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The role of mentoring relationships in counseling programs

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Abstract

Purpose – The goals of a mentoring relationship are important to the development of mentees. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the specific needs of students and junior faculty in counseling programs.
Design/methodology/approach – The authors used a psychological phenomenological research approach to understand the role and significance of a mentor and the mentoring relationship. In this qualitative research study, pre-tenured faculty, doctoral- and master's-level students in counselor education programs in the USA were interviewed ($n = 30$), to explore the mentorship needs.
Findings – In the study, the authors identified 28 codes that emerged from the participants' lived experiences, which then were organized into seven meta-codes. The seven meta-codes were: relationship between mentor and mentee; communication style or patterns; preferred gender of mentor; introduction to the relationship; mentee needs; mentee benefits; and experiences as a mentee.
Originality/value – In the paper, the authors sought to explore the mentoring needs of students and junior faculty in counselor education programs and how these needs can begin to be addressed effectively.
Keywords Higher education, Counselor education, Mentoring, Mentorship of doctoral students, Mentorship of early career faculty members, Mentee needs, Mentee expectations
Paper type Research paper

Mentoring and mentorship are present in a variety of disciplines and promote an environment in which mentees can perform and grow at optimal levels (Mullen, 2005). Traditionally, a mentor has been described as a guide, role model, advisor, teacher, and supporter (Roberts, 1999), and specific to the counseling field, a mentor is defined as "someone with experience and expertise in the counseling field who is willing to share knowledge and offer advice to foster professional development" (American Counseling Association, 2012, p. 68). The International Mentoring Association (n.d.) describes mentoring as having the three following components:

(a) a series of tasks that effective mentors must perform to promote the professional development of others; (b) an intense, trusting, supportive, positive, confidential, low-risk relationship within which the partners can try new ways of working and relating, making mistakes, gaining feedback, accepting challenges, and learning in front of each other; and (c) a complex, developmental process that mentors use to support and guide their protégé through the necessary career transitions that are a part of learning how to be an effective, reflective professional, and a career-long learner ("What is mentoring?", para II).

Positive outcomes related to mentoring include increases in competence, research productivity, career growth, and satisfaction (Allen *et al.*, 2004; Baranik *et al.*, 2010; Buyukgoze-Kavas *et al.*, 2010), as well as insight into professional identity and the mentee's role in the profession, greater professional and personal development, and socialization within a field (Magnuson *et al.*, 2009; Ngara and Ngwarai, 2012; Vespia, 2006). In counseling programs, the mentoring relationship also facilitates development in communication, relationship, and critical thinking skills and allows students to explore their professional identities as counselors (Taylor and Neimeyer, 2009; Vespia, 2006). In the USA, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) encourages mentoring in counselor education programs to help students develop a counseling identity and understand the professional world (Counsel for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2009). Brown *et al.* (2009) proposed that effective mentoring is personalized to meet the developmental needs of the mentee. For example, a master's-level counseling student who is just developing clinical competency would have different needs than would a newly hired counselor educator who is navigating the politics of academe. Although a call for increased mentoring has been made, a paucity of research exists regarding the mentoring needs of counseling students and faculty. Furthermore, mentorship expectations and parameters are different for graduate students and junior faculty in counselor education programs. The differences of expectations and needs will be explored in the following paragraphs.

Mentorship for graduate students

Faculty contact is an important aspect of many graduate programs (Lechuga, 2011). Tenured faculty help to create scholars by providing mentorship to both graduate students and junior faculty members (Lechuga, 2011). Hansman (2012) suggested that many errors that graduating doctoral students make in their job search can be avoided through the careful guidance and feedback from a mentor who has previously navigated that process. Mentor faculty can assist students in feeling more connected to their program, peers, faculty, and profession through support and encouragement, and have an openness to discuss controversial topics such as gender and race (Henfield *et al.*, 2013).

Interestingly, Koro-Ljungberg and Hayes (2006) discovered that effective mentoring relationships with faculty helped female graduate students to feel welcome in the academic community, provided professional guidance and research knowledge, and assisted them in gaining a broader sense of self. Often, graduate students, especially minority students, feel lost, isolated, disrespected, or misunderstood during their graduate programs. Butler *et al.* (2013) suggested a strengths-based mentoring approach to working with African-American male counseling students in order to help improve recruitment, matriculation, and graduation rates of these students. Within the strengths-based mentoring approach, the mentor focusses on "placing or reframing perceived deficits within a multicultural context" and helps the mentee identify "resources and assets" through specific mentoring "interventions, strategies, and programs" that assist the mentee in their professional success (p. 422).

