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READY, MindSET, GO!

Increasing Students' Resilience in Counselor Education Programs

Eleonora Bartoli, Alexandra Mamolou, Michael T. Morrow, Lisa Brutko, Emily P. Cox,
Stacey J. Herreid-Halstead, and Adam M. Levy

The process of becoming a counselor requires students to learn personal skills, the development of which can be emotionally onerous. An initial needs assessment in a counselor education program identified four areas of need associated with students' resilience during counselor training: fixed mindset, low academic self-efficacy, high anxiety, and high academic contingent self-worth. The article describes the development, delivery, and assessment of a pilot curriculum offering counseling students resilience strategies that overlap with clinical tools.

Keywords: counselor education, mindset, mindfulness, self-compassion, stereotype threat

Students are often attracted to counselor education programs because they view the counseling field as a way to give voice and expression to what they have learned through their own life struggles. Some of these students come into programs after extensive self-exploration and healing, which makes them yearn to give back and share what they have learned; others may view the program itself as an avenue to further their own journeys. These trends are noted in discussions among training directors of counselor education programs, and seem to have emerged more broadly in the field across time (e.g., Day, 1994; Stebnicki, 2016). The decision to become a counselor can be felt by students as a calling, even more than a vocation, and therefore carries deeply personal values and meaning (Scott, 2007).

Once students begin their counselor education, they are faced with challenging and novel classroom activities that prompt constructive feedback regarding their interpersonal skills (Bartoli, Morrow, Dozier, Mamolou, & Gillem, 2014; Homrich, DeLorenzi, Bloom, & Godbee, 2014). For instance, role-play presentations ask students to practice counseling skills while exposing themselves to peers' and professors' critiques about personal attributes, such as emotional expression and empathy. These classroom rehearsals are perceived as evaluative and therefore can trigger anxiety. Anxiety, in turn, has been shown to negatively

relate to both self-efficacy (i.e., the belief that one is able to execute actions to achieve desired outcomes; Bandura, 1977) and academic performance (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Galla & Wood, 2012; Penney & Abbott, 2015; Stankov, 2013). Further, Larson and Daniels (1998) assert that counseling students with low self-efficacy may avoid taking risks, give up following failure, and shy-away from the learning process as a whole. High self-efficacy, on the other hand, has been linked to classroom participation and engagement (Galyon, Blondin, Yaw, Nalls, & Williams, 2012), key tasks in counselor education. The question then emerges of how counselor educators can build students' resilience to being evaluated on personal dimensions. Greater resilience makes it less likely that students will experience their learning curve as proof that they may be inherently deficient or unfit for the profession.

Martin and Marsh (2009) define academic resilience as "a student's capacity to overcome acute or chronic adversities that are seen as major assaults on educational processes" (p. 353). Counselor education asks students to invest themselves fully as human beings (e.g., their capacity for warmth, congruence, respect, non-judgment) during the learning process. The counseling work itself asks counselors to adjust their behavior and interventions on an ongoing basis following clients' feedback (Norcross, 2011).

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Therefore, it appears important that counseling students not simply to withstand, but actually thrive through personal transformation, *both* during graduate work *and* in their counseling careers. To do so, students must learn to embrace and work with feedback (whether from faculty or clients) that might challenge their self-efficacy. In our program, we have witnessed how not doing so negatively impacts both students' academic learning and their work with clients.

Research shows that one's beliefs about the nature of one's intelligence, thought of as innate or acquired, is related to one's self-efficacy (Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004). Dweck's (2000) work on theories of intelligence describes a direct relationship between what she calls a "growth mindset" and higher self-efficacy (Komarraju, & Nadler, 2013; Niiya, Crocker, & Bartmess, 2004), meaning that if one believes that they can develop their intelligence, they also believe that they will succeed at a given task. Therefore, grounding counselor education students in a growth mindset might enhance their academic resilience. In other words, students' belief that they can further develop their intelligence (whether emotional, analytical, or other) during graduate work—even when doing so is anxiety provoking—might allow them to persist through the personal transformation process required in learning counseling skills. The following section is a review of Dweck's theories of intelligence and their impact on students' resilience to academic tasks. Dweck's theories, and their correlates, were then used in a counselor education program as the framework to assess and intervene on challenges to counseling students' academic resilience.

Mindset in the Making of a Counselor

Dweck (1986) described people's attitudes regarding the plasticity of their own intelligence using two different theories of intelligence: "entity" (henceforth referred to as "fixed" mindset) and "incremental" (henceforth referred to as "growth" mindset). People with a fixed mindset believe that their intelligence is an inflexible trait that they cannot influence, whereas people with a growth mindset believe that their intelligence is malleable (or plastic) and can therefore change based on their effort and environment. Theories of intelligence have been found to be related to a number of variables in addition to self-efficacy, such as education goals (Dweck, 2000), anxiety (Jain & Dowson, 2009), and contingent self-worth (Niiya et al., 2004).

Individuals' theories of intelligence inform their educational goals, or goal choice. Dweck (2000) categorizes the goals of people with a fixed mindset as

"performance goals", and goals of those with a growth mindset as "learning goals" or "mastery goals". Performance goals are focused on demonstrating competence by receiving favorable evaluation (e.g., a good grade) and avoiding critical judgment altogether. Conversely, mastery goals reflect the desire to acquire new knowledge and skills without concern of evaluation or comparison to peers. Students with a growth mindset are more likely than students with a fixed mindset to report seeking a challenging task that they might fail at, but also learn from (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995).

In counselor education programs, students with a fixed mindset may interpret instructors' feedback as indication that they have innate and unchangeable deficits (e.g., poor interpersonal skills). Such an interpretation could discourage them from participating in learning activities (e.g., role-plays) or make them doubt their fitness for the program or profession. Yet, students with a growth mindset may interpret the same feedback as a growth opportunity, which may motivate them to fully engage with their program. By doing so, these students may feel more hopeful about their future as counselors and persist through the learning process.

Students' theories of intelligence and goal orientation have also been linked to self-efficacy, which in turn appears inversely related to academic anxiety. For instance, high school students with more mastery-oriented goals exhibited higher levels of classroom self-efficacy (Greene et al., 2004; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013), and middle-school students with higher self-efficacy reported lower math anxiety (Jain & Dowson, 2009). Accordingly, the mastery-oriented goals associated with a growth mindset are linked to stronger beliefs of academic agency and less worry of academic failure, which may boost students' engagement and persistence (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). Such persistence and resilience to academic and clinical challenges is what we are looking for in counseling students as well.

Individuals' theories of intelligence also impact the type of responses to negative academic feedback. Individuals with a fixed mindset tend to translate criticism as personal judgment. For example, following exposure to a hypothetical scenario about receiving negative feedback for a class presentation, college students with a fixed mindset were more likely than students with a growth mindset to "indict their whole self, saying that they would feel worthless, they would feel like losers, or they would feel like total failures" (Dweck, 2000, p. 46). Therefore, theories of intelligence seem to interact with individuals' academic contingent self-worth [i.e., the extent to which a person's self-appraisal is linked to their academic performance (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003)] and affect their reactions to academic failures.

Further, Niiya et al. (2004) found that individuals with high academic contingent self-worth were less likely to experience lower self-esteem and negative affect following a failure when primed with a growth mindset statement as opposed to a fixed mindset statement. Thus, a growth mindset appears to buffer some students (i.e., those whose self-worth largely stems from academics) from the impact of negative academic events. Because counseling students are asked to embody the skills they are learning (e.g., empathy), they might be even more likely to react to faculty's critiques or feedback by devaluing themselves as individuals. In their case, then, holding a growth mindset may be particularly helpful.

Mindset in Counselor Education Programs

Dweck's date theories of intelligence have been applied to numerous educational contexts to enhance students' academic persistence and performance, but seldom to graduate school settings, and to date there is no evidence of its use in counselor education settings. However, as argued above, it might be especially important for counseling students to ground their learning experience in a growth mindset, leading to mastery (versus performance) goals. Therefore, in the current pilot study, the mindset of students in a counselor education program was assessed with the aim of identifying and then intervening on possible barriers to learning.

An initial needs assessment was conducted to examine the extent to which each theory of intelligence, and their correlates (e.g., self-efficacy, contingency self-worth), were present among the students. This needs assessment allowed the authors to identify specific areas that might hinder students' resilience to the challenges of counseling training. Subsequently, the authors designed, delivered, and evaluated a training program targeting the identified areas of need. Generally speaking, we expected a significant portion of our students to endorse a fixed mindset and its correlates, as described in the literature.

Needs Assessment

Method

Participants. All students enrolled in one Northeast counselor education program were invited to participate in the needs assessment; 40 students (54.05% of total enrolled students) volunteered to complete the measures. Participants were not asked to report their gender because only 11% of the students in the program at the time of the study were men, thus

reporting gender could identify a participant (in the context of other demographic data collected, e.g., GPA, age). For the same reason, participants were also not asked to report other standard demographic variables (e.g., ethnic background); given the relative homogeneity of the student body at the time, this information would not allow participants to remain anonymous. The program exclusively offers a master's degree; at the time of the needs assessment, about 80% of the student body was pursuing a mental health counseling degree of at least 60 credits, while 20% was pursuing a school counseling degree of at least 48 credits.

Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 57 years ($M = 30.68$), and they had completed between 3 and 57 course credits ($M = 27.77$). Forty-seven and a half percent of participants reported attending the program full-time and 52.50% part-time (at the time, exactly half of the overall student body attended the program full-time and half part-time.) Self-reported grade point average (GPA) ranged from 3.05 to 4.00 ($N = 31$, $M = 3.67$, $SD = .24$). About two thirds of students (76.92%) reported taking time off between their undergraduate and current graduate studies ($N = 39$, $M = 6.10$ years off; range = 1 to 30 years off), while 23.08% transitioned to graduate school immediately after completing their undergraduate studies. Four participants reported taking time off between two master's degrees (descriptive statistics are not provided for any group with less than five participants to avoid identifying students). Finally, 51.28% of participants reported that they had worked or currently work in mental health settings.

Measures. Participants were asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire, which asked about participants' age, number of credits completed in the program, full-time vs. part-time status, cumulative Grade Point Average, years of experience in the field, whether they were currently working in the field, and whether they took time off between their bachelor's and master's program. Participants also completed a series of measures, for a total of 52 items. First, they completed Dweck's (2000) Theories of Intelligence Scale, which has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007), convergence with an alternate measure of implicit theories (Dweck et al., 1995), discriminant validity, and sensitivity to experimental manipulation (Dweck, 2000). Second, participants completed Dweck's (2000) Goal Choice Questionnaire, which has been found to correlate in expected ways with the Theories of Intelligence Scale. Third, participants completed the Perceived Ability subscale of an Academic Self-Efficacy measure with high internal consistency and a strong factor structure (Greene et al.,

2004; Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996). Fourth, Spielberger's (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Index for Adults was completed; these scales have been well-validated by evidencing high internal consistency and appropriate test-retest reliability (i.e., high for trait and low for state); the trait inventory has converged with several other validated anxiety scales and was found to distinguish clinical and nonclinical populations. Fifth, participants answered one item assessing Academic Enjoyment; limited psychometric information was available for this item; however, it appears sensitive to experimental manipulations of mindset (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). Finally, participants completed the Academic Competence subscale of the Academic Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (Crocker et al., 2003); the full scale has an adequate factor structure, and the subscale has satisfactory internal consistency and reasonably high test-retest reliability. With one exception, all of the multi-item scales evidenced satisfactory internal consistency in this study ($\alpha = .70-.94$). The alpha for the Goal Choice Questionnaire (.67) fell just below the typical cutoff of .70.

Results

Descriptive Statistics. For the Theories of Intelligence scale ($M = 27.78$; $SD = 6.90$), higher scores indicate a fixed mindset and lower scores indicate a growth mindset (possible range of 8 to 48). Notably, 45.90% of the sample scored between 29 and 48, revealing that just under half tended to endorse a fixed mindset and just over half tended to endorse a growth mindset. The Goal Choice scale includes three rating-scale items that were summed for a possible range of 3 to 18 ($M = 12.08$; $SD = 2.34$); for this scale, higher scores indicate preference for mastery goals (related to a growth mindset) and lower scores indicate preference for performance goals (related to a fixed mindset). On average, participants endorsed preference for mastery goals on these items. The fourth Goal Choice item was forced-choice with two options (1 = performance goal; 2 = mastery goal); 35% of participants chose preferring a performance goal, and 60% chose preferring a mastery goal (with the remaining 5% not answering this question). On the measure of Academic Self-Efficacy ($M = 21.35$; $SD = 2.82$), higher scores indicate a weaker belief in academic self-efficacy (possible range of 7 to 28). About half of the participants reported concern about their ability to succeed in the program (by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to statements such as "I am sure about my ability to do the assignments in this program").

Possible scores for both state and trait anxiety ranged from 20 to 80, with higher scores indicating

greater anxiety. Participants' scores on both scales were compared to normative data for women aged 19 to 39 years (Spielberger, 1983; as noted earlier, we did not collect data on participants' gender; thus, we chose this norm as a reference given that the program was comprised of about 90% women) via a one-sample t test. Relative to this norm group, participants scored

significantly higher in state anxiety ($M = 43.24$; $SD = 11.24$), $t(32) = 3.615$, $p = .001$, and in trait anxiety ($M = 42.06$; $SD = 10.68$), $t(32) = 3.179$, $p = .003$.

Academic Enjoyment ($M = 5.93$; $SD = .78$) was measured on a scale of 1 to 7 with higher scores indicating greater enjoyment. On average, participants reported high levels of academic enjoyment. Finally, Academic Contingent Self-Worth ($M = 5.77$; $SD = .82$) could range from 1 to 7. Higher scores indicate that self-worth is more contingent on academic success. In general, participants reported that their global self-worth is dependent upon their academic success.

Demographic Differences. When potential student demographic differences were explored, one difference was observed for student age. Younger participants evidenced higher academic self-efficacy than older students ($r = -.355$, $p = .031$). In addition, participants with experience working in a mental health setting ($n = 18$) displayed lower levels of academic self-efficacy than those with no work experience in the field ($n = 18$), $t(34) = 2.659$, $p = .01$. No other demographic differences were detected for any other measure.

Outcome of Needs Assessment

The sample was fairly evenly split between students endorsing each theory of intelligence. Further, the students in this sample demonstrated somewhat low academic self-efficacy, which was even lower for older students and students who worked in the field. It's not unusual for older students to doubt, at least initially, their ability to re-ignite their academic skills (Mercer, 2010). Older students might also experience greater pressure to succeed quickly, as they may feel that they have less time to practice their profession before retirement. However, it was surprising to find that students who worked in the field had lower academic self-efficacy as well. Should the result not be simply an artifact of our sample, it could be related to students heightened awareness of clients' needs (often a motivation for seeking additional training), and therefore of the discrepancy between their perceived pace of learning and the ultimate desired outcome.

Academic contingent self-worth scores were generally high as well, suggesting that students' global self-appraisals were dependent upon their success in

academic tasks. Finally, both trait and state anxiety were higher than comparative norms. Therefore, the four areas of need associated with students' resilience to learning were: *fixed mindset*, low *academic self-efficacy*, high *anxiety*, and high *academic contingent self-worth*. The next section describes the development, delivery, and assessment of a pilot training program addressing these four areas.

Development, Delivery, and Assessment of Intervention

Method

The research team reviewed existing interventions that were found (i) effective to address each area of need identified above, (ii) manageable (in length and depth), and (iii) appropriate for delivery in an academic program (as opposed to a clinical setting). This literature review led to the development of a training program divided into three modules, each focusing on one or more areas of need identified in the initial assessment: (module 1) theories of intelligence/academic self-efficacy (teaching theories of intelligence has been found effective to address both areas); (module 2) self-compassion (as an antidote to the evaluative nature of contingent self-worth, as described by Neff, 2011; Neff, Hseih, & Dejithirat, 2005); and (module 3) mindfulness (which has been found effective not only to reduce anxiety, but also to enhance self-efficacy in academic challenging context, as described in Hanley, Palejwala, Hanley, Canto, & Garland, 2015).

To assess the impact of the training, students were asked to complete several measures (assessing theories of intelligence, academic self-efficacy, state anxiety, academic contingency self-worth, and self-compassion) immediately before and after the program was delivered. Before and after each module, they were also asked to answer several questions to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or intentions related to the content of the training. Each module included some skill practice; however, skills are usually acquired over time. Therefore, the effectiveness of the training program in promoting skill acquisition was not assessed directly, but extrapolated from the literature. While the effectiveness of compassion and mindfulness relies on repeated practice, mindset training itself has been shown to be longitudinally effective [e.g., Blackwell et al. (2007) utilized a knowledge-based growth mindset workshop to positively change students' academic behavior up to one-year post-intervention.]

Procedures and Participants

All students enrolled in the same counselor education program surveyed during the needs assessment were invited to participate in the training program. Eleven matriculated students (about 12% of the student body at the time) attended the training. Given the small and personal nature of the training, demographic data were not collected. The training program was delivered over three hours by one recent graduate and three advanced graduate students (all part of the research team), with no faculty or staff present.

Training Curriculum

The details of the modules were developed by the advanced graduate students and the recent graduate on the research team (in collaboration with the first author), to ensure that each module was tailored to, and infused with, students' experiences.

Module 1: Mindset. The first module aimed at teaching students about theories of intelligence, with the intent to boost their academic self-efficacy. Mindset training is primarily content/lecture driven; the authors embedded in it examples from students' experiences. To begin with, participants were given the following case scenario:

"This is your third semester in the program. You have received As and Bs on all of your assignments so far. You are taking two classes this semester and working 15 hours per week. You turn in a rough draft on a paper and get positive feedback from the professor with a few suggestions for edits. Later, you turn in your final draft and one week after that you get your assignment grade. It's a D."

