then we have some classes together so that made it easier.

Participant 9: I would describe it as good because umm like I said like we're going we're all going through like basically the same thing and everything and we tell each other like advices on like our kids and school and each other, our relationships and all that.

Participant 12: Good. Good. We communicate. We talk. Everybody gives her opinion and we make a lot of things like for a lot of activities that help us and we can express what we feel and things like that. Is better than the other one, so we talk together like with the other girls like about the topics and other things.

Other participants did not directly mention motherhood, but they made comments about talking with everyone in the group.

Participant 8: Well I get along I try to get along with everyone. I don't try to have any problems with anyone. I talk to everyone.

Participant 10: Uh. Great. Yeah. Like we talk a lot and then if I have a question or something I ask them.

Negative feedback regarding relationships with peers/classmates. Six of the twelve participants shared negative feedback regarding their relationships with peers/classmates in the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. Participants referenced a lack of connection with their peers and classmates, some of whom specifically mentioned that they had a connection with only some of the girls.

Participant 3: Umm I don't think it's as strong because since that's the only time in the day we actually see each other and it's for twenty minutes so we don't like really talk that much.

Participant 5: Well, I talk to everybody but like being friendly and saying hi and bye but I don't talk to them like that. Like I don't try to get close to them.

Participant 6: Well, I don't know some girls in that Pathways so I don't feel great.

Participant 11: Umm, like I really don't know them so I wouldn't say that we have a friendly thing.

The following two participants said that while they talk with some of the participants, they do not talk with all of the participants in the homogeneous advisory group.

Participant 7: Umm with some girls it's good, but with others not because they don't talk too much and they are not family.

Participant 10: Well I don't talk to all of them. Only some of them.

Interview question eight. The eighth interview question asked to participants is as follows: Please take a moment to think about your time spent as part of this current Pathways group and share a moment or experience that stands out most. When given the opportunity to think about their time spent in the current homogeneous advisory group for student mothers, participants shared about a celebration or an activity when discussing a moment or experience that stood out most. The students who shared about a celebration talked about parties, Mother's Day and creating birthday cards. The students who shared about an activity discussed games and structured activities.

Celebrations. Of the twelve participants, three referenced celebrations as a moment or experience that stood out, but none of them elaborated or shared any specifics regarding the celebrations.

Participant 5: Nothing. I mean we had little parties and stuff but they're like not very exciting or anything.

Participant 7: Umm. Mother's Day.

Participant 11: When we do birthday cards. Umm, yeah.

Activities. Nine of the twelve participants referenced an activity when asked to share about a moment or experience that stood out most when thinking about their time in

the homogeneous advisory group. Some of the activities that were mentioned were games and structured conversations. Many participants referenced a communication game involving animal sounds.

Participant 1: Umm, when we like play games. We always, like, have. Like the time we did a circle and you had to like name umm like the animals and you had to think who was who. Like we had something on our foreheads and you had to say like if you were a duck you to do like the sound to the duck and we had to guess who we were. Yeah.

Participant 2: Like, umm, when we do like she put us to do sounds and stuff like cats and stuff. That's the only part I remember.

Participant 4: Umm. There's this one time when we had to stand up and Ms. [name] was, I think it was Ms. [name] gave us a little card that had an animal. And we had to make a noise. And we had to find our pair of animals cause there was two animals. Like a pig, a pig. A mouse, a mouse and we all had to make our noise and we had to find out who made our noise.

Two participants referenced a game involving a ball as the activity that stood out most to them when thinking about their time spent in the homogeneous advisory group.

Participant 6: When we play a game with a ball.

Participant 9: Umm. An activity we made that we were doing and it involved a volleyball that had like in each color of the ball it had a question but like simple question like what's your favorite color, your favorite food, where would you like to visit and all that. And I found that really fun because we all like got to have fun and be silly and have a good time.

One participant talked about a Jeopardy-like game that the group played to learn more about their advisor in the homogeneous advisory group.

Participant 3: Umm I think the time is when like we have like when we play all these different activities and one of them was like Jeopardy and it was like umm things about the school and like School Based, like what's the name of the Director.

Three participants referenced a structured conversation as the moment or experience that stood out most when thinking about their time spent in the homogeneous advisory group.

Participant 8: Well we all talk about our kids like every day cause like I guess like we all like love our kids and that's like something that we like to talk about every day.

Participant 10: When we do the, I think the relationship violence awareness.

Participant 12: I think that the moment since like when that they give a question and thing and we need to answer it and then the others uh, share their opinions about how about uh uh I say something like say oh I maybe I agree with you or disagree and they we talk about that and its good cause you kinda know each other and sometimes they give you papers with facts about the others and you need to ask and say oh you go outside this year and you do this and well like get-togethers. I think I like that type of activities.

Summary of findings. When analyzing the data from interview questions five through eight regarding relationships in homogeneous advisory groupings some trends were identified. Before the trends are discussed, it is important to note that ten students

shared positive feedback regarding the homogeneous group relationships while two students shared negative feedback. Of the ten students who shared positive feedback regarding the homogeneous advisory group, six of those students also discussed the relationship with their advisor through positive feedback and shared a positive feedback regarding their relationships with peers/classmates. Furthermore, one of the students with positive feedback about the homogeneous group shared positive feedback regarding the relationship with her advisor; however, shared negative views regarding relationships with peers/classmates. Regarding the two students who shared negative feedback about the homogeneous advisory groups, both of them shared that they had a relationship with the advisor but conveyed negative feedback about their relationships with peers/classmates in the group.

Findings related to the comparison of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. The findings in this section focus on participants' perceptions regarding the benefits, what they miss most and what they miss least about the heterogeneous advisory groupings and what they would miss least and most about their current homogeneous advisory group. These comparisons were drawn from interview questions nine through fourteen.

Interview question nine. The ninth interview question asked to participants is as follows: Based upon your experiences, what were the benefits of being a part of your first Pathways group? When asked to identify the benefits of the heterogeneous advisory groups participants experienced, benefits such as the people, either peers or advisor, in the advisory group as well as the advisory programming, either scripted advisory

curriculum or advisor created activities, utilized by the advisory were identified. Some participants identified no benefits.

No benefit. Of the twelve participants, two stated that there were no benefits to being part of the heterogeneous advisory groups.

Participant 6: I think that there were not benefits because it's like the same.

Participant 7: I don't know. There were none.

People: Peers and/or advisor. Of the twelve participants, six referenced their peers and/or advisor in the heterogeneous advisory groups as the benefit. Five participants mentioned their peers.

Participant 1: Umm, the benefit was that we actually met other people and umm I had like a chance to like get along with other people because I know there's like one special needs in our class, in my old Pathways and he was like really nice and he would like tell us. He would actually like, he was smart. He would help us with our homework and he was really cool.

Participant 3: I think the benefit would be that we were all in the same age group, like in the same grade.

Because like if one of my umm classmates had a certain teacher like maybe I have that teacher and if I didn't understand something they could help me with it.

Participant 4: Umm. We got to meet someone like new people that we didn't know were in the high school before.

Participant 5: That I got treated like another high school student. They didn't see me like a teen mom. Like they didn't always ask me about the baby. They asked

me about me. They didn't say, "oh don't do this cause you're a mom." They would encourage me to join sports or anything.

Participant 10: That I got to meet people that I didn't know. Like from different schools. Yeah. Different like like from different like like places too.

One participant identified the advisor as a benefit of the heterogeneous advisory group because the advisor was able to help with homework.

Participant 12: Benefits. I think oh that my advisor was a teacher so she can help me with my homework in that subject.

Help. Two of the twelve participants expressed the benefit of participation in the heterogeneous advisory groups as the ability to receive help either academically or personally.