Mentorship for junior faculty

For newly appointed faculty, mentorship serves an important role. According to seminal mentorship research conducted by Kram (1985) and a more recent review of the mentoring literature (Haggard *et al.*, 2011), there are two primary domains related to faculty

mentorship: career and psychosocial. The career aspects of faculty mentorship include guidance on time management, teaching, research, service, and prioritizing important aspects of one's profession as an academician. Some other aspects of faculty mentorship in the career domain include collaboration on research studies and presentations and recommendations for service and leadership opportunities. The psychosocial aspect of mentoring refers to receiving guidance on work life balance, adjusting to one's role, and interacting with others while maintaining one's individuality. Subsequently, mentorship for junior faculty is one of the primary methods of preventing isolation and workplace dissatisfaction (Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Dunham-Taylor *et al.*, 2008). According to Schrodt *et al.* (2003), new faculty members who have a mentor feel more connected to their respective universities and have higher levels of satisfaction with academic socialization than do their un-mentored peers.

Formal mentoring programs and informal mentoring relationships exist in academe to assist junior faculty in movement toward personal and professional goals (Borders *et al.*, 2011). Briggs and Pehrsson (2008) observed that understanding the tenure and promotion processes was the main area in which guidance was received from a mentor for junior faculty. We wondered whether the faculty participants in our study might similarly express the navigation of tenure and promotion processes as a mentoring need.

Mentoring processes with students and pre-tenured faculty have been reported in the extant literature for other professional fields (Mullen, 2005); however, a gap exists in the current counseling literature on the specific mentoring needs of counselor education graduate students and pre-tenured faculty (Blood *et al.*, 2012; Hill *et al.*, 2005; Trepal and Stinchfield, 2012). Blood *et al.* (2012), Hill *et al.* (2005), and Trepal and Stinchfield (2012) explored the unique needs of women counselor educators, but no other researchers have addressed the specific mentoring needs of counselor education students and faculty at each of the three developmental levels (i.e. master's, doctoral, and pre-tenure). We expected that the qualitative nature of our study would assist in filling this gap in the literature regarding the mentoring needs of counseling students and faculty. Consequently, the purpose of our qualitative research study was to explore the specific needs of students and junior faculty in counseling programs and to provide a glimpse of the mentorship experience through the lens of the mentee. The following research questions guided our study:

RQ1. What differences exist in the mentoring needs perceived by persons in the following categories: persons who are enrolled in a master's program in counseling; persons who are enrolled in a doctoral program in counseling; and persons who identify themselves as junior faculty?

RQ2. How do persons in counseling graduate programs experience their mentoring relationships?

Method
Because there exists a gap in the literature addressing mentoring needs specific to counselor education students and faculty, we believe a qualitative inquiry to be an essential first step. It is important to obtain a rich understanding of the mentee experience within this population prior to attempting any large scale, quantitative research study. Therefore, we used a psychological phenomenological research approach to understand the meaning of a mentor and the mentoring relationship. Phenomenology is a paradigm for understanding the natural world, awareness, and experience; and psychological phenomenology involves an investigator focussing on descriptions of

experiences from the participants' view rather than from the researcher's view (Polkinghorne, 1989), in order to elicit data that are valid to the data source – that is, the participant (Moustakas, 1994). We deemed the phenomenological approach to be appropriate for understanding the lived experiences of graduate students and junior faculty in counseling programs. Giving voice to a culture and phenomenology involves the study of a smaller number of participants until saturation is reached (Creswell, 2007).

Participants
After obtaining ethical clearance to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board at each of the researchers' universities, we solicited participants from members of various counselor education listservs, as well as from counseling students from the universities of each researcher. An announcement approved by the IRB was e-mailed to potential participants; the potential participants then contacted the researcher(s) via e-mail and expressed interest in participating in the study. The researchers then responded to the participants and scheduled interviews based on the participants meeting the specified selection criteria. More specifically, the selection criteria included that the participant: was a graduate (i.e. master's- or doctoral-level) student in a counseling or counselor education program; or was a pre-tenured faculty member in a counselor education program; and had been involved in a mentoring relationship wherein the participant had been the mentee.

