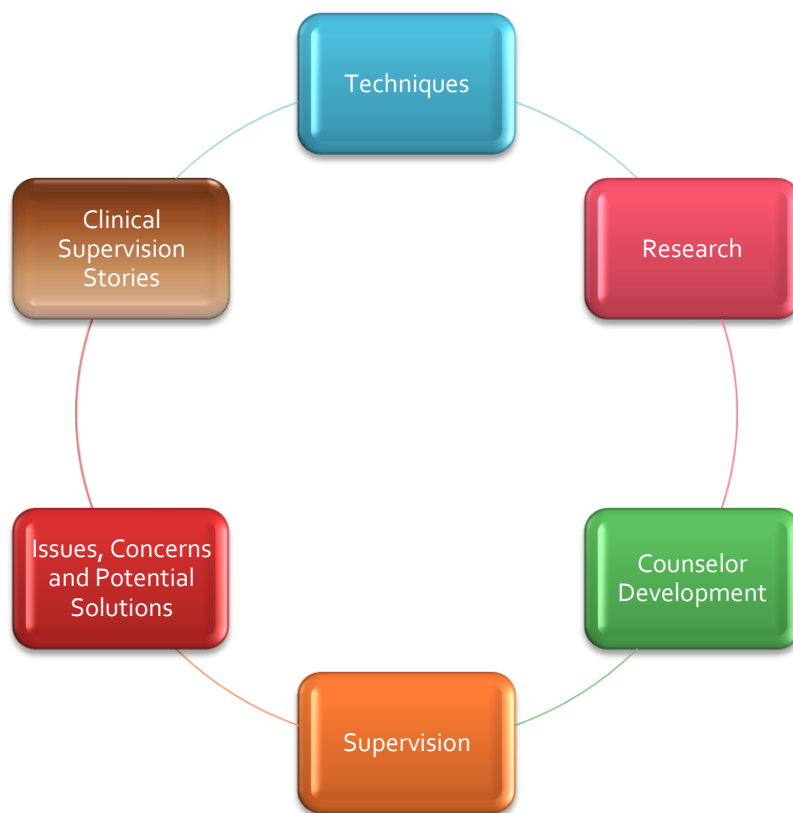


# The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

Volume 1, Number 1

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Editor: Bill McHenry



The Official Journal

of the North Atlantic Regional Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

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The mission of the *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision* is to provide a high quality platform for research, theory and practices of counselor educators, counselor supervisors and professional counselors. We believe the journal chronicles current issues, concerns and potential solutions that enable counselors to continue to grow and develop as practitioners, educators and human beings. The journal publishes high-quality articles that have undergone a thorough and extensive blind peer-review.

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There are six general categories that help focus the content of the journal.

**Research.** These articles focus on research (qualitative, quantitative, mixed) in counselor preparation, professional development, supervision, and professional practice.

**Techniques.** These articles focus on professional models for teaching empirically grounded techniques used by professional counselors, as well as teaching and supervision techniques used in professional preparation programs.

**Counselor Development.** These articles include insightful commentary on means by which professional counselors can continue to develop professionally. Effective teaching strategies for counseling students as well as continuing education for experienced counselors will be highlighted.

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**Clinical Supervisors Stories.** These articles describe current issues in counselor preparation and supervision from the perspective of site supervisors. The emphasis on these articles should focus on the story of the issue, potential solutions and the uniqueness of the message. Authors are encouraged to forgo significant literature review and attend directly to the intended message to the field.

The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision is an EBSCOHost affiliated journal.

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Because JCPS is an on-line journal, all correspondence and submissions are electronic. Authors are to submit manuscripts in Microsoft Word. We do not accept Macintosh or WordPerfect formats. Submissions to the journal should be sent to:

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3. Manuscripts are not to exceed 30 pages.
4. The *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision* uses APA style. Authors must adhere to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA for formatting and style. Manuscripts will not be published that do not utilize this formatting and style.
5. All manuscripts should use 12-point Arial font, be double spaced including references and extensive quotes, allow 1" margins on all sides, and include an abstract of 50-100 words.
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# The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

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# A Special Note

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Dear NARACES Members,

We are very proud to bring you the first edition of the Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision. This journal is the culmination of the vision and efforts of several generations of NARACES leaders who have wanted to start a NARACES journal, but were unable to because of the financial hardship of doing so. We are fortunate today to make use of technology and the wonderful volunteer efforts of Bill McHenry and the entire editorial board, to be able to offer members a no-cost quality journal. This would not have been possible without the support of our membership and the vision of so many of you. The feedback from our members at various forums and through our listserv has been invaluable and greatly appreciated.

NARACES is committed to meeting the needs of counselor educators, field supervisors and professional counselors. JCPS is designed to promote best practices and professional growth by providing a forum to showcase research, theory and practice in counselor education and supervision. Special care has been taken to ensure that the journal is useful to its readers through addressing supervision and training research, training techniques, counselor development, supervision methods, and stories from the field.

NARACES leadership have signed an agreement with EBSCOhost making our journal searchable on databases. This process greatly raises the visibility, accessibility, and stature of JCPS, and increases our readership both nationally and internationally. Further, each edition of JCPS will be posted on our website and immediately available to NARACES members. We are sure that you will find the journal a valuable member benefit.

The success of JCPS rests on the contributions of counselors dedicated to sharing scholarly insights and critical practice experiences. Please consider contributing to JCPS and helping NARACES in its mission to provide opportunities for its community of members to engage in dialogue about the important issues that we face. Contributing to the professional literature is an important way to participate in this meaningful discourse.

We hope you will enjoy this journal as much as we take pride in adding JCPS to the list of NARACES benefits. We look forward to a long and productive relationship with counselor educators, supervisors and other counseling professionals in the NARACES region and those residing beyond its geographic borders. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Warm Regards,

Gail Mears, NARACES president 2009-2010  
Kathryn Douthit, NARACES president 2008-2009  
Rachelle Pérusse, NARACES president 2007-2008

# Editorial

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## Welcome to the new Journal

**T**he very first line of the first edition of this journal contains two major themes; thank you to all of those who have worked to create this new and much needed platform, and welcome to all of you who will serve to fill, digest and make meaning from the pages within.

The editorial board members identified in the front matter of this journal have offered great insight, skill and attention in the development of the journal, from its origins as a kernel of an idea, to what you are reading at this very moment. From the very start, they provided enthusiastic and careful feedback that honed and shaped your journal.

When the original idea to materialize the voices of NARACES members in a new publication was presented to the NARACES Executive Board, our leaders led the way by (1) embracing the concept, (2) offering pragmatic seasoned advice, and, (3) allowing the editorial board to bring the concept to life. Good leadership finds a way for solid ideas to emerge.

What we hope to have happen with this journal is to enhance the field of counselor preparation and supervision while offering another publication venue. If you have attended a recent NARACES conference, you are probably aware of the diverse, significant and worthy voices within our membership. This journal will allow us to share and build upon the innovative work being done throughout the region.

The excellent efforts of our editorial board, executive board and authors have led to the pages that follow.

In the first article, the authors cover activities that articulate reflective practice within a CACREP curriculum. The authors ask us to consider the value of immersing students purposefully and consistently in reflective practice throughout their coursework in a cohesive and systematic way.

In the second article, the authors use qualitative research design to better understand the experience of faculty in the dawn of their career. The authors provide suggestions applicable to both counselor educators and students in the process of completing their doctorates.

The author of the third article provides a deep inspection of the use of metaphor across counseling, supervision and counseling theory. The author posits poignant questions for readers that encourage reflection on the use of metaphor as a vibrant and useful tool in counseling and counselor education.

In the fourth article, the author utilizes a mixed method pilot study to highlight potential directions for thought and further research regarding the use of data by school counselors. The author infuses technology as a potential variable in the use and management of data by school counselors.

It is clear that this inaugural edition of our journal contains diversity across topics, style of writing, and research methods. It contains work done as student-faculty partnerships and solo projects.

Once again, thank you to all involved in the development and digestion of this journal.

Bill McHenry

# Reflective Learning within a Counselor Education Curriculum

David J. Tobin, Rebecca A. Willow, Erin K. Bastow and Erica M. Ratkowski

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The literature on counselor education and supervision acknowledged the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection in supervision. As counselor educators we emphasized a need to prepare students for reflective practice prior to the practicum experience. In order to investigate how active learning and opportunities were being infused, we conducted an inquiry into the core curriculum of a Community Counseling program. Learning activities were categorized and charted according to the eight core areas of counselor education. This case study analysis provides a guide for a curriculum review of reflective learning and a catalyst for further inquiry.

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**C**ounselor educators are challenged to cultivate reflective learning habits within students that will facilitate the development of a reflective practitioner. In addition to theory, experience, and skill training, self-awareness and reflectivity have been deemed essential for counselor development and professional growth (Skovholt, 2001). Schon (1983) provided an impetus for reviewing reflection-in-action across professional practice. He contrasted technical rationality, shaped by research, education, and practice, with reflection-in-action or intuitive performance that helps practitioners to effectively deal with “situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict” (p. 50). His work has prompted the contribution of personal learning to the development of a professional worldview (Hoshmand, 1994). Primarily, we became interested in how reflection-in-action was operationalized in counselor education and training.

## Counselor Supervision

Skovholt and Ronnestad (1995) explored stages of counselor development and emphasized a process of continuous professional reflection that encouraged reflection on professional and personal experiences, a supportive work environment, and a reflective stance. More recently, this reflective stance has been referred to as reflectivity (Skovholt, 2001). The literature on counselor development and reflectivity has mostly focused on counselor supervision. Neufeldt (1999) introduced a framework for practicum supervision that emphasized an interpersonal environment that supported active reflection. Counselors-in-training were encouraged to engage in reflectivity, defined as “the process that involved attention to the therapist’s own actions, emotions, thoughts in the counseling session, and to the interaction between the client and the therapist” (p. 6). Furthermore, she cited evidence that reflectivity and self-awareness contributed to counselor development, deliberate practice, and perhaps extended beyond formal training

(Neufeldt, 2007). In a similar manner, Sweitzer and King (1999) offered groundwork for the supervised internship that acknowledged the critical role of self-understanding in forming effective counseling relationships. They reported that self-understanding helped the internship student to successfully manage three major pitfalls: projection, professional myopia, and the tendency to confuse difference with deviance. Internship was regarded as an opportunity to “teach you about aspects of yourself and review unresolved issues in your life” (p. 140). Tobin also focused on unresolved issues within counselors-in-training and developed a supervision model for countertransference work on the “hidden client” (Tobin, 2003; Tobin & McCurdy, 2006). Ward and House (1998) emphasized the reflective stance in counselor supervision and cited evidence for a model of self-awareness that enhanced an integrated professional and personal identity. Guiffrida (2005) developed an Emergence Model that helped counseling students link practice to theory by engaging in continuous self-reflection. As evidenced, the central importance of reflectivity is well documented in the literature on counselor supervision.

## Reflective Learning

As counselor educators and supervisors, we have likewise emphasized the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection in counselor supervision. We also recognized that counseling students may need to acquire new learning skills in order to engage in reflectivity. Graduate students who seek reassurance through high achievement and academic success have been referred to as outcome focused (Harlow & Cantor, 1994). We have observed that counseling students seem outcome-focused and demonstrate a command of academic and study skills, information literacy, scholarly writing, classroom presentation skills, and validation through the attainment of high grades.

Counselor education programs reinforce an outcome-focused orientation by emphasizing learning objectives, cumulative grade point averages, qualifying scores on comprehensive exams, and subsequent success on national certification or state licensure exams. All of these indicators contribute to program evaluation. At the same time counseling programs are challenged to develop students who display strong counseling skills and efficacy for competent clinical practice.

Young (2004) addressed this challenge by encouraging students to use reflection when engaged in challenging helping situations. This reflective practitioner approach prompted students to process new information for greater self-awareness and multiple viewpoints. Other educators have emphasized constructivist learning that focused on self-knowledge and self-development. Guiffrida (2005) acknowledged the value of constructivist learning and contrasted it to modernist learning that relied on a facts-based approach for knowledge acquisition. According to Driscoll (1994), “nurturing reflectivity is a learning condition that constructivists assert is essential to the acquisition of goals such as reasoning, understanding multiple perspectives, and committing to a particular position for beliefs that can be articulated and defended” (p. 371). McAuliffe and Eriksen (2000) compiled literature on counselor preparation that emphasized constructed knowledge and reflective learning as essential to counselor development. They suggested guidelines to stimulate active learning including the creation of links to previously learned information, frequent recall of information, and the use of a wide range of learning methods and settings. The value of reflectivity and constructivist learning in counselor development is widely acknowledged.

The use of reflectivity and constructivist learning in practicum and internship supervision has been acknowledged (Neufeldt, 2007). We emphasize laying the groundwork for

reflective learning prior to the supervised practicum and internship experience. Early training in reflectivity, within a supportive environment may better prepare counselors-in-training to engage in the personal challenge of becoming a reflective practitioner. The integration of reflective learning has yet to be addressed in a systematic manner across the curriculum. Thus, we became interested in how reflectivity could be infused within the core curriculum of a graduate counselor education program (Willow, Bastow, & Ratkowski, 2007). For that purpose we conducted an inquiry into our Community Counseling program in order to identify reflective learning and opportunities for self-reflection and self-knowledge across the core curriculum.

## Method

This is a case study analysis of active learning and reflectivity within a Community Counseling program held in a private university located in the northeastern United States. The program is designed to meet academic requirements for national certification and state licensure for professional counselors. In order to meet this requirement, course content within the curriculum and learning objectives on each syllabi carefully follow the standards established by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001). The program is currently in the process of preparing for CACREP accreditation.

The units of analysis consisted of classroom learning experiences that offered the opportunity for active learning and reflectivity and were derived from course content. We operationally defined active learning as those classroom teaching strategies, experiences, or assignments that cultivate constructivism and cognitive engagement and are designed to stimulate reflective learning.

Two graduate assistants were employed to gather evidence of active learning and reflectivity within the core curriculum. The data consisted of syllabi and related course activities and assignments. The analysis was conducted through a three-step process. First, the graduate assistants, who collectively experienced most of the courses in review, collected and analyzed the data. Second, they reflected upon their experience with active learning in each content area (Willow, Bastow, & Ratkowski, 2007). Third, they consulted with the instructor of record to provide additional clarity and/or verification of the purpose of course assignments and activities.

The program offers a sixty credit curriculum, with a forty-eight credit foundation sequence designed to reflect the eight core content areas delineated by CACREP: Human Growth and Development; Social and Cultural Diversity; Helping Relationships; Group Work; Career Development; Professional Identity; Assessment; and Research and Program Evaluation. The additional twelve credits are part of a certificate for Advanced Counselor Studies which were added to meet the sixty credit requirement for state licensure. For this study, advanced courses and supervised practicum and internship were omitted from analysis. By limiting our analysis to courses within the eight core content areas we attempted to enhance applicability to other Community Counseling programs. The units of analysis were delineated and charted within the eight core areas of counselor education (See Table 1).