Participant 2: Umm because I wanted to learn more like how to take good care of a baby and learn about what is good and bad for like a newborn baby.

Participant 9: Uh, the benefit was that there were computers available so I was able to check my grades every single day to stay on track with my school work and everything.

Freedom. Two of the twelve participants cited the ability to do whatever they wanted as the benefit of being a part of the heterogeneous advisory groups.

Participant 8: It was like a chill out Pathways and like you could do like your homework whenever you had any to do or whatever.

Participant 11: Being able to do whatever you wanted. Umm, I mean sometimes you could do homework or go to any other class, but you had to go there. Yeah.

Interview question ten. The tenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: What do you miss most about your first Pathways group and why? When asked to share what they missed most about the heterogeneous advisory groups, participants noted nothing at all, the people in the group, or the programming. Programming includes either scripted advisory curriculum or advisor created activities.

Nothing. Of the twelve participants, only one shared that there was nothing she missed about her heterogeneous advisory group, but she did not share why.

Participant 7: Nothing.

People: Peers. Seven of the twelve participants shared that their peers and the conversations they had with their peers was what they missed most about their heterogeneous advisory group. No participants commented about missing their advisors.

Participant 1: That umm we all used to like talk about random things and we all used to like, and it wasn't about moms. It was like us more. It was before I was pregnant. Like, we would like talk about what we did and like oh, if we would want to go out and where we would want to go. Like having like more talk like about other things no about only moms.

Participant 3: Umm the thing I enjoyed the most was how close we got to be over time because it didn't feel like we were going to just any class. Like we knew we were going to our Pathways.

Participant 4: Umm. That like we learned that we were, umm, were different people that like we really won't communicate with outside of school. But in Pathways we'll all like be like friends but like as soon as we get out, we wouldn't be friends or something like that. Umm, because we like got to like experience

new ways of like communicating with people. Like how to become friends with like almost random people we don't know. That umm lived in New Brunswick and went to the Middle School Like, you wouldn't know that they existed in the Middle School. But since we were picked at random for Pathways. You get to meet with them and then you talk about did you go to the Middle School and if you did, I never saw you there.

Participant 5: Umm. Being with them. Cause I communicated with them more than I do here.

Participant 10: That everyone got along with everyone. Because like everyone talked to each other and then you didn't see no one mad. They were always happy.

Participant 11: The fact that there were was people actually there and we were cool.

Participant 12: Like, uh my friends there I think and cause I know like her since I came here so we talk a lot and things like that.

Programming. Four of the twelve participants shared that the programming, such as discussions, games or free time, was what they missed most about their heterogeneous advisory groups.

Participant 2: Umm reading the books and talking about it after we read because umm I really didn't like understand how to really take care of a baby like that so from there I learned much.

Participant 6: When we played games because all the students participate and they like it.

Participant 8: We didn't have to do the student activities that other people would have to do.

Participant 9: That we got free time because we were able to do homework or other work that we had to do. Oh because like like it's free time that you don't really get throughout the day and maybe the homework that you need to do is for next class so it really helps a lot.

Interview question eleven. The eleventh interview question asked to participants is as follows: What do you miss least about your first Pathways group and why? When asked to share what they missed least about the heterogeneous advisory group participants again noted the people in the group, programming or nothing at all. For consistency, it is important to note that programming includes scripted advisory curriculum or advisor created activities.

Nothing. Of the twelve participants, two shared that there was nothing in the heterogeneous group that they did not enjoy.

Participant 2: There was nothing I didn't enjoy.

Participant 10: I don't know. There's nothing to say.

People: Peers and/or advisor. Of the twelve participants, six made reference to their peers and/or advisor when sharing what they missed least about their heterogeneous advisory group. Two of the participants identified their peers in the heterogeneous advisory group as what they missed least.

Participant 4: Umm, that some of the people like got annoying. Cause there's this one girl who would always take pictures. And she would be like, "Take a picture of me. Take a picture of me." And that was so annoying.

Participant 7: Umm when I talk with girl that she was pregnant we was talking about babies. Umm because she say that a baby is a bad thing for us because we are a teen.

One participant discussed her advisor when identifying what they missed least from their heterogeneous advisory groups.

Participant 6: Hmm, when, like when, I when he wasn't in a good mood or when he was angry and he say, "don't do that" when we were talking, "do your homework."

One participant shared that she didn't like that her advisor was out of school for so long.

Participant 1: That, umm, I didn't like it because the teacher wasn't there like for a certain time because she had an accident, so. That's the only thing I didn't like.

Finally, two participants did not specify whether it was specifically their advisors or peers that they missed least, but they made reference to feelings, such as being judged or not feeling close, as what they did not miss regarding relationships within the heterogeneous groups.

Participant 8: Umm in a way I felt like I was judged because I was pregnant and I was the only one pregnant in the class.

Participant 9: The relationship between the teacher and the students because we weren't really that close. We were really apart. We would just go, stay and leave. Not really like a close Pathways.

Programming. Four of the twelve participants shared programming related issues as what they missed least about the heterogeneous advisory groups. All of the responses

were related to the dislike for the advisory activities, some specifically mentioned the scripted advisory activities, such as “the book,” which is the advisory curriculum for advisors, while other participants just referenced activities overall.

Participant 3: Umm I think it would be like doing some activities we didn't really like. Like sometime we have to get up and we didn't really like that.

Participant 5: Umm. That, I don't know. I don't really - oh, the thing we had to do every day. Like he had to have this book of activities we had to do. Yeah, I didn't enjoy that. Cause some activities were boring.

Participant 11: Umm, The least would be the activities that we would have to do sometimes because we really wouldn't do them on a regular basis.

Participant 12: That no communication with the others in the group. Cause it's supposed to, you need to do like all the activities and all like stuff for the group and things like that. In respect for the teacher she tried to do something good for us and we act like ahh whatever.

Interview question twelve. The twelfth interview question asked to participants is as follows: Based upon your experiences so far, what are the benefits of being a part of your current Pathways group with other student mothers? Participants were asked to recall their experiences to date and identify the benefits of being part of the homogeneous advisory group designed for student mothers. The benefits that were shared by the participants include the commonality among student mothers, the fun activities or no benefit at all.

No benefit. Of the twelve participants, one shared that there was no benefit because both groups were the same. This is the same participant that stated there was no benefit to the heterogeneous group.

Participant 6: Umm, like what I said, I think that there were not benefits because they are the same.

Commonality. Of the twelve participants, ten identified the benefit of the homogeneous advisory group as the commonality shared being student mothers.

Participant 1: Umm, the benefit is that you get umm to communicate with other people that know what you're going through. And they have the same like problems. Like they could be like oh, my baby just wouldn't stop crying yesterday. Oh yeah, you could do this to her or like this happened to me yesterday. And it's like you get more advice.

Participant 2: So, other moms could help us. Because like if I don't know something I can ask them or ask the teacher or something.

Participant 3: Umm I think the benefit is that we all know like what we're going through cause we are all teen moms and we go to school so we know it's not easy.

Participant 4: Umm, we all have something to relate to. And it's easy like to communicate with them because we all have something in common.

Participant 5: It helps me with my baby.

Participant 8: Uh nobody gets judged. Everybody is the same because we're all mothers and we all understand each other and there's no issues in between. You don't feel any type of way when you walk in Pathways.

Participant 9: The benefits is that when you have a doubt you could like ask either the peers or your advisor and they could give you an advice and we're all like were all on the same page so it's not like one is different from another. Well in some ways it is but you know we have a kid and that makes it like all the same.