In several seminal phenomenological research works, authors have provided small sample size recommendations. In particular, Dukes (1984) recommended three to ten participants as being adequate for this type of qualitative research. Polkinghorne (1989) provided a larger range of five to 25 participants. Morse (1994) suggested the inclusion of six or more participants. More recently, Guest *et al.* (2006) recommended that six interviews may be "sufficient to enable development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations" (p. 78). Further, Guest *et al.* (2006) surmised that 12 participants are sufficient to "understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals" (p. 79).

The sample was comprised of 30 participants, including 26 females and four males, and thus exceeded the recommended sample sizes for phenomenological research referred to above. The participants' academic levels were master's ($n = 11$), doctoral ($n = 10$), or junior faculty ($n = 9$). Of the 30 participants, two were 18-24 years old, 11 were 25-31 years old, ten were 32-38 years old, three were 39-45 years old, one was between 46 and 52 years old, and three were 53 years or older. In total, 83 percent of the participants were white and 17 percent were African-American. The majority of participants reported that they attended or worked at a CACREP accredited counseling program ($n = 23$) vs a non-CACREP accredited program ($n = 7$).

As participants in this study were located in various regions of the USA, data were collected via slightly different methods. In total, 50 percent of the participants were from the Southern region of the USA, 23 percent were from the Midwest, 10 percent were from the western region, and the remaining participants were scattered throughout the Northeast region. To achieve this geographic diversity, some interviews were conducted individually via a live web camera using a web hosting site (i.e. Skype or Google+), whereas others were conducted face-to-face in pairs or small groups. Only pseudonyms were used throughout the study.

Instruments and procedure
Demographic questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used in an attempt to fully understand the participants' experiences with mentoring and their identified

needs. When each participant was given the demographic questionnaire, definitions of mentoring were provided. Participants who chose to meet in a small group format (three to four participants) were matched per their developmental level (master's, doctoral, faculty) as to provide an environment where participants felt comfortable to share their thoughts and experiences. For reasons of privacy, junior faculty participants were interviewed in a one-on-one context.

Demographic questionnaire. Before each individual and group participant interview, participants were given a short demographic questionnaire to complete, and were provided with multiple definitions (e.g. American Counseling Association, 2012; Roberts, 1999) of a mentor to guide participants in their selection of a mentoring experience on which to reflect. This questionnaire allowed the researchers to gain specific information about the participants' age, gender, work, or school location, and specifics about their mentoring relationship (e.g. gender of the mentor, formal assignment of a mentor vs an informal relationship self-initiated by mentee, duration and frequency of mentoring meetings, and challenges to the mentoring relationship).

Semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews and written statements are commonly used in phenomenological research in an effort to obtain rich descriptions (Polkinghorne, 1989). Following Polkinghorne's (1989) recommendation for interviews to be open-ended and unique to the participants, the semi-structured interview protocol consisted of eight overarching interview questions and follow-up questions pertaining to how needs were met. According to Spradley (1979), using grand tour questions constitutes an emergent quality of the interview process to result in subsequent questions. Additional follow-up questions were spontaneous and varied, depending on the information provided by a participant, or in an attempt to gain a fuller understanding of each participant's experience.

This semi-structured format allowed the acquisition of adequate information surrounding the participant's experience as a mentee. All of the participants' responses were audio recorded and then transcribed. All identifying participant information was removed from the transcripts. Transcriptions produced by non-researchers (e.g. teaching assistants (TAs), professional transcription service) were reviewed by each interviewer. Member checking was conducted to verify accuracy, to maintain trustworthiness and credibility of the data, and to increase descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992) According to Manning (1997), "thorough member checking, including respondent review of field notes, working hypotheses, and case study drafts, means that the researcher is accountable to those sharing their words, lives, and experiences" (p. 102).

Next, each transcript first was coded by the two researchers who had not interviewed the participant. The original researcher who completed the interview then coded the transcription independently, noting points of agreement and disagreement with other researchers. The coding agreement among the researchers ranged from 76 to 100 percent, with 93.7 percent being the overall average percentage of agreement between the researchers. The researchers discussed their respective rationales for each of the codes until consensus was reached.

Analysis
Qualitative analyses were conducted to answer the two overarching research questions. Van Kaam's (1959) analysis of phenomenological data was used to understand the essence and meaning of the participants' stories. After collecting participant data, constant comparison analysis (Glaser, 1965) and classical content analysis (Berelson, 1952) were used to create a textural-structural explanation of the essence of the participants' stories.

