EXEMPLARY COUNSELOR EDUCATORS’ REPORTED EXPERIENCES DURING THEIR OWN SELF-PERCEIVED GOOD TEACHING

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by

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This research was a phenomenological study that explored exemplary counselor educators’ reported experiences during their own self-perceived good teaching moments. An assumption of the researcher was that the participants would reveal beliefs about teaching and preferred pedagogical methods while sharing their experiences during moments of their own self-perceived good teaching. The research question that guided this study was: What are exemplary counselor educators’ reported experiences during their own self-perceived good teaching moments?

The researcher contacted the chairs, coordinators, or directors at CACREP accredited counselor education programs and requested they identify a tenured faculty member who they believed was an exemplary teacher. Six participants, three males and three females, were selected to participate in this study. Data were collected through phone interviews and analyzed by a process consistent with phenomenological research.

Data revealed the following salient beliefs among the six participants that contributed to the structure of good teaching moments: (a) the process of teaching has similarities to the process of counseling, (b) sharing professional experiences is helpful to students, (c) students are capable of teaching each other and teaching themselves, (d) students learn to become counselors through experiencing content, (e) teacher reflection
is important in good teaching, and (f) being authentic in the classroom is important to
good teaching. The results of this research were discussed in relation to existing
literature and unique contributions to the field were identified. Implications for counselor
education, future recommendations for research, and limitations were shared.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation marks the end of my doctoral career, but opens opportunities for me to pursue my professional goals. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to pursue higher education and complete a dissertation. While I am proud of this academic achievement, I realize that I may not have been successful without the help and influence of others.

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Finally, I extend deep appreciation to the six counselor educators who graciously offered their time and commitment to this research.
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Jenny

Paul

Ben

Zoe

Glen

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Those teaching in higher education employ a variety of teaching methods when facilitating classroom learning (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006; Pregent, 2000). They use teaching methods to accomplish their pedagogical goals for students that can include: lectures, discussions, case studies, service learning, demonstration, peer teaching, and role-plays (Pregent, 2000). In the current counselor education and supervision (CES) literature, an abundance of articles suggests various ideas for teaching methods that can be used by counselor educators (e.g., Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2001; Granello, 2000; Granello & Hazler, 1998; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2000, 2002; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). This pedagogical information can be helpful when preparing class lectures and course activities, and offers quick resources for counselor educators who are looking for innovative methods of teaching. Although the particular methods that one exercises while teaching may be of importance, it may also be of equal importance to consider the reasons that teachers have decided to employ such methods; that is, the underlying assumptions that drive particular pedagogical decisions that lead teachers to believe they are engaging in successful teaching.

In *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*, Parker Palmer (2007) proposed that teachers look beyond methods of teaching, and to instead look at the person behind the methods, at the person who teaches. Palmer implied that professors can understand more about their teaching and their pedagogical decision making if they examined the beliefs of teaching that underlie their methods and
techniques employed while teaching. Palmer noted that congruence between teaching methods and one’s authenticity can lead to more effective teaching and comfort in the classroom.

Palmer (2007) brought awareness to the idea that a potential driving force behind choosing particular teaching methods might be an educator’s beliefs about teaching and learning. Other authors have also noted that beliefs and convictions regarding teaching are underlying forces that influence how teachers choose to be present in the classroom and how they use particular methods to facilitate learning (Ellis & Griffin, 2000; Pike, Bradley, & Mansfield, 1997; Pratt, 2005; Witcher, Sewall, Arnold, & Travers, 2001). In addition to Palmer, Pike et al. (1997) also noted that teachers are more successful when their instructional practices reflect their educational beliefs.

Pratt (1993) identified five beliefs (discussed in depth later in this chapter) about teaching, which faculty members across many disciplines shared. Pratt concluded that professors’ views about teaching influence their behaviors in classrooms and ultimately shape their students’ learning experiences. In addition, Pratt explained that beliefs, intentions, and actions of teaching are dynamic and change over time based on experiences and challenges. This implied that as faculty members have more experiences, and as they mature as teachers, their beliefs may change. Considering that beliefs, intentions, and actions are interrelated (Pratt, 1993), a change in educational beliefs may result in changes in educational goals and methods used in the classroom.

The current research study examined counselor educators’ beliefs and experiences about their own self-perceived moments of good teaching. More specifically this
research examined whether beliefs about teaching manifest themselves in counselor educators’ reports of their experiences of their own good teaching. The purpose for this study, as well as the guiding research questions, is further explained in the remainder of this chapter.

**Purpose of Study**

Pratt (1993) and other researchers (e.g., Bain, 2004; Ginsberg, 2007; Gow & Kember, 1993; Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2001; Herron, Beedle, & King, 2006; Kember & Gow, 1994) have noted, identifying teachers’ beliefs about teaching is important to understanding their decision-making in the classroom in terms of course structure, assignments, activities, teaching methods, and interactions with students. From this information it appears that beliefs about teaching influence the experiences of teaching that might be reported by faculty members. There is, however, a lack of information dedicated to the experiences of teaching, and specifically how these experiences express the relationship between beliefs about teaching and the selection of teaching methods. Furthermore, minimal literature in counselor education provides a definition of what is included in good teaching as reported by counselor educators who are tenured. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to provide more information regarding exemplary teachers’ beliefs about their teaching to the counselor education community by exploring how these exemplary counselor educators, who were tenured, defined and experienced their own good teaching.
Research Question

The research question that guided this qualitative study was: What are exemplary counselor educators’ reported experiences during their own self-perceived good teaching moments?

Sub questions of interest were:

1. What are exemplary counselor educators’ beliefs about good teaching?
2. What methods do exemplary counselor educators use during moments of good teaching?

Review of the Literature

The remainder of this chapter serves to summarize professional literature that is relevant to this research. A rationale for this study is provided, a review of beliefs about teaching found in higher education and how they manifest in behavioral descriptions of teaching is explored, and a summary of additional factors that may influence experiences of teaching is described.

Teaching in Counselor Education

Before the review of pertinent literature regarding teaching in higher education, specifically in regards to the relationship between professors’ beliefs about teaching and their rationale for choosing teaching methods that they believe are most effective is presented, it was thought to be important to place the current study within the context of counselor education. As this study examined the experiences of good teaching for exemplary counselor educators, this section provides justification for why it may be
beneficial to examine the teaching practices of counselor educators by illustrating the importance of teaching in counselor education.

**Career goals of counselor education graduates.** One reason the doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) was created was to respond to demands for better instruction in counselor preparation programs (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs [CACREP], 2009; West, Bubenzer, Brooks, & Hackney, 1995). Second, this terminal degree in counseling is designed for counselors who desire enhanced skills of clinical practice, supervision, research, and instruction. For some, the goal of obtaining the doctoral degree is to seek a university faculty position in counselor education (Sweeney, 1992; West et al., 1995).

When considering the career aspirations of students enrolled in CES programs, Poidevant, Loesch, and Wittmer (1991) found that these students had higher preferences to work in teaching positions than students who chose to pursue a doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology (CP). In addition, it was ascertained that students in CES sought more teaching and faculty positions in university settings than their counterparts in CP (Poidevant et al., 1991). This suggested that individuals who sought to train potential counselors in a university setting might intentionally choose the CES doctoral degree over the CP degree.

In a study prior to the Poidevant et al. (1991) investigation, Zimpfer and DeTrude (1990) sought to determine in what capacity graduates from CES programs were using their degrees five to six years post graduation. The data revealed that nearly 30% of graduates had teaching positions in a college or university graduate degree program, with
the majority of these respondents being full-time faculty members. In a five year follow-up to this study, it was established that the counselor education graduates remained in faculty positions, whereas graduates from CP programs tended to move from teaching positions into direct counseling service activities (Zimpfer, 1996). This information suggested that many graduates from CES programs not only sought professoriate positions where they spend time teaching, but also remained in these positions over time.

According to the 12th edition of Counselor Preparation: Programs, Faculty, and Trends (Schweiger, Henderson, Clawson, Collins, & Nuckolls, 2008), in 2006 all counseling programs in the United States were invited to participate in an online survey of the descriptive characteristics of their program. Eighty-eight doctoral level programs in counseling provided information for the survey. Forty-nine of these programs identified specifically as providing doctoral preparation in Counselor Education and Supervision. When determining job settings after graduation, 16 of these CES programs responded that their graduates moved into positions in “advanced education,” making up 51% of graduates, which was the most frequent post graduate professional setting reported (Schweiger et al., 2008). This data continued to suggest that many graduates who earned doctoral degrees in CES have the goal of finding positions in academia, although not all in teaching.

The value of teaching reflected in CACREP. As the aforementioned literature has suggested, it may be plausible to assume that one motivation for seeking a doctoral degree in CES is to become competent in teaching, and thus to be prepared to seek a counselor education position in academia. In response to this goal and to assure that CES
students are being prepared as counselor educators who will one day teach, the 1994 accreditation standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) placed a greater importance on teacher preparation in counselor education programs (West et al., 1995).

When the 1994 standards of the CACREP were published, faculty in CES programs were encouraged to consider how they might support students in gaining teaching experience and in enhancing their identities as teachers (West et al., 1995). These revised accreditation standards included greater emphasis on preparing counselor educators to teach students how to become professional counselors, and thus they included more specific standards dedicated to teacher preparation.

Since 1994, CACREP has revised their standards for doctoral level counselor education twice, with the most recent edition in 2009. The focus on teaching continues to be a priority in the current standards with sections regarding both professional identity and practice as teachers, as well as doctoral learning outcomes related to teaching. Specifically, the doctoral standards for counselor education and supervision (CACREP, 2009) state that CES students must have learning experiences in “instructional theory and methods relevant to counselor education” (Section II, C.3). In addition, the standards (CACREP, 2009) imply that a successful CES graduate “knows instructional theory and methods relevant to counselor education” (Section IV, C.2), “develops and demonstrates a personal philosophy of teaching and learning” (Section IV, D.1), “demonstrates course design, delivery, and evaluation methods appropriate to course objectives” (Section IV, D.2), and “demonstrates the ability to assess the needs of counselors in training and
develop techniques to help students develop into competent counselors” (Section IV, D.3). These standards put forth by CACREP are evidence that teaching is a priority for prospective counselor educators and being an effective teacher to prepare future counselors is vital.

Suggestions in the literature have proposed that for counselor educators, having a strong teaching identity is important for the preparation of competent counselors (CACREP, 2009; West et al., 1995) and for finding a faculty appointment (Heiberger & Vick, 2001; Rogers, Gill-Wigal, Harrigan, & Abbey-Hines, 1998; Warnke, Bethany, & Hedstron, 1999; Wilbur, 1995). Counselor education faculty in CACREP programs reported that the majority of their professional time is spent in teaching (Davis, Levitt, McGlothlin, & Hill, 2006), which justified the importance CACREP placed on teacher identity when preparing CES doctoral students. Zimpfer, Cox, West, Bubenzer, and Brooks (1997) found that CES faculty members at CACREP universities have declared that a major goal for their programs is to train students to be effective teachers and thus have placed a high value on teaching experiences.

**Teaching responsibilities of counselor educators.** Counselor educators have multiple roles in academia and the profession of counseling. These roles include: making scholarly contributions to the field through research and writing; presenting their work and ideas through scholarly presentations; and serving as leaders in counseling by providing service to the profession (Niles, Akos, & Cutler, 2001). Another important role of counselor educators is to be teachers of counseling to graduate students. This particular role of teacher is one where counselor educators spend much of their time
(Davis et al., 2006) and a role for which they have been educationally prepared during their doctoral studies.

Counselor educators, as reported by Davis and his colleagues (2006), spend most of their professional time on their teaching duties. In their study, which sought to examine promotion and tenure expectations, 74 CES program liaisons reported what they perceived was typical time spent in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Results indicated that the liaisons perceived that most time was allocated to duties of teaching, with counselor educators being responsible for a mean total of four courses per semester. These results were consistent across academic ranks of assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors. Although the data from this study were merely the perceptions of 74 representatives, as opposed to actual time allocated to each counselor educator role, they still offer some insight to the experiences of the respondents.

In the same study by Davis et al. (2006), researchers found that the CES program liaisons endorsed teaching as an important activity in regards to tenure and promotion by rating its importance an average of 3.64 on a 4-point Likert scale. Davis and his colleagues found that counselor educators ranked the domains of publication, teaching, and service to the counseling profession as equal when considering how to prepare one’s self and how to evaluate candidates for tenure and promotion. This indicated that from the perspective of the 74 program representatives who participated in the research, teaching was perceived as being as important as the traditional area of scholarship.
Other counselor education literature has suggested that teaching is a vital responsibility for counseling faculty as evidenced by articles and books devoted to teaching. Throughout CES literature, authors have contributed innovative methods for teaching in counseling content courses (e.g., Cheston, 2000; Griffith & Frieden, 2000; Higgins & Dermer, 2001; Koch & Dollarhide, 2000; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2002; Rabinowitz, 1997; Schwitzer, Gonzalez, & Curl, 2001), ideas to assist fellow counselor educators in fostering student skills in clinical classes (e.g., Whiston & Coker, 2000), and suggestions on teaching styles and educational theories best suited for counselor education (e.g., Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2001; Granello, 2000; Granello & Hazler, 1998; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2000; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). This mounting literature dedicated to teaching substantiates the idea that teaching is a crucial component of counselor education.

**Faculty hiring practices in counselor education.** The ability to demonstrate teaching experience, competence, and philosophies of teaching and learning is an important piece of evidence for obtaining academic appointments. It is recommended that any person attempting to find a job in academia must be prepared to discuss their teaching competencies, as well as share their philosophy of teaching during the interview process (Heiberger & Vick, 2001; Wilbur, 1995).

When considering specific faculty positions in counselor education programs, there is evidence in the literature that teaching is a priority in the hiring process. In further examination of hiring needs, teaching experience and ability have been identified as an important selection criterion for counselor education faculty search committees.
In preparation for the academic interview, it is recommended that CES graduates be familiar with their teaching experiences, as well as identify their beliefs about education and discuss them at length (Warnke et al., 1999).

As students emerge from their CES programs with their completed doctorate and enter into academia as counselor educators, they must become acclimated to the culture of a new program and meet the demands of scholarly presentations and publications while gaining confidence in their teaching. In her study to examine the first year experiences of counselor educators, Magnuson (2002) identified a common theme of challenges while teaching among the 38 new assistant professors she interviewed. These challenges included course design and preparation, grading, receiving feedback from students, and difficult student interactions (Magnuson, 2002).

In an attempt to provide mentorship to new counselor educators, Niles et al. (2001) published a qualitative study in which they interviewed nationally recognized counselor educators on how they were able to be successful in their multiple tasks and roles (e.g., researcher, teacher, service) as counseling faculty. The researchers summarized responses and offered concrete strategies for success to the readers. Particular recommendations for teaching included: (a) observing and being observed by senior faculty, (b) using diverse teaching methods in the classroom, (c) being knowledgeable about innovative ideas in counseling and teaching, (f) making connections with students by using counseling skills, and (g) keeping a positive attitude about the process of teaching and learning (Niles et al., 2001). Although these strategies are specific and potentially useful, this research only included a small amount of
information relevant to the role of teaching. In addition, the researchers did not identify the teaching experiences of the counselor educators, their beliefs about what constitutes good teaching, nor the methods they employed while teaching.

As literature has suggested, mentorship by senior faculty may be beneficial for the success of new counselor educators (Magnuson, 2002; Niles et al., 2001). This may be especially true for assistance in meeting the challenges new counselor educators face in teaching and developing a “teacher identity.” In considering the importance of teaching for counselor educators, it may behoove counselor educators to hear their senior colleagues, who have been successful in teaching, share their experiences and beliefs of teaching, as well as to know how they define good teaching.

This section provided justification that teaching is an important aspect of the professional life of counselor educators. In many instances, graduates of CES programs intended to use their degree to teach and there is evidence that teaching takes a large amount of preparation and time for counselor educators. As teaching in counselor education is important as evidenced by its emphasis in accreditation standards and the hiring practices among counselor education programs, it may be useful to learn about the experiences of tenured counselor educators, who have been identified as good teachers by their peers, and gain an understanding of how they define good teaching. It may also be beneficial to learn more about the beliefs about teaching these counselor educators hold and how these beliefs influence their work with students.
Educational Beliefs and Teaching Experiences

The current study examined exemplary counselor educators’ experiences of their own good teaching. Sub interests pertaining to the main research initiative were (a) What beliefs do counselor educators hold regarding teaching? and (b) What methods do counselor educators employ while engaged in good teaching? The following subsections review literature specific to higher education that explores teaching experiences as they relate to the relationships between beliefs about teaching and pedagogical decision making.

Educational beliefs and pedagogical decision making. Some authors have suggested that teaching is more than merely the utilization of pedagogical techniques, but rather a way of being present with students, educational material, and themselves as teachers (O’Reilley, 1998; Palmer, 2007). The way in which someone chooses to teach, be present in the classroom, and interact with students comes from their beliefs about education, teaching, and learning (King, 2003; Pratt, 2005; Witcher et al., 2001).

In *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*, Parker Palmer (2007) proposed that teachers not only examine techniques and methods of teaching but also their identity and integrity as teachers. He stated “good teaching cannot be reduced to techniques; good teaching comes from the identity and the integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). By looking beyond technique, Palmer noted that teachers would be able to match their practices as a teacher to their personal convictions. This congruence, he shared, leads to more effective teaching and more comfort in the classroom.
As individuals become aware of themselves as teachers, they are able to discover their convictions and beliefs about education that guide their teaching (Ellis & Griffin, 2000; Pike et al., 1997; Pratt, 2005; Witcher et al., 2001). In addition to Palmer (2007), Pike et al. (1997) noted that teachers are more successful when their instructional practices reflect their beliefs on education. Although this is noted by authors, there are few qualitative or quantitative studies exploring whether congruence between faculty members’ beliefs and techniques leads to better teaching.

The underlying convictions and beliefs about teaching and learning can be identified as a teacher’s philosophy of teaching (Pratt, 2005; Witcher et al., 2001). Teaching philosophies provide the blueprint for one’s teaching and actions in the classroom, with students, and with others (King, 2003). By encouraging teachers to reflect on their educational practices, their experiences with others, and by engaging in discourse with other teachers, they will begin to construct and identify their teaching philosophies (Palmer, 2007; Pike et al., 1997; Pratt, 2005). This reflection may be helpful for teachers in order to narrate their stories of being a teacher and thus find comfortable ways to interact in their classrooms and with students.

Personal philosophies, or beliefs, of education can be defined as one’s underlying convictions about teaching and learning (Pratt, 2005; Witcher et al., 2001). The beliefs teachers have about teaching and learning guide their decisions and actions in the classroom and provide a context and rationale for their methods of instruction (Ellis & Griffin, 2000; Pike et al., 1997; Pratt, 2005; Witcher et al., 2001). Teaching philosophies uncover the beliefs and values that provide a rationale for specific approaches to teaching
That is, the methods of pedagogy teachers choose to use with their students can be understood through the lens of their beliefs of teaching and learning. Conversely, examining teachers’ methods of pedagogy may reveal their beliefs about teaching.

When teachers are authentic in the classroom by matching their instructional methods to their beliefs and values of education, they may be more successful (Pike et al., 1997). Palmer (2007) wrote that when used by themselves, pedagogical methods and techniques are far less effective compared to when teachers find and utilize the particular teaching methods that fit with their beliefs of teaching and education. In other words, congruence between the teaching techniques and teaching philosophies may be important for teacher and student success.

Hativa et al. (2001) concluded that exemplary teachers achieve effectiveness in a variety of ways. Through their research, they identified that the commonality among exemplary teachers is a fit between teachers’ beliefs about education and effective strategies and their actual classroom practice. Furthermore, Hativa et al. suggested that in order to be successful, novice teachers should learn about the wide range of effective pedagogical methods and select methods that fit their personality, thinking, and beliefs (p. 726).

This section served to describe how one’s beliefs, whether conscious or unconscious, about teaching may serve as a guide to how one may make pedagogical decisions. These pedagogical decisions include the pedagogical methods, choosing assignments, and approaches to student evaluation, and ways of interacting with students. By understanding his or her beliefs about education, an individual may obtain greater
insight into how he or she chooses to teach and be with students. Authors have suggested that faculty members who find a fit between their beliefs about teaching and the techniques they employ in the classroom have better teaching experiences. This study sought to identify counselor educators’ experiences of what they perceived to be their own good teaching moments in an effort to explore how they define good teaching and identify their beliefs about teaching.

**Relationship between teaching beliefs and methods.** “To ‘teach’ means different things depending upon one’s values, beliefs, and intentions” (Pratt, 1993, p. 203). In perhaps one of the largest studies of the experiences of teaching in higher education, Pratt interviewed 253 instructors across five countries and ascertained five conceptions of teaching reflected in the data. By using phenomenography as a research methodology, Pratt sought to understand instructors’ experiences of teaching. His work was grounded in the theory that teaching is interdependent on actions, intentions, and beliefs (p. 206). That is, teachers’ beliefs about teaching, their goals for teaching, and their actions while teaching are dependent on one another and cannot exist alone.

During his research, Pratt (1993) interviewed participants with three categories of questions that corresponded to the teachers’ actions, intentions, and beliefs regarding teaching. The questions that pertained to actions included, for example, “How do you prepare lectures?” and “What kind of activities might characterize your teaching” (p. 208). Questions that determined the participants’ intentions ascertained the goals they had for lessons, the course, and for learning. For example, “How do you know when you are successful in your teaching?” and “What are you trying to accomplish with your
teaching?” (p. 208). Finally, in an effort to discover the participants’ beliefs regarding teaching, Pratt and his research team asked questions such as, “Can you think of a motto or metaphor that guides you in your teaching?” and “What advice would you offer a beginning teacher?” Pratt noted that answers for these questions were sometimes explained quite easily, whereas other times the beliefs were vague and abstract.

Through data analysis that was consistent with the phenomenography methods of research (e.g., analyzing for units of meaning, pooling units of meaning categories, deriving commonalities), Pratt (1993) identified themes that he named “conceptions of teaching.” Each theme included various actions, intentions, and beliefs that were common among participants. The first, Engineering Conception: Delivery Content, was described as being teacher centered with an emphasis on knowledge transmission that was executed through content delivery and learning that was measured through mastery of content. Beliefs included that the learning environment should be teacher-centered and learning was observable and predictable. The second conceptual theme was identified as Apprenticeship Conception: Modeling Ways of Being. This theme included the belief that knowledge was held by experts and was to be passed down to novices. Teaching was described as a medium to socialize people in disciplines through role-modeling and mentoring. A third theme was named Developmental Conception: Cultivating the Intellect. This particular theme was more learner-centered than the previously mentioned, in that the power in the classroom was not hierarchical and the goal was to move students (who already held knowledge) to higher thinking. The fourth conceptual theme was identified as Nurturing Conception: Facilitating Personal Agency
and was described as being learner-centered with the main focus on the learner’s self-concept and autonomy. In addition, this theme included many references to personal relationships and care between students and teachers. The final theme was named Social Reform Conception: Seeking A Better Society. This was based on ideals that were connected to society. Emphasis of learning was directed toward social, cultural, and political values and teachers in this theme described ways to help students challenge authority and socially constructed truths.