## Results

### *Human Growth and Development*

Assignments in the human growth and development content area required students to reflect on their individual and family development and how these might affect counseling skills, professional development, and the therapeutic relationship. Students

also examined the role of self-awareness in maintaining a counselor-client relationship appropriate to the client's developmental level. This was explored in the context of aiding a client to achieve optimum development in his or her stage of life. The culmination of the self-reflective exercises in human growth and development was an examination of one's critical life events written as a formal paper. According to the instructor, the goal of this assignment was to build awareness of how one's personal encounters with developmental crises can influence one's approach to counseling.

#### *Social and Cultural Diversity*

Reflective learning exercises in this content area were aimed at understanding one's values, attitudes, experiences, and biases related to culture. Students were required to write weekly self-reflection papers, that focused on increased cultural self-awareness. Several experimental learning activities were incorporated into the multicultural issues in counseling course, including a cross-cultural experience to promote greater understanding of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination as well as an appreciation for diversity. Closure on each experiential exercise included self reflection as an integrated component.

#### *Helping Relationships*

Activities in the helping relationships content area were created to facilitate an examination of the reciprocal relationship of theoretical orientation and personal experience. Students were asked to investigate their worldview in conjunction with the concept of an effective helping relationship. This was done in written form and in live class discussions and internet message boards. Discussion topics included countertransference, professional growth, building effective therapeutic relationships, and the consultation process.

#### *Group Work*

Learning in the group work content area was structured around the idea that reflectivity is an essential component of effective group counseling. Students were members of interpersonal process groups led by counseling psychology doctoral students. The principles of group dynamics were learned firsthand as students wrote reflection papers after each group session that detailed knowledge of group process, developmental stages, member roles, and leadership styles as each applied to the individual's experience as both a group member and a counselor-in-training. A final paper was required which delineated personal and professional awareness obtained through group experience and information learned in classroom activities.

#### *Career Development*

Students were asked to investigate the influence of life events on their personal career history. Class assignments required an exploration of one's interests, abilities, personality, and occupational preferences according to the classification systems of traditional career self-assessment tools. Students worked in dyads to practice a career counseling interview. The goals of this dialogue were to develop a holistic picture of one's occupational experiences and preferences, to examine the ways in which interests, abilities, personality, and occupational styles contribute to career development, and to reflect on consistencies between self-assessment results and self-selected occupational goals.

#### *Assessment*

The Assessment course required students to administer, score, and interpret several self-report instruments on themselves including personality inventories, intelligence tests, lifestyle assessments, and measures of anger and depression. Students then reflected on these results and potential implications for counseling along

with a written, integrative summary. This activity also afforded students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the assessment and to reflect on their personal experience of taking the tests and receiving results.

*Professional Identity*

Learning objectives for professional identity included: (a) developing an understanding of personal wellness, self care, and prevention of burnout or compassion fatigue, (b) becoming aware of one's capacity for professional advocacy, (c) conceptualizing one's development in professional counseling, and (d), reflecting on one's personal, academic, and professional growth in a counselor education program. These goals were addressed with the following self-reflective activities: (a) participation in a "Counselor

Wellness Day" that emphasized personal, physical, and mental self care, (b) identification and reflective support of a social justice or professional advocacy issue, (c) creation of a professional disclosure statement, and (d) creation of a professional portfolio.

*Research and Program Evaluation*

The primary emphasis of Research and Program Evaluation is on content knowledge and critical analysis. However, a singular activity that encouraged reflectivity was noted. The instructor utilized a stimulus question designed to promote self-reflection. Students were required to examine their potential investigator/participant bias within the methodology of their qualitative research proposal. This activity underscores the relevance of self-knowledge.

**TABLE 1**  
**Reflectivity Learning Exercises by CACREP Content Area**

CACREP Content Area	Reflective Exercise	Reflectivity
Human Growth & Development	Self-Reflection Paper	Effects of critical life events on personal and professional development
Social & Cultural Diversity	Self-Reflection Papers	Awareness of cultural issues and personal bias
	Cross-Cultural Experience	Knowledge of "otherness" and systems of privilege
Helping Relationships	Personal Theory Paper	Awareness of personal and professional experiences shaping view of human behavior
	Blackboard Discussions (electronic message board)	Express growth as a counselor through collaborative discussion
	In-Class Workshop Groups	Collaborate with colleagues; Discuss personal views
Group Work	Group Counseling	Increase interpersonal learning
	Final Exam / Synthesis Paper	Integrate course content and group counseling experience
Career Development	Career Life Line	Awareness of life events leading to occupational choice
	Integrated Career Interview	Exploration of personality, interests, and career aspirations
Professional Identity	"Counselor Wellness Day"	Awareness of personal physical and mental health
	Advocacy Project	Identification of a social justice or professional counseling issues
	Professional Disclosure Statement Professional Portfolio	Professional and theoretical orientation Culmination of professional training and the establishment of scope of practice
Assessment	Personality Assessment	Awareness of personality's affect on worldview and behavior
Research & Program Evaluation	Stimulus Question	Awareness of potential investigator/participant bias in a qualitative research proposal

## Discussion

The literature on reflectivity in counselor education has primarily focused on the supervisory experience. We acknowledged a need to prepare students for reflective practice prior to the supervised practicum, and conducted an initial inquiry into active learning and reflectivity within a Community Counseling program. The results indicate that students experienced active learning and reflectivity in each of the core content areas, which suggests that reflectivity is widely practiced across the curriculum. The identified reflective learning exercises offer a guide for teaching strategies and serve as a catalyst for further development. This type of case study analysis provides faculty with a guide for a curriculum review of reflective learning, and the potential to contribute to a more deliberate and systematic effort to infuse reflectivity throughout the curriculum. The results of this study reveal that there was less emphasis on reflective learning in Research Methods and Program Evaluation. This became an area of discussion and future planning among our program faculty. It has been suggested that students could reflect on their assumptions, beliefs, and values when selecting or reviewing research topics. Areas of personal subjectivity may also include researcher bias, and statements on limitations. This could be reviewed along with ethical considerations.

This descriptive study identifies reflective learning strategies embedded within the curriculum and categorized them into the eight core areas. It is beyond the scope of this study to assess the quality of these learning experiences. It may prove interesting to explore student receptivity to self-reflection in the classroom. There is literature to suggest that students have different learning styles (Hoshmand, 1994). Furthermore, constructivist learning may be met with resistance when students experience anxiety about how they will be evaluated (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2000). Our experiences with teaching and training

graduate students suggest that the propensity for reflective learning is developmental. When leading reflective discussion or learning activities, counselor educators need to cultivate a safe and supportive learning environment (Willow, Tobin, & Toner, in press). Instructors are also advised to adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics in regard to student self-disclosure (F.7. Student Welfare; American Counseling Association, 2005). Student welfare needs to be safeguarded during self-growth experiences. Counselor educators are cautioned to “use judgment when designing training experiences that require self-disclosure; and make supervisees and students aware of the ramifications and evaluative components of experiential training” (p. 15).

The implementation of a reflective orientation requires reflective thinking on the part of counselor educators. Panel presentations or round table discussions on “best practices” could benefit counselor educators, along with suggestions for balancing constructivist learning within an outcome focused curriculum. Further inquiry into instruction that leads to reflective habits in students is warranted. Future research into the development of a reflective practitioner could benefit from a qualitative inquiry into student learning experiences with reflectivity, and the ability to assimilate self-knowledge and connect it within the developmental framework of the practicum/internship. Moving beyond the academy, researchers may also attempt to assess the quality of reflectivity required of professional counselors in clinical practice.

In summary, the literature on counselor development and counselor supervision promotes a reflective practitioner approach. We reviewed opportunities for active learning and reflectivity across the core curriculum. Ultimately, it may prove beneficial to intentionally connect reflectivity as developmental preparation for the practicum experience. Counselor educators are challenged to cultivate opportunities for reflectivity throughout the curriculum.

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# Career Experiences of Counselor Educators: Early and Near-Tenure Experiences

Dana Heller Levitt and David A. Hermon

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Counselor educators near the tenure years (5-10 years) experience challenges that differentiate them from their early and late career colleagues, regardless of tenure status. The following phenomenological study sought to ascertain the experiences of counselor education faculty during these distinct years of their academic careers. Eight counselor educators were interviewed and themes were derived, including a need for increased support pre- and post-tenure, adequate doctoral level preparation for faculty roles, and challenges in balancing the functions within and outside of the academy. Recommendations for current and emerging counselor educators are provided.

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## Finding A Fit: Career Experiences of Counselor Educators

A growing body of literature exists describing the experiences of faculty at the early stages of their careers (Conway, 2006; Magnuson, 2002; Magnuson, Norem, & Haberstroh, 2001; Magnuson, Shaw, Tubin, & Norem, 2004) and as they have been established as experts in the counselor education profession (Niles, Akos, & Cutler, 2001). Magnuson, Black, and Lahman (2006) engaged in a longitudinal study of new assistant professors of counselor education to study their changes in roles and experiences in the first three years of work. Their study tracks the developmental changes and insights as new faculty further engage in academia. The results of this research suggest the large role of experienced faculty as mentors in career

success and satisfaction (Magnuson et al., 2006). Additionally, life demands of faculty, including first year experiences and understanding the tenure process (Conway), balance of wellness and job satisfaction (Connolly & Myers, 2003), cultural dynamics and career success (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004), occupational stress (Hill, 2009; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Reybold, 2005) and the acquisition of strategies that lead to success (Niles et al.) are foci of research attention. Yet there appears to be minimal discussion of the experiences of faculty when they are 5 to 10 years into their careers. In other words, what happens between entering and beginning to solidify oneself in the profession? Issues of interest include earning tenure, moving up in rank, making decisions regarding "fit" with current position, and exploring options of staying and pursuing other opportunities.

The purpose of the present study was to highlight, through phenomenological inquiry, the experiences of counselor educators in the “near tenure” (e.g., 5 to 10 years) years. Eight counselor educators were interviewed to ascertain their experiences and answer the central question: What are the experiences of counselor educators during these important years?

## Early- to Mid-Career Faculty Experiences

There is a limited body of research on counselor education faculty careers in the specified time frame of the present study. A small body of literature regarding mid-career faculty is extracted from other fields of study as a context for the present inquiry. Mid-career faculty are defined as “scholars who have tenure and yet perceive themselves as still relatively distant from retirement” (Baker-Fletcher, Carr, Menn, & Ramsay, 2005, p. 4). Romano, Hoelsing, O’Donovan, and Weinsheimer (2004) provide an even broader definition of faculty “no longer at the early stages of their careers” (p. 22). Given the relatively long time to retirement (25 years or more), job satisfaction may shift from the achieved extrinsic “status” markers (e.g., tenure and promotion to professor) to more intrinsic markers (e.g., knowing work matters, mentoring the next generation of counselor educators). Faculty may be similar to the employees in Connolly and Myers’ (2003) study, who found wellness and mattering to be significant predictors of job satisfaction.

### *Faculty Challenges: The Tenure Process*

Tenure may be perceived as creating an opportunity for life balance and for the faculty member to expand teaching and service activities. Pre-tenured faculty may experience greater occupational stress than their tenured counterparts (Hill, 2009). In reality, tenured faculty have increased expectations. Tenured faculty are expected

to have demonstrated a strong work ethic and to provide a mature perspective to students and early career faculty (Baker-Fletcher et al., 2005). The demands for mentorship and expert status increase with greater success. Faculty are placed in the role of experts and leaders, providing direction to the profession and to academe. One is left to wonder when this transformation from junior to senior faculty takes place. Does the faculty member, only a few years post-tenure, truly have the means to provide the type of mentorship expected to new faculty? Are there faculty members who achieve the status and expectations for success prior to the tenure marker?

Mid-career faculty also express frustration with the limited opportunities for pedagogical development (Baker-Fletcher et al., 2005). Most workshops for curricular design and enhancement are geared toward doctoral teaching assistants and early career faculty (Baker-Fletcher et al., Romano et al., 2004). These sessions do not offer the resources required of faculty who have been teaching for several years and whose material suddenly seems dated as technology and academic discipline continue to advance (Sorcinelli, 1999). Particularly in counselor preparation, rapid sociocultural changes require faculty to remain up to date on issues and the means by which emerging counselors can be encouraged to facilitate change. Students change, the discipline changes, and faculty members may find that once-effective teaching methods no longer have the same impact on students (Romano et al.). The elimination of tenure pressure creates a unique opportunity for faculty to grow as teachers, yet attention to pedagogy may have been lacking to this point. The pressures experienced early in one’s career to publish may have distracted efforts to invest in growth as a teacher (Baker-Fletcher et al.). Additionally, increased administrative responsibilities may take time away from the newly tenured faculty from exploring and mastering innovative pedagogical practices.

### *Unique Challenges for Counselor Educators Between their 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Year*

The bulk of research regarding faculty experiences is generalized across academic disciplines. Limited research exists regarding the experiences of counselor educators during these defining years. One might assume, based upon previous research, that counselor education faculty experience similar challenges of faculty from other disciplines. There are circumstances unique to counselor education faculty such as the continual changes in the counseling profession, advances in counseling service provision, and the demands and orientation of a service-driven profession. Distance from professional counseling practice may be an additional concern. As counselor educators prepare students to enter the profession, they may themselves be anywhere from 5 to 10 years removed from clinical practice. Such distance has the capacity to create dissonance in preparation and content expertise as well as a research agenda that adequately reflects the state of the profession.

Phenomenological inquiry was used to explore the experiences of counselor education faculty near tenure. Rather than use quantitative analyses to test for differences, or qualitative grounded theory to derive a theory, the researchers judiciously chose the method offering the greatest likelihood for faculty to share their experiences in their words to attempt to capture themes during crucial years immediately pre and post-tenure. The authors selected the 5 to 10 year range to be consistent with the literature regarding faculty neither in early career experiences nor nearing retirement.

## **Method**

### *Phenomenology*

Phenomenological research is research, “from the point of view of the behaving organism itself” (Snygg, 1935, p. 406). It is

both a philosophical approach and a way of gathering information (Lemon & Taylor, 1998). The goal of the researcher is to obtain an articulate description of the individual’s experiences with the phenomena and his or her understanding of self in those experiences (Anderson-Nathe, 2008). The process of phenomenological inquiry begins with reduction. The researcher must work to suspend all previous knowledge of a phenomenon in order to approach it as unique to the time, place, context and the observer’s subjective perspective. Next, decisions must be made about what data will be gathered and from whom. The researcher uses qualitative methods to obtain information from participants as they subjectively describe the phenomenon (Lemon & Taylor). This information is gathered and analyzed with the researcher again attempting to suspend previous knowledge and biases while working to “live the experience as if it were her own” (Lemon & Taylor, p.233).