Students were then asked to answer confidentially the following question on a piece of paper: "What do you think and feel about yourself, about the professor, about the class, and about the program?" The responses were shared by the presenter and general themes were identified.

Next, the presenter played a short video describing research evidence for neuroplasticity and potential growth of intelligence. The presenter then defined "growth" and "fixed" mindsets (Dweck, 2010) and asked the group to classify the themes from their original responses into each category. Research findings about the potential academic benefits of a "growth" mindset were also discussed. Finally, participants were given a worksheet titled, "Talk Back with a Growth Mindset," to practice restructuring "fixed"-oriented thoughts into "growth"-oriented thoughts.

Module 2: Self-compassion. Training in self-

compassion was meant to address academic contingent self-worth, as self-compassion highlights the importance of viewing oneself more broadly than a single outcome or set of skills, and not simply from an evaluative standpoint (Neff, 2011; Neff et al., 2005). Research shows that self-compassion is positively correlated with feeling connected and optimistic people who practice self-compassion also report lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Breines & Chen, 2012; Neff, 2009). During this module, the presenter defined self-compassion (as the act of “treating ourselves with the same kindness, caring, and compassion we would show to a good friend”; Neff, 2011), described its usefulness personally and professionally (particularly in managing difficult internal and external experiences, and in building resilience to learning from challenges and failures; Neff, 2009), and taught skills to practice self-compassion (e.g., turning negative thoughts related to an aversive experience into more compassionate statements, while identifying strategies to relieve the negative physical and emotional responses associated with the aversive experience). Self-compassion was clearly distinguished from self-indulgence, which leads individuals to avoid or “brush off”, versus confront and grow through, adversity (Breines & Chen, 2012; Neff et al., 2005). Participants were also asked to compare how they respond to a friend who is struggling with a difficult experience, to how they typically respond to themselves when facing academic challenges. This was done not simply to underscore the discrepancy in participants’ behavior toward a friend and themselves, but also to highlight participants’ competence in being compassionate.

Module 3: Mindfulness. Practicing mindfulness facilitates emotion regulation and time management by increasing awareness of one’s cognitions, affect, and motivations (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010). Mindfulness has been found to promote life satisfaction (Hülshöger, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013) and decrease anxiety (e.g., Collard, Avny, & Boniwell, 2008; Fulton & Cashwell, 2015). This module began with presenters defining mindfulness as “the practice of cultivating nonjudgmental awareness in everyday life” (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010, Introduction section, para 2). Presenters also described Nilsson’s (2014) four dimensions of mindfulness: physical (approaching the body’s various states with heightened sensory attention), mental (noticing non-judgmentally one’s thoughts and feelings, allowing them to pass), social (cultivating empathy and compassion for oneself and others), and existential (acknowledging that we are constantly changing, as do the life meanings we construct).

Participants were then invited to consider how

mindfulness can support the acquisition of counseling skills, such as empathy and compassion (Fulton & Cashwell, 2015), the use of “external skills” (e.g., validating statements) and “internal skills” (e.g., attention and presence), as well as attending to one’s countertransference reactions. Without these skills, counselors exhibit more apprehension in session, along with less self-efficacy, openness to learning, and effectiveness in their actual counseling performance (Greason & Cashwell, 2009). The module concluded with a brief body scan (i.e., bringing one’s attention to different parts of the body to practice present-moment awareness), as an example of a mindfulness practice.

Measures

To evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, immediately before and after the training program, participants were asked to complete a subset of measures from the needs assessment [i.e., The Theories of Intelligence Scale (Dweck, 2000), the measure of Academic Self-efficacy (Greene et al., 2004), The State (but not Trait) Anxiety Index for Adults (Spielberger, 1983), and the Academic Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (Crocker et al., 2003)], as well as the Short Form of the Self-Compassion Scale (Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Van Gucht, 2011), which has demonstrated adequate internal consistency and has been found to correlate nearly perfectly with the Long Form. Participants’ scores were expected to change from pre- to post-training on all variables, with the exception of self-compassion, which is conceptualized as a relatively stable trait. Nonetheless, the researchers were interested in testing whether even a brief training could yield a positive trend in this construct.

Before and after each module, participants were asked to answer several content-based questions to assess their knowledge, attitudes, and/or intentions about key concepts from the training. Three separate five-item measures were created to evaluate each module. Items for Module 1 asked participants to explain the difference between a fixed and a growth mindset, estimate the extent to which research suggests benefits for a growth mindset, and rate their ability to identify when they exhibited one mindset or the other. The items for Module 2 asked participants to rate how familiar they were with the personal and professional applications of self-compassion, how familiar they were with specific ways to monitor and practice self-compassion, and their intention to practice self-compassion in the future. The items for Module 3 asked participants to select the correct definition of mindfulness, rate how familiar they were with specific mindfulness practices, rate how useful they believed mindfulness practices to be both personally and

professionally, and indicate how likely they were to practice mindfulness in the future.

Results

To evaluate change in the variables from pre- to post-training, we performed paired-samples *t* tests. Arguments have been posed against using *t* tests with small samples, such as the current sample ($N = 11$). However, simulation studies suggest that it is generally acceptable to use paired-sample *t* tests with small and even extremely small samples (e.g., $N < 5$). Specifically, Type 1 error rates do not appear inflated when testing small samples, but power is sacrificed in cases where effect sizes are not particularly large (de Winter, 2013). Since it is difficult to estimate the effect sizes for the variables in this study, particularly for the measures developed specifically for this project, adequate power may be lacking for some analyses. Effect sizes (Cohen's d_z) were also computed for each comparison (Lakens, 2013; Rosenthal, 1991). Effect sizes for all pre-post comparisons are presented in Table 1, and effect sizes for significant findings are described next following Cohen's (1992) guidelines.

Several significant pre-to-post differences were found, and the size of each significant effect was large in magnitude. As seen in Table 1, significant changes were found for Theories of Intelligence, Academic Self-Efficacy, and State Anxiety. Academic Contingent Self-Worth also decreased; this effect was medium in size and marginally significant ($p = .07$). Self-Compassion did not change significantly. Participants' ratings for all five Module 1 (mindset) items increased; however, only one (how much research suggests benefits for a growth mindset) changed significantly. Participants' ratings for all six Module 2 (self-compassion) items increased significantly. Participants' ratings for four Module 3 (mindfulness) items increased, three of which increased significantly: familiarity with mindfulness practices and how useful mindfulness was both personally and professionally (rated separately). The increase for the fourth item (intention to practice mindfulness in the future) was small-to-medium in magnitude and marginally significant ($p = .09$). One Module 3 item is categorical (0 = incorrect answer, viewing mindfulness as a way to accomplish a specific behavioral goal; 1 = correct answer, viewing mindfulness as the ability to pay attention to the present without judgment). To evaluate change in this item, McNemar's chi-square test for paired categorical data was conducted. Significantly more participants endorsed the correct answer at post than at pre ($p = .004$).

Outcome of Intervention

Overall, the findings suggest that the training

positively impacts the areas of need identified in the initial needs assessment. Participants who completed the training program evidenced increases in growth mindset and academic self-efficacy, along with decreases in academic contingent self-worth and state anxiety. Such findings are consistent with previous research outcomes for comparable interventions (Dweck, 1986; Greason & Cashwell, 2009; Neff et al., 2005; Niiya et al., 2004). In addition, participants displayed increased knowledge and familiarity with the material presented for further practice.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate the potential for counselor educators to develop training programs, based on their students' specific needs, that enhance areas of knowledge connected to academic resilience. A fixed mindset and its correlates were found to be relevant and potentially detrimental concepts among students in a counselor education program, and a pilot training program was found helpful in addressing this difficulty. It is crucial for programs to find ways to identify challenges to, and then facilitate, students' learning. Counselor education students not only look for programs to provide the courses and experiences they need to achieve licensure or certification; they also need programs to provide them with the supportive context and specific tools to *transform* themselves into professional counselors.

Excellence in counseling does not simply rely on the accurate application of a set of interventions, but is embedded in a way of being. In fact, counselors' ability to create strong therapeutic relationships (via empathic attunement, positive regard, congruence/genuineness, for instance) accounts for up to 30% of the effectiveness of treatments (Norcross, 2011). These same relational qualities are essential to the appropriate delivery of specific interventions. In this context, supporting the development of the *whole* student should be a key aspect of all counselor education programs.

The question then becomes how to craft, deliver, and assess co-curricular experiences most appropriate to support the personal growth of students, so that they may persist through the process of developing interpersonal (and not simply knowledge-based) counseling skills. This project focused on enhancing skills associated with academic resilience. Depending on the needs of a program's unique student population, the needs addressed and co-curricular experiences developed might differ. Whatever the focus of the training, ideally it would create a common language and culture within the program for both faculty and students to lean on in challenging moments.

It is important to remember that students' needs are

impacted by a number of factors, including sociopolitical and demographic characteristics. Therefore, students' needs should be assessed considering the characteristics of a program's student body in the context of the faculty, staff, and institution they interact with. For example, students of color, students from working class backgrounds, or older students, might experience various degrees of stereotype threat simply by virtue of attending a primarily White institution, being first generation college students, or being in class with students with more recent academic experiences (Steele, 2010). Stereotype threat increases students' anxiety in situations in which they might fear being perceived in stereotypical ways, solely based on their race, class background, or other marginalized identity. Stereotype threat impairs students' performance by diverting cognitive functions from the task at hand to disproving the stereotype. In some contexts, then, assessing the potential role and impact of stereotype threat (in addition to, or instead of, mindset) would be important.

Further, the interventions considered by a counselor education program should match the cultural preferences of its student body. For instance, mindfulness skills might be more appealing to women or might be less welcomed by students who might view them as attempts to steer them towards specific spiritual practices. The language and examples used in the training should reflect the realities of students' lives—depending on social class or geographical location. Further, theories of intelligence fit an individualistic Western worldview, and might not be as applicable to, or effective for, students who hold collectivist views. Thus, the results of this study are probably most relevant to a female, White, middle-class, suburban population (the predominant demographic layout of the program in question).

The current project has additional limitations that warrant attention. First, this study was embedded in the daily operation of a counselor education program and followed a single-sample pre-post design; thus, it lacked both random assignment and a comparison group. Accordingly, it is not possible to draw conclusions about causal effects of the training program. Second, while the assessment project was developed on the basis of consistent concerns expressed by faculty, administrators, and students over a number of years, the students who completed the needs assessment were not necessarily the same students who attended the training program. Third, the number of participants who attended the training program was quite small, as the training was framed to students as new and optional, rather than a requirement of the program. Therefore, the positive pre-to-post training results should be considered as preliminary. Fourth, the content-based measures for each module were novel

scales developed specifically for this study; thus, they lacked previous psychometric assessment. Accordingly, these measures' findings should be interpreted cautiously, pending evaluation of their reliability and validity.

Further, even though this project was designed to identify and address needs in one program, future research on building students' resilience in counselor education programs should include multiple institutions with similar concerns, as it is likely that there is overlap in the challenges experienced by students across programs, given the very nature of the field and the training. A larger multi-site study would provide additional data across contexts and potentially lead to the development and refinement of more effective training. Such a larger study would grant the opportunity to investigate additional demographics variables without the risk of compromising confidentiality. Variables such as race/ethnicity, religious/spiritual background, or socioeconomic status might influence mindset, anxiety management strategies, the effectiveness and relevance of given interventions (e.g., mindfulness), as well as the exact nature of academic difficulties. Finally, although the current training yielded some immediate positive results, its long-term effects as well as its impact on actual students' learning are not clear. The implementation of any training should include ongoing assessment to evaluate its impact over time and determine needed modifications to maximize effectiveness.

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Table 1

Paired-Sample Tests of Pre-to-Post Changes

Comparison of Pre and Post Variables	<i>n</i>	df	<i>t</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>d_c</i>
Theory of Intelligence	11	10	3.59**	.22	1.08
Academic Self-Efficacy	11	10	3.95**	.06	1.19
Post State Anxiety	11	10	2.91*	.08	0.88
Self-Compassion	11	10	-.65	.13	-0.20
Academic Contingent Self-Worth	11	10	2.06	.26	0.62
Mindset 1: Difference between fixed and growth mindset	11	10	-1.66	.27	-0.50
Mindset 2: Research support for fixed mindset	10	9	1.56	.77	0.49
Mindset 3: Research support for growth mindset	10	9	-6.03***	.35	-1.91
Mindset 4: Ability to identify when using fixed mindset	11	10	-1.27	.93	-0.38
Mindset 5: Ability to identify when using growth mindset	11	10	-1.61	.85	-0.49
Self-Compassion 1: Familiarity with concept of self-compassion	11	10	-4.22**	.39	-1.27
Self-Compassion 2: Familiarity with personal applications of self-compassion	11	10	-4.49**	.53	-1.35
Self-Compassion 3: Familiarity with professional applications of self-compassion	11	10	-3.03*	.66	-0.91
Self-Compassion 4: Familiarity with ways to monitor self-compassion	11	10	-5.85***	.62	-1.76
Self-Compassion 5: Familiarity with the practice of self-compassion	11	10	-3.82**	.79	-1.15
Self-Compassion 6: Plan to practice self-compassion	11	10	-2.32*	.78	-0.70
Mindful 2: Familiarity with specific mindfulness practices	11	10	-3.83**	.28	-1.15
Mindful 3: Belief in personal usefulness of mindfulness	11	10	-4.35**	.25	-1.31
Mindful 4: Belief in professional usefulness of mindfulness	11	10	-3.18*	.34	-0.96
Mindful 5: Likelihood of practicing mindfulness in the future	11	10	-1.88	.34	-0.57

Note. df. is degrees of freedom. *t* is *t* statistic. *SE* is standard error of the mean difference. *d_c* = Cohen's effect size for paired samples. Mindful 1 is a dichotomous variable, and its analysis is described in the text. ****p* < .001. ***p* < .01. **p* < .05.

Calling and Gatekeeping in Counselor Training

Ruth Baugher Palmer

Many counselor trainees are motivated by a sense of calling, some with religious impetus emanating from a faith tradition and others from a secular origin. The Christian tradition offers rich resources on discernment of calling. This article specifies how faculty might utilize these to assist students in exploring whether the counseling profession is a suitable vocation. Particular attention is given to gatekeeping with poorly performing students who persist in training programs because of perceived calling.

Keywords: counselor training, gatekeeping, calling, vocation

For over 20 centuries, theologians, scholars, and clergy have encouraged Christians in discerning their vocational callings (Placher, 2005). Feenstra and Brouwer (2008) explain the Christian concept of vocation as "...discovering one's identity, understanding the world, and discerning one's purpose in relation to God's will" (p. 83). For the religiously devout, discernment of divine callings is a serious matter. It has been described as a spiritual developmental task of adulthood, the accomplishment of which brings deep meaning and purpose to the individual (Fowler, 2000). Calling has also been identified as a strong motivator among counselor trainees, with some students citing religious impetus emanating from a specific faith tradition and others from a secular or more broadly defined spiritual origin (Hall, Burkholder, & Sterner, 2014). Following is a discussion of (a) a theological explication of Christian calling and career choice, (b) graduate training as a context for discernment of calling, and (c) how faculty might utilize resources from the Christian faith tradition in mentoring and gatekeeping students who express calling as a motivation for their pursuit of the counseling profession.

Theology of Vocational Calling

Buechner's (1993) often quoted definition of vocation starts with the self: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (p. 95). Indeed, many writers cite internal processes as important in the discernment of calling. Neafsey (2004), for example,

states, "[i]t is evident that an authentic sense of vocation—a genuine hearing of the voice of God or the Spirit—must be rooted in or flowing from the deeper currents of feeling and desire within the human person" (p. 171). Similarly, Johnson (2002) suggests the call of God begins with a cognitive process, an idea in one's mind, which "emerges and gets your attention," then becomes "energized by feelings," and finally "specific enough for prayer and powerful enough to challenge our volition" (p. 21, 22). McKim (1996) defines the theological term *call* or *calling* as follows: "(Gr. *kalein*, 'to call'; Lat. *vocatio*, 'vocation') God's summons to salvation or to a particular work of service, implying a divine selection" (p. 36). Thus, the called one will have an internal sense of being invited (or directed) to something. Some have dramatic experiences of this summons. For others, it begins with internal interests, passions, and longings often evoked in response to the needs of the world. In her analysis of Christian students' calling narratives, Scott (2007) observed that calling was often described as inner conviction: "words like 'purpose,' 'passion,' 'longing,' 'convicted,' and 'compelled' peppered the responses to questions about meaning of calling" (p. 268).

While these internal processes are viewed as initial indicators of calling, most Christian writers caution against relying on these alone and in fact, imply that serious distortion can result without *external* confirmation of calling (Hardy, 1990). Across faith traditions, calling to ministry has long been viewed as having both internal promptings and external affirmation, and many denominations require novitiate-type periods where the person must consider his or her calling within the community context (Farnham, Gill,

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McLean, & Ward, 1991; Schuurman, 2004). Likewise, external confirmation is equally important for non-ordained vocations (Johnson, 2002).

Citing examples of seemingly unqualified candidates from the Scriptures, Hardy (1990) addresses the question of whether God's calling is always a matter of doing what one is most qualified to do:

God does sometimes call people to do that for which they are outstandingly unqualified; and sometimes he calls people to do what they are entirely disinclined to do. But when he does that, it is because he is about to give a special demonstration of his power. That is, he is about to perform a miracle—which is, by definition, a departure from the normal course of affairs. As a rule people are to do that for which they are qualified...it is not as if our abilities, concerns, and interests are just there, as an accident of nature...these are his gifts, and for that very reason they can serve as indicators of his will for our lives. In coming to know ourselves and our situation, we come to know God's will. (p. 92-93)

Abilities are seen as gifts from God in the Bible. The parable of talents instructs that there is both diversity of gifting and responsibility to use those differing gifts wisely (Mt. 25:14-30, New Revised Standard Version). Wisdom with regard to career choice means using our talents in service that is fitting to the nature of those talents. Indeed, research in positive psychology confirms there is intense joy in finding work which so meshes with one's personal capacities that the person experiences flow—becoming so lost in the enjoyment of the activity for its own sake that the passage of time is unnoticed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Perhaps this is at least partially what Buechner (1993) meant in the “deep gladness” part of his definition of vocation (p. 95).

