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Students with disabilities experiencing homelessness are a growing and vulnerable population in the United States (Bassuk et al., 2014). They have a myriad of unique and complex needs, many of which teachers are ill prepared to meet. In this study, the researcher conducted a case study (Yin, 2014), set within the context of Ecological Systems Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), to investigate existing school and district level supports for teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, and teachers' and other school personnel's perceptions of those supports.

The researcher interviewed six school and district level personnel, and analyzed several school and district level documents and web resources regarding homeless education to triangulate the data. Data were coded at three levels, the first two employing deductive logic and a priori codes based on the EST theoretical framework (Level I) and extant literature (Level II; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The third level of analysis was conducted using an inductive process, during which codes emerged from the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

Results from Level I coding indicated microsystem supports (to students and families) were provided most frequently, followed by exosystem supports (to teachers and other school professionals). Level II coding revealed teachers and other school professionals have drastically different perceptions of the absence or presence of teacher supports. Furthermore, the roles of teachers and other school professionals are concentrated on providing supports to students and families far more frequently than

providing them to teachers. Level III analysis resulted in four overarching themes: homeless education norms, perceptions of the experience of homelessness, assumptions about teacher awareness and supports, and culture of support. While other school professionals often worked together formally and informally, they rarely involved teachers in their teams, but reported they provide adequate teacher support. The special educator's perceptions indicated a lack of knowledge and support as well as a desire to improve both. Although the majority of participants held a deficit perspective of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness, overall they conveyed the importance of establishing a culture of support for those students and their families.

Implications for future research include an investigation of the descriptive (the way things are done) and injunctive (the way things ought to be done) norms (Cialdini et al., 1990) within schools and districts. Specifically, the siloed nature of homeless education appears to be an emerging descriptive norm, when existing research supports homeless education ought to be carried out in a coordinated, team-based manner (i.e., injunctive). Professionals from other systems must be included in future research, as the norms from various systems can result in further contradictions. Similarly, additional investigations of rural homeless education are warranted to further unveil norms that impact the education of rural students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Finally, considerations for practice include overhauling professional development to include teacher leadership and coaching as valid and sustainable options for improving the supports for teachers of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness.

A CASE STUDY OF THE SUPPORTS THAT FOSTER TEACHERS'
AWARENESS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

by

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DEDICATION

To my two former students, simultaneously the sources of my most challenging moments and my brightest lights, who inspired my research of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A Context for Homelessness

Homelessness is a complex and multifaceted condition that may be fleeting or enduring, and is not limited by ability, gender, age, race, religion, or socioeconomic status. Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (2016), children and youth experiencing homelessness “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,” (42 U.S.C. §11434A(2)), which is defined as a permanent structure, consistently and predictably available, that meets the needs typically met by stable housing. Also included in the law are several examples of homelessness, such as sharing the housing of others due to economic hardship, or living in shelters, cars, public places, or other accommodations not designed for human beings to sleep. In addition, unaccompanied youth are defined as those “not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian” [42 U.S.C. 11434a(6)].

Over 43 million people live in poverty in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). High rates of poverty and lack of affordable housing are the primary causes of homelessness in the United States (Bassuk, DeCandia, Beach & Berman, 2014). Every January, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducts a Point in Time (PIT) count, and every city in the U.S. is required to count its homeless on a single night. The 2016 data indicated 549,928 people were reported homeless on that night.

HUD also reported 401,061 homeless households in 2016, just over 65,000 of which included families with children (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2016).

Children accounted for almost 29% of the homeless population in the 2016 PIT Count (HUD, 2016). The most recent estimates from the National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH), a division of the American Institutes for Research (AIR) indicate as many as 2.5 million children and youth may experience homelessness annually, representing one in every 30 children in the U.S. (Bassuk et al.2014). From 2011 to 2014, the number of students experiencing homelessness enrolled in school increased 15% (Endres & Cidade, 2015). Unaccompanied homeless youth make up another staggering population—HUD’s 2016 PIT count data revealed 3,824 homeless unaccompanied youth on one night; but every year, as many as 1.7 million youth are on their own and experiencing homelessness (National Center for Homeless Education [NCHE], 2013).

In North Carolina, the poverty level is 18.64%, almost 3% higher than the national poverty level (NCHE, 2017). Over 400,000 students in grades 3-12 are considered economically disadvantaged (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). In HUD’s 2015 state-by-state PIT Count data, 10,685 people were reported as homeless in North Carolina. While that number has decreased almost 10% since 2007 (HUD, 2015), child homelessness continues to grow. From 2006 to 2013, the number of homeless children increased 116% to just over 27,000 (Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness [ICPH], 2015).

The Educational Impact of Homelessness

Nationwide, over 1.2 million students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in school in 2012-2013 (NCHE, 2014b). Just over 200,000 (16%) of those students were also served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; NCHE, 2014b). Of students experiencing homelessness who participated in annual assessments, only 47% and 44% achieved proficiency in reading and math, respectively (NCHE, 2014b).

In North Carolina, 26,852 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled during the 2014-2015 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Approximately 4,700 of those students also had an IDEA-identified disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Less than half of enrolled students experiencing homelessness participated in and received a valid score on grade level testing in reading (11,591) and math (11,535). Of those students, 21.7% scored at or above proficient in reading, and 20.8% scored at or above proficient in math (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Researchers have continually demonstrated that homelessness negatively impacts educational performance. Students experiencing homelessness repeat grades more frequently than their housed peers (Rafferty et al., 2004). A majority of students experiencing homelessness (66% - 85%) score significantly below their housed peers on standardized tests of academic achievement, and their learning trajectories consistently fall one standard deviation or more below the projected national norm (Obradović, et al., 2009).

Students experiencing homelessness are at heightened risk for chronic school failure and poor educational outcomes, due, in part, to the many obstacles that hinder

their school success. Housing instability and low income often result in high mobility. Students who are highly mobile typically change schools frequently. Each move creates barriers to attendance, such as inability to enroll or lack of transportation, which often lead to chronic absenteeism (Aratani, 2009; ICPH, 2015). When students experiencing homelessness do attend school, they often face academic challenges resulting from frequent interruptions of their educational experiences (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin & Williams, 1996).

Long-term outcomes for this population are also grim—these students are less likely to complete high school and more likely to be engaged in delinquent activities than their housed peers (Aratani, 2009). Children and youth experiencing homelessness are likely to have parents who did not complete high school (ICPH, 2015). Unfortunately, they also plan to pursue post-secondary education significantly less often than their housed counterparts (Rafferty et al., 2004). This intergenerational lack of education increases the likelihood of future housing instability.

Academic performance is not the only area in which these students struggle. The persistent lack of stability that accompanies homelessness often prevents students from adjusting socially (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003), and changing schools frequently makes connecting with peers a challenge (Moore & McArthur, 2011). Moreover, high rates of behavioral and emotional issues (Koblinsky, Gordon & Anderson, 2000; Masten et al., 1997) are likely to prevent homeless students from making many friends. Anxiety, depression, aggression, and withdrawal are more common in children and youth experiencing homelessness (American Psychological Association [APA], 2015).

Unaccompanied youth are also more likely to have mental health issues, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; APA, 2015).

Students with disabilities experiencing homelessness are an especially vulnerable and growing population. While abundant research exists on general education and homelessness, research focused upon students with disabilities experiencing homelessness is extremely limited. The National Center on Family Homelessness (2015) reported children and youth experiencing homelessness were four times more likely to exhibit delayed development, twice as likely to have a learning disability, and three times more likely to demonstrate emotional and behavioral problems than their housed peers. Cutuli et al. (2013) discovered homeless students receiving special services (e.g., supports for English Language Learners or special education) demonstrated lower levels of initial achievement in math and reading than their housed peers. As might be expected, there is a multiplicative nature to academic difficulties when students are interfacing with both the special education system and the child welfare system (Geenan & Powers, 2006).

Despite the additional challenges they encounter in educational settings, students experiencing homelessness value school and view it as a safe environment with teachers who care (Moore & McArthur, 2011). Teachers are important, trusted supports (Hedin, Hojer & Brunnberg, 2011) who are in the unique position to provide the stability, predictability, and support students need in order to adjust and have positive experiences, especially in a new school (Moore & McArthur, 2011).

Unfortunately, researchers have also reported teachers and other school personnel generally have negative attitudes regarding children and families experiencing homelessness (Powers-Costello & Swick, 2008). They often maintain a deficit perspective, assuming children experiencing homelessness will exhibit academic, behavioral, and developmental deficits (Kim, 2013). Furthermore, when teachers believe students will not be in their classrooms for long, such as when students are highly mobile, teachers are less committed to effectively serving those students (Altshuler, 2003).

Homeless Education Policy

To combat the growing issue of homelessness in the 1980s, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987. It was most recently reauthorized under Title IX of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2016), as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (2016), and is the primary federal legislation safeguarding the education of homeless children and youth with and without disabilities. McKinney-Vento authorizes the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. At its heart, McKinney-Vento ensures students experiencing homelessness receive the services and supports necessary for uninterrupted public schooling, thereby minimizing the adverse effects on academic performance.

McKinney-Vento (2016) includes provisions for school selection, transportation, enrollment, access to programs and services, and appointment of local homeless education liaisons. In addition, every state must have an office of the state coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth, a position usually designated in the state department of education. Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the

right to remain in their school of origin—the school they were attending when they were last housed or the last school attended—if the parents choose to do so and it is in the child’s best interest, as determined by the parents, youth, and school team. The students also qualify for transportation to and from their school of origin, even when moving out of the school or even the district boundaries. Moreover, the two local education agencies (LEAs) must agree on a transportation plan, if necessary, and determine which LEA is financially responsible or if they will share the responsibility. Children who qualify as homeless but do not remain in their school of origin must be immediately enrolled in a new school, even if the required paperwork (e.g., previous academic files, birth certificate, vaccination records, or IEPs) is not available. Regardless of school choice, students experiencing homelessness must have access to the same programs and services as their housed peers and may not be segregated based on housing status.

Theoretical Framework

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory (EST) was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), and is based on the premise that human development occurs in the context of an extensive and ever-changing environment. It includes the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). See Appendix A for an illustration. The microsystem is the activities, roles, and relationships experienced by an individual in a specific setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The relationship between the individual and the setting is reciprocal in nature—the environment affects the individual and vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner stressed the importance of the

individual's perception of, rather than the objective truth of, the role he or she plays and the relations he or she has with others within the microsystem. Children's microsystems typically include the classroom and home environments. The home microsystems of children and youth experiencing homelessness differ markedly from those of their housed counterparts and, depending upon the situation, are often unstable, unpredictable, or inadequate, both in reality and perception. Classroom microsystems can afford students experiencing homelessness some much-needed safety and consistency, as well as the sense of strong relationships.

The mesosystem is a "system of microsystems" (p. 25) and refers to the interrelatedness between two or more microsystems in which the individual is actively involved (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In addition to connecting through the individual, other links may include communication between the two microsystems, other individuals who are prominent in both systems, and the knowledge and insight one system has about the other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For children, the home-school connection is a relatively universal mesosystem, but homelessness can have drastic effects. Primarily, what a student experiencing homelessness faces at home, such as residential instability, absent or busy parents, lack of basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, personal hygiene), or inability to do school work, often manifests in classroom issues such as behavioral problems or failing grades. There may also be minimal communication between the two systems (i.e., parents and teachers), which often results in lack of knowledge of each other. Furthermore, lack of knowledge and insight may prevent the members of one

microsystem (i.e., the teacher in the classroom) from fully understanding the other (i.e., the parent or guardian).

The exosystem refers to other settings outside the individual's immediate networks that potentially affect or are affected by what happens in the individual's microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For children, typical exosystems may include a parent's place of employment, the school district or school board policies and decisions, and even educational law, such ESSA (2016) or IDEA (2004). For children and youth experiencing homelessness, exosystems may include the work of the homeless education team or district homeless education policy. Families experiencing homelessness may have irregular employment situations, thus the parent's workplace microsystem affects the home microsystem, which is shared by the parent and child. Likewise, a school district's policies on homeless education and procedures for supporting homeless families directly affect the student.

Finally, the macrosystem is the collection of beliefs and societal norms that affect the development and operation of the other systems. For example, when Kim (2013) explored the conception of homelessness in the United States, she found the relatively universal misconception of homelessness held by pre-service teachers was limited to single, unemployed males living on the streets. None of them had thoughts of child or family homelessness, essentially denying the possibility any of their students may be experiencing homelessness and leading to two problematic situations. First, if a student experiencing homelessness exhibits behavioral problems, but a teacher is not aware of his or her housing status, the teacher may not be able to discover the root of the issue and

effectively intervene. Second, and possibly even more detrimental, if a teacher is aware that a student is experiencing homelessness, the teacher may maintain a deficit perspective of the child due to his or her housing status, and assume he or she will not be successful in school.

Statement of the Problem

Students experiencing homelessness have a unique array of complex issues; the research is replete with data proving homelessness is extremely detrimental. Miller (2011) highlighted the seminal literature comparing students experiencing homelessness to those who were from low-income families but stably housed. Results differed across studies, with some researchers reporting there was little to no difference between students experiencing homelessness and their poor housed counterparts (e.g., Masten, Miliotis, Graham-Bermann, Ramirez & Neeman, 1993; Masten et al., 1997; Schteingart, Molnar, Klein, Low & Hartman, 1995), and others discovering significant differences in academic success and behavior (e.g., Buckner, Bassuk, Weinreb & Brooks, 1999; Obradovic et al., 2009; Rubin et al., 1996; Ziesemer, Marcoux & Marwell, 1994). However, the overwhelming consensus was the existence of a continuum of risk, whereby students experiencing homelessness are susceptible to the same issues as students from low-income families, but homelessness likely plays a role in conjunction with other common risks impoverished students face (Miller, 2011).

While it is clear we do have an understanding of children and youth experiencing homelessness that is both wide and deep, we are far from finding solutions to their array of problems, particularly in the classroom. In Miller's (2011) description of support

mechanisms for homeless students, along with parents, shelters, and community-based programs, he named school personnel as key players. Miller noted the existing literature is largely descriptive and variable. However, while he addressed a large collection of literature relating to school counselors, school social workers, and district homeless liaisons, one group that received minimal attention was teachers. When one realizes how much time a student experiencing homelessness spends each day with his or her teacher, the dearth of research on how to support these classroom leaders is concerning.

The research addressing teachers and homeless education covers primarily teacher perceptions of homelessness (e.g., Kim, 2013; Powers-Costello & Swick, 2011) and pre- and in-service teachers' experiences in shelters or other service agencies (e.g., Gustafson & Cichy, 1996; Griffith, 2005). Other studies include the effects of homelessness in the classroom on teachers (Chow, Mistry & Melchor, 2015), and the dispositions and teaching practices of effective teachers of highly mobile students (Popp, Grant & Stronge, 2011). To date, case study research in homeless education is scant (e.g., Hallet, 2012), and there are no comprehensive studies on the supports teachers receive to improve their awareness of homeless education or the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

Rationale and Purpose

There is universal agreement among researchers that teacher quality matters with regard to student achievement (Goe, 2007). In 1976, Rosenshine acknowledged that, despite the history of research on teacher behaviors extending back to 1940, there was a scant body of such research. Unfortunately, replacing that paucity is now a lack of clarity

regarding what defines teacher quality and which aspects of it are most crucial for student success (Goe, 2007). However, in a review of state policies, state case studies, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data, and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data, Darling-Hammond (2000) reported the “most consistent and highly significant predictor of student achievement in reading and math each year is the proportion of well-qualified teachers in a state” (p. 23). In 2002, Darling-Hammond and Youngs reasserted that student achievement is clearly linked to teacher effectiveness.

Teachers clearly have a considerable influence on their students. However, teachers frequently lack the necessary awareness regarding characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and the legal aspects of serving them. Additionally, rather than adopting an ecological perspective of students and addressing student development and all-around well being (as social workers typically do), teachers focus primarily on teaching and learning (Bronstein & Abramson, 2003). Thus, they are underprepared for serving this population of students, who have needs far beyond purely academic support, and over and above those of their more stably housed and economically advantaged peers.

Students experiencing homelessness have an array of unique and complex needs. Their often-precarious or insufficient housing situations negatively impact their academic, emotional, and behavioral outcomes (see Miller, 2011). Students who have disabilities in addition to experiencing homelessness are even more vulnerable and often require additional supports. Under the McKinney-Vento Act (2016), all students experiencing homelessness are provided supports to reduce the barriers to their education.

Those with disabilities are served under McKinney-Vento and IDEA. When students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness are able to attend school, they view it as a safe and stable place with caring adults (Moore & McArthur, 2011). Unfortunately teachers are frequently unprepared to effectively serve this population (Swick, 1996) and typically hold negative views of homelessness and its child victims (Kim, 2013). The key, then, is to enhance the supports provided to teachers and other school professionals, so they are more aware of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

The purpose of this case study was to examine teacher development within the contexts of district and school. In Chapter II, I review relevant literature on the characteristics of students experiencing homelessness, and existing supports for both students and teachers. In Chapter III, I discuss the methodology I used, including research design, participants, setting, data collection and measures, data analysis, and quality of research. In Chapter IV, I share results of the investigation. Finally, in Chapter V, I discuss the implications, limitations, and future direction of my research.

Definitions of Key Terms

Awareness: realizing the importance of a specific aspect of teaching and focusing on it to build knowledge (Joyce & Showers, 1980)

Ecological Systems Theory: all individuals develop within a complex system of nested environments, and the reciprocal relationship between the individual and his or her environment creates a lasting change in the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program: program, authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, dictating the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness

Homeless: lacking a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence (McKinney-Vento, 2016)

Homeless Education: an overarching term to describe the rights, services, and supports applied to students experiencing homelessness

Homeless Liaison: a position created by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and required in every school district; the liaison helps to identify and enroll students experiencing homelessness and ensures they receive the education, including services and supports, to which they are entitled by law (NCHE, 2014)

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2016: Legislation dictating the rights of all individuals experiencing homelessness

Student with disabilities experiencing homelessness: a student who qualifies as homeless and has an IDEA-identified disability

Supports: various forms of assistance provided to teachers and homeless education personnel that allow them to more effectively serve students experiencing homelessness, including informational supports, direct supports provided by personnel, psychosocial supports, and collaborative supports

Summary

Poverty affects over 43 million Americans annually (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016) and, when combined with the widespread lack of affordable housing, creates millions of

individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Over two million of those individuals are children, and their numbers continue to rise (ICPH, 2016). Homelessness is extremely detrimental to children, negatively affecting their academic outcomes; behavioral and social skills; and mental, emotional, and physical health (Buckner, 2008). Though students experiencing homelessness often view school as a safe and stable place and their teachers as trustworthy and caring adults (Moore & McArthur, 2011), teachers are frequently unfamiliar with homelessness and maintain damaging misconceptions of its child victims (Kim, 2013). They are also unaware of the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and EHCY Program, both of which support students experiencing homelessness. Teachers are the leading in-school impact on student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000) and, with the exception of their parents, the adults with whom children spend the most time. It is imperative teachers develop an awareness and understanding of homeless education and the ability to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. Using an Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) lens, I examine the effect of supports at the school and district level on their teachers' and other school professionals' awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students experiencing homelessness.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the existing supports for teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. This chapter includes a review of the literature in the area of homeless education. Literature topics include the characteristics and experiences of children and youth experiencing homelessness and the existing supports for students experiencing homelessness and their teachers. I frame the literature within Ecological Systems Theory (EST) to emphasize the value of case study methodology when exploring homeless education, which, as previously noted, spans multiple systems, in the context of school and district.

I conducted a comprehensive review of the relevant homeless education literature using both electronic databases and hand searching methods. Databases included Academic Search Complete, Education Source, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and Social Work Abstracts. I first searched for relevant literature reviews on homeless education and children and youth experiencing homelessness using the terms homeless education and review. This resulted in 43 publications, of which three (Buckner, 2008; Miller, 2011; Murphy & Tobin, 2011) were relevant to my review. I then searched for relevant empirical publications using the following search terms in various combinations: homeless students, homeless children, homeless youth, outcomes, teachers, education, special education, and disabilities. This resulted in 567 publications, including

duplicates. Removal of duplicates and non-empirical publications, such as introductions to special issues, letters to the editor, and book reviews, reduced the number to 340. I then reviewed the titles of the remaining publications and eliminated those that were not relevant (e.g., were not focused on education, were studies conducted in a foreign country), resulting in 152 publications. Finally, I read the abstracts of those 152 publications and removed non-empirical articles (83) and those that were not relevant to the current study (47). I also removed 15 publications that were included in the three literature reviews described previously. I included a total of 21 publications from the electronic search.

After completing the electronic search, I used the resulting 21 publications to identify ancestral citations. I added ten more relevant publications in this way. Finally, a hand search of several journals, including *Child Development*, *Children & Youth Services Review*, *Exceptional Children*, *Education & Urban Society*, *Journal of At-Risk Issues*, *Journal of Children & Poverty*, *Journal of Special Education*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Review of Educational Research*, and *Urban Education*, resulted in one additional publication. I included a total of 32 empirical articles in my review of homeless education literature.

I conducted a second review of the literature regarding teacher supports. I extended the review of supports, beyond the issue of homelessness, to supporting teachers serving students who have been through a traumatic experience, as homelessness can often be traumatizing for children. I searched the same databases and included the following terms in various combinations: homeless students, homeless children, homeless

youth, homeless education, teacher supports, teacher development, social workers, and trauma. Searches resulted in 195 publications, including duplicates. There were no relevant literature reviews. I used the same procedure described previously, removing 71 duplicates and non-empirical publications. I reviewed the publication titles and removed another 115 based on relevance. I read the abstracts of the remaining nine publications; four were not empirical and two were not relevant to the current study. The three remaining empirical publications are included in my review. I also reviewed the references of the three included studies, but found no additional ancestral citations.

The Microsystem and Mesosystem

Literature included in this section involves one or more microsystems and, in some, the interactions between microsystems (i.e., the mesosystem). Though Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined a microsystem as a specific setting, here I use a broad interpretation of the term to encompass the situation of homelessness in general. While some researchers describe and recruit participants from specific settings, such as transitional shelters, public housing, or welfare hotels, many employ school records to ascertain housing status and data, use participants from a variety of housing situations, or obtain data (e.g., interviews or surveys) from other stakeholders in homeless education or community services. A similar view is necessary when considering the homeless education team—each student experiencing homelessness essentially has a separate microsystem in which homeless education personnel are the primary relationships. While the student may not be as deeply involved in this microsystem as his or her other microsystems (e.g., the classroom), he or she undoubtedly plays a role and maintains

relationships with team members. Loosely viewing these microsystems is essential to understanding how they are connected to the other systems.

Characteristics and Experiences of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Pre-school and school age children. Two relevant literature reviews have been conducted on child homelessness, one by Buckner in 2008, and one by Miller in 2011. Buckner summarized the existing findings on the impact of homelessness and discussed challenges and future directions. Miller crafted a critical analysis of the research, with a focus on understanding how it related to the educational opportunities of students experiencing homelessness. These two reviews cover the majority of the applicable literature on homelessness and homeless education from 1987 through 2011. Therefore, I summarize these two reviews then add any summaries of other relevant studies published since then.

Buckner's (2008) review included findings on the effects of homelessness on children's academic achievement, development, and mental and physical health. In this way, Buckner was investigating a mesosystem—the interrelatedness between homelessness and other areas, particularly school. His conceptual framework for the review was a continuum of risk, wherein all children are exposed to some risks, regardless of income or housing; stably housed but impoverished children are exposed to an additional set of risk factors related to poverty; and children experiencing homelessness are exposed to all the previous factors as well as the risk factors related to homelessness (Buckner, 2008). He categorized the included studies into three types: one in which researchers compared children living in shelters to children in the general

population (i.e., not low-income) using normative data; one type involving the comparison of homeless and low-income children using non-normative instruments; and the final and, he asserts, strongest study, in which researchers compare homeless and low-income children on instruments with published norms (Buckner, 2008). This final type would allow researchers to attempt to isolate the effects of homeless-specific factors, rather than examining factors related to poverty in general, including homelessness (Buckner, 2008).

Of the 21 studies included in this review, nine confirmed the continuum of risk; three indicated there were no differences between homeless and low-income children, but that both were at greater risk than children in the general population; and two revealed no differences among the three populations (Buckner, 2008). Buckner (2008) took issue primarily with the studies focused on education, since the majority of them did not include a low-income comparison group, thus prohibiting the demarcation of homeless effects versus poverty effects. However, in general, a poverty effect was likely given the results of the studies (Buckner, 2008).

The limitations of the methodologies overall, coupled with lack of multivariate analyses, made it difficult to draw a line between poverty-related risks and homeless-specific risks (Buckner, 2008). The unreliable and inconsistent findings also prevented researchers from making accurate statements that generalize the effect of homelessness on children (Buckner, 2008). For example, while a stay in a shelter is often detrimental to a child, that is not a universal truth. Buckner (2008) asserted there were several likely reasons for the inconsistencies in results. Methodological differences, as discussed

previously, weakened the research base as a whole and prevent generalization (Buckner, 2008). Historical and contextual factors, such as changes in policy that lead to funding and educational access, shelter conditions, or the fluctuations in supply and demand for housing in a specific area, also altered the applicability of the findings (Buckner, 2008). Finally, the undeniable similarities between homeless and low-income housed children made it difficult for researchers to determine where the influence of poverty ended and the effect of homelessness began (Buckner, 2008).