Pratt’s (1993) research identified that what students learn is shaped by their instructors’ conceptions of teaching and how their teachers create a learning environment. Furthermore, the research called attention to the beliefs that faculty held about teaching and learning that might exist as underlying causes for making particular pedagogical decisions. Pratt pointed out, however, that although beliefs existed in each conceptual theme, the conceptions were not mutually exclusive. That is, individuals can hold beliefs that exist in more than one of the conceptualizations identified in this research. Pratt also mentioned that the same pedagogical methods can be used in each of the conceptual themes, with the only difference being the beliefs that each faculty member held when choosing the particular methods. Finally, this research indicated that the five conceptions of teaching identified are dynamic, meaning that teachers’ beliefs, goals, and actions will evolve through experiences and challenges.

As Pratt’s (1993) notions are a starting point for the current research study, the literature review that follows focuses on teaching experiences as they relate to the relationship between beliefs about teaching and pedagogical methods. In higher
education literature, there is qualitative research that implied educational assumptions influence how professors choose to teach in higher education. The data in the qualitative research, combined with anecdotal stories from professors, provide evidence that there are rationales for behavioral choices in the college classroom. When examining these rationales, they appear to be grounded in latent educational assumptions. The pedagogical choices and beliefs about teaching may ultimately reflect how the participants view and define successful teaching.

The following text summarizes three dimensions of beliefs that influence teaching methods found in research, which was primarily qualitative in nature (Bain, 2004; Ginsberg, 2007; Hativa et al., 2001; Herron et al., 2006; Kember & Gow, 1994; Pratt, 1993). These include: beliefs about teaching, beliefs about teachers, and beliefs about students. Each of the assumptions is described through anecdotal comments found in the cited literature. In addition the research studies, in which the assumptions were ascertained, are briefly explained.

**Beliefs about teaching and their influence on pedagogy.** The beliefs faculty members have regarding how to effectively teach and how students learn can be reflected in the methods they choose in the classroom. The following information regarding beliefs about teaching and learning and how they may influence pedagogical decisions were ascertained by a review of literature.

In an attempt to uncover whether there was a relationship between professors’ orientations to teaching and student learning, Kember and Gow (1994) initially examined professors’ assumptions about teaching and learning. To begin the study, the researchers
questioned whether there was a relationship between faculty members’ beliefs about teaching and the way courses were taught. Researchers interviewed 39 professors on their beliefs about the teaching and learning process. The interviews were analyzed and common constructs were grouped into two orientations, “learning facilitation” and “knowledge transmission.”

Researchers identified that faculty members who ascribed to the orientation of learning facilitation shared commonalities in their beliefs about teaching. One similarity was that they valued an interactive learning environment. Professors who shared this belief stated that they valued opportunities to listen to their students’ opinions regarding classroom topics, as evidenced by facilitating classroom discussions as a learning tool. Another similarity they shared was the belief that a goal of learning is for students to think critically and problem-solve. Researchers noted that these faculty members choose educational activities in which students could interact with material and apply knowledge. Lectures and the use of media were not commonly reported among this group of professors. These faculty members also believed that their purpose as teachers was to guide their students into wanting to learn. As a result, many participants of this category said that they attempted to motivate students by showing their own enthusiasm for the subject. Finally, researchers identified that these professors had a pastoral interest in their students shown by caring for their students and seeking opportunities to interact with them.

The second teaching orientation Kember and Gow (1994) noted was identified as knowledge transmission. The professors that used this teaching orientation had a
common goal to train students to work in their fields. In order to properly train students, they relied on lectures and the use of media, particularly overhead transparencies containing content related to the classroom subject. Their expectation of students was for them to take notes and begin to memorize the information regarding the subject, so that they would learn as much as they could about the subject at hand. The professors believed that in order to teach the subject they must have sound knowledge and the ability to lecture effectively so that they could impart their knowledge to students. The teaching methods employed by these participants were primarily lecture and use of media, with little use of class activities and discussions.

After dividing the data into the teaching orientations of “learning facilitation” and “knowledge transmission,” researchers identified 14 categories that included educational beliefs, teaching methods, and in-class behaviors that were compatible to each orientation of teaching. From these 14 categories, researchers developed a questionnaire, which contained 46 items that described both teaching orientations. The survey contained statements that were affiliated with each teaching orientation and had a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “definitely agree” to “definitely disagree.” Each category of teaching contained various methods of teaching, beliefs, or educational goals that participants could rate. For example, an item corresponding to the learning facilitation scale read, “In my teaching I have tried to develop participation from the students to make it more lively” (Kember & Gow, 1994, p. 62). An example of a survey item pertaining to the teaching orientation of knowledge transmission read: “A lecturer imparts information to the student” (Kember & Gow, 1994, p. 62). The final version of
this survey was distributed to faculty among 15 disciplines and yielded 170 usable questionnaires. The scores were then compared with student learning approaches in order for researchers to identify a relationship between teaching orientations and the quality of student learning. To do this, students in each participant’s class were given the Biggs Study Process Questionnaire, which measured the students’ approaches to learning (e.g., deep approach, surface approach, and achieving approach). Data analysis results yielded that teaching orientations did indeed influence the students’ approaches to learning. Researchers identified that students exposed to learning facilitation had an intrinsic motivation to learn and looked for personal meaning in course material (Kember & Gow, 1994). The researchers also concluded that students exposed to the knowledge transmission orientation of teaching had a decrease in intrinsic motivation for learning and focused their learning to memorization of what might appear on exams (Kember & Gow, 1994). Although these are interesting conclusions, it is possible that variables such as students’ prior knowledge and interests in subjects, personality of the teachers, course topics, and previous level of student achievement may have influenced results. Perhaps the most important aspect of the aforementioned study, and the most relevant to the current study, was the researchers’ conclusion that conceptualizations of teaching and learning held by instructors strongly influence the methods of teaching adopted (Kember & Gow, 1994), and possibly the experiences and definitions of good teaching.

Ginsberg (2007) also acknowledged a relationship between teaching orientations and educational beliefs that correspond to those of Kember and Gow (1994). In her qualitative research study she interviewed and observed 11 full-time faculty members at
two public institutions, Ginsberg sought to determine what characteristics were shared among faculty identified as being successful with classroom communication (e.g., immediacy and clarity) and the commonalities among those participants who were unsuccessful with communication. Ginsberg noted common assumptions related to teaching and learning amongst both groups of participants. One belief that was ascertained by Ginsberg (2007) was that learning is more than providing facts to students, but rather a process in which students partake while discovering and struggling with ideas. One participant in Ginsberg’s study shared that he believed students should be provided with opportunities to make their own meaning out of subject content and apply it to their lives, students should learn how to problem-solve, and learning takes place when students take an active role through discussions and projects. As a reflection of these beliefs he incorporated teaching methods that allowed students the freedom to explore content on their own by having them work together to learn material. He also stated that he spent little time in front of the class lecturing and more time addressing students on a personal level during class. He also shared with the researcher that he believed in trusting his students’ abilities and reported that he had loosened his control over his students.

Ginsberg (2007) also found that professors who she deemed ineffective in communication with students had similar assumptions with one another. Most typically these professors, similar to Kember and Gow’s (1994) “knowledge transmission” group, shared the belief that knowledge is best learned through lecture. These participants believed that their main responsibility was to fill the heads of their students with
knowledge and sought to do so through lecture, and offered little opportunity for classroom dialogue. Ginsberg noted that these participants did not seek a reciprocal relationship with their students, as evidenced by not interacting with them. This was reflected in one participant’s expressed assumption that he needed to control all aspects of his class while teaching, and allowed little opportunity for student input and student participation.

The Ginsberg (2007) and Kember and Gow (1994) studies appeared to link lecturing as a preferred method for professors who believe that learning is best accomplished through transmitting facts to students. The studies implied that lecturing is less effective in teaching students because it encourages students to engage in surface learning, or learning for a test and simply memorizing facts without understanding or connecting content to larger issues in contrast to deeper learning, or learning that encourages students to find an intrinsic desire to learn and thus attach more meaning to course content (Biggs, 2001). Research has generated mixed results on whether or not teaching methods of lecturing versus active learning environments (e.g., group work, class dialogue) create an environment for meaningful learning (Baeten, Dochy, & Struyven, 2008). Perhaps this is due to the varying nature of lecture styles that may be influenced by the beliefs faculty members have regarding education and their goals for student learning.

In his study on effective teaching, Bain (2004) found that when faculty members engage in effective lecturing, they are able to engage students in critical thinking. They do this by providing necessary course content while posing reflective questions, offering
dilemmas while providing multiple sides of an argument, and conversing with the class during the lecture rather than simply presenting information. Other authors (Fletcher & Patrick, 1999; McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006) have also noted that effective lecturing occurs when it is supplemented by providing time for students to be thoughtful while they are listening to the professor, participating in reflective activities while taking notes, and when professors use additional methods while lecturing such as showing video clips, breaking out in small groups, or sharing relevant anecdotes.

Bain (2004) also mentioned another quality that effective teachers share while they are lecturing. He wrote that effective teachers are thoughtful while they are lecturing. For example they are considering the sounds of their speech and their body language, wondering when they should take pauses to allow students to reflect, deciding what points need to be repeated, and thinking about what visual aids might be useful to better engage students (p. 59). These considerations might provide a difference between effective lecturers and non-effective lecturers.

Bain (2004) identified that effective teachers want their students to “grapple” with notions and struggle through material in order to break down their old assumptions and incorporate new knowledge. In order to do this, students have to do more than just memorize facts, but rather incorporate ideas into their schemas. Bain noted that professors who are effective believe that reflective questions help people to construct knowledge, which may be reflective of teachers asking their students to bring in questions from their assigned readings. Another method that can help students grapple with course content is through small group discussion. Provided that professors have the
goal of students engaging in conversation with one another for the purpose of thinking through topics, challenging one another, and expressing their thoughts to one another, group work can be effective (Bain, 2004, p. 126).

In addition, the way teachers set up exams for their students may be an extension of their beliefs (Bain, 2004). Instructors who believe that students need to memorize facts from lectures or readings might have an exam in which students must find correct answers, such as multiple choice, matching, or true and false. Another possibility is that exams are an outlet for students to reason through problems and find ways to defend their answers, which might reflect a faculty member’s value that learning is problem-solving, interpreting information, and applying class material. These exams may include open-ended questions from case studies or essays in which students are expected to defend positions.

It is noteworthy to consider that the methods of teaching are not as important as the assumptions of why particular methods might be chosen (Palmer, 2007). Although different faculty members achieve effectiveness by using various teaching methods (Hativa et al., 2001), perhaps the most noteworthy aspects are the reasons teachers choose particular methods. The purpose of this subsection was to provide information from the literature that suggests that professors have beliefs about education that may influence their teaching. That is, they choose particular methods or interactions with students that are an extension of what they believe would be most helpful for learning, as well as what they believe the goals of learning should be (e.g., course content, critical thinking, problem solving). These beliefs, actions, and goals may be interdependent and may
construct experiences of teaching and influence faculty members’ definitions of good teaching.

**Beliefs about teachers and their influence on pedagogy.** Another category of assumptions that faculty members may have that might influence their teaching style relates to how they view their role as a teacher. Common assumptions of the role of a teacher can include their goals as instructors and what they believe are their responsibilities.

Herron and her colleagues (2006) sought to identify the reasons that faculty selected particular instructional methods. In their qualitative research study, Herron et al. used semi-structured interviews to explore the teaching methods of female faculty members in an educational leadership program (it is important to note that although this study examined female faculty, the researchers did not compare the data to male faculty so conclusions may not be limited to only female faculty). Besides identifying what strategies the instructors employed, researchers were also interested in the reasons for the pedagogical decisions regarding methods of teaching. After inductive analysis of the interviews from the seven female participants, researchers identified five themes that influenced their choice in teaching methods: (a) perceived role of faculty members, (b) perceived role of students, (c) effective ways to enhance student learning, (d) the assessment of students, and (e) the effect of prior educational experiences and instructional preparation. Findings indicated that two themes were directly related to faculty members’ beliefs (role of faculty member and the role of students). Although each research finding from the Herron et al. study is noteworthy, for the purposes of this
section only the beliefs regarding the role of the faculty member were explored. The data related to the perceived role of students are explored later in this review of literature.

In response to the interview questions regarding the role and purpose of the professor in the teaching environment, researchers (Herron et al., 2006) identified that one influence in the pedagogical decision making of their participants was how they collectively defined their role as the instructor of the class. For example, the researchers noted that the participants (educational leadership teachers) believed their goal as an instructor was to empower their students. This was reflected in teaching methods that provided students with opportunities to critically reflect upon and question the beliefs and opinions of the instructors, in order to “embrace their own truth and reality” (p. 78).

In addition, Herron et al. (2006) described their female participants as believing that teachers had the responsibility to plan and design effective learning environments. In order to do this, researchers noted that the teachers took time for planning and preparation of their courses but also allowed for flexibility in the structure of the class. This flexibility allowed the teachers to switch teaching strategies mid class if students were leading the instructors in different directions than originally planned. Furthermore, researchers reported that their participants had a common excitement about teaching and most reported that they looked forward to learning and experienced enthusiasm while preparing for classes.

Additional beliefs regarding the role of the teacher that may be linked to particular methods include the belief that instructors have the responsibility to impart information to students (Ginsberg, 2007; Kember & Gow, 1994). The common methods
used among teachers that expressed this belief were the facilitation of lectures and use of media (e.g., PowerPoint, transparencies) and less interaction with students by use of class discussions. An additional assumption was that professors must be knowledgeable and have mastery over course material (Kember & Gow, 1994).

In a study, which sought to identify how exemplary college teachers described their pedagogical beliefs about effective teaching strategies and the extent to which participants used these strategies, Hativa and colleagues (2001) conducted a qualitative investigation in which they identified four exemplary teachers as participants. The researchers sought answers to three research questions: (a) “What are participants’ beliefs and general pedagogical knowledge about effective teaching?” (b) “What effective teaching strategies do the teachers use?” and (c) “What are the relationships between the beliefs and knowledge about effective teaching and their actual use of these strategies?” (p. 704). Participants who rated high on teaching evaluations of large undergraduate courses were selected, and researchers used a series of methods to collect data, including teacher interviews, student interviews, videotaped classroom observations, a questionnaire on effective teaching, and examining course handouts that were distributed to students by the teachers.

One dimension that Hativa and colleagues (2001) identified as they explored their first research question of identifying teachers’ beliefs about effective teaching was that participants believed they had a responsibility to motivate students to learn. One way participants reported achieving their goal to motivate students was by increasing student curiosity and making material interesting. One participant described his belief that as a
teacher he must choose material that is interesting to students and that will keep them engaged in the process of learning. In order to do this, he utilized a variety of teaching methods such as showing videos and movies during class, sharing entertaining stories that were relevant to the subject, and using humor. Another teacher believed that she must keep students interested in the topic by giving them opportunities and lessons in the classroom that they could not learn on their own by reading material on the subject. To achieve this she described integrating other texts or cross-disciplinary information to supplement her lectures.

Similarly, participants in the Kember and Gow (1994) study who used the learning facilitation teaching orientation believed that teachers are motivators of learning. They shared their belief that teachers must do things in the classroom to excite students, and provide them with opportunities to enhance their learning if they were struggling. This belief was evidenced by participants expressing their enthusiasm for their discipline while they conducted class and giving the message that all students will be able to grasp the concepts of the course. These participants mentioned the importance of finding opportunities to give guidance and direction to students. In addition, these professors believed they must have a “pastoral interest” (pp. 62-63), and showed this to students by taking time during class presentations to ask students if they were understanding concepts, and then reviewing specific material if students reported difficulty in understanding the concepts. This idea of taking time to review important course material during a lecture and to assess if students understand concepts was exhibited by effective college teachers (Bain, 2004). Being a motivator of students included encouraging them,
especially if they are struggling, and avoiding judgmental comments that might intimidate students or encourage competition.

The aforementioned ideas of motivating students by making course content interesting, showing care and concern for students, helping them when they are struggling, and avoiding judgment begins to speak to classroom climate. An additional dimension that was identified when considering teachers’ beliefs about effective teaching was the teachers’ roles in creating a positive classroom environment (Hativa et al., 2001). One participant believed in creating a friendly atmosphere and expressed this in her classroom by acknowledging her students’ feelings and providing opportunities for extra help to students who were struggling. A second participant believed that he must have an attitude toward his students that shows patience and sincere care for them, which he exhibited by interacting with students in and out of class, and by attempting to prevent feelings of competition among students in the classroom.

Classroom climate is an important aspect of teaching, of which instructors should be aware (Weimer, 2002). Classroom climate includes the relationships between the instructor and students and the relationship the students have with each other. The components of classroom climate include: (a) interactions between students and teachers and the care teachers show for students, (b) students’ participation in classroom learning and activities, (c) students’ friendliness with one another, (d) students’ enjoyment of the class and subject, (e) the clarity of class activities, (f) the variety of teaching methods employed by the instructor, (g) the degree to which students have input over their learning and how they are treated individually based on their needs, (h) level of hostility
and competition, and (i) academic rigor (Fraser, Treagust, & Dennis, 1986; Weimer, 2002; Winston, Vahala, Nichols, Gillis, Wintrow, & Rome, 1994). Because overall student learning and achievement are associated with classroom climate (Fraser et al., 1986; Lichtenstein, 2005; Winston et al., 1994), teachers may believe that they have a responsibility to create a climate that is conducive to learning.

Another belief that teachers might have is that they are role models for students (Weimer, 2002). Instructors who believe this might talk about their own process of learning, or talk about what has been helpful to them when learning about new things. In addition, they might talk students through the problem-solving process when confronting a dilemma in class or share with students their own inner dialogue of how they approach new ideas (Weimer, 2002).

A belief that may coincide well with teachers disclosing their own process of learning or difficulties in learning to students is the belief that teachers do not have to be experts or hold all of the power in the classroom (Weimer, 2002). This can lead to teachers’ feeling comfortable in sharing their experiences as learners (e.g., admitting that they, too, struggled to grasp information when they began studying), which is a sign of an effective teacher (Bain, 2004). Another indication of sharing the power with students is that teachers will not be defensive if they are questioned or challenged in class. In addition, allowing students to have some power in the classroom as evidenced by allowing them some input into assignments and offering them opportunities to share their own experiences and knowledge can improve the classroom climate and learning outcomes (Fraser et al., 1986; Winston et al., 1994).
This subsection, which illustrated potential beliefs of teachers, served to illustrate some of the beliefs that professors might have regarding their duties as teachers and how these beliefs might be reflected through their interactions with students. In addition, there are indications that beliefs faculty members have about their role in teaching might influence how they incorporate techniques into their classroom and how they reason through their pedagogical decisions.

**Beliefs about students and their influence on pedagogy.** Instructors’ beliefs regarding students may also influence teaching styles and methods. Beliefs about students can include what instructors expect from their students, their goals for students, and their perceptions about students’ personalities and desires.

Perhaps the most explicit notion of how some professors view students can be found in Ginsberg’s (2007) study. Ginsberg noted that professors who exhibited effective communication with their students as evidenced by having clarity in content and immediacy (e.g., head nods, humor, self-disclosure, enthusiasm, smiles) held humanistic views of students, meaning that they had positive regard for students and believed that they were capable of success. Each participant in her qualitative study, of which she deemed as having effective communication, expressed genuine caring for students and spoke highly of them as people and as learners. One way these participants exhibited caring for students was by making themselves available before, during, and after class, in order to help them if they were struggling and to connect with them on personal levels. Kuh and Hu (2001) noted that the interactions between students and faculty members are most often after class and are usually about course material. In general, interactions are
most helpful when the topics of discussion are related to course work. Clark, Walker, and Keith (2002) also determined that out of class conversations are helpful for students, particularly with their affective learning (e.g., feelings about education, personal investment into course material).

Professors who value their students and believe they are capable of learning also attempted to have a reciprocal learning relationship with them (Ginsberg, 2007). This is evidenced by their desire to hear students’ ideas during class. Ginsberg noted that each of the participants that shared the previously mentioned belief spoke highly of their students and were optimistic about their learning. Further, these participants described their patience with students, their methods of reviewing material if something was misunderstood by students, and providing extra help to students.

Bain (2004) also indicated that effective college teachers hold a humanistic view of students. Effective teachers share the perspective that students are capable of learning, growing, and changing (Bain, 2004). This trust in their learning leads effective teachers to discover their students’ various learning styles in an effort to incorporate multiple activities and assignments so that all students can succeed.

Lucas and Murry (2002) briefly summarized typical learning styles that professors should consider when attempting to structure their courses in an effort to reach all students. They identified the following learning styles: (a) auditory (learning by listening), (b) visual (seeing something to understand and learn), (c) tactile or kinesthetic (learning by doing), (d) inductive learners (begin with facts and infer principles), (e) deductive learners (begin with generalizations and deduce practical implications), (f)
sequential (process facts in a linear fashion), (g) global (identifying chunks of information and making larger connections), (h) reflective learners (those who prefer to work alone), (i) active learners (those who process information while talking and therefore work better in groups), (j) sensing types (prefer learning hard facts and need concrete examples), (k) intuitive types (have creativity and prefer discussion based learning), (l) thinking types (prefer objectivity and analysis), and (m) feeling types (prefer learning by connecting information to human interest and values).

By being aware of the various ways people learn and by acknowledging that all students are capable of learning, effective teachers attempt to diversify their teaching methods (Bain, 2004). For example, while giving lectures effective teachers might supplement their information with pictures and graphs for visual learners or break down information one piece at a time for sequential learners. While creating course assignments they might offer two options to students, one in which the reflective learners can work individually and one in which the active learners can work in a pair or small group.

Another belief about students that Ginsberg (2007) noted in her study was that the professors who lacked effective communication during class viewed their students as unmotivated learners who simply wanted to be entertained during class more than they wanted to learn. They shared that they did not believe their students were motivated to expand their knowledge. Ginsberg noted that these professors did not facilitate interactions with students, and most often became frustrated while lecturing because students did not appear interested.
Effective faculty members might also have the belief that students want to be entertained, however, they use it to their advantage when teaching (Bain, 2004). Good teachers might note that to entertain is an effective way to captivate students during a lecture. Effective professors have learned to incorporate various techniques in their lectures in order to keep students engaged. They think of their lectures as a conversation rather than a presentation, they begin with a provocative question, they use warm language that is rich and descriptive, they incorporate anecdotes, and they provide multiple perspectives to students (Bain, 2004).

An additional belief about students found in the literature comes from Herron et al. (2006). In their study of pedagogical decision-making, participants reported a common belief that students must be responsible for their own learning. Faculty described the importance of allowing students to show some knowledge in the classroom by encouraging them to share their ideas in class and offer multiple perspectives. By encouraging students to participate in class and offer ideas to one another, teachers give the message to students that their voices should be heard and that they are trusted to teach one another.

In order for students to teach one another, they must be encouraged, and feel safe to participate in class. Effective faculty members encourage class dialogue by treating all students with respect each time they speak (Lucas & Murry, 2002). Bain (2004) noted that creating small discussion groups so that students get used to one another is helpful in eventually getting students to participate in a larger group. Another idea for increasing student participation during class is engaging students in experiential activities, in which
they are active during class (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006). All of these strategies are contingent on faculty members creating a classroom climate, in which students are respectful and kind to one another (Weimer, 2002).

This subsection illustrated various beliefs faculty members may have regarding students. General beliefs about students can influence how professors interact with students, the activities they choose to use during classes, and how they treat students.

This section of the literature, Educational Assumptions and Teaching, reviewed qualitative research, which implied that professors have and can employ methods and techniques of teaching, as well as ways of interacting with students, that are congruent with their beliefs. These beliefs can include their assumptions about successful teaching, how they view their role as an instructor, and their beliefs about students. In addition, these beliefs may influence teachers’ decisions regarding classroom techniques and interactions with students, and may ultimately shape their perceptions of what they perceive as good teaching.