Graduate Training as a Context for Discerning Calling

In the past two decades, Christian vocation has been the focus of numerous books (Brouwer, 2006; Guinness, 2003; Hardy, 1990; Johnson, 2002; Lewis, 1989; Palmer, 2000; Schultze, 2005; Schuurman, 2004). Late adolescence to young adulthood is seen as a crucial period for students' identity development and formation of life trajectories, as interests, abilities, and values emerge and are tested out in selection of college major and/or initial occupational choices (Super, 1990). Accordingly, concepts of calling and vocation are increasingly emphasized in higher education with

undergraduate students (Miller, 2007). For example, in 1999, the Lily Endowment launched the *Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation* (PTEV), which offered resources to liberal arts institutions. Research and educational grants were awarded, and two complementary anthologies were compiled to facilitate reflection on vocation with college students (Placher, 2005; Schwehn & Bass, 2006). In addition, a website was developed (www.ptev.org), which offered study guides for these books and other free digital resources. A total of 88 colleges and universities were funded by Lily with PTEV grants, and in 2008, the Council of Independent Colleges sought to develop a nation-wide network for the theological exploration of vocation on (undergraduate) campus communities; the vision was realized in fall of 2009 with the launch of the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), which is comprised of 168 colleges and universities (Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Training, 2016).

For those pursuing advanced degrees, graduate school continues to be a formative time; yet, in stark contrast to efforts with undergraduates noted above, there is little research exploring vocation and calling with graduate students. There are theoretical articles on how particular professions can or should be viewed as spiritual callings (e.g., Hall, 2004 on academic psychology; Schwehn, 2002 on teaching; and Trulear, 2007 on social work); however, these seem to be aimed at professionals already working in these fields. Aside from students pursuing ministry preparation, little literature exists on how graduate students who have chosen a “secular” profession might come to apprehend how their profession might be part of a divine calling for their lives.

A survey of graduate counseling and psychology students at one university revealed “God” or “God's calling” among the top influences in their career choices (Chung, Wicklund, Palmer, & White, 2005). While the academic context of the aforementioned research is a faith-based institution, a recent panel discussion of counselor educators at diverse institutions reported a preponderance of their students having missional motivations; for some students, the perceived calling has a religious source and others a secular one (Palmer, 2015). The discussants noted, for example, that religiously devout counselor trainees might believe they are following God's will for their lives, while non-religious trainees might believe they are following a path in accord with deeply held ideals like commitment to community service or social justice. The latter is in keeping with a non-religious definition of calling found in career literature: “...a consuming, meaningful passion people experience toward a domain” (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011, p. 1005). Moreover, Dik and

Duffy (2009) assert that calling can be perceived in any area of work, provided the work holds "...other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation" (p. 427). Indeed, Domene (2015) found that students intending to pursue human service careers (such as counseling, medicine, nursing, social work, and teaching) were significantly higher in both perceiving and seeking calling in their work than students pursuing careers in other occupations.

While no faith tradition reduces God's calling merely to career choice, Christian writings through the centuries offer rich resources for discernment of calling. These resources provide guidance and have implications for career selection. For example, Plantinga (2002) characterizes work as one of many sub-vocations (along with worship, leisure, volunteering, marriage, parenting, etc.) with the main vocation as serving the kingdom of God. Regarding undergraduate education, he states, "[t]he full value of your education is that it will help you find and prepare for your vocation—which is...much bigger than any particular occupation" (p. 115). In graduate education, the student is expending considerable resources, often at great sacrifice, to train for a specific occupation. It, too, should be a time of for deep reflection on vocation.

Furthermore, an awareness of divine calling in one's work has been found to motivate strong commitment to its tasks and endorse additional positive career development outcomes. For example, Duffy and Sedlacek (2007) found the presence of calling to be strongly correlated with self-clarity, career decidedness, and choice comfort in large, ethnically diverse sample of college students. Calling was found moderately related to career commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in a sample of university employees representing diverse occupations (Duffy, Dik, & Steger, 2011). Further, two qualitative studies revealed calling as facilitating Christian women's positive coping with interrole conflicts between parenting and career demands (Oates, Hall, & Anderson, 2005; Sellers, Thomas, Batts, & Ostman, 2005). According to Schuurman (2004), God has situated professionals in their respective vocations for particular purposes, cultivating their unique gifts and capacities for service to the community. Moreover, the pursuit of an advanced degree might be a providentially "situated" context, and the process of the graduate training can yield confirmation (or not) of how practicing in the profession might be part of a student's calling.

The literature on Christian calling can help counselor educators to assist their students in discerning whether that profession might be part of her or his vocation or mission, regardless of whether the sense of calling stems from a religious or secular foundation. Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) stated calling has

"captivated public attention," as they noted frequent references to calling on the internet, including on job search websites (p. 1002). These authors also reported an increase in scholarly investigation on this topic and contributed to the research by developing a scale to measure this construct. Duffy and Dik (2013) likewise noted the prevalence of calling across diverse samples of students and employees; in their review of 40 studies conducted on calling since 2007, these researchers conclude a sizeable number of American college students and adults are motivated by a sense of calling. Thus, calling has become a relevant construct in career motivations for religious and non-religious alike, as it seems to be a way many people "seek and derive meaning from work" (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011, p. 1002). In evaluative and mentoring roles, faculty have the responsibility to help their students recognize the suitability of their career choices, and in doing so they might also have opportunity to assist students in discovering particular callings.

Vocational Interests and Aptitudes

Prospective students often are attracted to the counseling profession because of their passion for helping others, a passion some see as evidence of divine calling or personal mission. However, some graduate students appear to erroneously connect job interest/passion with job aptitude. For example, Gale (1998) reports that many people, when hearing career inventory results, disparage the instrument: "Oh, I took one of those and it told me to be a forest ranger because I *like* to work outdoors" or "It told me to be a psychiatrist because I *liked* to work with people" (Gale, 1998, p. 13). Yet, what they most likely were administered was a career-interest inventory and not a career-aptitude test (Gale, 1998).

This conflation is long-standing. Decades ago, Kerr and Willis (1966) lamented, "many people equate interest and aptitude, perhaps due to the American axiom that if a person is interested and perseverant, any goal can be reached regardless of his physical or mental abilities" (as cited in Lam et al., 1993, p. 155). In a more recent work on discerning vocation, Palmer (2000) expands this, describing how the expectation of success based only on interest and effort reflects an American cultural myth (of a limitless self and universe). Unfortunately, some career exploration books in popular press directly reinforce this illusion. Sher and Smith (1994) imply this in the very title of their book: *I could do anything . . . if I only knew what it was*.

On the contrary, the professional literature on career counseling has proposed the "person-environment fit" theory (Carson et al., 1999), stating researchers explore the match between the worker and

his or her job demands. These involve complex correlations between matrices of abilities, values, personality, and interests on the one hand and job requirements and conditions on the other (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Lam and colleagues (1993) found moderate to high correlations between interest and aptitudes in some disciplines (science, mathematics, and the arts), but curiously, interests in social service and business formed the least substantial and consistent relationships.

Bizot and Goldman (1993) found significant correlations between aptitudes—job correspondence and both employee satisfaction and satisfactoriness (appraisal by supervisors on how satisfactorily employees perform the work). This is as one would expect—people whose skills match the job demands are likely to perform well in those jobs and to enjoy their work. These same researchers found that interest-job correspondence did not correlate significantly with either employee satisfaction or satisfactoriness at initial measurement; however, it did correlate significantly with performance satisfactoriness at follow-up. What this means is that there is a murky relationship between one's job interests and actual ability to perform in a specific job, as well as the likely satisfaction one will find in that job.

This literature demonstrates that some people are more suited for certain jobs than others, and that the fit between the person and the occupation involves more than mere interest. In his seminal work that launched the field of career counseling, Parsons (1909) described vocational choice as a process of (a) knowing oneself, including “aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources limitations, and their causes,” (b) knowing various occupations, including “requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, the demands of the workplace, compensations, opportunities and prospects” and (c) exercising “true reasoning” to bring the two together (p. 5). Thus, knowing oneself is equally important to career selection as it is to discernment of calling. And the self-knowledge needed exceeds mere interests and passions. Aptitudes are crucial to finding optimal occupational fit. Similarly, discernment of vocation (whatever its ultimate context: volunteering, family, occupation, ministry, etc.), requires deep understanding of one's gifts.

Implications for Intervening with Poorly Performing Trainees

Across faith traditions, discernment of calling requires attention inward to promptings of the Caller, which activates one's aspirations and fitting motivations (Neafsey, 2006). It also requires outward

confirmation (evidence of gifting for the calling's tasks, which are observable in the season of life when there are available opportunities to glorify God and serve others in the calling) (Johnson, 2002). Wisdom in occupational selection requires a strong match between the worker's interests, work values, needs, and abilities, and the occupation's skill requirements and reinforcers (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). When all of these are observed, mentoring is easy—one can joyfully confirm the match between the student's gifts and the demands of the profession, and affirm her or his sense of calling. When some of these factors are missing, however, the mentoring task is much more difficult, and faculty gatekeeping responsibilities gain prominence.

Gatekeeping, Mentoring, or Both?

Gatekeeping has been defined broadly as “...evaluation of student suitability for professional practice” (Brear, Dorrian, & Luscri, 2008, p. 93), and more specifically as the processes by which counselor educators intervene to prevent poorly prepared students from entering the counseling profession (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Ten percent of master's level trainees in both secular and Christian clinical practitioner training programs were identified by faculty as poorly suited for the field, yet both samples of faculty indicated they only intervened with about half to remediate or dismiss from the training program (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Palmer, White, & Chung, 2008). In the study of Christian faculty (Palmer et al., 2008), four significant variables were associated with faculty intervention: (a) faculty rank, (b) degree of formalized gatekeeping procedures, (c) institutional support, and (d) faculty perceptions of gatekeeping as related to spiritual gifting. Faculty who perceived gatekeeping itself as connected to gifting and their gatekeeping role as a means of helping students discern their individual gifts were more likely to intervene with poorly performing students than faculty who did not deem their gatekeeping functions as relating to gifts and their discernment.

Ten percent of trainees in both of the aforementioned samples of training programs were identified by faculty as poorly suited for the field, which is concerning (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Palmer et al., 2008). However, that faculty in both studies reported intervening with only half of these students demonstrates that many educators do not have the courage, tools, or support necessary to effectively mentor students (Forrest et al., 2013). It means faculty allow ill-equipped practitioners to enter the field. In doing so, they miss opportunities to help students know themselves more deeply and thus discern suitability of their callings.

Unfortunately, perceived calling may actually be an impediment in the training process. In two different investigations (a longitudinal study with high school students pursuing music careers and a cross-sectional study of undergraduate and graduate business students), Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2012) found that students with strong sense of calling (religious or not) were more likely to ignore negative feedback on suitability for chosen career paths. The authors note that there are significant costs that students might incur after training when they are unable to find or retain employment due to the high-performance demands of professions for which they are not well-suited. This is equally concerning for counselor training; mentors might need particular understanding of how to address calling with poorly performing students to enhance their receptivity to feedback.

For the student who, for whatever combination of reasons (e.g., skills, attitudes, emotional stability, season of life, etc.), is poorly suited to the counselor training program, the faculty's responsibility goes beyond gatekeeping. It is also a responsibility to the student to mentor that person toward a path that is in keeping with her or his gifts (Ladany, Friedlander, & Nelson, 2016). In postsecondary education, faculty are concerned not only with the transmission of knowledge and skills but also with student formation. This development involves mentors taking time to know students beyond the classroom, helping them discern talents, barriers, and wise decision making, while modeling that "who we are is more important than what we do" (Holmes, 2001, p. 117). While Holmes (2001) is speaking of the traditional, liberal arts (undergraduate) education, even more imperative is the mentoring role for faculty in graduate professional programs whose jobs are to apprentice their students in an applied discipline. When it becomes clear the apprentice cannot obtain the skills of the profession, it is the mentor's responsibility to not only protect the profession but also to tactfully tell the apprentice the truth about her or his suitability for that profession. This honesty is an important first step to help the student explore an alternate path that is more fitting. Guinness (2003) observes that becoming aware of a poor vocational fit, though painful, can actually be a release, a step toward one's true identity. Therefore, faculty gatekeeping can thus be thought as freeing students, rather than constraining them.

Reframing Failure

For the student who perceives a calling, but who cannot acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or other characteristics required for the profession, failure in the training program can precipitate a crisis of faith. Reframing is a technique cognitive and family systems

therapists use to change the meaning of events to reduce negative affect and increase positive problem solving (Robbins, Alexander, Newell, & Turner, 1996). It is thought that the reframed perception might lead to a solution of the problem because the emotional interference has been removed, or because the manner in which the person was previously attempting to solve the problem was actually maintaining the problem (Conoley & Garber, 1985). This might describe the phenomenon of the graduate student whose performance is clearly deficient in the counselor training program but persists because he or she feels called. In this case, the perceived call might interfere with the student's ability to accurately assess whether he or she could actually live out that calling in competent counseling practice.

Faculty might need to use reframing to help students redefine their failure in the program as an opportunity to discern direction from what Palmer (2000) calls "the way closing:"

...when I consistently refuse to take no for an answer, I miss the vital clues to my identity that arise when [the] way closes . . . if I try to do something noble that has nothing to do with who I am, I may look good to others and to myself for a while. But the fact that I am exceeding my limits will eventually have consequences. I will distort myself, the other, and our relationship—and may end up doing more damage than if I had never set out to do this particular "good." (p. 43 & 47)

Certainly, great sensitivity and tact would be needed from the faculty member working with a poorly performing graduate student. Just as in counseling, it would require a sound alliance between the student and the faculty mentor to effectively reframe deficient performance as "the way closing." It is no small thing to advise a student to discontinue in a graduate program (Ladany et al., 2016). Even when the evidence indicates the program is not a good fit for the student, it is still not an easy conversation to initiate, especially when the student does not recognize the mismatch between program demands and personal qualities or abilities. Yet, the ending of one pursuit can free the person to a new one, perhaps to one that is better suited to the unique talents and gifts.

In her provocative essay, McEntyre (2005) describes how the virtue of perseverance can actually become a trap, wherein the person is driven to continue, believing in the "I've-invested-too-much-to-stop-now" principle (p. 39). She relates this specifically to the educational process and argues that although advising students to persevere in the face of hardship in school is often appropriate, sometimes it is not: "heroic

determination is one thing; mindless doggedness is another...urging someone to complete a process that is neither life giving nor fruitful may be a misguided kindness” (p. 40). Many faculty have witnessed this “mindless doggedness” when the way obviously seems to be closing, but students cannot or will not see it. Instead, students continue plugging away at course work, on academic probation one semester, then off the next, spending time, energy, and money pursuing a degree in a field whose content and skills they cannot master. In these cases, the kindest response might be to reframe the call as a “wrong number” and encourage the student to listen for a new call (Rayburn, 1997).

The “Call of the Moment”

In other cases, the difficulties in performance might be due to situational circumstances, which, once resolved, can free the student to proceed satisfactorily in the program (Ladany et al., 2016). Here, the mentor might need to help the student pay attention to all that he or she is managing simultaneously while pursuing graduate school:

The trick is to understand one’s calling—and not to understand the idea of calling simply in terms of ‘what to do with my life,’ but to ask periodically what is ‘the call of the moment.’ What is this phase or chapter of my life about? (McEntyre, 2005, p. 41).

The metaphor of life’s seasons can be a means of grace to a struggling student. At times, students must be urged to ask “is this the season in which I can do graduate school?” Some have bravely answered “no,” left the program and returned later, ready for the rigors of graduate education. Again, this might require the advisor to use the reframing tool—to help the student shift thinking from “I’m dropping out of school” (i.e., quitting) to “I’m taking time off to tend to my life” (i.e., prioritizing what is most important now). It is most desirable if the decision to withdraw from the training program is mutual (Russell, DuPree, Beggs, Peterson, & Anderson, 2007). Faculty can sometimes help a student consider this if the leave is framed as temporary.

An important theme in theological writings on calling is the idea of multiple calls: the summons comes over and over again. In commenting on John Donne’s preaching, Shaw (1981) observes, “God may, to speak precisely, call us but once, but such is his mercy that the call is repeated in our hearing through human voices and nature’s operations. We are thus given not one but numerous opportunities to respond” (p. 58). Johnson (2002) describes this as living “call to call,” a pattern of transition that is inherent in vocation (p. 134). One is

not called once and forever to specific tasks in ministry, in one’s family, or one’s work. Rather, the shape of one’s vocation changes over time. Thus, we should not ask “what am I called to” as a once and done enterprise. Schultze (2005) asserts “the mystery of vocation is more like an unfolding relationship than a carefully planned trip...an ongoing journey, not a one-time blast of revelation or a straight trajectory” (p. 13-14). Since human beings live in time, it follows that God’s call comes not just once, but rather is on on-going conversation over an entire lifetime (Lewis, 1989).

Defining or Re-defining Calling

Mentors might need to expand students’ understanding of calling—broadening the focus on a specific occupation to overall area of passion and gifting; that is, those unique interests and talents that Hardy (1990) describes as “indicators of the divine intent” (p. 83). Perhaps the student lacks the interpersonal skills needed for counseling practice but has the analytic and writing skills for research (Wester & Borders, 2013). Sometimes, mentors can help open up students to previously unknown possibilities. Faculty might also need to redefine calling as more than an internal impression, teaching the student that external evidence is part of discerning of a call (Hardy, 1990). Since competence is multidimensional, this should entail educating students more explicitly on the demands of the field for which they are training and examining the student’s track record in demonstrating requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and qualities needed for that field—to help the student see if there is a match (Overholser & Fine, 1990).