Specifically, constant comparison analysis was conducted to generate a set of themes (Glaser, 1965), whereas classical content analysis was conducted to determine the frequencies of the themes extracted via the constant comparison analysis. The interview data were coded and analyzed via the two aforementioned qualitative data analysis approaches first by manually color coding the emerging themes and then using the QDA Miner Version 4.0.3 (Provalis Research, 2011), a qualitative software program.

Legitimation
Trustworthiness and credibility are important components of legitimation in qualitative research. In our study, conducting the participant interviews face-to-face or through videoconferencing technologies allowed for observations of non-verbal communication such as laughter and ambivalence in responses, which informed follow-up questions and facilitated in-depth conversations during the semi-structured interviews. In order to ensure that the participants' stories were being told, the researchers used low-inference descriptors (Johnson, 1997) by selecting verbatim quotations that highlighted the participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Quasi-statistics, a means of using basic counts to quantify terms such as some and most in qualitative research (Becker, 1970), and member checking (Manning, 1997) were employed to ensure the accuracy of the information reported by the participants – that is, to maximize descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992).

Researcher bias was taken into account and reduced through the use of bracketing of the researchers' opinions and views of mentoring and peer debriefing. Bracketing was helpful in assuring that every effort was made to remove all personal biases from the findings in order to report most accurately the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007). Peer debriefing diminishes researcher bias by encouraging the researcher to discuss and to explore how his or her values might influence the study (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2008). In addition to the peer debriefing, the researchers met to bracket their assumptions as an ongoing process; which incorporated the use of memoing (i.e. writing ongoing notes and exploring the perception and shaping of interpretation data; Creswell, 2007). The researchers were then able to suspend their own biases, thereby creating an epoché. The peer debriefing technique (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2008), being aware of one's reflexive voice, and memoing are ways we bracketed our personal experiences and beliefs during the research process. In order to ensure that the participants' stories were being told, during data analysis and reporting, the researchers utilized low-inference descriptors by selecting direct quotations from participant's interviews to capture the essence of the phenomenon (Johnson, 1997).

Findings
Lived experience of mentees in counseling programs
After completing Van Kaam's (1959) method of analyzing qualitative data, we identified 28 codes that emerged, which then were organized into seven meta-codes. These seven meta-codes were created by analyzing and coding text via the QDA Miner software and searching for common threads and overarching meaning among the 28 codes. Each participant level's specific needs, as well as differences in needs among the groups, are outlined in the following section. (See Table I for the meta-code and code frequency at each participant level.) The seven meta-codes were: "Relationship between mentor and mentee," "Communication style or patterns," "Preferred gender of mentor," "Introduction to the relationship," "Mentee needs," "Mentee benefits," and "Experiences as a mentee." These identified meta-codes emerged across the three sample groups.

Meta-code	Code	Frequency of occurrence in participant level		
		Master's	Doctoral	Faculty
Relationship between mentor and mentee				
	Dual roles	2.67	6.09	5.61
	Approachable	3.11	1.60	3.12
	Individual approach to mentorship	7.11	2.56	0.93
	Encouragement	8.00	4.49	2.49
	Desire to be approached by mentor/not have to ask	5.78	0.96	2.18
	Characteristic of mentor	11.11	7.69	8.72
	Personal connection/relationship	4.44	4.81	4.67
	Total frequency within group	42.22	28.21	27.73
Communication style or pattern				
	Provide information (unsolicited)	4.44	2.88	2.18
	Feedback	4.89	5.78	5.30
	Total frequency within group	9.33	8.65	7.48
Gender				
	Gender/gender of mentor	5.33	7.05	8.72
	No specific needs by gender	0.89	0.96	0.62
	Total frequency within group	6.22	8.01	9.35
Introduction of relationship				
	Mentor relationship initiated by mentee	1.78	1.28	0.93
	Relationship initiated by mentor	0.89	0.00	0.00
	Assignment of mentor not as beneficial	2.22	1.28	0.93
	Total frequency within group	4.89	2.56	1.87
Mentee needs				
	Multiple mentors	2.67	7.05	6.54
	Mentee seeking specific answer/advice	3.56	4.81	5.61
	Unmet expectations/needs	2.67	5.13	8.10
	Understanding politics	0.44	0.32	2.80
	Future/becoming need	1.33	0.96	0.62
	Peer mentoring	2.22	1.06	1.56
	Total frequency within group	12.89	28.53	30.84
Mentee benefits				
	Preparation for what to expect/real world application	8.89	6.09	1.56
	Current trends in the field	0.89	0.32	0.00
	Provides opportunities/resources	2.67	4.49	4.98
	Total frequency within group	12.44	10.90	6.54
Experience as a mentee				
	Modeling	2.22	4.49	3.12
	Experience as a mentor	0.00	2.56	5.92
	Life balance-positive and negative examples	1.33	3.85	4.36
	Negative experience	3.11	1.28	1.25
	Desire/positive view of being challenged	5.33	0.96	1.56
	Total frequency within group	12.00	13.41	16.20