Identification and Change of Beliefs About Teaching

As previously noted, there is evidence to suggest that educational beliefs may influence the methodological practices of faculty members (Ginsberg, 2007; Hativa et al., 2001; Herron et al., 2006; Kember & Gow, 1994). The relationships between beliefs and methods may influence faculty members’ experiences regarding teaching. The educational beliefs that faculty members possess may include beliefs regarding the following three topics: (a) beliefs about teaching, (b) beliefs about teachers, and (c)
beliefs about students. The following section describes how teaching beliefs can be identified and how they evolve over time.

**Identifying beliefs about teaching.** Although beliefs may impact how professors present in their college classrooms, they may exist outside of their awareness (Louie, Drevdahl, Purdy, & Stackman, 2003). It has been suggested that when faculty members become more aware of their educational assumptions they will improve their teaching and be more comfortable in the classroom (Ginsberg, 2007; Palmer, 2007; Pike et al., 1997). Hativa and her colleagues (2001) recommended that future faculty members consider their beliefs concerning the educational process so as to choose teaching strategies that are congruent with their personalities and beliefs. In order for faculty members to connect themselves with their beliefs about teaching the following recommendations have been made in the literature: self-reflection, considering past role models and mentors, and entering into pedagogical discourse.

**Self-reflection.** In order for faculty members to connect with their educational assumptions, personal reflections on their experiences of teaching and the process of student learning may be helpful (Pike et al., 1997; Pratt, 2005). A number of topics that teachers can reflect on have been identified. Considering the goals that teachers have for students is one topic of reflection when identifying assumptions of education (Ellis & Griffin, 2000; King, 2003; Pike et al., 1997).

For example, Herron et al. (2006) noted that all of the females in their study had the common goal for students to be empowered in the classroom. This goal was reflected in their commonly reported teaching method of creating thoughtful and reflective
discussions of course content. The female faculty also reported that they wanted students to take responsibility for their knowledge acquisition, and reported using activities that enhanced students opportunities to question material, research their own ideas, and engage in critical thinking and problem solving.

Herron et al. (2006) suggested the importance of reflection on the role of instructors and of students. In considering their purpose in the classroom, it might guide a teacher to favor particular teaching styles. An example comes from Ginsberg’s (2007) qualitative study, which examined the commonalities of faculty that exhibit effective communication skills versus faculty that exhibit ineffective communication skills. Some participants in this study noted that they believed their role as instructors was to impart knowledge to students. The teaching style they had in common was to use a rigid lecture, in which they allowed little opportunity for student input.

**Considering previous role models and mentors.** It has also been suggested that teachers consider how their role models and mentors have influenced their ideas about teaching and learning (King, 2003; Palmer, 2007; Pike, 1997). By considering how mentors have influenced them, teachers can consider what educational perceptions they have that are similar or dissimilar to their mentor’s ideas. Further, in examining the mentorship they received, teachers can determine what qualities their mentors had that they appreciated or found helpful. Teachers can then identify ways that they either possess the same qualities or recognize times in their own teaching in which they are replicating these treasured qualities (King, 2003).
Engaging in pedagogical discourse. An additional recommendation for identifying one’s beliefs about teaching found in the literature is to engage in “pedagogical discourses” about education that go beyond talking about technique (Palmer, 2007). Palmer’s description of “pedagogical discourses” includes finding a community of teachers with whom to discuss how they create their learning environments for students, their gifts and limitations, and experiences that have shaped their teaching identities. Palmer shared that as teachers listen to one another and share personal insights, they are encouraged to reflect on their own values of teaching.

Collaborating with other teachers by talking about educational practices is also noted as being helpful elsewhere in the literature (Herron et al., 2006; Inch & McVarish, 2003; Pike et al., 1997). When teachers converse with one another, they have opportunities to voice their understanding about teaching and challenge each other’s thinking. This may create reflective space to consider the origins of one’s teaching assumptions, expand notions, and possibly integrate new ideas and perspectives.

Evolution of beliefs and change in teaching. It is important to note that beliefs about teaching do not remain stagnant and unchanged. The beliefs that teachers possess regarding teaching develop over time (King, 2003; Pike et al., 1997) and there is evidence to suggest that these changes result in the utilization of different teaching methods. These changes can be related to learning new methods, collaborating with other teachers, and a change in the working environment.

Ginsberg (2007) noted that a faculty member in her study changed his perceptions of education after learning about an educational theory that was new to him. The
participant remarked that after he became more aware of constructivist teaching, he shifted from lecturing to allowing his students to explore material through discussion, projects, and small group work in order to make meaning of their own educational experience. In his interview with the researcher he shared that this behavioral change was indicative of his change in belief.

Change in educational beliefs has also occurred through peer mentorship. In his co-authored article, Inch identified that the beliefs he held about students and the process of teaching, which he had for 8 years, were altered after engaging in a professional relationship with a colleague (Inch & McVarish, 2003). He attributed this change in his beliefs to her presenting him with new ideas, which encouraged him to re-consider his own teaching. After he reflected on ideas and allowed himself to become more excited about his teaching, he experienced change in the way he approached his students and presented material by providing more demonstrations during lessons and implementing small group activities in his mathematics courses.

A change in educational context and environment may also lead to modified beliefs and methods of teaching. Carusetta and Cranton (2005) researched the experiences of eight faculty members who moved from working in a traditional university to working in a collaborative environment in higher education. They determined that the faculty members all experienced an increased amount of authenticity in teaching by reconnecting with their educational values and becoming more aware of multiple perspectives of teaching. In addition, faculty members became receptive to changing their methods of teaching by learning new approaches to use in the classroom,
including problem-based teaching and team teaching. The participants of the study attributed their changes in thought and behavior to being in an environment in which teaching was valued by all faculty, there were multiple opportunities to reflect upon and discuss teaching practices, and there was support by co-workers for the participants to find and trust their genuineness in regards to teaching (e.g., matching their beliefs and pedagogical practice).

If beliefs about teaching are related to the pedagogical methods that faculty members use, it is logical to assume that when beliefs are altered, methods will change as a result. The purpose of this section was to highlight faculty transformations of educational beliefs and teaching methods. There is evidence to suggest that learning new theories and methods regarding teaching, peer mentorship, and spending time in new teaching contexts contribute to re-evaluation of beliefs and methods. These opportunities for reflection may result in new assumptions about education and altered methods of teaching.

This section described the various approaches to identifying the beliefs that may guide the teaching experiences of faculty members and illustrated how beliefs about teaching may change over time. This information is important to the current study of the counselor educators’ experiences of good teaching for four reasons. First, the information offers the idea that when teaching beliefs and teaching methods are related, faculty members may have better teaching experiences and may be more engaged in good teaching. Second, the literature implied that considering the educational beliefs is important for faculty members so that they might gain insight into whether or not their
methods match their beliefs about teaching. Third, the ideas presented shed light on the usefulness of sharing reflections on teaching experiences, beliefs, and methods through conversation. Finally, it opens up possibility that multiple experiences may have led to the beliefs about teaching, and thus the experiences and definitions of good teaching as described by counselor educators.

**Additional Factors That May Influence Teaching Experiences**

In addition to teachers’ beliefs about teaching, there is evidence in the literature that suggests additional sources of influence on teaching practices. These influences include various experiences that individuals have had, such as: (a) past educational experiences as a student and experiences with previous role models and mentors and (b) experiences with student feedback and student reactions to teaching methods. Each are discussed throughout this current section.

**Prior educational experiences.** Past experiences in their own education and preparation can influence the methods teachers use and the ways in which they interact with students (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Barnes, Bull, Campbell, & Perry, 2001; Braxton & Nordvall, 1988; Duncan & Precians, 1992; Lucas & Murry, 2002). Teachers who experienced particular methods while they were students may choose to adopt the strategies they believed to be effective and avoid using the teaching methods they found ineffective (Herron et al., 2006).

In their qualitative research study that sought to identify the factors that influenced pedagogical decision making, Herron et al. (2006) identified that prior educational experiences impacted the teaching decisions of faculty members.
Researchers explained that participants in their study reported that they attempted to replicate particular instructional methods that they perceived to be helpful when they were students. This suggested that teachers may choose methods based on what their perceptions of good and bad teaching are, per their own experiences as students.

Professors who have taken on the same educational practices as their former instructors or mentors may have done so without critical examination (Barnes et al., 2001). Palmer (2007) noted that if teachers imitate their mentors’ practices of teaching without considering whether these practices are an authentic fit for themselves, they may struggle or feel ineffective as teachers. For example, if an instructor who is uncomfortable being the center of attention continually lectures, because his favorite professor in college did so effectively, he may not feel as effective or happy when teaching. Another example might be of an instructor who becomes increasingly frustrated after allowing his students to participate in discussion, yet consistently leads discussions in class simply because it was a method his mentor often employed.

It has been suggested that faculty members consider how their prior educational experiences, former teachers, role models, and/or mentors have influenced their ideas about teaching and learning (King, 2003; Palmer, 2007; Pike et al., 1997). By considering how they have been influenced, teachers can consider what educational perceptions they have that are similar or dissimilar to their mentors’ ideas. Further, in examining the mentorship they received, faculty members can determine what qualities their mentors had that they appreciated or found helpful. They can then identify ways
that they either possess the same qualities or recognize times in their own teaching in which they are replicating these treasured qualities (King, 2003).

**Student feedback.** Professors have the opportunity to receive feedback from their students on what students perceive as helpful or unhelpful throughout the class experience. Student evaluations on teaching can be done formally or informally and are most helpful if instructors specify what information is sought from students (Pregent, 2000) and if they are received throughout the semester regarding specific topics (Centra, 1993). In addition, student evaluations can be helpful in making improvements and changes in teaching styles if the teacher values the opinions of students, is motivated to make necessary changes in teaching, if the feedback is specific, and if the teacher learns things from the students of which he or she was not already aware (Centra, 1993).

In qualitative studies, faculty members have reported that their teaching methods and styles have evolved, and are influenced, by their experiences with receiving student feedback. For example, Ginsberg (2007) noted that faculty members may change the way they present material to students or alter classroom activities based on feedback from students on what was and was not helpful for their learning. McKeachie and Svinicki (2006) noted that quantitatively assessing student performance through their grades is helpful in determining what teaching methods are effective. When students appear to do poorly, teachers might benefit from assessing how they could have used different methods to present material (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006).

When considering formal evaluations that are most typically conducted at the end of each semester, teachers should note that the information gained from students is not
necessarily reflective of the teachers’ ability to effectively teach. Many variables must be considered when reviewing student evaluations of professors. Research on student evaluations has supported that teaching effectiveness, per student feedback on formal evaluations, is influenced by gender of both teachers and students (Chamberlin & Hickey, 2001), grades expected by students (Feldman, 1983), class size and classroom environment (Safer, Farmer, Segalla, & Elhoubi, 2005), teacher communication skills as perceived by students (Turhan, Yaris, & Nural, 2005), student attendance (Davidovitch & Soen, 2006), and instructor popularity (Atamian & Ganguli, 1993; Marsh, 1987).

Immediate student responses to particular methods are also influential in choosing teaching methods, or changing methods, in the classroom. In her case study of how one lecturer can move from being a teacher-focused instructor (e.g., lecturing with little interaction with students) to a student-focused instructor (e.g., engaging students through group work, activities, and discussion), Hockings (2005) noted that her participants continually reverted back to lecturing when students were not attending class or were unprepared. This observation might suggest that students’ reactions and performance in the classroom may influence how teachers choose to present material to students based on their preparedness, student motivation, and participation in class. This might suggest that teachers respond to their students by altering their original teaching plans in reaction to how students respond to particular methods.

**Summary of Chapter 1**

This chapter served to introduce the current research study that examined tenured counselor educators’ experiences of good teaching. The information included in this
chapter provided a rationale for why it was useful to examine teaching in counselor education. For example, excellence in teaching is supported by CACREP (2009). Also, for most counselor educators, teaching is a large component of the overall job responsibility (Davis et al., 2006). Finally, teaching is an ultimate professional goal of many counselor education graduates (Poidevant et al., 1991; Zimpfer, 1996; Zimpfer & DeTrude, 1990).

In addition, relevant literature regarding experiences of teaching in higher education was reviewed in order to provide background information on this research topic. Specifically literature suggested that many experiences of teaching, including methods of teaching and ways to interact with students, are associated with beliefs about teaching and many of these beliefs were found among faculty members (e.g., Ginsberg, 2007, Gow & Kember, 1993; Hativa et al., 2001; Herron et al., 2006; Kember & Gow, 1994; Pratt, 1993). Other impacts on teaching, such as previous educational experiences, student feedback and evaluations, and faculty relationships and conversations with peers were also reviewed.

This review of literature not only provided a context for the current research study, but it also provided a justification of the sub interests in the study. The purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs and experiences of good teaching in counselor education as reported by faculty. The guiding research question was “What are exemplary counselor educators’ reported experiences during their own self-perceived good teaching moments?” The goal of the study was to capture the essence of good teaching as reported by the participants when they considered their own self-perceived
moments of good teaching. For the purpose of this study, the essence of good teaching included the beliefs participants held regarding their self-perceived good teaching moments and the teaching methods employed during moments of good teaching. Finally, this study served to inform the greater community of counselor educators about the experiences exemplary counselor educators have of good teaching in an effort to contribute to the dialogue of teaching practices in counselor education, the training of doctoral students in CES, and future research on teaching.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter summarized the importance of teaching in counselor education, as well as reviewed literature in higher education that pointed to faculty members’ beliefs regarding teaching and how these beliefs may be linked to the pedagogical methods they employ. The overall findings from literature regarding teaching beliefs and teaching methods indicated that beliefs about teaching and learning may be an important aspect of how faculty members may experience and describe good teaching. The purpose of this research was to examine the experiences of good teaching moments as reported by exemplary faculty members who are tenured in counselor education in order to ascertain (a) the beliefs the participants held about their self-perceived good teaching and (b) the methods of teaching used by participants. The guiding research question was: “What are exemplary counselor educators’ reported classroom experiences during their own self-perceived good teaching moments?” A qualitative phenomenological research design was deemed most appropriate to explore this research question.

Phenomenological Research

Qualitative research is a holistic process, in which researchers seek to more fully understand a particular issue or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). It is inductive in nature in that the analysis of qualitative data attempts to identify patterns and themes in order to gain a more complex awareness of the topic being studied (Creswell, 2007). Various options for methodological designs fall under the umbrella of qualitative research, such
as case study, ethnography, narrative inquiry, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Patton, 2002). A phenomenological qualitative design was chosen for this research study.

The goal of phenomenological research is to capture the essence of the lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Moustakas (1994) suggested that in order for researchers to arrive at the essence of experiences they must examine all aspects of a phenomenon, find meanings of experiences through participant reflection on the phenomenon, and focus on descriptions of experiences rather than explanations or analyses. An assumption of the phenomenological framework in qualitative research is that there is an essence of shared experiences among individuals (Patton, 2002; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Consequently, the goal of the researcher is to gain a thorough understanding of a phenomenon in an effort to explain the essence of an experience. In addition, the focus of phenomenological investigations is to examine the structure and description of an experience rather than the characteristics of the participants (Polkinghorne, 1989). The structure of an experience is the underlying assumptions and themes that account for a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The description of a phenomenon, sometimes referred to as the texture, includes the concrete actions, feelings, and thoughts about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The grounds for using a phenomenological research method in this investigation were twofold. First, the phenomenological approach is constructivist in nature and presumes there may be commonalities in how and why participants experience a phenomenon; however it also allows for all voices to be shared so that “multiple realities”
can exist simultaneously (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). It does not disqualify particular aspects of
the phenomenon as being “untrue.” The goal of this research on teaching is to highlight
the voices of all participants and to acknowledge all of their beliefs and experiences about
the phenomenon, and thus identify aspects of the essence of good teaching in counselor
education.

The second quality that deems phenomenology as the most appropriate method
for this study is its emphasis on underlying beliefs and themes that account for a
phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) called this the structure of an experience. This research
seeks to examine the underlying beliefs teachers possess that draw them to make
pedagogical decisions that create moments of good teaching. The examination of the
underlying forces that cause participants to experience the phenomenon in the way that
they do will be a main focus and is built into the data analysis of phenomenological
studies (Moustakas, 1994).

Besides literature that describes ideas about teaching and methods counselor
educators use with students (e.g., Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2001; Granello, 2000; Granello
& Hazler, 1998; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2000, 2002; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998), literature
that examined experiences of teaching as described by counseling faculty members is
limited. This research study sought to fill that gap by providing information on what
exemplary counselor educators believe about teaching and how these beliefs influence
their methods of teaching. There was an assumption of the researcher that all participants
would have experiences that would contribute to a common essence of good teaching in
counselor education. As the aim of the current study reflected the goals of
phenomenological research, a phenomenological research design was deemed as the most appropriate means to study teaching experiences in counselor education.

**Description of the Researcher**

The idea that all researchers have presuppositions relevant to the data is especially important in the process of phenomenological investigations. Moustakas (1994) wrote that the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon or experience in question is consistently present in the research process. He described the concept of *epoché*, which means, “to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (p. 33). Epoché is a necessary step in phenomenological research, and can be accomplished through bracketing. By bracketing, researchers are able to reflect upon their own experiences and assumptions regarding the research topic in an effort to become more aware of biases that can potentially influence the research process (Creswell, 2007).

To become more aware of biases that could influence the research process, it was essential that the researcher of the current study engage in the process of bracketing her experiences and assumptions regarding the phenomenon of good teaching. In the next section the researcher describes her experiences with teaching. This is followed by a list of assumptions that she has generated regarding good teaching, through first-hand experiences, as well as through reading in preparation for this study.

The phenomenological research question is important in that it is not simply a question of investigation, but rather it is “‘lived’ by the researcher” (van Manen, 1990, p. 44). This appears to imply that the researcher must have an investment in the
phenomenon studied. The researcher exhibited this investment in this study of teaching through her professional goals and motivations. At the time of the study, the researcher, a Caucasian female, was a licensed professional counselor in Ohio, and a doctoral candidate in Counseling and Human Development Services at Kent State University. Her area of study was Counselor Education and Supervision (CES), and the researcher’s career goal was to find a faculty position in a counselor education program; and thus be a professor of counseling. One motivation that drew her to seek a doctoral degree in CES was to learn how to be an effective teacher of counseling and help prepare graduate students to become competent counselors. Her desire to learn more about teaching was not only personally motivated, but also communally motivated through her intent to share the participants’ experiences of good teaching with their colleagues in CES, in an effort to shed more light and attention on aspects of teaching in counselor education. The researcher held the assumption that counselor educators can learn and benefit from faculty members who were identified as good teachers.

It was important that the researcher reflect upon her own educational experiences in order to bracket her assumptions about good teaching. The researcher’s experience as a teacher was minimal; she had been the instructor of record in only three graduate level counseling courses at two universities (Kent State University and Youngstown State University). The researcher had experiences co-teaching four graduate level counseling courses with four different counseling faculty members. She thought these experiences helped shape some of her beliefs about good teaching, as well as her goals for becoming a successful professor of counseling. The researcher also thought that her experiences as
a student had been influential in shaping her beliefs about good teaching. She had been a student at three universities and completed two degrees in higher education (B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies and M.A. in Counseling), as well as completing all necessary course requirements in her current doctoral program. The researcher also completed an extensive literature review regarding teaching in higher education in preparation for this research study, which she assumed influenced her thoughts on teaching.

The following is a list of assumptions regarding good teaching that the researcher identified through her experiences with teaching, being a student, and reading literature about teaching:

1. There are common descriptions of good teaching among exemplary counselor educators that will ultimately lead to building a description of good teaching.
2. All CACREP accredited counselor education programs will have at least one exemplary teacher who could be identified by the program coordinator/director/chair.
3. Exemplary teachers will have shared beliefs about good teaching that will include their goals for students, intentions for pedagogical techniques, and their views of themselves as teachers. These beliefs about good teaching may ultimately shape their experiences of good teaching.
4. Good teaching requires thoughtfulness and intentionality on the part of a faculty member.
5. Consistent good teaching is the result of years of experience, challenges, and changes in conceptualizing teaching on the part of faculty members.

6. Good teaching might be described through a teacher’s classroom methods and behaviors while in class, as well as by the teacher’s interactions with students outside of class (e.g., meeting with students during office hours, exhibiting professionalism, inviting students to collaborate on professional projects).

7. Good teaching results in students grasping insights through a combination of memorization and thoughtful reflection.

8. Good teaching is a result of professors using a combination of pedagogical methods (e.g., lectures, discussions, active learning, creating individual assignments and group work) to address multiple styles of learning and needs of students.

9. Showing care and concern for students is a component of good teaching.

**Sampling Procedures and Participants**

Purposeful sampling is typically used in phenomenological research because it is necessary to find participants who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007). This type of sampling allows researchers to choose participants who are able to provide an in depth understanding of the issue being studied. In phenomenological studies, the aim is to select informants who can offer varied descriptions of a phenomenon, in an effort to obtain a rich description of an experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). Throughout literature, the number of participants in phenomenological studies has varied greatly, for example, between 1 and 325.
participants (Creswell, 2007). Starks and Trinidad (2007) recommended that an optimal number of participants is 1 to 10. In this study six participants were used as informants. After six participants, saturation of data occurred as indicated when no new information regarding the phenomenon was revealed.

Purposeful sampling was used to identify participants. The program coordinators/directors/chairs of CES programs informed the researcher of potential participants who met the following inclusion criteria: (a) earned a doctoral degree from a counselor education program, (b) held a tenured position in a CACREP accredited counselor education program, (c) taught counseling content-based courses (e.g., theory, diagnosis, life span development) within the last academic year, (d) were recognized by the program coordinator/chair/director as an exemplary teacher, (e) were available to participate in at least two interviews within one month and were willing to complete member checks of transcripts.

The first item for inclusion in this study was that participants held a counselor education doctoral degree. One goal of counselor education programs is to train students to become professors of counseling, therefore it is assumed that counselor educators from these programs had training through course work and experience to be effective teachers of counseling. Most tenured faculty members have minimally 6 years of experience and have been evaluated and promoted based on their accomplishments in scholarship and teaching. Holding a tenured position at a senior level (e.g., associate professor or full professor) was chosen as inclusion criteria because of the researcher’s assumption that consistently engaging in good teaching is a process that evolves over time. In addition, it
was presumed that his or her evaluation of teaching was thought to be sufficient at the time of tenure. CACREP accredited programs are assessed and recognized by counselor educators as having educational excellence in counseling (CACREP, 2009). To maintain consistency across participants only faculty members who held positions in CACREP accredited counseling programs with a CES doctoral program were selected for this study. In counselor education there are clinical courses (e.g., practicum and internship) and counseling content-based courses (e.g., counseling theory, lifespan, substance abuse, diagnosis). A criterion for inclusion was that participants engaged in teaching non-clinical courses (e.g., within the last year). Content courses, rather than clinical courses, were chosen as the focus of interest as to not contaminate experiences of teaching with experiences of supervision, a task in which faculty members engage when teaching clinical courses. As there was no formal recognition for excellence in teaching in CES, the researcher relied on program coordinators/chairs/directors to identify colleagues who they thought provided exemplary teaching and would offer reflective discussion about their teaching practices. Finally, participants had to be willing and able to participate in at least two interviews.