### *Sampling*

The authors employed two sampling procedures. The first method was through CESNET, a voluntary listserv for counselor educators and graduate students in counselor education. A message was sent to the list requesting individuals with 5 to 10 years of counselor education experience to participate. Intentional sampling was also employed wherein the researchers solicited participation from faculty who they knew and who met the criteria. Some of these individuals were recommended through snowball sampling as well as direct contact by the researchers. The researchers were mindful of the challenges of interviewing individuals they knew. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to ensure consistency in the interview questions. Additionally, the researchers consulted one another before or after interviews with colleagues to address issues with objectivity and potential for bias. Individuals agreeing to participate were sent a brief demographic questionnaire and an informed consent form for participation in the study. Following receipt of a signed consent agreement, the

participants were contacted to schedule individual telephone interviews.

### *Pilot study*

A pilot study was conducted with two counselor educators. Each of the researchers interviewed one of the pilot study participants by telephone using the pre-determined interview questions. The participants of the pilot reported that they found the questions easy to understand and offered few suggested changes. One additional question was added as a result and at the recommendation of one of the pilot interviews. This question asked participants to consider the factors that shape their roles as counselor educators, to include elements that draw upon participants' life balance and faculty role expectations.

### *Participants*

Eight counselor education faculty members were interviewed for the study. Five of the participants were male and three were female. The mean age of participants was 42.4 (range = 36-48). Participants were primarily Caucasian (n = 7). One participant identified as African American. The mean number of years as a counselor educator was 7.5 (range = 5-10 years). The mean years of professional counseling experience prior to or during faculty work was 7.5 (range = 0-16 years). Most of the participants were pre-tenure. At the time of the study, five were planning to submit materials for promotion and tenure within the next two years, and 2 had achieved tenure within the previous year. One participant was previously tenured at another institution. All of the participants were employed as counselor educators at the time of interview. Five participants were at their second institution, two at their third institution, and one at a fourth institution. Mean time spent in the current position at the time of interview was 3.1 years (range = 0.5-6).

### *Procedures*

Consistent with qualitative sampling procedures, interviews were conducted until a saturation point was reached (Patton, 1990). That is, the point at which participants' experiences were repetitive and did not offer additional insights into the phenomenon of faculty at this career stage.

Each of the eight participants spoke with one of the two researchers by telephone for the individual interviews. The interviews were recorded, with the participants' consent, and transcribed for analysis. The interview protocol was designed to meet the purpose of the phenomenological study to ascertain the experiences of counselor education faculty at this point of their academic careers.

The specific interview questions asked participants to compare their current teaching, research, and scholarship expectations with what they initially expected. Participants who had been at more than one institution were asked to discuss these expectations for each position they held. Participants were also asked to share their greatest surprise (i.e., significant disparities between expectations and discovered reality) in their counselor education careers; the significant contributors to levels of work satisfaction and dissatisfaction; and what they would have liked to have known prior to entering academe. Participants similarly were asked to discuss the confluence of relationships between personal issues (e.g., age, career interests, and personal goals) and professional issues (e.g., teaching, research, service). Finally, the interview concluded with the question, "If you had to do it over again, would you pursue being a faculty member?"

Each interview was approximately 1 hour in duration. A graduate assistant transcribed the recordings. Individual member checks were conducted with the participants by offering them the opportunity to review the transcriptions for accuracy and to add or delete content. A final member check procedure entailed follow-up

questions with participants for elaboration of content.

### *Researcher Bias*

As counselor educators in our fifth to tenth years of experience, we were aware of the potential for researcher bias in the present study. The authors entered the research with this awareness and conducted numerous checks to ensure our objectivity. The authors acknowledge the similarities of participants' reported experiences and their own career positions. Suspension of judgment, knowledge, and shared experiences with the participants was an expected challenge upon commencement of the study. As such, the research team was deliberate and consistent in sharing our experiences and perceptions with one another throughout the interview process. Researcher bias was accounted for in the interviews and analysis through a semi-structured protocol, member checks, and consultation between the researchers. Attempts to control bias were prominent in strong collaboration throughout the project. While attempts were made, the researchers acknowledge that this research, as with most qualitative designs (Patton, 1990) may bear the effects of personal experiences and perspectives.

### *Data Analysis*

The final transcripts were reviewed by the researchers and a third, independent reviewer trained in qualitative research. The purpose of the triangulated review and the member checks was to extract themes of the interviews more objectively and validly, given the researchers' close connection to the study and interview process (Creswell, 2008).

Open and axial coding systems were applied to categorize the data in the transcripts (Neuman, 2006). The transcripts were independently reviewed with notations about prospective themes during open coding (Patton, 2002). The researchers then came together with the initial coding to

further explore the themes. An axial system was employed to further categorize the themes derived from the interviews (Patton, 2002). Continued verification of the accuracy of the placement of data in the themes was conducted throughout the analysis (Patton, 2002).

## **Results**

The initial themes were identified by the researchers' and reviewer's independent study of the transcripts (Patton, 2002). Open coding produced initial themes centered around satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to careers in academia. Further review of the themes and transcripts in the axial coding phase yielded more specific categories, including work role balance, work-life balance, and doctoral level preparation.

The final analysis of the 8 interviews, through selective coding (Neuman, 2006), yielded 3 categories of experiences for the counselor education faculty: support pre- and post-tenure, doctoral level preparation, and balance. Two additional areas, what counselors educators would have liked to know and whether they would pursue this career path again, provided rich data for counselor education programs and are discussed in the recommendations section.

### Category 1: Support

Support was characterized by participants' needs for assistance during the transition to faculty roles and within their work lives. Participants discussed the support they receive in their institutions and by nature of academia.

**“One of the reasons I don't work in K-12 anymore is because they are heavy on policies and rules and not a lot of trust in the field ... that has always been a strong aspect of higher education, the academic freedom, the creativity to design what you want in a course.”**

**"I am right where I need to be. I am at a place where they give me so much autonomy ... the days are mine and I can do what I need to do."**

Much of the support addressed by participants reflected their experiences as pre-tenure faculty. One participant reflected on the transition from a personal and professional context and the challenge of testing assumptions regarding pedagogy.

**"...the education portion of the counselor education is really important to me...I have really high personal standards when it comes to teaching. It felt like you were constantly busy being an educator."**

Support was further discussed with respect to the requirements of the job. Time seemed to emerge in several participants' comments. One participant commented on the time related to the quality of work to be produced. Another participant mentioned the help received through graduate assistants.

**"...it is different preparing a manuscript for publication than...getting a paper to turn in at the end of the semester. The quality level has to be quite higher than what you have done previously...so that has added a lot of time to each week."  
"I get a student [assistant] but I only get her for 4 hours a week and I need a lot more time than that to do various things...so sometimes I am up to 2:00 in the morning."**

It should be noted that sometimes participants did not feel supported in their work. These comments primarily reflected collegial relationships in which support was anticipated. Participants were surprised by the lack of support. There was a general sense of respect for peers and their work, but tremendous dissatisfaction with interpersonal conflicts and an overriding sense of competition, particularly among a group of counselors. For example,

**"I thought, oh if I get in with the counseling people they are going to be more sensitive, more caring of people, there will be less squabbles ... colleagues who start rumors about you, spread lies, come into your class and sit in the back of the classroom so they can gain material about people's teaching... ego and competition is what I really didn't expect."**

**"I think you waste too much energy on trying to understand and avoid the dynamics of those things between faculty ... some expect the level of difference as if we live in a caste society in the 1800s."**

**"I did not expect the kind of junior high bullying thing that goes on to step in the way of expectations."**

Another participant spoke of the importance of colleagues and mentors in understanding the role, function, and expectations of faculty with respect to promotion and tenure. This comment seems salient given the perspectives previously discussed regarding collegial support and the general navigation of the promotion and tenure process.

**"I have a clear and consistent message from other people that I talk to, but not a clear and consistent message from the director of our school or the people that are involved in reviewing my dossier and giving me feedback on my annual review."**

It was clear that participants sought support in their professional relationships. This included colleagues from one's own institution, as well as the broader community of counselor educators. The participants indicated that it is this sense of connection that contributes to their inspiration and overall satisfaction with their faculty roles.

**"the ability to travel, the ability to be in a community when I go to a conference and it's like there are people all over the United States who**

**are doing similar jobs as I am ... there's a community ... you go to the next conference and you see them and again ... the community, the travel, those have been the really pleasant surprises"**  
**"I would say the relationships I have with my colleagues are the greatest satisfaction [sic] relationship I have. I put that above financial gain; that is the central piece of my work satisfaction."**

In addition to university colleagues and counselor educators nationwide, students provided a grounding force to remind the participants why they entered the profession and enhanced career satisfaction.

**"I enjoy the students probably the most...satisfies me professionally, but personally I enjoy them, their personality with the same respect to my colleagues they play an important factor in the enjoyment of the job."**  
**"For the most part...the students are really good, both at the master's level and the doctoral level...two masters students did presentations with me... to go and stand in front of a bunch of people when you are a master's student to make presentations. ... we have a good number of those students that get involved and do really good work."**

#### Category 2: Doctoral Level Preparation

Doctoral level preparation emerged as a distinct category from support. Participants discussed the surprises they experienced upon entering their first faculty positions.

**"I didn't realize the time it was going to take and then on top of that my chair was of the mindset that you had to be in the office five days a week from 9 to 5...though we had faculty meetings at 9:00 in the morning...working until 8:00 or 9:00 at night and then coming back the next morning, that was hard to balance."**

Often, these surprises seemed to be rooted in their own doctoral level preparation.

They observed their own mentors and faculty and combined their observations with the means by which they navigated their own doctoral study. As one participant stated,

**"...where I went to school that was normal because you couldn't go into a class and not be prepared to be there. And if you had to be up to 2:00 they weren't going to cry you a river because you stayed up late."**

There were surprises and challenges to their work mentioned by participants. These participants felt that they were unprepared for the realities of academia because the issues were not addressed in their doctoral preparation. Issues around equity, earning additional income, and general work environment presented unexpected challenges to participants.

**"I had one raise in three years at my other university ... Not only are you not going to get a raise but every year there is going to be somebody who comes in making more than you... that is the way higher ed works compared to other settings."**  
**"... counselor educators making money outside of the institution drove me nuts. They would be working almost full time outside the university and carrying whatever the minimum load was and they would teach somewhere else or they would be working in private practice and it would eat up 20 or 25 hours a week."**  
**"I wanted to believe that everything here is about honoring students, about learning, and that there would be excitement to that climate and a sense of collegiality and teamwork. But that is not the case here or at my other university."**

#### Category 3: Balance

A significant yet not surprising theme that emerged was a sense of balance, or lack thereof, for faculty. Two themes within the

balance category emerged: faculty roles and responsibilities, and career-life balance.

*Faculty roles and responsibilities.*

Participants discussed the journey, challenges, and successes in navigating a balance in work functions. They consistently expressed that the balance is unique to academia and their move to counselor education faculty roles.

**"...there is not enough hours in the week and that is basically a three-pronged job, and you know one in and of itself could be a full-time job...so managing what I would consider to be three part-time jobs all into one."**

**"...when one role dominates, whether service dominates or research seems to dominate or the teaching dominates; I would like to have some type of balance between those things"**

One participant expressed surprise over the amount of time involved in course preparation:

**"I taught as an adjunct in one course and I thought that was time consuming and at the time I wasn't aware of how time consuming it would be to teach three. It is more than just triple the amount of time."**

Time to devote towards research and publication in particular was mentioned by several participants. The balance of research, teaching, and scholarship responsibilities was a significant theme in much of the participants' discussions of research in particular.

**"X was a teaching institution and they had a 70-15-15 split on the three areas [teaching, scholarship, and service] and that was spelled out in the faculty handbook. I had to do one expectation to keep my position and another to meet my personal expectation. Coming to Y, it is not spelled out in the handbook, but it is**

**the same expectation. The union contract tells you what the university's expectations are."**

**"I don't necessarily write every day; that and committee work take up time."**

**"...what has happened here is I have had more opportunities and more venues to do it in. It is easier to find and easier to get done. Greater expectations, but more opportunities."**

**"It is not necessarily the amount of production you have to do although I hate writing and I only do in short concentrated spurts where I drive my family nuts when I am grumpy and I get up early in the morning and do it. But other people say I am productive and I just don't see it because it is such an effort for me to do it."**

In addition to participants sharing the amount of time they spent on research and writing, several participants discussed a new awareness about the time involved in the publication process. One participant had a great deal to learn given the number of manuscript revisions required for publication and balancing this responsibility with service and teaching. Another participant, who was at an institution with a higher research expectation than the first faculty position, described the research component as "an enigma...it has always been a mystery how much, and I preferred not to worry about it."

*Career-life balance.* Balance was also discussed from the standpoint of personal and professional responsibilities. Three participants spoke of the challenges of beginning or maintaining a family given demands of the job:

**"I wasn't prepared at all for how large of an impact the tenure process would have on your personal life and around developing a family...I can't imagine how much harder this would be on women faculty members...I hear counselor education colleagues**

**make negative comments about people who have had children.”**

**“I didn’t think I would try to have a family life and never be home in the evenings...I really think there are not enough support systems in place for women for them to successfully navigate through the programs as professionals and be happy healthy family members.”**

**“..the hardest thing for me has been finding the balance to give my kids and family the time that I want to and yet still carving out enough time to get what needs to be done work wise...trying to work with a child there is difficult, so I try to do the best I can in their presence and then do a lot of work when they go to bed. It is working around their schedules rather than them working around yours.”**

One participant summed the importance of family and balance by stating:

**“If I can’t give my family the time they need then I won’t keep the job. I love the job, but I am not going to sacrifice my family for it.”**

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

The results of this study suggest numerous and unique factors influencing the experiences of counselor education faculty between years 5 through 10. The primary findings were consistent with the research on counselor education faculty career satisfaction (e.g., Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Hill, 2009). The unanticipated result of early career job changes is likewise consistent with the literature (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002). All of the participants in the present study had changed institutions at least one time by the time of the interviews. The rationale for moves varied among participants. Current research regarding faculty job moves suggests that satisfaction, collegiality, professional conflicts,

organizational commitment, job involvement, and morale may be factors in career transitions (Johnsrud & Rosser; Olsen, 1993; Olsen, Maple, & Stage, 1995; Reybold, 2005).

The categories derived in the study may be summarized to suggest that support, preparation, and balance are key issues for the participating counselor educators. Participants’ responses indicated a desire for information about the expectations, differences among institutions, and the time commitment involved in the profession. These responses suggest the need for further preparation of counselor educators-in-training, increased mentoring opportunities and processes, and increased support for counselor educators.

### *Counselor Educator Preparation Programs*

Counselor education doctoral programs may be an instrumental starting point in helping faculty adjust to their roles and maintain clarity and success throughout their careers. Interestingly, there appeared to be a strong predictor of how participants entered academe on their perceptions and experiences several years into their careers. This study found that information is needed regarding the expectations of faculty, the types of institutions at which one might work, and the time involved in the position. Doctoral preparation programs in counselor education are uniquely positioned to provide such information.