Participant 10: That like some are freshmen, some are sophomores, some are juniors so they're like they're young moms and then we could tell them like like what they're gonna expect from the children and how things are gonna go and stay strong like don't give up.

Participant 11: Umm, hmm. I don't know. Umm. I guess that umm we have most conversations like where all girls participate about a topic that has to do like with personal life or something like that.

Participant 12: We can ask things like about our babies or what we feel. Also we have our clinician here so if we will feel sad about things we can talk with her and I think it's good.

Fun. Only one participant shared that the benefit of the homogeneous advisory group was the fun and the activities.

Participant 7: We have fun and we do many activities like what do you like to do, what you want to be in the future.

Interview question thirteen: The thirteenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: What do you most enjoy about your current Pathways group and why? When asked, participants shared that they most enjoyed their peers and the programming in the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. Again, programming includes scripted advisory curriculum or advisor created activities.

People: Peers. Of the twelve participants, four identified their peers in the homogeneous advisory group as what they most enjoy. Specifically, they referenced the openness and willingness to help as what they most enjoyed regarding their peers.

Participant 1: That we all get along and that we all know who each other is going through. We can like help each other or try to help each other. Because like if I have a problem I can talk to somebody and they understand me. They're like oh yeah I'm going through the same thing and like you could do this. Like they give us good advice.

Participant 4: Umm, being able to like find out more about each other. And like having different, umm, activities that teach us more about each other that we didn't know before.

Participant 5: Umm, I don't enjoy a lot of things but I guess some of the girls I like. Umm, because it helps me realize that I'm not the only one with the situation.

Participant 12: I uh, I think that we're close with the girls more and we can all be like more open.

Programming. Eight of the twelve participants enjoyed the programming of the homogeneous group including the activities, parenting skills, and discussions.

Participant 2: When we do group things and we do like umm writing and stuff and drawing.

Participant 3: Umm I enjoy that we learn like something new every day, sometimes about yourself, sometimes about our children and umm like different tactics we can use to help them learn more every day.

Participant 6: Umm, because sometime we play games that I like it but sometimes not. Because hmm they are about what do you want to do when you finish high school or what do you plan to do after high school.

Participant 7: Umm when we talk about our life. Umm, because we can express our feelings. Yeah.

Participant 8: We can talk about anything basically because some of us go through the same things that other go through.

Participant 9: Uh, what I enjoy is that we get to have many activities and not just be there wasting our time and yeah the activities are like involving like thinking about your future and like your own personal stuff. Yeah.

Participant 10: The activities that we do. Cause some of them are like about our goals like our what we would want to be when we grow like are older and also like how can we improve right now.

Participant 11: Umm. I, I don't know. Uh. Umm. I guess the same. The birthday cards cause it's the only thing we get to do that doesn't get me bored.

Interview question fourteen. The fourteenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: What do you enjoy least about your current Pathways group and why? Three categories emerged when students shared what they least enjoyed about the current homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. The three categories of responses included the people in the group, both peers and advisors, as well as the programming and the physical space of where the homogeneous advisory group is held daily.

People: Peers and/or advisor. Overall, out of twelve participants, four least enjoyed the peers and/or advisor from the homogeneous group. Of these four participants, three identified issues related to peers when discussing what they least enjoyed about the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers.

Participant 1: Umm, that sometimes nobody talks. Like when the teacher asks something like for everybody some of them don't talk and they be like shy and I hope that everyone doesn't get shy anymore.

Participant 3: Umm, I think the only thing would be that not everyone there is like a senior so it's like if I ask somebody like oh when are senior pictures coming up they're like oh I don't know.

Participant 6: I don't enjoy when umm I don't know some girls and I don't have good relationships with them.

One participant discussed the advisor when asked to share what they least enjoyed about the homogeneous advisory group; the advisor was perceived as nosy.

Participant 5: That some, some advisors are too nosy. Cause I don't like when people are too nosy. I don't like people being all up in my stuff like that. Like if I'm absent because I have court or something

Programming. Programming was identified as something that six of the twelve participants did not enjoy about the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. Issues included within programming include participation, activities and structure. Two of the six participants did not enjoy participating for reasons such as shyness or not enough time for everyone to participate.

Participant 2: Umm talking out loud cause I'm shy sometimes.

Participant 9: Uh, I would say the time because sometimes we do really good activities and since it's a big group like we each like get to go one by one talking and sometimes it's not even enough to go through all of us and like it, you feel really bad cause it's like maybe one person want to talk but there's not enough time. Yeah.

Two participants directly referenced a dislike or discomfort with the activities in homogeneous advisory group.

Participant 7: Some activities are boring. I don't like them.

Participant 12: Least? Umm, I think the part when you need to like the activities when you need to I would say like write things like about. I don't know. Write things that may be like personal; things like that and I sometimes I like say this too personal, I don't want to do it, but ahh.

Additionally, two participants felt as though the homogeneous advisory group was too structured and did not allow for enough time to do whatever they wanted, such as homework or hanging out.

Participant 8: Hmm, uh sometimes I would like to get like time to just like hangout or like do our homework when we have a lot of homework. So, yeah.

Participant 11: Umm, the fact that we all have to do what you know Ms. [name] asks us to do. Like, we can't do our own things.

Physical space. Physical space was identified as something that two of the twelve participants did not enjoy about the homogeneous advisory group due to feeling overcrowded.

Participant 4: That we all have to sit in like a table like in one big table with all of us like cramped together. Because like like we have not enough space for us to like lean over or go like this cause we are all like squished together. And then some of us like can't even sit in the table because it's filled. So we have to like put a chair in the back and you don't really hear what they are saying.

Participant 10: That there's no space like for everyone to sit down like around the table. Like everyone's like bump into each other.

Summary of findings. When analyzing the data for questions nine through fourteen regarding student perceptions of benefits for heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping the responses varied. For example, the benefits for heterogeneous grouping as shared by participants included no benefit, freedom to do anything and receiving help, but the overwhelming response was the people within the group, mostly their peers. Notably, when asked to share the benefits regarding their experience in the homogeneous group, ten of the twelve participants cited the benefit as the commonality of motherhood, while one cited no benefit and one discussed the fun atmosphere. The participant who stated there was no benefit to the homogeneous advisory group was the same participant who stated there was no benefit to the heterogonous group.

Likewise, there were common themes when participants shared what they missed most and least about the heterogeneous advisory group and what they enjoyed most and least about the homogeneous advisory group. These themes were the people within the group including peers and advisors as well as the programming of the groups. While there were some trends in the correspondence between what students missed from the heterogeneous group and what students most enjoyed in the homogeneous group, these

trends were not the majority. Two of the seven participants who identified their peers as what they missed most from the heterogeneous advisory group shared that their peers were what they least enjoyed in the homogeneous group. Furthermore, three of the four participants who discussed programming as what they missed most from the heterogeneous advisory group share that the programming was what they least enjoyed in the homogeneous advisory group.

Finally, when discussing what the student mothers missed least about their heterogeneous groups and what they enjoyed most about their homogeneous advisory group, the responses did not denote overwhelming trends. For example one of the participants who identified peers as what she did not miss about the heterogeneous advisory group shared that the peers were what she enjoyed most about the homogeneous advisory group. Perhaps more notably, two of the four participants who discussed the activities such as programming as what they missed least from the heterogeneous advisory also shared that the activities were what they most enjoyed in the homogeneous group. The trends in responses discussed above are important to consider when interpreting the data.

Findings related to advisory programs as a support for high school graduation. The findings in this section draw from interview questions fifteen, sixteen and sixteen a. These questions pertain to how advisories help students graduate high school, how the participants perceive advisories have helped them toward graduating high school and finally if the participants plan to graduate high school.