Buckner (2008) made two suggestions for future research. First, he recommended clarifying the impact of a wide range of negative life events (e.g., witnessing violence, suffering abuse, losing a loved one) that are not unique to homelessness, but are also frequently experienced by children living in poverty. Second, he suggested using a person-centered approach to data analysis to form subgroups of children experiencing homelessness (Buckner, 2008). He asserted there are likely multiple types of children experiencing homelessness, all with different levels of functioning and different needs. A person-centered analysis would allow researchers to determine those groups, and possibly differentiate how to meet their needs (Buckner, 2008).

Miller (2011) analyzed the literature published from 1990 through 2011 to develop a more focused understanding of how places, relationships, interactions, and condition influence students' education during periods of homelessness. It is clearly an investigation on both the microsystem and mesosystem levels. An individual's microsystem includes the relationships he or she has within a specific setting, and the mesosystem is focused on interactions between microsystems. Miller included 151

empirical articles and reports from the fields of education, social sciences, medical and health sciences, and law. He also assessed the quality of the articles and reports using AERA (American Educational Research Association) standards and a rating scale of one through three, three being the highest. The 33 articles that were scored highest became the primary focus of the review and helped the author to generate themes, while the remaining articles provided supporting information but were less prominent in the review (Miller, 2011).

Miller (2011) first focused on the comparison of residentially stable low-income students to students experiencing homelessness. Overall, he noted students experiencing homelessness exhibited low academic achievement, poor attendance, more frequent transfers between schools, high rates of disability identification, higher dropout rates, and more frequent violent behavior (Miller, 2011). However, findings were not consistent—while some researchers in the 1990s and early 2000s asserted there were minimal academic differences between the two populations, researchers have more recently found considerable differences (Miller, 2011). The most common conclusion among researchers was that school struggles were not the result of homelessness, but of students' placement on the extreme end of the continuum of risk, and that homelessness matters in conjunction with other risks related to poverty (Miller, 2011). Furthermore, a child's age during a homeless episode, the setting (i.e., housing situation), and duration of homelessness seemed to further affect school beyond the general impact of poverty (Miller, 2011).

Miller (2011) then discussed how federal policy shapes educational opportunities of students experiencing homelessness, primarily focusing on McKinney-Vento and the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. According to Miller, researchers have found that McKinney-Vento is indeed fostering more educational supports, including providing additional professional development for school personnel, allocating extra resources for student transportation and school supplies, and facilitating family connections to other services. Additionally, many districts receiving McKinney-Vento subgrants have documented improvements in students' math and reading proficiency levels (Miller, 2011). However, it remains clear EHCY is not adequate—it is underfunded, and even funded districts do not always implement the requirements appropriately, preventing student access to necessary services (Miller, 2011). Though EHCY is fundamental to serving students experiencing homelessness, and rates of implementation have grown, Miller asserted its full potential has not been realized.

EHCY is carried out by multiple support mechanisms, which Miller (2011) summarized in his final analysis section. Parents were a primary support mechanism, and effective parenting was a protective factor linked to school success (Miller, 2011). Conversely, the stress of homelessness can lead to poor parenting, negatively affecting parent-child relationships and impacting school performance (Miller, 2011). School personnel were also a crucial support, though the literature, while primarily descriptive, indicated school-level practices were highly unstandardized (Miller, 2011). Furthermore, there was virtually no data linking the efforts of school personnel to the academic outcomes of students experiencing homelessness, a gap, Miller noted, that must be filled.

A third support Miller described were school models, the most effective of which appeared to be modified comprehensive schools—those that served only students experiencing homelessness. However, McKinney-Vento forbids the segregation of students based on their housing situation, much the way IDEA provisions require the least restrictive environment, and most of those schools no longer exist (Miller, 2011). Miller’s fourth identified support mechanism was emergency shelters and long-term residential agencies, both of which provide a wide range of interventions and services. However, these services can only positively affect children when there is available space at a shelter, the family is aware of the supports available, and children remain at the shelter long enough to benefit from the services (Miller, 2011). Finally, Miller addressed collaboration and the multiple stakeholders, such as schools, shelters, community agencies, and universities, who could work together for the benefit of students experiencing homelessness. He recognized that differences in structure, operation, and culture often prevent or complicate collaborative endeavors, but that the individuals within these organizations must consider ways to alleviate those problems (Miller, 2011).

In the vein of collaboration, Miller’s (2011) final recommendations involved considering networks of homeless education, and examining the various support mechanisms at multiple levels to better understand how McKinney-Vento is implemented and how it impacts students’ educational opportunities. Agencies must have a common sense of purpose, develop webs of communication, strategically deploy collective resources, and evaluate their processes and effects (Miller, 2011). Again, this echoes the

mesosystem, which may be supported by effective collaboration, or damaged by lack thereof.

I now move to the additional studies published since the completion of Miller's review. Much of the data in the following studies was collected prior to either of the previous reviews, and I present them in relatively chronological order of data collection, but the majority of results were not published until 2011 or later. As Buckner (2008) asserted, the timing of data collection is essential to understanding the results in the context of shifting policy and community-level changes. Data from one study (Huntington, Buckner & Bassuk, 2008) were collected in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a time when McKinney-Vento had recently been created and efforts to comply with its requirements were still in their infancy. The rest of the literature includes data collected after the 2001 reauthorization of McKinney-Vento, which authorized the EHCY Program and began an era of higher standards and increased accountability in the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

As suggested by Buckner in his 2008 review, Huntington et al. (2008) employed a person-centered analysis to determine whether children experiencing homelessness were a homogeneous group in terms of behavior problems, adaptive functioning, and achievement. Using data collected in the late 1980s from 122 children in Worcester, Massachusetts shelters, Huntington et al. (2008) classified children into two clusters—high functioning and low functioning. High functioning children were characterized by low scores on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and high scores on the Vineland (a measure of adaptive functioning), Weschler Individual Achievement Test-Screener

(WIAT-S), Kaufmann Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT), and the Kaufmann Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC, an intelligence test for preschoolers; Huntington et al., 2008). Low functioning children scored high on the CBCL and low on measures of functioning and achievement (Huntington et al., 2008). These results confirm children experiencing homelessness are not a homogeneous group (Huntington et al., 2008), despite the similarities of their microsystems.

Herbers et al. (2012) examined the achievement trajectories of students in Minneapolis public schools. They reviewed the records of 18,011 students, from 2005 through 2009, to compare various socioeconomic groups of students (Herbers et al., 2012). Students were sorted into four groups: homeless and highly mobile (HHM, 10%), free meals (FRE, 55%), reduced price meals (RPM, 4%), and general (GEN, 31%; Herbers et al., 2012). The first grade reading fluency skills of each group were as follows: HHM students read 40.8 words per minute (WPM), FRE students read 47.7 WPM, RPM students read 65.7 WPM, and GEN students read 86.7 WPM (Herbers et al., 2012). This again confirmed the continuum of risk hypothesis, and the impact a child's microsystem has on him or her. Researchers reported higher WPM scores in first grade predicted higher math and reading achievement scores in third grade, and a slower deceleration of math growth over time (Herbers et al., 2012). Additionally, risk status predicted overall achievement and growth for all groups (Herbers et al., 2012). One particular finding of note was the independent negative effects HHM status and low WPM scores in first grade had on later achievement in reading and math (Herbers et al., 2012).

Using the same pool of participants as Herbers et al. (2012), Cutuli et al. (2013) examined achievement trajectories and resilience in the context of various levels of risk. Again, they explored a continuum of risk, with HHM students at highest risk, followed by students receiving free meals (FM), students receiving reduced cost meals (RM), and all other students (GEN) at the lowest risk (Cutuli et al., 2013). Reading and math achievement scores were aligned with the continuum of risk (Cutuli et al., 2013). Researchers explored whether homelessness presented a chronic risk to academic achievement, or if academic achievement fluctuated with housing status, indicating an acute risk. They reported reading and math achievement scores were lower for HHM students following identification as homeless, and scores typically remained low, thus widening the achievement gap between HHM students and their more advantaged peers (Cutuli et al., 2013). This indicated homelessness was a chronic risk for academic achievement in both areas. Furthermore, math achievement changed from year to year as a function of HHM status, indicating homelessness was also an acute risk for math achievement (Cutuli et al., 2013).

In 2013, Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Brumley, and Perlman used data collected from a sample of Philadelphia third graders during the 2005-2006 school year to examine whether the timing and frequency of homeless episodes affected future educational outcomes. A review of records revealed 32.6% of children first experienced homelessness in infancy, 25.4% during toddlerhood, 16.4% during preschool years, and 25.6% in elementary school (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). The majority of children (70.2%) had only one homelessness episode, and approximately 11% reported three or more

episodes (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). Children who experienced homelessness during toddlerhood were 60% more likely to not meet proficiency in third grade math than those who experienced homelessness during elementary school (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). Similarly, children who experienced homelessness in infancy or toddlerhood were 46% and 39%, respectively, more likely to have academic engagement problems than those with later homeless episodes (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). Only truancy was linked to the number of homeless episodes—students with three or more homeless episodes were 51% more likely to be truant (Fantuzzo et al., 2013).

Using another large sample of students, Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Chen, Rouse, and Culhane (2012) explored the unique and combined effects homelessness and school mobility had on educational outcomes of students in Philadelphia. They used the records of 8,672 third graders, which included teacher ratings on the Problems in Classroom Engagement Scale (PCES) each marking period of the 2005-2006 school year to examine academic achievement and engagement problems (Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Contrary to many other findings, math and reading scores of students experiencing only homelessness did not differ significantly from their peers with no homeless experiences or school mobility (Fantuzzo et al., 2012), a rare instance in which the effect of the microsystem is not negative. However, students who experienced school mobility and students who had experienced both homelessness and school mobility, scored significantly lower in math and reading achievement than their peers who had experienced neither (Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Poor performance due to school mobility may point to mesosystem issues, and a lack of communication between a child's current and previous schools.

With regards to engagement, students with only a school mobility experience, students with only a homelessness experience, and students who experienced both, all had significantly more engagement problems than students without any school mobility or homelessness experiences (Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Engagement scores fell on a continuum of risk, in which students with both experiences were at highest risk, followed by students with only homeless experiences, then students with only school mobility experiences, and students with neither experience at lowest risk (Fantuzzo et al., 2012). Finally, researchers examined attendance records to determine whether absenteeism mediated educational outcomes. They found students with lower attendance rates had lower achievement and more engagement problems (Fantuzzo et al., 2012).

Yu, North, LaVesser, Osborne, and Spitznagel (2008) compared the behavior, psychiatric status, and cognitive functioning of homeless and housed children. Through interviews and standardized screening instruments (i.e., DISC and K-BIT), Yu et al. assessed 157 children and their mothers experiencing homelessness in general, and compared them to a matched community sample of 61 housed, low-income children and their mothers. According to maternal reports, 33% of children experiencing homelessness met the criteria for a disorder; 24% of those met criteria for an anxiety disorder, 15% for a disruptive behavior disorder, and 5% for a mood disorder (Yu et al., 2008). The only significant difference was in the disruptive behavior disorders—four times as many children experiencing homelessness than housed were diagnosed, and homelessness was predictive of behavior disorders (Yu et al., 2008), again confirming a microsystem effect. On the K-BIT, children experiencing homelessness scored

significantly lower in verbal cognitive areas, but there was no difference in non-verbal cognitive scores (Yu et al., 2008). Unlike behavior, however, homelessness was not predictive of verbal cognitive scores (Yu et al., 2008).

Masten et al. (2012) reported on the executive function (EF) of children experiencing homelessness and how it influenced their school success—the impact of the microsystem of homelessness on the classroom microsystem. EF was measured with a battery of EF tasks, and IQ was measured using the PPVT and the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scales of Intelligence, Third Edition (WPPSI-III; Masten et al., 2012). School outcomes, including academic competence, peer acceptance, prosocial behavior, inattention-impulsivity, and aggressive-defiant behavior, were measured by the teacher version of the MacArthur Health and Behavior Questionnaire (HBQ; Masten et al., 2012). EF and IQ scores were analyzed separately to test their effects on the five school outcomes. IQ uniquely affected only academic achievement, whereas EF accounted for unique variance in all five areas (Masten et al., 2012). Thus, researchers determined EF is an indicator of both risk and resilience in school for children experiencing homelessness (Masten et al., 2012).

Similar to Masten et al. (2012), Obradović conducted a study in 2010 on effortful control (EC) and adaptive functioning (AF) of children experiencing homelessness. Using a battery of effortful control tasks, the teacher form of the HBQ, WPPSI-III subtests, parent interviews, and researcher observations, Obradović (2010) screened 58 children in a shelter in the Midwest to determine whether EC was beneficial during children's transition to school. She found EC was a significant predictor of resilience

(Obradović, 2010). More specifically, a higher EC score was related to higher academic and peer competence, and lower rates of externalizing behaviors (Obradović, 2010). Moreover, EC predicted teacher reports of academic and peer competence and internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Obradović, 2010). EC scores were positively related to IQ and negatively related to socio-demographic risk (Obradović, 2010). Despite this, 41% of children were resilient in a least one domain.

Canfield, Nolan, Harley, Hardy, and Elliott (2016) used data, collected from 19,261 Kentucky students during the 2010-2011 school year, to examine the effect of homelessness on school attendance. Students were grouped into the familiar four levels: homeless, free lunch, reduced lunch, and no reduced lunch. Researchers found students experiencing homelessness missed significantly more days of school than their highest economically advantaged peers and those who have reduced lunch (Canfield et al., 2016). There was no significant difference between the number of absences of students experiencing homelessness and those with free lunch (Canfield et al., 2016). Researchers also conducted a quantile analysis using varying levels of absences. For students in the lowest quartile, there was only a minimal difference (i.e., one day) between the number of days missed by the most economically advantaged students and the least (i.e., homeless and free lunch; Canfield et al., 2016). However, the difference between groups grew in the higher percentiles: two to three days at the 50th percentile, three to six days at the 75th percentile, and seven to nine days at the 95th percentile (Canfield et al., 2016). Thus, while the aggregated data showed no differences between attendance of

economically disadvantaged and homeless students, person-centered data indicated homelessness may have a significant influence on attendance (Candfield et al., 2016).

Larson and Meehan (2011) examined the records of 104,680 students from three Minnesota school districts to develop a population-level description of students experiencing homelessness. They found 3,776 students who were labeled as homeless (Larson & Meehan, 2011). Overall, students who were identified as homeless experienced more maltreatment and falling attendance rates in the year prior to becoming homeless (Larson & Meehan, 2011). According to administrative codes, students experiencing homelessness had higher residential mobility, school changes, and disconnections (i.e., leaving school for other reasons; Larson & Meehan, 2011). The year following identification as homeless, 55% of students were no longer enrolled in the district, none due to graduation (Larson & Meehan, 2011). The typical missing student was a teenager with deteriorating attendance (Larson & Meehan, 2011). In terms of supportive services, approximately 19% of students experiencing homelessness were receiving special education services both before and after identification as homeless (Larson & Meehan, 2011).

Again building on the continuum of risk hypothesis, Brumley, Fantuzzo, Perlman, and Zager (2015) examined the relationship between early homelessness and educational outcomes, while controlling for other commonly associated risk factors, another future research suggestion made by Buckner (2008). These risk factors included birth risks (premature birth, low birth weight, or no/minimal prenatal care), lead toxicity, low maternal education, teen mother, and maltreatment (Brumley et al., 2015). Children who

had experienced homelessness had a significantly higher prevalence of all five risk factors (Brumley et al., 2015). Students who had experienced homelessness scored 2.5 points lower than their peers in reading achievement, but it was not a significant difference (Brumley et al., 2015). Students experiencing homelessness did have significantly higher academic engagement problems than their low-income peers, but when the risks of teen mother and low maternal education were added, there was no longer a significant difference (Brumley et al., 2015). Conversely, students experiencing homelessness had significantly higher social engagement problems than their low-income peers, a difference that remained even when adding maternal and maltreatment risk factors (Brumley et al., 2015).

Finally, Tobin (2016) queried whether housing status predicted academic achievement, and whether the effects of homelessness were mediated by attendance. Using two years of school records (2007-2008 and 2008-2009), she compared the reading and math achievement scores of students identified as homeless with students eligible for free lunch, controlling for race and poverty (Tobin, 2016). Tobin reported that housing status was a significant predictor of math achievement, but the significance was much smaller once income, race, special education, and previous achievement were added to the model. The strongest predictors of both reading and math achievement were race and participation in special education (Tobin, 2016). Additionally, homeless students had more absences than their low-income peers, but the difference did not significantly impact achievement (Tobin, 2016).

The literature on the characteristics and experiences of children experiencing homelessness is relatively consistent—homelessness is detrimental to children and negatively affects multiple aspects of their lives. It illustrates the influence of one microsystem (i.e., homelessness) on education, emotional and behavioral functioning, and socialization, all of which are included in other microsystems such as school. Furthermore, the links among these microsystems, including communication, understanding, and the prominent individuals in each, make a difference in the educational success of students experiencing homelessness.

Unaccompanied youth. Adolescents experiencing homelessness are often termed unaccompanied or runaway/throwaway youth and are a unique group of young people homelessness. They may be unaccompanied, which creates an even more complex situation, especially regarding educational decision-making. For these reasons, I have separated the research on them from the research on children. I found one relevant literature review on youth experiencing homelessness, and I summarize it below, then discuss the relevant literature published after its completion.

Murphy and Tobin (2011) specifically focused on adolescents experiencing homelessness, writing what they deemed “the story addressing the homelessness of youth” (p. 636). In their review, the authors addressed the impact of homelessness and the role of schools, including addressing youth homelessness and coordinating with outside services.

Murphy and Tobin (2011) began by describing the educational deficits of adolescents experiencing homelessness. Their high residential mobility often leads to

high school mobility, resulting in loss of time and poor skill development (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). As students get older, they are more likely to be absent and more likely to be suspended or expelled (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). They are also more likely to qualify for special education services, but unfortunately most of them do not receive timely evaluations nor the services to which they are entitled (Murphy & Tobin, 2011).

In addition to educational deficits, adolescents experiencing homelessness have physical health problems, psychological and emotional impairments, and socialization issues (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Hunger, unsanitary conditions, exposure to extreme weather, and lack of medical care lead to more illnesses, many of them chronic (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). They are frequently exposed to violence, resulting in more traumatic injuries (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Adolescents also have a high rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) due to sexual assault, prostitution, and risky sexual behaviors such as unprotected sex (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Because of their stressful situations, many adolescents exhibit signs of depression, anxiety, and aggression (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). They also report having low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Unfortunately, they lack trust in adults, making it difficult to confide in service providers and others who can help (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Their social isolation and lack of stable relationships with caring adults often leads to involvement with less mainstream peer groups that foster antisocial and delinquent behaviors (Murphy & Tobin, 2011).

Murphy and Tobin (2011) then described six ways to address youth homelessness within the school, combatting the negative effects of one microsystem by increasing the

supports in another. First, educators must develop awareness of the impact of homelessness, students' needs, the legal requirements, and the actions they can take and resources available to them (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Second, before education can take place, school personnel must attend to basic needs, including food, clothing, and hygiene (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). The next three strategies go hand-in-hand. Creating an effective instruction program, both through pedagogy and curriculum, is essential to ensuring the educational success of adolescents experiencing homelessness (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). The key, the authors asserted, is to remediate while accelerating, so students can fill the gaps in their knowledge and skills while progressing with their peers. Strategies school personnel may employ include providing individualized instruction, engaging in cooperative learning, using strengths-based approaches to planning, offering flexible credit recovery options, and maintaining an overall willingness to restructure and adjust to meet these students' needs (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Along with effective instruction must come a supportive environment, in both the classroom and the school overall, where students feel cared for, safe, and stable (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Furthermore, schools must provide additional supports, beyond the basic package a school may typically provide, such as extended day programs and supplemental services (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Finally, school personnel must collaborate with other agencies and organizations, because youth homelessness is not just a school issue, but a community issue (Murphy & Tobin, 2011).

Murphy and Tobin (2011) acknowledged the challenge of the final recommendation above, and reviewed ways school personnel can understand and

coordinate with other services outside of the school, creating a positive mesosystem. First and foremost, they must understand homeless education policy and the available community services (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). The authors then summarized the services typically available to unaccompanied youth, including various housing types, and mental and physical health services (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Housing may include safe houses, drop-in centers, temporary shelters, or permanent supportive housing. Mental health services must remain individualized and flexible for the wide range of issues adolescents experiencing homelessness have (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Physical health services should include sexual health education, including STD prevention and treatment, contraception, and pregnancy testing (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). They should also offer services for overcoming abuse, which should focus on developing trust and empowering teens (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). The authors concluded by reiterating the important role of the school in advocating for this vulnerable group of students and ensuring their success in school and beyond (Murphy & Tobin, 2011).

Additional studies not included in the previous review were primarily focused on adolescents experiencing homelessness and their school experiences. In 2011, Aviles de Bradley interviewed six unaccompanied youth in Chicago Public Schools to learn about youth's experiences with homelessness and their perceptions of how schools respond to their needs. Although the law explicitly defines homelessness with regard to housing situations, these youth explained it was more about relationships than housing (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). They felt lonely and lacked support from school personnel (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). They also described homelessness as a forced "choice," usually chosen

because remaining housed put them in danger; essentially, they chose safety over housing (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). Furthermore, when they had issues at home that forced them to leave, they felt it was the duty of school personnel, primarily counselors, to help them (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). They wanted trusted adults at school to help them bridge the gap between themselves and their parents or guardians (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). While they did want support from teachers, they also illustrated their own agency through finding shelter, transportation, personal and hygiene needs, and school supplies (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). Their peers were also frequent providers of support (Aviles de Bradley, 2011).

In his 2012 multiple case study, Hallett explored the influence of living doubled-up on educational participation. Over the course of seven months, the researcher interviewed and observed four adolescents, ages 16 and 17, living doubled-up in Los Angeles (Hallett, 2012). He found doubled-up residences took on two different structures—merged and separate. In merged residences, all households worked together and divided work and financial responsibility among the whole group (Hallett, 2012). In separate residences, each household or family was responsible for its own members, and all household tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and child care, were accomplished separately (Hallett, 2012). Educational participation depended on the type of residential structure—merged residences encouraged it by holding one adult responsible for school-related tasks such as homework and transportation, while other adults took responsibility for household chores and financial obligations (Hallett, 2012). Because of the divided nature of separate residences, educational participation was not supported, and youths

were responsible for their own school success, if it was something they desired (Hallett, 2012).

Ellis and Geller (2014) interviewed four African American adolescents to learn how they experienced the education system. Their descriptions closely resemble previously described findings. Youth described the shame they felt over their situations, and struggled with how to disclose or find support discreetly (Ellis & Geller, 2014). Though they wanted relationships with adults in their lives, they often experienced a lack of support from family members and school personnel (Ellis & Geller, 2014). Homework was frequently their biggest hurdle, mostly due to lack of time, work space, and supplies (Ellis & Geller, 2014). Some teachers were supportive and tried to work creatively with students, either by modifying assignments or teaching differently, to ensure student success (Ellis & Geller, 2014). Despite the challenges they faced, all participants were hopeful for their futures—they had dreams of postsecondary education and careers, and were determined to live in stable housing (Ellis & Geller, 2014).

Finally, in an overall study on the functioning of adolescents experiencing homelessness, Milburn et al. (2009) developed a typology of newly homeless adolescents to determine who was doing well despite their situation. Researchers conducted interviews with 426 adolescents with a mean age of 16 years to determine their risk and protective factors and develop clusters based on factor patterns (Milburn et al., 2009). They developed three clusters. The protected cluster scored high on at least four of five protective factors and low on six of six risk factors (Milburn et al., 2009). The at-risk cluster scored high on one of five protective factors and low on zero of six risk factors

(Milburn et al., 2009). Finally, the risky cluster scored high on zero protective factors and low on zero risk factors (Milburn et al., 2009). They discovered the protected cluster had less distress, less unprotected sex, and less drug use, and spent more time at school, had more positive friends, and more survival skills; they also had better health (Milburn et al., 2009).

The microsystem of homelessness may be substantially more chaotic for unaccompanied youth, leaving them more vulnerable to current and future risks. Despite most youths expressing their need for a positive school microsystem to negate the effects of their homelessness, they rarely received such support. Furthermore, a well-developed mesosystem, primarily between schools and community services, is essential, but often difficult to achieve due to siloed cultures and practices.

Existing Supports for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

There are multiple levels at which children and youth experiencing homelessness receive support. Federal and district level supports are not discussed here because they are part of the exosystem. Microsystems and mesosystems exist at the local level, where shelters, schools, and community agencies provide direct interventions to support children experiencing homelessness. In this review, the most common supports at the local level were summer programs for children in shelters or supportive housing.

Shelter programs. One shelter in Tennessee implemented an art program for children. Heise and MacGillivray (2011) developed a six-week art course and used observation, interviews, and document analysis to explore its effect on the children living in the shelter. The researchers found that creating a safe space allowed children to

express themselves without worry and to meaningfully engage with their environment (Heise & MacGillivray, 2011). It was also important for children to feel success and pride in their creations (Heise & MacGillivray, 2011). Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the program, and the children always wanted to stay longer or could not wait to return (Heise & MacGillivray, 2011). This positive attitude and desire to participate was crucial for children's learning. This program is another example of a positive microsystem overcoming the impact of a negative one.