With respect to expectations, burgeoning counselor educators could be exposed to the information that blindsided some of our participants upon entrance into the profession. Doctoral seminars specific to the role and function of the faculty member may give a more clear sense of the expectations of faculty.

Several participants in our study believed that the vast majority of doctoral programs prepare students to teach at research extensive universities, creating role confusion for faculty should they enter other types of institutions (e.g., master’s

level, liberal arts). In fact, the majority of participants in this study began their faculty careers at universities that were not research I schools. Beyond simply reviewing Carnegie classifications, counselor education programs can describe how institutional type specifically impacts the day-to-day work lives and expectations for professors at various universities. A forum (either live or video conference) of counselor educators from various institutions (e.g., liberal arts college, masters level teaching university, and research I university) where professors describe their roles and time spent in research, teaching and service activities could prove to be a helpful initiative within counselor education programs.

### *Mentoring*

Several participants spoke of the importance of mentoring as they progressed beyond the first faculty years. One participant discussed her experiences and continued learning:

**“I have learned how to say no, I have learned that my chair has also been a great mentor...so I have learned how to balance myself in terms of when I am working, I work really hard, when I don't need to work really hard, I don't. But that has taken me almost 10 years to realize.”**

Without mentors in the process, such learning and boundary setting may have been absent. Like the institutions that employ them, faculty invest in the success of their colleagues. Therefore, establishing mentoring relationships at every stage of faculty development may contribute to the success and satisfaction of counselor educators. Our participants suggested that they would like to have models at the mid-career mark to guide them through the tenure process and help them navigate new roles that accompany tenure and promotion (e.g., perceived or actual increased service responsibilities). Additionally, because institutions differ, faculty need mentoring if

they leave one school for another where the playing field for success (and tenure) may be markedly different from their previous school. In the words of one participant, with respect to new expectations for community service:

**“...moving from where I was and going to a new location and taking a position as an assistant professor around the service area was that I didn't know anyone in the community...I didn't have any of those links to the community, so doing service was really hard for me to do. In fact, I didn't do it. I just stayed in the college and the associations. I still haven't connected well with parts of the community to do that kind of service.”**

One might question this participant's success with service had mentoring and community networking been a more visible part of the experience.

Faculty, particularly pre-tenured, are not likely to seek mentoring on their own (Sorcinelli, 1999). Satisfaction, and thereby success, may be increased with formal programs for pre-tenured faculty (Hill, 2009). Programs could establish these partnerships as faculty enter the institution and maintain partnerships throughout their pre-tenure experience. Established partnerships that receive programmatic support to continue through the tenure process may be a means of maintaining faculty success and satisfaction.

### *Support*

The overwhelming voice of the participants is that they need support during their fifth to tenth years in academe. They need to know that they are competent and have reasonable contributions to make to the profession. They want to know if they are on track towards tenure, establishing identities in the department, and moving in the right direction in their management of responsibilities. Most notably, participants want support and feedback in order to be

successful, consistent with the research (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Olsen, 1993; Olsen et al., 1995; Reybold, 2005).

Additional support is noted in the proliferation of the counselor education profession. This is particularly important to faculty as they consider their future. One female participant remarked that she has a responsibility to the profession to ensure that support can continue:

**“I would like to go up for full professor because women in academe are on the low end of being full professors in our field. So I would like to model what my mentor has modeled for me.”**

This comment, consistent with the literature regarding challenges for women and minorities in academe (e.g., Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004), is further supported by the following participant’s statement:

**“I think men need to be much more cognizant of how we can be supportive of this type of situation...we don’t even have child care structured into who we are and I think it is incredibly unfair.”**

Support for counselor educators can take many shapes and can be derived from several sources. The comments of the two participants above speak to the diversity of sources of support: institutional, professional association, and collegial. As simple as it may appear, counselor educators, regardless of rank or years in the profession, might consider how they can advocate for change in their programs.

## **Limitations and Directions for Research**

As with all research, and qualitative designs in particular, the results of this study must be applied with a readiness to continually evaluate. The small sample size was adequate to reach a saturation point within

the interviews (Patton, 1990), yet may not adequately reflect the experiences of all counselor educators. The nature of qualitative phenomenological research allows participants to give voice to their experiences. Yet the downside of such an approach makes comparison and contrast to the limited research finding that resulted from other forms of analysis unjustifiable. Furthermore, the final sample was limited in its diversity. As Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2004) note, there are unique experiences for counselor educators of non-minority cultural identities. Related, the fact that none of the participants were still at their first institution translates that the interviewees’ responses varied between expectations they originally had as doctoral students and newly formed expectations with respect to moving to new institutions.

Face-to-face interviews allowing for greater interaction would have been the preferred method for conducting the interviews. Geographical and financial limitations did not allow for travel by the researchers. Further, the interviews, while semi-structured in nature, were conducted independently by two researchers. As a result, the responses may have changed had both researchers been involved in all interviews or if all interviews had been conducted by one individual alone.

Finally, the present study does not have a true comparison point with existing research. The first challenge was finding existing literature and a definition of faculty near their tenure years (5 to 10). The researchers acknowledge the limitation in the lack of a standardized definition, yet simultaneously propose a new foundation for further research.

The present study provides a step forward in understanding the experiences of counselor education faculty. Future research may be conducted to better ascertain the experiences of faculty at this and later stages to provide direction to enhance and ensure productive and satisfying careers. Future studies that explore career development issues for faculty at various stages may provide

greater insight into their experiences and needs. Building directly upon the results of the present study, the profession may be better served by exploring the career selection criteria for counselor educators. Specifically, what factors influence faculty career selection? Exploration of career development needs and opportunities may be of interest and help delineate successful career development for counselor education faculty as they reach the midpoints and move into the latter stages of their careers.

A large and unexpected result this sample produced was the fact that none of the participants remained in their first position. Faculty satisfaction in particular may warrant additional research in light of findings regarding departure from academia (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Reybold, 2005). Research on the frequency of counselor education position changes is needed to answer several questions. Do counselor educators tend to make transitions at a greater rate (i.e., number of positions per year of employment) compared to other academic disciplines? How do factors such as salary compression and the greater use of portable defined-contribution retirement plan (Conley, 2007) rather than university defined-benefit plans (based on years of service and salary) contribute to the movement of counselor educators from one university position to another? Studying the attrition rates and reasons for job transitioning have implications for preparing the next generation of the professoriate. The current economic and employment markets may have implications for career trends in the profession.

Lastly, research regarding the relationship between support and mentoring in doctoral training, initial faculty positions, and continued work in academe may illuminate the reasons behind counselor educators' transiency and stability over a career. Given current tenure and academic career structures, the academy itself may be challenged to keep up with the changing job trends of counselor education faculty.

## Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that counselor educators' experiences between years 5 through 10 can be categorized according to support, preparation, and balance. As participants considered the question, "If you had to do it over again, would you still pursue being a faculty member," most were affirmative. It is important to note that counselor education preparation programs, mentoring, and support can play critical roles in these responses and counselor educators' experiences.

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# Intricacy Unveiled: Metaphor, Models, and (Mis)Understanding in the Behavioral Sciences

Scott L. Horton

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Metaphor use stands as a striking example of the creative drive of humans, with its ability to render understandable that which is highly convoluted, making it a natural partner and tool of the behavioral sciences. Touching briefly on the nature and efficiency of metaphor, I explore that tenacious and fertile connection vis a vis historic and current conceptualizations and contexts, and preparation for the counseling relationship.

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## Introduction

As anyone knows who has attempted to master a foreign language, one must travel metaphorically to another land. Sentence structure may be alien; the language itself may sound on the one hand disjointed, or in contrast, a stream of contiguous, meaningless utterances; familiar idioms likely no longer work; and a sense of welcome may be evasive at best. It can take considerable time, effort, and frustration before becoming acclimated enough to be able at last to navigate with confidence and success.

The above scenario, while certainly not new in concept or content, depends on metaphor to convey essence and evocation. Indeed it would be practically impossible to impart more concisely both the meaning and sense of being linguistically lost *without* the help of metaphor and its ability to capture and express both literal and figurative truth. However, neither metaphor's value nor presence is limited to such everyday terms and discourse, but infuses virtually every aspect of thought and communication, including academic conceptualization and its surrounding

discourse. Specifically, since the inception of the social and behavioral sciences, metaphor, unrivaled in expressive capacity, has served as integral but silent partner in the development of various models and concepts, mediating between abstraction and accessibility, density and directness, complexity and comprehension. The following is intended as a brief exploration of this quiet but crucial partnership and the key role the use of metaphor may have within the counseling environment.

To start, the formal study of metaphor is extensive, a considerable linguistic field unto itself, and well outside the scope or purpose of this discourse. Nonetheless, before entering said exploration, the concept of metaphor is worth discussing in broad terms from a couple of vantage points: what metaphor is fundamentally, and why it is so powerful.

Addressing the first issue, Fraser (1979) denotes metaphor as "an instance of the non-literal use of language in which the intended propositional content must be determined by the construction of an analogy" (1979, p. 176). More simply put, [T]he essence of metaphor is the use of one thing to represent another" (Barker, 1996, p. 11). For example, in hearing someone

described as a *raging bull*, the listener does not think that said person is actually bovine, but that his behavior is angry and threatening. So common is this type of imagery that we scarcely give it any thought. Human endeavor is steeped in metaphor to such an extent that it can be argued that we live by metaphors even, and cannot get through a day, or perhaps even a conversation, without constructing or using them (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Hayakawa (as cited in Emblar, 1966) asserts that “in everyday speech, in social thought...the meaning is, more often than not, in the metaphor” (p. ix). He continues: “Metaphors are the principles of organization by means of which we sort our perceptions, make evaluations, and guide our purposes” (p. ix), and that metaphors “are the very stuff with which human beings make sense of their lives (p. i). “It is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh” (Aristotle, ca 330 BCE/1924). So fundamental are metaphors that “[T]he metaphors--spare like poetry--embrace and express a large arc of human experience” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 198). Thus it is no surprise that metaphor, stemming from Greek and meaning “carrying from one place to another” (Cuddon, 1977, p. 383), is a long-established literary device as well, given its capacity to “open windows of unexpected insight into areas dense, distant, or ineffable” (Horton, 2002, p. 280).

## How then does metaphor work?

One salient characteristic about metaphor construction is that it increases in times of high feelings (Siegelman, 1990) or when there are decisions to be made that may be difficult (Leary, 1990).

Metaphor flows from affect because it usually represents the need to articulate a pressing inner experience of oneself and of oneself's internalized objects. It typically arises when feelings are high and when ordinary words do not seem strong enough or precise enough to convey the experience

(Siegelman, 1990, p. 16).

What makes this yet more intriguing is that in so constructing metaphors, we engage both hemispheres of the brain (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987). This has the effect of metaphor's serving as an internal, structural bridge between something understandable and something not so, in some cases between the linguistic and the non-linguistic (Horton and Andonian, 2005), even as we ourselves are trying to form a conceptual bridge between what is difficult to understand and what we can grasp. Significantly, it means that we almost literally bring more brain power to a problem or expression thereof through metaphor use, calling to mind the efficacy that Ortega appositely noted in the introductory quotation.

Metaphorical language offers the benefit of engaging the left and right side of the brain simultaneously, combining the linear and the figurative, the descriptive and the participative, the concrete and the abstract (Kegan, 1994, p. 260). In this way, metaphors serve to heighten cognitive functioning, which has obvious advantages when we are problem solving. Thus, when it comes to practical activity, metaphors can be signally effective (Leary, 1990).

Such boosted mental activity is necessary for forming and conveying ideas in a multitude of realms and situations. Here again the advantage of metaphor construction is evident, since “[C]ertain concepts are structured almost entirely metaphorically” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 85). This is certainly true in the social and behavioral sciences, where in attempting to create explanations for life events and contingencies that are highly complex and convoluted, we rely on available assistance such as metaphor to formulate, convey, understand, make sense of, and learn from them, even as we are well admonished to be aware of the danger in becoming trapped by a metaphoric conceptualization (Cox and Theilgaard, 1987). We mustn't mistake the map for the territory.

All the same, the behavioral sciences abound in metaphor use, and have

from the beginning, whether describing concepts or models of development, working with families within a theoretical perspective, or counseling individuals in therapeutic situations. Psychology and developmental studies in particular depend heavily on metaphor to delineate ideas that are quite intricate.

Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.), we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientation, objects, etc.). This need leads to metaphorical definition of our conceptual system (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 115).

## Metaphor in Counseling Theory

The popularizer of the so-called talking cure, Freud (1960) was a prodigious producer of metaphor, with uses too numerous to cite, other than minimally. For instance, within just three pages he asserted that “the ego is the actual seat of anxiety” (p. 47), is “servant of three masters” (p. 46), and is a constitutional monarch. His and others’ subsequent use of stages to describe developmental change is widespread; Erikson (1963), Jung (1933), and Piaget (1952) all spoke of stages as they developed and honed their particular approaches to developmental issues.

There are many other examples of the use of metaphors to describe concepts or models (*model* itself being metaphoric) and the processes of development. Some but not all are noted briefly below, broken into rough and perhaps arbitrary categories, and certainly neither in any hierarchical order nor claiming comprehensiveness, as there are doubtless others, with yet more to be conceived. In any case, these that follow evoke physicality, non-physical events or conditions, changes of many kinds, directional progress, and storytelling.

Among those that rely on physical structure for comprehension of mental

representations are spirals (Kegan, 1982, 1994), pyramid (Maslow, 1968), scaffolding for learning (Vygotsky, 1934/1996), and plateaus (Kegan, 1982). Vygotsky’s work lends itself very well to such physicality. Both his concept of scaffolding in particular and his Zone of Proximal Development make sense presented this way, as does Maslow’s pyramid and Kegan’s spirals and plateaus, all of them bringing to mind things that are familiar, tangible.

Transitioning from the physical to the non-physical, we find tasks (Havighurst, 1952), crisis (Erikson, 1963), systems (Hockey and James, 1993; Tennant and Pogson, 1995), and cognitive operations (Basseches, 1984; Piaget, 1952). Each of these imply a sense of order or threat thereto, the expectation being that the individual will face or accomplish something as part of her/his own development, or will develop within a prescribed organizational arrangement. Although non-physical, they are nonetheless recognizable as events that we all experience at some point or represent our attempts to understand them in the context of the surround in which these events take place.

Long a staple of explaining natural change, whether recurring or one of a kind, are such metaphors as cycles (Erikson, 1997), seasons (Levinson, 1978, 1996), transformation (Jung, 1933), and metamorphosis (Stein, 1998). We are familiar with the changing of the seasons, cyclical themselves, and sometimes extraordinary alterations of form that animals and insects go through, such as frogs and caterpillars respectively. We can sense some commonality if we ourselves have experienced surprising developments within our own lives or witnessed them, and it is natural to assert that others likewise have or will.