Interview question fifteen. The fifteenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: How does Pathways help students to graduate high school? Ten participants

identified two major factors of advisories as having an impact on their ability to stay in school through graduation: advisories provide a time to relax and advisors provide academic support. Two participants felt that advisories do not help students to graduate high school.

Time to relax. Of the twelve participants, two felt that the time to do what they wanted to do and relax was a helpful break, which they perceived helped students to graduate from high school.

Participant 1: Umm, it helps us because it gives us the time to like relax and just talk to our friends and get like other things in mind then; like, it's like a little break for us from school.

Participant 7: Umm because they say that we have to go always to them. Some when you have to what you want to do.

Academic support. Eight of the twelve participants shared that the academic support provided within advisories helped students to graduate high school. Academic support varied from help with homework and school work to academic planning.

Students who discussed help with homework made the following comments:

Participant 2: Cause they help you like if you don't know how to do the homework they will get the time to help you. If you don't understand something they will help you too. They give you advice like to stay in school and learn.

Participant 10: Cause they give us time to do our work or homework and then we get to finish it and then hand it in so it helps a lot.

Students who shared that that the academic planning helped students to graduate made the following comments:

Participant 3: Umm I think it helps them because they have a teacher assigned to them that's gonna be with them throughout their four years so like that teacher helps look after them. Like if they have any questions they can talk to their counselors and stuff.

Participant 5: It keeps them on track and updated on their work and their grades and attendance.

Participant 6: Umm I think when we have questions they can help us.

Participant 8: Uh some students have a like a connection in a way like with their Pathways teachers and some students like have umm like they could tell their problems to their teacher and not feeling any type of way. Like they trust them with what they say so some students take the advice that their Pathways teachers give them.

Participant 9: Umm. It umm uses activities to like keep you on track like and like if you have like they may ask you like what problems are you going through or what are your strengths and weaknesses and yeah that helps you understand like what you need to work on and what you don't really need to work on.

Participant 12: Oh. Like this Pathways helps us because they always try to say oh you are doing that, that classes you need to progress and that always talk about our future and things like that so we get to know that we need to do good in class to pass and all that.

Does not help. Of the twelve participants, two did not feel that advisories helped students to graduate.

Participant 4: I don't know. I don't feel like Pathways, I feel like Pathways isn't necessary. Like they should just put it for different classes. Cause like you really don't learn anything in Pathways. It's like time to relax and do nothing. And do your homework.

Participant 11: I don't think Pathways helps.

Interview question sixteen. The sixteenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: In what ways has Pathways helped you toward finishing high school? When participants were asked how advisories specifically helped them toward graduating from high school, their responses varied widely. Responses included providing a time for academic support, help with their babies, academic support and help with their babies hand-in-hand, the advisor and some felt that advisories did not help them at all toward finishing high school.

Academic support. Of the twelve participants, four felt that the time in advisories spent on academic support helped them toward high school graduation.

Participant 5: Umm, it keeps me updated with my school. When I have a low grade I have to get it higher.

Participant 8: I feel like I get encouraged to like work harder that way I can finish high school faster and not worry about staying another year.

Participant 12: Umm sometimes I get like when we don't do accomplish homework or things like that we can do it in the Pathways and they always try to

help us and say if you don't got time you can do it after school and things like that.

Help with baby. Two of the twelve participants specifically addressed the help that they received for their babies through advisories, such as an advisor to talk with about baby related concerns.

Participant 2: By helping me taking care of my baby and making me like go on with life. Like if they wouldn't take care of my baby how would I be in school if I don't have nobody to take care of the baby because I don't trust nobody. Like the only person I trust is my mom to stay with the baby and she works when I come to school so.

Participant 9: Well, I really do want to finish high school even before I got pregnant but like they help me with my child. Like if I'm having trouble with him like if he's crying too much or there's a problem with him like medically I talk to them and they help me not stress out and yeah that's pretty good.

Academic support and help with baby. Two of the twelve participants discussed both the academic support and the help they receive for their babies as the ways in which advisories helps them toward graduation.

Participant 1: Umm, it helped be because like it helps me do my homework on time. Like if I forgot, like last night to do it I will do it quickly and the teacher will help me. She'll be like, oh I'll help you. Well, this Pathways helps me a lot because they take care of my baby and cause it's like um help for me.

Participant 10: Umm having my daughter like in PIC-C and then so yeah. And then I be doing my work too if I don't do it at night I do it there.

Advisor. Two of the twelve participants shared ways in which the advisor of their advisory group helped them toward graduation.

Participant 3: Umm, well like my Pathways teachers they always listen to me like if I have a problem or like a concern I can talk to them and they can like either help me themselves or like send me to someone that can help me.

Participant 6: I would say because we have something that we don't understand and we ask to the teacher in Pathways and they help me.

Not helpful. Of the twelve participants, three felt as though advisories have not helped them toward finishing high school.

Participant 4: It hasn't.

Participant 7: There are none.

Participant 11: Umm, not at all.

Interview question sixteen a. The sixteenth interview question, question sixteen a, asked to participants is as follows: Do you plan on graduating? All of the twelve participants responded "yes" when asked if they planned on graduating from high school. This is the only interview protocol question which was answered the same way by all participants.

Summary of findings. All participants shared one thing in common: they all plan on graduating. However, their responses regarding how advisories help students to graduate from high school were in many cases different responses to the question which asked how advisories help them personally to graduate from high school. The responses regarding how advisories help the overall population of students to graduate included time for relaxation, academic support and some said advisories did not help. When

participants responded regarding how advisories help them personally toward graduation, academic support was also identified, but in addition, help with the baby and help from the advisor was also discussed. Three participants shared that advisories did not help them personally toward graduation; two of the three also commented that advisories did not help students in general toward graduation.

Findings related to overall advisory program participant recommendations and preferences. The findings in this section focus on participants' perceptions based upon their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. Students are asked whether the grouping of advisories matters when considering it a support for graduating high school. Students are also asked whether, if given a choice, they would stay with their current homogeneous advisory group or return to their heterogeneous advisory group. The responses were drawn from interview questions seventeen and eighteen.

Interview question seventeen. The seventeenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: Think about your first Pathways group as compared to your second Pathways group. When you consider Pathways as a support for graduating high school, does the grouping of students matter? Why or why not? Responses to whether grouping students in advisory groups matters was split: of the twelve participants, six students believed it mattered and six students felt it did not matter.

Yes. Of the six participants who felt grouping mattered, five shared that it did matter how advisory sections were grouped because commonality among the students in the group is important.

Participant 4: I think it does because if you're like in a group of like let's say bilingual children and then there is people who are addicted to drugs and you are trying to help them. They will probably feel better knowing that they're with a group of people that have something in common with them rather than just random people that they have to meet. And then there are people in the class that won't talk to anyone because they have nothing I common.

Participant 5: Yes. Cause we all need different needs. Like if I was in school and I had nobody to take care of my baby then I will find it a struggle where not to come to school. Now being in this school they could take care of my baby. I could bring my baby every day and get educated every day.

Participant 8: In a way because some students that are going through the same thing need other people around that are going through the same thing and if they see that others can do it that in a way they'll think yeah I can do it to and I can graduate and do something positive.

Participant 9: It does matter because if you want to have an activity and expect all students to talk you have to make sure that all students are like not the same but that they're most likely going through the situation that mostly everybody is going through. So like you can't have like a teen mom and like a really like I don't know – another teen that has bad attitude and expect them to share thing cause it's not going to work. You have to have like people on the same page.