Summer programs and interventions. Beginning in 2000, Nabors and her colleagues evaluated several mental and physical health and behavior management programs implemented in a summer program for youth living in Baltimore shelters. Nabors, Proescher, and DeSilva (2001) and Nabors et al. (2004) examined behavior, mental health, and health prevention services provided to 53 elementary age children and their parents through a program called the Empowerment Zone (EZ) Project. Teachers and students were surveyed about their perceptions of the program and growth (Nabors et al., 2004); parents were surveyed about their perceptions of child growth (Nabors et al., 2001). The majority of teachers (90%) rated the quality of interventions as above average or excellent, and they all reported they would be able to implement the activities in their classrooms, and the skills their students learned were valuable (Nabors et al., 2001; Nabors et al., 2004). Students were overwhelmingly pleased with the activities and reported they learned new information that would help them stay healthy (Nabors et al., 2001; Nabors et al., 2004). Parents felt their children's behavior and overall functioning improved significantly over the course of the program (Nabors et al., 2001). Parents also

rated their children's grades higher at the end of the summer (Nabors et al., 2001). Parents who attended training sessions described a better understanding of their children's behaviors and the appropriate consequences and how to improve their relationships with their children (Nabors et al., 2001). One anticipates improved relationships within the home microsystem would positively affect children, potentially even within their other microsystems.

Nabors and her colleagues (2003) evaluated the behavior management system implemented in the same summer program, using the CBCL for parents and teachers, a parent and teacher survey, and the General Functioning subscale from the McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD). The system involved students earning bracelets for positive behaviors, which they could exchange for prizes each week (Nabors et al., 2003). The average number of bracelets children earned each week increased, but not significantly (Nabors et al., 2003). Mothers reported no improvement in general functioning, which was negatively related to CBCL scores—higher levels of behavior problems were significantly related to lower levels of family functioning (Nabors et al., 2003). At the end of the program, mothers and teachers reported no significant emotional or behavioral problems, indicating the program was moderately successful (Nabors et al., 2003).

Several years later, Sinatra (2007) described the outcomes of a literacy program, implemented over the course of four summers (four cohorts), for children living in New York City transitional facilities. The program was called the 6Rs—Read, Reason, Retell/Reconstruct, Rubric (w)Rite, and Revise—and focused on multiple components of

balanced literacy (i.e., viewing, listening, speaking, reading, and writing; Sinatra, 2007).

Data was collected using the writing sample rubrics from the program, a Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS), and a participant satisfaction questionnaire (Sinatra, 2007).

Writing scores improved significantly for each cohort, though none of the students earned the state benchmark score of 3 (Sinatra, 2007). During the fourth summer, program directors provided the RSPS to students. Students demonstrated significantly higher perceptions of progress at the end of the program (Sinatra, 2007). Likewise, students were overwhelmingly positive about the program, essentially a microsystem itself, and what they had learned (Sinatra, 2007).

In 2012, Sinatra and Eschenauer evaluated a summer academy for children and youth in New York City shelters, implemented on a local university campus, and including multiple offerings such as literacy instruction, robotics, leadership skills, computers, biology and chemistry, and tennis. Researchers used WRAT-4 Spelling subtest, the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test 4th Edition (SDRT4), the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC), other skills tests related to each activity, and a final questionnaire (Sinatra & Eschenauer, 2012). Analyses of the WRAT-4 and SDRT4 indicated that a group of control students' scores were higher at pre- and post-test than academy students; however, there was no significant difference in the gain scores of both groups, meaning both groups improved substantially from pre- to post-test (Sinatra & Eschenauer, 2012). Additionally, while there were no differences in writing scores at pre-test, shelter students made significantly more gains and had significantly higher scores on the writing post-test (Sinatra & Eschenauer, 2012). Students made positive

statements about the program, indicating they enjoyed the activities, it was more fun than school, they learned new things, and that the program would help them in their everyday lives (Sinatra & Eschenauer, 2012). This last piece of data indicates the students were creating their own mesosystem—a link between the microsystem of the program and their other microsystems (i.e., their everyday lives).

Willard and Kulinna (2012) evaluated another summer literacy program for students in transitional housing in the Southwestern U.S. Twelve students were each paired with a tutor, and the pairs engaged in paired reading, comprehension activities, and literacy games (Willard & Kulinna, 2012). Students were assessed using the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and their reading attitudes before and after the program were obtained using the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Willard & Kulinna, 2012). Parents and tutors were also interviewed at the end of the study, and tutors were asked to keep a journal of their observations throughout the program (Willard & Kulinna, 2012). Students who already read at grade level or above improved most, with an average of 32 more words per minute (WPM) at post-test (Willard & Kulinna, 2012). Seven of the eight children who had both pre and post DIBELS scores improved their scores; three of the five children being evaluated for special education services, all of whom were reading below grade level, also improved their DIBELS scores (Willard & Kulinna, 2012). While students did not report any significant changes in reading attitudes, parents and tutors reported children seemed to have higher levels of reading self-confidence, and even struggling readers began to read on their own (Willard & Kulinna, 2012).

In addition to the previous studies, I found one literature review on effective interventions for youth experiencing homelessness. Altena, Brilleslijper-Kater, and Wolf (2010) evaluated 11 quantitative studies, conducted between 1985 and 2008, that included evidence-based practices for unaccompanied youth. Of the 11 studies, four were rated fair quality and seven were rated poor, primarily due to small sample size, nonrandomization, low retention rates, lack of a control group or follow-up measure, and too many initial differences between experimental and control groups (Altena et al., 2010). They described the results of each study and reported generally positive results for intensive case management, a vocational intervention, a peer-based intervention, supportive housing, and cognitive-behavioral interventions (i.e., counseling), which was the most promising intervention overall (Altena et al., 2010). They related inconsistent results for an independent living program and a motivational intervention focused on drug and alcohol rehabilitation (Altena et al., 2010).

School interventions. The only school-based intervention came from Viafora, Mathieson, and Unsworth (2015). An eight-week mindfulness course was run for 7th-8th grade students attending a charter school that serves youth experiencing homelessness and a 7th grade non-homeless control group; researchers also included a 6th grade control group who did not receive mindfulness training (Viafora et al., 2015). Students engaged in a mindfulness lesson daily that included a listening exercise, class discussion, introduction of new mindfulness practices, and breathing exercises (Viafora et al., 2015). Benefits were measured through the Child Acceptance and Mindfulness Measure (CAMM), a self-report of cognitive and behavioral functioning; the Avoidance and

Fusion Questionnaire for Youth (AFQ-Y), which assesses psychological inflexibility; the Self-Compassion Scale for Children (SCS-C), a measure of self-critique, and a participant evaluation questionnaire (Viafora et al., 2015). There were no differences in pre- and post-intervention on the AFQ-Y or the SCS-C, but the non-homeless control group improved significantly on the CAMM (Viafora et al., 2015). Though the homeless group did not improve as much, they had significantly higher ratings for the training than the non-homeless group. They also had positive reactions to the training—86% liked or loved it and would recommend it to a friend, and 79% reported mindfulness helped them at school and that they would continue the exercises on their own (Viafora et al., 2015), another instance of a self-developed mesosystem. In open-ended answers, students experiencing homelessness reported significantly more positive mental states, such as feeling great, awesome, happy, more alert, and more focused (Viafora et al., 2015). They were also more likely to express that mindfulness practice helped them manage difficult feelings such as anger, fear, sadness, or anxiety (Viafora et al., 2015). One student experiencing homelessness even acknowledged the benefit of mindfulness for others in the same situation, due to the unique issues they often face (Viafora et al., 2015).

Teacher practices. Multiple researchers (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goe, 2007) have acknowledged that teachers are the most influential in-school component of student success. Thus, I acknowledge them here as a support for students experiencing homelessness. Research conducted with teacher participants has been primarily focused on pre- and in-service teacher perceptions of homelessness and how those perceptions change after a particular service experience or professional development. The relevant

studies I include here explore the effective practices of teachers of students experiencing homelessness.

In Virginia, Popp and her colleagues (2011) examined specifically what award-winning teachers think and do when teaching at-risk or highly mobile students. They conducted observations using the Differentiate Classroom Observation Scale (DCOS) and a Questioning Techniques Analysis Chart, and they interviewed the six teachers about their beliefs and teaching practices (Popp et al., 2011). Researchers found that teachers used multiple instructional activities (5-11 per hour) during each lesson and maintained high student engagement throughout (Popp et al., 2011). Teachers directed the majority of the learning, and cognitive requirements were mostly low to medium, according to Bloom's Taxonomy (Popp et al., 2011). With regard to questioning, teachers generated the majority of the questions, and the cognitive level of questions was approximately even, with 36%, 39%, and 27% at low, medium, and high levels, respectively (Popp et al., 2011).

Researchers analyzed interview data for words related to either academic, affective, or technical needs of students, and for the qualities teachers exhibited in the classroom (Popp et al., 2011). Half of teacher responses were focused on academic needs, and 30% addressed affective needs (Popp et al., 2011). The most frequent teacher qualities were related to the teacher as a person, and instructional delivery. Researchers reported interesting findings when reviewing the intersections of the two dimensions (i.e., student needs and teacher qualities; Popp et al., 2011). For example, statements involving the teacher as a person corresponded to statements regarding the academic and

technical needs of students; student progress monitoring and classroom management coincided with statements about academic and affective needs, and statements about planning went alongside statements about students' technical needs (Popp et al., 2011).

Teachers viewed affective and academic needs as intertwined, and realized academic success typically required a relationship with students (Popp et al., 2011). They continually assessed student needs and measured success with both immediate and future goals (Popp et al., 2011). They were prepared to meet the basic needs of their students, such as school supplies, food, or access to community resources (Popp et al., 2011). Finally, effective teachers maintained high expectations of their students and provided the supports necessary to help them succeed (Popp et al., 2011). On the whole, teachers integrated the needs of their students with their teaching, viewing both students and instruction holistically (Popp et al., 2011). Though these teachers focused on the microsystem of the classroom and improving their students' experiences within it, they acknowledged the existence of the mesosystem when they viewed their students holistically. They understood the interactions between the microsystem of homelessness and the classroom microsystem.

Chow, Mistry, and Melchor (2015) collected the self-described experiences of 28 teachers who worked in three schools frequently serving children living in three nearby shelters. During interviews, researchers asked teachers to describe their awareness and perceptions of students and families experiencing homelessness, how they adjusted their instruction to meet the students' learning and behavioral needs, challenges they faced

working with these students and their families, and any professional development or training they had received regarding homeless education (Chow et al., 2015).

To address social issues, 22 teachers reported pairing new students with a buddy to help with adjustment to a new school and promote a new friendship (Chow et al., 2015). Despite these attempts, students experiencing homelessness still often had difficulty socializing and forming meaningful bonds (Chow et al., 2015). Teachers often attributed externalizing behavior problems to this lack of connection with others or the instability and uncertainty in a child's life (Chow et al., 2015). To combat these behaviors, teachers reported providing positive attention, developing a relationship, and maintaining high expectations (Chow et al., 2015). Likewise, teachers described children who were disengaged and exhibited internalizing behaviors because their housing was tenuous, so they essentially saw each classroom a temporary situation and stopped caring (Chow et al., 2015). For these students, teachers remained flexible in their teaching and made incentives more immediate to keep them motivated (Chow et al., 2015). Most teachers also acknowledged the variation among students experiencing homelessness, which kept them from making inaccurate generalizations (Chow et al., 2015). All of these practices were an acknowledgement that one microsystem can influence another, both negatively and positively.

In addition to struggling with students, teachers had difficulty communicating with parents, primarily due to a parent's unavailability (Chow et al., 2015), potentially creating ineffective mesosystems. Instead, teachers used techniques to develop positive

mesosystems. They remained sensitive, attempting to build positive relationships and find ways for parents to be involved in their children's education (Chow et al., 2015).

Shelters and other agencies provide child-focused services and programs that support the educational success of students experiencing homelessness. During summer programs, students experiencing homelessness learn new content and strategies, so they can transfer that knowledge to the classroom microsystem. The research on supports and services available at schools or provided by teachers is minimal, though what does exist is indicative of the expertise of some teachers. In the two studies detailing teacher actions, teachers were clearly aware of the effect homelessness has on other aspects of a child's life, and made efforts to enhance the classroom microsystem and the home-school mesosystem.

The Exosystem

As defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979), the exosystem is the network of environments external to one's own microsystems. That is, an individual is not directly involved in these microsystems, but they influence his or her microsystems. In this section, I include studies on federal programs and policies and district operations.

Supportive housing programs are typically federally funded programs that help families experiencing long-term homelessness find stability. They provide financial support for housing through subsidies and offer social services such as case management, recovery programs, and job or life skills training. Hong and Piescher (2012) investigated whether supportive housing impacted child protection involvement, school mobility, attendance, academic achievement, and rates of special education services. They

compared four cohorts of children receiving supportive housing services to four cohorts of children not in supportive housing, across three school years (Hong & Piescher, 2012).

Child protection involvement decreased in the supportive housing groups, from approximately 9% of children involved to approximately 1%, while rates in children not in supportive housing increased from 2% to 3% (Hong & Piescher, 2012). School mobility decreased over time for students in supportive housing, while comparison cohorts increased or fluctuated (Hong & Piescher, 2012). Likewise, attendance rates for supportive housing students were generally higher than those not in supportive housing (Hong & Piescher, 2012). Both school mobility and attendance results were significantly different for one of the cohorts (Hong & Piescher, 2012). Academic achievement fluctuated over time for both samples, and there was no significant relationship between supportive housing services and reading achievement (Hong & Piescher, 2012). However, one supportive housing cohort performed significantly better than the comparison cohort in math (Hong & Piescher, 2012). There was also no significant relationship between receipt of supportive housing and rates of special education services (Hong & Piescher, 2012). Though the results of this study were not definitive regarding the effect of the exosystem, there were some positive outcomes that resulted from this federal-level support.

As previously described, McKinney-Vento is the federal law protecting the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. One of the requirements of McKinney-Vento is that school districts provide transportation for students who move, so they can remain in their school of origin. This decreases school mobility, which has been

described as detrimental to educational outcomes. James and Lopez (2003) described the efforts two Texas school districts were making to ensure school stability for their students experiencing homelessness. Even before McKinney-Vento required transportation, the superintendent of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) made a commitment to transporting students so they could remain in their school of origin (James & Lopez, 2003). Because HISD is such a large district, it is not difficult to find a bus that can accommodate a student who has recently moved, and the transportation department works closely with school social workers and the homeless liaison to ensure students have transportation to and from school if it is in their best interest (James & Lopez, 2003). Additional steps the district has taken include developing agreements with surrounding districts for students who cross district lines; creating special bus routes to increase child safety in dangerous neighborhoods; and providing transportation for children and parents for purposes other than school, such as appointments, meetings, and extracurricular activities (James & Lopez, 2003).

Victoria Independent School District (VISD) is less than one-tenth the size of HISD, but it is a geographically large district (James & Lopez, 2003). Like HISD, they developed a system for keeping students in their school of origin even before it was required by McKinney-Vento (James & Lopez, 2003). The superintendent, Title I director, transportation department, homeless liaison, and school administrators worked together to ensure the system worked (James & Lopez, 2003). After two years of implementation, several schools reported improvements in both attendance and academic achievement (James & Lopez, 2003). VISD trained multiple district personnel, including

principals, counselors, school secretaries, and bus drivers, as well as parent liaisons for each school to ensure families experiencing homelessness had access to support and children had advocates (James & Lopez, 2003). They also targeted teen parents and provided not only transportation, but also helped them find other supports such as childcare and housing (James & Lopez, 2003). Both of these districts are prime examples of the positive effects an exosystem (e.g., McKinney-Vento, administrative homeless education teams) can have on a student in his or her classroom microsystem.

McKinney-Vento also provides funding to districts to support their students experiencing homelessness. Hendricks and Barkley (2012) examined student data provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to determine whether students in districts that received McKinney-Vento funding out-performed students in districts that did not receive funding. Researchers used end-of-grade (EOG) reading comprehension and math scores of 6th grade students from the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years (Hendricks & Barkley, 2012). Approximately 20% of North Carolina districts reported receiving McKinney-Vento funding; students in the remaining 80% of districts served as a control group (Hendricks & Barkley, 2012). Researchers found there were no significant differences between students in funded and non-funded districts, on either reading comprehension or math assessments (Hendricks & Barkley, 2012), a direct contradiction of the impact of an exosystem on an individual.

Finally, Ausikaitis et al. (2015) conducted a focus group with 18 unaccompanied youth to determine whether the McKinney-Vento Act helped them stay in school. Similarly to others, these youth were fearful of the repercussions of disclosing their living

situation and skeptical that anyone would be able to help them (Auisikaitis et al., 2015). They also desired privacy and valued remaining stigma-free over the potential supports they could receive from McKinney-Vento (Auisikaitis et al., 2015). Essentially, students denied the potential support of the exosystem, despite the school's legal requirements. Most youth, however, were not even aware of their rights until participating in the focus group and were not put in touch with the homeless liaison, even after they had disclosed their homeless status (Auisikaitis et al., 2015). The biggest problem for unaccompanied youth was either the inconvenience or complete lack of transportation (Auisikaitis et al., 2015). For these teens, transportation issues often led to dropping out (Auisikaitis et al., 2015).

As Miller (2011) noted, McKinney-Vento is not perfect, and districts still struggle to implement it correctly, even when they have funding to do so. While only two of the previous four studies supported the positive effect of the exosystem on an individual, there was no evidence of a negative effect of the exosystem. Instead, the other two studies essentially denied the effect of the exosystem at all.

The Macrosystem

I only found one study in which the researcher addressed the macrosystem, or the societal norms and overarching beliefs that influence every other system. Kim (2013) conducted a qualitative study with six pre-service teachers she was teaching and supervising during a community-based field experience at a shelter. She examined whether their views of homelessness were aligned with public discourse, “which neglects and stigmatizes children experiencing homelessness” (Kim, 2013, p. 291).

Through reflective journals, classroom activities and discussions, final projects, and focus group and individual interviews, Kim (2013) indeed discovered the pre-service teachers held stereotypical views of homelessness. Their conception of homelessness was primarily limited to adults living on the streets—“the visible homeless”—and only occasionally included children (Kim, 2013, p. 299). Furthermore, when pre-service teachers did reflect on the characteristics of children experiencing homelessness, they assumed the children would be dirty, dysfunctional, troubled, misbehaved, sad, or broken (Kim, 2013). They also thought the parents would be unsupportive and apathetic about their children’s education (Kim, 2013).

Throughout the semester, the pre-service teachers radically changed their views of children and families experiencing homelessness (Kim, 2013). However, Kim (2013) maintained the public opinion and its ignorance of child homelessness was a critical issue. She asserted teacher education programs could begin to remedy the problem by creating awareness, providing opportunities for interaction with children experiencing homelessness, reexamining the concept of home, and developing collaborative community partnerships.

Supports for Teachers Who Serve Students Experiencing Homelessness

There is minimal literature on supports for teachers who serve students experiencing homelessness or other traumatizing events. Two sets of authors (Bowen & Bowen, 1998; Zosky & Johnson, 2004) address it in the discussion sections of their publications. Another group of researchers (Green, Xuan, Kwong, Holt & Comer, 2016) mention teacher supports in their study of the Boston Marathon attack. I reviewed these

studies separately because this is the primary focus of my current research. I summarize them and discuss them in relation to EST.

Bowen and Bowen (1998) conducted a study with an ecological framework on the effects of risk and protective factors on students' academic achievement and their investment in school. Risk factors (e.g., divorce, abuse, or poverty) increase the likelihood of negative outcomes, while protective factors (e.g., positive family relationships, external supports, or a child's natural characteristics) help to mitigate the consequences of those threats. The researchers focused on six home risk factors (i.e., low income, low parental education, minority status, single parent family, siblings in the home, low sibling education) and one school protective factor—perceived teacher support (Bowen & Bowen, 1998). This was a direct investigation of the negative characteristics of one microsystem (i.e., home) and how they impacted another (i.e., school), and whether the positive characteristics of the school microsystem could overcome the negative of home.

Results from a one-way ANOVA indicated teacher support decreased as the number of home risk factors increased (Bowen & Bowen, 1998), exactly the opposite of the teacher actions in Popp et al.'s (2011) and Chow et al.'s (2015) investigations. However, teacher support did have a significant effect on grades, which improved as support increased (Bowen & Bowen, 1998). Likewise, teacher support had the most substantial effect on educational investment (Bowen & Bowen, 1998). Thus, the authors assert that social workers should target teacher training, specifically providing professional development on positive interactions, cultural awareness, and willingness to

provide extra student support (Bowen & Bowen, 1998). This discussion directly addresses the exosystem, and the need for teachers' microsystems (i.e., students' exosystems) to include development regarding homeless education.

Later, in 2004, Zosky and Johnson surveyed 1,407 teachers from five counties regarding their knowledge of domestic violence (DV), available supports in their schools, and the appropriate intervention and prevention strategies. While the overwhelming majority of teachers (94%) felt students were negatively affected by DV, only 31.7% had formal training, and 54.5% said their schools had specialized support teams (Zosky & Johnson, 2004). In the discussion section, the authors emphasize the ability of a school social worker to identify and support children who are victims of DV (Zosky & Johnson, 2004). They assert the need for school social workers to train teachers on the warning signs of DV and appropriate intervention strategies for student victims (Zosky & Johnson, 2004). Again, this speaks to the exosystem and the need for increased teacher knowledge.

More recently, Green et al. (2016) investigated teacher outreach to school-based mental health professionals following the 2013 Boston Marathon attack. Several months after the attack, 147 K-12 teachers were surveyed regarding the perceived psychological distress of their students and how they provided supports to those students they felt were distressed. While Green et al.'s exploration was not expressly focused on the supports teachers received, they did briefly touch on teachers' access to mental health professionals. Sixty-three percent of teachers were able to consult with a mental health professional (i.e., school counselor, social worker, or psychologist) when they had

concerns about a student (Green et al., 2016). Though there is no discussion of how these mental health professionals supported teachers, a majority of teachers did have access to someone who could support them when navigating unfamiliar waters with traumatized students (Green et al., 2016). These teachers did have either microsystems or mesosystems (i.e., contact with school-based mental health professionals) that provided them with the necessary knowledge to support their students with unique needs.

School social workers and other homeless education personnel are arguably the most beneficial supports for both students experiencing homelessness and their teachers. Bowen and Bowen (1998) asserted social workers are the link between the home and school microsystems, and support from them and other personnel increases the likelihood children will succeed in school and beyond. They are frequently the contacts for homeless students and families, and largely support homeless education within a school or district. They often provide professional development and make pedagogical suggestions, both contributions to the exosystem that impacts students experiencing homelessness.

Building Teachers' Knowledge Base

Joyce and Showers (1980) described several components that must be present for teachers to successfully transfer new knowledge or skills to classroom practice. Teachers require knowledge of the theoretical basis for the new strategy, and a basic understanding of its use (Joyce & Showers, 1980). Though Joyce and Showers emphasized the importance of a continuum that also included observation of best practice and opportunities to practice with feedback, building the knowledge base is the first step.

Without an adequate knowledge base, transfer and sustainability would be nearly impossible (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

The most common way to impart knowledge to teachers is through professional development (PD). Thus, it is crucial that PD is effective and high quality. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) investigated what makes a professional development effective using a national sample of 1,027 math and science teachers. They examined the features of the PD, including type of activity (e.g., workshop vs. study groups or network), duration of the PD (e.g., number of hours spent in PD and the span of time over which it took place), participation (e.g., a single teacher vs. a group of teachers from a school; Garet et al., 2001). They also examined the core features of the PD, including the content (e.g., content knowledge vs. pedagogy), opportunities for active teacher learning, and the coherence of PD (e.g., connections to other PDs, standards, or goals; Garet et al., 2001).

The researchers reported a longer duration of PD, in both hours spent and span of time, led to more opportunities for learning and greater coherence (Garet et al., 2001). All three core features of the PD had a positive effect; that is, a greater emphasis on content, a better connection to other areas, and more opportunities for active learning, enhanced teacher knowledge and skills (Garet et al., 2001). Furthermore, teachers who reported enhanced knowledge and skills were also more likely to report changing their instructional practices as a result (Garet et al., 2001).

In a longitudinal study of 457 teachers in 71 Title I schools over three years, Desimone, Smith, and Phillips (2013) explored whether teacher participation in a

content-focused PD predicted the aspects of instruction teachers focused on and the growth of student achievement. Though the effects were small, researchers reported teachers who attended a PD focused on math instruction were more likely to focus on advanced math topics, and student achievement grew more quickly (Desimone et al., 2013). Teachers who did not attend the math PD focused on basic math topics, and their student achievement scores increased more slowly (Desimone et al., 2013). Though findings were not significant, it was a unique study in which the researchers attempted to link professional development to student achievement (Desimone et al., 2013).

What Is Known?

Through an ecological lens, the situation of homelessness as a microsystem is drastically detrimental to students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional outcomes. Though they demonstrate occasional resilience, students experiencing homelessness are at a high risk for chronic school failure. For unaccompanied adolescents, those without consistent adult care, the issues are compounded even further. While children and youth experiencing homelessness receive various supports from shelters and other local agencies, they ultimately want and expect support from school personnel, especially teachers. Home and school microsystems are tightly linked through the student, and that mesosystem requires effective communication and mutual understanding to ensure the highest possible levels of support. However, educators are only marginally informed and prepared to serve these students. Not only does this damage the mesosystem, but it also diminishes the positive influence the exosystem (e.g., homeless education policies and district procedures) can have on the student in his or her microsystems. Research on the

crucial supports for teachers serving students with disabilities experiencing homelessness or other traumatizing events is essentially nonexistent.

What Remains Unknown?