Yet another metaphoric approach employs the imagery of direction and progress. There is hardly anyone who has not traveled somewhere or another, hence the metaphors of journey (Sternberg and Spear-Swerling, 1998), paths or pathways (Lachman and James, 1997), passages

(Sheehy, 1974/1976), personal navigation (Sternberg and Spear-Swerling, 1998), and life course (Hockey and James, 1993). No matter how clichéd it may seem to say that “life is a journey,” some developmental approaches nonetheless find richness in the resonant commonality of this way of expressing and understanding life’s process and the episodes one may take part in along the way.

Finally, and most recently, the power of the age-old human practice of story-telling has proven applicable as a new way of exploring personal development, as witnessed by the concepts of narrative therapy (White and Epston, 1991), of being in voice (Gilligan, 1982), of chronicling of one’s life story (Rosenberg and Rosenberg, 1999), and of personal myth (McAdams, 1993). All of these reveal the potent and integral nature of who we are vis a vis what we say and how we say it, with the telling (or the non-telling, for whatever reason) of our history being perhaps as important as the history itself.

Moving now from the arena of individual counseling or conceptualization, we enter the relatively new realm of family therapy. Family has been variously characterized in terms of system (Hoffman, 1981), which opens up into a world of system controls, family boundaries and subsystems, and so forth (Rosenblatt, 1994); narrative (White & Epston, 1991), with its emphasis on language, story, and metaphor; a system of meaning-making (Maturana & Varela, 1987) based on constructivist epistemology; and anthology (Horton & Andonian, 2005), the idea that a family is an aggregation of individual or collective stories and voices; to cite a very few. Even the term *therapy* itself is metaphor for the process of investigating and working through the sometimes labyrinthine interconnections between people comprising what is paradoxically the most basic of human groups, the family. Perhaps the very newness of the field accounts for the comparatively smaller metaphoric representation, but the two disciplines (psychology and family therapy)

do co-mingle to a certain extent.

Consciously aware or not of the breadth and depth of metaphor’s hold, therapists and counselors nonetheless use all manner of metaphor in their work. Such concepts as mirroring, projecting, ventilating, acting out, attachment, boundaries, transparency, splitting, ego, id, superego, drives, modeling behavior, feedback, defenses, and more far too numerous to cite (Yalom, 1995), are all themselves integral metaphors of the profession’s complex environs; for an experienced professional it may difficult to imagine everyday counseling, including its language, without their presence or contribution.

As one can see in this brief overview and recognizable examples, there would appear to be a Will to Metaphor (Horton, 2002), so suffused with metaphor are these disciplines and applications therein, from the broadly conceptual to the idiosyncratic realm of the individual attempting to convey or better understand her/his reality or concerns. Speaking to the latter, metaphor has value in identifying and individual’s life themes (Horton, 2002), conspicuous clues being the key, root, or deep metaphors that “will often be metaphors for the whole person” (Siegelman, 1990, p. 67). Such awareness can be a valuable tool for practitioners and counselor educators. In any case, metaphors, whether used or suggested by the therapist, or client generated, have great value, for “[W]ithout metaphor we neither begin to think about nor experience our mundane thoughts, our humdrum emotions” (Hockey and James, 1993, p. 39).

One key, however, in all of this, is that the metaphors be recognizable not just to oneself, but to others. On a therapeutic level this means that the counselor must be open to the metaphors of the client, rather than imposing her/his own, regardless of how reasonable or applicable they seem from the outside or how successful one has been in the past with a certain metaphoric construct. To do otherwise can lead to distance, misunderstanding, or even

cessation, which is hardly the goal of an therapeutic environment or outcome. However, especially for someone new to the profession, this may not be so apparent, requiring that specific attention be paid to metaphor as part of counselor education.

There can be a profound misfit as the client strives to accept a counselor's view/metaphor of things, perhaps in an effort to please, or to avoid being *resistant*. It may be, for instance, that what first appears to be resistance is simply a reflection of a clash in metaphor. The question is: whose metaphor holds sway? If understanding is the goal, then finding the client's reality dictates the answer. "We can learn a great deal by studying our most metaphor-using clients in their most metaphorical moments" (Carlsen, 1996, p.340). Individuals create highly idiosyncratic metaphors that serve to connect the person (and presumably the listener) to what is important, bringing their intelligence to an issue creatively. Within one's own culture, assuming broad enough commonality to bridge individual experiences, this is more likely to occur.

However, as we continue to receive and hopefully welcome those from *other* cultures into our own, it is as critical that we understand them as it is for them to understand us. For instance, in *The Tongue-tied American* (1980), Illinois Senator (then Congressman) Paul Simon cited many examples of international communication gone awry, where our American English imagery and metaphor simply did not translate. One brief vignette relates to an American businessman who attempted to market doormats in Japan, with no success at all, since the Japanese, accustomed to removing shoes when entering a home, take their shoes off, and thus have no need whatsoever for doormats as foot-wipers.

This example reinforces both the personally and culturally idiosyncratic nature of metaphor. To the Japanese, the metaphor of someone's being *a doormat*, that is, trodden on, treated disdainfully and disrespectfully, does not apply, at least so

stated. What culturally analogous metaphor the Japanese use I do not know, but it stands to reason that unless it were to be a culturally universal metaphor, it could or would be lost on us or anyone outside that specific culture, just as our doormat metaphor would be lost on them. In a time noted for global awareness and interconnectedness and its implicit intercultural exchange, in treating an immigrant client, attending to metaphors can be critical.

However, we needn't travel that far either linguistically or in miles to find that even within the English language, cultural differences may result in metaphorical chasms, England coming to mind readily. It has even been said that the English and Americans are separated by a common language. Sharing a common long-term history with the British and ostensibly speaking the same language is not enough to guarantee understanding. One example is the following. Most people in the United States are passingly familiar with the tale of Lady Godiva, who rode naked through town, assured that no one would look. One did, however: the famous Peeping Tom. His punishment for peeking was that he was *sent to Coventry*, where he was completely isolated and shunned. However, the metaphor, while well-known in England, is not at all stateside. There are many, many more examples illustrating easily that however common a metaphor may be in one culture or set of circumstances, it may be completely alien elsewhere, the same language base notwithstanding.

### **Where, then, does this leave us?**

It is clear that humans everywhere have an uncanny knack and drive to use metaphor in all realms and will continue to do so. Even someone who adamantly argues against metaphor use must inevitably use metaphor in her/his selfsame argument, so interwoven is it into human endeavor, language, and thinking. It is also clear that metaphors

themselves are “not only innovative, imaginative forms of comparison and contrast, they are also conceptual windows into evolution and change” (Carlsen, 1996, p. 338). As such, they too must change as our thinking evolves, sensitive as they are to our meaning-making, creative problem-solving, growth, and personal experience. Witness the constellation of metaphors presented here, many of which have passed into disfavor or simply been supplanted by more urgent, current, and more powerfully resonant constructions, or may not translate across cultures.

It is further clear that there exists, alongside the manifest advantages of metaphor, some potential for miscommunication, especially as the world seemingly shrinks, wherein it is possible for someone who mere years ago would have been practically unreachable by most people, to now communicate instantaneously through electronic means, to travel to distant lands quite readily, and indeed to become our colleagues and students. Thus, we must not assume congruity, either culturally or linguistically.

This leads to a few questions.

**Which metaphors do transfer culturally?**

**How sure can we be that our metaphors are understandable outside ourselves?**

**How certain can we be that we understand others’ metaphors?**

**Is there a need, then, for the equivalent of an international clearing-house of metaphors?**

**Just how tolerant, embracing, or helpful can we be to those whose fundamental metaphoric constructions (and therefore life experiences and subsequent views) may be at great variance, considering our dominant Western perspective, and our dominant American one specifically?**

**And perhaps most importantly, how**

**beneficial can we be to others or the cause of finding grounds of connection implicit in an effective counseling relationship if we do not have a heightened awareness of fundamental cultural or personal conceptualizations that metaphors convey so felicitously?**

In closing, there is an imperative, a power or magic, if you will, as Ortega notes, to metaphor, a sentiment echoed by Hayakawa, who asserts that “we do not use metaphors so much as our metaphors use us” (as cited in Emblar, 1966, p. i). This paper has not attempted to furnish answers to the questions raised, so much as to alert or remind counseling educators regarding the pervasiveness and potency of metaphor, and to provide a background and framework from which to open a convivial colloquy around the fruitful creativity, certainty, and potential of metaphor, partner to the behavioral sciences, and one of humankind’s greatest gifts.

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# Evaluating the effectiveness of a professional development workshop to increase school counselors' use of data: The role of technology

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The use of data by school counselors has grown increasingly important over the past few years, and has a prominent place in the American School Counselor Association's National Model for School Counseling Programs. This study examines the effectiveness of four variations of a workshop designed to improve school counselors' data use skills. The workshops were designed to vary along two dimensions; the amount of conceptual knowledge participants were exposed to, and the amount of a technology application (EZAnalyze) participants were exposed to. The quantitative results of the study indicate that being exposed to technology did not have a statistically significant impact on data use. The qualitative results indicate lack of time and knowledge were the most prominent barriers to applying what was learned during the workshop, and technology and access to useful data were the most prominent facilitators of data use. While the design of the study may provide a useful model to evaluate the impact of professional development over time, the results of the current study are best viewed as exploratory in nature.

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The use of data by school counselors today is critical to engage in effective school counseling practice (ASCA, 2005). Generally speaking, student outcome data can be used in two ways; school counselors can use data to guide program development by engaging in data-based decision making, and data can be used to evaluate program effectiveness. Practically speaking, using data to engage in data-based decision making and to evaluate program effectiveness go hand in hand, as the process for using data is similar for both data-driven decision making and program evaluation. The context of education today promotes the use of data for program evaluation purposes, as these data provide

accountability information to school counseling program stakeholders.

The ASCA National Model calls on school counselors to be data-driven – to use data to identify student needs and evaluate the effectiveness of programs that intend to affect student outcomes. However, most school counselors lack the data use and evaluation skills necessary to effectively engage in the types of accountability efforts the ASCA National Model proposes (Bauman, 2004; Myrick, 1984; Wilson, 1985). To address this issue, literature describing methods specifically for school counselors to conduct research and engage in evaluation activities on a local level are appearing, such as single-subject research designs (Foster, Watson, Meeks, & Young,

2002), using school-wide data (Hayes, Nelson, Tabin, Pearson, & Worthy, 2002), school counseling program evaluation (Curcio, Mathai, & Roberts, 2003), school counseling-focused models of data-driven decision making (Reynolds & Hines, 2000; Isaacs, 2003; Poynton & Carey, 2006; Stone & Dahir, 2007), and a model of evidence-based practice specific to school counseling (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

Noting the need for school counselors to have specific training in program evaluation, Trevisan (2000) conducted a telephone survey of all of the 50 state certification offices plus Washington D. C. to determine what program evaluation knowledge and competencies were required to obtain certification as a school counselor in each state. Using the *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs* (CACREP) standards, he found that two of the 50 states met the CACREP standards (Colorado and Washington), and another two came very close to meeting those standards (Missouri and Wisconsin).

The computer technology that is available today can assist school counselors in executing many aspects of their job, but the use of computer technology to assist in program evaluation and data use has not been documented. Areas where computer technology has been formally explored in the field of school counseling are retrieving and disseminating information, distance learning, training and supervision, and as a counseling tool (Van Horn & Myrick, 2001). School counselors are sometimes seen as lagging in their use of computer technology, which may be attributable to a lack of financial resources, training in how to use the technology, or both (Owen & Weikel, 1999).

The importance of technology for counselors has not gone unnoticed by counselor educators, and led to the creation of a set of technology competencies by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) which focus largely on computer technology (ACES, 1999; ACES, 2007). As the technology competencies

currently stand, counseling students should “be able to use computerized statistical packages” (ACES, 2007, p. 4). It is interesting to note that while this competency is near the top of the list of technology competencies for counselor education students (number 4 out of 12), there appears to be no literature on the topic regarding how to best engender these skills.

Given the current climate for accountability in the field of school counseling, the importance of using data to demonstrate accountability and guide decision-making, and the interest in the use of technology by counselor educators, methods for teaching school counselors how to use data to engage in program evaluation activities need to be identified and evaluated. The current study evaluated the effectiveness of four variations of a professional development workshop designed to isolate the value-added benefit of technology.

## Hypotheses

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the professional development workshops. Three specific hypotheses were investigated using quantitative methods:

1. Participants will perform differently over time (from pretest to posttest, one month, and three months) on measures of applied statistics knowledge and research methods, and research confidence and attitudes according to which group they belong.
2. Participants will engage in the actual use of data at one month and three months post-instruction differently according to which group they are assigned.
3. The use of data by participants will lead to more components of the ASCA National Model being implemented in their schools. Therefore, participants will differ in the number of ASCA National Model components added to their school

counseling program according to which group they are assigned

The qualitative portion of the study consisted of a focus group, convened after the quantitative portion of the study was complete, to help the researcher understand what barriers and facilitators to data use existed for the participants.

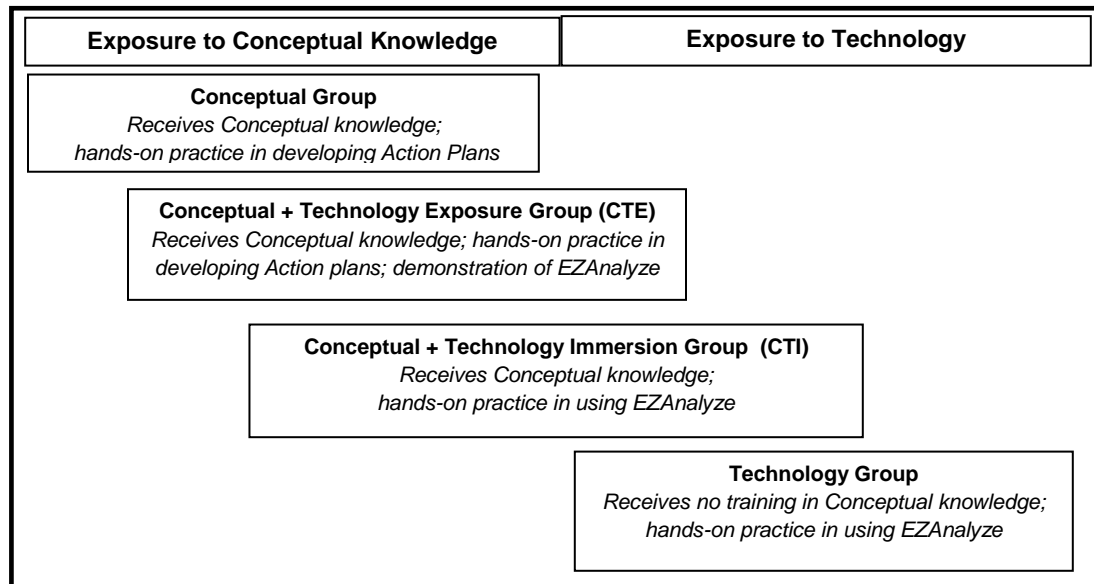
## Method

### *Technology*

Since most available computer programs for data analysis are more powerful than school counselors need, priced prohibitively high, and can themselves be quite confusing, a program called “EZAnalyze” was developed for use in this study. EZAnalyze (Poynton, 2007) is an “Excel Add-In” that contains data analysis functions necessary to follow the ASCA National Model recommendations for the use of data, and adds a “point and click” user interface to Microsoft Excel.