Participant 12: Umm. I think yes because like if you got the same the same difficulty the same why you are here in this group we can talk about oh now you have a baby and it's more difficult, but you can do it. You can still do it and don't

drop out just because you have a baby and in the other ones you can't like say oh cause you have a baby cause others doesn't have and things like that.

One participant of the six who felt grouping mattered discussed the importance of peers getting along with one another as well as the potential for one student with a lack of motivation to receive more attention from the advisor than the other students.

Participant 1: Yeah it does because umm sometimes like there could be like a person that doesn't care and like it makes the teacher mad and she like put more attention to that person than us. Then we be like oh, like not caring. And, like, it's important because everybody has to get along. Like, imagine if two people don't get along they start like fighting in class and now we're all getting in trouble. Like because they're gonna be like oh, they're instigating.

No. The six participants who felt that the grouping did not matter discussed motivation to graduate, indifference between their homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groups, and some did not cite anything specific. Two of the six students who felt grouping did not matter discussed motivation to graduate; if you're motivated to graduate then the grouping is not important.

Participant 2: No. Because it doesn't matter if you're not a mother or whatever you want to graduate.

Participant 3: Umm, I don't really think so because if you like want to graduate like you're gonna do it for yourself and not because of the people around you.

Two participants felt as though grouping did not matter because the homogeneous groups and heterogeneous groups were indifferent.

Participant 10: No, no I don't think so. Because they both give you time to do your work and yeah.

Participant 11: Umm. I don't think it matters. Umm because like in a way we're all doing the same things.

There were two participants who felt as though the grouping did not matter, but they were not able to provide specific reasoning.

Participant 6: I think that it doesn't matter. Umm because we can be in any Pathways. It doesn't have to be a specific Pathways.

Participant 7: It doesn't matter. Because it's the same thing. You say what you. I don't know. I only have that. It doesn't matter.

Interview question eighteen. The eighteenth interview question asked to participants is as follows: If you were given the choice today to remain with your current Pathways group or return to your first Pathways group, what choice would you make and why? Seven of the twelve participants expressed they would want to stay in the homogeneous advisory group while three would like to return to their heterogeneous advisory group. Two of the participants were unsure as to the decision that they would make if given the choice.

Homogeneous. The seven participants who would like to stay with their homogeneous group elaborated with reasons related to their peers and advisor and an overall level of comfort. Two students who identified the peers and advisor made comments related to connectedness, such as friends and family.

Participant 1: I would stay because I like get better along with my friends now here and I get along with the teacher and there's more people I know and better advice.

Participant 10: I would stay in my current one.

Cause there's too many girls and we talk and then I get time to do my work and it's like a family cause it's a lot of girls.

Five students shared about the level of comfort within the homogeneous advisory group commented in the following manner.

Participant 2: Stay with my group. I would feel better in that group.

Participant 4: I would remain with this one – with Ms. [name] because it's easier to relate to. You talk freely with them and you become friends easily with them than when in my first Pathways where I was just in the Pathways with just random kids. I didn't really know and make friends with them. To feel more comfortable in that class.

Participant 8: I would stay with my Pathways my current Pathways because I like how it is right now. Like were all moms, we all understand each other and like I said there's no judgment.

Participant 9: I would stay in my current advisory group because I feel more comfortable. I get to express myself throughout the whole year and like I know that I can count on the teachers and on the students in the advisory.

Participant 12: I think I would stay with my group cause I like how we involve how I involve in this group.

Heterogeneous. The three students who would like to stay with their heterogeneous group shared reasons related to their peers and advisor and an overall level of comfort. The students who identified the peers and advisor made the following comments.

Participant 3: Umm I think I would return to my first group because like umm like I got so close to my old Pathways teacher and like sometime I still see her and we talk and stuff. Yeah, I think I would go back

Participant 6: Ha ha. I would go back to my Pathways. Because there I know other students who were there and they are my friends. This Pathways, I don't know all of them.

The participant who made a comment regarding the comfort level of the heterogeneous advisory group as the reason for staying stated the following.

Participant 11: I would go back to my first Pathways cause it was more fun than the one right now. Umm. Well because I miss you know hanging out with my friends from that Pathways cause I knew them better.

Unsure. Finally, of the twelve participants, two were not able to make a decision regarding which advisory group they preferred.

Participant 5: I don't know cause sometimes I want to go back to my old Pathways cause I miss my friends there but sometimes I find that it's better here because they deal with different situations. Try to make you understand different situations and for you to expand your mind and feel the other person's point of view – not just yours.

Participant 7: I think I don't care.

Summary of findings. When analyzing the data from the final two interview questions regarding student preferences and overall grouping recommendations, some trends were identified. Out of the six participants who said that grouping did matter, five of those participants said that they would prefer to stay with the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. The remaining participant of the six who said grouping of advisory did matter said that they were unsure which group they would prefer. Of the six participants who shared that grouping did not matter, three of the participants shared that they would prefer to return to their heterogeneous advisory group, two participants would prefer to stay with their homogeneous advisory group and one participant was unsure. Overall, of the participants who said that grouping did matter almost all said that they preferred the homogeneous group, while the participants who said that grouping did not matter were split in their preferences regarding which group they would prefer.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative research study analyzed the perceptions of young mothers in high school regarding their experiences in homogeneous advisory groupings and heterogeneous advisory groupings. This chapter identified and summarized the areas of focus which emerged through data analysis. The first two areas of focus, relationships in heterogeneous advisory groupings and relationships in homogeneous advisory groups, correspond to the first two research sub-questions dealing with how participants perceive their relationships with advisors and peers in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. Table 3 provides a visual representation of the summary of findings in relation to the areas of focus and research questions deal with advisor and peer relationships in heterogeneous and advisory groupings.

Table 3

Summary of Findings in Relation to Relationship Research Questions

Research Sub Questions	Areas of Focus	Summary of Findings (n)
RQ1: How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?	Relationships in heterogeneous advisory groupings	Positive feedback about heterogeneous advisory group (10) Negative feedback about heterogeneous group (4) Celebration (7) Activity (5) Positive feedback about homogeneous advisory group (10) Negative feedback about homogeneous advisory group (2)
RQ2: How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?	Relationships in homogeneous advisory groupings	Celebration (7) Activity (9)

The final three areas of focus, comparison of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings, advisory programs as a support for graduation and overall advisory program participant recommendations and preferences, correspond to the last two research sub-questions dealing with the participant perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. Table 4 provides a visual representation of the summary of findings in relation to the areas of focus and

research questions dealing with participants' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings.

Table 4

*Summary of Findings in Relation to Grouping Advantages and Disadvantages
Research Questions*

Research Sub Questions	Areas of Focus	Summary of Findings (n)
RQ3: What do young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?	Comparison of heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings	Heterogeneous benefits No benefit (2) People (6) Help (2) Freedom (2) Homogeneous benefits Commonality of motherhood (10) No benefit (1) Fun (1)
RQ4: What do young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?		Heterogeneous - miss most People (7) Programming (4) Nothing (1) Heterogeneous – miss least People (6) Programming (4) Nothing (2) Homogeneous – enjoy most People (4) Programming (8) Heterogeneous – enjoy least People (4) Programming (6) Physical space (2)
	Advisory programs as a support for high school graduation	Advisories offer Time to relax (2) Academic support (8) Does not help (2) How advisories help participant Academic support (4) Help with baby (2) Help with baby/academics (2) Advisor (2) Not helpful (2) Plan to graduate Yes (12) No (0)
	Overall advisory program participant recommendations and preferences	Grouping supports graduation Yes (6) No (6) Advisory grouping preference Homogeneous (7) Heterogeneous (3) Unsure (2)

All of the findings which were organized using areas of focus in relation to research sub-questions ultimately work toward developing deep understanding of overarching research question regarding the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. Chapter V provides an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research and recommendations for secondary practitioners regarding the grouping of advisory programs.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This qualitative research study explored the perceptions of young mothers in high school regarding their comparative experiences in homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groupings. In this chapter, the researcher will restate the research problem, interpret and discuss the findings, provide recommendations for further research and for secondary practitioners, and discuss the limitations of the study.