Upon receiving approval from the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), the researcher contacted the program coordinators/chairs/directors of 49 CACREP accredited doctoral programs to recruit participants for this phenomenological study. First contact was made through an email (Appendix B), which requested that they: “Please identify one or two tenured faculty member in your program that you believe to be an exemplary teacher, who you believe excels in teaching, and will
be able to articulately and reflectively discuss his or her teaching.” The researcher made
phone calls to those email recipients who did not respond to the email after
approximately one week. Out of the 49 programs contacted, 34 program coordinators/
chairs/directors did not respond to the researcher’s request; two program coordinators/
chairs/directors reported that no faculty member met the inclusion criteria; and one
contact person reported discomfort in identifying faculty members in that way. From the
12 program coordinators/chairs/directors that responded, a pool of 18 potential
participants was created. The researcher drew names from the pool of potential
participants to inquire if he or she met the full inclusion criteria and was able to be an
informant for this study. This process of contacting program coordinators/
chairs/directors and potential participants was repeated until the final participants who
met the inclusion criteria were identified. Overall, five faculty members did not meet the
criteria of the study due to being an assistant professor or having a degree in something
other than CES and four declined participation. From the remaining nine teachers, six
agreed to participate before the remaining three needed to be contacted. Their names
were kept as reserves in the event that additional participants were needed.

No participants were forced to take part in this study, and participants signed
consent forms, of which they kept a copy for their own records. Although at the onset of
the study the researcher requested that participants be available for at least two
interviews, including the member check, participants were informed that they had the
right to withdraw from participation at any point in the study. Confidentiality was
important throughout the research process, and as a result data were kept secure and
participants’ names were not attached to transcripts while they were being analyzed and audited. Further, pseudonyms were used to organize data for each participant and are used throughout this text.

Data Collection

The researcher contacted the counselor educators recommended by CACREP accredited CES program coordinators/chairs/directors. The researcher called or emailed (Appendix C) each potential participant to introduce the study and determine if he or she met the inclusion criteria. The first six faculty members who met the inclusion criteria were selected for the study. The researcher reminded each participant of the goals of the research study, the interview procedures, and issues of confidentiality. Data collection consisted of four stages: (a) demographic information received by mail, (b) initial interview, (c) member check interview, and (d) final member check. Figure 1 illustrates the process of data collection, as well as data analysis (which is discussed later in this chapter).

All data collection interviews, including member checks, were completed by telephone. All interviews were digitally recorded. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and all documents were kept on computer files. To ensure confidentiality, each participant’s interview transcript was labeled with a pseudonym and, therefore, no real names were attached to any documents.

Demographic Information

Upon their agreement to participate in the study, participants were sent research and recording consent forms (Appendix D), as well as a demographic form (Appendix E).
Participant agreed to participate in study and met inclusion criteria. Researcher sent consent forms and arranged the first interview.

First interview completed by phone

Email textural-structural summary to participant in preparation for member check

Member Check Interview by phone

Email updated textural-structural summary to participant in preparation for 2nd member check

Second member check by phone for Susan
Second member check by email for Jenny, Ben, Glen

Transcribe interview

Identify meaning units and cluster into themes

Write textural-structural summary of the experience of good teaching

More data were revealed; update textural-structural summary for Susan, Jenny, Ben, and Glen

No additional data revealed; end data collection for Paul and Zoe

No more data revealed; end data collection for Susan, Jenny, Ben, and Glen

Figure 1. Illustration of the process of data collection and analysis.
to participants, which they were directed to return to the researcher. The demographic form included questions that helped inform the researcher about the participants (demographic data is presented in Chapter 3). Participants’ gender, age, and race were requested in order to be able to ascertain potential differences in interview responses during data analysis. Participants were also asked to identify their faculty rank, ensuring that participants had a senior position (e.g., associate or full professor). In addition, participants were asked to identify the number of years in which they have held a tenure track position. The participants were asked their years of experience as a teacher in counselor education because the researcher had an assumption that good teaching was a result of years of experience (see earlier text for researcher’s assumption related to years of experience). Lastly, participants had the opportunity to list any awards they had received for teaching. This information was helpful to the research process as it served to emphasize participants’ recognition as exemplary teachers.

Initial Interview

One week prior to the first interview, participants were emailed the following request: “Please reflect on times, as a counselor educator and in your own classroom, when you believe you were engaged in a moment of good teaching. Be prepared to talk about these experiences during our first interview.” This email (Appendix F) served the purpose of engaging the participants in consideration of times when they believed they were experiencing the phenomenon of good teaching, when they were the teacher. This request was also included in hard copy form when the consent and demographic packet was sent to participants. Van Manen (1990) noted that often individuals are unable to
fully describe an experience when they are currently engaged in the act, but rather identify such instances when they are being retrospective. Although the participants may have been engaging in good teaching at the time of the interviews, the researcher thought it would be helpful to ask participants to reflect on previous times when they were engaged in good teaching, even if they recalled times that were merely one week prior.

The initial interview was semi-structured and was used to obtain as much information as possible regarding the participants’ experiences of their good teaching. Moustakas (1994) pointed out that phenomenological data collection uses informal interviews that are conversational in nature. Knowing this, the researcher formulated a series of questions that were used to help explore the description of the participants’ experiences of good teaching; however she also used additional questions to further guide the conversation or seek clarification. The question to begin the initial interview was: “As a counselor educator, and in your own classroom, please describe your experiences of being engaged in the act of ‘good teaching’.”

The following questions were used with participants if the researcher deemed them appropriate (e.g., if the participant led the conversation in directions where they would become appropriate probes). These questions were created to encourage the participant to further consider his or her own self-perceived good teaching and to stimulate descriptive summaries of moments of good teaching. Furthermore, the questions were designed to steer the conversation to talking about underlying beliefs about good teaching. Literature suggested that teachers are often unaware of specific beliefs about teaching and may have difficulty in articulating them in a way that
represents their ideas (e.g., Louie et al., 2003; Pratt, 1993). As a result, for the first interview, the researcher did not specifically ask about beliefs and instead used the following questions to discuss topics that literature suggested might uncover latent beliefs about teaching (e.g., methods, outcomes, descriptions of how good teaching occurs).

1. What are common characteristics in experiences of your good teaching?

2. How did you know these times could be labeled as good teaching? How did you know these were characteristics of good teaching?

3. How did the experiences of your good teaching occur? What do you attribute them to?

4. Describe what you were thinking during times when you were engaged in good teaching. What were you feeling? What were you doing?

5. Tell me how your students reacted to your good teaching. What did you notice about them?

6. What was the outcome of your good teaching?

7. Is there anything else about the experiences of good teaching that you can share?

**Member Check**

The second interview, which served as a member check interview, took place after the researcher wrote a textural-structural summary of each participant’s experience of good teaching reported in the initial interview. This textural-structural summary is an exclusive aspect of phenomenological studies in which the participants’ behaviors, thoughts, and feelings related to the phenomenon are summarized (see Appendix I for an
example of this type of summary). The process used to write this summary is described further in the data analysis section of Chapter 2.

One week prior to the member check interview, the summary of the participant’s first interview was sent via email to each participant. Each participant was asked to read the summary before the interview. The member check interview served two purposes. First, it was used as an opportunity for participants to discuss their reactions to the textural-structural summary from their first interview and clarified any discrepancies. Second, it was used to initiate additional conversation about the participants’ experiences of good teaching based on the summary from the first interview.

During the interview, the researcher initiated a conversation about the summary of the participant’s experience of good teaching to determine if the researcher understood the participant’s experience of good teaching in the way that the participant meant for it to be understood. The researcher provided the opportunity for the participants to further clarify aspects of the experience and add more information regarding the experiences if necessary. The goal of this interview was twofold. First, the researcher sought confirmation that the beliefs ascertained from the first interview were associated with the participant’s experience of his or her own self-perceived teaching moments. Second, the interview was used to determine if saturation of data for each participant was reached. The following questions were asked of each participant:

1. Please give me your comments on the narrative from your first interview. What did you think or feel when you read this?
2. How well does it represent your experiences of good teaching? In what ways can it be improved?

3. Are there any parts of your experiences that have been left out? Please explain those missing aspects to me.

4. How does the underlined text (parts of the narrative that reflect the participants’ beliefs about teaching—see Data Analysis section for further explanation) fit with your beliefs about good teaching? Do these parts describe beliefs that you hold about good teaching? If not, how would you improve the statement; should it be removed because it does not reflect your experience of good teaching?

After transcribing the second interview, the researcher analyzed the transcript to determine if more data were revealed. If more information was uncovered of the participant’s experience of good teaching, the researcher made additions to the participant’s textural-structural summary and re-emailed the updated version to the participant. After the member check interview, four participants revealed additional data, thus requiring a second member check. Two participants revealed no additional data and stated that they did not want or need changes to their summary to make it more like their experience. These two participants did not require a second member check.

**Second Member Check**

The second member check served to review and verify the updated textural-structural description of the experience of good teaching for the four participants who provided additional information in the first member check interview. One participant’s
second member check was done by phone; this phone conversation lasted less than five minutes during which the participant reported that the summary was complete and therefore did not require a third member check. Due to the requests of the remaining participants, their second member check was done through email. The procedure for the second member check by email was as follows. The researcher emailed the summaries to the three participants who required the second member check by email. The email requested that the participants read the updated summary and email the researcher to identify whether (a) the updated structural-textural summary described his or her experience of good teaching, and thus it required no additional changes or (b) the summary required additional changes and therefore required a third interview. All three participants emailed the researcher stating that the summary was complete and therefore no one required a third member check.

**Saturation of Data**

Through the process of member checking it was evident that (a) saturation of data per each participant was achieved, and (b) saturation of data across participants was achieved. First, saturation of data for individual participants was achieved as evidenced by each participant reporting that the textural-narrative summary of good teaching was representative of his or her experience. In addition, saturation of data was achieved when participants reported that they had no more information to add to their experience of good teaching. For example, when asked if there was any part of the summary that was not faithful to her experience of good teaching, Zoe stated, “No, when I read through it I thought that it really well summarized how I feel about the teaching experience.” When
asked if there was anything that was left out of her experience of good teaching, Zoe responded, “No, I really didn’t notice anything. I really thought that it pretty much grasped it.” In response to similar questions, Paul remarked, “This sounds like me. I can’t think of anything that I would add.” After Susan read her updated summary, which included clarification from the first member check, she reported that there was nothing more for her to add. Jenny, Ben, and Glen indicated through email, after reading their updated summary from the first member check, that they had nothing to add with comments such as: “Looks great,” and “It all looks great, and I see no need to make any alterations.”

To determine if saturation of data across participants was occurring, data analysis was an ongoing process simultaneous to data collection. The data analysis process is summarized in Figure 1 and is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. After data were collected from each participant, the data were analyzed and sorted into emerging themes of experiences of good teaching per each participant. As themes emerged they were noted in the researcher journal, and envelopes for each emerging theme were kept. As participants’ data were analyzed, the data were considered in light of the emerging ideas and themes and either grouped similarly or separately as new themes emerged. By the time the sixth participant had been interviewed there was very little difference in what he contributed to the data from the previous five participants, indicating that saturation of data was occurring. Upon completion of data analysis and more thorough investigation of the data, it was evident that no new major ideas or contributions had emerged from the sixth participant.
Establishing Trustworthiness

Taking steps to establish trustworthiness is essential for qualitative research. It is imperative that research conclusions are “well-grounded and well-supported” so that there is dependability in the conclusions made from data (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 57). It is recommended that qualitative researchers use at least two measures throughout the research process to establish trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007). In this research study, five procedures to improve trustworthiness were used: (a) peer review, (b) member checks, (c) research journal, (d) thick descriptions of research findings, and (e) external audit.

Peer Review

The researcher elicited help from a peer reviewer throughout the data collection and analysis stages of research. The peer reviewer was not involved in the current research; however she was a member of the counselor education and supervision community. The peer reviewer is to be an outside member of the research process who externally reviews the methods and findings (Creswell, 2007). Peer reviewers (a) assist the researcher to assure that biases and assumptions do not dilute the research process, (b) engage the researcher in conversation regarding research findings to ensure that the researcher can provide evidence for conclusions, and (c) provide the researcher with opportunities to reflect on thoughts and feelings that may influence the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In order to accomplish the aforementioned purposes of having a peer reviewer, the following steps were taken. First, prior to data collection the peer reviewer and the
researcher conversed about the initial interview questions. The researcher interviewed the peer reviewer as a trial run to test the interview questions to determine if the questions led the peer reviewer in a pre-determined or biased direction. In addition, the researcher informed the peer reviewer of the process in choosing the interview questions. During this conversation the peer reviewer and researcher also shared ideas about moments of good teaching in an effort to bracket presuppositions. Bracketing is imperative in phenomenological studies in order to illuminate biases regarding the studied phenomenon in an effort to decrease the risk of the researcher’s beliefs contaminating data (Moustakas, 1994). Second, during the process of data analysis, the peer reviewer reviewed meaning units and emergent themes. Then the peer reviewer informally interviewed the researcher on how she arrived at naming emergent themes. This step assured that the researcher was able to defend choices and rationales for the themes found in the data and to demonstrate evidence and clear thinking when arriving at the study’s conclusions. In addition, the peer reviewer offered varying ideas and interpretations of the data.

**Researcher Journal**

The researcher kept a reflective journal to document feelings and thoughts throughout the research process. First, the journal was used to document feelings and thoughts during and after the interviews with each participants. Second, the researcher used the journal to document the steps and methods used in the data analysis. Third, the journal served as an immediate outlet for emerging ideas or emotions that arose during data analysis. The researcher also used the journal to track experiences during the research process, list ideas, and pose reflective questions as they arose.
The researcher’s journal benefited the process of data collection and analysis by providing a space for the researcher to sort initial thoughts and feelings as they were fresh in her mind. By documenting reactions and ideas, the researcher was able to look back through entries and be reminded of initial thoughts and assimilate them into emergent thoughts. The journal was a place to pose questions and keep ideas organized for further reflection as data were being analyzed. The journal was also a place to document the steps in analysis as the analysis became larger and more complex than originally planned. Through documentation, steps in analysis were further clarified and became a source of reference throughout the analysis.

**Member Checking**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that member checking “is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). The purpose of member checking is for the researcher and the participants to review the ideas put forth during the initial interview and co-construct the meaning of the phenomenon for the participant. After the initial interview, the researcher constructed a summary of the initial interview. This summary was comprised of the specific data units and was supplemented with the researcher’s ideas about how the participant experienced the phenomenon. Creswell (2007) stressed the importance of seeking the participants’ views on the initial research findings, therefore the member check was used to review the researcher’s summary of each participant’s first interview and offer an opportunity for the participant to respond. During the member check interview, conversation ensued about the participants’ thoughts of the summary and thoughts regarding the researcher’s interpretation of the data. In
addition, it offered a chance for the researcher to share ideas about how the participant experienced the phenomenon and allowed the participant to supplement the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon. The conversation led to a deeper discussion about the phenomenon of good teaching for the participant and additional data were revealed. Member checking was used twice in this research as a way for participants (a) to confirm or deny the researcher’s interpretation of interview content, (b) to further clarify descriptions and meaning of the phenomenon, and (c) to offer the participants the opportunity to share more information about the phenomenon that may have been omitted or neglected in the initial interview.

**Thick Descriptions**

Rich and thick descriptions of research findings enable readers to be drawn into the research so they can consider whether or not the conclusions can be transferable outside of the research context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Polkinghorne (1983) shared four ideas on how to increase trustworthiness when writing data results: (a) vividness creates a clearer picture of the experience to draw the reader in; (b) accuracy enhances the readers’ ability to recognize their own experiences with the phenomenon and makes the experiences believable; (c) richness “deepens the description” by using detailed language (p. 46); and (d) elegance suggests that the writing is clear and provides the essence of the phenomenon with “grace and poignancy” (p. 46). Chapter 3, which describes the results of the current study, illustrates the rich and thick descriptions that provide a sense of trustworthiness in the research findings.
**External Audit**

An external audit was used to increase the trustworthiness and dependability of this study. Audit procedures seek to confirm that the research procedures were used appropriately, the data were analyzed free of bias and with enough evidence to substantiate findings, and the research interpretations were justified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher chose an auditor who was identified as being familiar with the phenomenological research methods that the researcher employed in this study.

Upon completion of this study, the researcher provided the auditor with a notebook containing the following: a document outlining the step-by-step procedures of the study, interview transcripts, meaning units for each participant, clustered meaning units and themes for each participant, the textural-structural narrative for each participant, visual representations of each identified theme, and the research journal. The auditor was asked to review the documents and write a letter to address the trustworthiness of the research. See Appendix G for the audit letter.

**Data Analysis**

The ultimate goal of data analysis in a phenomenological study is for the researcher to reveal a description of the structure of a lived experience. The aim is to provide the audience with “the elements or constituents that are necessary for an experience to present itself as what it is” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 51). Data analysis uncovers the themes and common experiences first from the individual experiences of participants and ultimately the group of participants (Moustakas, 1994). Polkinghorne (1989) noted that there are many variations of phenomenological data analysis.
Moustakas (1994) described and modified two approaches: the van Kaam method and the
Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. In order to expose the experiences of good teaching as
reported by tenured counselor educators, the researcher used Moustakas’ modified
version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method: (a) identify meaning units and cluster the
meaning units into themes; (b) construct a textural-structural experience of the
phenomenon (a summary of the experience that describes the behaviors, thoughts, and
feelings of the phenomenon in juxtaposition to the underlying themes that create the
experience for the participant); (c) cross-analyze data across participants to identify the
themes that remained consistent across participants; and (d) construct a composite
textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of good teaching as described
by tenured counselor educators. Following is a description of the steps for data analysis
in this study. Figure 1 illustrates the process of data analysis and data collection, as it
was completed.

**Step 1: Identify Meaning Units and Clustering Themes**

In preparation for data analysis, the researcher transcribed each interview as soon
as possible after talking with participants. This immediate transcription was important so
that the material covered in the interview and the information received from the
participant was still memorable to the researcher and not diluted from another interview.
After transcribing, the researcher began the first step in data analysis: identifying
meaning units. To do this, the researcher read transcripts from one interview and
considered each statement to determine if it was relevant to a description of good
teaching. Each relevant statement was underlined in the transcript and then transferred to
a computer document for further analysis. The researcher then reviewed each statement that was extracted from the interview and judged them on three standards: (a) Is the statement relevant to understanding the experience of good teaching? (b) Could the statement be labeled and ultimately grouped with other statements? (c) Is the statement repetitive or does it overlap with other statements? (Moustakas, 1994). Provided the statements met the first two standards it was kept and labeled as a meaning unit. All other statements were discarded. The meaning units were not altered by the researcher in any way and remained in the participants’ verbatim wording. See Appendix H for a sample list of meaning units for one participant.

After meaning units were identified, the researcher printed the document and cut each meaning unit into strips. Once meaning units were cut and separated from one another, the researcher read and considered each one and began to cluster similar ones together by reading each one and grouping the strips of meaning units together. This process was done multiple times until the researcher felt satisfied that all meaning units were grouped by emerging themes. The researcher kept track of the emerging themes by keeping notes in the research journal and clustering emerging themes on a computer document. The researcher repeated this step with data from all participants. In an effort to track for saturation of data, the researcher continually grouped and re-grouped each participant into the previous participant’s themes until no more themes emerged. This process was time consuming and required multiple trials as themes emerged and dissolved until the researcher was satisfied that all meaning units were accounted for and
themes were solid. This process was revisited after the member check interview in order to include additional meaning units that were revealed.

**Step 2: Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions**

The researcher considered each participant’s data set and themes. She summarized each theme in order to create a brief description of how the participant was describing the experience of good teaching, based on his or her verbatim quotes. By doing this, the researcher attempted to clarify the meaning of a series of quotes by the participant and summarize underlying themes in the interview (Moustakas, 1994). The purpose of this was to create a textural and structural text of what was learned from the participant (see Appendix I for an example of one participant’s textural-structural summary). A textural description is a narrative of what participants’ experiences of the phenomenon were (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). For example, one participant remarked “[good teaching happens when] I am also challenged to think about information in a different way or from a different point of view, and I learn a great deal as well.” This statement was then supplemented with a structural description. A structural description is a narrative of the “underlying dynamics of the experience, the themes and qualities that account for ‘how’ feelings and thoughts are connected” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 135) to the phenomenon. The underlying belief that may not have been specifically stated but was somewhat evident in the direct quote, was underlined indicating it was the researcher’s assumption about the participant’s experience, thus it needed more clarification and attention in the member check. For example, the above quote was supplemented with the following:
Susan empowers her students to take ownership of the knowledge they already have. Susan’s knowledge is not rigid; she believes that she can learn and be influenced by her students. During the exchange of knowledge she gives them messages that they are also teaching her and challenging her to look at ideas and perspectives through a new lens. She begins to integrate their ideas into her existing knowledge.

As mentioned above, when supplementing quotes with the researcher’s understanding of the experience, the researcher underlined (see above) and highlighted in green text, the statements that related a belief that the participant alluded to when providing data about good teaching. The participant was asked to pay particular attention to those underlined statements and offer feedback for each one during the member check in an effort for the participant to correct or confirm the researcher’s understanding of the participant’s beliefs that created the moment of good teaching. Each participant’s textural-structural narrative was emailed to each participant prior to the second interview. During the second interview, participants were asked the following questions related to the textural-structural narrative: “Does this represent your experience of good teaching?” “Is there anything that you disagree with? How so?” “Is there anything that was left out from your experiences of good teaching?” and “Is there anything you would like to add that speaks to your experience of good teaching?” This second interview was transcribed immediately and analyzed in a fashion similar to the first interview. New information regarding good teaching was then added to the textural-structural narrative.
Step 3: Identify Emerging Themes Across All Participants

After data analysis was completed from the second interview, the researcher returned to each of the sets of meaning units, which were then updated from the second interview. The researcher began to cross-analyze each set in an effort to cluster similar meaning units across each participant and place them into themes. This was done by reading each meaning unit repeatedly, removing redundant meaning units, and ultimately, using various colored highlighters to cluster similar meaning units.

Step 4: Identify the Essence of the Experience

The emergent themes were then used to create a composite textural-structural narrative of the essence of good teaching as experienced by tenured counselor educators. This narrative included descriptions of what is experienced during good teaching, as well as the underlying themes attributed to how good teaching occurred. This final composite textural-structural narrative expressed the essence of good teaching as described by tenured counselor educators.

Summary of Chapter 2

The goal of Chapter 2 was to illustrate that the phenomenological research design was appropriate for this research investigation. In addition, procedural methods of the research were described and included: selection of participants, data collection, trustworthiness procedures, and data analysis. Documents discussed in this chapter that are relevant to the research procedures are located in the appendices (e.g., IRB approval, email/script used to seek participants, demographics, meaning units, textural-structural summaries). Chapter 3 reveals the findings of this phenomenological investigation.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Chapter 3 presents the results of this phenomenological study of the beliefs and methods of good teaching as revealed through the participants’ reported experiences of their own self-perceived good teaching. The purpose of this chapter is to: (a) introduce each participant and describe his or her credibility in providing information regarding the experiences related to moments of good teaching in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES), and (b) present the six overarching beliefs, or themes, that formulate the structure of the experience of good teaching for the participants of this study.