Students, as well as the general public, often do not understand the distinct training, credentialing, and scope of practice for various mental health professions (Fall, Levitov, Jennings, & Eberts, 2000; Gale & Austin, 2003; Jones, Vela, Vang, & Walden, 2006; McDonald, Wantz, & Firmin, 2014). College students reported their perceptions of professional counselors emerged from the media, word of mouth, and personal experiences—sources which might lack accurate detail or erroneously portray the profession (Firmin, Wantz, Firmin, & Johnson, 2012). Therefore, the mentoring process for graduate trainees might require exploring with the student her or his unique gifts, interests, and values as well as also educating the student about the particular demands for competence in the given profession (Ladany et al., 2016; Overholser & Fine, 1990). In doing so, the faculty advisor explores both sides of the person-environment equation to help the student discern degree of fit.

Christian writers overwhelmingly stress accurate self-awareness as crucial to discerning calling, and that this awareness comes by listening. Buechner (1983)

urges “listen to your life” (p. 87), and by this he means to reflect deeply on the totality of one’s experiences for God’s voice. In doing so, one gains greater self-knowledge and subsequently, greater clarity of calling. Palmer (2000) explains,

That insight [listening] is hidden in the word *vocation* itself, which is rooted in the Latin for “voice.” Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am...The deepest vocational question is not “What ought I to do with my life?” It is more elementary and demanding “Who am I? What is my nature?” (p. 4, 15)

The existential question, “Who am I?” is fundamental to discerning calling. This search for identity encompasses needs, longings, passions, interests, and values to be sure, but also examination of aptitudes, abilities, and (Christians believe) God-given spiritual gifts (Edwards, 1988). Mentors can urge students to this careful listening, as discerning who we are means “we must be willing to hear the appealing and the unappealing, the familiar and the unfamiliar. If we become selective, we may turn a deaf ear to God” (Farnham et al., 1991, p. 31).

Institutional Support for Gatekeeping

The fact that calling is discerned in the context of community means not only that students need faculty feedback to help them discern person-environment fit, but also that faculty need personal and institutional support for their roles in the gatekeeping/mentoring process (Robiner, Fuhrman, & Risvedt, 1993; Strom-Gottfried, 2000). Faculty are not immune to bias, distortion, and blind spots—regarding themselves or their students, nor are they immune from the fear of fallout for intervening with poorly performing students. Both non-tenured and tenured faculty members reported similar concerns about the influence of lawsuit fears on their own and their colleagues’ motivation to screen deficient students (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). However, non-tenured faculty members reported greater concerns about institutional pressures and the threat of receiving poor teaching evaluations than did their tenured colleagues.

Similarly, in a study of faculty at Christian institutions, perception of inadequate administrative support was negatively correlated with their intervention with poorly performing students, whereas the presence of formalized gatekeeping policies and procedures facilitated intervention (Palmer et al., 2008). More specifically, faculty need to see themselves as

part of the external community that confirms (or disconfirms) students’ internal sense of calling, and they need support from one another and their institution to fully serve that mentoring function with their students—especially with deficient students (Baldo, Softas-Nail, & Shaw, 1997; Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Darr, Moore, & Snyder, 2003; Enochs & Etzbach, 2004).

Conclusion

Tisdale (2004) describes her own journey in discerning her call as a clinician and urges professionals to reflect on their work as a calling. Graduate school is a unique opportunity to “do in order to know” (Johnson, 2002, p. 103) and to use the “true reasoning” that Parsons (1909, p. 5) recommended for choosing a vocation. Sayers (1947) believes work reflects the creativity generously given by the Creator, and thus she argues “the only Christian work is good work well done” (p. 58). If she is correct, then excellence in performance can be viewed as confirmation of divine calling. Brouwer (2006) describes this high-quality performance with a phrase used in the acting profession: getting “off book” is when one knows the role so well, it is internalized, and therefore the actor is free to improvise. Thus, far from being ungracious or thwarting God’s calling, faculty must assess whether students have the raw capacity to achieve being “off book” and become truly excellent in the profession (Borders, 2014; Sperry, 2010). If so, they can be confident in affirming that person’s calling or mission.

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Developing Spiritual Competence: A Look at a Counseling and Spirituality Course

Emily M. Schweiger, Janet L. Muse-Burke, and Micalena I. Sallavanti

The ACA (2014), ASERVIC (2009), and CACREP (2016) standards indicate that counselors must be able to address clients' religious and spiritual needs. Despite this, counseling programs often fail to incorporate religion and spirituality into the curriculum (Adams, Puig, Baggs, & Wolff, 2015). In order to increase student counselors' spiritual competency, a Counseling and Spirituality graduate course was developed at a CACREP-accredited program. Students' spiritual awareness and competence were found to generally increase following the course.

Keywords: spiritual competence, spiritual awareness, counselor education

In order to be considered competent, it is necessary that counselors meet the needs of a diverse range of clients (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014). This diverse range includes clients who are religious or hold any spiritual belief. Data reveal that 63% of adults in a sample of 35,071 identified as being "absolutely certain," and 20% identify as being "fairly certain" that they believe in God (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2014). Following these findings, Saw, Bayne, and Lorelle (2012) and Adams et al. (2015) explain that religious and spiritual beliefs play an important role in clients' lives. Furthermore, it has been said that religion and spirituality are "...among the most important factors which structure human experience, beliefs, values, and behavior, as well as illness patterns" (Lukoff, Turner, & Lu, 1992, p. 56). Self-actualization is an important goal of counseling, and "for some clients, self-actualization involves a religious perspective" (Cashwell et al., 2013, p. 46). In order for counselors to be prepared to handle religion and spirituality within a counseling setting, counselors must receive proper training. As such, the purpose of this pilot study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a new course in Counseling and Spirituality for increasing counselor trainees' personal spirituality and spiritual competence.

Defining Spirituality and Religiosity

In training on religion and spirituality, it is

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important to differentiate between the two terms as well as understand the manners in which they overlap. Richards and Bergin (1997) define religiosity as that which, "...has to do with theistic beliefs, practices, and feelings that are often, but not always, expressed institutionally and denominationally as well as personally..." (p. 13). Spirituality, on the other hand, when defined inclusively, is "the part of one's identity that is concerned with purpose and meaning in life, interdependence with others, inner peace, and transcendence" (Muse-Burke & Sallavanti, in press, p. 4). Religion and spirituality are similar but distinct, and throughout this study, an emphasis is placed on spirituality, as it is inclusive and might encompass people who are religious as well as individuals who identify as spiritual but not religious.

Spiritual Competencies

The Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC), the ACA Code of Ethics, and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) further the idea that religion and spirituality play a role in counseling, as all mention spiritual and religious competence. ASERVIC (2009) initially created a list of 14 competencies that fall under six main topics: Culture and Worldview, Counselor Self-Awareness, Human and Spiritual Development, Communication, Assessment, and Diagnosis and

Treatment. These spiritual competencies necessitate that counselors are aware of the differences between religion and spirituality, explore their own beliefs, utilize religious or spiritual concepts that are amenable to the client, gain a general understanding of the client's religious or spiritual beliefs during the intake process, and set goals consistent with the client's beliefs (ASERVIC, 2009). The 14 competencies express the knowledge counselors should have about spirituality and religion along with ways in which counselors ought to be prepared to integrate or address religion and spirituality in counseling. For the purpose of this study, and consistent with the spiritual competence literature, spiritual competence is defined as understanding "...the differences between spirituality and religion; the differences between spirituality, religion, and culture; and a counselor's obligation to remain open to spiritual and religious references by the client" (Robertson, 2010, p. 12).

Complementing this portion of the ASERVIC competencies, the 2014 version of the ACA Code of Ethics also addresses spirituality. Specifically, it notes in Section E.8., Multicultural Issues/Diversity in Assessment, that counselors must recognize the effects of religion and spirituality. Required to adhere to this code of ethics, counselors have a duty to their clients to be competent in spiritual and religious matters when completing assessment. Additionally, in their 2016 standards, CACREP (2015) has included spiritual competence as a specific requirement. In Section F.2.g., under Social and Cultural Diversity, the CACREP standards state that "the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews" must be covered in the curriculum of accredited programs (CACREP, 2015, p. 10). As such, there is a growing expectation that ethical counselors will be competent to work with a variety of clients who identify as spiritual.

Counselor Training in Spirituality and Religiosity

Despite the great number of clients who possess religious and spiritual beliefs (Shaw et al., 2012), and the spiritual competencies of which counselors must be aware, "...legitimate concerns can be raised about the adequacy of spiritual/religious diversity training" (McMinn et al., 2014, p. 51-52). In fact, in many CACREP-accredited counselor education programs, there is not a specific course on religious or spiritual issues, and therefore, the only place in which the information might be learned is through general courses on multiculturalism (Henriksen, Polonyi, Bornsheuer-Boswell, Greger, & Watts, 2015). Unfortunately, the lack of spiritual and religious training might be

attributed to the long-standing, intense separation between the mental health professions and religion (Richards & Bergin, 2000). Some believe that religion and spirituality are not as important to the multicultural training of counselors as other topics, such as ethnicity or gender (Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006). Also, because many counselor educators were not trained in religious and spiritual issues, graduate programs might be slow to incorporate religion and spirituality into the curriculum, as there might not be faculty who are competent to teach such courses (Hage et al., 2006).

Notwithstanding the lack of training, most counselors believe that they should be trained in religious and spiritual matters. In a study done by Henriksen et al. (2015), of 113 counseling students, only five felt that religious and spiritual beliefs should play no role in the counseling process. Most participants reported that religious and spiritual beliefs should play some role, an important role, or a significant role in counseling (Henriksen et al., 2015). Similarly, in a study conducted by Young, Cashwell, Wiggins-Frame, and Belaire (2002), counseling students rated the importance of the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies with moderately strong agreement, suggesting the importance of the competencies in counselor training. Additionally, according to a study conducted by Young, Wiggins-Frame, and Cashwell (2007), American Counseling Association members are in strong support of utilizing the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies in counselor training programs.

Addressing spirituality and religion in counselor training programs can take many forms. One important aspect of training counselors on spiritual and religious issues aligns with the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies and maintains that counselors should be trained to recognize their personal beliefs (Shaw et al., 2012). Additionally, Briggs and Rayle (2005) note that it is important for counselors to be taught the difference between religion and spirituality as well as the importance of respecting different religious and spiritual issues. Furthering this idea, Henriksen et al. (2015) developed a data-based model that identifies the important components of meeting students' training needs regarding religion and spirituality. Components that require stronger training include: (a) personal development, (b) self-discovery and clarification, (c) additional education, (d) the role of religion and/or spirituality in the counseling process and ethical counseling practice, and (e) counselor supervision (Henriksen et al., 2015).

One course discussed in the literature focused on expanding awareness of spirituality, increasing awareness of students' own spiritual development, and

increasing confidence in addressing spiritual issues with clients (Curtis & Glass, 2002). This course resulted in a significant increase in students' confidence in their ability to address spiritual issues, a decrease in students' judgmental thoughts, and an increase in beliefs that using spirituality in counseling might be useful to clients (Curtis & Glass, 2002). Notably, after examining 14 different syllabi on introductory courses in spirituality and counseling, Cashwell and Young (2004) found a lack of convergence, which might warrant additional standardization across courses so as to effectively facilitate the development of spiritually competent counselors. Similarly, Shaw et al. (2012) note there are very few articles that provide information on how a spirituality course should be structured for counseling trainees. There is no prescribed framework for a spirituality course within counselor training programs, so this study will help to fill the gap in a lacking area of research.

Hypotheses

Based on this review of literature, the purpose of this pilot study was to examine the effectiveness of a new counseling and spirituality course for counselors-in-training. Specifically, spiritual competence and personal spirituality were assessed for change before and after a six-week, 3-credit graduate course on counseling and spirituality. It was expected that students' personal spirituality (Inclusive Spirituality Index; ISI; Muse-Burke, 2005) and spiritual competence (Spiritual Competency Scale; SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2010) would increase following the Counseling and Spirituality course. Further, students' posttest personal spirituality scores (ISI; Muse-Burke, 2005) were expected to exceed the mean score ($M = 239.2$) of the norming sample (Muse-Burke, 2005). Likewise, students' posttest spiritual competence scores (SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2010) were anticipated to surpass the threshold for spiritual competency (score = 105; Robertson, 2010). In addition to examining personal spirituality and spiritual expertise, ratings of the course were reviewed to assess student satisfaction and learning outcomes. It was hypothesized that students' ratings of the completion of course objectives and satisfaction with the course would be greater than the midpoint scores of each measure (i.e., course objectives score > 4.0, satisfaction with course score > 3.0).

Method

Participants

Ten students enrolled in a graduate course entitled

Counseling and Spirituality at a small, Catholic, liberal arts university in Pennsylvania participated in the study. The university includes CACREP accredited programs in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling. The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the university, and participants participated in an informed consent procedure. No compensation was offered to the participants for taking part in this study. Eight of the 10 participants provided demographic information. All eight participants identified as being white. The gender of the participant included seven women and one transwoman. The ages of the eight participants ranged from 22 to 68, with a mean of 33 ($SD = 16.41$). Of the eight participants, seven identified as graduate students, and one as a school counselor. Six participants were pursuing a degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The remaining graduate student was pursuing a Master's degree in Psychology. Five participants identified as Catholic, two as Christian, and one as Agnostic/Spiritual. Frequency of religious practice per month ranged from daily to two times per month.

Intervention

The course on counseling and spirituality provided didactic and experiential opportunities related to integrating spirituality and religiosity into counseling. By creating a safe place to discuss religious and spiritual experiences, the course sought to increase students' knowledge of religion and spirituality and awareness of personal religious and spiritual beliefs. The class was designed to teach students about the ethical issues associated with incorporating religion and spirituality into counseling and to help students become knowledgeable of the empirical mental health literature related to spirituality and religion. The course covered a variety of topics related to religion and spirituality, including ethics, theoretical frameworks, qualitative and quantitative assessment, world religions, counselor self-awareness, and group counseling. Students were taught how to incorporate religion and spirituality into counseling sessions through techniques that enhanced gratitude, forgiveness, and mindfulness.

Before each class, students were required to read various articles on religion and spirituality (e.g., ASERVIC, 2009; Briggs & Rayle, 2005; Cashwell et al., 2013). In addition, students completed readings from a book on world religions (Schouler, 2010). During class, the teaching methods included lecture, experiential ice breakers, group discussions, and spiritual practices. The integration of experiential ice breakers and spiritual practices provided students with a unique learning opportunity, as students were able to

participate in meditation, yoga, bible study, and mindfulness during class time.

Students were required to complete three writing assignments. First, they wrote a reflection paper based on their experience creating a spiritual genogram (Frame, 2001). This assignment was developed to help students gain greater self-awareness of their religious and spiritual backgrounds. Students also completed a review of a spiritual book chosen from a list of authors provided by the course instructor (e.g., Pema Chodron, Viktor Frankl, and Caroline Myss). The purpose of this assignment was to teach students analysis skills to incorporate bibliotherapy into counseling. Lastly, students completed a paper on a religious or spiritual practice in which they participated outside of class; students were required to choose a practice with which they had little or no familiarity. The goal of this assignment was to extend students' empirical and experiential knowledge of specific spiritual interventions and help students gain awareness of their personal reactions.

Measures

Spiritual Competency Scale. The Spiritual Competency Scale (SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2010), based on the ASERVIC (2009) Spiritual Competencies, was designed to assess the effectiveness of training in spirituality and counseling and provide quantitative data on spiritual competency (Robertson, 2010). The SCS-R-II includes 21-items that are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = *High Disagreement*, 6 = *High Agreement*). Items are summed to attain a total score, with no items being reverse-scored. A total score of 105 or higher indicates spiritual competency. Items are written to be harmonious with wording found within the literature on counseling and spirituality, and each can be matched with an ASERVIC competency (Robertson, 2010). The SCS-R-II has an internal consistency of .84 and six factors that account for 61% of the variance in scores (Dailey, Robertson, & Gill, 2015). Reliability of individual factors range from .61 to .85 (Dailey et al., 2015).

Inclusive Spirituality Index. The Inclusive Spirituality Index (ISI; Muse-Burke, 2005) is a measure used to assess the four dimensions of spirituality as defined by Muse-Burke and Sallavanti (in press; i.e., purpose and meaning in life, interdependence with others, inner peace, and transcendence). The ISI utilizes 47 self-report items, 22 of which are reverse scored. Respondents rate their agreement with each of these items on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Items are summed for a total score ranging from 47 to 329; higher scores indicate a higher level of spirituality. The ISI displays

high internal consistency, $\alpha = .91$, and high test-retest reliability over a 3 and one half week period, $r = .87$, $p < .0001$ (Muse-Burke, 2005).

Course Objectives Survey. The Course Objectives Survey was designed by the second author to assess the effectiveness of the Counseling and Spirituality course. Students completed the survey at the end of the course, rating the extent to which course objectives were met. Students were asked to reflect on course learning objectives found within the syllabus and rate the degree to which they believe the learning objectives were met using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *completely*). Seven items were rated for the course learning objectives; eight items were rated for course activities; and a section was provided in which students might provide written comments. There is no reliability or validity data available for this measure.

University Course Evaluations. The University Course Evaluation is an anonymous survey that students complete electronically for all courses at the university at which the Counseling and Spirituality course was offered. Students rate nine questions concerning course organization and planning, four questions on student/faculty interaction, and six questions about the course experience overall using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *strongly agree*). Results are returned to the professor by means of percentages for each item. There is no reliability or validity data available for this measure.