The status and needs of students experiencing homelessness are well researched, and the characteristics of and links between microsystems are relatively clear. There is, however, extremely limited research on how in-service teachers are prepared to support those students. More specifically, there is a dearth of information regarding teacher awareness of homeless education and the needs and characteristics of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. In other words, it is unclear how the exosystem (i.e., a teacher's microsystem—her roles, contacts, and actions) impacts students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this single case study was to examine teachers' and other school professionals' awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, within the contexts of district and school. Specifically, I explored the various types and modes of available supports provided to teachers and other school professionals. The case for this study was a rural school district.

Through this study, I contribute to the field of special education teacher development by revealing how one rural district and two of its schools support teachers and other school professionals involved in homeless education, as they serve students with unique and complex needs, including those with disabilities. As explained through EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), multiple systems in the school environment affect each student, even if the student is not directly engaged with the system. A district-level professional development on homeless education, for example, does not directly influence a student, but rather that student's teacher, who may have attended the professional development. As a result of the professional development, the teacher may be aware of the needs of that student and the supports available to meet those needs. Results of this study may encourage homeless education personnel and administrators to

restructure the focus of homeless education supports to ensure teachers, who spend a great deal of time with, and often have a large beneficial or adverse impact on their students, can serve students with disabilities experiencing homelessness more effectively.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the available school and district supports designed to foster teachers' and other school professionals' awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness?
2. How do existing school and district supports foster teachers' and other school professionals' awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness?

Research Design

According to Yin (2014), case study methods enable the researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its context. This is beneficial when it is not possible to separate the subject from the context (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, case studies are valuable when the primary research questions involve “how” or “why,” but the researcher is not able to control the environment (Yin, 2014).

Yin (2014) identified various purposes for and designs of case studies. This study was descriptive, because I described a case within its real world context (Yin, 2014). To do this, I used a single case design. Yin (2014) proposed several rationales for selecting single case study as a valid research methodology. Two of these rationales include examining an extreme case and a common case (Yin, 2014). An extreme case is one that

deviates from everyday occurrences and is likely to provide valuable insights for a large number of people (Yin, 2014). Students experiencing homelessness are unusual cases when compared with their housed counterparts, since the majority of students in schools are not experiencing homelessness. Thus, this study may be considered an extreme case. Conversely, a common case is evidenced in everyday situations (Yin, 2014). Students experiencing homelessness may also be considered common cases because homelessness is a widespread and growing issue, and there are likely well over two million students experiencing homelessness in U.S. public schools.

Propositions

Yin (2014) asserted propositions were necessary to direct the examination and to narrow the researcher's focus on the relevant evidence. While propositions may be based on professional or personal experience, they are most often developed from the literature (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I framed my propositions using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, and developed my propositions using the homeless education and teacher development literature, and my personal and professional experiences in homeless education. While developing them, I considered the scope of the study and the evidence I could gather to either support or refute my claims. Two experts in the field, the directors of a state and a national level technical assistance center, reviewed the propositions for accuracy and inclusiveness. I applied their feedback and revised the propositions as needed. Table 1 includes each proposition. In addition to developing the propositions, during the design stage, a researcher must determine how each proposition will be linked to the data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014).

Table 1

Propositions

1. Within a student’s primary microsystems (i.e., home and school), other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, rather than teachers, provide the majority of student and family supports.
2. Communication and cooperation between school professionals, such as homeless education personnel and teachers (i.e., mesosystem), often varies in quality and quantity, depending on school or district policies and procedures.
3. Professional development and supports (i.e., exosystem) are typically designed to support the roles of other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, rather than teachers, leaving teachers unaware of homeless education supports and students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.
4. Society’s opinion of individuals experiencing homelessness (i.e., macrosystem) is typically negative, leading to unfavorable perceptions of those individuals. Likewise, teachers and other school personnel typically maintain a deficit perspective of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including those with disabilities.

Unit of Analysis

Defining the Case

In case studies, a case must be identified (Yin, 2014). While typical case studies are often focused on an individual, other possibilities include small groups, communities, programs, or events (Yin, 2014). In this study, as noted previously, I defined the case as a school district. I came to this decision by considering my research question, in which I addressed school and district supports. Thus, the supports in place throughout a district became my focus, and the district became my case. The context of the case was the rural location of the district. As Yin (2014) noted, it is often difficult or impossible to separate the case from its context, and the rural nature of this district impacts its homeless

education program. I explored the existing supports for teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness at the school and district levels because, even as far removed from the classroom as the district level, existing structures and services (e.g., professional development, support from other school professionals, including homeless education personnel) impact teachers' abilities to serve students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

Bounding the Case

In case study research, the researcher must create a "concrete manifestation of the abstraction" (p. 34), allowing her to identify where a case begins and ends and create a narrower focus free of extraneous variables (Yin, 2104). Typical boundaries include spatial, temporal, and topical, but others can be included (Yin, 2014). I bounded my case in four ways. First, I bounded my case geographically, by limiting participants to those in my state of residence. I made this decision both for ease of data collection should I need to travel, and because I have an existing relationship with the state coordinator for homeless education, who helped me recruit participants. Second, I bounded my case spatially, by including only schools that had identified students experiencing homelessness at the time of data collection. While interviewees at other schools could provide information and insight, personnel at schools with identified students were more likely to be able to speak about their experiences with this population. Third, I bounded my case by participant, by including only special educators and other school professionals directly involved in homeless education. Again, while general educators or others (e.g., "specials" teachers or teaching assistants) may have provided information

and insight, they may not have been able to speak accurately or in depth regarding students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Likewise, other school professionals, including homeless education personnel would be able to discuss homeless education in detail. Finally, I bounded my case by level, including only school and district level data. While I considered including state level supports, I realized they are extremely far removed from the classroom level, thus teachers. Direct state level supports are meant for district level personnel and those supports trickle down several levels (i.e., state coordinator, to district liaison, to school level liaison or contact, to teachers). Through this process, I bounded my case to include district and school level supports for special educators and other school professionals, including homeless education personnel in one district at two schools with students experiencing homelessness currently enrolled.

Participants

In qualitative research, the goal is to gain a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Purposeful sampling is an appropriate method for selecting participants, based on the likelihood they will be information-rich with regard to the phenomenon being studied (Gall et al., 2007). Therefore, I purposefully selected all participants at every stage, ensuring they were either directly involved in homeless education (e.g., teachers, counselors, homeless liaisons) or supervised the aforementioned personnel (e.g., principals).

All participants were employed by Carya Public Schools, a small rural district in the Southeastern United States. Individuals were chosen as interview participants at both

the school and district levels. Participants came from two schools—Maple Elementary School and Carya Magnet High School. At the school level, the following participants were interviewed: one principal, two school counselors, one student support specialist and one special educator. At the district level, I interviewed the homeless liaison. All were female, and their years of experience ranged from 1 to 33. Participant information is included in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Information

Participant Pseudonym	Position	Level	Highest Degree	Years of Experience
Alice	School Counselor	Elementary	M.A.	10
Anne	School Counselor	High school	M.Ed.	1
Chloe	District Liaison	All	Ed.S.	10
Kelly	Principal	High school	M.Ed.	2
Quinn	EC Teacher	Elementary	B.S.	20
Ruth	Student Support Specialist	High school	B.S.	33

Data Collection and Measures

As suggested by Yin (2014), I first developed a study protocol (see Appendix B) to guide my research and increase reliability. Yin (2014) described four sections of a case study protocol: an overview of the study, data collection procedures, data collection questions, and a guide for the resulting report (Yin, 2014). Together, these four sections

ensure the researcher maintains the scope of the study (Yin, 2014). Then, through interviews and documentation, I collected multiple types of data from various sources to allow for triangulation (Yin, 2014). I describe the interview, documents, and web-based professional development data collection in detail below.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are beneficial because the researcher can focus the questions directly on the topics relevant to the case, and insights from participants can provide important explanations and personal views (Yin, 2014). In this study, I used semi-structured interviews because they allowed me to obtain relatively uniform data across participants, as well as probe participants for further information when appropriate (Gall et al., 2007). When conducting interviews, researchers must be aware that bias and inaccuracies may occur (Yin, 2014). For this reason, interviews were not the sole method of data collection, and multiple interviews were conducted. I conducted six interviews with multiple stakeholders, allowing me to gather the perspectives of a wide range of individuals, all of whom are responsible for supporting, either directly or indirectly, students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Though 12 interviews would be the ideal minimum, six seems to be sufficient to begin extracting codes (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006).

Teacher interview. The purpose of the teacher interview was to learn more about her knowledge of homeless education and how she was supported in serving a student with disabilities experiencing homelessness. The interview lasted approximately 20 minutes and was audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. The interview was

semi-structured, which allowed for several additional questions and diverging lines of discussion. See Appendix B for teacher interview protocol.

Homeless liaison interview. I interviewed the district’s homeless liaison to learn more about how she supported students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and their teachers. The liaison was asked about her professional background, her duties as liaison, the supports she provides to teachers, and her views of district supports. The interview was semi-structured to allow for additional questions and lines of discussion, and it lasted approximately 20 minutes. It was audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. See Appendix B for homeless liaison interview protocol.

School personnel interviews. At each school, I interviewed additional school personnel (i.e., team members) who served students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, including two school counselors and a student support specialist. I asked them about the supports they receive from the liaison, the supports they provide to teachers, supports the school and district provide to teachers, and the team’s functioning. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. All school personnel interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. See Appendix B for school personnel protocol.

Principal interview. One school principal was interviewed via e-mail about her awareness of and involvement in homeless education, and the supports she provides to their teachers. She stated she was unable to take 20 minutes from her day for a phone interview but was willing to answer questions via e-mail and provide follow-up clarification as needed. I modified the interview questions slightly to ensure I was

gathering as much information as possible, given I would not have the same opportunity for additional questions or tangential lines of discussion as I did in phone interviews. Her typed answers were analyzed and coded. See Appendix B for principal interview protocol.

Documentation

Documents allow a researcher to both corroborate information from another source, and make inferences that lead to further investigation (Yin, 2014). They are beneficial because they are readily available, can be reviewed frequently, are not obtrusive, can cover a wide range of time or events, and include detailed records (Yin, 2014). However, researchers must exercise caution when using documents—they should not over-rely on them, and must realize they are not without bias (Yin, 2014). Documents may be formal or informal sources of information (Yin, 2014). I analyzed the following documents, which totaled 80 pages, for this dissertation case study:

- Standard district-issued handbook (46 pages)

The district handbook allowed me to determine whether there was written information readily available to teachers regarding the requirements of homeless education or the process of serving students experiencing homelessness.

- The Homeless Education Needs Assessment and Action Plan (5 pages)

The needs assessment is a tool that allows districts to assess nine different areas of their homeless education program: awareness, policies and procedures, identification/enrollment/access, student success, internal and external collaboration, resources/capacity, guidance/monitoring, and professional

development/technical assistance. The assessment includes strategies and activities, the personnel responsible for each activity, timelines for completion, the resources and supports needed to complete each activity, and how personnel will provide evidence of completion. It is typically completed by the homeless liaison and one other person (e.g., the Director of Student Services, Director of Federal Programs, or Superintendent); Carya's needs assessment was developed by the homeless liaison and the Director of Federal Programs. It allowed me to see how homeless education personnel at the district level viewed the training and supports available to teachers, as evidenced by the activities directed toward teachers.

- A parent brochure available via the Carya's district website (4 pages)

In an age of increasing technology use, the internet is often a teacher's initial resource for content information, pedagogical strategies, or answers to general questions. I made the assumption that the school and district websites would be among the first steps for a teacher who needed to know more about homeless education in his or her district. Checking these sources allowed me to determine what information about homeless education is readily available to teachers via this limited internet search. The only relevant content available was the parent brochure. Though it is directed toward parents of students experiencing homelessness, it contains valuable information teachers can use to increase their awareness and knowledge of McKinney-Vento and homeless education.

- The district's McKinney-Vento subgrant application (25 pages)

States receive McKinney-Vento funding from the federal government, which they then divide amongst their districts. In the state in which I conducted my research, this is done through district subgrant applications, every three years. Any district may submit an application to the office of the state coordinator, requesting a pre-determined amount of funding based on the number of homeless students it identified the previous school year. Examining Cary's subgrant allowed me to see how the homeless liaison and other homeless education personnel view the supports available to teachers, as evidenced by how they plan to use available funds during the current 3-year cycle.

Web Based Professional Development Module

Finally, I included the content of a web-based professional development (PD) on homeless education, which allowed me to see what structured training was either available to or required of teachers and other school personnel. *Homeless with Homework: An introduction to homeless education* is a self-paced training developed by NCHE and accessible through their website. Cary employees must access it through the district's online PD portal to create a record of completion, since it is a required component of their annual training. The presentation is approximately 18 minutes long and consists of a narrated PowerPoint presentation that has been pre-recorded and advances automatically. The PD covers the following topics:

- The definition of homelessness
- Causes of homelessness

- Description of the McKinney-Vento Act and other relevant legislation (i.e., IDEA, Title I, Head Start Act, Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, College Cost Reduction and Access Act)
- The rights of students experiencing homelessness, including an in-depth discussion of each right
- The effects of homelessness on students
- Unaccompanied youth
- Educational barriers and the available supports to overcome them

Collectively, these sources allowed me to identify the existing structures and services in place to teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, at the school and district levels. I was also able to explore the accessibility and availability of these supports, as well as their primary audience.

Principles of Data Collection

Yin (2014) proposed four principles of data collection to follow when collecting evidence from the three previously described sources. They also aid in establishing validity and reliability of data (Yin, 2014).

Multiple Sources of Evidence

Though a researcher can use only a single source of evidence in other methodologies, it is not recommended for case study research (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) asserted a major strength of case study research is the opportunity to collect evidence from many sources. Collecting data from multiple sources allows a researcher to establish “converging lines of inquiry” (p. 120), meaning several sources of data point to the same

conclusion (Yin, 2014). As a result, the researcher can draw more accurate and convincing conclusions. Yin (2014) described six sources of evidence (i.e., documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts) and suggested using as many as possible to help establish content validity and reliability. As described previously, I was able to collect evidence from three sources, including a web-based PD, documentation, and interviews with multiple stakeholders, to enable me to triangulate my data. Due to time constraints, I did not engage in observation or participant-observation. Though I requested archival records, they were not made available to me. Physical artifacts were not relevant in this particular case study.

Case Study Database

A case study database is a separate compilation of all the data collected for the study (Yin, 2014). It should be organized both electronically and as a paper portfolio, as appropriate, and may contain field notes, case study documents, quantitative data, and other narrative pieces such as researcher memos (Yin, 2014). A well-organized database may also contain an annotated bibliography of everything contained in it (Yin, 2014). Maintaining a case study database helps to increase the reliability of the study (Yin, 2014). To do this, I kept all data on a password-protected computer and a back-up version on a password-protected flash drive. Data were organized in folders according to source of information and level, and recorded in an electronic chart with notes (i.e., annotated bibliography).

Chain of Evidence

A chain of evidence refers to the path a researcher takes from initial research question to conclusion (Yin, 2014). A reader must be able to trace this path clearly, from question to data collection and analysis, to conclusion (Yin, 2014). The chain must follow the case study protocol, to show the data were obtained through the correct procedures (Yin, 2014). To ensure a clear path through my data, I developed flow charts that included the data sources, data analysis, themes, and propositions. These are included in Appendix C

Data from Electronic Sources

Finally, Yin (2014) provides guidance regarding the collection of data from electronic sources, a common practice in an age of abundant electronic information. He recommends setting limits on the amount of time spent collecting electronic data from websites and social media. Furthermore, information should be cross-checked for accuracy and bias (Yin, 2014). Though my electronic data collection will be minimal, to ensure it is accurate and relevant, I collected it from reliable websites (e.g., state homeless education support and school district websites) and avoided social media outlets. Though social media may be a valuable source of information, for the purposes of this study and to limit my time spent searching, the majority of relevant information was obtained through interviews or other websites.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, I read through all transcripts and documents to ensure I was familiar with the data from each source. I then imported all interview transcripts,

documents, and the transcript of the online PD into Dedoose (<http://www.dedoose.com>). Dedoose is a web-based application that allows researchers to manage both qualitative and mixed methods data. It generates a myriad of charts and graphs, which can be manipulated to analyze and display the data in multiple ways.

Yin (2014) recommended combining any number of methods of analysis to create a more complete picture of the data and increase validity. Conclusions in case study research are primarily based on inferences, which can be a threat to the internal validity of a study (Yin, 2014). Multiple data analysis techniques can help resolve this issue and increase the internal validity (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, using multiple data analysis techniques helps to promote quality and rigor in qualitative research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Yin, 2014). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) described three types of data analysis—interpretational analysis, structural analysis, and reflective analysis—to help researchers conduct quality research and generate meaningful findings. Using multiple techniques from the first approach, I engaged in three levels of data analysis, employing triangulation to more fully understand the data and phenomenon I was studying (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

In addition to multiple levels of analysis, I employed a hybrid approach of deductive and inductive logic (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) to develop codes within those levels. Creswell (2013) included inductive and deductive logic in his definition of qualitative research, citing their importance in the development of accurate and complete patterns, categories, and themes throughout the research process. Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasized the nature of the human element in research and the possibility of

misinterpretation. They, along with Patton (2003), maintained the importance of validating interpretations through the use of both induction and deduction (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, to ensure I was accurately understanding the data, developing themes, and recognizing patterns, and to avoid making common mistakes in interpretation, I analyzed the data on three levels, using both processes.

In the first two levels, I used a deductive approach to answer my first research question. I developed a codebook with a priori codes based on my theoretical framework (Level I) and the extant literature (Level II; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The third level was inductive and helped me answer my second research question. My codes emerged from the data as I read (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). As I read through the data, I selected what Gall et al. (2007) referred to as segments, or sections of the text that contain information that could still be understood when read out of context, and applied a code to each. The process I used for each level is described in more detail in the following sections.

Level I Coding

The first level was a descriptive analysis of the data using a deductive theoretical approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I developed the codes a priori, based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which I described in Chapter I as my overarching conceptual foundation for this study. Codes included the four systems—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem—as well as two subcodes (immediate and extended) within the exosystem. These subcodes emerged inductively, as an expansion of the exosystem code (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). As I read

through the data and applied the four a priori codes, I realized there were two different forms of support provided to individuals outside a student's microsystem. Some supports (e.g., email contact) were provided directly to teachers, thus becoming the immediate exosystem. Another form of support was that which was provided to homeless education personnel so they could, in turn, support teachers. These became the extended exosystem.

In addition to the four system codes and two subcodes, I coded for whether a system was absent or present. For example, when the homeless liaison stated she did not communicate directly with the special educator, I coded that as the absence of the mesosystem. When the student support specialist listed the supports she provided to her students experiencing homelessness, I coded that as the presence of the microsystem. I developed a codebook (see Appendix D) that included Bronfenbrenner's definitions, a coding definition that more closely fit the scope of this study based on literature presented in Chapter II, and examples for each code.

Yin's approach to case study research suggests he leans toward positivism (Yazan, 2015). Positivists are typically logical and empirical, and rely on a priori theories to guide their research (Creswell, 2013). Employing multiple levels of analysis is also common practice for researchers who adopt a positivistic approach (Creswell, 2013). Thus, in the positivist tradition, my Levels I and II analyses consist of descriptive statistics to answer my first research question, which requires only descriptive data to answer.

In addition to serving as the foundation for this dissertation study, including data analysis related to the theory was important for answering my research question. As described in Chapter I, all individuals develop within the four nested systems, and every system affects the individual, regardless of how far removed it is (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Students with disabilities experiencing homelessness are negatively impacted by the microsystem of homelessness, but positive supports within other systems can potentially mitigate many problems (Bowen & Bowen, 1998; Moore, 2013). Therefore, I needed to investigate existing structures, particularly within the mesosystem and exosystem, that fostered teachers' and other school personnel's abilities to provide those supports. Exploring how ecological systems were reflected in my data allowed me to see in which systems supports were emphasized within the school and district.

My coding process for this level involved either two or five steps. First, I read a sentence and, to determine whether it was a meaningful segment, compared its content to the essential elements of my Level I coding definitions (see Appendix D). Then, if all or part of the sentence was identified as a match to one or more of the coding definitions, it was tallied as an occurrence of the code(s). In this level, because of the interconnectedness of the four systems, text could match multiple coding definitions. If it was not a match to my a priori codes, it remained uncoded. For example, the online PD included a description of the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homelessness. Based on my coding definitions for this study, this information did not fit any Level I codes and was not included in Level I analysis. This particular information, however, did fit Level II coding definitions and was included in Level II descriptive analysis.

If I was uncertain whether it matched any of my coding definitions, my third step was to highlight the text and attach a memo that included the possible code(s) and my thoughts about both why it may and may not be counted. Upon completion of my Level I coding, I collected all memos and reviewed them for patterns in my thoughts. Based on those patterns, in my final step, I made a decision and either coded the text or left it uncoded.

After all codes were decided, I used the Code Application function in Dedoose to see the total number of occurrences for all codes. Using this information, I calculated percentages of various codes. This was a necessary step because the length of sources and number of codes applied to each varied considerably, and tallies were not entirely indicative of relevance. For example, although the interviews of the special educator and elementary counselor were virtually identical in length, and they both mentioned the exosystem a similar number of times—13 and 14, respectively—mentions of the exosystem represented over one-third of the code occurrences in the special educator’s interview, and just under one-quarter of the counselor’s. Thus, I included percentages, which I calculated by dividing the number of occurrences in the system or source of interest by the total number of system or source occurrences. For example, to determine the percentage of exosystem codes in each of the previously mentioned interviews, I tallied the number of exosystem mentions for each participant and divided that by the total number of Level I codes in their interviews. I included these percentages in my Level I descriptive analysis results.

Level II Coding

My second level of analysis was also a deductive approach. I developed a second set of a priori codes based on Miller's (2011) description of the roles of various school personnel who support students experiencing homelessness. Drawing on information from this influential literature review, I developed seven codes: meeting student needs, student service delivery, instruction, compliance and advocacy, consultation, coordination, and engaging with families. Appendix D includes all Level II codes, definitions, and examples. Identical to my positivist approach to my Level I analysis, this level includes only descriptive statistics that will aid in answering my first research question.

This data analysis was a larger, more detailed approach to help me answer my exploratory research question. Each participant would likely perceive the roles filled by both themselves and other participants differently. Understanding those perceptions is a key piece of understanding how homeless education personnel support each other, teachers, and students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

My coding process for this level was similar to my Level I process. I again read each sentence individually, comparing it to the essential elements of my Level II coding definitions to determine meaningful segments of text. If the text was a match, I coded it as an occurrence of an a priori code. If I was uncertain about a piece of text or could not decide between two codes, I again attached a memo with my thoughts. I collected all memos and reviewed them for patterns, coding text or leaving it uncoded based on my decision. Again, once all codes were decided, I used the Code Application function in

Dedoose and the same percentage formula to determine relevant percentages of support code occurrences.

Level III Coding

In the third and final level of analysis I developed codes inductively, allowing my codes to emerge from the data as I read (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). I used a common qualitative data analysis technique (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), a process Glaser and Strauss (1967) termed constant comparison analysis. As I read through each data source, I used a method similar to the one I used in Levels I and II to determine segments, and highlighted the information that could be understood out of context. I assigned each phrase a descriptive code, keeping a list of applied codes as I went. Each time I highlighted a new phrase, I checked previous codes to determine whether I should create a new code or use an existing one (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Because constant comparison analysis allowed me to develop a new code if an existing code did not fit, I did not double code any data in this step.

Thematic development. The data analysis techniques described above helped me to develop themes across my data. Ryan and Bernard (2003) recommended using a cutting and sorting process to make systematic comparisons across data and identify themes. Following my constant comparison analysis, I wrote each code on a sticky note. I then sorted them into groups by sticking similar codes, or codes I could encompass in a single idea, in columns on a dry erase board, writing possible themes at the top of each column. This allowed me to easily readjust my groups or reword my themes as I went.

Pattern matching. Pattern matching is one of Yin's (2014) suggested analytic techniques. It involves comparing predicted patterns (i.e., propositions) to patterns in collected data (Gall et al., 2007; Yin, 2014). Each proposition parallels what Yin (2014) describes as nonequivalent dependent variables, the outcomes of which represent a pattern. Therefore, if my empirical results match my proposition pattern, I can make conclusions. Once I developed my themes, I compared each one to each proposition to determine whether the data from each theme supported or refuted my propositions (Yin, 2014). As I previously noted, to increase reliability and validity, I created flow chart, adapted from a case study by Almutairi, Gardner, and McCarthy's (2014), in which they also presented practical guidance for engaging in pattern matching. My chart begins with my data sources and ends with the support or opposition of my propositions (see Appendix C).

Intercoder Agreement

Reliability is crucial to conducting high quality qualitative research. To increase reliability, Yin (2014) recommended making the research process as operational as possible, so another researcher could conduct the same research and obtain identical results. One way to ensure reliability is through what Creswell (2013) termed intercoder agreement, and defined as the "stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets" (p. 253). In other words, multiple coders should be able to code a text with a high degree of consistency (Gall et al., 2007).

I conducted intercoder agreement (ICA) with a second researcher, a recent doctoral graduate of an R2 (higher research activity) doctoral university

(<http://www.carnegieclassifications.iu.edu>). During her program, she received instruction in qualitative research methods, including coursework and training conducted by qualitative experts. She had experience conducting qualitative research, including coding text and video data both by hand and using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

We conducted ICA for codes applied in the deductive analyses in Levels I and II. To do so, I randomly chose one data source to use for training purposes. I provided her with the codebook, explained each code and the coding process, and answered any questions she had. We then coded the data source together in Dedoose, discussing our reasons for applying each code to each segment and addressing any differences until we reached 100% agreement. Dedoose includes a function that displays the codes applied by each user, allowing for easy calculation of intercoder agreement.