Participants

This research study had the purpose of exploring the experiences of six exemplary Counselor Educators. The sample included three females and three males, all of whom identified as Caucasian. Participants’ ages ranged from 38 to 63 years old and all held positions of associate or full professor in their respective programs. Each participant was nominated by the program coordinator, director, or chair of the counselor education program, in which he or she held a faculty position. All participants were faculty members in CACREP accredited CES programs that had a master’s degree program in counseling and a doctoral degree program in CES. Each participant met the inclusion criteria (doctoral degree in CES, tenured faculty member in CACREP-CES program, taught content oriented courses in past academic year, and were nominated as an exemplary teacher). As described in this section, all participants had an interest in this research topic and had internal motivation to add to the scholarship of teaching.
This section introduces each participant in the order in which they were interviewed during data collection, describes the courses each participant taught over the past year and on which he or she focused during the interview, and provides examples of how each participant articulated an interest in the research topic. Tables 1 and 2 offer a summary of the demographic information obtained for each participant. All participants were given a pseudonym to help ensure confidentiality.

**Susan**

Susan, the first participant interviewed in this study, was a 53-year-old Caucasian female. She was the liaison person for her CACREP accredited CES program, and nominated herself as a potential participant.

Susan reported that her doctoral degree was earned in Student Personnel Services. She, however, explained to the researcher that all of her courses fulfilled counselor education and supervision requirements (teaching, counseling, supervision, research) and that she sought the degree specifically to be trained as a counselor educator. She further explained that her degree was given at a time before CACREP accreditation was awarded to her university, and at the time of this study the university had been granted accreditation. Susan whole-heartedly identified as a counselor educator and held active membership in the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES).

Susan reported that she was an exemplary teacher as evidenced by being the recipient of three teaching awards in her 11 years as a tenured faculty member in CES. As she expressed interest in being a participant, Susan shared that she had a passion for teaching and believed that she could reflectively contribute thoughts and experiences to
Table 1

Demographic Information (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Years as Tenured Faculty Member</th>
<th>Faculty Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Full Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Full Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Full Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

this research. Susan’s reflection on her teaching practices was evident as she took time in answering interview questions, chose words carefully, and shared her beliefs and experiences articulately and thoughtfully.

Many of Susan’s comments and examples of good teaching moments were from her experiences teaching Dynamics of Self (Human Development), which she has taught 11 times, and the Group Counseling course, which she had taught 10 times. She provided specific examples of teaching moments from each of these courses, and reported that in addition to these courses, she had taught Counseling Children and Adolescents and Career Counseling over the past academic year.

After participating, Susan stated that she enjoyed participation in the study as it helped her to reflectively consider her teaching. Reflection was a theme that Susan
Table 2

Demographic Information (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Content Courses Taught</th>
<th>Number of Teaching Award Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Counseling Children &amp; Adolescents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Orientation to Counseling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision in Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Parent Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Family Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Theory and Practice (I and II)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselor Supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multicultural Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe</td>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation to Community Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen</td>
<td>Testing and Individual Appraisal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counseling Theories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage and Family Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continually alluded to as an important value in her teaching and, seemingly within herself.

Jenny

Jenny, a 63-year-old Caucasian female, was the second counselor educator interviewed. Jenny was identified by her program chair as being an exemplary teacher as evidenced by her recognition as a Presidential Teaching Professor at her university.
Jenny immediately responded with interest when she was invited to participate in this research. She described herself as having a love for teaching and stated that she has identified herself as a teacher her whole life, even as a young girl when she played school and gave piano lessons to other children. She informed the researcher of her own interest in the scholarship of teaching and shared that her dissertation research was also related to teaching in counselor education.

At the time of this study, Jenny reported that she had been a tenure track counselor educator for 20 years and held the rank of full professor. She reported that she typically taught 6 to 8 content based (as opposed to clinical) counseling courses each year. The information she shared during the interview process was drawn from her experiences teaching Orientation to Counseling, School Counseling: Programs, Issues, and Practices, and Supervision in Counseling, all of which she reported teaching over the past year.

During the interview process, Jenny provided detailed descriptions of her experiences during moments she believed she was engaged in good teaching in her classrooms. She provided rationales for her decisions and actions in the classroom and it was obvious that she spent time considering the research topic between interviews. At the end of the interview process, Jenny reported that she enjoyed her participation in the research and shared that the data the researcher drew from her accurately described her philosophy of teaching; she reported that she felt honored to be able to contribute to the research.
Paul

Paul, the third participant interviewed for this research, was a 44-year-old Caucasian male. He was a full professor and has held a tenure track faculty position for 15 years, and was the program chair that was initially contacted by the researcher. When asked to identify one or two faculty members he believed were exemplary teachers, Paul nominated three faculty members including himself. He shared evidence of his qualifications as an exemplary counselor educator through his receipt of a Master Teacher Award at his university. When ultimately selected as a participant, he was quick to respond with interest in providing his time and experiences to the researcher.

During the interview process the majority of the information he shared and the examples he provided in describing his experiences of good teaching were from his Qualitative Research (levels I and II) classes, of which he reported that he taught once per year. It appeared Paul had a particular passion for teaching his Qualitative Research course. In fact, he shared that one of the motivating factors to participate in this research study was because he is always willing and interested in adding to the qualitative research in the field of CES.

As he shared his teaching experiences with the researcher he focused on his affect as he was responding to questions and shared his observations over the phone with the researcher. For example, he would make statements such as, “I’m smiling as I think about that question.” Similarly, in reviewing the data that Paul contributed to this research, it was evident that giving awareness to affect was an important attribute of his teaching, as he often described identifying his own emotions during class as well as
encouraging students to identify their own. Paul was humble and modest as he spoke about his experiences of his own good teaching. He wanted to be clear that his experiences were his own experiences and opinions, not necessarily the only way, or the “true” experiences of good teaching. As evidence of this, he often started comments with, “In my opinion . . .” or “To me . . .” Again, Paul showed authenticity in his style of conversation and his reports of teaching, as he described being humble and taking a position of “non-expert” while teaching.

Ben

Ben was a 38-year-old Caucasian male. He reported that he was an Associate Professor and has held a tenure track faculty position in CES for 10 years. Ben was nominated by his program chair as being an exemplary and reflective teacher among faculty. Although Ben was the fourth participant to be interviewed, he was the second person to express interest in this research by promptly emailing the researcher and sharing that the research topic was of particular interest to him and that he wanted to be a participant. Ben described his interest in counseling pedagogy to the researcher and shared that his own scholarship has included teaching as he had published articles on the topic.

Over the past year, Ben has taught Theory and Practice (I and II) and Counselor Supervision, all of which he has taught once each year for the past 9 years. In addition, over the last year Ben taught his program’s Qualitative Research course and Multicultural Counseling course. Many of the experiences and examples Ben shared were centered around the counseling theory and practice course and the multicultural counseling course.
Ben expressed interest in students and in the process of teaching. His experiences focused on the strong preparation of counselors, and it was evident in his dialogue that he has given much thought to the underlying reasons he employs his style and methods of teaching. Often throughout the interview he shared the thought processes that lead him to teach in a particular way and he made it clear that these processes came from trial and error and experiences over the course of many semesters.

**Zoe**

Zoe was the fifth participant in this research study. She was a 59-year-old Caucasian female who had been a counselor educator in a tenure track position for 9 years. At the time of the research study, Zoe held a position of Associate Professor. Zoe was one of two eligible participants identified by her program chair. Upon being contacted, Zoe responded quickly with interest in hearing more about this research and ultimately decided to contribute her time as a participant. During the interview process, Zoe reported that she views counselor education as a professional training program, and provided much evidence that she does her best to prepare effective counselors. Zoe clearly had a passion for the field of counseling. She often likened the process of teaching to the process of counseling, and it was evident that she brought her skills and attributes as a counselor into her classroom.

During the interview process, Zoe drew from her experiences of teaching Group Counseling, Career Counseling and Development, and Professional Orientation to Community Counseling, all of which comprised her usual teaching assignment. Zoe was articulate and offered many specific beliefs that she held about counselor education,
teaching, counseling, herself, and students, beliefs that resulted in her choices of style and methods of teaching. Upon completion of the interviews, Zoe reported that she believed her contributions to the study helped her re-connect with the reasons that she loves teaching and counselor education.

**Glen**

Glen was a 59-year-old Caucasian male. He reported that he had been a counselor educator in a tenure track position for 17 years and holds the position of full professor at his university. He was one of two people nominated by his program chair, who was quick to nominate him as an exemplary teacher among faculty. Glen provided evidence of exemplary teaching by informing the researcher that he had been recognized by peers as an exemplary teacher by being awarded a total of four teaching recognitions. Glen was friendly and outgoing during the interview process. He brought a sense of humor to the interview process and shared interesting stories as he recounted his experiences of good teaching. His process of being interviewed appeared to be similar to his process of teaching as he often reported using humor and storytelling in his classroom. Glen reported that he enjoys teaching and likes talking about, and processing, his own teaching.

Glen reported that he typically teaches seven content based counseling courses each year. His teaching experience over the past academic year had included being the instructor for Testing and Individual Appraisal, Principles of Counseling, Counseling Theories, Marriage and Family Counseling, and Current Issues. Many of the experiences he shared with the researcher were directly associated with the testing class.
**Summary of Participants**

All participants had an investment and interest in the area of teaching. Each took their role as a participant in this research seriously as evidenced by maintaining contact with the researcher, being quick to schedule interviews, and sharing time with the researcher. Although each participant had his or her own experiences of good teaching to share with the researcher, through data analysis it was evident that there were commonalities in their experiences through particular beliefs about what it means to be a good teacher in CES. The remainder of this chapter considers these commonalities of beliefs and methods across participants.

**Beliefs and Experiences of Good Teaching**

Phenomenological research seeks to identify the essence of a phenomenon by identifying the structure of an experience (the underlying themes that drive the participants to experience the phenomenon in the way that they do) and the texture of an experience (the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings related to the experience; Moustakas, 1994). The structure of the experience accounts for the texture of the experience. The structure of an experience puts the texture into context. For example, the texture of the teaching experience might include pedagogical methods employed, responses of students to the teaching (nodding, taking notes, participating), ideas and thoughts while in the moment of teaching, or feelings in the classroom toward students while teaching. The structure of a teaching experience are the beliefs that motivate teachers to experience the phenomenon they are describing, examples may include rationales that teachers might have for employing particular pedagogical methods or their hindsight report of why the
teaching moment was reported as good. That is, the structure is comprised of the underlying forces that create the concrete events during the experience, or the texture. The phenomenon under investigation in this research was moments of good teaching as reported by exemplary counselor educators. The research question driving this study was: What are exemplary counselor educators’ reported experiences during their own self-perceived good teaching moments? The sub questions of interest were as follows: What beliefs do counselor educators have about good teaching? and What methods of teaching do counselor educators use when they are engaged in good teaching?

The phenomenon of the experience of good teaching across participants was composed of two main elements. First, participants shared similar beliefs about the underlying influences that created moments of good teaching in their classrooms. These underlying beliefs accounted for the structure of the phenomenon of good teaching. Second, participants disclosed recurrent behaviors and methods while engaged in moments of their own good teaching. These behaviors and methods account for the texture of the phenomenon of good teaching as reported by exemplary counselor educators.

To organize data in a meaningful way, the data themes that emerged are identified as the beliefs that were associated with the experience of good teaching for the participants. The supporting data for each theme are comprised of portions of the structural-textural experience of participants.
Belief 1: The Process of Teaching has Similarities to the Process of Counseling

One overarching belief held by the participants that contributed to the experiences of good teaching was that the process of teaching is similar to the process of counseling. Participants were clear to state they did not counsel their students; however, they did emphasize the importance of bringing their “counselor-self” into the classroom by using some of the same counseling skills that they used when they practiced counseling. As the researcher further examined this particular belief, it was evident that there were four supporting categories for the belief that teaching has similarities to counseling: (a) creating an emotionally safe environment contributes to good teaching, (b) building a relationship with students is important to teaching, (c) good teaching occurs when teachers remain in the present moment, and (d) attending to students’ comments and feelings is part of good teaching. Table 3 summarizes the common words and methods used across participants.

Creating an emotionally safe environment. Participants revealed that they strive to create an emotionally safe classroom environment for students, similar to the counseling environment in which they hope their clients feel safe to be authentic. Participants most often identified trust and safety as a classroom norm that they established with students at the beginning of the semester and worked to maintain throughout the course. All participants identified that an emotionally safe environment leads to good teaching moments because students are able to be authentic and free to engage in the learning process. They described protecting their students from disrespect,
Table 3

Summary of Categories for Belief 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Common Words Used</th>
<th>Teaching Methods Associated With Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating an emotionally safe environment leads to good teaching moments</td>
<td>Trust, Respect, Safety</td>
<td>Addressing emotional safety in syllabus, Honoring students’ input, ideas, and questions, Speaking to students who are disrespectful, Talking about confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a relationship with students is important in teaching</td>
<td>Relationship, Care, Connection</td>
<td>Caring and showing interest in students, Staying attentive to the mood of the class, Being flexible to students’ needs, Loaning books to students, Being available to students (office hours; email)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good teaching occurs when teachers remain in the present</td>
<td>Presence, Balance</td>
<td>Staying in present moment; focused on class, Maintaining personal balance and health, Following spontaneous flow of class, Leaving stressors outside of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending to students’ comments and feelings is part of good teaching</td>
<td>Summarizing, Empathy, Attending, Attuned</td>
<td>Remaining attuned to students’ reactions, Summarizing students’ comments, Empathizing with students, Connecting emotional responses to learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

helping their students to consider confidentiality, and remaining non-judgmental when hearing students’ ideas.

For example, Jenny thought “that the most important thing is [for] the classroom climate to be safe; meaning that [she] want[s] students in the classroom to be free to be who they are.” She described that when students are authentic they are more open to experiencing class discussions and lectures and as a result can interact with the material in a more meaningful way.

Jenny believed that a safe learning environment is created when students know they can trust her and trust one another. Jenny recognized that “it takes a while for
students to build trust in the classroom,” and she gave students the message that
disrespect will not be tolerated in her class early in the semester by speaking to it in her
syllabus.

I think your syllabus is always the first impression. The syllabus sets the stage.
[In all of my syllabi] I have a blanket statement about the fact that we may have
differing opinions, and I encourage that—but what’s most important is that we
will respect the right for people to hold different views and that we will honor
everybody’s right to their own views.

Throughout the semester Jenny closely monitors all group discussions in order to
immediately recognize if any students are crossing boundaries of respect or if anyone
feels that his or her comments are not being honored. As soon as she begins to notice
that perspectives and experiences are not being respected, she steps in and reminds
students of the importance of respect, trust, and comfort in the classroom.

Once in a rare, rare day I might have to say, “We’re on the verge here of not
honoring what’s being said, and I just want us all to stop a minute.” Sometimes I
might have to speak to somebody out of the classroom to say, “What you said
there probably was hurtful to somebody else, and we need to talk about that.”

Ben also works to create an emotionally safe environment early in the semester.
He thought that good teaching is similar to good counseling in that it motivates people to
change and take new risks. “Good teaching involves motivating people to change, just as
good counseling does; to take some risks; to be open to looking at one’s self in a new
way; critiquing one’s self;” but in order for this to happen, he mentioned, students must
feel safe to make themselves vulnerable, share mistakes, and try new things. Establishing a relationship of trust between Ben and his students is crucial.

People won’t put themselves out there or make themselves vulnerable by trying new things or presenting work that wasn’t what they perceived to be perfect unless they trust in me and in each other. So if I’m asking them to present something where they think they did poorly the first week, nobody would do that. They may say it was poor work but really it was their best work because they don’t trust anyone and they feel vulnerable. Once that trust is formed, then you get people really willing to look at themselves in new ways, to try new things, to be vulnerable and that’s when I think real learning occurs.

At the start of each semester, Ben sends the message that he will be a trustworthy teacher who will work hard to create an emotionally safe classroom. He begins the first day of class by informing students about confidentiality.

[Trust] is developed from the first day. I talk about confidentiality. I talk about how essential trust is in this process. When someone presents something and they’re getting upset or talking about some racist idea that exists in their family . . . when that occurs in the class there is a notion of acceptance that I and their peers will display, it’s okay—what goes on in this room is going to stay in this room. And they’re accepted by the group even from people who might not agree or who might otherwise have been offended . . . I think there’s this notion of acceptance that gets fostered.
Glen also acknowledged the importance of creating a safe environment in the classroom and gives all of his students the message they are safe to share all viewpoints and perspectives and by sharing that he tries “to create an atmosphere where [he’s] accepting of what all people say.” He continued by stating:

Laid on top of [good teaching moments] is just general counseling stuff that we should do as a good teacher, which is being non-judgmental and using good listening and trying to be sensitive and making sure that your biases don’t come through so that you’ll turn off some people, and create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable to talk about whatever they need to talk about.

During moments where good teaching is occurring, Susan noticed that students easily jump into discussions without reservation because they feel comfortable to share their own ideas and experiences that are related to the course material.

[Students] tend to be more responsive, I think they tend to share more. I think they tend to relate to each other better. I think they let go of some of the concerns about saying the right thing. I think it just creates that environment where there is more of a sense of freedom to just share.

Creating an atmosphere of trust was an essential component across participants, as they revealed that creating an emotionally safe environment where students can be respected and authentic sets the foundation for moments of good teaching. This seemed to motivate participants to increase students’ awareness of respect and confidentiality and remain free from judgment.
Building a relationship with students. Literature has noted that a genuine relationship between the counselor and client is the most important predictor in successful counseling (Lambert & Barley, 2001). Similarly, each participant remarked that a necessary component to their moments of good teaching is a relationship and connection between themselves and their students. As participants talked about their students it was clear to the researcher that they had genuine care and interest in their students. They talked about having relationships with students and being connected with students.

Paul believed that forming a relationship with students is “immensely important” to the learning process. He shared that during moments of good teaching having a relationship with students is important in creating an atmosphere in which everyone in the class can feel connected to one another. Creating a connection and a relationship with students is important in creating moments of good teaching.

I’m finding that in my best moments of teaching, it is about the relationship. Compared to days when I feel like I’ve had a bad day of teaching, it’s where I feel disconnected from the classes and that might be that I just didn’t give up myself fully in the moment and attend to students in the conversation as intensively as I could, and then I feel like the students walked away not having as good an educational experience as those days where I think we are intensely attending to our relationship and the conversation about whatever material is being learned. Zoe also described the importance of using herself as a tool to connect with students.
One of the things that I really think in being a counselor educator is that all of those attributes that Carl Rogers attributed to good counseling I believe also attribute to being a counselor educator. The most important thing and the most important part of being a counselor educator is who I am as a person, who I am as a counselor myself. [While teaching] I’m using the skills as a counselor that I’ve used for many years, and that’s when I really feel like I connect with the students.

For Zoe, part of having a relationship with students is showing that she cares for them and recognizes when they might need extra help. She encourages open communication with her students and is supportive of their learning. Zoe believes it is important to pay attention to their needs and she is willing to be flexible in order to optimize their learning experiences.

Last semester I knew that my class as a whole was just stressed to the max. I could see the tension on their faces. There were a couple assignments that were due in another class that they were really stressed out about and so I changed the schedule of a couple of my assignments. That gave them enough space to alleviate some of the stress because I knew that they weren’t going to do well, as stressed out as they were. They really appreciated that, and I appreciated it. I wanted them to succeed, and I knew that they wanted to succeed.

Glen also indicated that building a professional relationship with students was important. He seemed to describe having genuine care and interest in his students.

Being friendly to students, but not being friends with your students [is important]. Showing interest during the break and talking to them about what’s going on in
their life [and] listening and showing some interest is important. I have interest in them.

One way that Jenny showed that she cares for her students was by inquiring about how they are before class.

Sometimes when I do weekend classes I will start the class with a check in—just like a group—where I’ll just say, “Let’s just go around and do a brief check-in.” They can say I’m doing great and pass or they might say I got a speeding ticket on the way here and I’m a little rattled. I do things along the way that allow me to create a safe atmosphere and an open atmosphere.

Another aspect of building a relationship of caring and concern with students was being available to them for help outside of class. Zoe expressed that she made herself available when students needed help or wanted to talk about class. She let students know that they can communicate their needs to her and that she will listen, be empathic, and help them in any way she can.

[I try] to be present and available if they have concerns or problems [about class]. [Students are] able to email me, call, or make an appointment. Probably the main thing is letting them know I’m very open and that part of my job is to be there for them; to listen to their questions or their concerns, so that they know it isn’t just a class—that we meet for a couple of hours and then that’s it and they have to figure it out by themselves. [I] try to let them know that I’m real open if they don’t understand.
Susan also indicated that part of a good teaching moment is when she makes herself available to students outside of class and expresses interest in their work. She shared that she invites students to her office after class and asks them about the topics they have been enjoying and sometimes she offers them additional resources.

Outside the classroom a moment of good teaching is when students come up and are interested in getting more information or they talk about wanting to do a paper or thesis or project related to something that we talked about in class; or maybe they’re interested in sharing more personal kinds of experiences that they don’t necessarily share in class. Those moments when students linger and want to talk or come back to my office with me, or have additional questions that they didn’t get answered are moments of good teaching because I’m thinking, “Whatever went on in class has really sparked something in that moment and they want more.”

Often, Susan takes these opportunities to continue to teach; she might invite them back to her office at a different time to continue the conversation. She listens to the students; she asks them things like “What is it about this area that really turns you on tonight?” or “What did you hear that sparked an interest?” or “What questions do you have?” Sometimes she notices that the student has an interest in a particular topic that was discussed in class and wants more information about it.

I will immediately try to suggest some additional resources, and if I don’t have anything right there I will tell them that I will be in touch. I’ll email them something that they may think about or I will encourage them to come in and talk
more about the topic because it’s those kinds of conversations that are really the essence of what I do. When I see students getting excited and taking something from the experience that is a clear sign to me that there’s that exchange that I’m talking about . . . that growth and that interest in students. So I just cherish those moments.

**Teachers are in the present moment.** The words present, presence, and balance were common among all participants. Each participant reported that during moments of good teaching he or she was fully present in the here and now moment of the classroom experience and felt a sense of balance in order to remain present. By staying in the present moment, during times of her own good teaching, Susan noticed that she “doesn’t have to think too much;” she just has “to be present and [she] just has to be following [students], and [she] has to be sharing.”

During moments of good teaching in Jenny’s class, both she and her students are fully engaged in the present moment. Jenny shared that for good teaching and learning to occur teachers and students must both be engaged in the present moment.

One of the things I think I do well is that I can be in the present, and generally when I’m teaching I’m not thinking about other things. I’m very into whatever it is that I’m doing and that’s what I try to get my students to be. I really try to engage students in such a way that they themselves are also present, which I think is critical in enhancing learning. So that being in the moment is a very important concept to both teaching and to learning.
As she is in the moment of teaching, Jenny allows herself to go where her mind takes her. She has a plan of how the class will be, but she also allows herself to be flexible; to share the ideas and stories she did not necessarily plan.

When I’m in that moment I certainly always have an outline of what I’m going to talk about, but now that I’ve done this for 25 years I don’t have a planned script so things just sort of roll out as I’m teaching.

Paul is also completely in the present moment. He is fully engaged and he is not thinking of other aspects of his life. During moments of good teaching he has left other parts of his life outside of the classroom, and for the class period he is completely engaged in the present moment with his students. He is not thinking of responsibilities he must do after the class or things he could be doing with his time.

A lot of my good teaching depends on how well I have managed other areas of my life and where I’m at in my emotional world so to speak as I enter a classroom; how focused I am in that class or is my mind already thinking of something that’s got to take place after class, because then I’m not going to be fully engaged in that next hour or two hours. So, it’s completely letting go of whatever might be bothering me and solely putting boundaries around that moment that I’m with the students. So [good teaching is] very much a here-and-now awareness.