Follow-up Survey. The Follow-up Survey, created by the researchers, consists of five open-ended questions that participants were asked to answer honestly. Questions inquired about what participants learned about themselves, their families, others, being a counselor, and what impressions they gained about religious/spiritual practices.

Demographic Questionnaire. Participants were asked to complete a demographics questionnaire designed by the researchers, which included questions on age, gender, ethnicity, graduate student status, religious orientation, and frequency of religious practice.

Procedure

Data were collected on three separate occasions for this study: (a) the first day of the six-week Counseling and Spirituality summer course, (b) the last day of the course, and (c) two months after the completion of the course. Participants were asked to complete paper copies of the Inclusive Spirituality Index (ISI; Muse-

Burke, 2005) and the Spiritual Competency Scale (SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2010), which were distributed and collected at the start of the first and the last day of class. At the conclusion of the course, participants were also asked to fill out paper copies of the Course Objectives Survey and an online version of the University Course Evaluation. Two months after the last day of the course, participants were sent an email to inform them that they would receive follow-up data collection measures in the mail. Participants were mailed the ISI (Muse-Burke, 2005), SCS-R-II (Robertson, 2010), the Demographic Questionnaire, and the Follow-up Survey. In addition to these measures, participants were provided with business return envelopes and instructions to mail the completed measures back to the researchers. Surveys were scored after the second author submitted final grades for the course, and students' surveys were coded with names removed. As such, participation in the research and survey scores had no impact on course final grades.

Results

In order to address the hypotheses, mean scores for the Inclusive Spirituality Index (ISI; Muse-Burke, 2005), Spiritual Competency Scale (SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2010), Course Objectives Survey, and University Course Evaluations were examined. First, it was hypothesized that the individual spirituality of participants, as measured by the ISI (Muse-Burke, 2005), would increase from pretest to post-test. The results support this hypothesis, with a pretest mean of 254.0 and a post-test mean of 274.5. The increase, however, as examined by a paired samples t-test, was not significant. Similarly, it was hypothesized that participants' spiritual competency, as measured by the SCS-R-II (Robertson, 2010), would increase from pretest to post-test. At pretest, participants had a mean score of 107.8, and they finished the post-test with a mean of 112.9. A paired samples t-test was conducted and revealed that the change in scores was not significant.

Also, it was hypothesized that participants' personal spirituality (ISI) would be greater than the norming sample at post-test. The norming score for the ISI is $M = 253.29$ ($SD = 30.99$; Muse-Burke, 2005), which participants exceeded with a mean score of 274.5 ($SD = 25.63$) at post-test. Likewise, it was hypothesized that participants' spiritual competency would be greater than the threshold for spiritual competency (SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2010) at post-test. A score of 105 or higher on the SCS-R-II indicates spiritual competency (Dailey, et al., 2015), and participants received a mean score of 112.9 at post-test, supporting the hypothesis.

Finally, it was expected that participants would rate items on the Course Objectives Survey and the University Course Evaluations higher than the midpoints of 4.0 and 3.0, respectively. On the Course Objectives Survey, an item that concerned developing knowledge about the potential negative effects of religion and spirituality received the lowest rating, with a mean rating of 5.95. The highest ratings were found for meeting the course objective of providing a safe environment to discuss spiritual experiences and for using lecture, discussions, and activities as experiences that contributed to learning. Both items received a mean rating of 6.8. The mean score of all the items was 6.02, which is higher than the midpoint of 4.0. The University Course Evaluation resulted in a mean score of 4.6 for the "Course Organization and Planning" section, a mean score of 4.4 for the "Student/Faculty Interaction" section, and a mean score of 4.7 for the "Overall Evaluation" section. The mean score of all the items was 4.7, which is higher than the midpoint of 3.0. As such, both hypotheses were supported.

Follow-up data was collected two-months after the course concluded, at which time participants' average scores on the ISI (Muse-Burke, 2005) and SCS-R-II (Robertson, 2010) were 278.25, and 113.25, respectively. This shows a slight increase from their personal spirituality and spiritual competency scores reported at the end of the semester. As part of the follow-up data, qualitative answers were collected regarding what participants learned about themselves, their families, and others from partaking in the course. Information was also gathered in relation to what participants learned about being a counselor and religious/spiritual practices. One participant noted that, "[t]hrough the class concluded months ago, I still reflect daily on what we did throughout the course." In response to a question involving learning about one's family, another participant stated, "[w]e are much more diverse than I thought," and another participant said, "[r]eligion has a lot more to do with the quality of relationships between members than I realized."

On the topic of impressions gained about religious and spiritual practices, one participant expressed that "many [practices] have a lot of the same foundations and share many similarities," while a different participant noted, "I had not been very educated on the variations of religions and/or their beliefs—I have gained respect for others, even those who don't have similar beliefs or have no beliefs...." Another participant concluded that "...spirituality can be felt and understood differently by each person. Some practices are better for some people." Finally, when asked about the clinical implications of the course, participants made comments such as, "[i]t is important to be spiritually educated and without being content with yourself, you can't work on someone else"; "[i]f a

client wants to discuss religion or spirituality I want to be open and willing; now I know how”; “...spirituality is a vital piece to the lives of many & it would be negligent of me to not keep myself educated and competent in this area”; and “recognizing your biases is important, so you do not cause harm to clients.”

Discussion

The current pilot study investigated the change in students' spiritual competency and personal spirituality after the completion of a graduate level Counseling and Spirituality course. The study also reviewed course evaluation and participant comments in order to understand the class' utility and impact. It is important to examine the effectiveness of this course, since religion and spirituality classes might become a necessary part of counseling programs in the future in accordance with ASERVIC (2009), ACA (2014), and CACREP (2015) guidelines.

Following the course, it was found that spiritual competency increased, but this increase was not statistically significant. The small sample size in the current pilot study likely accounts for the lack of statistical significance, and a larger sample size might provide the necessary power (Cohen, 1992) to discern a statistically significant change. Notably, the pretest SCS-II-R group score indicates the group had already achieved spiritual competence prior to taking the course. This might be attributed to the fact that students self-selected this class because of interest in the topic. It is possible that counselor trainees who are personally or professionally invested in the topic of spirituality maintain a competence prior to receiving coursework. Future research might examine the effectiveness of a required course in Counseling and Spirituality for students who do not have strong personal or professional interest in the topic.

Despite the lack of significance, an increase in spiritual competency points to the potential value to the course. Cashwell and Young (2004) contend that the best framework for spirituality courses involves addressing spiritual competencies. Additional research indicates that counselors need to be trained in spiritual competency in order to prevent countertransference and deepen rapport with clients (Magaldi-Dopman, Park-Taylor, & Ponterotto, 2011). The current course incorporated the ASERVIC (2009) competencies through teaching definitions, theoretical frameworks, assessments, and techniques related to religion and spirituality. Each lecture topic and experiential exercise was developed to address specific ASERVIC competencies and to provide students with a toolbox of spiritual and religious interventions (Cox, 2013). Moreover, the course focused on the ASERVIC (2009)

competencies related to developing religious and spiritual self-awareness. This took place through icebreakers, group discussions, self-assessment, and course assignments, such as the spiritual genogram and the spiritual practice paper.

The personal spirituality of the participants also increased after the course was completed by nearly one standard deviation. Again, while this change was not statistically significant, it is possible that a larger sample would demonstrate the course increases personal spirituality in a meaningful way (Cohen, 1992). Similar to the SCS-R-II (Robertson, 2010), students had higher than average scores, compared to the norming scores, on the ISI (Muse-Burke, 2005) at pretest. Self-selection into the course due to interest in the topic likely explains this outcome. As such, students who are inclined to enroll in an elective course on Counseling and Spirituality are more likely to identify as personally spiritual. Future research might examine reasons for taking an elective course on spirituality and counseling and how this relates to integration of spirituality in counseling.

The increase in personal spirituality from pretest to posttest might be related to the spiritual icebreakers in which students engaged throughout the class. For example, there were several activities related to mindfulness, and previous research indicates that spirituality levels increase with mindfulness meditation training (Carmody, Reed, Kristeller, & Merriam, 2008; Greeson et al., 2011; Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998). The repeated practice of mindfulness throughout the Counseling and Spirituality course could have positively impacted students' spiritual growth, resulting in higher posttest scores.

While the overall trends demonstrated positive changes in SCS-R-II (Robertson, 2010) and ISI (Muse-Burke, 2005) scores, a few participants showed lowered scores from pretest to post-test, which might be the result of several factors. In particular, on the SCS-R-II (Robertson, 2010), three participant's scores dropped from pretest to post-test; the average drop was 7.33 points. With the ISI (Muse-Burke, 2005), two participants' scores decreased from pretest to post-test; the average drop was 11.5 points. The researchers hypothesize that the course resulted in an increase in self-awareness regarding spirituality and spiritual competence, and this self-awareness might have led to a more critical self-evaluation of one's spirituality and spiritual competence. Adams et al. (2015) discussed a heightened awareness that is important to training on spiritual issues. This heightened awareness might have caused students to appraise themselves more critically, resulting in a lowered post-test score. Yet, given the positive, overall trend, it appears unlikely that completion of the course decreased one's spirituality and spiritual competence. Assessment of self-awareness

at pretest might have been useful for determining its impact on these outcomes.

To gain additional insight into the value and utility of the Counseling and Spirituality course, the counselors-in-training were asked to complete the Course Objectives Survey and University Course Evaluation. As hypothesized, students rated all items on both inventories well above the midpoints. This indicates that students believed class learning objectives generally were met, and they generally were satisfied with the course. On the Course Objectives Survey, the item that received the lowest rating involved developing knowledge about the potential negative effects of religion and spirituality. This low rating could be a result of time restraints, which led to less focus being placed on the harmful influences. The course might benefit from including additional class activities and assignments related to this objective. Students designated the highest ratings to items that referenced providing a safe environment to discuss spiritual experiences and using lecture, discussions, and activities as experiences that contributed to learning. In the Counseling and Spirituality course, emphasis was placed on creating a safe space where students could share their thoughts and feelings in order to learn from one another's experiences and insights. The high ratings indicate that students not only felt safe to engage in discussions but also learned from the class conversation. Further, the ratings denote that students gained useful information from the in-class lectures and activities. This provides helpful insight regarding the mode of delivery through which students might best learn about religion and spirituality.

Results from the University Course Evaluation signify that students were satisfied with the class and thought it was a worthwhile learning experience. Students rated each section of the evaluation (i.e., Course Organization and Planning, Student/Faculty Interaction, and Overall Evaluation) as higher than the midpoint. This provides important information about the design of the course, indicating that students generally felt the class was well planned and organized. Consequently, educators might find it useful to implement similar design components in spirituality training for counseling students. It is important to note, however, that participants were not required to take the class but chose to do so, perhaps explaining the clearly positive results. Students who do not value spirituality and religiosity might have divergent reactions if required to complete coursework in this area.

In regard to the Follow-up Survey, participants provided useful responses that counselor educators might wish to consider when deciding whether or not to implement a course on spirituality and counseling. The responses were generally positive and frequently mentioned the ways in which each student learned and

grew through the course. Several students commented on how they developed greater self-awareness, stating, "I feel more self-aware," "... I learned more about my own ignorance and prejudices in regards to religion," "I learned my personal relationships are affected by religion," and "...I connected with pieces of myself that I haven't ever explored." These responses correspond with the ASERVIC (2009) competencies related to self-awareness, suggesting the course successfully addressed this material. Answers to the Follow-up Survey also indicate that the course corresponded with the ASERVIC (2009) competencies on culture and worldviews. Students provided various responses demonstrating that they became more knowledgeable about spirituality and religion, such as "I didn't realize how profound an individual's religious or spiritual beliefs and practices, or lack thereof, were on their lives," "[I learned] that many [religions] have a lot of the same foundations and share many similarities," and "I learned that spirituality can be felt and understood differently by each person." Overall, the responses signify that students became more competent, which will enable them to better address the religious and spiritual needs of their clients.

Limitations

The current pilot study contained multiple limitations. As previously mentioned, the small number of participants limits this study, as significant change between pretest and post-test might have been found if there had been sufficient power (Cohen, 1992). An additional limitation is the fact that participants self-selected into the course; students mandated to take a course in counseling and spirituality might result in different outcomes. Also, the small sample lacked diversity, as all the participants were women and one was a transwoman, all identified as being white, and all but one identified as being Christian. Additionally, participant responses might have been affected by the collection of study data by the instructor of the course. It is possible that students were concerned with impression management and might have provided favorable ratings of themselves and the course to please the instructor. That being said, participants were informed that data would not be reviewed or analyzed by the course instructor or primary author until after grades were submitted, so to better ensure students were honest in completing the rating scales.

Conclusion

Based on the participants in this pilot study, it appears that a course in Counseling and Spirituality can improve spiritual competence and personal spirituality.

It is vital that counselor education programs include courses on religion and spirituality or take more time discussing these matters within current courses in order to facilitate the development of competent and ethical counselors (ACA, 2014; ASERVIC, 2009; CACREP, 2015). Counselors must be prepared to work with a diverse range of clients, and given that most individuals in the United States hold some spiritual or religious belief (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2014), the chances of a client being spiritual or religious are high. Certain skills and a specialized knowledge base are necessary to effectively address spiritual and religious issues or beliefs in counseling (Robertson, 2010), necessitating training on this significant topic (Hage et al., 2006). Therefore, based on this preliminary research study, counseling training programs are encouraged to consider offering a course specific to counseling and spirituality for students. Moreover, researchers are encouraged to continue to investigate the efficacy of this type of training for increasing counselors' spiritual competence.

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Triadic or Individual? Developmental Considerations for Clinical Supervision

Kimberly M. Jayne and Katherine E. Purswell

Numerous models for counseling supervision exist, and decision-making criteria are needed for counselor educators to determine the appropriate supervision modality for counselors-in-training. The authors explore existing research on supervision modalities, professional development literature, and use of triadic and individual supervision in light of the overall purposes of supervision.

Keywords: supervision, counselor development, CACREP, triadic supervision

Supervision is one of the cornerstones of counselor education and is a legal and ethical requirement for counselors-in-training as established by accrediting agencies and state regulatory boards (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2016) requires that each student receive, on average, one hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision and one-and-a-half hours per week of group supervision during practicum or internship experiences. The current supervision standards originated with the 2001 revision of the CACREP standards for supervision of counselors-in-training, which changed to include triadic supervision, “a tutorial and mentoring relationship between a member of the counseling profession and two counseling students,” (CACREP, 2016, p. 44) as an adjunct or alternative to individual supervision. In spite of limited conceptual and empirical evidence for the efficacy of triadic supervision, many CACREP-accredited programs utilize the triadic modality given the time and cost efficiency of supervising two students concurrently (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 2011; Lyman, 2010).

In 2011, the ACES Executive Board adopted standards for best practices in clinical supervision that emphasized the need for supervision modalities and interventions to match the individual needs of supervisees. Specifically, the task force members who created the report recommended that supervisors select interventions “based on the assessment of the supervisee’s developmental level, confidence, self-

efficacy, and learning style; the clinical and supervision contexts; and the needs of the client” (ACES, 2011, p. 5). When utilizing triadic supervision, the supervisor has the responsibility to conduct supervision in a manner that meets the needs of both supervisees in each session. The ACES task force members further advised that time efficiency should not be a primary rationale for utilizing a triadic modality of supervision, and that triadic supervisors strive to effectively match supervisees, so that the development and skill of both supervisees is enhanced (ACES, 2011).

Although supervisors may find guidance from many established models of counseling supervision, no clearly stated decision-making criteria exist for counselor educators and supervisors to determine the appropriateness of triadic or individual supervision for counselors-in-training based on supervisees’ developmental needs. The purpose of this article is to provide considerations for decision-making in counselor education regarding the provision of triadic supervision as an alternative or adjunct to individual supervision for counselors-in-training. We will examine this issue in light of the overall purposes and goals of supervision, existing research on the efficacy of various supervision modalities, and research on the professional development of counselors across the lifespan. Throughout these discussions, we will provide recommendations for selecting developmentally appropriate supervision modalities in counselor training and discuss implications for counselor education and research.

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Purpose of Supervision

Supervision is considered essential for counselor development and is utilized to facilitate counselor competence and growth, evaluate and monitor the quality of services provided to clients, and to perform professional gatekeeping (American Counseling Association [ACA] Code of Ethics, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). Beyond these overarching goals, some specific functions of supervision include: promotion of supervisees' professional development (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Dollarhide & Granello, 2012), personal development (Borders, 2009; Scholl, McGowan, & Hansen, 2012), ability to think critically and with complexity (Granello, 2010), and self-exploration of counselors-in-training (Dollarhide & Granello, 2012) protection of client welfare (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Dollarhide & Granello, 2012); and enhancement of supervisees' knowledge of counseling theory and techniques.

To accomplish these varied functions of supervision, supervisors are responsible for relating and responding to supervisees in a personalized manner that promotes the development of each supervisee (ACES, 2011; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Borders & Brown, 2005). Skilled supervisors attend to individual variables, cultural factors, and issues of power and privilege that impact the supervisory relationship and the supervision process (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, F.2.b; ACES, 2011; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Dollarhide & Granello, 2012). The interpersonal relationship and working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee is central to the success and efficacy of supervision across supervision models and modalities because it provides the framework for supervisees' professional and personal development in the counseling profession (ACES, 2011; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2013).

Balancing gatekeeping, supervisee development, client welfare, and the supervisee-supervisor relationship are not simple tasks even in the most ideal circumstances. The complex demands of supervision are potentially multiplied in a triadic format due to the division of time and attention between two supervisees and responsibility to a greater number of clients. Supervisors may also be challenged as they aim to develop a strong working alliance with each supervisee and to manage group and power dynamics within the supervision triad (Borders et al., 2012). These issues may be compounded when peer supervisees have substantial developmental differences or are poorly matched (Hein & Lawson, 2008).