Upon completion of training, I chose one data source from each type (i.e., document, online PD, and interview) to complete ICA. Creswell (2013) asserted what coders are actually agreeing on is a key issue in conducting ICA. There are multiple options, including agreement on code names, the same coded passages, or the same passages coded the same way, and researchers must determine what approach best fits their available time and resources (Creswell, 2013). Because my partner was not an expert in homeless education and may not have been able to determine relevant segments, I opted for indicating which segments I had identified, allowing her to then apply the code or codes she felt were most appropriate. I then calculated ICA by dividing the

number of agreements by the sum of agreements and disagreements, and multiplying by 100, to obtain an ICA of 95.5%. See Appendix E for a table of all ICA percentages.

Quality of Research Design

In qualitative research, validating the study's conclusions and possible threats to validity increase the credibility and allow others to judge the quality of the study design (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggested four strategies for case studies: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. I used the following strategies to reduce any threats to validity and reliability.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is particularly important in qualitative research due to the subjective nature of data collection (Yin, 2014). In this study, construct validity was established in three ways. First, I used multiple data sources to allow for the triangulation, or corroboration, of evidence (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). For example, the online PD coupled with interviews allowed me to determine the information and supports available for teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Second, I maintained a password-protected electronic database of evidence, along with an annotated bibliography, to ensure access to the original data (Yin, 2014). Finally, as described previously, I maintained a chain of evidence, linking my data collection to my conclusions (Yin, 2014).

Internal Validity

Internal validity is especially important when a causal relationship is drawn between two events (Yin, 2014). It is primarily achieved during the data analysis phase.

Maintaining adequate internal validity ensures the researcher does not draw an incorrect inference (Yin, 2014). To achieve internal validity, I engaged in pattern matching with propositions, which has been previously described in the data analysis section.

External Validity

External validity refers to whether the results of a study are generalizable to a broader population (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). Typically, case studies are not generalizable (Creswell, 2013). However, the aim of this study was not statistical or universal generalizability, but to present the case of a school district and interpret the themes and patterns within the case. The findings can then be applied to other cases with similar characteristics (Creswell, 2013).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of another researcher to repeat the same study with the same results with limited error or bias (Yin, 2014). The goal is not replication—using the same procedures with new participants—but on repeating the *same* study (Yin, 2014). To ensure reliability, I included clear and detailed methods regarding sampling procedures, data collection, and data analysis. I also documented all procedures through case study protocols throughout the study (Yin, 2014). Finally, I conducted intercoder agreement with another research to ensure consistent data interpretation.

Researcher Bias

As a researcher, it is important that I acknowledge any possible bias I bring to the study (Creswell, 2013). During my data collection and analysis, I wrote memos in Dedoose as a way to organize my thoughts and ideas (Creswell, 2013). Through

examination of these memos, I was able to determine multiple biases I may have. Though it is impossible to completely abandon bias, acknowledging it allows the researcher to ensure her conclusions are based on the data, not her own beliefs (Yin, 2014). By identifying my bias, I avoided unintentionally incorporating it into my findings and muddling my conclusions (Yin, 2014).

First and foremost, I have extensive knowledge of the homeless education literature. This knowledge could sway me toward specific evidence that supports my beliefs about the state of homeless education and how it must be changed, rather than allowing the data to present a more objective picture of the district. Furthermore, my bias may influence my perception of how school and district personnel serve these students and how I represent them in my findings.

Second, I believe in working smarter, not harder, and finding the most effective way to solve a problem. The plight of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness is clearly a problem that requires a solution. I also believe in the effectiveness of teamwork and collaboration when it is carried out correctly. Through effective communication and mutual support, I believe teachers can become a solution to this problem and begin to mitigate the issues of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. These beliefs undoubtedly color my perceptions of homeless education, and writing memos allowed me to keep them in check.

Third, as a future teacher educator, my primary focus is on the development of effective teachers. There were other participants in this study whose goals and job responsibilities do not include teacher development, but rather the direct support of

students experiencing homelessness. It was important for me to understand their points of view and keep their job orientation and goals in mind during interviews and analysis of data.

Finally, I have close relationships with individuals who, earlier in their lives, were homeless unaccompanied youth. These relationships bring me even closer to the problem of youth homelessness, and their stories strike an emotional chord in me. To ensure my emotions did not affect my perspective or my data analysis, my memos included my thoughts and feelings with regard to these relationships.

Summary

The purpose of this single case study was to examine teachers' and other school personnel's awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, within the contexts of district and school. I used a single case study design in the Yinian (2014) tradition to explore the case of a small, rural district in the southeastern United States. Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory as a framework, I developed propositions based on the extant homeless education and teacher development literature.

My data collection included district document analysis, an analysis of a district-wide online PD, and six semi-structured interviews with school and district level personnel. Interview participants were purposefully selected for their involvement in homeless education and included an EC teacher and school counselor at the elementary level; a school counselor, student support specialist, and principal at the high school

level; and a district homeless liaison. I adhered to Yin's (2014) principles of data collection to ensure reliability and validity.

Data analysis included three levels. The first level was a descriptive analysis of the data using a deductive theoretical approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) and a priori codes based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. The second level of analysis was also deductive, and included a priori codes based on Miller's (2011) description of the roles of various school personnel who support students experiencing homelessness. In the third and final level of analysis, I developed codes inductively (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) using constant comparison analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I then developed themes and engaged in pattern matching to determine whether my data supported or refuted my propositions. I conducted intercoder agreement with a second doctoral scholar. Yin's (2014) requirements for the quality of research design, including construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability, guided my data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter is presented in three sections. I begin by describing my Level I descriptive coding results, which are based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. I then share my Level II results, also obtained through descriptive coding based on Miller's (2011) description of the roles of education personnel in the support of students experiencing homelessness. Finally, I present my inductive findings from my Level III analysis. I present data to support the development of each of four overarching themes, and discuss whether each theme supports or refutes my propositions.

Level 1: Descriptive Coding of Bronfenbrenner's Systems Reflected in Supports

As previously stated, the following results drawn from 11 sources—six interviews, four documents, and one online professional development (PD). Of the six interviews, I conducted five with personnel at the school level and one at the district level. Two of the four documents were from the district's McKinney-Vento program and were sent to me by the district homeless liaison. I retrieved the remaining three sources—two documents and the online PD—from the district website and online portal, respectively. I coded all data sources for information related to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, using the four levels (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) and two subcodes under the exosystem (immediate and extended) as a priori theory driven codes.

Of the 11 data sources, 10 (91%) included mention of the microsystem, nine (82%) the mesosystem, all 11 (100%) the exosystem, and four (36%) the macrosystem. The most common system referenced was the exosystem, which accounted for 43% of the 710 total instances of codes. The microsystem was the second most commonly mentioned system, followed by the mesosystem, with 40% and 17% of the codes, respectively. Finally, the macrosystem was noted only six times, for less than 1% of the total codes.

Microsystem

The microsystem was most often included in interviews, which represented 58% of the total occurrences of microsystem codes. All six interview participants mentioned the microsystem; the two highest totals were from the elementary school counselor and high school student services specialist, each of them accounting for 15% of instances of microsystem interview codes. Participants described supports they had provided in the past or were currently providing to students and families experiencing homelessness. Both administrators (i.e., the district liaison and the high school principal) referred to the microsystem the least, both including only 3% of the occurrences of microsystem interview codes.

Following interviews, references to the microsystem appeared in documents 48 times, or 33% of incidences of microsystem codes. Within the documents, the McKinney-Vento subgrant application included the microsystem most frequently, typically citing specific ways the district currently supports or plans to support students experiencing homelessness, totaling 67% of the instances of microsystem codes in

documents. The microsystem was referenced least in the online PD, though it was the most common code applied within that source, accounting for 36% of total code occurrences.

Microsystem supports were coded as present in 110 (75%) of the 146 occurrences of microsystem codes. The elementary counselor and high school student support specialist identified microsystem supports as present most frequently, 92% and 96% of their instances of microsystem codes, respectively. The microsystem was most frequently identified as absent in the McKinney-Vento subgrant application, representing 36% of the total instances of absent microsystem codes. One document (Parent Brochure) and two interview participants (high school principal and high school counselor) did not include any references to absent microsystem supports.

Mesosystem

Sixty-five percent of instances of mesosystem codes came from interviews. Similar to microsystem comments, administrators differed markedly from other school personnel—the high school principal did not mention the mesosystem, and the district liaison mentioned it only three times, accounting for 6% of the total instances of codes in her interview. Also similar to the microsystem, the elementary counselor and high school student support specialist included mesosystem specific comments most frequently, including ways they communicated with both their colleagues and families experiencing homelessness. Together, their comments accounted for 41% of the total occurrences of mesosystem interview comments. Mesosystem centered information was not common in documents - they included only 26% of instances of mesosystem codes.

The absence of the mesosystem was most common in the Needs Assessment and the McKinney-Vento subgrant application, representing 79% of absent mesosystem codes. The remaining three instances occurred in three interviews - the elementary special educator, elementary counselor, and high school counselor. The high school student support specialist and district liaison both mentioned the mesosystem, but neither referred to its absence. Similar to the microsystem, the presence of the mesosystem was most often mentioned by the elementary counselor and the high school student support specialist, accounting for 65% of all mesosystem present codes.

Exosystem

The exosystem was most often included in interviews, accounting for 63% of the instances of exosystem codes, followed by documents, representing 34% of instances. It was most frequently referenced in the Needs Assessment, which included half of all document exosystem codes. The exosystem code was also applied to any instances of homeless education personnel contact information, such as the name and phone number of the district liaison or state coordinator for homeless education. It was the only code applied to information in the employee handbook, which was the contact information for the district liaison.

A deeper examination of the data revealed two diverging characteristics of exosystem codes. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) definition of an exosystem, outside influences impact an individual's microsystem. Those influences may be spatially, temporally, or in other ways closely connected to the microsystem, or they may be as far-removed as federal legislation or the decisions of various governing bodies,

such as school boards or city councils. Therefore, I divided the exosystem codes using two child codes: immediate and extended. The immediate exosystem included supports directed specifically toward teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness; the extended exosystem was any supports provided to school or district level homeless education personnel. In some instances, I was unable to apply an immediate or extended code. For example, the provision of the homeless liaison's contact information in the Parent Brochure cannot be easily coded as immediate or extended because it is available to anyone who sees it, unlike a monthly training for school counselors, which I coded as extended.

Extended exosystem. I identified 44 instances of an extended exosystem—42% of the total occurrences of exosystem codes. As indicated previously, the supports included in these instances were primarily descriptions of professional development or access to the district liaison by school counselors, school-level liaisons, or principals. The extended exosystem was most often included in the Needs Assessment, accounting for 32% of the occurrences of extended exosystem codes. The Needs Assessment also included the most instances of an absent extended exosystem, representing 79% of all absent extended exosystem codes. The McKinney-Vento subgrant application was the only other source that included any occurrences of an absent extended exosystem. The elementary special educator was the only interview participant who did not refer to an extended exosystem, while the high school counselor referred to it most frequently, accounting for almost half of the interview references to the extended exosystem. The

extended exosystem was identified as present twice as often as it was identified as absent, 29 times and 14 times, respectively.

Immediate exosystem. Of the 95 instances of extended versus immediate supports, 51 (54%) were coded as immediate. These included participant references to specific supports such as email contact with homeless education personnel or training provided to teachers, as well as general remarks about the support of teachers. I coded 51 instances for the presence or absence of immediate support—26 and 25, respectively. Of the eight sources that included a reference to the immediate exosystem, three (elementary counselor, high school student support specialist, and high school principal) included more instances of present codes than absent codes. The high school student support specialist identified four times more present immediate supports than absent immediate supports. In all other sources, including both documents and interviews, I coded for more instances of absent immediate supports than present immediate supports. The high school counselor identified no present immediate supports and four absent immediate supports.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem was the least included system in all data sources. It was not included in any documents. The online PD included one instance of the macrosystem—a description of the common societal belief regarding homelessness. Three of the six interviews—the high school principal, high school counselor, and high school student support specialist—also included specific references to the macrosystem, by way of

describing their perceptions of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness.

Level II: Descriptive Coding of School and District Personnel Roles in Homeless Education

Using Miller's (2011) description of the roles of school personnel, I developed seven Level II codes and applied them a total of 175 times: student service delivery (34), compliance/advocacy (31), coordination (31), meeting student needs (25), engaging with families (24), consultation (20), and instruction (9). The school level homeless education personnel (counselors and student support specialist) made comments that fell under all seven codes. The special educator's answers represented six codes; she did not make any comments about student service delivery. According to my coding definitions (see Appendix D), student service delivery, meeting student needs, and instruction are all codes related to providing direct services to students. Those three categories account for 39% of all Level II code occurrences.

Student Service Delivery

Student service delivery represented the highest number of code occurrences. As I expected, the majority of code occurrences were found in interviews with school level homeless education personnel, since they are the primary providers of the supplemental services described in my coding definition (see Appendix D). The instances of student service delivery code in the two counselors and student support specialist interviews represented 74% of the occurrences of that code. The majority of these codes (77%) were applied to comments made by the two counselors. They primarily mentioned

specific supports such as assisting with college applications, providing mental health services or supporting students in crisis, mediating conflict resolution, engaging in individual student therapy, and checking in with students.

Compliance and Advocacy

I applied the compliance and advocacy code second most frequently. In documents, compliance and advocacy occurred most frequently in the needs assessment (6 times), accounting for half of all the codes applied to that data source. Two of the instances of compliance were centered on ensuring ESSA requirements were met with regard to students experiencing homelessness. Two more instances were about identification of students experiencing homelessness. The majority of occurrences were found in interviews, representing 58% of all compliance and advocacy code occurrences. I coded 94% of the interview instances in transcripts from homeless education personnel. The three school level personnel primarily mentioned transportation, accounting for 54% of their compliance and advocacy comments. The district liaison differed—three of her four comments were focused on identification and enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.

Coordination

I applied the coordination code as frequently as the compliance and advocacy code. Again, most comments about coordination were made by homeless education personnel and represented 71% of all code occurrences for this category. The people with whom participants were coordinating services varied. Sixty percent of the high school student support specialist's coordination comments were about her work with

outside agencies or organizations. The high school counselor spoke only about coordinating with the homeless education team at her school. Of the district liaison's five coordination comments, three were focused on coordination with school level liaisons, and the other two with personnel in the district's Exceptional Children's (EC) department.

Meeting Student Needs

Meeting student needs was the third most frequently applied code. I applied this code primarily to data from interviews, which accounted for 21 (84%) of the total occurrences of meeting student needs. Of those 21 instances, only two were found in administrator (i.e., principal and district liaison) interviews; 90% were located in school level personnel's interviews. I coded the elementary counselor's interview for the most occurrences of meeting student needs—20% of the total code occurrences in her transcript, and 30% of all instances of the meeting student needs code. Six of those instances were general references to meeting student needs, and two were specific examples of items they often provide to students experiencing homelessness to meet their basic needs.

Engaging with Families

Similar to student service delivery, I was not surprised about where I applied the majority of the engaging with families code. Fifty-four percent of occurrences of this code came from the two elementary level personnel. While the elementary counselor made very general comments about helping struggling families, finding supports families needed, or checking in with families, the elementary special educator emphasized

relationships with parents in her comments about engaging with families. The high school student support specialist made five of the 24 comments regarding family engagement, and two of those were specifically about supporting parents during IEP meetings. In other categories, homeless education personnel were generally aligned and made a similar number of comments in the same vein. However, in this instance, the high school counselor differed considerably and made only one mention of engaging with families, which was a general assertion about the need to support them along with the student. Administrators also made minimal comments about engaging with families—the high school principal did not mention it at all, while the district liaison mentioned it twice.

Consultation

Again, I expected most instances of consultation codes to come from transcripts of school level personnel; all 20 did. Sixteen of those instances (80%) were comments made by homeless education personnel. Of those, I coded 13 (81%) in comments made by the two school counselors. The high school counselor's seven comments were all focused on consultation with other homeless education personnel, such as the district liaison or other counselors in the district. However, only half of consultation codes in the elementary counselor's transcript were about consulting with the district liaison; in the other half, she mentioned consulting with teachers. The special educator's three comments coded as consultation were all general descriptions of receiving support from either homeless education personnel or her principal. I did not code any instances of

consultation in the district liaison's transcript, but the principal made one comment about consulting with the district liaison.

Instruction

The least coded category was instruction, representing only 5% of the total Level II codes. As I expected, it was mentioned most often by the special educator and accounted for 20% of the total instances of codes in her transcript. Her comments accounted for almost half of all instruction codes. Only school level personnel mentioned instruction during their interviews; the district liaison did not.

Level III: Inductive Coding and Development of Themes

In the following section, I describe my data through the presentation of four themes: homeless education norms, perceptions of the experience of homelessness, assumptions about teacher awareness and supports, and culture of support. Following each theme, I discuss whether the data included in it support or refute my propositions. Some themes are relevant to only one proposition while others apply to multiple propositions, so the number of propositions addressed at the end of each section varies.

Homeless Education Norms

Within the district, there are certain procedures, or norms, homeless education personnel have adopted or have come to expect. These norms include how they learn, how they communicate with their colleagues, and how they work with each other to meet student needs. Their primary way of learning about homeless education is through training. All three school level participants described monthly meetings facilitated by the district liaison. Anne described them as "counselor meetings, set up like a formal

meeting.” Adding to that, Alice said, “We have monthly trainings as a group. And at least one, but frequently two, will deal with the homeless.” Ruth was the only one to mention further training, stating, “All the counselors get trained, to bring back and work with your faculty and everybody.” She was also the only one to mention the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY), sharing that she “had the opportunity to go to the national homeless conference two years ago, in Phoenix.” Kelly mentioned “classes and training updating and reviewing information related to homeless students,” but did not describe them further.

Beyond the monthly trainings with Chloe, the district liaison, school level homeless education personnel and the principal either had contact with or received various supports from her. Anne and Alice both described a woman who is always available and easy to contact. Anne said, “If I have a question about anything, I will call her. Her phone number and email is always available to me.” Likewise, Alice stated she can “call her all the time if I need something or have trouble. She comes to the school sometimes. She’s quite accessible.” Kelly’s contact seemed to be more formal, as she explained being “in contact regularly through the year to discuss face to face any updates, interventions, and services available to homeless students.” Furthermore, Ruth and Alice both described situations in which they have turned to Chloe for support. Alice recounted a situation she had recently regarding a student whose family spoke only Spanish:

I called her and she’s trying to find out for me... she’s calling around the community to find a Spanish speaking counselor who can work with the family.

That kind of stuff, when I need resources or I'm not sure how to handle a situation.

Ruth's general statement, "When I have a kid and for what services," corroborated Alice's story. She also mentioned, "a manual for us that is step by step what I need to do," and a Google form Chloe had created for the school level liaisons.

In addition to the district liaison, Anne described a number of other ways she receives support. She stated her school was "so small, we talk formally and informally." She also noted that she had resources outside her immediate team: "I can be in contact with any other counselor in the district. They're a phone call away." Though her knowledge and ability to serve her students was apparent throughout the interview, she did recognize her need for additional support and was confident in her ability to find it, saying, "If I don't know what to do, I know who to ask to know what to do."

Homeless education personnel spoke frequently about working together. Chloe described working with others on both the school and district levels. When I asked her to describe her responsibilities, one of her primary duties was to "work with the school level liaison just to meet student needs." She has regular contact with the co-directors of the Exceptional Children's (EC) department and stated, "If we see they're EC, we make sure our EC department is aware of it so they can get on board quickly and start immediately getting the kid's needs met." Alice echoed that statement at the school level, saying, "If it's an ESL kid, the ESL teacher needs to know. If it's an EC kid, the EC teacher needs to know. We all need to be there to listen and help." For her, the school social worker was a primary source of partnership, helping to lighten her workload: "He's here twice a week

and I can refer kids to him, which helps.” Anne also felt she had a team of people to work with at the high school, declaring, “We always work as a team. We have a social worker here half time. We have a dropout prevention specialist and student services personnel.” Ruth summed up her job at the high school simply: “I work with the teachers and the kids and the families.” Alice felt similarly about the atmosphere at the elementary school, emphasizing twice during her interview that they “really do wrap around these kids when something’s going on in their lives.”

While the homeless education personnel made multiple positive assertions about their learning, support, and working together to meet the needs of their students, it seemed teachers were left out. When I asked Anne if teachers were involved in the high school teams, she said, “Not in our monthly meetings. We have PLC meetings every month so the three of us [counselor, social worker, student services specialist] can work together.” Though she does not teach at the same school, Quinn’s responses seemed to confirm Anne’s answer. Quinn did not describe proactively working with a homeless education team, but rather the ways in which she receives reactive support from others, stating, “I can send out an email and have four people in my room asking, ‘What can I do? What do you need?’” Rather than the homeless education aspect, Quinn’s description of working with others was focused primarily on supporting a child with a disability:

He has a language facilitator as well, just to help, because we’re trying to support him in oral vocabulary. Between she and I and his homeroom teacher, we have a really good relationship... we are all together trying to get this child everything he needs.

She acknowledged her lack of expertise in homeless education, despite serving a student with disabilities experiencing homelessness, but was confident when she said, “I know someone at our school knows, so that’s when I send out my email and everyone comes together.”

Supporting the propositions. Within the theme of homeless education norms, data partially support Proposition 2. Communication and cooperation between homeless education personnel and teachers does vary in quality and quantity, but not solely due to school or district policies and procedures. While policies and procedures may influence communication and cooperation, most communication seemed to be based on informal norms created at multiple levels. For example, Anne described being able to easily contact other counselors in the district. Likewise, multiple school level homeless education personnel described Chloe as always available and accessible. Neither of these examples are policies developed by the district, but rather informal practices established between colleagues.

Data in this theme also support Proposition 3. The professional development described by participants was primarily designed to support the knowledge of homeless education personnel, rather than teachers. Anne, Alice, Ruth, and Chloe all mentioned monthly training for counselors and other support personnel, while Quinn stated she had no formal training. She also described her need to request support reactively, rather than receiving support from homeless education personnel.

Perceptions of the Experience of Homelessness

Participants had varying perceptions of how their students experienced homelessness. They referred to both the common issues students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness face, as well as their concept of those students. For the most part, their descriptions of these students were negative and focused on their deficits rather than their strengths. Anne noted,

A lot of them do just look like any average student. But I know a lot of their struggles will be different from the typical student you'll see because some of their basic need are not met. You know, the food, the clothing, the shelter.

She continued, describing how the lack of basic needs creates additional pressures their housed counterparts do not experience: "It can be more stress, more spill over. And those pressures can negatively impact all sorts of areas of their life, whether it be social, emotional, academic, career." When asked more specifically about students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, she stated, "Anytime you have a student with a disability and another outside factor, it's just more they bring to the table. They just have more needs, need more support. It's going to be harder to build up that resilience."

Similarly, Kelly described students experiencing homelessness as typically performing "poorly academically due to their unstable home life and at times lack of parental support." She also indicated they are often "socially inadequate and isolate themselves from others." Kelly did note, however, that she had also "seen the other side of the spectrum, where these students become motivated to succeed so they can change

their situations. They also become resilient almost to the extent of being emotionless.” It was unclear whether she felt this last trait was positive or negative.

In the online PD, the narrator states:

For many years, a common portrayal of homelessness was of a single man living on the streets or in a homeless shelter. He may have been struggling with unemployment, substance abuse, or a mental health condition, making it difficult for him to secure safe, stable housing without assistance.

To my participants’ credit, none of them portrayed students experiencing homelessness in a similar way or denied the growing problem of family and youth homelessness. Anne did, however, state that being homeless “is kind of a shameful thing to advertise.” Ruth, on the other hand, described her initial teaching process, stating,

When we recognize that someone’s homeless, I bring them in and we talk about it and I explain to them what homeless is, because a lot of them still think it’s living under a bridge, and that’s not what it is.

She also recognized that there are various types of homelessness, and listed the ones with which she has had experience: “I’ve had kids in a shelter... we’ve had some living in hotels. And of course, unaccompanied is probably our biggest one.”

Quinn, the only teacher participant, had some experience with a student with disabilities experiencing homelessness. She currently serves a student who is deaf and recently became housed, and spoke matter-of-factly about his abilities, stating,

He hasn't had very many experiences, like going to the beach or... just little things. And part of the vocabulary is due to the cochlear, but even simple vocabulary that you would expect him to have through signing... is not there. And I don't know if the homelessness played a part in that; in my brain, it did.

In addition to vocabulary deficits, she indicated the student had difficulties with reading comprehension and behavioral issues. Over the course of the 25-minute interview, Quinn did not describe any of her student's strengths or accomplishments.

Supporting the propositions. Data in this theme provided support for Proposition 4. All participants described the negative aspects of homelessness, such as a lack of basic needs or parental support. They also described how these issues impacted their students, often causing academic, social, and emotional deficits. Anne even described homelessness as a shameful thing, confirming her perception of the experience as only something negative.