Table I.
Meta-code and code
frequency by each
participant level

In the master's-level participants' interviews, all meta-codes emerged with the exception of the specific "Experience as a mentor" code. In the doctoral-level participants' interviews, all meta-codes emerged in the participant stories. The specific code that did not emerge was the "Relationship initiated by the mentor" code. In the junior faculty-level

participants' interviews, all meta-codes were identified and the two specific codes that did not emerge were the "Relationship was initiated by the mentor" code and the "Current trends in the field" code.

Overall, 29 of the 30 participants (96 percent) reported a beneficial relationship between mentor and mentee, and all 30 participants reported learning originating from the mentor-mentee relationship. Furthermore, one participant described conflict with her particular mentor and shared a negative experience; the same participant also gave details that indicated learning from the experience and from the relationship. Of the participants who reported beneficial relationships, Emma stated that her mentor was "able to have very real conversations about the things that I need to pull back on in order to keep myself healthy, my marriage healthy, and then be successful in this program." Mentees also noted several desirable mentor behaviors – particularly, using dual roles for teaching and modeling, being approachable, providing an individual approach to mentorship, using encouragement often, providing a personal connection/relationship with the mentee, providing unsolicited information to the mentee, and offering frequent feedback.

The participants also identified several beneficial experiences originating from their "Experience as a mentee," one of the identified meta-codes, which were helpful in their development as a professional. These beneficial experiences as a mentee included: "Being able to learn through modeling," "Gaining subsequent experience as a mentor," "Learning about life balance through positive and negative examples," and "Having a positive view of being challenged." Gaining the subsequent experience as a mentor was a benefit of the mentoring relationship that was especially important to the junior counselor educator participants. Diana illustrated this when she stated: "that's how I look at it when I mentor my students […] modeling and helping them negotiate a path to becoming a professional – what they desire to be." Essentially, having a mentor prompted the junior faculty members to reciprocate and become mentors to their students.

The participants also reported specific "Mentee needs" that they wanted met from the mentoring relationship. For all three participant levels, the mentoring needs included "Having multiple mentors," "Desiring a specific answer/advice from the mentor," "Understanding politics" in the counseling and counselor education field, using "Peer mentoring," and recognizing that there might be a "future need" for mentoring going forward. There were times when the mentees noted that they had "Unmet expectations/needs" resulting from the mentoring relationship. One doctoral student reported significant unmet needs from her mentor and found alternative methods to get those needs addressed. When this pattern continued, the mentees reported a negative experience of mentoring. One participant, Scott, mentioned continual difficulty with his mentor that led to feelings of frustration and disappointment in the relationship. He stated: "I was just really frustrated and I felt like other people were able to access her more than I was."

Along with the unmet needs that sometimes emerged from the mentoring relationship, another obstacle faced by mentees was the "Assignment of a mentor." This was a theme that consistently emerged as being unbeneficial to mentees. Most participant mentees preferred informal mentoring relationships and stated that they desired to seek out the mentor on their own.

Frequency of codes by participant developmental level
Using QDA Miner, we found certain needs and qualities that were more important to mentees at the different developmental levels (i.e. master's, doctoral, junior faculty).

The code "Characteristics of mentors," within the "Relationship between mentor and mentee" meta-code, was suggested to be the most important by all participants. This code was mentioned 77 times within the interviews (95.2 percent of interviews). The next most frequently used code was within the overarching "Gender" meta-code, the importance of the gender of the mentor to the mentee. This code appeared 71 times and was one of the most frequently mentioned codes, appearing in 90.50 percent of the interviews. The use of "Multiple mentors," within the "Mentee needs" meta-code, was another common code. It appeared 49 times (85.7 percent of the interviews). "Having the relationship initiated by the mentor" and "Discussion of current trends in the counseling field" were the least common codes. These two codes were only mentioned three times each and occurred in 9.5 percent of the interviews.