### *Design*

Participants in the study were assigned to one of four groups. Groups differed in terms of their exposure to Conceptual Knowledge (knowledge of a data-driven decision making system, basic statistical analyses, and summary of ASCA National Model data use recommendations) and exposure to Technology (EZAnalyze). As Figure 1 illustrates, the Conceptual group received conceptual knowledge only, and the Technology group received brief instruction in statistical analyses and hands-on practice with EZAnalyze. The Conceptual + Technology Exposure (CTE) and Conceptual + Technology Immersion (CTI) groups differed in their degree of exposure to EZAnalyze. Specifically, “exposure” to EZAnalyze was accomplished by providing participants with a demonstration and copy of EZAnalyze, and “immersion” was accomplished by providing participants with a demonstration and copy of EZAnalyze, with two hours of hands-on practice with EZAnalyze as part of the training.



**FIGURE 1**

### Overview of experimental groups

## *Curriculum*

The content of the conceptual knowledge materials utilized in the professional development workshops were developed by the National Center for School Counseling Outcome Research (CSCOR, 2004). These materials have been used across the country to provide training to school counselors on the ASCA National Model and the use of data, and were adapted specifically for use in the state the current study took place in by using examples from the state's education department website. This training was provided to the Conceptual, CTE, and CTI groups during approximately 4 hours of direct instruction. The specific components of the conceptual knowledge training, based largely on the ASCA National Model (2003) were:

- Information on the types of data (ASCA 2003, pp. 49-50):
  - Student achievement data (for example, standardized test scores, drop-out rates, and promotion and retention rates)
  - Achievement related data (for example, discipline referrals, attendance rates, and parental involvement)
  - Standards and competency related data (for example, the percentage of students with four-year plans, percentage who participate in job-shadowing opportunities)
  - Perception data (for example, data collected from self-report surveys)
- Methods for using data (ASCA 2003, pp. 50-51):
  - Disaggregating data (sorting data into categories such as ethnicity, gender, grade level, and teacher)
  - Program evaluation data
  - Process data (time analysis accountability methods)
  - Showing improvement over time

- Seven steps of data-based decision making (Adapted from Love, 2002)
  - Develop vision statement for school counseling program
  - Collect and analyze student data
  - Describe the problem
  - Commit to benchmarks
  - Develop and action plan
  - Implement, monitor, and evaluate intervention
  - Share results
- Creating results reports (ASCA 2003, pp. 60-61)
  - Structuring a results report to show changes over time
  - Different methods for displaying and communicating the results of data (for example, pie charts, bar graphs, and tables)

## *Measures*

### Demographics

A questionnaire was developed to obtain basic demographic information from participants. Items were included to assess gender, age, years of experience as a school counselor, teacher, and administrator, school and district size and setting, and the number of research courses taken in graduate school.

### ASCA National Model program implementation (SCPIS)

The 18-item "School Counseling Program Implementation Survey" was utilized to assess ASCA National Model program component implementation (available from [http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/implementation\\_survey.htm](http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/implementation_survey.htm)). Each item was measured using a four-point scale: 1 = Not Present, 2 = Development in Progress, 3 = Partly Implemented, and 4 = Fully Implemented. In addition to the items having high face validity, Elsner (2004) obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of .79 and .85 in pilot studies using 29 and 35 high schools in

Massachusetts, respectively. The survey was designed to assess the four ASCA National Model components – Foundation, Delivery, Management, and Accountability. Reliability analyses conducted by Elsner (2004) indicated that when the instrument is divided into these four subscales, reliability significantly declined.

#### Research confidence and attitudes (RESKA)

Bauman's (2004) measure, dubbed "RESKA" in this study, was employed to assess counselors' perceived confidence in conducting research, relevance of research, and value of research. Each item of the RESKA is measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. While the original survey instrument presented by Bauman contained 26 items, factor analyses revealed that only 14 of those items were found to reliably assess one of the three subscales (Bauman, 2004). Since this measure is new, further analyses were warranted to investigate the reliability and validity of this instrument. Therefore, all 26 items were administered to participants as a pretest and posttest the day of instruction. A factor analysis conducted on the pretest data yielded a similar factor structure to Bauman's (2004). Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for the entire 14-item instrument and each subscale using the pretest data. The six-item Confidence subscale, five-item Relevance subscale, and three-item Value subscale had Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of .86, .65, and .73 respectively, while the entire instrument had a Cronbach's Alpha of .77.

#### Actual use of data

A six-item measure of participants' actual use of data was developed to assess the frequency of data use. This measure contained four items asking participants to indicate how many times they have engaged in various data use activities (e.g., administered a survey, analyzed data, and

used data to make decisions) and two open-ended qualitative items. The quantitative items were designed to assess how frequently data was used and what type of data was used, while the qualitative items asked participants to describe how they used data, or if they did not use data, why not.

#### Applied statistics knowledge and research methods (Knowledge Test)

A 15-item questionnaire was developed to assess knowledge of basic research, evaluation, and statistics terminology, and the ASCA National Model (see Appendix A). The fifteen items of this measure were aligned with the conceptual knowledge part of the training curriculum to assess knowledge of the specific content areas the professional development workshop was designed to address.

To obtain information about the characteristics of the Knowledge Test, individual items were examined by computing Point Biserial correlations between each individual item and the total score on the instrument, and an Item Facility (IF) index for each item at posttest. These analyses were conducted on the posttest data because the highest scores for each individual should be obtained during this administration of the measure. The Point Biserial correlation coefficient is used in test construction to establish the ability of each individual item to discriminate between people who performed well or poorly on the test, while the Item Facility index is used to express the percent of people who correctly answered the question (Brown, 2001). As can be seen in Table 1, items 7, 9, and 11 had low and non-significant Point Biserial correlation coefficients, indicating that these items did not contribute meaningfully to total scores on the instrument at posttest. Items 9 and 11 nearly everyone answered correctly, while very few people answered item 7 correctly. The items contributing most meaningfully to total scores on this scale were items 1, 5, 10, and 12. Future revisions of this instrument should be

modeled after items 1, 5, 10, and 12 to create a better assessment of the learning that occurs during training.

**TABLE 1**

**Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients and Item Facility Index for Posttest Administration of Knowledge Test**

Item	N	IF Index (Posttest)	Point Biserial Correlation
1	120	.64	.53**
2	122	.87	.27**
3	119	.84	.39**
4	123	.94	.32**
5	117	.86	.53**
6	113	.48	.26**
7	120	.09	.01
8	119	.82	.34**
9	122	.95	.14
10	115	.73	.45**
11	121	.99	.15
12	115	.79	.45**
13	119	.69	.33**
14	119	.79	.44**
15	121	.95	.34**

### Quantitative Procedures

Participants were recruited for participation in this study from a single state in the southwestern United States. Participants in the Technology group were a convenience sample obtained from a large city school district in the state. Participants in the remaining groups were obtained by mailing a brochure describing the workshop to all school counselors in the state. Participants who elected to attend the conference were then assigned non-randomly to groups, based on the location of the conference they chose to attend.

Before the training began and measures were administered to participants, informed consent for participation in the study was distributed and explained. Participation in the study was separate from participation in the training; while participation was encouraged, it was voluntary and participants were informed

verbally and in writing of the voluntary nature of the study. Of the 214 people who participated in the training, 144 informed consent documents were returned indicating a desire to participate in the study, yielding a 67% participation rate.

Evaluation of the training was conducted through analyses of the survey measures. A research design employing repeated measures was used to permit analyses of within-subject differences among the four experimental groups. The first measure participants encountered was a pretest, which established a baseline to evaluate the effect of participation in one of the four groups. The pretest, administered prior to the training, contained several measures – the demographic questionnaire, Knowledge Test, the RESKA, and the SCPIS. The posttest, administered immediately after instruction on the day of the workshop, contained the Knowledge Test and the RESKA. At one-month post instruction, participants received a survey identical to the posttest with the data use items added, and at three-months post instruction participants received a survey similar to the pretest with the data use items added. Based on analyses of the pretest data, the RESKA administered at one and three months post instruction contained only the 14 items related to one of the three factors identified in Bauman’s (2004) original analysis.

### Qualitative Procedures

To develop an understanding of barriers and facilitators to employing the skills and knowledge gained during the workshop, a focus group was convened by the author after the administration of all quantitative measures was complete. The focus group was conducted as a special session of an annual conference for school counselors in the state. To obtain participants, announcements were made in the conference program book, and the morning of the focus group in a brief description of the session to all conference attendees. People were encouraged to participate in

the focus group even if they had not completed any of the follow up measures.

Fifteen people attended the focus group presentation, and five actively contributed to the focus group discussion. The session began with an overview of the research study, how participants were assigned to groups, and how each of the four groups differed in terms of workshop content. This ensured that each participant in the room knew which group they were part of, and how their training experience differed from others in the study. Next, the focus group was initiated. Participants were informed that the conversation was being tape recorded, and that participation in the focus group was completely voluntary. The focus group, which was facilitated by asking people to share their thoughts and experiences on the presentation and the topic of data use, lasted approximately 30 minutes, and the resulting data were transcribed for subsequent analysis.

### Participants

Of the 144 participants in the study, 122 were school counselors, five were administrators, and one was a teacher. The remaining 16 participants held dual appointments in their schools or did not answer this question. Of the valid responses to the question regarding the setting of their school district, 39% ( $n = 54$ ) of the participants indicated they worked in urban districts, 20% ( $n = 19$ ) worked in suburban districts, and 40% ( $n = 55$ ) worked in rural districts. The majority of the participants indicated they worked in high schools (56%,  $n = 75$ ) exclusively, 10% ( $n = 15$ ) worked exclusively in middle schools, and 12% ( $n = 17$ ) worked exclusively in elementary schools. The remaining 18% ( $n = 26$ ) of the participants contributing valid data to this question indicated they worked across multiple grade levels (K-12, 6-12, etc). The average age of the entire sample was 43.38 ( $SD=11.50$ ), which consisted of 79% women (30 males, 110 females, 4 missing). The average number of years experience among participants who were school

counselors or had a counseling background was 8.0 years ( $n = 137$ ,  $SD = 7.57$ ), and the average number of years experience among participants who had an administration background was 6.24 ( $n = 17$ ,  $SD = 5.93$ ). Fifty-nine percent ( $n = 85$ ) of the participants had a teaching background, with 9.18 years of teaching experience on average ( $SD = 5.62$ ).

A total of five participants were actively involved in the focus group discussions. Three of these participants were in the CTI group, while the remaining two participants were in the Conceptual group. Two of the focus group participants from the CTI group were part of a large urban school district, and their supervisor was in the room listening to the discussion. The third CTI group participant was a high school counselor and department chair from a small, rural school district. Of the participants from the Conceptual group, one was from a small Catholic high school located within a large urban school district, while the other was from a small, rural high school.

## Results

### *Quantitative Findings*

To assess the research hypotheses of this study, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures are indicated to assess within-group, between-group, and the interaction effect of within and between group factors on the dependent variables. However, the use of multiple measures in this study and the relatively high attrition rate of survey participants yielded very few data that are usable in this type of repeated measures ANOVA procedure. To be included in these analyses, each participant had to complete all four administrations of the measure. Twenty-seven of the 144 participants (18% completion rate) in this study completed all four administrations of the RESKA, while 29 participants (20% completion rate) completed all four administrations of the Knowledge Test. Since there were more

participants who completed some of the measures than all of the measures and the requirements for inclusion in the ANOVA analyses might obscure differences between groups, the hypotheses were tested formally using ANOVA analyses, and informally through comparison of group means over time. Formal assessments of the hypotheses were conducted, but are not reported here due to the problems noted above. The informal assessment results are reported here for illustrative purposes, and should be viewed as tentative findings.

To assess the hypothesis that participants will perform differently over time on the RESKA and Knowledge Test, the

data for each RESKA subscale (Table 2) and the Knowledge Test (Table 3) were summarized. An inspection of Table 2 reveals that any observed differences over time within groups did not exceed one standard deviation for any of the RESKA subscales, and in most cases differences were much smaller. An inspection of Table 2 reveals that changes from pre- to post-test did exceed one standard deviation. At one month and three months post instruction, mean scores were generally lower than post-test levels, but still exceeded a one standard deviation increase over pre-test levels.