Assumptions About Teacher Awareness and Support

Over the course of their interviews, homeless education personnel made several assumptions regarding how teachers learn about homelessness, their awareness of students experiencing homelessness and homeless education, and how teachers are supported in the context of homeless education. The first assumption they made was about the ways teachers learn their students are experiencing homelessness. At the high school, homeless education personnel do not provide that information to teachers and, as Anne noted, "Whether that student chooses to disclose they're homeless or not, it's kind of up to them." At the elementary school, Alice explained that she is not always the first to know: "Usually, they're the ones who find out first, quite honestly, from the parents

telling them. Or the kid.” Quinn, however, described a different experience altogether, saying, “Usually I’m in the bottom of the pecking order and so I’m told, ‘And by the way, this child has been homeless or is homeless.’”

A second assumption homeless education personnel made was about teacher awareness. I asked Alice, for example, what a teacher would do if he or she learned from a parent that they were experiencing homelessness. She stated, “They inform me.” Ruth made a similar assumption about teacher awareness of policy and the identification process, saying, “They know about homeless. We have a McKinney-Vento but it’s usually through us [student services]. So they know I’m that person and that’s who they come to.” Chloe confirmed the two school level participants’ comments when she described the district’s system for homeless education: “The way we have it set up, our school counselors are typically the teacher’s first contact.” All three assumed teachers would know whom to contact if they suspected a child was experiencing homelessness.

Perhaps these personnel made their assumptions of teacher knowledge based on their provision of training. Chloe described an online training required of everyone in the district:

We do have an online training that everybody in the district does every year. It’s more of an awareness and actually it pulls from the NCHPEP website. So everybody in the district is trained on that so they’re just aware of who to go to and things like that.

Alice also listed ways they have provided training at her elementary school, saying,

We have done educational things for the teachers here, we’ve shown videos. We’ve given handouts I’ve gotten from Chloe that talk about the struggles that a

kid has in school academically and how the danger of them falling behind needs to be mitigated. So they're aware.

Homeless education personnel described a myriad of ways they provide information and support to teachers of students experiencing homelessness. The most common way seemed to be through informal contact. Ruth stated twice that she tried to "work with teachers to make sure they sort of understand what's going on" or, if the student did not give permission for her to talk to the teacher, that she could "hint that there's a lot of stuff going on." Likewise, Alice said, "I get permission to talk to the teachers about most issues. I do tell the kids I work with, 'sometimes I'm going to want to talk to your teacher about stuff.'" Only Ruth gave more specific examples of the information she may provide to teachers, saying, "I try to make sure they're aware to maybe modify assignments... to make sure our teachers know not to assign homework that requires internet access." She did not go into detail about how she provided this information, but did briefly describe a weekly professional development opportunity she provides for teachers: "I usually do lessons that the teachers do with the kids. To help build relationships and stuff."

In addition to providing information both formally and informally, homeless education personnel mentioned other ways they perceived they support teachers. Both Ruth and Alice felt positively about how their schools supported teachers. Ruth said, "I feel that our school is set up, due to small classrooms, to support teachers to work with homeless and at-risk students." Similarly, Alice thought her school did "a really good job of training and supporting teachers." Chloe made a general statement about support from

the district level, saying, “I guess in supporting our counselors we’re supporting our teachers.” At the school level, Kelly, the high school principal, indicated vaguely how she supported her staff, writing, “I make sure faculty members have all they need to fully work with these students such as flexible schedules, important contacts, a listening ear, etc.” Alice was more specific, indicating she will “check in with teachers frequently once they [students] are identified,” though she did not describe what checking in entailed.

When asked about teacher supports, three participants described student supports. Kelly wrote, “I have a student service specialist who provides these students with all types of services and resources that community organizations offer.” Anne made a similar statement, describing student services when I asked how she supported teachers: “If we know a student is struggling in a particular teacher’s classroom, we’re going to address what those areas are and why they’re not being successful and ways we can help them.” Ruth’s statement about teacher supports clarified what the other two participants may have been indicating. She said, “Let me deal with the attendance issues, to take that off the teacher’s plate.”

Despite all of the aforementioned supports, homeless education personnel still assumed teachers needed more supports, and assumed what those supports may entail. Anne felt teacher support “can always be better.” Likewise, Alice said there were “areas, especially with teacher training, that could be better.” She then specified what could be improved, saying

I don’t feel like all the teachers are on board in their understanding of the struggles these kids face and maybe aren’t always as empathetic as they could be.

I think they need more training in what it is like to be homeless and what that does to you.

Ruth had similar thoughts, stating, “Our teachers could always benefit from more training around homeless and poverty issues.” Anne summed up the issue succinctly when she said, “You’re really preaching to the choir,” referring to the frequent training for homeless education personnel and the lack of training for teachers.

Echoing Alice’s sentiment about empathy, Chloe described a situation she had recently managed at the high school level:

There was a situation with an older student. The child was listed as homeless and the teacher was a little bit too tough on some of the homework requirements. So the counselor went to them and said, ‘Okay they’re homeless and they don’t have some of these items that they need.’ And the teacher wasn’t as... um... warm and fuzzy as we thought they should be.

Chloe spoke the most about teacher needs, despite her lack of direct communication with teachers. She said they “got to talking about it in a counselor meeting and they said, ‘Well, it [more training] wouldn’t be bad.’” She thought they needed “more face to face training in addition to the online. And just giving them some more tips and pointers, different resources that may be out there that the online training doesn’t always hit.” She then described to me a plan they had developed for further teacher training: “We’re going to work this summer to create a basic PowerPoint for after the online training is complete, for the counselors to go back and do some training at the staff meetings.”

Quinn, the special educator, had several disparate thoughts about how she learned and what supports she needed. Her primary method of learning about homeless

education was “just being in conversations with the principal and the counselors, and picking up on... they say something and my brain just absorbs it.” When I asked what supports she received, she also detailed several supports provided to her student. When I asked again and clarified that I meant direct supports provided to her, she gave a surprised, “Oh!” and, after a few seconds, said, “nothing. It’s just me.” She did, however note that, “Anytime I have a concern, I’m emailing Alice. So we do work very closely. And Dr. Peters, our principal, we’re together at least once a day talking about something.” So although those contacts may not be directly related to homeless education, she does have supports in place for herself and her students.

When I asked Quinn about what she felt she still needed, she was mostly focused on matters of policy, saying, “I want to know who made the decisions and why we felt that way. And so anytime I have a student or situation, I would like the background and I would love the legality.” She also said she “wouldn’t mind having a printout of the laws, the formal laws, and things that schools are required [to do] when you have a homeless student.” She also wanted to be able to support both her students and their families. She said, “I don’t know all the supports to put by research, because I don’t have it.” She continued later, insisting she would “like to know that if a parent comes to me and said, ‘I need help,’ I would immediately like to say, ‘This is what we can do for you.’”

Supporting the propositions. In this theme, data again only partially supported Proposition 2. Communication and cooperation between homeless education personnel and teachers varied based on what homeless education personnel felt teachers knew or still needed. They assumed teachers were familiar with McKinney-Vento and the

procedures for identifying and serving students experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, their supports were primarily informal, such as creating awareness of potential student supports, rather than the result of district or school policies. The only participant to mention working with teachers as the result of a school procedure was Ruth, when she described a weekly PLC time allotted for her to provide professional development.

Data also partially supported Proposition 3. Chloe described supporting counselors, which she felt, in turn, supported teachers. Her support, however, was not specifically directed toward teachers of students experiencing homelessness. Participants also described ways they perceived they supported teachers. Alice checked in with teachers, assuming that was a support that would benefit them. She also stated she provided them with educational videos and pamphlets, assuming that would provide them with enough information to familiarize them with homeless education. Despite these provisions, homeless education personnel still felt teachers needed more professional development to ensure their knowledge of homeless education and ability to serve students experiencing homelessness.

Culture of Support

Participants continually spoke of the culture of support in their district and school. They described it through their perceptions of their teams and the ways they worked together. They also frequently mentioned the importance of building relationships with students. Finally, they most often detailed the numerous supports provided to students experiencing homelessness and their families.

As Chloe mentioned, Carya is a small district, and all the school level homeless education personnel also pointed out the small size of their schools. Ruth emphasized, “We’re a small school. We tend to have smaller classes and get a lot closer.” Three times, Anne reinforced that comment, adding she received “great support—we’re pretty small, pretty tight knit.” Anne also spoke about working together during monthly PLC meetings. When I asked how her team operated when a new student was identified, she said she “would talk with them and make the referral out to our liaison. So, get the paperwork started, do all that, and kind of connect them where they need to be connected.” Alice was most adamant about the need to work with others, stating, “I don’t believe in working in isolation. I have a family therapy background, so I see us as part of the family. All of us.” Perhaps because of that familial emphasis, Alice noted that families felt comfortable asking school personnel for assistance, saying, “Any family that’s struggling, they will tell us because they know we will try to help.” Similarly, Anne described the district’s PORCH Program, which provides food and clothing and is “available to any students in need, not just our homeless.”

To several of the participants, support was about more than meetings and working together. They emphasized building relationships with their students and families experiencing homelessness. Ruth said, “Carya Magnet is about building relationships; it’s a neat place. So I think we do that well beyond any school I’ve ever been around.” For her, building relationships with her students meant she “sort of knows what’s going on with the kids and they feel comfortable.” While Anne did not describe her relationship with students, she did perceive teachers building strong bonds with students,

saying, “The teachers really get to know the students. They really build relationships with them, get to know them.” Quinn commented briefly about her positive relationship with her student, saying, “He’s still here this year and we have a good relationship.”

In addition to building strong relationships, homeless education personnel described dozens of supports they regularly provide to students. Ruth’s supports were typically hands-on and included

Getting them materials, handing out clothes, transportation. If they miss the bus or something is going on at home, I provide transportation. I do a lot of mediations, if they have conflict with teachers or students. I do a lot of home visits.

Anne provided information about programs available at the high school, including “the PORCH Program, for students who are in poverty, who need more food... a Back to Sleep Program if they need a cot, bedding, pillows, that sort of stuff.” She also mentioned “doing more check-ins with students. Obviously they’re on our radar.” Alice did not speak about the supports she necessarily provides directly, but about several she was aware of and could access through Chloe, the district liaison:

There is some funding available that Chloe has. So when you have a kid who’s homeless, there’s a tapping of resources there. Sometimes we can even pay for tutoring. She always has supplies, like she has beds that we can give them if they’re sleeping on the floor. She has food, school supplies, hygiene products. And then there is also a pool of money so if there’s something a kid really needs, we can call her and figure it out.

When I asked Quinn about providing supports that centered on mitigating the homeless factor for her student, she seemed unsure, saying, “Is there something I could add, sure. Well, I don’t know, but I’m assuming so.”

Support also extended well beyond students to their families. Quinn was more confident in this area. For her, “That relationship piece with your parent is huge... if you have a good relationship with your parents, you’re more able to help connect to even community resources.” Ruth and Anne also made comments about providing support to families and parents. Ruth provided specific examples of how she supports families by

making sure families can get to the meetings if it’s an IEP, so providing transportation beyond the kid by going and grabbing the mom to make sure. And making sure I’m there for support in the meetings... because it could be overwhelming for a parent.

Anne spoke more generally, stating

With the homelessness, you’re not just supporting that student—it’s the parents and the siblings, the whole family unit, not just one individual. So kind of remembering to connect the parents to any supports they may need... kind of helping them stabilize.

Alice emphasized continuous monitoring of family needs and described how she would “keep checking in with the family and the kid to see where things are and what supports they need.”

Supporting the propositions. Within this theme, data supported Proposition 1. The primary source of supports for both students and families experiencing homelessness was homeless education personnel. Ruth described providing transportation, basic needs, and social/emotional supports. Alice spoke of the funds the district liaison could provide in support of students experiencing homelessness. Ruth, Anne, and Alice all emphasized

supporting the family as well as the student. Quinn was unsure about the homeless-specific supports she could provide to her student experiencing homelessness.

Summary

In my first level of analysis, microsystem and exosystem supports occurred most frequently. However, the perceptions of school professionals in homeless education were drastically different from perceptions of the teacher with regard to the presence or absence of exosystem supports. In my Level II analysis, the seven roles of teachers and other school personnel fell into two primary categories—those that provided supports for students and those that provided supports for teachers and other school personnel. This paralleled my Level I findings with regard to the most frequent supports. My inductive Level III analysis enabled me to generate four codes about how teachers and other school personnel are supported: homeless education norms, perceptions of the experience of homelessness, assumptions about teacher awareness and supports, and culture of support. Overall, school professionals involved in homeless education work together and support each other often, both formally and informally. Though they rarely involve teachers in teams, they assume they are supporting teachers adequately and that teachers are aware of the needs and characteristics of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness. These perceptions differ markedly from teacher perceptions, which indicate a lack of awareness and support. Unfortunately, teachers and other school professionals maintain a deficit perspective of students experiencing homelessness. Despite this, they maintain a culture of support for both students and families experiencing homelessness.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I describe my findings for each research question. I then discuss the convergent and divergent findings from the extant literature within each proposition. I address my limitations, and finally present the implications for future research and practice.

Norms and Educational Siloes

In any society or culture, social norms are complex sets of rules and principles that guide members' behaviors (Sripada & Stich, 2007). Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren (1990) described two types of norms: descriptive and injunctive. Descriptive norms designate what is typical behavior; they are what most people *do* (Cialdini et al., 1990). Injunctive norms constitute what is morally acceptable in society; they specify what *ought to be done* (Cialdini et al., 1990). Within a school environment, oft considered a microcosm of a larger macrocosm, such as society or culture, the routines, structures, and expectations in place reflect the accepted norms (Macdonald, Gringart & Gray, 2016).

Norms are important for education researchers and practitioners to understand because they influence human actions (Cialdini et al., 1990). Moreover, the type of norm being followed in a given situation has different behavioral implications—a descriptive norm may have more influence on an individual than an injunctive norm, or vice versa, depending on the context (Cialdini et al., 1990). With this in mind, I wondered how the

homeless education norms of the Cary School District were manifested with regard to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, and how they impacted the reported actions of teachers and other school professionals.

In this study, findings regarding both descriptive and injunctive homeless education norms pertain to how professionals described carrying-out homeless education within and across schools included in this district. When viewed from an EST lens, all systems and the individuals in them impact each other—albeit positively or adversely. As I discovered through my Level III analysis, the ways in which Cary professionals described how they supported students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness and their families reflected a siloed (i.e., minimal collaboration between teachers and other school professionals), rather than a coordinated (i.e., continuous communication and cooperation between teachers and other school professionals) effort. As a preliminary finding, these siloes seem to reflect a potential descriptive norm that runs counter to the injunctive norm of serving students experiencing homelessness in a coordinated fashion through team efforts (see Altshuler, 2003; Murphy & Tobin, 2011; Walther-Thomas et al., 1996).

When viewed as a potential descriptive norm, the vertical structure of a siloed organization often prevents meaningful collaboration across disciplines, functions, or departments, and presents a challenge in creating a shared belief or shared knowledge (Leimer, 2009), which could adversely impact effective coordination and delivery of homeless education services. For instance, Bandura (2000) pointed to the importance of a shared belief within collective agency. When a group, such as homeless education

professionals and special educators, engage in collective agency, they work together to accomplish that which they cannot accomplish independently (Bandura, 2000). Groups with higher perceived collective agency are more likely to persevere in the face of setbacks, leading to greater accomplishments (Bandura, 2000). Aligned with this theory is Lloyd's (2016) assertion that any individual efforts within silos would likely be less impactful or effective than an effort by a connected and collaborative organization.

More specifically, the abovementioned cautions regarding siloed systems and organizations as a potential descriptive norm can be applied to understand how it might adversely impact the provision of supports within Cary's homeless education program—efforts by one professional or one group of professionals, such as school counselors and social workers, when carried out in isolation will not likely be as effective as a set of coordinated services undertaken by an interprofessional team that also includes special and general education teachers. More specifically, the siloes that emerged from data analysis primarily involved professional development and support, or the exosystem, as I defined it for this research. The special educator seemed to work in a silo; she did not identify any professional development supports, and perceived minimal support from other school professionals, while homeless education personnel expressed that they had multiple opportunities for professional development and continued support from various colleagues. However, based on the interview data from the special educator and the high school counselor, it appeared the knowledge homeless education personnel obtained from those supports was not, in turn, typically conveyed to the special educator. Again, these descriptions run counter to injunctive norms described in relevant homeless education,

which emphasize the need for team-based efforts (see Garstka, Lieberman, Biggs, Thompson & Levy, 2014; Murphy & Tobin, 2011; Walther-Thomas et al., 1996; Weinberg et al., 2009)

Research Question 1 – What are the Available Supports for Teachers and Other School Professionals?

My first research question was: What are the available school and district supports designed to foster teachers' and other school professionals' awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness? To begin to answer it, I conducted two levels of deductive analysis and provided descriptive results in the form of frequency counts and percentages. In the first level, I used a priori codes based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, described in Chapter I, to determine the levels or systems of support. In the second level, I again developed a priori codes using Miller's (2011) description of the roles of school professionals in homeless education. This allowed me to investigate how teachers and other school professionals served students and worked with each other.

Level I

In my Level I analysis, I discovered microsystem supports (i.e., supports provided to students and families experiencing homelessness) and exosystem supports (i.e., those provided to teachers and other school professionals) occurred most frequently. Within the exosystem, two forms of support emerged—immediate (i.e., directed toward teachers) and extended (i.e., directed toward other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel), and I assessed whether each one was identified as present or

absent. Though the immediate exosystem was identified more often than the extended, there was a distinctive difference in their perceived absence or presence. Other school professionals identified immediate supports for teachers as present more often than absent. In fact, the teacher was the only participant who perceived her immediate supports to be absent more frequently than they were present. Microsystem supports for students and families were also perceived as present far more often than absent in all data sources.

In the two schools included in this study, services and support to students and their families emerged as a potential injunctive norm—the “right” thing to do. All participants, regardless of position, detailed multiple microsystem efforts to support students and families experiencing homelessness. Likewise, several participants described other supports such as annual professional development, meetings, and simply being available to their colleagues, for both teachers and other school professionals in the area of homeless education. These exosystem supports may be regarded as a descriptive norm—supporting teachers and other school professionals in the aforementioned ways is a common and effective action. However, as evidenced by responses from the teacher and other school level professionals, the two groups perceive norms within the exosystem differently. Other school professionals described their perceptions of a descriptive norm—consistent and beneficial support of teachers of students experiencing homelessness. However, the teacher’s experience indicated that she may view it as an injunctive norm—other school professionals ought to provide more support (e.g., print

resources or collaborative efforts) to special educators who are serving students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

As a researcher, this difference in perception warrants further investigation to develop more accurate and detailed understandings of norms and siloes and how they might be influencing the manner in which school personnel carry out homeless education supports and services. For instance, was the teacher's expressed lack of support representative of most teachers, or was it an isolated one? If the former, I find it disconcerting because the lack of teacher support likely impacts the services and supports provided to some of the most vulnerable students in the Cary schools—those with disabilities experiencing homelessness. For example, Chow et al. (2015) described a teacher who believed all of her students experiencing homelessness had behavioral problems and used punitive practices (e.g., staying in for recess) to manage them, rather than attempting to empathize with students or understand the function of their behaviors. The same teacher indicated she needed more support and professional development that would help her relate to her students (Chow et al., 2015). The special educator in this investigation indicated there were times she was not sure whether the disability or his homelessness was impacting his performance. Support and involvement from homeless education personnel might have helped her determine that and provide the most appropriate supports.

My Level II analysis involved using actual and perceived roles to determine the supports available for teachers and other school professionals at the school and district levels. Four codes—student service delivery, meeting student needs, instruction, and

engaging with families—were all roles meant to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness and their families. The majority of supports in this level fell under these four codes, indicating the majority of supports are directed toward students. Two codes—consultation and coordination—were roles centered on meeting the needs of teachers or other school personnel by working together. These accounted for a much smaller number of available supports, and the overwhelming majority did not include descriptions of working with and providing support to teachers, but rather other school professionals such as homeless education personnel. Again, in this level, the injunctive norm of how support ought to be provided differed from the descriptive norm of how support for teachers and other school personnel is typically provided.

In Level I the definition of the microsystem is broad and encompasses multiple types of supports for students experiencing homelessness and their families, all viewed through lens of injunctive norms, or how families experiencing homelessness ought to be served. In Level II, I created the aforementioned group of four codes regarding serving students and families to mirror the microsystem. Each code detailed a more specific role that became a way of supporting students experiencing homelessness and their families. The Level I microsystem and group of Level II student and family support codes represented approximately the same data set.

Similarly, the exosystem codes reflected overarching definitions of support for teachers and other school personnel and paralleled the pair of Level II codes about meeting the needs of teachers and other school personnel. The Level II codes of consultation and coordination included roles adopted by teachers and other school

personnel in support of each other. However, while the exosystem codes included supports such as training or print resources, the consultation and coordination codes were focused specifically on actively working with others. These distinctions raise another issue worthy of discussion—the meaning of the word supports and the norms through which they are carried out.

Throughout my research, I defined teacher supports as any additional help that was provided to a teacher, including explicit in-person or online training, print or web resources, and working with other professionals both within and outside the classroom. However, I did not explicitly define these for my participants; thus, they may have each interpreted supports in a different way. Homeless education professionals primarily described district-wide required training as an available support for teachers. A few also mentioned their availability to consult with teachers. Thus, it seems homeless education personnel primarily perceived supports to be personnel-based. Conversely, as noted previously, the special educator stated she received no supports, though she described working closely with the school counselor. She did, however, describe print materials she would like to have to improve her knowledge of the legal requirements for serving students experiencing homelessness.

Again, these differing descriptions, which may reflect descriptive norms, require additional investigation. For example, within the microsystem, participants clearly viewed supports as services provided directly to students and their families experiencing homelessness, with minimal variation. However, within the exosystem, what constituted a support for teachers did not appear universal. Thus, school professionals, including

homeless education personnel, may have assumed they were providing supports to teachers, while at least the one teacher in this study felt completely unsupported. So, I wondered, how can teachers and other school professionals rectify their diverging assessments of support in order to more effectively foster their awareness of the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness?

In pre-service teacher development, for example, Izadinia (2015) investigated pre-service teachers' evaluations of their mentor teachers. She reported that both groups felt the majority of mentor teachers (14 of 16) successfully implemented their beliefs on how they should support pre-service teachers (Izadinia 2015). The two who did not, however, did not act on their espoused theories, leaving their mentees feeling unsupported (Izadinia, 2015). The researcher suggested there may have been differences in the interpretation of roles, or in the levels of support pre-service teachers needed versus the levels of support mentors were willing or able to provide (Izadinia, 2015). Likewise, in this study, the teacher and other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, may have viewed their professional roles and responsibilities differently. Homeless education personnel may also have been unaware of or unable or unwilling to support the learning, behavioral, or social/emotional needs of teachers of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness. Again, establishing whether this is a widely held descriptive norm warrants additional study.

Research Question 2 – How are Teachers and Other School Professionals

Supported?

My second research question was: How do existing school and district supports foster teachers' and other school professionals' awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness? To answer this question, I conducted a third level of analysis using an inductive approach. I then reduced my codes to categories, and the categories to four themes: homeless education norms, perceptions of the experience of homelessness, assumptions about teacher awareness and support, and culture of support. I compared those themes to my propositions through a pattern matching process to determine whether the data supported or refuted the propositions. Through this analysis, I began to interpret how school professionals support each other to increase awareness and to serve students and families experiencing homelessness.

For the purposes of this discussion, I address homeless education norms last, and start with perceptions of the experience of homelessness first. Overall, participants' perceptions of the experience of homelessness were deficit based. By this I mean, they focused primarily on the needs of these students, rather than strengths and abilities. Only one participant made a positive comment about the resilience and determination of students experiencing homelessness. One participant even described being homeless as shameful. This is a troubling emerging descriptive norm—students experiencing homelessness are viewed from a deficit perspective. Instead, as an injunctive norm, teachers and other school professionals should adopt a strengths-based perspective of

students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness (Parker & Folkman, 2015; Zimmerman, 2013).

Other school professionals made multiple assumptions about teacher awareness and how they perceived teacher support. These professionals assumed teachers were aware of whom to contact regarding a student experiencing homelessness. Likewise, they assumed teachers had received enough training at the school and district levels to have an adequate understanding of homeless education policy and the needs and characteristics of students experiencing homelessness. School professionals involved in homeless education also described ways they provided supports to students, and perceived that as indirectly supporting teachers. Despite all these perceived supports, other school professionals still felt teachers required more training and professional development. The teacher, however, did not identify informal or formal supports, such as professional development or collaboration with the school social worker, nor did she equate student support with indirect support for her. Her opinion of what she needed was primarily focused on policy knowledge, printed resources, and how she could support families, which reflects a siloed, teacher driven approach to providing homeless education services, rather than a team based, coordinated one.

That desire, albeit singly or collectively, to support families was reflected in the normative culture of support reported by participants in both schools. They emphasized the small size of their district, which meant they could form relationships with students. They all believed in working with others, especially to support student and family needs. They listed dozens of supports at the school, district, and community levels that were

available to students experiencing homelessness and their families. Though the teacher was not confident in her ability to provide supports to mitigate the impact of homelessness on her student, she was adamant about developing relationships with parents/guardians. Several other school personnel also described communicating with parents, connecting them to school and community resources, and monitoring their needs.

As described previously, homeless education norms pertain to how professionals, in two schools, described carrying out homeless education within and across schools included in this district. Overall, school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, received an abundance of training at the district level. In addition, they had multiple informal supports consistently available, including frequent contact with each other and with their supervisor, the district homeless liaison. However, their meetings and frequent contacts did not involve teachers. Instead, in this case study, the special educator described requesting support from others, rather than routinely being included as part of a team that served her student with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Although she received support when she requested it, she more often worked with school personnel to meet her student's needs that were the result of his disability, rather than of his housing status. That said, the extent to which her experience is representative of other special education teachers in this district remains unknown.