Research on Supervision Modalities

Researchers have obtained mixed results on the efficacy of individual, triadic, and group supervision for counselor development (Averitt, 1988; Bland, 2012; Lanning 1971; Newgent, Davis, & Farley, 2004; Nguyen, 2003; Ray & Altekruze, 2000). Although significant differences between the three modalities have not been established, some evidence supports the effectiveness of individual over triadic supervision (Newgent et al., 2004) and that triadic and individual supervision are not equivalent in terms of the supervisor-supervisee working alliance (Bakes, 2005). Qualitative research indicates that supervisors and supervisees value the contribution peers make to the process, including peer feedback and vicarious learning (Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009; Stinchfield, Hill, & Kleist, 2007). Triadic supervision may increase demands on supervisors and present challenging dynamics related to managing feedback (Derrick, 2010; Stinchfield et al., 2007). Furthermore, supervisees in triadic supervision who also received some amount of individual supervision, often benefited from the additional supervision sessions (Derrick, 2010; Lawson et al., 2009; Stinchfield et al., 2007).

Effectiveness Research

Lyman (2010) surveyed 276 counselor educators to explore their rationale and frequency of use of triadic supervision in CACREP-accredited programs. The author found that, of the 63.5% of counselor educators who used triadic supervision in their programs, 74.3% used it solely with master's students and 20.5% used it with both master's and doctoral students. Of those surveyed, 82.1% perceived triadic to be as effective or more effective than individual supervision with master's students and 90% perceived it to be as effective or more effective than individual supervision with doctoral students. Overall, the majority of counselor educators surveyed utilized triadic supervision and considered it an effective supervision modality.

With regard to group supervision, researchers found no significant differences between the effectiveness of group and individual supervision for counselor development (Averitt, 1988; Lanning 1971; Ray & Altekruze, 2000). Nguyen (2003) compared the efficacy of two triadic supervision formats and individual supervision and found no significant differences in effectiveness between either triadic modalities or individual supervision. In contrast, Newgent and colleagues (2004) found that supervisees considered individual supervision more effective and better at meeting their needs than triadic supervision.

In an investigation of the working alliance in triadic and individual supervision, Bakes (2005) found that supervisors and supervisees perceived the working

alliance differently in each modality and that the two modalities were not equivalent. However, when examining the impact of supervision modality on working alliance and counselor self-efficacy, Bland (2012) found no difference between individual and triadic supervision. Limitations across studies included absence of control groups, concurrent student participation in multiple supervision modalities, inadequate instruments to measure the desired constructs, and small sample sizes.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers explored perceptions of supervision and found triadic supervision increased the demands on supervisors who had to manage sometimes challenging dynamics between clinically inexperienced peers who likely had different personalities and could be at different developmental levels (Borders et al., 2012; Hein & Lawson, 2008). Supervisors found it challenging to concurrently meet the needs of both students when the students had very different capabilities and learning needs. They also found supervisors were sometimes able to fulfill a less directive and more facilitative role due to additional peer interaction in triadic supervision. Thus, triadic supervision had the advantage of capitalizing on peer interactions, but could also pose substantial challenges regarding the supervisor's ability to facilitate student growth when peers were not well-matched.

Time Management in Supervision. In their examination of supervisees' experiences in triadic supervision, Lawson et al. (2009) found that the triadic structure affords less time and attention for each supervisee. Similarly, in an exploration of supervisors' and supervisees' experiences in triadic supervision, Derrick (2010) found the triadic modality required increased structure, organization, and time in order to effectively meet supervisees' needs. Whereas triadic supervision provided more opportunities for vicarious learning, peer feedback, and support, supervisors found it challenging to adequately meet both students' needs, to adequately monitor client welfare, and to manage the dynamics of providing feedback to one student in front of another student who may be at a different ability or insight level dynamics or managing student feedback to one another (Borders et al., 2012; Derrick, 2010).

Researchers found that students benefited from individual supervision as a supplement to triadic supervision to share personal information with their supervisors, to discuss their experiences in triadic supervision, and to address client concerns (Derrick, 2010; Stinchfield et al., 2007). Others also recommended supervisors augment triadic with individual supervision to provide appropriate time and

attention for each student (Lawson et al., 2009). Stinchfield et al. (2007) noted that supervisees reported positive experiences within a triadic model designed to provide equal time and attention for each supervisee and to engage supervisees in active and reflective roles. However, students with less developed counseling skills or competency concerns may need increased individual attention (Lawson et al., 2009). If triadic supervision is used, the length and frequency can be increased (Lawson et al., 2009).

Supervisee Compatibility. Researchers found that both supervisees and supervisors recognized that compatibility and appropriate matching of peer supervisees was critical for students' growth; and that developmental differences between peer supervisees contributed to disparities in the time and attention provided to each supervisee and the perceived power differential between peers (Borders et al., 2012; Derrick, 2010). Lawson et al. (2009) also emphasized the importance of effectively matching supervisees, attending to compatibility between supervision peers, and encouraging collaboration between all members of the supervisory triad (Hein & Lawson, 2008; Lawson et al., 2009). Lawson et al. (2009) concluded that

a relatively high level of compatibility between supervision peers is necessary to achieve fundamental elements of supervision, which, in turn, contribute to an effective supervision process. In contrast, a low level of compatibility can result in varying degrees of impairment to both the process and outcome of triadic supervision. (pp. 454-455)

Poor compatibility between peer supervisees undermines safety and trust and contributes to restricted feedback processes as well as decreased openness, self-disclosure, learning, and support. Specific training and skill development is necessary for supervisors to effectively facilitate triadic supervision (Borders et al., 2012; Hein & Lawson, 2008).

In a complementary study, Hein, Lawson, and Rodriguez (2011) identified several factors that contribute to supervisee-peer compatibility, including: multicultural dimensions (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity), personality characteristics, previous counseling experience, cumulative life experiences, developmental level, counseling skills, conceptualization skills, maturity, motivation and willingness to learn, ability to engage in self-reflection, ability to provide feedback, receptivity to feedback, willingness to self-disclose, and affective expression. Researchers concluded that supervisees valued having a voice in the matching process (Derrick, 2010; Stinchfield et al., 2007) and recognized that incompatibility impacted their sense of safety and the overall productivity of triadic supervision (Derrick, 2010).

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative results of research on the various supervision modalities have been mixed. A high percentage of counselor educators utilize triadic supervision and believe it is helpful (Lyman, 2010), yet qualitative research highlights many disadvantages to triadic supervision, such as limited time and focus (Derrick, 2010) as well as challenges with supervisee incompatibility (Hein & Lawson, 2008; Lawson et al., 2009). Although triadic supervision has some benefits, they seem to only be present when supervisees are well-matched. Without clear, consistent research outcomes, counselor educators and supervisors must rely on existing research and theory to inform decision-making practices regarding supervision modality.

Counselor Development

Counselor development is among the important factors for supervisors to consider when determining the most appropriate supervision modality for counselors-in-training (ACES, 2011; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). Assessing each student's developmental level is critical for providing effective supervision and meeting students and clients' needs. Though there are many individual differences across the spectrum of professional development, several well-researched and established developmental models may be utilized to inform counselor educators' decision-making practices regarding the application of supervision modalities and interventions in CACREP-accredited counseling programs.

Skovholt and Ronnestad's (2003) lifespan developmental model, Stoltenberg and McNeill's (2010) integrated developmental model, and King and Kitchener's (2004) reflective judgment model provide potential frameworks for understanding counselor development. Each of these models provides insight into supervisory needs of beginning students entering formal training, advanced students in practicum and internship, and new professionals following completion of a master's degree through licensure and/or doctoral education. Table 1 includes a summary of key dimensions from each developmental model and potential benefits and limitations of utilizing triadic supervision at each phase of counselor development.

Beginning Students

Beginning level students typically include pre-practicum and beginning practicum students. These students tend to be highly anxious and eager to learn, and they may benefit most from individual supervision.

Overview of beginning students. When seeking

answers to complex problems that cannot be resolved through reasoning alone, King and Kitchener (2004) found individuals at the earliest level of reflective judgment view knowledge as concrete and absolute and reference authority figures to justify their beliefs and conclude that one view is right and all others are wrong (Table 1). Brabeck and Welfel (1985) found that master's level counseling trainees displayed the second level of reflective judgment, quasi-reflective judgment, in which they valued various perspectives, but were unable to differentially evaluate the quality of evidence to arrive at a current best answer. However, when faced with new, complex challenges, including clinical challenges, the students sometimes reverted to earlier levels of reflective judgment. This potential regression is consistent with research indicating beginning students often experience high levels of anxiety (Ronnestad & Skovolt, 2013). Because counseling represents the challenge of an ill-structured problem, which they approach with a high degree of self-focus and limited self-awareness (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010), beginning students tend to be highly dependent on external sources for direction and evaluation (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Dollarhide & Granello, 2012). They also tend to seek counseling approaches and methods that can be learned quickly and applied universally (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003) and seek the "right" or "best" approach to use with clients (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). This tendency toward concreteness and reliance on external authority to find "the" answer is only exacerbated by "high standards of performance, unrealistic expectations, the achievement orientation of academia, [and] fear of being unsuited for counseling/therapy work" (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003, p. 32-33).

Beginning students are often highly dependent on supervisors and sensitive to critical feedback (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). They may experience supervision as threatening and actively work to hide their anxiety and self-doubt (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). Because of their fears, beginning students also tend to present only positive aspects of their clinical work and avoid sharing difficulties openly in supervision. To address these issues, supervisors may need to provide higher levels of structure and direction in supervision to help reduce their anxiety and address their need for concrete skills. However, beginning students also need opportunities to struggle with the complexity and ambiguity of the counseling process, to explore multiple perspectives, and to practice self-reflection (King & Kitchener, 2004; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010).

Recommendations for beginning students. We recommend individual supervision for beginning level

students. When individual supervision is not possible on a weekly basis, it should be provided as an adjunct to triadic supervision at regular intervals. For beginning students, the presence of a peer in supervision may serve to increase performance anxiety and decrease self-disclosure. Supervisors may experience difficulty providing sufficient time to two supervisees with high needs for structure and to adequately monitor client welfare.

Despite these recommendations, individual student characteristics should be kept in mind when making the decision between supervision modalities. For example, peer presence in triadic supervision can normalize anxiety and provide an additional source of support and feedback for some students (Table 1). Further, the triadic modality can provide students with alternate perspectives and decrease self-focus, helping move them out of the pre-reflective stages of reflective judgment. We believe the negative aspects of triadic supervision outweigh the positive aspects and that many of the helpful components of triadic supervision can be achieved outside of the supervision modality through group supervision or peer observation and consultation.

Advanced Students

Advanced students typically include mid- to late-practicum and early- to mid-internship students. These students are developing confidence and independence, and may still depend on their supervisors for support and assistance. We recommend individual supervision or a combination of individual and triadic supervision for advanced students.

Overview of beginning students. Counselor educators and supervisors intend that by the end of practicum and the beginning of internship counseling students are moving into the advanced student role. Toward the end of their formal training, advanced students often feel pressure to excel in their work and have internalized high standards for professional functioning (Table 1; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). As a result, they tend to be cautious and to feel overly responsible in their professional roles. Advanced students may still feel insecure and vulnerable and actively seek validation and feedback from supervisors and peers. They function more independently but often experience a conflict between their growing sense of autonomy and their dependency on supervisors or instructors (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). During the quasi-reflective thinking stage that generally characterizes master's students and that may particularly characterize master's students once they have some counseling experience (Brabeck & Welfel, 1985), students have a growing awareness that

uncertainty is part of the knowing process and view knowledge as constructed, contextual, and subjective (King & Kitchner, 2004). Although evidence is used to justify beliefs, evidence is considered selectively to support established beliefs and the connection between evidence and specific beliefs is often tenuous.

Skovholt and Ronnestad (2003) emphasized that during the advanced student phase, "experiences in supervision have particular significance" (p. 15) and "can be a powerful source of influence" (p. 15). Advanced students are more likely to readily engage in a process of critical evaluation and assessment and tend to be more aware of the interplay between their personal and professional growth. These students may seek feedback from their supervisors in order to clarify their perspectives on conceptual, theoretical, and methodological issues but feel more freedom to reject supervisory feedback. Thus, tension, conflict, and resistance generally peak in supervision during this phase (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). According to Skovholt and Ronnestad (2003), the advanced student "has actively assimilated information from many sources but has still not had enough time to accommodate and find his or her own way of behaving professionally" (p. 71), a description that, again, resembles quasi-reflective judgment.

Recommendations. We believe that at the advanced student stage, individual supervision can be a powerful modality to allow for self-exploration as it leads to professional growth. However, supervisees at this level who are well-matched on interpersonal skills and self-insight may provide substantial support to one another. Still, we recommend that individual supervision be provided on a regular basis in lieu of or in tandem with triadic supervision to address potential conflict or to allow for a more confidential opportunity for self-exploration. At the advanced student stage of development, triadic supervision may again provide a normalizing experience for the supervisee (Table 1). The presence of a peer may also stimulate risk-taking and provide for vicarious learning. Additionally, a supervisee may more readily hear feedback from a peer than a supervisor. Having a third person present in supervision may help diffuse conflict or tension between a supervisor and one supervisee, but may do so in ways that obstruct healthy conflict resolution experiences. At the advanced stage of development, supervisees are still working to rely on their newfound confidence and comparing oneself to a peer or getting contradictory feedback from a peer and a supervisor may hinder this process.

New Professionals

New professionals are those who have recently

completed graduate training, but some late-internship students may be moving into this stage. At this stage, we generally recommend triadic supervision, but recognize that in some cases, individual supervision may be ideal.

Overview of new professionals. Following formal training and graduation, new professionals tend to engage in a developmental process of confirmation, disillusionment, and exploration (Table 1; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2013). Personal and professional integration increase as new professionals practice self-exploration and self-reflection and develop a more genuine and personalized approach to counseling (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Once they have experienced the complexity and ambiguity of clinical practice, new professionals tend to increasingly recognize the crucial roles the therapeutic relationship and the person of the therapist play in therapeutic outcome. New professionals also become more skilled in regulating boundaries and professional limits. Although new professionals experience insecurity and self-doubt at times, they have more confidence in their efficacy as counselors and trust their clinical judgment and decision-making than they did earlier in their development. Supervisees who reach the reflective thinking stage, view knowledge as, “the outcome of a process of reasonable inquiry in which solutions to ill-structured problems are constructed” (p. 7) and “conclusions are defended as representing the most complete, plausible, or compelling understanding of an issue on the basis of evaluable evidence” (King & Kitchner, 2004, p. 7). Reflective thinkers are open to new information and reevaluating their conclusions based on new and emerging evidence. King and Kitchner (2004) found that only some doctoral students demonstrated the most advanced level of reflective judgment; presumably, some new professionals remain at the quasi-reflective level and some advance.

Recommendations. For novice professionals, we prefer triadic supervision because it can be an opportunity to develop collegial relationships with supervisors and peers as supervisees transition out of the role of student into the role of professional. At this stage, the presence of peers can expose the supervisee to diverse clinical issues and multiple perspectives, something that can complement their focus on personal and professional integration and help them develop reflective thinking (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2013). Potential negatives to the triadic modality at this stage include limited self-disclosure or reflection due to limited time and the possibility that supervision is too generalized for personal integration. However, we believe the positives of developing collaborative relationships and being exposed to diverse clinical

experiences outweigh the negatives. As with all supervisees, the development and life circumstances of the individual must be taken into account. For example, individual supervision might be more appropriate if the supervisee is dealing with difficult personal life circumstances that could impact counseling effectiveness.

Summary of Developmental Models

Skovholt and Ronnestad’s (2003) lifespan developmental model, Stoltenberg and McNeil’s (2010) integrated developmental model, and King & Kitchener’s (2004) reflective judgment model have many implications for how counselor educators and supervisors make decisions regarding the use of triadic supervision for beginning students, advanced students, and new professionals. Although developmental models provide a general understanding of trajectory for counselor development, it is essential that supervisors acknowledge and respond to supervisees’ developmental differences and individual needs.

Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision

The following case example illustrates implications of supervision modality research and supervisee development research for counselor education and supervision. Henry and Chloe have been paired for practicum supervision because of their similar theoretical approach. Chloe is in her mid-twenties and self-identified as African American. She excelled in her pre-practicum class, demonstrating an ability to be empathic and non-judgmental toward clients. She has a natural relational capacity and was able to effectively integrate most supervisor feedback into sessions immediately. Toward the end of pre-practicum Chloe consistently demonstrated fundamental counseling skills, and much of Chloe’s supervision focused on the impact of her self-doubt or anxiety on her effectiveness in the sessions and on integration of theory in her counseling practice. Henry is a male in his early thirties who identifies as White and who had experienced difficulty in pre-practicum. In fact, at midterm he had been unsure whether he would pass. Henry initially struggled with demonstrating basic counseling skills and developing rapport with the client. Half-way through the semester, he experienced a qualitative change in his thinking and he was able to begin consistently responding in therapeutic ways to the client, but still struggled with falling back into excessive questioning and advice giving. Henry’s supervisor had concerns about the extent to which Henry had integrated counseling skills and attitudes

because Henry's responses sometimes seemed focused on pleasing the supervisor rather than meeting the client's needs.

In determining whether to utilize individual supervision, triadic supervision, or triadic supervision supplemented with individual supervision, the practicum instructor would need to consider which modality would best facilitate reaching the goals of supervision. Specifically, the supervisor would want to consider the developmental levels of the supervisees, the supervisor's ability to manage developmental differences and interpersonal concerns in supervision, the length of supervision sessions, how to address sociocultural factors, any programmatic restrictions (e.g. triadic supervision is the policy), and the compatibility of the supervisees. Below is a discussion of possible pros and cons to pairing the two together in supervision followed by a recommendation for supervision of these students.