**Table 2**  
**Means and Standard Deviations of the RESKA subscales.**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Pretest N=141</b>	<b>Posttest N=110</b>	<b>1 Month N=47</b>	<b>3 Month N=47</b>
Confidence <i>5 point scale</i>	Technology	<i>M</i> = 3.51	<i>M</i> = 3.50	<i>M</i> = 3.62	<i>M</i> = 3.51
		<i>SD</i> = .69	<i>SD</i> = .68	<i>SD</i> = .58	<i>SD</i> = .57
		<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 7	<i>n</i> = 9
	CTI	<i>M</i> = 3.41	<i>M</i> = 3.61	<i>M</i> = 3.46	<i>M</i> = 3.50
		<i>SD</i> = .75	<i>SD</i> = .61	<i>SD</i> = .61	<i>SD</i> = .70
		<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 39	<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 16
	Conceptual	<i>M</i> = 3.29	<i>M</i> = 3.58	<i>M</i> = 3.38	<i>M</i> = 3.47
		<i>SD</i> = .86	<i>SD</i> = .66	<i>SD</i> = .52	<i>SD</i> = .59
		<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 30	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 12
	CTE	<i>M</i> = 3.35	<i>M</i> = 3.51	<i>M</i> = 3.57	<i>M</i> = 3.68
		<i>SD</i> = .64	<i>SD</i> = .60	<i>SD</i> = .51	<i>SD</i> = .42
		<i>n</i> = 26	<i>n</i> = 22	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 10
	Total	<i>M</i> = 3.37	<i>M</i> = 3.56	<i>M</i> = 3.48	<i>M</i> = 3.53
		<i>SD</i> = .76	<i>SD</i> = .63	<i>SD</i> = .55	<i>SD</i> = .58
Relevance <i>5 point scale</i>	Technology	<i>M</i> = 3.82	<i>M</i> = 3.84	<i>M</i> = 3.77	<i>M</i> = 3.91
		<i>SD</i> = .55	<i>SD</i> = .71	<i>SD</i> = .34	<i>SD</i> = .49
		<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 7	<i>n</i> = 9
	CTI	<i>M</i> = 3.59	<i>M</i> = 3.71	<i>M</i> = 3.59	<i>M</i> = 3.75
		<i>SD</i> = .58	<i>SD</i> = .55	<i>SD</i> = .59	<i>SD</i> = .77
		<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 39	<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 16
	Conceptual	<i>M</i> = 3.59	<i>M</i> = 3.67	<i>M</i> = 3.69	<i>M</i> = 3.58
		<i>SD</i> = .60	<i>SD</i> = .46	<i>SD</i> = .53	<i>SD</i> = .42
		<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 30	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 12
	CTE	<i>M</i> = 3.78	<i>M</i> = 3.72	<i>M</i> = 3.56	<i>M</i> = 3.74
		<i>SD</i> = .55	<i>SD</i> = .60	<i>SD</i> = .34	<i>SD</i> = .38
		<i>n</i> = 26	<i>n</i> = 22	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 10
	Total	<i>M</i> = 3.65	<i>M</i> = 3.72	<i>M</i> = 3.64	<i>M</i> = 3.74
		<i>SD</i> = .58	<i>SD</i> = .56	<i>SD</i> = .50	<i>SD</i> = .56
Value <i>5 point scale</i>	Technology	<i>M</i> = 3.37	<i>M</i> = 3.59	<i>M</i> = 3.71	<i>M</i> = 3.81
		<i>SD</i> = .74	<i>SD</i> = .61	<i>SD</i> = .56	<i>SD</i> = .78
		<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 7	<i>n</i> = 9
	CTI	<i>M</i> = 3.44	<i>M</i> = 3.51	<i>M</i> = 3.81	<i>M</i> = 4.02
		<i>SD</i> = .93	<i>SD</i> = .77	<i>SD</i> = .60	<i>SD</i> = .67
		<i>n</i> = 47	<i>n</i> = 30	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 12
	Conceptual	<i>M</i> = 3.45	<i>M</i> = 3.53	<i>M</i> = 3.72	<i>M</i> = 3.47
		<i>SD</i> = .77	<i>SD</i> = .72	<i>SD</i> = .47	<i>SD</i> = .54
		<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 30	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 12
	CTE	<i>M</i> = 3.21	<i>M</i> = 3.26	<i>M</i> = 3.37	<i>M</i> = 3.37
		<i>SD</i> = .87	<i>SD</i> = .80	<i>SD</i> = .70	<i>SD</i> = .48
		<i>n</i> = 26	<i>n</i> = 22	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 10
	Total	<i>M</i> = 3.39	<i>M</i> = 3.48	<i>M</i> = 3.69	<i>M</i> = 3.70
		<i>SD</i> = .84	<i>SD</i> = .74	<i>SD</i> = .59	<i>SD</i> = .67

**TABLE 3**  
**Means and Standard Deviations of the Knowledge Test**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Pretest</b> <i>N</i> =143	<b>Posttest</b> <i>N</i> =123	<b>1 Month</b> <i>N</i> =47	<b>3 Month</b> <i>N</i> =48
Technology	<i>M</i> = 5.55 <i>SD</i> = 2.19 <i>n</i> = 20	<i>M</i> = 8.00 <i>SD</i> = 1.68 <i>n</i> = 18	<i>M</i> = 8.00 <i>SD</i> = 2.71 <i>n</i> = 7	<i>M</i> = 8.44 <i>SD</i> = 1.33 <i>n</i> = 9
Conceptual + Tech Immersion	<i>M</i> = 6.49 <i>SD</i> = 1.71 <i>n</i> = 45	<i>M</i> = 9.18 <i>SD</i> = 1.83 <i>n</i> = 45	<i>M</i> = 8.32 <i>SD</i> = 2.34 <i>n</i> = 19	<i>M</i> = 8.18 <i>SD</i> = 1.98 <i>n</i> = 17
Conceptual	<i>M</i> = 6.18 <i>SD</i> = 2.26 <i>n</i> = 49	<i>M</i> = 9.72 <i>SD</i> = 1.95 <i>n</i> = 36	<i>M</i> = 8.58 <i>SD</i> = 1.31 <i>n</i> = 12	<i>M</i> = 8.42 <i>SD</i> = 1.24 <i>n</i> = 12
Conceptual + Tech Exposure	<i>M</i> = 5.70 <i>SD</i> = 2.27 <i>n</i> = 27	<i>M</i> = 8.67 <i>SD</i> = 2.50 <i>n</i> = 24	<i>M</i> = 8.44 <i>SD</i> = 2.60 <i>n</i> = 9	<i>M</i> = 8.40 <i>SD</i> = 1.65 <i>n</i> = 10
<b>Total</b>	<i>M</i> = 6.10 <i>SD</i> = 2.09	<i>M</i> = 9.07 <i>SD</i> = 2.05	<i>M</i> = 8.36 <i>SD</i> = 2.17	<i>M</i> = 8.33 <i>SD</i> = 1.59

To assess actual data use among participants, four questions were administered at one month and three months post instruction. The raw responses to these questions yielded quite disparate results among individual participants, and some responses indicated that the question was misunderstood by the respondents. For example, some respondents indicated that they “analyzed student data to evaluate a program’s effect” hundreds of times. This indicates that the participant understood the question to mean “analyzed individual student data,” which was not the intent of the question. To address the disparate answers to these questions, participant responses were coded as simple yes/no answers. This permitted the calculation of a total score for each participant that ranges between 0 and 4 to create a total “Data Use” score that encompassed all four questions for participants completing the measure at both administrations.

As can be seen in Table 4, the Technology group evidenced more data use on average than the CTI, Conceptual, and CTE groups at one month post-instruction. A similar pattern emerged from the three month post-instruction data; the Technology group had higher scores on the Data Use measure at three months post instruction than the CTI, Conceptual, and CTE groups. These findings provide limited support to the hypothesis that groups will perform differently over time in actual data use. The group expected to perform the best on this measure, the CTI group, evidenced the lowest scores at one month post instruction, and the second lowest score at three months post instruction. The Technology group achieved higher Data Use scores than each of the other three groups across administrations of this measure.

**TABLE 4**  
**Means and Standard Deviations of the Data Use questions.**

<b>Group</b>	<b>One Month</b> <i>N</i> =47	<b>Three Months</b> <i>N</i> =48
Technology	<i>M</i> = 2.43 <i>SD</i> = .79 <i>n</i> = 7	<i>M</i> = 3.56 <i>SD</i> = .53 <i>n</i> = 9
Conceptual + Tech	<i>M</i> = 1.21	<i>M</i> = 1.88

Immersion	<i>SD</i> = 1.43	<i>SD</i> = 1.61
	<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 17
Conceptual	<i>M</i> = 1.50	<i>M</i> = 1.75
	<i>SD</i> = 1.62	<i>SD</i> = 1.36
	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 12
Conceptual + Tech Exposure	<i>M</i> = 1.67	<i>M</i> = 2.30
	<i>SD</i> = 1.58	<i>SD</i> = .95
	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 10
<b>Total</b>	<i>M</i> = 1.56	<i>M</i> = 2.25
	<i>SD</i> = 1.46	<i>SD</i> = 1.41

To determine if more ASCA National Model components were added to participants' school counseling programs as a result of the workshop, SCPIS means and standard deviations were inspected for changes from pre- to 3 months post-instruction. As can be seen in Table 5, very little change was evidenced within groups or for the sample as a whole. Any observed changes, given the small number of participants in each group that completed both measures, are likely due to random, chance factors.

**Table 5**  
**SCPIS means and standard deviations for pretest and three month post instruction**

Measure	Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Pretest SCPIS	Administration			
	Technology	3.15	.44	9
	CTI	2.99	.47	17
	Conceptual	2.62	.47	10
	CTE	2.46	.54	10
	Grand Mean	2.82	.53	46
3 month SCPIS	Administration			
	Technology	3.18	.42	9
	CTI	3.19	.57	17
	Conceptual	2.67	.55	10
	CTE	2.66	.65	10
	Grand Mean	2.96	.60	46

### Qualitative Findings

Analysis of the transcribed focus group data uncovered three overarching themes among the participants' responses - Barriers to using data, Facilitators to using data, and examples of the Actual Use of data. Since the focus of the qualitative analyses was to uncover barriers and facilitators to using data, the results of the data analyses focus on those two themes. Eight codes were derived from the data, and these codes were used to characterize the distinct thoughts of the participants, as captured by their statements on the transcript of the focus group. To be included as a code in the analysis, the code had to be mentioned at least twice.

The codes that arose from the data are defined below using exemplary statements from participants to characterize the meaning of the code:

#### Time

The Time code was used to capture respondents' statements regarding how time influenced data use, and was viewed as both a facilitator and barrier to using data. An example of this is "if I have to go gather all of this data myself, am I willing to take the time out of going into classrooms."

#### Knowledge

The Knowledge code was used when participants talked about how knowledge influenced data use, and was both a facilitator and barrier. An example of the Knowledge code from the transcribed results is "I was missing that ASCA model

piece and I had this, you know, data, doing all this research stuff, and it didn't make a connection for me, I was missing the first piece because I didn't know how it fit into the puzzle."

#### Access

Access to the data itself was listed as both a barrier and facilitator to using data, and involved the more practical ways that school counselors could physically gain access to data. An excellent example of the Access code is "counselors have the data right at their fingertips if they know how to get to it."

#### Relevance

A statement was said to fall under the Relevance code when the meaning of what the participant said involved seeing the connection between using data and school counseling practice. The following statement captures the meaning of the Relevance code: "I came away from the (Conceptual group) training with the idea that what you did that day didn't apply to me at all."

#### Technology

The Technology code was used to capture responses that referenced specific technologies such as EZAnalyze, Microsoft Excel, or student information systems facilitating the use of data. Technology was not perceived by any focus group participant to be a barrier to using data. "When you showed EZAnalyze the other day...it clicked" is an example of how the Technology code was employed.

#### Reason to use data

This code was only used twice, but the topic is distinct and important enough to warrant a separate code. For example, one participant noted that "it's more of a reactive process than a proactive process," and

captures a unique aspect of facilitators to using data. Namely, how data use fits into school counseling program management at the individual school and district level.

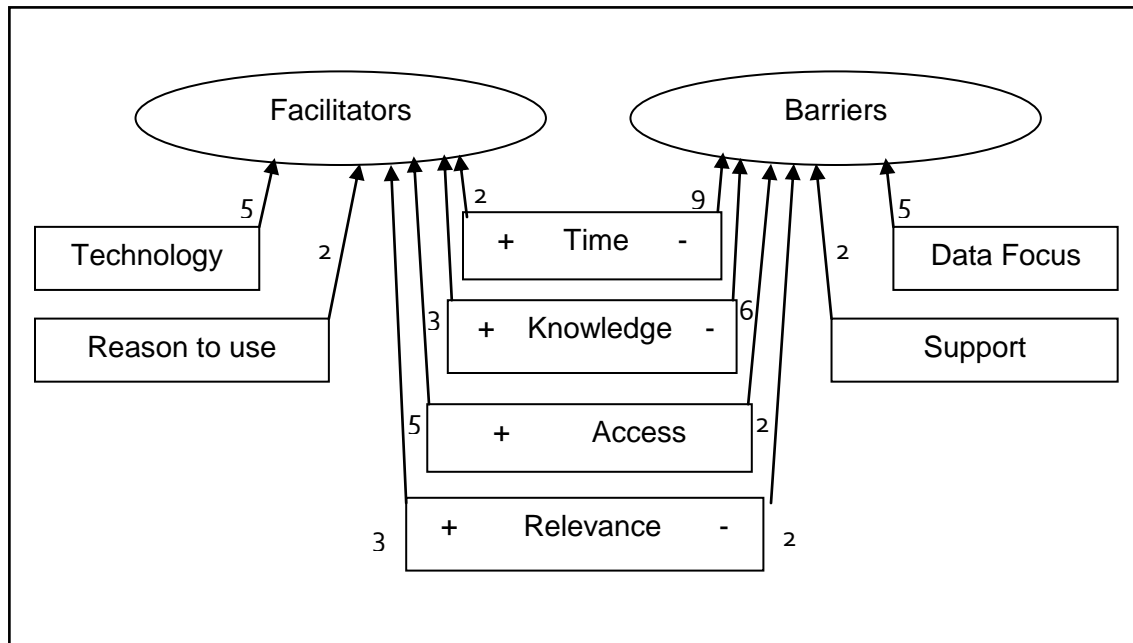
#### Data Focus

Data Focus involves participants' references to the ability to make their data collection and analysis efforts realistic and attainable, and was always listed as a barrier. "The big problem that I had with the data is kind of what (name of other participant) talked about is...there is so much of it there, what do you use?" is an example of how a lack of focus in which data elements to use was perceived to be a barrier to actual data use.

#### Support

Colleague support was always perceived to be a barrier when mentioned, and was used to capture participants' responses that centered on how a lack of support from fellow counselors led to failure in data use efforts. "I tried to bring it up (using data) and get people really excited about it, and if your response when you try to do that is negative, it kind of, you know, moves you in the other direction."

Figure 2 is a depiction of the results of the qualitative data analysis. The overarching themes are represented as ovals, while the codes are represented as rectangles. The number next to the path depicting the relationship between the codes and themes represents the number of times the code was mentioned by the focus group participants. The codes are listed in terms of their frequency of occurrence from top to bottom. The Time, Knowledge, Access, and Relevance codes were mentioned as both facilitators and barriers by the participants, Data Focus and Support were mentioned solely as barriers, while Technology and Reason to use data were mentioned only as facilitators to using data.



**Figure 2**

**Graphical representation of qualitative data depicting reported barriers and facilitators to data use by school counselors. Number indicates the number of times mentioned.**

## Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to evaluate the “value added” benefit of EZAnalyze to a more traditional approach to increasing school counselors’ data use skills. This was accomplished by designing an experiment that varied the degree of exposure to technology and data use concepts across four distinct groups, and proposing research hypotheses that, if supported, indicated that technology had a positive impact on the acquisition and retention of knowledge, research-related attitudes, ASCA National Model implementation, and actual data use.

The first hypothesis was that groups would perform differently on measures of research knowledge and attitudes according to which group they were assigned over time. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Across groups, differences observed were largely in the expected directions on these measures from pretest

to posttest, but any observed differences between groups at any single point in time (pretest, posttest, one month and three months post instruction) were not statistically significant. While this does not support the research hypothesis, it does permit the aggregation of the data across groups. The data indicate improvement occurred from pretest to posttest and pretest to three months post instruction for the entire sample on each RESKA subscale and the Knowledge Test. At one month post instruction, the entire sample evidenced higher scores on each RESKA subscale and the Knowledge Test except for the Relevance subscale, which was .01 points lower on average than the pretest Relevance score. The finding that improvement occurred from pretest to posttest on these measures indicates that the workshop had a small but positive short-term impact on research-related knowledge and skills. At three months post instruction, scores on these measures were still higher

than the pretest scores, indicating that the workshop had a small but relatively long lasting effect on school counselors' research related knowledge and skills.