As has been described, the data underscore an important preliminary finding noted previously and worthy of continued investigation—the norms in place in the Cary School District, as unveiled through interviews with a special educator and other school personnel in two schools, suggest homeless education is carried out in a siloed, rather

than a coordinated effort. According to the special educator, the other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, rarely work directly with her or her colleagues, despite the complex needs of the highly vulnerable students they share. The high school student support specialist described attending IEP meetings to support parents. While doing so is an admirable display of commitment to her students and families, what forms of support has she provided to teachers prior to and during those meetings? How has she routinely collaborated with the special educator to ensure the day-to-day needs of the student and family are being met, and that any services are not either duplicative or conflicting?

Legally, students with disabilities must have an IEP team committed to identifying and meeting their needs, using a strength-based perspective. Likewise, interprofessional teams are often put in place to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. In this investigation, only one participant mentioned a “crossing of the lines” from homeless education to special education, when she described attending an IEP meeting to support the parent. Again, as pointed out above, she was not supporting the special education team, even though her expertise and suggestions would likely be valuable additions to the student’s IEP. The members of these two teams must, at some point, work more closely together on a regular basis to establish descriptive norms that align with injunctive norms on homeless education services. Doing so will enable them to provide well coordinated, team based services aimed at effectively meeting the needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. That said, they must also strive to

do so more effectively without duplicating efforts, which can lead to increased costs and wasted time, or potentially implementing conflicting supports (Palladino, 2009).

Though there are legal hurdles within homeless education, primarily with regard to student confidentiality, there are ways to maneuver through them and enable teamwork, which is the preferred injunctive norm. For example, Weinberg, Zetlin, and Shea (2009) worked with seven counties in California to remove barriers to interagency collaboration for students in foster care, whose needs are similar to students experiencing homelessness, and who pose similar challenges with regard to confidentiality. Strategies included, among several others, developing information sharing forms and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), creating interagency teams or workgroups, appointing a liaison, and providing handbooks or other forms of written guidance (Weinberg et al., 2009). Existing siloes and emerging descriptive norms must be at least partially dismantled and disrupted because, as stated previously, they often prevent meaningful collaboration, and it is practically impossible to serve students at the intersection of special education and homeless education without a well coordinated team effort.

Convergent and Divergent Findings

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory as a framework, I developed four propositions about homeless education and supports for both students and school professionals. In the following section, I present each proposition, then discuss the convergent and divergent findings from the relevant literature presented in Chapter II.

Proposition 1 – Provision of Student and Family Supports

My first proposition was about the microsystem: Within a student's primary microsystems (i.e., home and school), other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, rather than teachers, provided the majority of student and family supports. In this study, the data fully supported the first proposition; however, in the literature I reviewed, the researchers' approach and/or findings did not.

Heise and MacGillivray (2011) implemented a six-week art course at a shelter, potentially one of the primary microsystems of a student experiencing homelessness. In their study, they conducted the course and provided the supports. Likewise, in Viafora et al.'s (2015) study of the effects of a mindfulness course, a graduate student who worked with the researchers taught the course. By nature of the research design, these were two instances of supports provided in a primary microsystem—the classroom—by someone other than the teacher or other school professionals.

Remaining in the classroom microsystem, two sets of researchers detailed the supports teachers provide to their students experiencing homelessness. In 2011, Popp et al. conducted a study on the behaviors of effective teachers of students who are highly mobile. The support described by the researchers was effective instruction through various pedagogical techniques, including using multiple instructional activities, varying the cognitive level of learning, and generating questions (Popp et al., 2011). Perhaps a more telling finding was the teachers' efforts to meet student needs. In the current study, school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, spoke often of building relationships with students. In Popp et al.'s (2011) study, the teachers built relationships

with students, which allowed them to view affective and academic needs as intertwined. Furthermore, teachers provided supports, such as basic needs (e.g., school supplies or food).

Chow et al. (2015) also explored the experiences of teachers who frequently taught students living in the shelters near their schools. Teachers provided basic supports such as pairing students with a buddy, offering frequent praise, remaining flexible, and providing incentives (Chow et al., 2015). They also communicated frequently with parents and provided them opportunities to be involved in their child's education. There was no mention of student or family supports provided by social workers, school counselors, or other school professionals in homeless education.

Proposition 2 – Communication and Cooperation Between School Professionals

I centered my second proposition on the mesosystem: Communication and cooperation between school professionals, such as homeless education personnel and teachers (i.e., mesosystem), often varies in quality and quantity, depending on school or district policies and procedures. Though my data partially supported this proposition, it is generally not represented in the literature I reviewed in Chapter II. There is, however, other related literature that reflects convergent findings. For instance, Altshuler (2003) conducted a focus group with stakeholders from education and child welfare (e.g., social workers) to discuss the barriers to successful collaboration. One of the primary barriers identified by participants was noncollaborative relationships among professionals (Altshuler, 2003). One primary reason for this barrier was the policies and procedures

within each profession, typically related to student privacy and confidentiality, that prevented communication and cooperation.

Proposition 3 – Professional Development and Supports

Proposition 3 focused on the exosystem: Professional development and supports (i.e., exosystem) are typically designed to support the roles of other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, rather than teachers, leaving teachers unaware of homeless education supports and students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. This proposition was fully supported by data. One study included convergent findings.

In addition to the supports they provide their students experiencing homelessness, teachers in Chow et al.'s (2015) study discussed the supports and training they felt would be beneficial. Few teachers reported receiving any training or information about working with students experiencing homelessness (Chow et al., 2015). When they did describe support, it was in the form of a brief informational session about student rights, and the resources and services available to families (Chow et al., 2015). Many teachers agreed it was not adequate and desired more opportunities to increase their awareness (Chow et al., 2015). These data suggest a finding convergent with the data in the current study—professional development, specifically regarding homeless education, is not designed for teachers in Carya and, when it is, it is not adequate to develop their awareness. The majority of professional development described by participants was directed toward other school professionals, such as monthly meetings for social workers, during which they receive updates on policy and practice, and receive support for implementing effective strategies within homeless education.

Proposition 4 – Perception of Students Experiencing Homelessness

In my final proposition, I focused on the macrosystem: Society's opinion of individuals experiencing homelessness (i.e., macrosystem) is typically negative, leading to unfavorable perceptions of those individuals (Kim, 2013). Likewise, teachers and other school personnel typically maintain a deficit perspective of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including those with disabilities. (Kim, 2013; Powers-Costello & Swick, 2011). My data supported the second half of this proposition. Two studies included in my literature review (i.e., Chapter II) included both convergent and divergent findings.

Chow et al.'s (2015) study of the consequences of homelessness in the classroom included data related to another proposition. In this convergent finding, researchers described teachers who engaged in stereotypical thinking and negative perceptions (Chow et al., 2015). One teacher, who struggled with the behaviors of students experiencing homelessness, believed parents who lived in shelters with their children did not value hard work and did not try to instill it in their children, resulting in inappropriate behaviors (Chow et al., 2015). She felt all students experiencing homelessness were problematic, and that tending to their social and emotional needs wasted valuable instructional time (Chow et al., 2015).

In Chow et al.'s (2015) divergent finding, most teachers were sympathetic and understood the variability in homelessness. Several teachers also described students experiencing homelessness who excelled in school, came to school clean, and were well

cared for by their parents or guardians (Chow et al., 2015). Because they did not adopt a deficit perspective, they were able to see the potential in their students experiencing homelessness and demonstrate sensitivity toward students and families.

Only one previous researcher clearly addressed the macrosystem as described previously in my literature review (see Chapter II). Kim (2013) examined whether pre-service teacher perceptions of homelessness were aligned with the negative view common in society. She discovered their concept of homelessness was primarily of adults living on the street (Kim, 2013). Furthermore, the pre-service teachers held negative views of students experiencing homelessness, assuming they would be dirty, troubled, misbehaved, and sad, and that their parents would not care about their child's education (Kim, 2013). This finding converges with the data in the current case study, as the majority of participants described deficits of students experiencing homelessness.

Kim's (2013) study included a clinical placement at a shelter, during which the pre-service teachers worked with children and parents living there. In their journals and class discussions, pre-service teachers drastically changed their views of students and families experiencing homelessness (Kim, 2013). They admitted their perceptions were inaccurate and were surprised to work with children who were dressed, clean, and well fed, and parents who were involved with their child's education. In the current study, I did not collect data regarding changes in perceptions, though no participants mentioned any changes in views, either currently or in the past.

Overall, because there is limited prior research in the area of supports for teachers and other school professionals, the convergent and divergent findings are limited. Studies in which researchers addressed the microsystem and supports for students are far more common, such as those in which researchers focus on classroom interventions or school-level supports that will improve outcomes of students experiencing homelessness. Research in which investigators examined the other three EST systems is scarce. Specifically, there is a dearth in investigations of the mesosystem and exosystem, both of which involve the support of and collaboration with teachers of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, the emerging findings regarding norms and siloes in the current study are supported by the literature, but not discussed explicitly. Though the descriptive norm of siloed services and supports is evident in several studies (i.e., Altshuler, 2003; Chow et al., 2015; Popp et al., 2011), authors do not discuss norms the need to move from siloes to a more coordinated effort.

Limitations

In the following section, I address the limitations of my study. First, due to the sensitive nature of my study and the vulnerable populations involved, I struggled to recruit participants. Thus, I made several changes to my study, which I describe in two phases below, including a summary of the intended study design and the recruitment.

Phase One

The first iteration of this study was intended to be a mixed methods design, including a traditional single case study and an evidence-based case study (Carlson, Ross & Stark, 2012). I would have implemented an intervention (i.e., a modified Check-

In/Check-Out process) with three dyads of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and their teachers. I would have then measured the effectiveness of m-CICO through classroom observations, student work, standardized measures, and interviews. Using documentation and interviews, I would have also investigated the existing supports that impacted a teacher's ability to implement the m-CICO.

Intended K-12 student participants were currently experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act and had an IDEA identified disability. Intended teacher participants were their homeroom teachers or the teachers they spent the most time with during the school day. Intended administrators and other school personnel were selected if they were involved in serving the target student. Intended district level personnel were those who directly impacted or supervised the school level personnel.

Participants were recruited through district homeless liaisons. On November 10, 2016, during a meeting of state homeless liaisons, I presented the study and asked for volunteers. Liaisons were asked if they were willing to participate, and if they knew of a teacher or school they thought would also be willing to participate. Six liaisons from across the state volunteered to be part of the study and provided their information. I then investigated the requirements of each district's research process and eliminated one district due to the likelihood it would not approve a small scale study. I contacted the five remaining liaisons to inform them of the next steps. Two liaisons did not respond to multiple contacts, so I submitted my research request to each of the three remaining districts. I received research approval from two of those districts, so I contacted the liaisons to discuss with them how to proceed. Those two liaisons contacted either

principals or social workers whom they thought would be willing to allowing me to conduct research. Neither liaison received replies from principals, despite multiple contacts. I asked the liaisons if they thought it would be wise for me to contact principals, and they both agreed I should try. They provided the contact information and I left voicemail messages and e-mailed all principals, but received no replies.

My final option was to submit a new IRB request to the school district in which my university was located, despite their frequent unwillingness to approve research in their schools. Through a contact at the National Center for Homeless Education, I learned there was a principal in that district who was willing to grant me access to his staff and students. I contacted the school social worker, who thought she had an ideal student-teacher dyad for my study and was willing to support me. I submitted the IRB request to the district, but it was denied.

Phase Two

Since I was unable to recruit participants for a mixed methods case study that included an intervention, my advisor and I agreed I would conduct a traditional case study, sans the modified CI/CO intervention. Instead, I would focus on building a foundation for future research by exploring the supports teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness receive at the school and district levels. For this dissertation case study, I would still require the same participants, but would only conduct interviews and document analysis.

I returned to the liaison with whom I had the most consistent contact previously to describe my new direction and ask for her continued support, to which she agreed. I

revised my university IRB and confirmed with the school district that I could still conduct my research there, even though my study had changed. I emailed the liaison to request a list of schools that had students with disabilities experiencing homelessness enrolled. When she did not respond after five days, I sent another e-mail. After another five days with no response, I contacted the principal of each school to request permission to conduct my research. I left voicemail messages for principals at eight of the nine schools, and spoke to one principal. She agreed to grant me access to her staff, and provided contact information for her school social worker, guidance counselor, student support specialist, and special education teacher. I contacted each of them via phone or e-mail and received confirmation from all but the social worker. Another principal returned my call the next day and indicated she would be willing to allow her staff to participate. She took a more involved and direct route and e-mailed her school counselor, social worker, and special education teacher, stating she would like them to participate in my research. Again, all but the social worker replied via e-mail with the best times for interviews. The principal did not return an e-mail with the best time for an interview and did not respond to a follow-up e-mail regarding her participation. Thus, she was not interviewed.

This difficulty in finding participants led to multiple limitations of this study. First and foremost is the small number of participant interviews. In their study on data saturation and variability using 60 semi-structured interviews, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) reported data saturation occurred after twelve. They did, however, discover a majority of their codes (73%) came from the first six transcripts they analyzed. They

concluded six interviews were enough to establish a relatively solid codebook and begin generating themes. I conducted six interviews, thus likely generating enough text to establish codes and generate themes.

In addition to having a small number of interviews, they were generally brief, lasting between 15 and 25 minutes. In Yin's (2014) description of using interviews, he indicated they should take one hour at minimum. Thus, it is unlikely that I gathered all the information I needed in such a short amount of time. However, due to my difficulty finding a principal willing to grant me access to his or her faculty, I was reluctant to request any more of a teacher's time than 20 to 30 minutes. Because I was working with principals who were protective of their faculty members' time, I feared asking for up to an hour would result in losing my access.

Because of the limited time I spent interviewing participants and my lack of field observations, I neglected to fulfill a primary requirement of qualitative research—extensive time spent in the field (Creswell, 2013). It is the extensive time and relationships between researcher and participant that serve to increase trustworthiness or validity (Creswell, 2013). To mitigate some of this issue, I engaged in several methods for ensuring validity and enhancing the quality of my research design, including using multiple sources of evidence to allow for triangulation, maintaining a chain of evidence, and engaging in pattern matching (Yin, 2014).

Time constraints and access issues prevented me from conducting field observations, another data collection strategy that would have allowed me to provide more thick, rich descriptions, triangulate my data, and ensure trustworthiness (Yin, 2014).

Though I was able to use three sources of data, the documents and online PD were not information-rich. Thus, my ability to triangulate my data was limited. Similarly to my reluctance to request lengthy interviews, I was unwilling to risk my access by asking to observe as well.

Also due to time constraints, I did not engage in member checking, allowing participants to review my findings and ensure I represented their thoughts accurately (Gall et al., 2007). This would have improved the quality and rigor of my study. As Gall et al. (2007) suggested, an alternative strategy that reflects sound research design is the use of coding checks, or intercoder agreement, which I did conduct.

Finally, as described in Chapter III, I have many biases that may impact my findings (Creswell, 2013). Because of my knowledge of homeless education and my investment in special education teacher education, I am particularly biased toward the support of teachers as a way to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. That investment has potentially permeated my findings, preventing me from identifying other themes not related to the support and development of teachers. By recording my thoughts in memos, I have attempted to organize my thoughts more clearly, address my biases, and reduce the likelihood they have impacted my findings (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Implications for Future Research

This case study has contributed to the body of knowledge that helps researchers illuminate the shortcomings of homeless education research related to teachers' awareness and the supports they receive to better serve students with disabilities

experiencing homelessness. This is supported by the dearth of research on teacher supports within homeless education. I was unable to find any empirical publications related to teacher supports specifically within homeless education, and only found vaguely relevant literature on the supports for teachers who serve students who have experienced a traumatizing event. As I mentioned previously, teachers are among the primary in-school determinants of student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goe, 2007). Including them in homeless education teams ensures students experiencing homelessness and their families are receiving as many benefits as possible from this collaborative effort (Lawson & Sailor, 2000; Walther-Thomas et al., 1996).

Through my data analysis, I have an important emerging theme, such as siloed service provision, which reflects a descriptive norm, that runs counter to injunctive norms that point to a need for a well coordinated, team based approach. However, as noted previously, this emerging theme warrants further investigation. For example, there are inconsistencies between the perceptions of teachers and the perceptions of other school personnel with regard to homeless education supports. As evidenced in the previous chapter, homeless education personnel perceived their support to be adequate, and made many assumptions about the knowledge and abilities of teachers with regard to homeless education. However, as pointed out previously, comments from the teacher indicated their support may not have been adequate. Furthermore, she reported her knowledge of homeless education and available supports for her student experiencing was limited. Thus, I want to determine if this pattern continues across teachers and schools. And, if so, I would like to investigate where the breakdown of communication lies and why teachers

and homeless education personnel think so differently. Ensuring teachers and other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, are on the same proverbial page is important when identifying descriptive norms. There must be consistent agreement on the ways support is provided, both to students experiencing homelessness and their teachers. Furthermore, it is essential they are both aligned with the existing research on homeless education, namely the injunctive norms—the way homeless education ought to be implemented.

The second issue I want to investigate further is education personnel's perceptions of homelessness and their awareness of its impact on students. In this study, the finding regarding a deficit-based perspective was another emerging and troubling descriptive norm. In a related study, Macdonald and her colleagues (2016) reported teacher awareness of the impact of poverty affected their behaviors, and often lowered their expectations of students. Furthermore, low teacher expectations lead to low student expectations, and students perceiving that they had no control over their academic outcomes (Macdonald et al., 2016). However, students experiencing homelessness value teachers who are empathetic and supportive (Ellis & Geller, 2016; Lindsey & Williams, 2002; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Thus, teacher understanding, awareness, and perceptions appear to be essential injunctive norms that run counter to the emerging descriptive norm unveiled through this case study. Still, for reasons explained previously continued investigation within and across cases is warranted. Though there is some extant research on teacher perceptions of homelessness in the homeless education literature, it is virtually non-existent at the intersection of special education and homeless

education. As such, I think it is important to explore how teachers develop these perceptions and how they impact teacher support (e.g., instruction, affective supports for students, collaboration with families) of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. When viewed as descriptive and injunctive norms, a strengths-based perspective is important when serving students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness. Teachers and other school professionals who maintain a strengths-based perspective of students with disabilities are more likely to perceive positive student outcomes (Donovan & Nickerson, 2007). Moreover, deficit-based perspectives negatively impact relationships with parents (Lake & Billingsley, 2000), who should be included in interprofessional teams. Thus, maintaining a strengths-based perspective not only improves relationships with parents, but also may positively impact student outcomes, reflecting essential alignment between healthy descriptive and injunctive norms.

In the future, I plan to conduct a similar case study exploring the supports special educators receive to effectively serve their students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. I will expand my participants to include personnel from at least one elementary school, middle school, and high school, and recruit the entire homeless education team and all special educators from each setting. This will allow me to obtain a more representative picture of homeless education norms within and across schools and multiple data sources for triangulation. To ensure my research is relevant for all stakeholders and to further triangulate my data, I will include students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and their parents. Furthermore, to further investigate norms, I

will add observational data on the ways teachers support students with disabilities experiencing homelessness, as well as the supports they receive from homeless education personnel. The time required to collect data from all of these additional sources, as well as the substantially larger compendium of data, will allow me to conduct a higher quality qualitative inquiry.

Moving forward, my findings and limitations will inform my future research. Colleagues at my new university, where I am employed as an assistant professor, have assured me that the university has a strong relationship with the district and works closely with teachers and other school professionals. My aim is to build on that relationship and position myself so that I can conduct my research without the trials of this dissertation case study. Furthermore, I now have a much deeper understanding of case study research. I know how to develop a case study protocol and think more prudently about the chain of evidence that will lead me from my data collection to my potential conclusions. This will allow me design a higher quality, rigorous study from the beginning and avoid accumulating as many limitations as I did here.

Finally, I plan to conduct the initial evidence-based case study I developed, including coaching and a modified Check-In/Check-Out (m-CICO). In my current research, I addressed the first component of the coaching continuum – building a knowledge base. However, as Joyce and Showers (1980) asserted, “the most effective training activities... will be those that combine theory, modeling, practice, feedback, and coaching to application” (Joyce & Showers, 1980, p. 384). In this future study, teacher participants will require a knowledge base, both about homeless education and the m-

CICO process, which I can provide through a brief online training. They will also require opportunities to observe best practice with the m-CICO, which I can provide through online resources and videos. Finally, to ensure they can apply the intervention correctly, I will use Bug-In-Ear (BIE) or *e*Coaching to provide feedback while they use it with a student.

Through presentations on my potential research interests, I have also received feedback on my plans from multiple practitioners at the school and district levels. For example, a high school counselor suggested adding information to the m-CICO about credit recovery, since adolescents experiencing homelessness are often credit deficient. This would allow them to monitor the work they've completed and their progress to completing credits on a daily or weekly basis. A middle school social worker was also concerned about the ability of teachers and other school personnel to correctly implement the m-CICO, leading to a discussion about the time it would take to front-load the necessary knowledge, training, and practice and before implementation. She was still excited about the possibilities of the m-CICO and understood that after a period of front-loading, the rest of the process would be relatively simple. This preliminary feedback has allowed me to consider the design of my intervention and how my participants and I can modify it to fit their needs and the needs of their students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

Both the case study and intervention studies, included in my research agenda, will be crucial to ensuring alignment between descriptive and injunctive service provision norms and to improving teacher support of students with disabilities experiencing

homelessness. Through additional case study research, I will be able to better understand the microsystems, mesosystems, and exosystems at multiple levels and how they come together as descriptive norms in a school to impact students with disabilities experience homelessness and their teachers. Likewise, the intervention study may help to establish new norms by improving the mesosystem between homeless education personnel and teachers, which would likely result in common knowledge and practices, and joint conversations about the students they share. In both investigations, I will focus on further exploring teacher development, a crucial piece of the EST puzzle, since it impacts descriptive norms, chief among them how homeless education personnel interact within and across the classroom microsystem, multiple mesosystems, and students' exosystems.

Beyond my research agenda, more inquiry is needed to investigate the intersection of special education and homeless education. Professionals from multiple systems (e.g., juvenile justice, education, social services) support students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness, and should be included as participants in the research. For example, juvenile justice workers are often involved with unaccompanied youth who resort to criminal activity to sustain their basic needs (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Shelter and outreach workers should also be included, since many of them develop relationships with children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness (Murphy & Tobin, 2011). Norms may vary considerably between these systems, further complicating team-based efforts and impeding provision of services for students experiencing homelessness and their families. Thus, an investigation of the norms within and across these systems is warranted.

Rural homelessness is also a drastically different experience than urban homelessness, and the norms that exist within rural education are likely to differ from those within other settings, such as urban. During the 2010-2011 school year, approximately one-third of all U.S. schools were located in rural areas and served approximately 12 million students, or 24% of the total enrollment in the country (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2013). Although cities often have numerous shelters and other resources for students and families experiencing homelessness, rural districts, such as Cary, often do not. For example, there is only one homeless shelter within Cary's district lines, and the next closest is in the neighboring county. Though homeless education law mandates school choice and transportation, moving to another shelter may create multiple issues. McKinney-Vento (2015) requires the best interest of the student be taken into consideration when determining whether the student remains in the school of origin or transfers to the new school. If the new school is far from the shelter, the student may have a long bus ride which, depending on the student's age, can be taxing at the least. Thus, the best interest of the student may be to transfer to the new school. Unfortunately, numerous researchers have demonstrated that frequent moves have a negative impact on students' attendance and educational achievement (Allen & Vaca, 2010; Buckner et al., 2001; James & Lopez, 2003). This is just one of the unique issues students experiencing homelessness face in rural school districts that warrants additional, in depth investigation.

Rural education, too, presents a number of challenges, including recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers (Best & Cohen, 2014). Within rural special education,

in particular, researchers have reported as much as a 35% shortage of highly qualified special educators (Brownell, Bishop & Sindelar, 2005). Rural special education teachers face unique difficulties. Though teachers often appreciate the close-knit community and value the close relationships they form, that closeness also makes it challenging to maintain boundaries between their professional and personal lives (Berry & Gravelle, 2013). They also report receiving less professional development than their peers in non-rural areas, which leads to professional isolation (Best & Cohen, 2014; Berry & Gravelle, 2013). In addition, because of their isolated locations, the diversity in their classrooms is extensive (Berry & Gravelle, 2013), and they lack the resources to meet their students' needs (Best & Cohen, 2014; Berry & Gravelle, 2013). Finally, teachers in rural schools typically have lower salaries than those in non-rural schools (Best & Cohen, 2014; Berry & Gravelle, 2013). Singly and collectively, these unique challenges are also worthy of initial and continued study, specifically as to how they influence effective special education service provision to students with disabilities who are homeless.

Moreover, rural teachers who serve students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness must be prepared for the additional unique issues and needs their rural location triggers. In their investigation of teacher preparation for rural education, Azano and Stewart (2016) suggested three ways to improve it. First, they acknowledged the value of a close-knit community, but also expressed the need to remove the "blinder to rural realities" (p. 115) pre-service teachers may have as the result of an idealistic presumption. Second, they noted pre-service teachers typically viewed rural students with a deficit perspective and encouraged pre-service teacher educators to help

them dismiss that view (Azano & Stewart, 2016). Finally, they recommended using dialogic pedagogy to confront pre-service teachers' stereotypes of rural students and families (Azano & Stewart, 2016). While research on rural education, special education, and homeless education may be plentiful, or at least growing, again, there are no investigations of the intersections between them or the norms that may be operating within each. Thus, more high quality research on rural homeless education and special education is warranted to determine teacher awareness and their support needs.