Master's-level participants. All the master's participants ($n = 11$) mentioned specific qualities, approaches to mentorship, and mentoring strategies as representing important needs stemming from the mentoring relationship. The least frequent codes for master's participants were learning about current trends and politics in the profession and having a negative mentoring experience (25 percent each). "Assignment of mentors" and the mentor having a "Dual role," such as the mentor being the master's student's professor for a class during his or her program while also being his or her mentor or being the student's clinical supervisor and his or her mentor, also were not as important to master's-level mentees as were the characteristics and qualities of the mentor.

Meta-code: relationship between mentor and mentee. The desire to have a mentor who was "Approachable," had an "Individual approach to the mentoring" relationship, and who was "Encouraging" was very important to the master's students who sought or wanted a mentoring relationship. Jane, a master's student, reported that her mentor was approachable, which helped her to be open and comfortable with him. She stated, "I don't think there's anything that would stop me from going to him and bouncing some things off of him." The use of encouragement in the mentoring relationship was appreciated by all the master's participants. It appeared to strengthen the mentor-mentee relationship and helped the student explore options and areas of the profession that were new or unknown to the student.

Meta-code: communication style or pattern. Another significant need that master's students had of their mentor was that the mentor "Provided unsolicited information" and "Feedback" to the student whenever the mentor came across items or ideas that he or she thought would be important to the mentee. One master's participant, Courtney, noted that her mentor's ability to provide unsolicited information on areas that she did not bring up in conversation was particularly vital because "you may not get the question if you are never exposed to the possibilities."

Meta-code: mentee benefits. The most frequently reported benefit of having a mentor was that the mentor was able to "Provide opportunities for growth and resources" that went above and beyond what the student would receive in class. Gabbie found the ability of her mentor to teach her how to build a professional network and to meet other professionals in the field was important to her professional growth. She stated that it was helpful because she had "someone who has some information outside of what you can gain in the class or reading some kind of journal."

Doctoral-level participants. All doctoral-level participants ($n = 10$) implicated the "Gender" of the mentor as being an important quality. Participants did not state a particular gender was important, just that they wanted to be able to make a decision about which gender was most important to them at the time. Also, the majority of them (90 percent)

considered having "Multiple mentors" and being "Provided with specific answers and advice" as being very important. "Gaining experience as a mentor" and "Learning about trends" and "Politics" were the two least frequent codes discussed by this group (10 percent). Also, having the "Relationship initiated by the mentor" was mentioned less often than was "Obtaining specific answers from the mentor" (10 percent).

Meta-code: gender of the mentor. The doctoral participants stated that the "Gender" of the mentor was of greatest importance, compared to all other mentor qualities, when searching for and selecting a mentor. One participant, Mary, spoke about the discussions that she would have with her mentor about gender-specific concerns in academia and balancing a family life or relationship. She stated, "having the guilt as a women, not to say men don't […] talking about how they feel guilty for moving their partner or their wife, or whoever their partner is, but you usually hear it more from women." Mary also reported discussions with her mentor about gender roles, stereotypes, and the helping professions that led to greater awareness and understanding for Mary. She reported, "just feeling the strain of being a woman and being tracked into a helping profession, which is making less money than my husband […] even though I have a higher degree […] he will always make more."

Meta-code: mentee needs. The doctoral-level participants reported that the ability to have "Multiple mentors" and mentors who were willing to "Provide specific answers" to their questions or to provide advice was very beneficial when addressing their needs as mentees. Jamie noted that having multiple mentors was helpful to her because she was able to have different needs met by different people or to learn about specific ideas related to counselor education and the field of counseling as a whole from those who had expertise in that area. She stated, "There are always needs being met within those mentorship relationships, but they might be divided differently and may be not one particular person […] that's important to recognize that it might not be exclusive to one or two people." A mentor who provides specific advice, suggestions, or ideas is valuable to mentees at the doctoral level. Kathy, a doctoral mentee, stated that her mentor was excellent at answering her questions.

Junior faculty-level participants. All the junior faculty participants ($n = 9$) indicated that having a mentor who serves dual, or multiple, roles for them and exhibits certain characteristics such as being "Approachable," "Having a personal connection" with the mentee, and "Providing feedback" were the most important to this group. Having "Multiple mentors" and the ability to "Obtain specific answers and advice" from the mentor were extremely important (87.5 percent). This group also had the highest rate of "Unmet expectations" from their mentoring experiences (87.5 percent).