The partnering of Chloe and Henry in practicum represents a potentially problematic pairing for triadic supervision. Chloe has left the beginning student phase and fully entered the advanced student phase. Henry, on the other hand, fluctuates between the beginning and advanced student phases without being firmly established in either. He is growing in self-confidence, but is still somewhat dependent on supervisors to tell him whether his responses are "right" or not. This discrepancy between phases of development can create challenges for the supervisor (Lawson, et al., 2009; Derrick, 2010). The supervisor may want to focus on building Henry's ability and confidence in demonstrating fundamental skills and limit risk-taking in session because Henry has not yet mastered the skills he needs to take risks appropriately. On the other hand, because of Chloe's developmental level and insight, the supervisor will likely encourage Chloe to take risks and trust her therapeutic judgment more. Rather than focusing primarily on skills, the supervisor is more likely to challenge Chloe to articulate her intentionality behind responses and to explore her personal philosophy or theory of counseling. These different needs may prove difficult for a supervisor to address simultaneously (Lawson et al., 2009; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). Pairing these students with a developmentally similar peer could help the supervisor make connections between peers and avoid unintentionally sending contradictory messages (i.e. focus on basic skills versus take risks).

If Chloe entered supervision with a well-formed argument regarding application of theory to practice that conflicted with the supervisor's view, the supervisor would consider this conflict an indication that she was developing appropriate self-confidence (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010) and quasi-reflective thinking (King & Kitchner,

2004). However, with Henry, disagreement with the supervisor's recommendation that he increase his rapport building or competency with fundamental skills would be a cause for concern due to Henry's limited self-awareness (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010) and his emphasis on "right" responses without a careful consideration of the context (King & Kitchner, 2004; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). Thus, the supervisor might have difficulty encouraging Chloe's increasing professional confidence while communicating concern toward Henry for frequent questioning of supervisor feedback. Triadic supervision might limit Chloe's willingness to express her disagreement and might limit the supervisor's ability to fully address concerns with Henry.

The potential for positive results from pairing Henry and Chloe in triadic supervision also exists. For example, Henry might learn from observing Chloe, and Chloe could develop further insight from explaining her rationale and providing feedback to Henry (Lawson et al., 2009). Further, their racial differences have the potential provide a space for greater understanding of others' experiences in the world as well as providing them with a supervised forum in which to address power and privilege issues. Depending on each student's level of racial development, placing them together could be a potentially positive or negative experience.

Although some benefits to placing these students together in triadic supervision exist, we argue that potential problems outweigh potential benefits and would recommend individual supervision for both students. If triadic supervision is the policy of the program, we would recommend placing these students with more developmentally similar peers and/or augmenting triadic supervision with individual supervision. We assume that competent supervisors of practicum students will address issues of race, gender, culture, and privilege with both of these students regardless of the modality used.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In the case example, we primarily addressed the beginning and advanced stages of supervision. New professionals may also benefit from increased personal attention in individual supervision as they seek to integrate personal and professional aspects of themselves into counseling. However, supervisees at this level may also benefit from the presence of a peer because of the increased exposure to differing viewpoints and counseling situations. For any level of supervisee development, extended time in triadic supervision or periodic individual sessions are often necessary in order to adequately meet supervisee and

client needs and to promote self-reflection and integration.

Whenever triadic supervision is used, compatibility between peers is essential to the process and outcome (Derrick, 2010; Lawson, et al., 2009; Stinchfield, et al., 2007). The ACES Best Practices in Supervision Task Force (2011) recommended that supervisors choose appropriate supervision interventions and supervision modalities following an assessment of the supervisee's developmental level, learning style, self-confidence, and self-efficacy. Often within counselor education programs, supervision modality and supervisory triads are determined before each student's developmental level, learning style, and needs have been appropriately assessed. Many courses and counselor education programs have established supervisory structures that are utilized on the basis of student enrollment and availability of resources rather than a comprehensive assessment of students' supervisory needs. Counselor education programs and supervisors need to improve methods for assessing students' development and learning needs and incorporate ongoing evaluation as part of the supervisory process on both an individual and systemic level. Counselor educators and supervisors need to consider how to involve students in the decision-making process when determining whether to provide individual or triadic supervision (Derrick, 2010; Stinchfield, et al., 2007) When triadic supervision is the modality of choice, supervisees should have a voice in the matching process as peer compatibility significantly impacts the process and outcome of supervision. Compatibility is particularly important for supervisees in the early stages of development when anxiety and self-doubt tend to be higher.

Furthermore, supervisors need to be adequately trained to provide triadic supervision (Hein & Lawson, 2008). Few models of triadic supervision exist and many variables unique to the triadic process have yet to be researched (Stinchfield et al., 2010). Training should also include assessment of student developmental level and decision-making models for appropriately matching supervision interventions and modalities to student's needs. Supervisors need to approach supervision with flexibility and incorporate feedback processes and continuous evaluation and re-evaluation of supervisees' learning needs as part of the supervision process. Borders and Brown (2005) identified several important factors for supervisors to consider when choosing supervision interventions such as the developmental level of the supervisee, the supervisees' learning goals, the supervisor's goals for the supervisee, the supervisor's learning goals for the supervision experience, and contextual factors such as setting, course and licensure requirements, and timeframe for supervision experience.

Additional research is needed to inform supervisor training and decision-making regarding supervision modalities in supervision and in counselor education programs. Future research should examine the efficacy of triadic or individual supervision within the context of developmental stages. However, before such research can take place, a better understanding of developmental models of supervision is necessary. Such an understanding includes creating a means by which to assess supervisee development and competence. Without a measure of supervisee development, further research will not have the specificity needed to look at differences in supervisee needs, experiences, or challenges within developmental stages. Once measures exist to identify supervisee development, research should focus on both the efficacy of triadic or individual supervision and on developing a better understanding of what contributes to the success of supervision at different developmental stages. For example, further research that examines compatibility factors at each developmental level could help inform supervisors and counselor educators as they make decisions about triadic supervision partners.

Triadic supervision is widely used in counselor education programs (Lyman, 2010). Although CACREP (2009; 2016) presented individual and triadic supervision as equally acceptable modalities, research indicates differences between how triadic and individual supervision are experienced by supervisors and supervisees. Further research is necessary to determine the effectiveness of individual, triadic, and group supervision and how variables unique to each modality impact counselor development and competence. Furthermore, given the many shared benefits of triadic and group supervision, such as exposure to multiple perspectives, support, normalization, and vicarious learning, we recommend that CACREP and counselor educators evaluate use of triadic supervision as an alternative to group rather than individual supervision.

For supervisors and program directors who are considering whether to utilize individual supervision, triadic supervision, or some combination, we wish that we could provide a flow chart or other concrete, guaranteed method of determining the supervision modality that is best for a particular student or group of students. However, as with most aspects of counseling, what is best for human being depends on each unique human being. However, we hope that the considerations we have presented in this manuscript and summarized in Table 1 provide a useful starting place for what can be challenging decisions. By considering the unique development and needs of students, counselor educators and supervisors can help each student develop into the best counselor that student can be.

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Table 1

Developmental Considerations for Triadic Supervision

Lifespan Developmental Model (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003)	Integrated Developmental Model (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010)	Reflective Judgment Model (Kitchener & King, 2004)	Potential Benefits of Triadic Supervision	Potential Limitations of Triadic Supervision
<p>Beginning Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -High performance anxiety -Highly dependent on supervisors -Fear of evaluation -Sensitive to feedback -Hide struggles in supervision -Prefer structure and direction -Focused on learning skills 	<p>Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Highly motivated and anxious -Focused on learning skills -Desire “right/best” answers -Dependent on supervisor -Need structure -Highly self-focused -Limited self-awareness 	<p>Prereflective Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Knowledge is assumed to be certain and absolute -No differentiation between well and ill-defined problems -Do not use evidence to reason towards conclusions -Rely on personal beliefs or authorities views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Peer presence can normalize anxiety -Shared time/attention can decrease self-focus -Increased peer support -Receive feedback from multiple sources -Vicarious learning opportunities -Exposed to multiple perspectives and challenged to explore alternative ways of thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Peer presence can increase performance anxiety -Difficultly giving/receiving feedback with peer present -Easier to hide struggles/clinical issues due to split attention/time -Not enough time and attention to adequately address needs/concerns -Confusion due to contradictory feedback from peer and supervisor -Avoid self-disclosure, hold back due to peer presence, insufficient time -Inadequate monitoring of client welfare based on counselor skill level
<p>Advanced Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tend to be cautious -Gaining confidence but still reliant on external feedback -Feel overly responsible in professional role -Tension and conflict peak in supervision -Strongly influenced by supervision 	<p>Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fluctuate between autonomy and dependence -Alternately confident and insecure -Resistant and challenging in supervision -More empathic towards clients -Difficulty regulating boundaries of professional role 	<p>Quasireflective Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Knowledge is uncertain, contextual, and subjective -Choose evidence that confirms existing beliefs -Link between evidence and conclusions is tenuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Peer presence can stimulate risk-taking -Peer presence can normalize experience -Vicarious learning opportunities -Peer feedback less threatening than supervisory feedback -Peer can potentially support conflict resolution in supervisory relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Peer alignment/relationship can interfere with supervisor feedback and working alliance -Compare development to peer, expanding power differential between peers -Contradictory feedback from peer and supervisor -Difficult to resolve tension, conflict in supervisory relationship with peer present -Confusion due to multiple perspectives and contradictory feedback
<p>Novice Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased focus on personal and professional integration -Increased sense of freedom and independence -Recognize importance of therapeutic relationship -May feel unprepared or inadequately trained -Increased use of self as therapeutic tool 	<p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focused on more personalized approach to counseling -Occasional self-doubt -Increased trust in professional judgment -Increased self-awareness including personal reactions in therapy and strengths and weaknesses 	<p>Reflective Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Knowledge is the outcome of a process of reasonable inquiry -Knowledge is constructed and reevaluated in light of new evidence -Conclusions are justified by consistent, coherent, compelling evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collegial relationships among supervisors and peer -Exposure to diverse clinical issues and settings -Exposure to multiple perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Personal reflection and self-disclosure limited due to divided attention/time -Supervision too generalized for personal integration process

Zip Code Matters: A Comparison of Rural and Urban School Counseling Funding

Eric W. Owens, Cheryl W. Neale-McFall, and Jennifer M. Toby

The literature on school funding, and specifically school counseling, suggests that student outcomes (e.g. academic, career, and social) are correlated to funding. This study examined school districts across Pennsylvania, comparing funding for school counseling services in rural districts to the funding in urban districts. Results indicated that urban schools are funded at a statistically significant greater rate than rural schools across 10 consecutive years. Implications of these results for professional school counselors were discussed.

Keywords: professional school counseling, school funding, rural and urban

Funding for public schools across the United States has historically been inequitable and inconsistent. Much of this inequality occurs as a result of the process by which public schools are funded, specifically through local property taxes (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). In 24 states the majority of funding for public education is developed through local taxes, and nationally 45 percent of public school funding is generated through local revenue (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). As a result, schools located in wealthier areas receive more funding through property taxes than schools that are located in impoverished neighborhoods, and as a local tax base fluctuates, so does local school funding. Biddle and Berliner (2002) explain that these differences in funding not only exist across states, but that disparities also exist across school districts within the same state.

These differences in funding have a significant impact on schools, students, and educators (Biddle & Berliner, 2002; Pouncey, Ennis, Wooley, & Connell, 2013). One important difference is found in student achievement, as measured by standardized testing. Students who attend schools with more funding indicate higher levels of academic achievement than students who attend schools with less funding (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). Furthermore, schools with higher funding levels are likely to employ more experienced educators, have smaller class sizes, spend more per student, and have more resources that are of higher quality, such as school programs and textbooks (Biddle & Berliner, 2002; Pouncey et al., 2013). Pouncey et al. (2013) explain, "The success or failure of schools is

strongly connected to the financial support made available to them through the levying of taxes and the allocation of revenues" (p. 2). Disparities in funding, specifically differences in per pupil spending, not only impacts a student's experience in the classroom, but also has the ability to impact that student's overall educational experience, including the ability to access quality counseling services within their school.

Per Pupil Spending

There are different ways that school districts measure the annual funding that they receive. The most commonly used measurement of funding is per pupil spending, which accounts for state and local funding for each school district across the United States (Baker, Sciarra, & Farrie, 2010). Data on per pupil spending is published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; Baker et al., 2010). Reporting of per pupil spending is further delineated by the myriad of services that account for a student's overall educational experience. These individual aspects of Per Pupil Spending (PPS) include: instruction, student support services, instructional staff services, operation and maintenance, administration, transportation, and food services (NCES, n.d.). Funding for School Counseling Services (SCS), along with attendance, health, and speech pathology services is included in a subcategory of PPS called Student Support Services (NCES, n.d.). The NCES (n.d.) reported that in the 2011-2012 academic year, an average of \$613 was spent on

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Student Support Services per pupil across elementary and secondary public schools in the United States.

A 2010 report by Baker et al. (2010) highlights the differences that exist in PPS across the United States. A closer look at the data indicates that PPS not only differs across states, but can also differ significantly within a single state. This report further analyzes how schools are funded across the United States using four measurements of fairness that include: (a) Funding Level, defined as PPS ranked by state; (b) Funding Distribution, which compares funding per district across each state in comparison to the amount of poverty that exists; (c) Effort, which is based on each state's Gross Domestic Product for education; and (d) Coverage, or the amount of children attending public school and median household income compared to those attending private school and their median household income across the states (Baker et al., 2010). This report highlights the inequality that exists related to public school funding across the United States, as well as within each state. These inequalities can, in turn, impact each school's ability to provide students with the education and resources that they need to be successful.

Professional School Counselors provide a host of services to students in schools. School counselors assist students in their academic, career, and personal development, and work with students and families to help children meet their goals across all three of these domains (American School Counselors Association, 2014). In order to meet these lofty goals, professional school counselors must have appropriate training, available resources, opportunities for supervision and consultation, and a manageable caseload. These prerequisites may not be possible given the barriers that exist in school systems, specifically those related to funding and available resources (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Imig, 2014; Morgan, Greenwaldt, & Gosselin, 2014; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Sutton & Pearson, 2002; Worzbyt & Zook, 1992). Successfully working with available resources, even when they are lacking, is particularly salient for school counselors.

Many school counselors, particularly those working in rural settings, are facing financial and time constraints that make it difficult, if not impossible, to provide all students with effective counseling services (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Imig, 2014; Morgan et al., 2014; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Sutton & Pearson, 2002; Worzbyt & Zook, 1992). Jackson, Johnson, and Persico (2016) compared PPS and students' long-term academic achievement and success. The study included 15,353 participants across the United States, and their findings indicate that increases in PPS have a positive impact on academic achievement and long-term educational attainment, especially for students in low-income neighborhoods. Jackson et al.

(2016) describe that, "...among low-income children, increasing per pupil spending by 10% over the entire schooling career increases the likelihood of graduating from high school by between 5.6% and 19.3% (p. 193). The authors also describe the positive impact that increased spending on Student Support Services can have for students, especially students who are likely to be growing up in low-income homes. Additionally, increased funding can result in lower student to counselor ratios, which has also shown to be a critical element in students' success (Jackson et al., 2016). The authors describe that these results support existing research. Jackson et al. (2016) write, "These similarities suggest that money still matters, and so do school resources" (p. 212).

Research suggests that there are significant disparities regarding where school counseling resources are being directed and which students benefit most from these services. As per pupil expenditures decrease, school counselor caseloads typically increase. In general, schools that spend less money for each student are likely to have substantially higher ratios of students to school counselors (Lapan, 2012). In these schools, students are served by school counselors with large caseloads, making the provision of comprehensive counseling services difficult, if not impossible. Counselors in these underserved schools are attending to a host of responsibilities, from assisting students in their academic and personal development, to preparing them for life after graduation (Lapan, Whitcomb, & Aleman, 2012).

Rural School Counseling

Data point to the fact that rural schools have a shortage of overall resources combined with restrictions in funding streams (Breen & Drew, 2012; Gandara, Gutierrez, & O'Hara, 2001). Breen and Drew (2012) found that rural school counselors feel they lack the resources necessary to effectively perform their job duties and are disconnected from services that are important to the success of their students. Likewise, Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, and Skelton (2006) found that rural schools often lack the resources to implement effective school counseling programs.

In turn, these funding shortages may adversely impact the counselor's ability to perform the duties necessary to implement a successful comprehensive school counseling program. For example, rural school counselors feel overwhelmed as a result of multiple responsibilities and large caseloads (Sutton & Pearson, 2002). Often, the school counselor working in a rural setting might be the only counselor at the school or in the area. Being the only counselor leaves one person to

handle diverse responsibilities with limited resources, making it virtually impossible to administer and deliver a comprehensive school counseling program. Conversely, a school with greater resources and numerous counselors could assign specific duties to each of the counselors (Sutton & Pearson, 2002). Related to the issue of limited personnel, Toby, Neale-McFall, & Owens (2016) write, “These are the very factors that make it difficult, if not impossible, for school counselors to provide thorough, effective, and comprehensive counseling services in rural schools” (p. 4-5).

The above studies highlight the crucial role that the school counselor plays in the life of a student, but also illuminate how a rural school counselor’s positive impact can be limited due to a lack of funding and necessary resources. Worzbyt and Zook (1992) write, “Staggering workloads, low salaries, meager resources, shortage of staff development opportunities, a high rate of administrative turnover, and difficulties attracting needed personnel are just some of the factors that plague small rural schools” (p. 344).