Restatement of the Research Problem

Since the 1970s advisory programs have been used as structure to support students in the development of relationships within the school community as they work toward high school graduation (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Clarke & DiMartino, 2004; Goldberg, 1998). As revealed in the review of the literature, there are numerous studies that focus on recommendations for structuring and implementing advisory programs (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Weilbacher & Lanier, 2012). Some of the most commonly implemented grouping methods for secondary advisory programs are across-grade, same-grade, upperclassmen mentoring underclassmen, same gender and whole school when the student population is small. Little is known about the effectiveness of these varieties of grouping methods. The impact grouping has on students in advisory programs has been left unaddressed (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Buchanan & Woerner, 2002; Lambert, 2005). Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature concerning the perceptions of students regarding the grouping of advisory programs. This study was designed and conducted to offer new insights into the study of the benefits of

advisory groups from the participants' point of view, particularly as they compare different modes of grouping.

The overarching research question of this study is: What are the perceptions that young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. The participants in this study were high school student mothers enrolled in a homogeneous advisory group for student mothers after previously being part of a heterogeneous advisory group. For purposes of this study, homogeneous refers to the similar characteristics; in this case, the similarities would be gender and motherhood. The overarching research question envelops four sub-questions which delve into the perceptions young mothers in high school have as they compare their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings. The sub questions are as follows:

1. How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?
2. How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?
3. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?
4. What do the young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping?

Interpretation and Discussion of the Findings within the Scope of the Research Questions

The findings of this study are presented within the scope of the research questions. The findings include the following themes: correlation between relationships with advisors and the overall advisory experience in homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groups, correlation between relationships with peers and the overall advisory experience in homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groups, and the commonality of motherhood as an advantage to homogeneous advisory grouping.

Findings related to research question one. The first research question in the study is as follows: How do young mothers in high school compare their relationships with their advisor in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their relationships with their advisor in heterogeneous advisory groups?

Correlation: Relationship with advisor and overall advisory experience. The findings show young mothers who are in high school did perceive a positive overall advisory experience when they have a positive relationship with their advisor in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groups. There was no significant difference regarding the participants' relationships with the advisors in the heterogeneous versus homogeneous groupings. Eight of the twelve participants shared positive feedback regarding their relationships with their advisors in the heterogeneous advisory group. These eight participants also shared positive feedback regarding their overall experiences in experiences in the heterogeneous advisory group. A highlight of this finding can be captured through the feedback from participant three who described the heterogeneous pathways as “fun” because “we were going to be together throughout the four years” and

she described her relationship with her advisor in the heterogeneous group as “really strong” because “throughout my freshman year when I wasn’t doing good she would always like give me advice.”

Furthermore, nine of the twelve, a majority of the participants, shared positive feedback regarding their relationships with advisors in the homogeneous advisory group. Seven of these nine participants also reported positive feedback regarding their overall experiences in the homogeneous advisory group. The responses made by participant four exemplify this finding. Participant four described the overall homogeneous advisory program for student mothers as “easier to get along with them cause like we all have something in common, which is being teen moms. And we can all talk about things that happen between us than talking with someone who’s not a teen mom.” Participant four described her relationship with her advisor as positive, “It’s better than the last one. I can actually, like, talk to her. And, like, have more, like, of a better relationship with her than with my old one.”

Although not as strong, it is still worth noting the correlation between the relationship with advisor and overall advisory experience for the participants with negative feedback. Four of the twelve participants shared negative feedback regarding their relationships with their advisors in the heterogeneous advisory group; three of whom also shared negative feedback regarding their overall experiences within the heterogeneous advisory group and one of whom shared positive experiences regarding overall experience. Participant nine embodied this finding as she described the overall heterogeneous advisory in a negative light as “very separated, like not a lot of interaction with each other.” She then went on to describe her relationship with her advisor in the

heterogeneous group as “not really good because we didn’t really get to talk a lot like together about anything – separated – like not tight.”

This finding supports other research which emphasizes the importance of student relationships with adults in secondary schools. When students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively with teachers during activities they begin to build connections with their teachers which have a positive impact on student engagement (Appleton, et al., 2008; Grossman & Bulle, 2006). In this study there was a strong relationship between the students who perceived their relationships to be positive and their overall perception of a positive advisory program. The student-advisor relationships influenced the perceptions of overall advisory experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groups. There was no significant difference between the heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groupings regarding the correlation of relationships with advisors and overall advisory experience. This correlation supports the findings that students are more likely to connect to school when students are known well by at least one adult in their school who is personally invested in their education (Benson & Poliner, 2013; Black, 2002; Felner & Seitsinger, 2007; Quint, 2006; Wilson, 1998).

Findings related to research question two. The second research question in the study is as follows: How do young mothers in high school portray their interactions with their peers in homogeneous advisory groups as compared to their interactions with their peers in heterogeneous advisory groups?

Correlation: Relationship with peers and overall advisory experience. The findings further indicate young mothers in high school have better relationships with their peers when they have positive perceptions of the overall advisory experience in both

heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groups. Seven of the twelve, more than half of the participants, shared a positive view regarding their relationships with their peers in the heterogeneous advisory group, all of whom also shared positive feedback regarding their overall experiences in the heterogeneous advisory group. The responses made by participant one best illustrate this finding; participant one described the overall heterogeneous advisory group experience as “everybody I knew already so it was like easy and I used to get along with everybody” and “we were just talking and like we would have fun.” She went on to positively describe her relationship with her peers in the heterogeneous advisory group as “we all used to get along. Like they’re all nice and umm we were like umm we were all friends.”

Seven of the twelve participants also shared positive feedback regarding their relationships with peers in the homogeneous advisory group. Of these seven participants, all of them also reported positive feedback regarding their overall experiences in the homogeneous advisory groups. An example of a participant response which highlights this finding is from participant two. She described her overall homogeneous advisory experience as “good because like now I feel better because umm I’m not the only mother and I feel more like I don’t know how to say it, like you know how you feel alone if you’re the only mother around other student that are not mothers or fathers.” She went on to describe her relationships with her peers as “good – they all my friends. They all talk to me. Some of them we even hang out and like if I don’t know something like about the baby, if he gets sick or something I will ask one of them and they will tell me what to do. We help one another.”

This finding supports the research which purports that student relationships with peers in secondary schools is important. When students develop positive relationships with peers in secondary settings, they are more likely to connect to school (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; McClure, et al., 2010; Poliner & Lieber, 2004; VanRyzin, 2010). In this study, there was a significant relationship between how participants perceived their relationships with peers and their overall perceptions of their advisory experience in both homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groups. Participants with positive perceptions of peer relationships were likely to have positive overall advisory experience perceptions and likewise, students with negative perceptions of peer relationships were likely to have negative overall advisory experience perceptions.

Findings related to research question three. The third research question in the study is as follows: What do the young mothers in high school identify as the advantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping? The majority of the young mothers in high school in this study identified the importance of being part of a cohesive advisory group as an important advantage of being enrolled in the homogeneous advisory group. The following describes the cohesive nature of the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers.