Meta-code: relationship between mentor and mentee. When discussing the components of a mentor-mentee relationship, the junior faculty participants noted that a mentor who had "Dual roles" within the relationship was helpful. Having dual roles, such as being the counselor education department chair and mentor or being a mentor and the mentee's professor while the mentee was the TA of the class, was preferred because the mentee could learn from the mentor in multiple ways. For example, Heather stated, "she had me as a TA in her research class and so I was there, and I got lots of in-classroom observations." Having a mentor who was approachable and sought to have a personal connection with the mentee also was important to junior faculty mentees. The participants desired a personal connection that went beyond being colleagues or a traditional working relationship because it allowed the mentee to become more comfortable sharing concerns or fears about different issues.

Meta-code: communication style or pattern. Junior faculty desired direct, honest feedback from the mentor. This feedback might come from a review of mentees' writing, research, or teaching skills as they begin to navigate counselor education. All participants stated that feedback was a necessary component of the mentor-mentee relationship. For instance, during his interview, Joe clearly articulated that feedback was vital to his growth and professional development as a counselor educator when he stated, "she would give me feedback; so, I really felt like that was very positive, that was probably one of the best mentoring experiences I had in terms of the teaching portion."

Meta-code: mentee needs. Similar to the doctoral mentee participants, junior faculty participants mentioned having multiple mentors and having those mentors who provided specific advice and answers were helpful to the mentee's growth and development as a counselor educator. Out of the three groups, junior faculty mentees reported the highest level of unmet expectations (i.e. 87.5 percent) originating from the mentoring relationship as opposed to the master's-level (75 percent) and doctoral-level (66.7 percent) participants who shared unmet expectations. In analyzing the interviews, we noted that unmet expectations or needs from the mentoring relationship often led to significant negative experiences with mentors. Marissa expressed feelings of disappointment around unmet needs within the mentoring relationship. She expressed, "I would like more support than I'm getting," "I just don't feel connected," "I feel like I needed the help and need the assistance," and that she was "floundering in the midst of lots of opportunity and possibility" due to missed chances for growth and negative experiences.

Discussion

For counselor educators who were a part of our study, the mentoring relationship was the most frequently discussed meta-code during the interviews. Counselor educator participants noted that the mentoring relationship that developed during their student learning process and/or their new position as a counselor education faculty member was significant to their professional development. Black and Zullo (2008) suggested that "the mentor provides acceptance, support, encouragement, advice, guidance, and challenges" (p. 298) through the mentoring relationship. These are needs that were vocalized by our participants repeatedly. In our participant group, counselor education students, both master's and doctoral level, and junior faculty alike suggested that a mentor should have certain characteristics, such as being approachable, having a personal style of mentoring, being encouraging, and providing clear and direct feedback to the mentee.

Our participants reported benefits of the mentoring relationship, such as being able to learn through modeling and learning about life balance through positive and negative examples. They also shared specific needs that they wanted addressed in the mentoring relationship. These included such needs as desiring specific answers/advice from the mentor and understanding politics in the counseling and counselor education field. Although there was an overall report of mentoring having a positive effect, there were times the mentees noted that they had unmet expectations/needs resulting from the mentoring relationship. Some participants reported significant negative events and experiences of mentoring. This is important to note because counselor educators who desire to engage in increased mentoring of students and faculty need to be aware of these experiences and how to manage these issues, so that student and faculty mentees can have positive experiences. In 2013, Hobson and Malderez coined the term "judgementoring" or judgmental mentoring (p. 95). This is defined as a mentor who too

often used personal, negative feedback, or critical judgments in their evaluations of the professional progress of the mentee. For these mentors, this became the focus of their relationship as there, at times, was the idea that the mentor wanted to create professionals who thought and behaved in a similar fashion to the mentor rather than encouraging the mentee to develop his or her own professional identity and critical thinking skills. Hobson and Malderez noted that this often led to the mentee feeling discouraged and disillusioned with the profession and/or his or her own growth.

Our findings are in line with other researchers who have explored the significance of mentoring relationships. Effective mentorship requires trust, safety, and responsiveness (Schrodt *et al.*, 2003). Each of these areas was noted by our participants as being essential to a positive mentoring experience. Providing mentorship to new faculty members is the primary way to prevent isolation and dissatisfaction in the position (Buyukgoze-Kavas *et al.*, 2010). They went on to note that "new faculty who share a quality mentoring relationship are likely to model mentoring to other new faculty, as well as students" (p. 345). This sentiment was echoed in Diana's illustration of how she mentors her own students; she stated she uses modeling as a way to "help them negotiate a path to becoming a professional." Additionally, the gender of mentors was found to be significant to our participants. Many female participants reported that having a woman mentor was beneficial. In their article, Casto *et al.* (2005) noted that mentoring between women, both at the student and faculty level, was vital in helping women develop skills and knowledge, and an understanding of the culture and politics was necessary to navigate and to thrive in professional settings.