The second hypothesis was that school counselors would report engaging in data use activities at one month and three months post instruction differently according to which group they were assigned. It was hypothesized that having explicit training in and access to EZAnalyze would increase the frequency of data use when compared to counselors in the Conceptual group who did not have access to EZAnalyze. The results indicate that the Technology group engaged in data use activities more than any other group, a finding statistically significant at one month post-instruction but not at three months post-instruction. While these results are counterintuitive, since the Technology group received the least amount of instructional time, it does indicate that factors outside of the professional development workshop can strongly influence results. In this study, the Technology group was the only group in the study to have all of the counselors from a single school district - a district often viewed as a leader in the United States regarding data use and ASCA National Model implementation. Informal conversations with counselors from this district revealed that their guidance supervisor required all counselors to complete a "data project." Knowing this, the finding that all of the counselors in this group used data within the three months following the workshop is not surprising.

The third hypothesis was that the skills, knowledge, and changes in attitudes towards data use activities would lead to increased ASCA National Model implementation. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. While all groups did evidence improvement in SCPIS scores from pretest to three months post instruction, the amount of improvement was small within each group, and for the entire sample. Therefore, participation in the workshop, regardless of venue, had a small but measurable impact on ASCA National

Model implementation. Given what the SCPIS measures (school counseling program activities and structures), three months may not be enough time to measure improvement on this instrument.

The results of the qualitative analyses conducted with the data obtained from the focus group, which consisted of three participants from the CTI group and two participants from the Conceptual group, indicate 1) the participants agree that technology should facilitate data use, and 2) factors outside of professional development need to be considered to effectively increase school counselors' use of data. While the quantitative analyses did not support the notion that technology can increase school counselors' use of data, contrary to the hypotheses, the qualitative data assert that technology should be a strong facilitator of data use. The qualitative data suggest the largest barrier to using data is lack of time. Before professional development and technology can be effective in helping school counselors, the issue of time needs to be addressed before the use of data by school counselors can be fully actualized.

No known studies to date have been published that evaluate the effect of professional development to increase school counselors' data use, in spite of counselor educators' descriptions of the need for these skills to be developed for some time (e.g., Lapan, 2001; Wilson, 1985). This study contributes to the existing research literature by systematically evaluating the impact of a workshop designed to meet the needs identified in the literature. While the quantitative data analyses did not lend support to the notion that EZAnalyze combined with appropriate professional development would increase their actual use of data, the qualitative analyses did lend tentative support.

The design of this study may be a useful model for future professional development evaluation studies in two distinct ways. First, the elaboration of a methodology for empirically investigating the short-term and long-term outcomes of a

professional development workshop using instruments to assess specific knowledge, attitudes, and perceived behavior provides a relatively 'whole' evaluation picture.

Second, and perhaps more interestingly, is the use of a qualitative data collection strategy in conjunction with the quantitative methodology. In this study, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods proved to be extremely useful, as the qualitative data provided insights into the nature of the quantitative findings.

Furthermore, the qualitative results revealed factors that were likely to be significantly affecting the results of this study – namely, the finding that lack of time is a significant inhibitor to data use. It is important to note that either approach (quantitative or qualitative) used in isolation would not have informed the interpretation of the findings to the same degree as their combination did.

Love (2004) asserts that there are four “building blocks” to engaging in a data-driven decision making process in schools: Collaborative Culture, Collaborative Structures, Wide-Spread Data Literacy, and Access to Useful Data. The qualitative findings of this study lend support to her conceptualization of the requisite knowledge, skills, and attributes of the school culture to facilitate actual data use and data-driven decision making. Each of the facilitators and barriers to data use identified from the focus group data can be usefully categorized by one of Love’s “building blocks.” In the context of a one-day professional development workshop, as was done in this study, only data literacy skill could potentially be improved. The remaining three building blocks are school-specific variables that are not amenable to change through professional development, but clearly need to be addressed if professional development in the area of data use is going to impact actual practice. School counseling supervisors seeking to engage in school improvement through data-driven decision making would be wise to pay explicit attention to creating collaborative culture and structures, and ensuring access to meaningful and useful

data. Then, and only then as the qualitative results of this study suggest, will knowing how to analyze and interpret data inform practice.

The literature regarding school counselors’ use of technology did not contain any empirical research evaluating the impact of specific technology tools on school counseling practice. The current study contributes to this area of the school counseling literature by demonstrating that technology tools alone will not impact school counseling practice if systemic barriers to change (e.g., lack of time) and personal barriers to change (e.g. lack of knowledge) are not simultaneously addressed with the introduction of the technology tool. When EZAnalyze was introduced to workshop participants, there was often a round of applause for providing them with a useful, easy-to-use tool. In spite of their initial positive reactions to EZAnalyze, the results of this study suggest that barriers to data use limited their ability to use it.

Overall, the results of this study are consistent with the themes and trends of accountability, comprehensive developmental guidance, and technology as portrayed in the professional school counseling literature. The hypotheses of this study pitched EZAnalyze as a panacea for school counselors’ data use ailments. As the trends apparent in the literature indicate, a true panacea may not exist.

“Comprehensive developmental guidance” and “accountability” have been appearing consistently in the literature since the 1970’s, yet many school counselors still struggle with the implementation of these activities.

## Limitations

The interpretation of the results of this study need to be tempered by several limitations inherent to the design of the study, nature of the participants, and quality of the measures used. The largest limitations of this study have to do with issues surrounding the

sample and sampling. This study took place in a single state in the southwestern United States, a state that has been supporting the implementation of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs for more than 15 years. School counselors in this state are likely to be implementing comprehensive developmental school counseling programs such as the ASCA National Model. In fact, many of the participants in the CTI group, and all of the participants in the Technology group were from a school district where a portion of the conceptual framework for the ASCA National Model was derived.

In addition to school counselors in this state being unique when compared to counselors from other states, it is also important to note that participants were not randomly assigned to groups. Participants were assigned to groups based on the location they chose to attend the workshop, which was likely determined by the proximity of the workshop to where they live. Since participants were not randomly assigned to groups, preexisting group differences based on geographic location are likely to be influencing the observed results.

Another limitation of this study was the use of measures that did not have clearly established reliability and validity. The RESKA was the only measure that was previously used with a relatively large number of participants outside of this study. The lack of observed differences between groups in terms of ASCA National Model implementation and actual data use may be artifacts of the measures themselves. The extensive use of self-report measures in this study is also problematic. Combining the self-report measures with additional observational measures would strengthen the interpretability of the quantitative results.

The relatively high attrition rate observed over time is also perhaps indicative of a larger issue affecting the results of this study – the participants' expectations of professional development workshops. Nearly 200 counselors participated in one of the four professional

development workshops; of those, 144 counselors agreed to participate in the study. Three months later, only 47 people completed the final quantitative measures, and five people participated in the focus group held nearly 4 months after the original workshop. Of the five people who participated in the focus group, only one person actually applied what they learned during the workshop to their school counseling practice. These observations, when taken together, seem to indicate that there is not an expectation, or perhaps ability, to apply what is learned in professional development to inform practice. School counselors are expected to attend professional development workshops, but there does not seem to be an expectation that what they learn during those workshops will actually be employed. Furthermore, the extended evaluation of the learning that occurred before, during, and after the workshop was foreign to the counselors, indicating that professional development providers themselves do not routinely gather data regarding the effect and effectiveness of the services they provide.

Given the high attrition rate observed in this study, self-selection is likely to be influencing both the qualitative and quantitative findings of the study. It is likely that the participants who completed the one month and three month follow up measures would score higher on measures of research related knowledge and attitudes than participants who chose not to continue participating in the study. Self-selection is also problematic in the focus group, where a representative sample of study participants from each group was not obtained. Furthermore, the high attrition rate led to extremely small sample sizes at one month and three months post instruction. Self-selection and sample size, when considered together, indicate that the data obtained in this study may not be representative of counselors in the state the study took place, let alone the nation.

## Future Research

This study sought to contribute to the existing research base by conducting a systematic evaluation of professional development for school counselors focused on data use, and the value added benefit of technology. The results of this study indicate that more questions may have been raised than were answered, as the outcomes of the professional development workshop and the value-added benefit of technology still are unclear.

Given that the results of this study do not decisively answer the research questions, the relatively high attrition rate of the study participants, and the apparent lack of application of knowledge gained during professional development, research investigating new professional development paradigms to improve school counselors' data use skills is indicated. The current study was based on a "traditional" professional development paradigm that involved exposing participants to a single-day workshop followed by quantitative measures to assess the effect of the workshop on school counseling practice. This design for the provision of professional development appears to be ill-advised by the results of this study, as the knowledge gained during the workshop appears to be perishable - evidenced by a decline in scores from posttest to one and three months post instruction for the entire sample. Furthermore, incorporating data use into school counseling practice and the skills that go along with using data are challenging for many school counselors. Research elucidating effective professional development paradigms that provide support to counselors over time may provide more consistent and positive outcomes than the current study was able to provide.

There are several possible alternatives to providing professional development regarding data use in a workshop-type format. Web-based technology could be a particularly effective vehicle for providing both the needed professional development and subsequent

"coaching" to help counselors translate theory to practice. Another approach could involve the pairing of counselor educators with school counselors to engage in collaborative research projects. Conducting collaborative research projects can benefit both the counselors working in schools and the counselor educators. For the counselors, the benefits are extended support and training over time in the development, execution, and interpretation of a research project. For the counselor educators, research projects conducted in collaboration with school personnel could permit the creation and maintenance of a research agenda while developing meaningful and productive relationships with counselors in the field (e.g., Poynton, Carlson, Hopper, and Carey, 2006).

This study also highlights the need for additional research to be conducted on measures assessing research knowledge and skills. If data use skills are as critical to the field of school counseling as the ASCA National Model and other relevant literature portray them to be, more effort needs to be exerted to develop and validate measures assessing these constructs. Equally important, as the qualitative results of this study indicate, is the need to develop measures that assess barriers and facilitators to data use in schools. The development of a measure that is able to highlight facilitators and barriers to data use can be used to guide professional development and consultation resources, and would be a great benefit to the field.

A key barrier to data use identified in the qualitative data is time, and engaging in tasks such as data analysis and interpretation are often viewed as "add on" responsibilities for counselors. Many school counselors struggle with engaging in data use activities, as it detracts from the time they have available to engage in activities that directly benefit students. It is the author's belief that engaging in data use activities directly benefits students. At the present time, however, there is no research available that supports the notion that a counselor engaging in data use activities

does, in fact, benefit students. To address this gap, research needs to be conducted tying positive student outcomes to school counselors' data use activities. While there is research that indicates comprehensive developmental guidance programs provide positive benefits to students (e.g., Sink & Stroh, 2003; Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski, 2003), there is no research available that documents a link between school counselors' data use and positive outcomes for students.

More rigorous research also needs to be conducted on the value added benefit of technology to school counseling programs in general, and the value added benefit of technology for improving data use in particular. While there is consensus in the literature that technology should positively impact school counselors' ability to effectively execute their roles and responsibilities, no research has been conducted which systematically documents the benefits technology provides. The results of this study indicate that counselors liked the idea of EZAnalyze, but the technology did not seem to have an impact on their actual practice. Future research studies need to be conducted to identify the ways school counselors are using technology to guide the development of specific technology tools to solve practical problems.

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## APPENDIX A

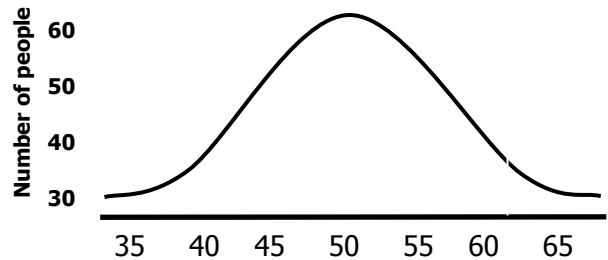
These questions will be used to assess how much you knew about today's topic before you started, and how much you have learned by the end of today's presentation.

*For each question, please circle the BEST response from the choices given. You can only choose one answer!*

1. Which part(s) of the ASCA National Model EXPLICITLY call on school counselors to use data?
  - a. Foundation
  - b. Management System
  - c. Accountability System
  - d. Management and Accountability Systems
2. Data can be used by a school counseling program to:
  - a. Prevent an over-reliance on standardized test scores.
  - b. Identify areas to target interventions
  - c. Build a culture of inquiry
  - d. B and C only
  - e. All of the above
3. Achievement-Related data are:
  - a. Data that are collected from academic subject areas outside of the discipline of interest
  - b. Data that research has shown are directly related to academic achievement
  - c. Perception data collected from students asking them to identify the areas they believe are related their academic achievement
  - d. Process data
4. The Mean, Median, and the Mode, respectively, are:
  - a. Most frequent number, average number, and the middle number
  - b. Average number, most frequent number, and the middle number
  - c. Average number, middle number, and the most frequent number
  - d. Middle number, average number, and the most frequent number
5. When \_\_\_\_\_ data, you sort the \_\_\_\_\_ variable by the \_\_\_\_\_ variable.
  - a. Analyzing / random / non-random
  - b. Categorizing / category / results
  - c. Summarizing / categorical / dependent
  - d. Disaggregating / dependent / categorical
6. You can use ANOVA whenever you use a T-Test, but you cannot use a T-Test whenever you use ANOVA.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. "Triangulating" means to:
  - a. Apply a three-pronged solution to a problem

- b. Identify three data independent sources of data to isolate a problem
  - c. Coming to consensus with at least three members of a data-driven decision making team
  - d. Coupled with regression and a mother object, means to engage in Freudian therapy
8. Process data are best described as data that:
- a. Documents *what* was provided and *who* it was provided to
  - b. Documents *who* was affected and *what* the effect was
  - c. Documents the *so what* of an intervention
  - d. Documents the *impact* of an intervention
9. A correlation describes:
- a. How two variables are related to each other
  - b. How one variable *causes* changes in another variable
  - c. How one variable *predicts* changes in another variable
  - d. How one variable *manifests* itself in another variable
10. Treatment fidelity describes:
- a. How well an intervention worked
  - b. How consistently an intervention works over time
  - c. How valid an intervention is
  - d. How consistently an intervention was implemented
11. Sharing the results of data analyses with school counseling program stakeholders should be done only if the results are positive.
- a. True
  - b. False
12. Creating an "honest graph" that does not exaggerate findings involves
- a. Making sure the data are valid
  - b. Making sure the graph represents an adequate range of possible scores
  - c. Making sure the graph is titled accurately
  - d. Making sure the graph is properly cited and referenced
13. A correlation of  $-.90$  indicates a very strong relationship between two variables
- a. True
  - b. False

14. The median is the appropriate statistic to use when the distribution is highly
- a. Skewed
  - b. Variable
  - c. Valid
  - d. Reliable
15. Which picture below is a frequency distribution of a set of scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 5
- Answer A



Answer B