Ben also allows himself to be completely immersed in the present moment while teaching. All of his energy is in the present and time just passes.
It’s a very present feeling. It’s what I’d refer to as a very mindful state of being. I’m not worried about what they’re thinking of me personally. I’m not making any judgments about them. I’m not worried about anything else or thinking about anything else that’s going on in my world or my life.

Zoe explained that in those moments of good teaching she approached teaching similarly to how she approached counseling. She expressed that she wanted to give students her full attention, presence, and immediacy, much like she did for clients when she was a counselor. Her identity as a counselor is evident through her interactions with students. She models what she believes to be important in counseling: being present, attentive, and balanced.

One of the things that I really think [we have to do] as counselor educators [is] role model what it means to be a good counselor. For myself, if I’m going into the classroom or if I’m meeting with a student, I see the students as my clients. They’re students but I need to be in the same place, the same balance, and the same frame of mind as though I was meeting with a client.

To find balance, Zoe takes care of herself and keeps her mind free of distractions so that she can be in the present moment during class. When with students, Zoe was able to put worries and other thoughts out of her mind and remain in the here-and-now experience. She found that when she is “balanced,” or free of distraction and in the present moment, she is most helpful to students.
When I feel like I’m doing a good job at teaching is when I feel in balance. One of the things that causes me to feel balance is when I’m present, I’m in the moment, and I’m connecting with the students.

Staying in the present moment is also important to Glen. When considering moments of good teachings he reported that he finds himself completely immersed in his class and present with students. Whether he is lecturing, sharing stories, or facilitating discussions, moments of good teaching in the classroom occur when he is feeling healthy, balanced, and focused on the present moment.

If I feel good physically, it really does make a difference . . . you go into class and a lot of times you leave everything behind, and I like that. I guess class brings me to focus attention on what I’m doing and that’s important.

**Attending to students’ comments and feelings.** The final category in Belief 1 involves the importance of attending to students’ verbal and nonverbal reactions. Participants described the importance of tracking students, summarizing their comments, being attuned to their emotional responses, and making empathic statements.

For example, Jenny noted her belief that it is important to be attentive to her whole class in order to make sure all students are getting what they need. She “spend[s] a lot of time reading the students,” to notice the looks on their faces to see if they’re understanding. She is also looking to see if people are attentive or if they have become distracted. She pays attention to the group of students who are smiling and nodding along with what she is saying, but she also draws her attention to the students who look like they might want to challenge her or offer another idea to the group.
[During moments of good teaching] I’m thinking about what I’m picking up from the students. Are their faces saying, “I don’t understand what you’re saying” or are their faces saying, “Yes, yes, this is exactly what I need”?

Paul reported that he stays attuned to students’ emotional responses during class because he believes that the recognition and experiencing of feelings are important to the facilitation of learning. As a result, he stays attuned to his students’ emotional reactions and asks them to be more aware of and start to identify their feelings. During classes, one of his goals is to help his students heighten their awareness of their emotional reactions to the topics they are learning and discussing. In order to elicit these feeling responses and in order to help his students recognize them and attribute meaning to them for the learning process, Paul attends to their verbal and non-verbal responses as conversations about new material occur. Paul describes it as being similar to the counseling process when counselors are attending to their client’s emotions. For him, he experiences good teaching when he stays attuned to students’ feelings.

It’s very much parallel . . . to the counseling context where feelings are very important to the facilitation of learning. I’m attending to ways that students communicate affect whether it’s nonverbally or whether it’s me [being] attuned to, and trusting, my intuition in terms of what I think is going on with them internally and helping them bring out those internal conversations.

During moments of good teaching, Paul shared that he watches and listens to his students as they are talking and listening to one another. He expressed that he is attuned to how they may be experiencing the conversation, and he wants to draw out their
feelings by making empathic remarks or summarizing what he notices about them in the moment. He might notice the way someone is looking at him or he might notice a shift in body language. Although they may not verbally share what they are thinking and feeling, Paul senses when students have reactions to particular topics or discussions. He “[can] tell [they’re] sitting on something to say; [he can] see that with the eye contact [they are] making, and [he can] sense that [they may] want space to say it.” When “[he] sees this [he] prompt[s] [them] with: ‘Looks like you’ve got something you want to share.’”

I guess it’s where I would connect it to good counseling—when you’re attuned to a client and you know a client hasn’t said a particular feeling, but you know there’s a feeling there, and you go to advanced level empathy.

During moments of good teaching, Zoe articulated that she wants her students to learn how to be aware of their emotions and take stock of their experiences and then be able to articulate their experiences with each other. While she teaches she remains attentive to her students’ responses to course content and she poses reflective questions to her students: “What do you really think about this right now? What do you really feel about the material that we just talked about?” She wants them “to be willing to take that risk in class, and to [her] that’s part of what class discussion is about.”

Having her students identify and express their emotional reactions to course content, readings, and experiences is important for Zoe, as she believes it leads to learning and personal growth. As she is facilitating discussion, she uses her counseling skills to encourage students to share what they are feeling and thinking while in class and she attends to their nonverbal reactions. She likened teaching to facilitating a group
counseling experience. She expressed that she might call on people to respond or she might summarize the process of the group dynamic that she notices.

For me, [successful teaching] is exactly the way I experienced it when I was a counselor. It depends on the dynamics of the group. It depends on where the people in the class are, and all of those things that are experienced in a counseling group I find also in the classroom. Sometimes there’s resistance, sometimes people are real silent, sometimes someone may want to monopolize—all those things are dynamics that take place in the classroom and so all of the things I would do if I was doing a counseling group I try to do with the students. Asking them to respond—sometimes I have to call on individual people to open things up and to keep them involved and keep them immediate because lots of times people don’t understand what that means.

As described throughout this section, the belief that the process of teaching is similar to the process of counseling is an underlying theme that accounts for ways the counselor educators in this study interact with their students in the classroom. Finding ways to create a classroom atmosphere in which students feel safe to be genuine is stressed, and relationship and connection with students emphasized. Staying in the here-and-now moment is an important factor involved in moments of good teaching and this presence encourages them to attend to and track students’ participation and emotional responses.

Perhaps the most evident aspect of this overall belief is that the counselor educators in this study bring their “counselor-self” into the classroom. As they were
counselors before they became counselor educators, they remained connected to the counseling skills and attributes that lead to therapeutic advancements and found those same skills helpful in the classroom. Perhaps Zoe was the participant that identified most with the belief that her “counselor-self” is a large aspect of who she is in the classroom. Zoe had a strong counselor identity, and when she was in the moment of good teaching she specifically described herself as bringing her counseling identity into the classroom. She brought parts of herself as a counselor to the students, and she thought it was important for her to be genuine and congruent with this counselor identity in the classroom.

One of the things I tell my class is, “I don’t know what I’m doing in academia. God has a real sense of humor, because I really am a counselor. I’m really not an academic; you may experience [this class] a little bit differently than some of your other classes, but I really am a counselor and it really is who I am and so that’s how I approach [teaching].”

**Belief 2: Sharing Professional Experiences is Helpful to Students**

A second belief that contributed to the structure of good teaching found among the participants was that their former experiences as counselors, and teachers could be useful to students. Participants described that during moments when they are teaching well, they are helping students understand the counseling profession more clearly by sharing their own experiences as a counselor. Table 4 offers a summary of this belief.
Table 4

Summary of Belief 2

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<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Common Words/Phrases Used</th>
<th>Teaching Methods Associated With Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing professional experiences is helpful to students</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Providing examples of counseling experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>Role-modeling counseling skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>Answering questions about being a counselor</td>
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<td>Good Counselors</td>
<td>Telling personal stories during lectures</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing mistakes and growth as a counselor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exhibiting vulnerability</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Teaching from their writing and scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching students about professional identity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging students to think critically</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignments that encourage collaboration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Zoe, Jenny, Glen, Paul, and Ben reported that they often share their own experiences with their students in an effort to help them learn or understand lessons more clearly. They explained that they used personal stories during moments of good teaching to illustrate a point or to provide an example of how classroom topics look in “real-life” situations. Ben reported that he often describes his own developmental experiences in his process of being a counselor trainee to connect with students and provides them with empathy through their process in becoming counselors.

Zoe mentioned she was a counselor for 30 years before becoming a counselor educator and indicated that she shares her experiences as a counselor with students regularly.
One of the [things I often do] is help them take information we’re discussing as part of class lecture and give them some real world experiences connected to it. I’ll give them some examples of experiences that I have had as a counselor and situations that I have had with clients in relation to the material that we’re talking about.

Glen reported that he believes stories are powerful ways to keep students interested and to make lectures rich with detail. When he was recounting his moments of good teaching, he shared that he tells stories of his experiences with students.

I tell a story about how I was walking down the street . . . and [someone] asked me, “Do you want to take a test?” and I said, “Sure I’ll take a test.” And then there’s a whole story about that and I end up talking about validity and reliability based on that story. And so rather than just standing up and saying here’s what reliability is and here’s what validity is, here’s a story about it.

Paul also shared that he recounts experiences to his students:

I tell a story [about obtaining personal agency] in my theories class each and every semester because for me it really exemplifies that we have the agency to learn what we want to learn not just what faculty put in front of us.

Ben noted that he shares his experiences as a counselor with his students. He stated that he talks “deeply about the field and the work, as opposed to just the details.” He talks “more about the process of engaging in this work; what they might be experiencing as they go through it and what’s normal about the struggle that they’re having” and then informs them of his own process of becoming a counselor. Ben
recognized that students’ experiences in becoming a counselor were similar to his own experience. He also shared that as a teacher he has seen students go through the same stages of development, and during moments of good teaching he shares his experiences as a new counselor and as a teacher witnessing former students’ development.

I recognize what they’re going through is tough. I’ve been doing it long enough that I can normalize their experiences from my own experience [and through teaching]. I might say, “It’s typical that students would be doing what you’re doing right now or to feel what you’re feeling right now.”

In an effort to keep them informed about their process of becoming counselors, Ben also encourages them to read about counselor development.

I have students read about normal counselor development so that they have an idea about what normal counselor development looks like. I really make an effort to normalize all the things that they’re going through. I let the students know these experiences are grounded in research. And so I normalize that to the students [by saying], “It’s not only okay to feel lost right now, but that’s part of this process, don’t resist this feeling of being lost right now, but just trust me and this process and dive into it.”

It was evident that sharing experiences as a student, counselor, or teacher were important aspects to good teaching.

Participants demonstrated a willingness to share successes and failures with students. The teachers identified that there was a sense of vulnerability that they were willing to risk in sharing stories with students. Perhaps, Jenny articulated this the most
clearly and shared that it is important to her that she makes an effort to be honest with students about times when she has made mistakes as a counselor:

I think in storytelling sometimes I take the risk of telling them when I wasn’t a very good counselor, or when I screwed up, or when I made a mistake. I’m willing to take the risk in showing when I might do something wrong because I want students to be able to risk practicing or dealing with the concepts so that it’s necessary that they will make mistakes.

Jenny and Zoe portrayed the belief that through their experiences they have an idea of what it means to be a good counselor and during moments of good teaching they are sharing this information with students so they are better prepared.

Jenny believed that during those moments of good teaching she has her own assumptions of what it means to be a good counselor in the back of her mind and those beliefs are the underlying forces for what she does in her classes, how she engages her students, and how she teaches.

When I’m [experiencing moments of good teaching] I feel like I have an idea of what an effective counselor does. I have conceptualized through my own education and learning what the role of the counselor is. If I’m working with the skills and strategies course, and I’m teaching the basic skills, I have a concept in my mind of how that needs to be done.

Jenny said that she becomes very “passionate in trying to help the students understand what their role is and how to convey that role to others.” Her goal is to “be as honest as she can about what the counselor will find in the field.” She wants them to be
passionate about advocating for their roles and purposes in schools. She wants them to have concrete ideas on how they can advocate for themselves. She shares stories from her own experiences and helps them to become passionate about their work so that they have the desire and the know-how to advocate for themselves and their profession.

Zoe also stated that during moments of good teaching she sees herself incorporating her ideas about what it means to be a good counselor into her class lessons and activities. She shared that she thinks good counselors know how to collaborate with one another, and therefore she talks to her students about the importance of sharing ideas. Zoe tells her students that “in the schools and in the community we collaborate and consult—we don’t work in isolation.” She intentionally creates assignments in which students have to share work with one another in an effort for them to use each other as resources and practice the skill of collaboration.

I encourage them to share with one another, and I tell them that in agencies and in schools we work in collaboration, we work with each other, and we consult with each other. It’s important that [students] share information with each other. For example, in the group class I have them share their group projects with each other so that [students] develop a portfolio of different groups.

To summarize Belief 2, five out of six participants highlighted the importance of sharing experiences and recounting professional stories with students in an effort to emphasize class topics, empathize with students, normalize experiences, and share ideas on how to be a prepared counselor. The sixth participant did not include this belief in his experience of good teaching.
Belief 3: Students are Capable of Teaching Each Other and Themselves

A third common belief that contributed to the structure of good teaching moments is that students have the ability to teach themselves and each other through a process of discussion facilitated by the teachers. With this belief, it was evident that participants had a sense of humility in describing a process of teaching and learning that was not centered around them as teachers, but around the students and the course material. Participants reported that an important aspect of good teaching was facilitating experiences for the students to learn material on their own or as a class rather than by them disseminating information. Students are able to teach themselves and each other through class discussions, in which they provide classmates with their own experiences and information and engage in self-exploration and meaning-making. Class discussion was a method used in both categories evident in this theme: (a) students can learn from each other and (b) self-reflection is important in learning. Table 5 offers a summary of the theme categories.

Students can learn from each other. Participants agreed that class discussion was a significant component during moments of good teaching so that students had the opportunity to share what they knew about the subject or the experiences they had about a subject with their peers. It was evident that discussion was used to exchange information between the teacher and students and encourage students to share perspectives and opinions with classmates. Participants valued the idea of sharing multiple perspectives and honoring all viewpoints shared by students.
Table 5

Summary of Categories for Belief 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Common Words Used</th>
<th>Teaching Methods Associated With Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students can learn from each other</td>
<td>Facilitator, Conversations, Discussions, Student experiences</td>
<td>Creating time for student led class discussions, Allowing students to ask and answer questions, Asking students to share ideas/perspectives, Focusing on cultural differences and experiences, Assigning readings to facilitate discussion, Taking a non-expert approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self reflection is important in learning</td>
<td>Facilitator, Meaning-Making, Process, Reflective Questions</td>
<td>Encouraging students to challenge teacher in learning, Focusing on emotional responses to class content, Asking reflective questions, Encouraging students to answer own questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When Susan teaches, she creates an environment in which all members of the class are part of the teaching and learning process. This is an important component to Susan’s experience of good teaching, as she believes that good teaching involves an active exchange between teachers and students. Susan described this exchange occurring through class discussion during which students offer their perspectives to one another and absorb what their classmates are saying. Susan explained that during these moments of good teaching classes become centered around students rather than around her.

I think for me one of the things I value about teaching is what I call an active exchange [of information] that includes [the sharing of] ideas and concepts and experiences. When I know that the teaching is working there’s a continuous flow
not only toward me, but it becomes this interaction between students in the class. I can kind of sit back then and just kind of watch it happen.

Susan reported that she will ask a reflective question to kick-start a lively class discussion or she might have students work in groups to have smaller conversations. During these good teaching moments in the classroom, students are feeling excited about topics, sharing ideas, and applying their own experiences to particular counseling topics that are being discussed. It is during these moments that Susan “knows that things are going right, and [she] believes it is [because of] the back and forth” between herself and students and between the students with each other that is valuable. During these moments Susan reported that she notices students are “engaging each other more frequently, just jumping in [the conversations], and [there is a] continual motion of activity.”

Ben explained that for him, moments of good teaching happen when he and students are engaged in a dialogue rather than when he is formally presenting. He shared that he might start a class by presenting the topic for the day and spend 15 minutes providing the basic information about the topic or reviewing readings from the week before. In those moments when he reported his best teaching, Ben allowed the formal conversation to slip away and the class to move into a casual dialogue.

When I’m in the moment of good teaching, it’s definitely when I’m not formally presenting. We usually will break off into some sort of sidebar conversation or dialogue, and that seems to be when I’m at my best.
Ben described that when he facilitated a class discussion, students seemed comfortable to share and ask questions. He encouraged them to share whatever thoughts and feelings came to them related to what he had presented. Students began to ask question after question, as their curiosities were peaked. They fed off of each other’s questions and comments and they were engaged in the present moment.

Glen reported that as he is lecturing he considers ways to get students involved and thinking. He shared that as he approaches topics that might be controversial or might spark multiple perspectives he will ask students a question in the hope that it will create a lively discussion. He thought that “questions are critical to engaging students” and that discussions are important so that students can learn from each other and have a forum to share their ideas.

I think when there’s good teaching going on there ends up being a lively discussion about a topic and people are sharing their different points of view. It usually comes up with a question, [for example], “What do you think about this? “ I think questions are critical to engaging students.

When recounting these good teaching moments, Glen stated that he knew it was a good time to facilitate a discussion when he approached controversial topics or ethical dilemmas in his lectures:

I’m probably curious in getting [at their ideas or opinions]. It’s often around something that’s a little controversial, whether it be an ethical dilemma or, “What do you think about Jung sleeping with his patient?” and, “What do you think
about Roger’s doing all of that drinking? How can he [Rogers] have been so great and also been such a hard drinker?”

Participants frequently reported that the reason they facilitate class discussions is so that students can teach each other what they already know about a topic, the experiences they have had with the topic, and their ideas and perspectives. Participants indicated they held an assumption that students come into class with knowledge and experiences that are worthwhile to share.

During moments of good teaching, Susan saw that students began to teach each other and teach themselves by reflecting and sharing their experiences and knowledge. Susan shared a belief that students come into the classroom already having knowledge and experiences relevant to course topics. To her, part of learning is synthesizing new information with existing knowledge:

It’s kind of that constructivist perspective of recognizing that students come into the classroom already knowing a lot. They may not know they know a lot in relationship to the specific content, but typically they have a lot to bring in terms of their experiences and the knowledge bases that they do have. I think it’s important to build from that. What I’m trying to do more and more is to provide experiences and activities that will help students recognize what they already know.

She believes this “[exploration of] what they already know [gives] them a foundation for having discussions.” During a class discussion of their existing knowledge, students have
opportunities to integrate new ideas, from other members of the class into what they already know.

I’m preparing a syllabus for this summer for the group class. I’m having them write a reflective paper, and it begins with having them list the groups that they’ve been involved with in their life and to think about not just educational groups but recreational groups and work related groups. Then I’m asking them to write a narrative about that: “How did they get involved in the group? What did you like or dislike about the experience? How did the group change you? What feelings or thoughts do you have about the leader?” Then I’ll have them share those experiences and we can talk about group experience from their perspective before I get into talking about group counseling.

Susan reported that when students share their knowledge and experiences with one another their confidence in grasping material rises. She noted that they might start thinking, “Maybe I do know something about [counseling/course topic].” During moments of good teaching and during this active exchange of prior and new information, Susan believes she empowered her students to take ownership of the knowledge they already have.

Jenny also conveyed the value of students teaching one another, particularly on multicultural experiences and issues:

When I’m thinking about good teaching I really believe that I have to understand that as a White, older, Caucasian woman my experience is just that—my
experience. As I’m teaching I have to be very sensitive to diversity and my students as well, and everything is always filtered through each learners’ lens. Jenny “think[s] that in the classroom, good teaching requires [me] to be sensitive to culture, gender, race, and sexual orientation, and all of those different pieces students bring that [I haven’t] got the foggiest idea about.” She reported that she strives to “honor the differences that students may bring to the table and [honor] how it will impact their work” as future counselors or counselor educators. She stated that she wants to model to students the importance of considering cultural lenses and their impact on how people experience life and view situations. To demonstrate that each person has their own experiences based on who they are, during moments of good teaching Jenny might share a story with her students from when she was a school counselor, and follow it up by simply stating that this was her experience. She shared that she will then invite students to share how they viewed her story, or what they felt about her story, or how they might have done things differently—particularly based on cultural differences. She explained that, to her, it was imperative to consider students’ cultural lenses while teaching and allow students the opportunity to share their beliefs and experiences as they relate to culture so that students will learn from each other.

Sometimes I might directly call on someone who’s from a different culture and say, “Tell me how that worked for you.” I might just put a blanket statement out there: “But that’s just my experience as a White older woman, but I know some of you come from very different ethnic backgrounds, so how is that for you?” And it
always evolves into some wonderful discussion about the impact of race and gender.

Although Susan, Ben, Glen, and Jenny spent time talking about the importance of class discussions in their moments of good teaching, Paul emphasized its importance the strongest. Paul reported that he uses class discussion almost exclusively as he is teaching. Paul explained that his teaching comes from the perspective of social construction, from which learning takes place through conversations in which all members of the class are contributing.

The cultivation of meaning doesn’t come before we enter class. Yes, students have interacted with the material and done their readings, but the learning takes place in the class. I focus on the social construction of meaning, and if I adopt that perspective I don’t know what it’s going to look like. So, it is spontaneous; not linear, I’ve had peers of mine that have sat in say it’s chaotic, but useful. I’ve had evaluations that were written to say, “Dr. _____’s class seemed chaotic and all over the place, but when you see the class end and the students walk out it’s very evident that they learned a lot.”

Class discussion as opposed to lecture is important to Paul because he expressed he “truly believes[s] that [he] doesn’t have anything to give [to students] in terms of content.” His perspective was students create what they need to learn through conversation rather than by him providing them information. Paul noted that he wants the classroom to be filled with many voices contributing ideas, thoughts, feelings, and
experiences. As a result, Paul believes that “good teaching happens when there is not a monologue,” but rather conversations between students and the teacher.

For me, good teaching is taking place when there’s not a monologue, whether that means I’m finding myself doing all the talking or whether I notice that it’s only one student doing all the talking. So when it turns out to be a group conversation, that’s one sign to me that good teaching is taking place.

Paul promotes an atmosphere of dialogue in his classroom by arranging the students’ chairs in a half circle so that when students sit down they are able to see and face one another. Paul “immediately set[s] up the [class] environment to facilitate conversation” by “ask[ing] students to turn [the chairs] into a half circle or a U [shape].” Paul finds his seat in the front of the half circle; “sitting with the students, not standing up front.” He sees his role in the classroom as a “facilitator of conversation” and as a “co-learner.” He does not lecture or present information, unless students need clarification about information in the assigned readings.

My emphasis is on process, conversations, and relationships. For me, that takes place much better when I’m sitting with students versus sitting up in front, or tapping away at PowerPoint presentations. I don’t use those because I think it takes away from what I’ve been communicating to you, so you’re going to be seeing me as if I was another member of the class, as a learner.

Paul shared that class conversation is centered around the material they are learning and most often it begins by discussing the assigned reading for the day. He expects that students come prepared for class having read the assignment: “I’m always
looking for the meaning that the students are grasping of the material that they’ve had to encounter whether it’s through some experiential activity or reading that they’ve had to come to class having read.” He believes that students “are capable of being self-directed learners” and they must be prepared to participate in class discussions by completing their assigned readings before class.

I have expectations for students as having the capacity to be self directed learners . . . I have the expectation that there should be an inherent motivation to learn the material since we’re in a professional program, whether it’s the masters degree in counseling or the doc program . . . my feelings are that I expect them to come prepared to learn the material . . . they’re responsible for reading the material . . . they’re also responsible for letting me know what needs to be clarified.