Implications

The goal of qualitative inquiry is to understand a unique group or phenomenon rather than to generalize findings. Notwithstanding, our discoveries have several implications for counselor educators and program directors who desire to utilize mentoring with students and other faculty members who have needs like the study participants.

First, it is evident that mentoring relationships are desired and needed by at least some counseling students and new faculty members. Thus, counseling program directors and faculty members are encouraged to create an environment of openness and interest among students and junior faculty members. Counseling students and junior faculty might find it helpful for department chairs and senior faculty to encourage mentorship but not necessarily to assign mentors. Encouraging mentorship can start the conversation about faculty members who might be a good fit for the person in search of a mentor. Essentially, implementing a mentorship program in departments but allowing the selection of mentors to occur organically is encouraged. Such an approach might be one way to guide mentors to establish mentoring relationships that are beneficial for mentees. Second, it is important that mentors focus the content of their mentoring meetings on information that is useful to the mentee. Checking in with mentees about their thoughts, needs, and obstacles is recommended. At the same time, mentors should be cautious of making the mentoring relationship too much about their own personal beliefs and values as this can develop into a negative, judgmental relationship (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). However, it is important to recognize that mentees sometimes do not know what to ask. Therefore, mentors should mention a few key areas even if the discussions are not initiated by the mentee. These areas include but are not limited to: discussing and modeling healthy work life balance, understanding politics within the field, providing information about the tenure and promotion process, and assisting with professional development by offering insight and feedback regarding

scholarly work. Mentors also should maintain mentee confidentiality, keep scheduled meetings, be approachable, and provide appropriate modeling to create and to maintain an open and safe environment for mentees to feel comfortable during the mentorship process. These are some of the basic tenets of facilitating an open and safe environment for mentees and our overall recommendations for improving upon mentoring relationships in counseling programs. It is important that counselor educators and others who desire (or who are required) to be mentors recognize the importance of having clear discussions about the mentee's needs and goals of the mentoring relationship, engage in appropriate professional role modeling, and maintain clear relational boundaries in order to avoid unmet needs or negative experiences of the mentee.

Conclusions
The focus of our research was on identifying the mentoring needs of counseling students and faculty members, and several limitations to our research findings were apparent. These limitations can impact the transferability of the findings. First, as in all qualitative research, the codes and specific stories of the participants are unique to their experiences. Thus, future researchers should investigate the generalizability of our findings through engagement in quantitative research studies and additional qualitative studies to explore issues of transferability to other settings and contexts. Researchers might consider using a quasi-experimental design to determine the impact of the mentoring relationship more fully. This can be undertaken through the development of comparison groups of which one group engaged in a self-initiated informal mentoring relationship and the other group of participants were assigned to a formal, assigned mentor. Also, participants were interviewed in multiple settings (individually, small group, and electronically) as participants were gathered from across the USA. Future researchers might want to engage in data collection through one method rather than several in order to maintain consistency. Second, the proportion of male participants (13.3 percent) was small. Although the small sample of male participants is similar to the proportion of men to women in the counseling profession (Evans, 2010), future researchers might wish to solicit a higher proportion of male participants. Third, our participants were diverse because they ranged in age from 18 to 53 years old, were in different student levels, and were located in several US regions; however, many of the participants were between 25 and 38 years old (70 percent), were white (83 percent), and were from the South (50 percent). Consequently, future researchers might explore the needs of different groups (e.g. men, non-CACREP vs CACREP programs, and race/ethnicity). Finally, researchers might consider creating a mentorship needs scale specific to students and faculty in counselor education programs. The development of such a measure could turn out to be beneficial for future empirical research. There were no mentorship needs scales for students and faculty in counselor education programs at the time this study was conducted.

The implications of our research are potentially far-reaching. Within counselor education programs across the nation, there exists a mixture of program directors and faculty members who provide formal or informal mentoring and those who provide none. Lack of mentoring, as well as ineffective or harmful mentoring, creates negative experiences and impedes the level of success that students and faculty members can experience in their education and careers. Based on the experiences of these 30 participants, it is evident that our participants, both as students and faculty members, desired mentoring relationships with others in the program and profession.

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Further reading

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