Commonality of motherhood. This study found that the commonality of motherhood is a perceived advantage of the homogeneous advisory group. Ten out of twelve, a majority of the participants, discussed the commonality of motherhood as the benefit of the homogeneous advisory group and all ten of these participants also indicated that they plan to graduate from high school. The participants included responses related to the commonality of motherhood such as “to communicate with other people that know

what you're going through," "so other moms could help us," "we are all teen moms and we go to school so we know it's not easy," and "nobody gets judged." All of these responses speak to the fact that the participants perceive the commonality of motherhood as an advantage because they are able to relate to one another and support one another in the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. This finding supports the benefits that were discussed in the research conducted by Weilbacher and Lanier (2012). Some of the benefits identified by Weilbacher and Lanier (2012) include facilitating a safe environment whereby same gender concerns can be openly discussed and creating trusting relationships.

MacLaury (2000) conducted research which found that students need to be comfortable with their peer group and advisor prior to being able to openly and honestly discuss adolescent concerns and personal decisions. Additionally, Hoffman and Whitney (1998) found that advisory programs are beneficial to students as they develop self-confidence regarding gender specific roles. The findings of this research indicate that the participants perceived the commonality of motherhood as a significant advantage of the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. This perceived advantage which was shared by ten of the twelve participants supports the findings which were revealed in the studies conducted by MacLaury (2000), Weilbacher and Lanier (2012) and Hoffman and Whitney (1998).

Findings related to research question four. The fourth research question in the study is as follows: What do the young mothers in high school identify as the disadvantages, if any, of homogeneous grouping as compared to heterogeneous advisory grouping? Research question four is closely related to research question three; however,

research question four seeks the disadvantages of homogeneous grouping as perceived by the participants while research question three seeks the advantages of the homogeneous advisory group. As previously discussed the commonality of motherhood was cited by the participants as a significant advantage of the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. An analysis of the data did not reveal any significant findings for the disadvantages of the homogeneous advisory group as compared to the heterogeneous advisory group.

Summary. The significant findings of this study were central to relationships and commonalities. The overall advisory experiences in heterogeneous advisory groupings as perceived by the participants showed a strong relationship with peers and adults. There was a strong correlation between positive overall advisory experiences and positive relationships with peers and adults. Likewise, there was a correlation between negative overall advisory experiences and negative relationships with peers and advisors. Furthermore, the strongest advantage of the homogeneous advisory group as perceived by the student mothers was the commonality of motherhood as they all worked toward high school graduation.

Implications

Based upon the results and findings of this study, the following recommendations for practice and future research are suggested.

Implications for practice. Comprehensive secondary schools with advisory programs should pay careful attention to the placements of students in advisory programs. This research suggests that guidance counselors and administrators scheduling students in advisory groups should work toward placing students with advisors and peers

whereby students will form positive relationships and have an overall positive advisory experience. It may be beneficial for administrators to work with advisors to develop strategies to employ strategies that support the development of positive relationships with students such as scheduling students with an advisor with whom a positive relationship already exists.

Additionally, this research suggests that the commonality of motherhood is a significant advantage of the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. Therefore, practitioners should explore options for grouping students by commonality on an as needed basis dependent upon the school population. For example, in schools with student mothers, an advisory group for student mothers may be appropriate. In schools with students who have truancy issues, an advisory group for these students may be appropriate. Overall, it is recommended that practitioners in comprehensive secondary schools develop advisory groupings for students based on common needs to maximize the benefits of an advisory program.

Implications for future research. A mixed-methods study could be conducted to provide an in-depth understanding of the perceptions students have regarding their overall advisory experience and relationships with peers and advisors and how those variables are connected, if at all, to variables of school connectedness and student engagement, such as attendance records, academic records and discipline records. Furthermore, a future study could be conducted to explore high school graduates' perceptions of how advisories supported them through graduation and prepared them for post-secondary life.

Finally, specific to the needs of student mothers, the literature revealed that school programming and support services have struggled to identify the exact support teenage student mothers need to remain connected in school (Camarena, 1998; Geronimus, 2003; Sadler, et al., 2007; SmithBattle, 2005; SmithBattle, 2006). This study revealed that young student mothers identified the commonality of motherhood as a significant advantage of the homogeneous advisory groups for student mothers. These results suggest that future research regarding homogeneous advisory groups for student mothers as a support service for student mothers could complement this study by further examining how the services in the homogeneous advisory group for student mothers support teenage student mothers.

Limitations

The limitations that were encountered in this research study were related to scope, the heterogeneous advisory advisors and the limitations of language in the interview process.

Scope. This study was conducted in a comprehensive high school in an urban setting in New Jersey with an advisory program that meets daily for twenty minutes. To gain a deeper understanding of the participants perspectives regarding homogeneous and heterogeneous advisory groupings it was necessary for students to have experienced both types of advisory groupings. Due to this criterion, there were only fourteen students eligible to participate in the study. Two students declined and therefore twelve students in all participated in the study. The researcher looked for other comprehensive high schools in an urban setting in New Jersey with comparable advisory programs. However, due to the inconsistencies in the design and implementation of advisories the researcher was not

successful in identifying a sample of students in a comparable advisory setting with heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory group experiences (Anfara, 2006; Galassi, et al., 2004; Niska & Thompson, 2007; Poliner & Leiber, 2004).

Heterogeneous advisors. A limitation of the study that was unavoidable was that the students who participated in the study all came from different heterogeneous advisory groups. While they were all in the same homogeneous advisory group for student mothers with the same advisors, their experiences in the heterogeneous advisory groups were different in that they all had different advisors and a different group of peers. The levels of experience likely varied among the heterogeneous advisors. This was considered when compiling and analyzing the data from the interviews.

Language. The interviewer conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Some participants were former English Language Learners who were exited from the English as a Second Language program. This may have impacted their responses in terms of richness and complexity. While the participants are no longer considered English Language Learners, this language barrier must be considered as a limitation of the study.

Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions of young student mothers in high school as they compared their experiences in heterogeneous advisory groups with their experiences in a homogeneous advisory group for student mothers. This qualitative research study provided an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of students regarding their experiences in heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groups. Additionally, it provided recommendations for future practice and research. In this study, students highlighted the importance of relationships and a feeling of commonality in their

advisory groups designed to personalize learning so that students are engaged and develop school connectedness to ultimately support them through high school graduation.

The importance of relationships with peers and adult advisors was a strong finding in this study regarding heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory grouping. The overall advisory experiences in both heterogeneous and homogeneous advisory groups were directly related to the relationships the participants had with their peers and their advisors. Commonality of motherhood was also a strong finding and this suggests that grouping subgroups of students with common interests or needs may be an important consideration when grouping advisories, especially when working with students at risk for not graduating from high school.

Relationships with adult advisors and relationships with peers are also critical components of advisory programs. Students value the connections they are able to form with their peers and adult advisors; relationships prevail over all. It is imperative that regardless of the advisory structure or program in place, school administrators ensure that students are afforded the opportunity to foster positive relationships with peers and advisors in non-academic settings such as advisory programs. For some students, participation in an effective advisory program could be the determining factor in the achievement of the goal of high school graduation.

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Appendix A

Permission from Data Collection Site



NEW BRUNSWICK BOARD OF EDUCATION

268 Baldwin Street
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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY 08903-2683
Phone: (732) 745-5300, ext. 5414 - Fax: (732) 745-5459

RICHARD M. KAPLAN
Superintendent of Schools

November 19, 2012

RE: Dissertation Research Approval

To Whom It May Concern:

Vanessa Pellington has been granted permission to conduct research at New Brunswick Public Schools. Specifically, she will be working with the targeted advisory group that serves adolescent female students with children at New Brunswick High School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Kaplan".