Paul also noted as the students converse with one another, he sees himself as another member of the class: “I put myself in as a learner . . . a participant . . . a co-learner might be another way to frame it.” As Paul has input he shares it with the class, rather than keeping his opinions, feelings, or ideas to himself.

If I hear conversations taking place between the students as they discuss the material for the day, if something new comes to me . . . some new meaning that I have about the material . . . I’ll contribute that back as if I was just a regular participant of the class, like any regular student.

However, he works hard to stay out of the process, and allows it to be student led: “part of that for me means I need to stay out of that [discussion] process as much as possible.”
As described above the participants relayed the message that class discussion is an integral part of moments of good teaching. According to participants, class dialogue was important so that students could share their own ideas and experiences related to course content with each other. Paul reported that discussion is invaluable, as he has adopted the perspective that learning is socially constructed, which necessitates conversation among the whole class. Participants also reported that discussion is useful for students to reflect on what they are learning and that it assists in attributing meaning to the material.

**Self-reflection is important for learning.** Participants reported that students can teach themselves through self-reflecting, ascribing meaning to what they are learning, and applying concepts. Participants concurred that self-reflection was important so that students were able to think critically, answer their own questions, gain confidence, and improve their likelihood of engaging in life-long professional learning. Participants described this process happening most often through class discussion, facilitated by posing reflective questions to students, experiential activities, applying concepts to case studies, and small group work.

Paul noted that as he was facilitating classroom dialogue his goal was to not only allow space for students to offer each other ideas and viewpoints in an effort to construct shared knowledge (see previous category of this belief), but also to encourage a process in which students reflect on their thoughts and feelings about course content. He was “more interested in different thinking processes in those moments of good teaching versus just dispensing, or as [I] would say more cynically dumping information.” Instead he thought he was “facilitating a multi-faceted thinking process that involves the
cognitive realm and the domain of feeling.” He expressed reflection on affect and discussion of feelings was crucial to learning.

I think the discussion of feelings in relation to any material to be learned is very explicit from the beginning of my classes. It is another source of information in learning. It’s another source of information for decision making, so I make it explicit that when we talk about whatever needs to be learned, that we’ll also be talking about feelings. [For example], “I’m feeling angry when I read about this kind of stuff,” or “I’m feeling confused, or I’m feeling thrilled, or I’m feeling excited.”

He expressed hope that students will be able to make their own personal meaning out of the course content; therefore while teaching he encourages his students to think critically, and reflectively make meaning out of the information they have. He reported believing that “[he] must facilitate the meaning making process by modeling [his] own reflective processes” and encouraging students to be aware of their thoughts and feelings about what they are learning by asking reflective questions. As previously mentioned, Paul’s classes include the students sitting in a U-shape so that they can see and hear one another during class. To engage students in self-reflection he asks process oriented questions (e.g., “What do you feel about the reading?” “What are your reactions and experiences when hearing about this topic?”). As noted in the above quote, Paul teaches through discussion of feelings and experiences in relation to the topics of the course. Paul engages his student in a reflective process to ascribe meaning to what they are learning and continue this process for the future.
I don’t think we’ll ever teach students about all the content that needs to be known because each and every month, each and every day, there’s probably new content that could be taught. For me, it’s more about teaching a process.

To start a class, Paul shared that he might ask his students to offer their thoughts, impressions, and feelings about their reading from the last week. He described himself as remaining quiet and waiting for students to take the lead in the discussion. As previously mentioned in Belief 1, Paul relies on his intuition and on his tracking of student’s nonverbal expressions when he leads them into a reflective space during class, and he hopes to help students talk out loud with one another about their internal thinking process. To help “them bring out those internal conversations” Paul remarked that he might ask reflective questions: “How did you feel when you read that?” or “What are you experiencing as your classmate talked about that?” He might also direct a statement to someone: “Looks like you’ve got something to share,” after reading body language when his intuition tells him the student might have a reaction to the discussion. To facilitate students seeing a different perspective or to prompt them to go deeper into their thinking and then share their ideas with the rest of the class, Paul mentioned the following:

I’ll pose some open-ended question that is reflexive. What tells me that I’m on track is when I get a student giving me a blank look that goes something like, “I hadn’t thought of it that way.” Or if I ask a question that I believe is reflexive and kind of pushes things in a different frame, then the students give a blank look and they don’t answer right away, and they’re silent. I get a sense that I change the frame or the view of the knowledge and the material that’s being discussed and
allowing them to have some conversation inside of themselves, trying to make sense of it. Giving them space to make that sense and then they might share what meaning they’re grasping. So I’m always looking for the meaning that the students are grasping of the material that they’ve had to encounter whether it’s through some experiential activity or reading that they’ve had to come to class having read.

Paul reported that after weeks of him having these discussions, students begin to initiate the process. These are the moments that he deems as “good teaching.”

[During moments of good teaching] you’d see less [note taking] and more eyes on other members of the class. You would see students feeding off of each other’s conversations, students asking each other questions about their take on the material and what they’re learning, and questions that I might ask, or like those reflective questions that I talked about before, over time you’d see more and more students doing that, and it’s almost as if they take over the class themselves so to speak.

Ben also valued the process of meaning making in learning and encourages students to participate in self-reflection after they have learned, discussed, or participated in an experiential activity. During moments of good teaching, Ben facilitates reflective conversations after his students engage in experiential activities.

I don’t see humans as passive recipients of knowledge. I believe in constructive based learning. I think people learn by doing and then looking at their doing afterwards. So, all of my classes are real active. The extent to which I get them
actively engaged is probably the biggest factor in what I consider good teaching.

So that’s, in my opinion, the first requisite as a constructivist to meaningful learning. The second part, is making sense out of what they’ve just done both in the moment and afterwards, so that’s what I try to do.

Ben thought that for optimal learning to occur, students must make meaning of what they had experienced while engaged in their practical activities. Ben typically had his students record their counseling interactions with one another and review them during class. This procedure of watching themselves with Ben and the rest of the class appeared important so students could reflect and make meaning of their processes and experiences. During moments of good teaching, Ben encouraged reflection by asking process-oriented questions such as, “What happened here; be descriptive?” His goal was to be a “facilitator, not a teacher in the traditional role of the teacher, but more like in a Socratic way by asking [students] questions to get them to think more deeply about what they’re doing.” Ben continued:

The process of thinking about what has occurred and making sense of it all in words allows that experience that you’ve participated in to become learning, and it becomes new knowledge because the experience alone, without the process of reflection, is just an experience and there’s no learning.

In providing time for reflection, Ben hoped that students will learn more about the process of counseling rather than what is “right or wrong.” His hope was that students will trust their instincts and ultimately rely on themselves for answers in the future. During moments of good teaching, Ben avoided telling his students that they did
something “right or wrong.” He refrained from judging their counseling interactions. His goal has been to guide his students to find their own answers to their own questions by engaging them in conversations that encourage them to problem solve and reflect on their processes of being engaged in the experiential activities because he believes this will help them in their future dilemma:

If [they don’t pull answers from themselves] they’re just going to be dependant on me for every answer, and I’m not going to be there for them all the time. So that’s how I know [when to help them reflect on their process], when I start feeling and getting the sense that they’re looking for directives, that’s when it’s time for them to pull it back into themselves.

Jenny also noted the occurrence of student reflection during good teaching moments, particularly to gain confidence, trust their instincts, and answer their own questions.

I spend time trying to get students to reflect upon their own work and to trust their instincts. Some people do that well and some people don’t, and if I find a student who has a hard time with that I try to work on their ability to be reflective, because I want them to have a sense of confidence in what they’re trying.

To encourage reflection, Jenny might facilitate a group dialogue that requires students to talk about what they are learning and have them apply it to their future practice as counselors. For example, after presenting an intervention to the class, she will have students practice the intervention with one another, and then engage them in discussion about their experiences in trying the intervention:
[I will ask] “Do you agree that an empty chair might be a good technique?” There are some people who would say “I’d never do that—it would be uncomfortable” or “I’ve never heard about that before, I can’t wait to try it when I’m in practice.” I try to engage the learner into learning enough that they’re able to bring that into their own realm of consciousness . . . and activities that they’re going to do as a professional.

The preceding quote illustrates how Jenny engages students in conversation about how they might use the skills they are learning when they are counselors. She reported believing this is important because she wants her students to reflect on what they know, be able to apply concepts, and trust themselves that they will make strong decisions. Jenny wants her students to experience “an empowerment and a sense of who they can become,” and how they can be as counselors.

Susan also explained that it was important to encourage student reflection over course material and to find opportunities for them to apply concepts to their own future counseling practice.

[Students] need to be able to talk about [course material; concepts] in a way that’s comfortable and express confidence, and where it really does show that they’ve integrated it into who they are. I think that’s one of the signs that students are learning. When they can converse about the information in a way that’s comfortable and more in depth than just spitting back what they’re reading.

Susan expressed that she also facilitates a process in which students have the opportunity to reflect on how they will apply what they are learning. She recalled a time
when she used case studies and encouraged students to work in groups to brainstorm ways they can apply concepts:

We talked about developmental theory, and then I gave several case studies and asked students to work in pairs first and look at their case study and talk about the application of developmental theory and then after they had the chance to work in pairs, then I have them work in larger groups. . . . The students got very involved. There was a lot of good discussion, they were providing a lot of personal examples from their experiences.

After learning how to use course concepts, Susan wants students to reflect upon how they will integrate what they have learned into their counseling practice.

I often ask them to talk about how they would describe their practice as a counselor or what they view as their future practice as a counselor, “How are they going to practice? What are they going to do? What’s important?” [I do this] so that they’re able to have a sense of how they can describe how it’s going to be meaningful to them and really be able to talk about it.

It is during these moments of good teaching, when Susan has facilitated an activity that helps the students achieve deeper understanding and confidence in learning new material and when they can articulate how they will use the material in their future as counselors, that Susan begins to feel satisfied that students are learning.

The data in the above section provided evidence that participants (particularly, Paul, Ben, Susan, and Jenny) believe in the importance of facilitating a process in which students interact with each other and with course content in an effort to share multiple
perspectives with one another, teach each other, and reflect on what they are learning. These teaching methods were reported to increase the possibilities of students relying on themselves for answers, thinking critically, applying concepts to their future practice as counselors, and acquiring a better understanding of the learning process in order to teach themselves in the future.

**Belief 4: Students Learn to Become Counselors Through Experiencing Content**

A fourth belief that contributed to the participants’ experience of good teaching is that counselor education is a professional training program in which they are preparing and teaching students to be counselors. This belief was evident across participants as they talked about the importance of students leaving their classrooms with the knowledge and experiences they need to be good counselors. This belief led the participants to provide students with concrete information and experiences that improve their knowledge and skills to be effective counselors. The categories included in this theme are: (a) teachers must teach important counseling content, (b) students should practice and experience concepts through experiential activities, and (c) students need to exhibit content and skill mastery on graded assignments. Glen, Zoe, Ben, and Jenny are most representative in this belief, although Paul contributed as well. Table 6 summarizes the categories.

**Teachers must teach counseling content.** Participants represented in this belief agreed that there is important counseling information that students need to know in order to be well-trained counselors, pass licensure exams, and be effective for clients. For Glen, an outcome of good teaching is “ensuring that students who take [the] course leave with a
Table 6

Summary of Categories for Belief 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Common Words Used</th>
<th>Teaching Methods Associated With Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers must teach counseling content</td>
<td>Content is a priority</td>
<td>Staying knowledgeable, prepared, and staying aware of current professional trends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Continually reading to prepare for class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparations</td>
<td>Lectures supplemented with stories; questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Activities for students to apply course material</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supplementing with movies; technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiential activities are important</td>
<td>Role-modeling</td>
<td>Role-modeling interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional training</td>
<td>Experiential activities to practice counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiential activities</td>
<td>“Counsel” one another with real problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice skills</td>
<td>Taping interactions for viewing and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students need to exhibit mastery on graded</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>Having students give presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>assignments</td>
<td>Pass/fail grading</td>
<td>Formal exams</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Pass/Fail grading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for students to re-do work</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing feedback and comments to students</td>
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</table>

strong foundation of counseling.” He wants students to learn and memorize the information he is teaching them so that they can be well prepared counselors.

Outcome is important; what they learn. Sometimes I think we have a lot of poorly trained counselors because a lot of counselor educators don’t stress learning. They stress feeling good and they teach counseling skills to a certain degree, but I don’t think we’re turning winners out there as counselors, and I feel a little discouraged about that. I don’t think we’re turning out smart counselors.

Glen continued by saying,

In counseling there are certain things you learn to build yourself as a counselor so that you can do it well. I mean how do you leave a program and not know facts?
Counseling skills are also critical, but it’s a combination of knowledge and skills that make a good counselor.

During moments of good teaching, Glen felt that he knew the material he was teaching well enough to provide in-depth lectures to his students. He mentioned taking his role as a teacher seriously and remarked that “people count on [him]” to know enough about the topic he was teaching and be able to teach it well.

People respond more to a sense that you know what you’re talking about and a sense that good teachers are, without over dramatizing this, powerful and all-knowing. I don’t really like those words specifically, but the point is that people count on you, and if you’re a good teacher you have to really know the topic.

To Glen, being prepared and confident means that he knows the information well and can talk about it in depth. Most often he prepares himself for class through his research and writing. He acknowledges that he cannot know all there is to know about topics that he teaches but having a level of comfort with the material in order to teach it confidently is important to him.

I think there is a depth of knowledge and confidence that I have when I feel like I know the topic really, really well. And that’s probably in a subject that I have experience [with]. I think that self-confidence is important in how you come across to students.

Jenny also talked about the importance of being well prepared to teach. When Jenny is teaching she mentioned that she wants to make sure she is teaching “competently in that [she] need[s] to know the body of literature of whatever it is that [she’s] teaching.” This
is particularly true if she teaches a class that is new to her. She wants to go into the class “knowing as much as [she] can about the body of knowledge around the topic that [she will] be teaching.” She mentioned that in her preparation for classes she researches good books to use, and she reads as much as she can. A reflection of this is that her classes are ever changing:

What I teach today is different from what I taught 20 years ago because there’s 20 years of knowledge here that I’ve been reading and staying on. I bring a lot of current events. I love theory, but to me it’s the application of theory [that’s important] because that’s who we are—we’re interacting with students and clients.

Both Glen and Jenny wanted students to learn enough information from them to be competent counselors. To Glen, providing students with course “content takes priority,” therefore he “organizes classes around learning [activities] based on the content being taught.” Providing students with information related to the course topics he was teaching became his main priority. If teaching a high-content course, such as theory or testing, he would use more lecture and story-telling methods to teach the course content:

I think experiential exercises are a creative aspect of what we do especially in the counseling field but they sometimes take second billing because there just isn’t enough time, so it’s a dilemma. I think I try to use experiential activities here and there or show a little video instead of doing a group exercise.

For content courses, lectures were Glen’s primary method of teaching. When describing his moments of good teaching it was apparent that he prepared PowerPoints to
keep him on track as he taught, and he supplemented his lectures with stories to illustrate his points, jokes to keep students engaged, questions that spark discussions, and videos to make concepts come alive.

I do lectures, and I have PowerPoints. I have required readings and other activities, and I encourage some discussion around the content. I also have homework assignments, for example, in my theories class they read and answer some questions and that becomes topics of discussion for class. In testing, for the first half of the semester I give them some “stat” homework so we can talk about it and they put it up on the board and we talk about it in class.

To Jenny, part of preparing students to be “good counselors” is by helping them to be competent. She stated that “competence comes from knowing what to do—it’s the skills.” Her hope is that students will leave her classes with a good knowledge base, as well as knowing how to find information that they might need when they are in the field. One method she uses while teaching in order to prepare students to learn important information is by providing specific points in her lectures that will be concrete and easy to remember. Jenny likes to use “models and lists” to help her students remember important concepts and ideas.

I think it’s a good way to teach from a model, [for example], “here is a four step approach to career counseling.” I want students to remember important things, so I might try to [say during a lecture], “Okay, here are three key points that you’ll want to remember when you’re talking to a principal who doesn’t agree you should be in the classroom.”
Providing students information is important in the structure of good teaching. Glen and Jenny put emphasis on teaching students through lecture, and in order to do so effectively, they ensure they are well prepared with the content by reading and engaging in scholarship.

Although Paul relies on discussion among students to relay course material rather than formal lectures to disseminate information, he also commented on the importance of him being prepared and knowledgeable about course content when he is teaching.

[Good teaching] requires me to be familiar enough with the material to be able to talk about it, again not in a linear fashion such as today we’re going to go through points a through z, [but] I need to know points a-z in my mind well enough that we might go from A to Z to Q to D to Q. I need to know them well enough and be prepared and knowledgeable enough about the material to go wherever the nonlinear flow goes. Some peers might say, “You don’t look like you come prepared to class,” because I don’t have a power point and I don’t have notes. I have the material in such a way that it’s me and I can go with the flow.

Being prepared and knowledgeable was clearly evident throughout interviews with Glen, Jenny, and Paul. Specifically, for Glen and Jenny being prepared was associated with methods of lecturing and creating activities to help ensure that students were learning important information.

**Experiential activities are important.** A second area in the belief that counselor education prepares students to be effective counselors focuses on experiential activities. All participants described using experiential activities at some point during moments of
good teaching. Four participants provided detailed comments on their use of experiential activities.

Zoe remarked that counselor education is a “professional training program” and as a result, learning information from the professional literature was important. Zoe often provided examples of the concepts they were learning and how she facilitated their interactions with one another through experiential activities.

One of the things that I tell the students in my class is that this isn’t a master’s degree or a doctoral degree that you just take some classes and pick up your diploma, but that it really is a professional training program. It’s not just about them getting some head knowledge, it’s about them understanding the material and then being able to apply it.

While recounting moments of her own good teaching, Zoe described setting up classroom activities where she lectured about counseling information and then encouraged students to try activities with one another. Zoe thought that by doing experiential activities, students learned how their knowledge could take shape in their counseling. Her hope was that they would learn what it is like to be in the presence of another person while counseling and experience what it might be like to be in the position of their future clients.

[Helping students to experience what their clients might experience] is important for them. To have some sense of what that means to really be with another person. They can experience those things with each other in a classroom. It’s not
therapy by any means, but it is being present and being immediate and being genuine and taking some of the masks off and letting go of some of those facades. Zoe also described herself as modeling counseling to her students in an effort to help them understand a particular intervention and experience what it might be like to be a client.

Sometimes I’ll do an exercise with them to help them to experience [an intervention]. For example, in group class the other night I did a guided meditation to help them experience how I would begin a group so that they could get a sense of what that was like. When we finished it they had an understanding of that [intervention in] a way that they hadn’t had before and that they couldn’t get from a book. I truly believe that [counseling] is 10% science and 90% art, and the art is, just like Rogers said, about people as counselors.

After participating in experiential activities, Zoe thought it was important for students to process what they had just tried and experienced through the activity. During moments of good teaching she found herself facilitating a discussion about what it was like to practice their counseling skills with another person. She might ask reflective questions to encourage deeper thought about what they may have noticed about themselves as they were engaged with their classmate during the activity.

Bringing the actual counseling experience into the class [is important] so that they experience it as part of the class and not something they just read about. It may not be something intimately personal, but it’s personal in how you’re responding to the activities. [They’re] going to be asked about [their] response in relation to
the provision of service to clients. “You aren’t a block of wood sitting there, what’s your response to that?” Sometimes that takes some real work for people to be able to do that. That’s also how I know when they’re getting it. I see them loosen up and become real.

Jenny also used experiential activities with students in an effort to experience how concepts take shape in a counseling interaction, but also to experience what it is like to interact with another person.

We’re teaching people to be professionals who are going to interact with other people, so I try as much as I can to infuse activities into the classroom where they have to engage with each other.

First, Jenny might role-model a particular theory or skill before she asks students to practice.

If I’m teaching theories, and I want them to learn how to do an empty chair technique, I give them the information about when and where an empty chair technique might be used. Then I demonstrate and share steps to an empty chair technique.

After demonstrating a skill, such as an empty chair intervention, Jenny has her students practice the skill they are learning. As students are interacting with each other and practicing their skills, Jenny mentioned that she walks around, listens in on groups, and offers feedback. If she hears cues that students understand how to utilize concepts she believes that they are gaining competence in their skills. She mentioned that she might hear them saying, “This makes sense to me, I can do this. That’s how I want to be
when working [as a counselor].” She noted that she likes hearing these statements because, to her, it is a sign that students are becoming more confident in their abilities and skills as future counselors. Students showing confidence in their skills was an important goal for Jenny in her desire to prepare effective counselors.

Ben also thought that practical interactions are important in the learning process. He noted that he might “only lecture 15 minutes, on average each class, the bulk of it [the time] is spent with them doing stuff.” During moments of good teaching, Ben briefly presents a concept, theory, or skill, and the remainder of the class time is spent in combination of a practical experience and discussion.

Most of my teaching tends to be more practice based, and I know [the researcher] didn’t want people with internship and practicum, and I don’t teach any of those courses, but in all the courses I teach we do activities as a major function of the course. When I’m working with activities with students, counseling scenarios, that kind of thing, that’s when I think the best teaching in my room occurs.

During moments of good teaching, Ben introduces an activity in which students have to counsel each other on some real issue that they might be experiencing and apply the course topics they are learning to the counseling interaction. Ben wanted his students to take these activities seriously, and he wanted them to experience optimal learning. For this reason, he chose to not have them role-play during these counseling interactions. Instead, he asked members of the class to consider real problems (which they did not mind sharing) for use in the interactions.
In my way of teaching, like in theories, they’re practicing the whole time with clients, they’re not real live clients—let me step back, they are real live clients they’re just not from outside the program, it’s their peers. So, it’s real clients with real issues, but they’re their peers; other students in the class. So, I don’t use role-plays, I found those to be very ineffective for training people because when the counselors are asking good questions of the person and doing the things that they should they usually stump the pretend client because they don’t know the issue well enough to respond.

To start these counseling interactions, Ben had “students perform interventions with [each other] at the same time they were learning theories and using the textbook knowledge to understand what they were doing and to understand themselves.” He thought that having students practice theories “breeds imitation rather than critical self-reflection.” Instead of copying and imitating intervention without thought of how the theory may be helpful, he wanted students to “do interventions and use theories to make sense of what they’re doing with clients and how they’re thinking about their issues.” That is, he wanted students to be immersed in the theory and use it with one another in order to conceptualize their work. As they are interacting with one another, his students make tapes so that they can watch them as a group and reflect on their experiences:

They make tapes throughout this class that are authentic and we’ll watch those together, and the students are supposed to be self reflective; that’s the major goal of the class—how to reflect in the moment, and so they watch the tapes and they reflect and they think about what types of theories they might be using without
knowing it, [what they naturally use without being able to name the theory] . . . so helping them think through their counseling interactions.

The data revealed that experiential activities are important in training students to be counselors. First, they allow them to practice skills and have a clearer understanding of how the information they are learning from books looks in real time. Second, experiential activities offer students an opportunity to practice what it is like to be authentically engaged with another person, just as they will be doing when they are a counselor, and then reflect on the experience.

**Students need to exhibit mastery on graded assignments.** A final aspect of good teaching, that is included in the belief that counselor education is a professional preparation program, includes the use of graded assignments to assess the teaching and learning process. Assignments are helpful for teachers to evaluate where students are in their understanding of content and skill mastery and then to continue teaching until students exhibit that they have mastered the information. This type of grade does not become the final grade; rather it indicates how much more learning needs to be done. Zoe, Jenny, and Ben explained that as they are teaching students to be effective counselors, it is their duty to ensure that students have opportunities to improve their work.