Finally, as I mentioned previously, there are legal barriers to sharing information between different professionals who serve students with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Confidentiality is essential, though professionals' interpretations of both federal policies such as FERPA and school or district policies often prevent the sharing of important student information (Altshuler, 2003; Weinberg, Zetlin & Shea, 2009).

Though it would be an ambitious and exceptionally challenging undertaking, establishing a national database for homeless education would be highly beneficial for teachers and homeless education professionals. A nationwide database would promote the tracking of highly mobile students and the sharing of sensitive but vital information across districts and states in a timelier manner. Doing so would allow students and their families to receive the educational and community supports they need in a seamless, coordinated, and expedient manner while respecting their rights to privacy and confidentiality.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications for practice at the school and district levels. In this discussion, I have previously addressed the descriptive and injunctive norms of Carya's

homeless education program. A universally accepted norm throughout the district is support at the microsystem level—direct support to students experiencing homelessness and their families. In this study, however, it was reported by at least one special educator, that the actual practice of that norm, however, is siloed, indicating limited mesosystem activity—interactions between the individuals in microsystems, such as between social workers and teachers. Additionally, exosystem interactions appeared lacking, as evidenced by several participants’ descriptions of minimal support of teachers. This indicates a potential norm that school and district personnel may need to change when considering how to support and develop teachers. One way to do this is through effective professional development (PD).

As described in Chapter II, professional development is the most common way to impart knowledge to teachers, despite Joyce and Showers’ (1980) assertion that a one-shot professional development is the least effective method of doing so. Nevertheless, professional development models in education represent a deeply entrenched system, in which one-shot professional development is the norm (Joyce & Showers, 1980). In Cary, the PD for homeless education was a 20-minute online video that all employees were required to watch once. Moreover, it was reported by multiple participants and confirmed, in part, through document analysis that teachers did not receive any additional training specifically related to understanding the needs of students experiencing homelessness or how to meet those needs in their classrooms. Instead, further professional development on homeless education was provided to other school professionals at multiple monthly meetings. This begs the question, how can school and

district level PD developers create a more effective PD system, in which teachers and other school professionals receive crucial information and training in an efficient, effective way that also allows for interprofessional communication and cooperation?

The first charge seems to be to instill an appreciation for the roles and responsibilities of others. Simply creating awareness, or what Gerend and Magloire (2008) conceptualized as general familiarity of a concept, would provide a foundation for teachers and other school professionals, such as homeless education personnel, to work together more fully. Awareness of the job description of other professionals is important to developing meaningful professional relationships that also benefit students in the long run (Altshuler, 2003). Furthermore, as described in Chapter II, if PD is extended over a longer period of time, participants have more opportunities to learn, leading to better understanding of the content (Garet et al., 2001). PD implemented over time (e.g., an entire school year) can help to create the aforementioned awareness and appreciation. Finally, if a PD allows teachers and other school professionals to make connections across other PDs, standards, or goals, they are more likely to retain and use the knowledge and skills (Garet et al., 2001).

Making knowledge and practice connections between social work, counseling, academics, and other additional services can help teachers and other school professionals understand the importance of each professional and his or her supports. Knowledge connections, such as a special educator being familiar with the functions and responsibilities of a school social worker and vice versa, can help each professional understand their roles. Once that understanding is solidified, they can begin to form

practice connections—working cooperatively through mutual understanding and goals to provide services for students experiencing homelessness. This collaborative practice can then become a descriptive norm—how homeless education is carried out in a district—which aligns with the injunctive norm of how services ought to be provided by a team.

The second, and more challenging, charge is to overhaul the existing notion of PD and create a more cohesive system that supports all education professionals. One way of achieving this within homeless education is to consider promoting teacher leadership. Teacher leaders, as defined by Wenner and Campbell (2017), are “teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom” (p. 140). In their review, the authors asserted teacher leadership occurred outside the classroom walls, and should include support for the professional learning of others. Within Cary, for example, the monthly meetings for other school professionals could also be attended by teacher leaders. Those teacher leaders would then be able to bring their knowledge back to the school and impart it to other teachers through ongoing PD, including coaching on coordinated practices. Another possible method of coaching would involve teachers coaching other school professionals on educational and classroom issues, and allowing other school professionals to coach teachers on specific issues such as the impact of homelessness and how to meet the needs of students experiencing it. Without coaching, the effect size for implementing practices learned in professional developments is 0.0 (Joyce & Showers, 2002). With coaching, the effect size jumps to 1.42 (Joyce & Showers, 2002), making it more likely the new, more effective, collaborative strategies will transfer to practice.

Thus, coaching is important to disrupting dysfunctional descriptive norms of siloed services and establishing healthier descriptive norms that align with injunctive norms of team-based efforts.

Summary

Though the U.S. economy continues to hold steady, and the unemployment rate has dropped approximately half a percent over the past year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017), the national poverty level still hovers around 15%—43 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Poverty is one of the leading causes of homelessness (Bassuk et al., 2014). Furthermore, the United States is in the midst of a growing opioid epidemic, one which claims the lives of over 90 Americans daily (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2017). According to the *Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health* (2016), opioid addiction and homelessness often occur mutually, and opioid addiction may even contribute to rising rates of homelessness in some areas (USICH, 2017). Unfortunately, treatment or support for one is often challenging without addressing the other (USICH, 2017).

In the United States, 1.2 million students were reported homeless during the 2012-2013 school year (NCHE, 2014b). This number continues to rise and may actually be closer to twice that estimate—2.5 million children annually (Bassuk et al., 2014). Poverty, unemployment, and the opioid crisis all contribute to creating unstable living situations for children and youth. Solving the aforementioned issues is clearly above and beyond the responsibilities and capabilities of educational researchers, teachers, and other school professionals. They do, however, have the ability and the obligation to ensure

descriptive norms align with injunctive norms thereby enhancing the education of students with and without disabilities experiencing homelessness. Through groundbreaking research, thoughtful collaboration, and improved professional development, researchers and practitioners alike can ensure improved outcomes for all students experiencing homelessness.

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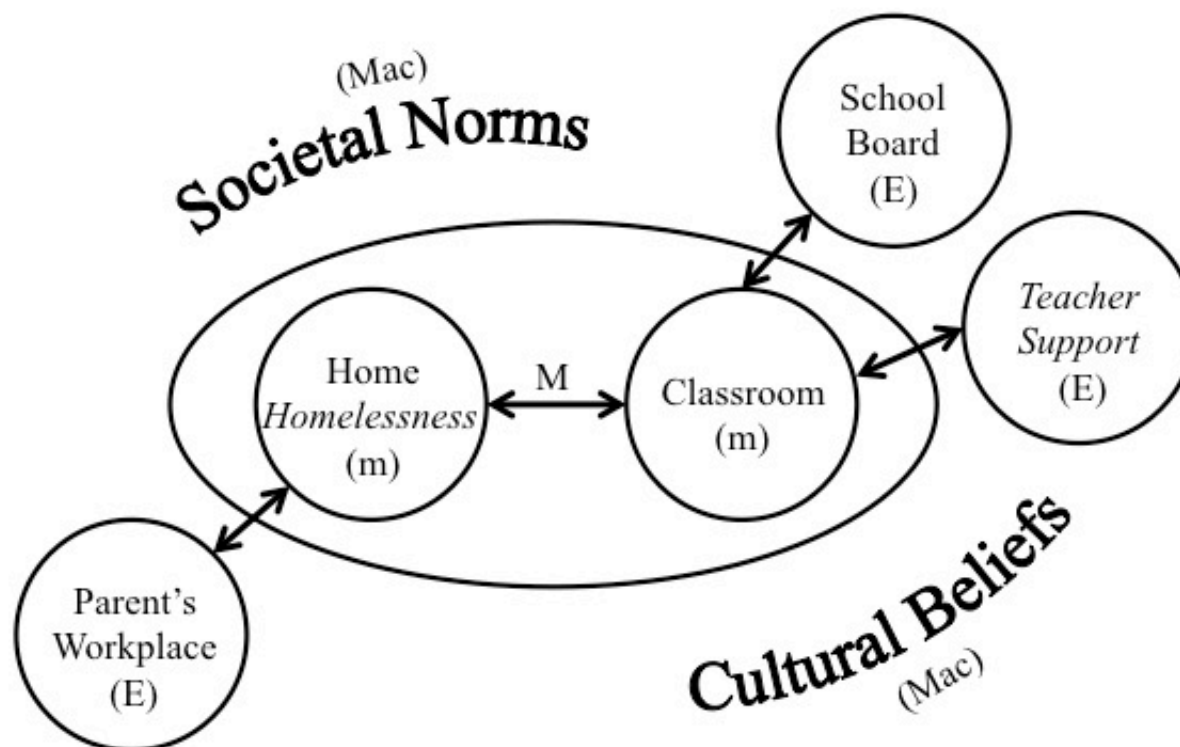
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APPENDIX A

MODEL OF BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY



m – Microsystem
M – Mesosystem
E – Exosystem
Mac – Macrosystem

APPENDIX B

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Section A: Overview of the Case Study

The purpose of this single case study was to examine what supports are available to teachers and other school professionals, and how those supports foster their awareness of homeless education and the characteristics and needs of students experiencing homelessness. The district served as the case, and the context was the rural nature of the district. The purposeful sample included a special educator, two school counselors, one student support specialist, one principal, and the district homeless liaison from a small, rural district in the southeastern United States. Each participant participated in one interview. Additional resources, including documentation and a web-based PD, were used to triangulate the data.

Section B: Data Collection Procedures

Access to Schools and Personnel

1. Obtain IRB from the university and school district.
2. Contact the district homeless liaison, who can identify schools with students with disabilities experiencing homelessness enrolled.
3. Contact the principals of those schools and gain consent from him/her to interview staff members.
4. Recruit interview participants via phone and e-mail and obtain written consent from all participants.

Fieldwork Procedures – Interviews

1. For phone interviews, use MacBook with QuickTime audio recording software and an iPad with a recording app (i.e., Meeting Recorder) as backup, and place the call on speakerphone. Also have print out of questions with space after each for researcher notes.
2. Schedule interviews via phone or e-mail, according to participant availability.
3. Record interviews for later analysis, and take brief notes during the interview. Each interview will last approximately 20-30 minutes.

Documentation Collection Procedures

1. Contact the individual responsible for keeping the required data.
2. Request document via e-mail, if available. If it is not available electronically, make plans to pick it up in person. If the document cannot be copied or taken from its location, use portable scanner to scan it to computer.

Section C: Data Collection Questions

Level 2 Questions

1. What is expected of teachers and other school personnel in a typical school day?

2. What do teachers and other school personnel know about homeless education policies and procedures?
3. What experiences do teachers and other school personnel have working with students with disabilities experiencing homelessness? How do they feel about those experiences and those students?
4. What supports do teachers and other school personnel receive? Are they enough? Do they have sufficient access to them? Are supports readily available?
5. Do teachers feel they have a responsibility to serve students experiencing homelessness beyond providing instruction?
6. Do teachers feel they can effectively apply what they have learned/their supports to their classrooms to benefit students with disabilities experiencing homelessness?
7. How do other school professionals, including homeless education personnel, perceive their jobs?
8. How do other school professionals, including homeless education personnel perceive homeless education in their districts?
9. How are principals involved in homeless education?

Level 1 Questions

Teacher Interviews

How long have you been a teacher?

What was your position prior to this one?

Tell me about your responsibilities with your current class. What is a typical day for you?
Probe for specifics about responsibilities beyond those of a typical teacher or students who need additional support (without divulging student information).

How familiar are you with homeless education? What do you know about teaching and serving students experiencing homelessness? How did you learn about it? Do you have regular contact with [Homeless Liaison]?
Probe for more information – ask for specific knowledge.

What past experiences have you had teaching students experiencing homelessness?
If none, skip to next question.
If he/she can describe an experience: What supports did you have during that time? (Probe for specifics) How effective did you feel those supports were at helping you meet the needs of your student? (Probe for specifics) Tell me about your relationship with that student.

Tell me about your experience currently.

What supports do you have? (Probe for specifics)
How effective do you feel those supports are at helping you meet the needs of your student? (Probe for specifics).

How does homelessness add to the mix? Your student already has a disability – how does homelessness affect his/her education?

Is there anything else you would like to add before we finish?

Social Worker/School Counselor Interviews

How long have you been a social worker/school counselor?

What was your position prior to becoming a social worker/school counselor?

What's your professional background (i.e., education, certification)?

What are your responsibilities as a social worker/school counselor? Do you feel there are some that are more important than others? (If so, describe and provide reasons)

How familiar are you with homeless education? What do you know about serving students experiencing homelessness? Do you have regular contact with [homeless liaison]?

Probe for more information – ask for specific knowledge.

Is there anything the district (or school) does specifically that supports students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and their teachers? (If so, describe and give opinion)

What is your opinion of the supports teachers receive for supporting students with disabilities experiencing homelessness?

Is there anything else you'd like to add before we finish?

Homeless Liaison Interview

How long have you been a homeless liaison?

What was your position prior to becoming the liaison? Are you still in that position (i.e., are the liaison duties an addition, rather than a change)?

What's your professional background (i.e., education, certification)?

What are your responsibilities as a homeless liaison? Do you feel there are some that are more important than others? (If so, describe and provide reasons)

Is there anything the district does specifically that supports students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and their teachers? (If so, describe and give opinion)

What do you do to support teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness?

How effective is the support teachers and students receive? (i.e., Do they need more or less or different support? Explain).

Principal/Administrator Interview (via e-mail)

How long have you been a principal?

What was your position prior to becoming a principal?

What's your professional background (education and certification)?

How familiar are you with homeless education? Describe what you know about serving students experiencing homelessness, including characteristics, needs, legal aspects, etc.

Describe your contact with the homeless liaison (e.g., method of contact, frequency, content).

What are your perceptions of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness? (Provide your thoughts on academics, behavior, social/emotional status and needs).

Describe for me any experience(s) you've had with a student with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Do not include any identifying student information (name, age, grade)

What supports do you receive as a principal who has students (with or without disabilities) experiencing homelessness in your school?

What, if anything, do you feel you still need?

As a principal, what supports do you provide your faculty members, especially teachers, who work with students (with or without disabilities) experiencing homelessness?

What, if anything, do you feel they still need?

Is there anything your school does specifically that supports students with disabilities experiencing homelessness and their teachers? If so, describe.

Identify the members of the team who serve these students and briefly describe how they work together (e.g., the identification process, how they obtain and maintain services, any type of evaluation or assessment process, etc.).

If there is anything else you'd like to add, please do so here.

Section D: Guide for the Case Study Report

Purpose

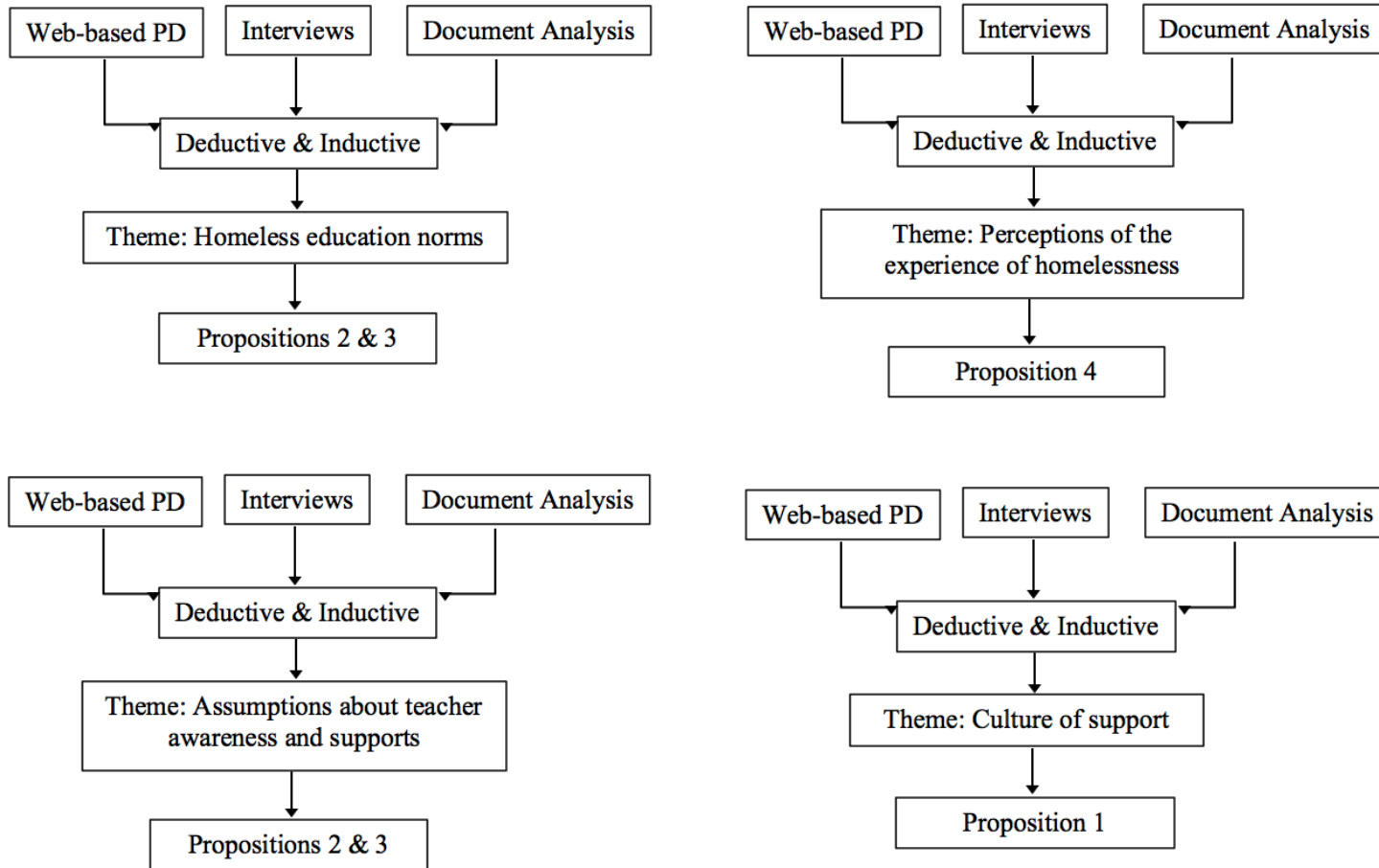
1. To share information and insights on the existing structures that support teachers of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

Audiences and Presentation

1. Dissertation committee – written dissertation and oral defense
2. Academic colleagues – empirical report in a professional journal
3. Participants and other practitioners – single page of insights, accompanied by illustrative examples from research

APPENDIX C

PATTERN MATCHING FLOW CHARTS



APPENDIX D

CODEBOOK

Level I Code	Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Definition	Coding Definition	Examples
Microsystem	The activities, roles, and relationships experienced by an individual in a specific setting	Supports for students and/or families experiencing homelessness. Supports may be specific or general and provided either within or outside the classroom. They may be a suggestion for a support that is available or can be provided, or description of a support that has been/is currently being provided. This also includes the rights of students experiencing homelessness under various pieces of legislation.	<p>The tutor will provide much needed academic services. (McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application)</p> <p>"On a case by case basis what they need. And that could be a ride home if the bus isn't there, or a little more leeway with the dress code, or getting them set up with student services." (Anne, High School Counselor)</p> <p>Homeless children and youth are categorically eligible to receive free school meals. (Online PD)</p>
Mesosystem	The interrelatedness between two or more microsystems in which the individual is actively involved	Interactions between the primary microsystems of a student experiencing homelessness. This specific descriptions of past or current interactions. Interactions encompass only the microsystems of a student, such as between home and school or the homeless	Review discipline reports monthly for students identified as McKinney-Vento for impact on access and barriers to success. (Needs Assessment)

		education team and the student's teacher. The impact of homelessness in general on other aspects of a student's life is also included.	"I check in with the teachers frequently once they're identified." (Alice, Elementary Counselor) Homelessness can have wide reaching effects on the well-being of children and youth, affecting not only their physical environment, but also their mental and emotional health. (Online PD)
Exosystem	Other settings outside the individual's immediate networks that potentially affect or are affected by what happens in the individual's microsystems	The supports for teachers of students experiencing homelessness and other homeless education personnel. Supports may include web or printed resources, professional development, or communication with homeless education personnel (including the provision of general or specific contact information).	To find out who the local homeless education liaison is in your district, call the district switchboard and ask to be connected. (Online PD)
Immediate	N/A	Supports, such as the above, specifically directed toward teachers of students experiencing homelessness	"I think they [teachers] need more face to face training in addition to the online." (Chloe, District Homeless Liaison) Provide online training through Public School Works for all staff. (Needs Assessment)
Extended	N/A	Supports, such as the above, specifically directed toward school	The district homeless liaison and one school level liaison will attend

or district level homeless education personnel or other education personnel supporting students experiencing homelessness.

NAEHCY each year. These staff members will then return to the district to share the information with the remaining school level liaisons. (McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application)

"She [the liaison] has also created a manual for us that is step by step what I need to do." (Ruth, High School Student Support Specialist)

Macrosystem	The collection of beliefs and societal norms that affect the development and operation of the other systems	References to an overarching societal belief, or to an individual's perception of homelessness or students and families experiencing homelessness.	For many years, a common portrayal of homelessness was of a single man living on the streets or in a homeless shelter. (Online PD) "In my experience these students usually perform poorly academically due to their unstable home life and at times lack of parental support. Many times they are socially inadequate and isolate themselves from others." (Kelly, High School Principal)
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Level II Code	Definition	Examples
Meeting Student Needs	Ensuring the basic needs of students experiencing homelessness are met.	"Looking at basic needs... making sure they have school uniform, supplies, as well as food, clothing and whatever else." (Chloe, District Liaison)

		<p>“We have a Back to Sleep Program, so if they need a cot, bedding, that sort of stuff.” (Anne, High School Counselor)</p> <p>Develop a family resource center at the local shelter to ensure students have an area of homework and the needed supplies. (Needs Assessment)</p>
Student Service Delivery	Providing supplemental supports and services to students experiencing homelessness.	<p>“I do a lot of mediations.” (Ruth, Student Support Specialist)</p> <p>“I also see some kids individually.” (Alice, Elementary Counselor)</p> <p>The program also has a tutoring program at the community center where they assist with homework. (McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application)</p>
Instruction	Providing classroom-based instruction to students experiencing homelessness.	<p>“If you’re cognizant and you know where you want to go, then you just gotta plan a way to get there.” (Quinn, Special Educator)</p> <p>“Teachers give her accommodations to support her being successful in the classroom.” (Kelly, High School Principal)</p> <p>“If we know a student is struggling in a particular teacher’s classroom, we’re going to address what those areas are and why they’re not being successful and ways we can help them.” (Anne, High School Counselor)</p>
Compliance and Advocacy	Addressing policy requirements and ensuring the rights of students experiencing homelessness are met.	<p>States must identify the number of homeless children and youth enrolled by grade level and also by primary nighttime residence. (Online PD)</p> <p>“If the parents aren’t in agreement with whatever happens at the school level, they’ll call me and we’ll work through some of those concerns.” (Chloe, District Liaison)</p> <p>The local liaison can help enroll your child in school. (Parent Brochure)</p>

Consultation	Consulting with other professionals with the intent of providing support, beyond simply creating awareness.	<p>“I work with our teachers to sort of understand what’s going on.” (Ruth, Student Support Specialist)</p> <p>“I can send out an email and I have four people in my room, ‘What can I do? What do you need?’” (Quinn, Special Educator)</p> <p>I am in contact with the liaison regularly throughout the year to discuss face to face any updates, interventions, and services available to homeless students.” (Kelly, High School Principal)</p>
Coordination	Working with others to determine how the needs of students experiencing homelessness will be met, and organizing and implementing the required supports.	<p>The district will continue to partner with Main Street Community Development Corporation to provide tutoring for students. (McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application)</p> <p>“We always work as a team. We have a social worker here half time, we have a dropout prevention specialist and student services personnel.” (Anne, High School Counselor)</p> <p>The liaison can help your child get school supplies, supplemental services, and free school meals; set up transportation to and from the school of origin; and help you find community supports. (Parent Brochure)</p>
Engaging with families	Communicating with and supporting families of students experiencing homelessness	<p>“He will meet with the family to make sure they know all of the resources in the community that could help.” (Alice, Elementary Counselor)</p> <p>“That relationship with your parents is huge.” (Quinn, Special Educator)</p> <p>Refer parents of homeless students to Parents as Teachers for birth to 5 parent support. (Needs Assessment)</p>

APPENDIX E
INTERCODER AGREEMENT

Level I					
<u>Document</u>	<u>Microsystem</u>	<u>Mesosystem</u>	<u>Exosystem</u>	<u>Macrosystem</u>	<u>Total</u>
Parent Brochure	90%	100%	86%	-	90%
Web-based PD	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Interview – Quinn	92%	100%	92%	-	94%

Level II								
<u>Document</u>	<u>C & A</u>	<u>SN</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Inst.</u>	<u>Fam.</u>	<u>Coor.</u>	<u>Cons.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Parent Brochure	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	100%	-	100%
Web-based PD	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%
Interview – Quinn	-	75%	-	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%