Richard M. Kaplan
Superintendent of Schools

RMK/dil

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Our aim is to explore the perceptions of young mothers in high school on their experiences in two types of advisory groupings. In order to do this, we need your help. We are asking that you participate in an open ended interview and answer all questions to the best of your ability.

Before we begin, it is important to distinguish between the two types of advisory groupings at New Brunswick High School. Pathways is the advisory program at New Brunswick High School. The first type of advisory grouping is a heterogeneous grouping in which students are grouped randomly with other students. The second type of advisory grouping is a homogeneous grouping in which students are grouped together because they gave something in common. The Pathways advisory group you are currently a part of is homogenously grouped and designated for student mothers. This interview should take about 30 minutes to complete. Your honest and open feedback when participating in this interview is important to our study.

Relationships with Advisor and Peers in Heterogeneous Grouping

I'm going to begin this interview by asking you a few questions about your experiences with your first Pathways group which contained random groups of students.

1. Based upon your experiences, how would you describe your first Pathways group where you were grouped among students with a variety of needs and backgrounds?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your advisor in this first Pathways group?
3. How would you describe your relationships with your peers/classmates in this first Pathways group?
4. Please take a moment to think about your time spent as part of this first Pathways group. (Pause) Share a moment or experience that stands out most.

Relationships with Advisor and Peers in Homogeneous Grouping

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about your experiences with your current Pathways group where students are grouped because they have something in common; you are all student mothers.

5. Based upon your experiences, how would you describe your current Pathways group where you are grouped among students with similar needs?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your current advisor in this Pathways group?
7. How would you describe your relationships with your current peers/classmates in this Pathways group?
8. Please take a moment to think about your time spent as part of this current Pathways group and share a moment or experience that stands out most.

Comparison of Heterogeneous and Homogenous Advisory Groupings

Now that we have talked about both Pathways groups, please take time to consider what you have enjoyed most and least about both groups.

9. Based upon your experiences, what were the benefits of being a part of your first Pathways group?
10. What do you miss most about your first Pathways group and why?
11. What do you miss least about your first Pathways group and why?
12. Based upon your experiences so far, what are the benefits of being a part of your current Pathways group with other student mothers?
13. What do you most enjoy about your current Pathways group and why?
14. What do you least enjoy about your current Pathways group and why?
15. How does Pathways help students to graduate high school?
16. In what ways has Pathways helped you toward finishing high school?
 - A. Do you plan on graduating?
17. Think about your first Pathways group as compared to your second Pathways group. When you consider Pathways as a support for graduating high school, does the grouping of students matter? Why or why not?

18. If you were given the choice today to remain with your current advisory group or return to your first advisory group what choice would you make and why?

Thank you for your participation in this interview.

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letter

Rowan University
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (IRB)
Continuing Review/Final Report Form

Human subject protocols are generally approved by the IRB for a twelve-month period. Federal regulations require a continuing review for ongoing projects no less than annually. If the project is concluded, the PI must file a final report with the IRB. Please complete this form and return it to the Office of Research, James Hall 3rd Floor. You can also email the completed and signed form to Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu) or Eric Gregory (gregorye@rowan.edu)

Principal Investigator: Vanessa Pellington

E-mail Address: vrpellington@gmail.com

Project Title: Exploration of the perceptions of young mothers in high school as they compare their experiences in both heterogeneous and homogenous advisory groupings.

Faculty Advisor (If student is PI): Dr. Gloria Hill

Department: College of Education, Office of Field Experiences

IRB Number: 2014-012

Original Approval Date: 08/22/2013

- This project has been completed (see FINAL REPORT section)
- This project has not been completed (see CONTINUING REVIEW section–page 2)

For FINAL REPORT:

1. Was there any deviation from the originally anticipated risks and/or benefits of the study?
 Yes | No
2. Did any adverse events or unanticipated problems involving risks to the subjects or others occur?
 Yes | No
3. Did any subjects withdraw or did you exclude anyone from the study?
 Yes | No
4. Did any subjects express discomfort or concerns or complain about the research?
 Yes | No
5. Did any subjects participate in the study without signing a consent (and/or assent) form?

Yes | No

6. To the best of your knowledge, are there any long-term risks to the subjects that were not

Yes | No previously identified or anticipated?

If you answered “**YES**” to any of the above questions, please attach a detailed explanation, including actions taken to reduce the risks or discomforts to subjects and/or to communicate new findings or knowledge to subjects.

(NOTE: Per Federal guidelines, future analysis of data from this study to address additional research questions will require a new IRB application.)

For CONTINUING REVIEW:

1. Have the risks and/or benefits to the subjects changed from those originally anticipated?

Yes | No

2. Did any adverse events or unanticipated problems involving risks to the subjects or others occur?

Yes | No

3. Have any subjects withdrawn or have you excluded anyone from the study?

Yes | No

4. Have any subjects expressed discomfort or concerns or complained about the research?

Yes | No

5. Since the last IRB review, have there been any findings, publications, or other relevant information that relate to risks associated with the research?

Yes | No

6. Are there any subjects participating in the study who have not signed a consent (and/or assent) form?

Yes | No

If you answered “**YES**” to any of the above questions, please attach a detailed explanation, including actions taken to reduce the risks or discomforts to subjects and/or to communicate new findings or knowledge to subjects. If you are still enrolling subjects in this study, please attach a copy of the current IRB-approved consent form.

CERTIFICATIONS: I certify that the approved protocol and the approved method for obtaining informed consent, if applicable, have been followed during the period covered by this report and/or will continue to be followed throughout the continuation period. If this request is for continuation, I will continue to observe the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human subjects from research risks and will continue to adhere to the policies and procedures of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board. I agree to obtain informed consent of subjects who are to participate in this project according to the procedures approved by the IRB; to report to the IRB any unanticipated effects on subjects which become apparent during the course or as a result of experimentation and the actions taken as a result; to cooperate with the IRB in the continuing review of this project; to obtain prior approval from the IRB before amending or altering the scope of the project or implementing changes in the approved consent form; and, for IRB purposes, to maintain documentation of consent forms and other research

notes for at least three years after completion of the research.

SIGNATURES:

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "George J. Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

9.23.14

Principal Investigator (Faculty advisor if PI is student)
Date

Appendix D

Letter of Informed Consent

October 1, 2013

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the Education Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Gloria Hill as part of my doctoral dissertation concerning the perceptions of young mothers in high school on their experiences in two types of advisory groupings. The first type of advisory grouping is a heterogeneous grouping in which students are grouped to include a variety of needs. The second type of advisory grouping is a homogeneous grouping in which students are grouped by common need such as the advisory group your daughter is currently a part of designated for student mothers. I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. The goal of the study is to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions of student mothers regarding the advantages and disadvantages of their experiences in both homogenous and heterogeneous advisory groupings so that recommendations can be made regarding advisory grouping and/or future research.

Each student will participate in a one-on-one interview which will last approximately 30 minute whereby the student will be asked a series of questions which will be audio-taped. I will retain the audiotapes at the conclusion of the study. To preserve each student's confidentiality participant numbers will be used to identify individuals. All data will be reported in terms of group results; individual results will not be reported.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his/her advisory group. At the conclusion of the study a summary of the data results will be made available to all interested parents. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 609-915-3785 or you may contact Dr. Gloria Hill at 856-256-4797. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Vanessa Pellington

*Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statements below and returning this letter to your child's teacher by **October 11th, 2013**.*

I grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in this study.

I do not grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in this study.

(Parent/Guardian signature)

(Date)

I grant permission for my child, _____, to be audio-taped.

I do not grant permission for my child, _____, to be audio-taped.

(Parent/Guardian signature)

(Date)