Urban School Counseling

School counselors working in urban schools also face unique difficulties in regard to providing successful comprehensive counseling services (Toby et al., 2016). Like rural schools, urban schools are also likely to have limited resources, and are usually located in high-poverty areas where there school and community violence. Urban schools are also characterized by “...high rates of teacher and administrative turnover, absenteeism, diverse family concerns, and a lack of parental involvement” (Toby et al., 2016, p. 5). This leaves school counselors working in urban schools to face unique challenges when administering services to students.

Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell’s (2005) study sought to discover the role of urban school counselors and the most prevalent issues that exist in their schools. One hundred and two urban school counselors participated in this study. The results of their surveys showed that the counselors most commonly spent their time (a) providing group and individual counseling; (b) consulting with teachers and parents; and (c) completing administrative work. The study further found that an urban school counselor on average had 362 students on their caseload, with as many as 1,800 students per counselor (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005).

A number of important themes emerged in Savitz-Romer’s (2012) qualitative study of 11 female urban school counselors who worked in schools where the majority of students were eligible for free and reduced

lunch. Examples of these themes included: a lack of motivation among students, low student expectations, and issues of homelessness (Savitz-Romer, 2012). The counselors in this study further describe the specific challenge of students experiencing a lack of familial support, which led the counselors to play a very significant role in the students’ lives, particularly in regard to their post-secondary plans. Although having a positive impact on students’ lives is paramount to being a successful school counselor, the participants reported that they feel that their assistance may in turn prevent their students from becoming independent (Savitz-Romer, 2012).

Both rural and urban school counselors face challenges that may prevent them from providing comprehensive counseling services to all students, particularly surrounding funding and a lack of resources. The review of the literature indicated a need to investigate the differences that may exist between funding for rural and urban school counseling programs. The present study sought to discover whether a significant difference exists by comparing funding for school counseling programs in rural and urban school districts across the state of Pennsylvania.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand the funding available to professional school counselors across Pennsylvania and to compare the resources available to school counselors in rural districts with their urban counterparts. As previously described, the literature indicates that financial resources play a significant role in student outcomes. These outcomes range from academic success to planning for college and careers after graduation. In developing this study, the authors examined school counseling funding at the district level across one state, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania was chosen, in part, due to the diversity found in the state, specific to relative equality in the number of districts that are categorized as rural and urban.

The specific research question this study aimed to answer was, *Do significant differences exist in per pupil spending on School Counseling Services (SCS) between rural and urban districts across Pennsylvania?* In order to perform statistical analyses, this question was posed in the null hypothesis form, that is, the null hypothesis for this study was, *No significant differences exist in per pupil spending on School Counseling Services (SCS) between rural and urban school districts across Pennsylvania.* The purpose of this study, then, was to determine if this null hypothesis was true or false. If proven false, and significant differences were found between rural and urban districts in PPS on SCS, then

the existing literature comparing funding and student outcomes could be applied to any disparities discovered in this study. In the end, the authors hoped to determine if one subset of students (i.e. those in rural or urban districts) were receiving less funding, and therefore, fewer services than their counterparts in the other subset.

Method

The authors reviewed extant data from 2003-2013 specific to district expenditures on School Counseling Services (SCS), as well as the amount spent per student. This provided an analysis of publicly available data across the past 10 years. Analysis of secondary data began with an evaluation of Per Pupil Spending (PPS) on SCS across Pennsylvania. These data were collected from publicly available websites of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Specifically, data were obtained for annual district spending on SCS (notated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as *Guidance Services*), as well as Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the years 2003-2013. ADM is defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as “the term used for all resident pupils of the school district for whom the school district is financially responsible. It is calculated by dividing the aggregate days membership for all children on active rolls by the number of days the school district is in session” (PA Department of Education, 2016, para. 5). PPS on guidance services was computed for each district by dividing the total amount spent on Guidance Services by the ADM for the district. Each district was then coded as either rural or urban, based on data provided by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania (2014). The Center of Rural Pennsylvania defines rural and urban school districts as follows: “A county or school district is rural when the number of persons per square mile within the county or school district is less than 284. Counties and school districts that have 284 persons or more per square mile are considered urban” (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2014, para. 3).

In Pennsylvania, schools are delineated by local school districts, rather than by county as found in some states. There are 500 public school districts in Pennsylvania, 497 of which were used in the analysis of historical data. Of these 497 districts, 234 were classified as rural using the definition previously described; 263 districts were identified as urban (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2014). Three districts were removed from this analysis: two were removed because they do not have their own school buildings, but use neighboring school district resources. The other was removed because of contradictory data reported to the state Department of Education.

Aggregate mean spending and standard deviations were then calculated for the two categories of school districts (i.e. rural and urban), and the differences in mean spending per pupil were compared using independent samples t-tests. Variance was first calculated using Levine’s test to determine if equal variances should be assumed or not assumed, and the appropriate test result was then analyzed. Values were not adjusted for inflation due to the fact that means were only compared for urban versus rural for each year and not across years.

Results

Prior to comparing the mean values of SCS between rural and urban districts, mean statewide expenditures on SCS were calculated, as well as the percent of the total budget and PPS on counseling services. Mean statewide expenditures on guidance spending per pupil indicate that during the 10 year period analyzed (see Table 1), the mean PPS on SCS across Pennsylvania ranged from \$197.01 per student to \$268.47 per student. The mean percent of total budgetary expenditures during this period ranged from 1.79 percent in the 2008-09 academic year to 1.90 percent in the 2003-04 academic year. The average percent of total budgetary expenditures during the 2003-2013 period was 1.83 percent.

Using the methods described above, mean values of PPS were calculated for both rural and urban districts for the 10 academic years analyzed in this study. Those mean values were then compared using unpaired t-tests. The results from this analysis determined that PPS on guidance services was statistically significantly greater in urban districts for every year examined. Differences between rural and urban locations ranged from \$15.92 in 2005-06, $t(495) = -4.20, p < .001$, to \$22.86 in 2009-10 $t(495) = -3.57, p < .001$. The average difference in spending being \$20.76 per student over the course of the 10 years.

Discussion and Implications for Professional School Counselors

Given the disparities in these data, there are clear and significant differences between the funding allocated for school counseling services in rural and urban districts across Pennsylvania. The statistical differences were not only significant, but in many cases, startling. Given these differences in spending between rural and urban districts, it stands to reason that these spending disparities can have a significant impact on the ability for professional school counselors to provide the highest quality services to their students, especially in rural districts.

Table 1*Comparison of Per Pupil Spending on Guidance Services 2003-2013*

Academic Year	Average Pupil Spending						95% CI <i>UL, LL</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
	Rural			Urban					
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>			
2003-2004	\$186.35	54.41	233	\$206.50	61.25	262	-30.20, -10.09	-3.94***	493
2004-2005	\$194.14	51.78	235	\$216.23	63.95	262	-32.42, -11.76	-4.20***	495
2005-2006	\$203.58	56.26	235	\$219.50	66.21	262	-26.81, -5.03	-2.87**	495
2006-2007	\$209.04	59.17	235	\$230.41	70.18	262	-32.88, -9.86	-3.65***	495
2007-2008	\$221.80	71.6	235	\$242.29	72.14	262	-33.17, -7.79	-3.17**	495
2008-2009	\$225.71	66.06	235	\$247.76	73.59	262	-34.43, -9.67	-3.50***	495
2009-2010	\$233.43	65.09	235	\$256.29	76.57	263	-35.44, -10.27	-3.57***	496
2010-2011	\$242.54	67.85	235	\$265.33	77.68	263	-35.71, -9.88	-3.47**	496
2011-2012	\$245.71	74.64	235	\$266.59	81.17	263	-34.66, -7.10	-2.98**	496
2012-2013	\$258.65	80.17	235	\$277.25	85.95	263	-33.28, -3.91	-2.49*	496

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

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

As described previously, the literature is clear regarding the influence of spending on counselor resources. As spending decreases, counselor caseloads increase. There is a reason that the American School Counselors Association recommends a ratio of 250 students to each professional school counselor (American School Counselors Association, 2012), which is to maintain equity across schools and districts, as well as to keep workloads manageable so that professional school counselors can work with all of the students in a school, not just those that present with the greatest need.

Other findings from the literature that were previously discussed are of importance given the results of this study. Rural school counselors in this study report a lack of financial support and insufficient time to provide the services necessary to their students. They wear many hats, have high caseloads, and lack peer support for service provision, consultation, and supervision. The significant spending differences found in this study suggest that professional school counselors in rural areas of Pennsylvania struggle with these very issues.

Finally, previous research has found direct correlations between inequity in spending and inequity in the quality and quantity of resources provided to students. These financial inequities also correlate directly with a lack of student achievement. Given the findings in this study (i.e. that rural school counseling programs are funded at significantly lower rates than urban programs), the question certainly must be raised regarding the quality and quantity of the services and resources provided in rural districts, and ultimately, the level of achievement of students attending rural schools as compared to their urban counterparts across Pennsylvania.

What this means for professional school counselors, especially those who are underfunded, is a need for advocacy for students, for their comprehensive school counseling programs, and for equity in resource allocation. This advocacy may best be conceptualized by using the ACA Advocacy Domains (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002). Lewis et al. (2002) suggested that advocacy can occur on a variety of different levels, both with clients and on behalf of clients, and at the student level, the school level, and the public domain.

In considering how to best advocate for the equitable allocation of resources, professional school counselors may want to examine the advocacy domains described by Lewis et al. (2002) as School/Community advocacy as well as Public Arena advocacy. For example, in the area of School/Community advocacy, professional school counselors can work with their local school boards to promote re-allocation of existing resources to the professional school counselors, especially if existing resources are being allocated to sources less directly connected to student success.

More likely, school counselors will be working in the area of Public Arena advocacy in order to attempt to close the opportunity gaps inherent in such inequity. Professional school counselors may want to use data such as those found in this study to collaborate with their state-wide professional organizations to lobby for equality in funding from state legislatures. School counselors may also want to partner with local officials, parent groups, community organizations, local chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders with a vested interest in the success of the students in their communities. As the number of voices grows, those voices are often heard more readily.

Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations to this study that are related to the scope of the research project, availability of data, and operational definitions. Specific to the scope of the research project, this study examined only one state's PPS data on counseling services. Pennsylvania may provide a good representation of many states as the number of rural and urban districts are almost equal (46.8 percent of districts are defined as rural while 47.2 percent of districts are defined as urban). Given the almost equal number of districts in each category, Pennsylvania provides a good example for comparison. However, equality does not necessarily imply generalizability, and the disbursement of population among each state will certainly be unique. Additionally, each state has its own school funding formula that will differ from that used in Pennsylvania. For these reasons, generalizability of these results to other states may be difficult, and each state may need to be considered independent of one another.

Regarding the availability of data, this study examined PPS on school counseling services over a 10 year span ending in the 2012-13 academic year, as those were the last publicly available data when the study was conducted. As Table 1 indicates, the last academic year examined (2012-13) had statistically significant results ($p=.013$), but those results were less significant than every previous year examined, where the significance values were less than .01 and .001 in many cases. This result may indicate that the 2012-13 academic year was an outlier and that the difference in spending would continue to be more significant. However, 2012-13 may mark the beginning of a shift toward more equitable spending on per pupil services. Future research should examine those trends, as more data are made available.

Additionally, cost of living is a statistical consideration that was beyond the scope of this study. While developing a statistical formula to adjust for variance in cost of living across the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania would provide more validity to this study, developing such a formula was extremely difficult given inconsistent measures of cost of living and challenges in accounting for how different costs of living would be reflected in both spending, but also revenues for the varying districts. It is the authors' contention that cost of living was accounted for in this study as the majority of school revenue is derived from property taxes, which are based on property values, which in turn reflect the cost of living in a particular district.

Finally, this study used two operational definitions to classify school districts and compare results: rural and urban. What is not included in this analysis is a

discussion of suburban school districts. The reasons for this were varied. First, the literature does not discuss suburban schools; it is almost exclusively constrained to rural and urban definitions for school districts. Second, in the review of the literature, specific definitions were provided for the difference between urban and rural districts in Pennsylvania; however, no definition could be found for suburban districts. For those who study or work in public education, intuition suggests that there would be differences between rural, suburban, and urban districts, if those distinctions can somehow be made and operationally defined. Future research may seek to develop those definitions and compare across all three categories.

Finally, this study used differences in PPS on school counseling services to draw conclusions about resources, counselor ratios, quality and quantity of services, and so forth, based on previous literature that examined the correlations between these constructs and spending. Future research may seek to correlate the data specific to this study to actual resource quality and quantity, counselor ratios, and other school counseling services in Pennsylvania.

Conclusion

The literature is sparse regarding the comparison of rural and urban school counseling. While some studies have been conducted, there is much to learn. The purpose of this study was to draw on previous findings related to the quality and quantity of school counseling interventions, as those constructs relate to financial resources for comprehensive school counseling programs. The literature suggests that there is a direct correlation between finances and resources; as financial support decreases, caseloads increase, quality decreases, time with students decreases, and student achievement suffers. The findings in this study suggest that in at least one state, there are significant and continuous differences between the amount spent per student on counseling services when rural and urban districts are compared. While we can lament these findings, as a profession we advocate for equality. We are often successful at advocating for student equality, but perhaps more needs to be done to advocate for our profession, so that we can provide quality school counseling services for all students, regardless of their zip codes.

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JPCA Test to Earn CE Credit

Note: Earn 2 Free Continuing Education Credits by reading selected articles in this issue. Read the articles identified below and answer 7 of the 10 questions correctly to earn 2 CE credit.

READY, MindSET, GO!

Increasing Students' Resilience in Counselor Education Programs (pp. 2-12)

1. A person with a growth mindset holds which of the following beliefs?
 a. A person should be able to advance themselves professionally if they grow their professional network
 b. With concerted effort and perseverance, a person can increase their intellectual abilities.
 c. A person is born with a certain amount of intelligence and it does not grow throughout their life.
 d. People with larger families are more intelligent.
2. Following the needs assessment, these researchers found which four areas of need related to students' resilience?
 a. Fixed mindset, academic self-efficacy, anxiety, and academic contingent self-worth
 b. Academic enjoyment, goal choice, academic self-efficacy, and academic contingent self-worth
 c. Academic enjoyment, fixed mindset, anxiety, and academic contingent self-worth
 d. Fixed mindset, goal choice, anxiety, and academic contingent self-worth

Calling and Gatekeeping in Counselor Training (pp. 13-22)

3. What sources does the author reference from the Christian tradition for discernment of calling?
 a. internal prompting and interests
 b. gifting and abilities
 c. external confirmation by the faith community
 d. all of the above
4. What intervention did the author suggest to help students process their perceived "failure" in a training program?
 a. Cognitive reframe
 b. Disputing distorted thoughts
 c. Reality testing
 d. Desensitization

Developing Spiritual Competence: A Look at a Counseling and Spirituality Course (pp. 23-31)

5. Mention of the role of spirituality and religion in counseling can be found in:
 a. the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics
 b. the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Standards
 c. the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) Competencies
 d. all of the above
6. How did participants' personal spirituality mean score (ISI) at post-test compare to the norming sample's mean score?
 a. participants' mean score was lower than the norming sample's mean score
 b. participants' mean score was higher than the norming sample's mean score
 c. participants' mean score was the same as the norming sample's mean score
 d. participants' mean score was not compared to the norming sample's mean score

Triadic or Individual? Developmental Considerations for Clinical Supervision (pp. 32-42)

7. Based on the article, Triadic or Individual? Developmental Considerations for Clinical Supervision, which of the following statements is the most accurate about beginning students.
 a. Beginning students should never be placed in triadic supervision.
 b. Peer presence almost always creates added pressure for the supervisee
 c. The limitations of triadic supervision generally outweigh the advantages at this stage
 d. Students at this stage tend to all be working on similar issues so triadic supervision is ideal

8. Based on the article, Triadic or Individual? Developmental Considerations for Clinical Supervision, at what stage is triadic supervision almost always considered appropriate?
- a. For beginning student supervisees because they need peer support
 - b. For advanced student supervisees because they benefit from receiving additional feedback from peers
 - c. For novice professionals because they benefit from the opportunity to be exposed to multiple perspectives
 - d. Triadic supervision is rarely considered appropriate for any developmental level of supervisee

Zip Code Matters: A Comparison of Rural and Urban School Counseling Funding (pp. 43-49)

9. For the purpose of this study, rural schools were classified as those that:
- a. Had less than 684 persons per square mile
 - b. Had more than 684 persons per square mile
 - c. Had less than 284 persons per square mile
 - d. Had more than 284 persons per square mile

10. The findings of this study indicated
- a. No significant differences in guidance spending per pupil between rural and urban districts for any of the years examined
 - b. Significant differences in guidance spending per pupil between rural and urban districts for each of the years examined
 - c. Significant differences in guidance spending per pupil between rural and urban districts for six of the ten years examines
 - d. Significant differences in guidance spending per pupil between rural and urban districts for eight of the ten years examines

I certify that I have completed this test without receiving any help choosing the answers.

Feedback

Please rate the following items according to the following scale:

5 – Superior 4 – Above Average 3- Average 2 – Below Average 1 – Poor

	Superior	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
The authors were knowledgeable on the subject matter	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
The material that I received was beneficial	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
The content was relevant to my practice	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
This journal edition met my expectations as a mental health professional	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
How would you rate the overall quality of the test?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁

Comments/Suggestions?

Instructions

Email: Complete the test, sign the form, and email to: PCA.profdev@gmail.com. Allow 2-4 weeks for processing.

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1. Manuscripts should not exceed 25 pages, including references.
2. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced (including references and extensive quotations) with 1" margins on all sides.
3. **Title Page:** Identify the title page with a running head. The title page should include title (not more than 80 characters), author, affiliation, and an author's note with contact information. Author's note should be formatted exactly as it appears in this example:

Author Name, Department of _____, University Name [or Company affiliation].
Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Author Name, Department of _____,
University, Street address, City, State, zip code (e-mail: xxxxx@xxxx.edu).
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