Zoe wanted her students to succeed, and she thought that having a good learning experience was more important than final grades. As a result, Zoe offered students feedback on assignments before they turned them in. She explained giving feedback to
students helped ensure that they were learning for future success and not just receiving a grade.

I try to be of service in making my classes an opportunity for them to learn. I give them the opportunity in the classroom to grow; for example, by having projects due a little earlier so that they have another week to re-look, re-think, and go over it one more time and have the opportunity to get some feedback from me. Zoe described an instance in which she graded and failed a student’s assignment; however, rather then finalizing the grade and moving on to the next assignment she invited the student to talk to her.

I gave him a zero, but I gave him the opportunity to come in and talk to me about it. We talked about it, and I realized that he really understood the concepts but was having some difficulty putting it in writing (English was his second language). It would have been easy to give him the zero, but when we met, and we talked about it, I felt comfortable giving him the points for the paper.

Being supportive and offering feedback was important to Jenny, as well. She thought that while classroom learning is important, moments of good teaching continue outside of the classroom while grading papers. Jenny mentioned being careful as she reads through students’ assignments; she makes an effort to continue moments of teaching and learning by providing a lot of feedback to students.

I will always read their papers, and I always comment on their papers. There’s rarely a page that I don’t put something down, and I would say 75% of my
comments are supportive comments, this is a fun part of teaching, and 25% of my comments are what I would call constructive.

There are times when Jenny might come across assignments that she knows are not the students’ best work. She believes that knowledge and competency are more important than final grades, and as a result she provides students with as much feedback as she can and offers them opportunities to improve their work and understanding of concepts and skills. “For me the accomplishment is [student] mastery. They do it until they get it. If they don’t critique the article in the way I’ve asked them to critique it, I ask them to redo it.”

In asking students to redo work Jenny thinks she is not only helping them truly learn and understand the material in the course but she is also giving them the message that as a counselor they must be competent.

What I try to get them to see is that when [they] are working, [their] clients want their mastery; they want [them] to be the best, and if [they] didn’t give them their best in the first part of the session, they [must] stop and do a better job the second half [of the session]. Always keep trying to get better with competence and especially in counseling because there is no right answer. I want [students] to rise to the occasion, and I want them to work hard to learn [what I am teaching].

In Ben’s experience, moments of good teaching also occur in the process of grading. Over the past years, Ben moved from formal grading to a complex pass/fail system, which he developed and “implemented standards through a process of 7-8 years of teaching different classes.”
Ben shared that by eliminating formal grades, his students were more focused on intrinsic motivations to learn and were less focused on getting work done just to earn the grade they want. He commented, “Students now focus on what they’re learning instead of what they’re earning.” Ben tells his students that he only accepts “A” work, and he works with students until they are able to turn in assignments that are “A” worthy.

Everything needs to be A level work or it’s redone, which creates a lot of work for me because I’m having people redo stuff all the time, and then I have to grade it twice or watch a video twice or whatever. I’ll stick with [students] as long as [they’re] willing to stick with it.

Ben shared, “if they don’t pass I let them redo it. I’ve got some minimum requirements for all the classes. Students have to be able to do certain things to move on to the next assignment.” During moments of good teaching, Ben will hand back a less than acceptable assignment to a student. Rather than penalizing the student with a poor grade, he tells the student to redo the work. By doing this, he encourages the student to work until he or she learns more and understands the counseling skills or topics better. Ben thought that if he gives a final grade on the assignment and does not allow the student to do it again, the student will forget about the topic and therefore not learn what is expected. Ben noticed that during these times of returning work to students there is a change in their attitude about learning and about assignments:

The conversation then becomes, “How can I improve this?” rather than “How can I get a better grade?” That just takes the conversation in a totally different direction; one that’s very helpful for the learner.
Glen also remarked about grading and mastery of assignments while recounting moments of good teaching by stating, “I think outcome is important [and] I think tests are critical. I know a lot of [teachers] are afraid to give tests.” Glen noted that for him learning outcome is important in producing good counselors. He continued by sharing the importance of students being able to leave his class with being prepared and knowledgeable and part of that comes from learning and memorizing important information.

We have to learn and memorize things all the time as a basis for other learning. You have to memorize ABC’s, you have to memorize numbers for counting . . . similarly in counseling there are certain things you learn to build yourself as a counselor so that you can do it well.

As the data suggested, part of the structure of good teaching included the beliefs that teachers must be prepared to provide students with important information about counseling, students benefit from participating in experiential activities, and assignments and exams can be evidence that students are learning. During moments of good teaching, participants are teaching their students through lecture, role modeling, facilitating experiential activities, and helping them master information through assignments and tests.

Belief 5: Teacher Reflection is Important

Data suggested that participants had a common belief that their moments of good teaching were influenced by reflection. Reflexive practices among participants were evident in two ways: (a) reflective about feedback from peers and students in evaluation
and ideas on content during class, and (b) reflective about course assignments and activities. Data revealed in Susan, Jenny, Glen, and Paul’s interviews were most supportive of the belief. Table 7 summarizes the categories of this belief.

**Reflective about feedback from peers and students.** Susan and Jenny’s data indicated that that they take time to be reflective about the feedback they receive from their peers and their students. Susan thought that, for her, moments of good teaching happen more often when she takes time to reflect on her teaching and to be thoughtful about the feedback she receives from her peers and her students. Susan was “willing to reflect constantly on what [she is] doing, what [she is] trying to do, and what [she] sees happening in the classroom.” Susan participated in a peer teaching program at her university in which she was paired with a faculty member, outside of counselor education, in order to observe each other’s teaching, to provide formative and summative evaluations, and to discuss their teaching. Susan described this process as helpful in identifying and maintaining moments of good teaching.

[Peer teaching programs] encourage focusing in on [moments of good teaching] and striving for more of them, and to be able to talk about [our good teaching moments] is really nice. It’s an outlet for saying, “I’m really excited, and I think this really went well, and I want to share it.” We take teaching for granted, we just sort of suppose we’re doing it right, and I think that opportunities like these peer evaluation programs encourage focusing more on [our moments of good teaching] and being more mindful about what we’re doing in classes.
Table 7

Summary of Categories for Belief 5

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Common Words Used</th>
<th>Teaching Methods Associated With Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective about feedback from peers and students reflection</td>
<td>Feedback, Evaluations, I am changed, Influence, I learn from students</td>
<td>Participation in peer mentoring programs, Sharing ideas with other faculty, Encouraging students to respectfully challenge, Teacher “doesn’t know everything,”, Hearing student perspectives, Asking students to share ideas and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective about course assignments and activities</td>
<td>Mindful, Intentional</td>
<td>Considering the purpose of assignments, Informing students why topics were chosen</td>
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It is during these conversations with peers that she is able to verbalize her successes, get new ideas, and consider new ways of doing things in the classroom. Susan noted that having a peer from a discipline other than counselor education was particularly helpful. Having someone who is outside of the counseling discipline is very useful … since that person isn’t familiar with the content they’re often able to focus more on the activities and the interaction in the classroom and we can talk more about teaching and not get side tracked into content.

Susan also thought that students have valuable insights into her teaching process, and therefore she solicits their feedback and evaluations in order to create more moments of good teaching.

I do get a lot of feedback from students, we do have the typical evaluation that the university gives, but I ask [students] more specific questions. For instance,
about the textbook and assignments. [I might ask], “If you were asked to do this assignment again, what would you change about it? What did you like about it?” Jenny “find[s] that [student feedback] contributes to good teaching” and seeks opportunities to solicit student feedback:

In a normal class over a semester I do my own midterm evaluation. I will say, “How is this class going? Are you getting what you need from this class? What aren’t you getting that you still want? What can I do better?” Jenny thought that to create moments of good teaching it is essential to consider her students’ feedback and incorporate it into subsequent classes.

Whenever you’re able to ask a learner for feedback I think it helps them feel that they are making a contribution to the class. That helps them to be more engaged so sometimes I will bring that information to the next class. [For example], I will say, “Someone asked me about special education laws and what’s the role of the school counselor around that, and while I’m not a special education expert here’s one thing that I’ve had a lot of experience in when I was a school counselor working with special education kids.”

Participants also acknowledged that students can influence them by teaching them alternative perspectives. Susan remarked that her knowledge is not rigid; she reported that she learns and is influenced by students:

What I think is really important, is that in the exchange [of information] I am also challenged to think about information in a different way or from a different point of view, and I learn a great deal as well.
In moments of good teaching, Susan integrates students’ ideas into her existing knowledge. She gives them space to express fresh ideas; she honors everyone’s input, and she acknowledges their statements by saying things like: “That’s a good point. I see what you’re saying. I never thought of it that way—I like it.” She began to integrate what they said into her comments during lectures and discussions. In addition, Susan did not “pretend to know everything.” She set up an environment in which she could share her own struggles with material, where she could be challenged, and where the students were encouraged to share their own struggles, ideas, and challenges: “I don’t have any problem with challenges, and I let them know that they can challenge me. I don’t pretend to know everything. Those are the kind of things that I hope allow for that environment of exchange.”

As previously noted in Belief 3, Jenny remarked on the importance of informing students that her awareness is limited to her experiences as a 63-year-old Caucasian female, and thus she seeks information from students of different cultures in order to gain a deeper understanding of others.

I try to practice what I preach, so if I’m telling a story about how I’ve worked with someone I might directly call on someone who’s from a different culture and say “Tell me how that worked for you.” I might just put a blanket statement out there and say, “But that’s just my experience as a White older woman, but I know some of you come from very different ethnic backgrounds. How is that for you?” And it always evolves into some wonderful discussion about the impact of race and gender.
Paul shared a feeling of vulnerability when encouraging students to lead the discussion. He viewed himself as a “co-learner,” and remarked that he learns from his students.

When good teaching is taking place the students are actively involved, and they’re making connections with the material and connections with the material in ways that may be new to me, so there’s a bit of vulnerability for me wondering, “Wow, I didn’t think of that.” I see that as really valuable. I wonder, “Can I move with that? Can I catch up with that student, so to speak, or do I have to?” But there are feelings of vulnerability and fear when it’s going well.

**Reflective about course assignments and activities.** Participants also alluded to the importance of being mindful about their course structure, assignments, and activities. In addition, it was important for some participants to acknowledge the perceived power teachers may have over the class and the topics that would be studied.

Susan thought moments of good teaching require her to be mindful and intentional about how she presents course material and how she chooses assignments. To encourage moments of good teaching Susan carefully considered what she asks students to do to ensure they have optimal learning experiences. When determining assignments she “wants to be clear about [her] purpose in giving the assignments” and she considers the assignment “in terms of how [students] might approach it.” She lets students know that everything she asks “them to do [she] has a specific purpose for and all the assignments and the papers that they are asked to write or do in class [she] has a
specific purpose in mind.” When creating assignments and activities that contribute to moments of good teaching, Susan is purposeful and intentional.

When I create [assignments and activities] I’m thinking to myself, “What is it I hope happens with giving this assignment? What kind of things am I looking for? What would be evidence that the students are learning? What concepts [am I] basing the assignment on?”

Glen and Paul shared that they are reflective and mindful of the power they have in choosing the topics they cover in class. Glen noted that he is “responsible for and in charge of what’s happening in the classroom, and therefore needs to make good choices [about what material is being taught and how it is taught].” Glen thought that by being a teacher, students expect that he will lead the class. In describing this, Glen sometimes refers to it as having power in the classroom—“not power in the sense that [I am] more important than students or powerful over students, but rather [I have] power to make choices in how [he] will teach students and in creating a learning atmosphere.”

Paul was also mindful that he is making choices about what the students are learning, and it is important to him that he informs students that there is more information to learn that might not be included in the course.

We talk about my role in choosing the content and that it doesn’t equate to all that’s out there. I set it up by having them realize you’re not learning all that you need to know about qualitative research just in this class, and that, as an active constructor of meaning as an educator, I am making choices based on research, based on values, and that there’s other stuff out there that you might have
preferred to be in the class, and you can go get that if you want because I can’t provide all of that nor can I know what each and everyone wants from a class. I think I set that up by explaining that it’s just helping them be more aware of what the 15 weeks on a syllabus means in terms of not representing the entire world of ideas about some topic.

By being mindful of the role that they have in simply choosing the topics that are covered in class, Glen and Paul were able to acknowledge that they wanted to make informed choices about the direction and structure of their class, as well as inform students that there may be more information for them to find on their own if interested. They did not pretend that they knew all there is on a course topic and they indicated that there is information in the literature that students can seek on their own.

Susan, Zoe, Glen, and Paul shared their reflective nature by considering feedback on how to increase their moments of good teaching and attempting to acknowledge their power in the classroom by choosing the curriculum. In addition, they were able to be reflective about what they heard and learned from students by creating space in their own knowledge base and absorbing students’ information into their own schemas.

**Belief 6: It is Important to be Authentic in the Classroom**

The final common belief that contributed to the participants’ structure of the phenomenon of good teaching in counselor education was the belief that they bring a sense of authenticity to their classroom. All participants reported having sincere passion and excitement for counselor education and teaching, and shared evidence of how this passion manifests in front of students. In addition, participants shared their belief that
Table 8

Summary of Belief 6

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<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Common Words Used</th>
<th>Teaching Methods Associated With Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to be authentic in the classroom</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Role-model passion for course topics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Curiosity about student learning processes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Demonstrate enthusiasm for the profession</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Exhibit counselor/counselor educator identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Using humor to engage students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creating a fun and relaxed atmosphere</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laughing with students</td>
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</tbody>
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Teaching is fun, which leads them to bring their senses of fun and humor into the class, creating an environment in which students enjoy themselves and have fun while learning. Table 8 summarizes the categories of this belief.

When considering moments of their own good teaching, participants reported that during those times they are exhibiting a strong passion for teaching, counseling, and students. Jenny reported that she has always identified as a teacher. “I feel like I’ve dedicated my whole life to teaching.” She stated that being a teacher is part of who she is:

I’ve always been a teacher, even as a little girl I played school with teddy bears and as a young person when neighbor kids would come together we often played school, and I remember being in a teacher capacity. When I played piano I was always teaching neighbor kids and friends’ kids things on the piano to play. I was trying to think back to when I sort of feel like I began to be a teacher and it just seems to me that it’s always been a part of who I am.

Jenny goes on to say that teaching has always energized her.
Teaching energizes me. I can’t say I’m not tired after I teach . . . but some people are drained by being in the classroom and being in that role, and I’m energized by it so I look forward to it. I always reflect on what I did, and certainly some days are better than others, but I always feel good about the role that I’ve been in. Glen shared a similar excitement and charge of energy when considering his students’ learning.

When I see that a student is really caught with a new thought or a new way of viewing a situation it really excites me, and so we feed off of one another. And so, I tend to encourage that and listen to it and I might say, “That’s really interesting,” and I’ll get really excited. If I’m excited then I’m seeing something happening with my student, and so I think that’s the way I get so into it myself.

Participants remarked that their excitement and passion was evident to students. They shared that they believed that students appreciated and even absorbed their passion. For example, Paul’s “passion comes out in how [he] move[s] physically in the classroom, and in the way [he] talks, emphasizing words and [demonstrating] a sense of feeling in the words.” Paul describes his passion as being evident to the students during those moments of good teaching.

I also think what makes good teaching in terms of what I bring is that passion. Now, I say that because that’s the feedback that I’ve gotten. I know I’m passionate about stuff, I never thought it would have any impact, but what I’ve heard from students is that they benefit and enjoy interacting with that passion. I
thought I’m just being passionate because that’s just me, but now to hear that [my passion] actually helps students attend to the information because it’s contagious.

Susan also found that she is passionate during moments of good teaching. She mentioned allowing herself to show her genuine enthusiasm and passion for counseling and for the course topics of the day. Her “facial expressions are uplifted,” and she talks enthusiastically about the class material and activities. During her lectures she shares examples and she “tends to be animated.” She described her passion as being noticed and appreciated by her students:

I tend to be a very serious person, not in a negative way, but I do tend to have that kind of demeanor, but I think that when good teaching is happening that passion really comes through, and I’m probably more animated and up. I’ve had students tell me that they really appreciate my passion, and how I get excited about the subject and their learning, and they appreciate the interest in them and in their learning process.

Participants also described having excitement for their students’ learning as evidenced by staying curious about their thought process, being excited for their successes in learning, and recognizing that students are engaging in a process that prepares them for future learning.

Paul displayed his excitement for student learning by being curious about how the students are engaging and interacting with the material. He asked students more questions and he brought them deeper into their learning experience:
When I’m passionate there’s also great curiosity from me, where sometimes I feel like I could go on all day and keep asking curious questions to the student about their learning of the material or how it’s applicable in whatever realms. How I know that I’m expressing passion is that I cannot stop being curious; when my wonderings are endless, boundless, and maybe at some point to the students that’s annoying because I can always go on and ask these wonderings, curiosities in focused questions. So that’s generally a sign to me that I’m being passionate. It also looks like there’s an increased level of involvement with students, and in attending to what they’re saying rather than ignoring what they’re saying. I know that I’m more passionate when I’m also sharing my thoughts and reactions to whatever the material might be.

During the interview process, Zoe suggested numerous times that she identified strongly as a counselor and she stays authentic to that part of herself while in the classroom. Indicated by a quote previously mentioned in Belief 1, Zoe identifies as a counselor and authentically brings her counselor traits to the classroom:

One of the things I tell my class is, “I don’t know what I’m doing in academia. God has a real sense of humor, because I really am a counselor. I’m really not an academic. You may experience [this class] a little bit differently than some of your other classes.” I really am a counselor and it really is who I am and so that’s how I approach [teaching], kind of like in-service training at work.

It was evident that the participants identified with passion and excitement for teaching and counseling. All spoke freely of how they exhibit these emotions in the
classroom in an effort to excite students and remain authentic. All mentioned that this was something that their students also appreciated and they believed that at times students found it to be contagious.

Some participants also mentioned that humor and fun have a place in the classroom. When participants thought of themselves as fun or funny, they shared how this personality trait is used as a tool to engage students.

During moments of good teaching, Ben works to maintain the students’ engagement. For him, he has found that humor best fits with his personality and comes as a natural way to keep his students engaged.

I would say there’s also a little bit of an entertainer sort of thing that goes along with [good teaching]. I don’t think this is true for everybody. I’ve known many great teachers here and not all of them are funny or entertaining when they’re up there, but sometimes I’m funny.

During moments of good teaching he may share a comical story to illustrate a point, or use a funny remark to follow up some statements. He noticed that students are paying attention to what he is saying, and they will laugh. Ben will laugh and joke with students and let them know that it is acceptable to have some fun in the classroom, but he monitors this closely and ensures that he is keeping the group on task and focused. He knows that sometimes when the class is having fun and laughing, “it’s hard to get back [on task], so it’s kind of a fine line you walk if you’re trying to joke around and have a good time.” He wanted his students to stay engaged and know that “learning is fun,” but “in the back of [his] mind [he thinks], I’m not here for some need for fun or to be
entertaining, I’m here for them.” Being focused on the students and their learning was important to Ben.

While I think that’s all important to keep them engaged and interested I take it very seriously that they’re paying a lot of money for this, and I’ll say that a lot, too, “Hey, you guys are paying for this; if you want to joke around you can do that at home or some other time, we’ve got to get back to being serious here.” So, I just know, it’s always in my mind what I owe them and what they need to get out of this takes precedence—the humor, the personal anecdotes—those are just tools to help keep them engaged and active, but they can’t take over.

Paul also noted the importance of humor to him, and ultimately to his teaching: “I think humor is important to me as a person, I think humor certainly has its role in the classroom, too, I actually think humor helps facilitate learning.”

Glen also engages his students through humor. Sometimes he will tell a joke or share a funny story related to the material and his students will laugh and have some fun while learning. Glen has a “comedian inside of [him]” that comes out often when he is teaching: “Jokes are great, because I’m Jewish and all the great comedians are Jewish, so I don’t know if you knew this but every Jew has a comedian inside of them.”

When participants identified their personalities as being humorous it was easy for them to bring humor into the classroom and authentically engage with their students. They reported this authenticity was helpful in engaging with students and remaining more comfortable in class.
Summary of Chapter 3

In summary, Chapter 3 reported the results of this phenomenological study of the beliefs and experiences of good teaching as reported by exemplary counselor educators. The data revealed that the participants had common beliefs about how to teach and what parts of themselves to bring into the classroom. The beliefs were: (a) the process of teaching has similarities to the process of counseling, (b) sharing professional experiences is helpful to students, (c) students are capable of teaching each other and teaching themselves, (d) students learn to become counselors through experiencing content, (e) teacher reflection is important in good teaching, and (f) being authentic in the classroom is important to good teaching. There was evidence that these common beliefs were the underlying factors for making pedagogical decisions in the classroom (e.g., facilitating discussion, making particular assignments, incorporating feedback from students into the classroom).

Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the research results. The results are discussed in relation to the existing literature and introduced as contributions to the profession.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The results of this phenomenological research study indicated that the structure of good teaching was undergirded with beliefs about teaching in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES). It was possible that these beliefs are the underlying motivations for the pedagogical methods participants employed during their moments of good teaching. The following six beliefs were identified in data analysis: (a) the process of teaching has similarities to the process of counseling, (b) sharing professional experiences is helpful to students, (c) students are capable of teaching each other and themselves, (d) students learn to become counselors through experiencing content, (e) teacher reflection is important in good teaching, and (f) it is important to be authentic in the classroom. Each of these beliefs was reflected in instructional practices reported by participants.

This chapter serves to discuss the current research findings in terms of the existing literature on experiences, beliefs, and methods of teaching in higher education positioned alongside this study’s findings and contributions to the literature in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES). Implications for teaching in counselor education based on the research findings are provided. In addition, research recommendations for the future are offered and the limitations of the current investigation are considered. Finally, the researcher shares observations and experiences from the research process.

Contributions to Teaching in Counselor Education and Supervision

The data analysis of this study revealed that the structure of good teaching moments as reported by the exemplary teachers who participated in this study was
comprised of beliefs about what they assume is important in counselor education classrooms, and perhaps beliefs about themselves as teachers. In addition, the structure of good teaching included particular techniques and methods (e.g., discussions, experiential activities, lectures). As participants shared their ideas about their moments of good teaching with the interviewer, they almost always provided a rationale for the methods, techniques, and activities they used in class. These rationales were later confirmed in each participant’s member check as beliefs they had about teaching or themselves.

The concept that beliefs about teaching are related to pedagogical decision making is not original. Pratt (1993) suggested that faculty members’ ideas about what is important in teaching are related to their actions in the classroom. In his research he noted that the act of teaching means different things to different teachers, and consequently teachers’ beliefs about teaching, their goals for students, and the ways in which they teach are mutually related. Kember and Gow (1994) also noted that teachers’ assumptions about teaching and learning were related to the particular techniques they used in their classrooms. Although the concept that the CES teachers’ beliefs influenced their moments of good teaching might not be original, the beliefs themselves have rich ideas to offer CES literature.

The Structure of Good Teaching Moments in CES

This research study sought to understand the phenomenon of good teaching in counselor education. By analyzing the data revealed by the six participants who were identified as being exemplary teachers of counselor education, it appeared that two
questions about teaching in counselor education were addressed. First, what do exemplary teachers in counselor education believe about good teaching? Second, what methods do exemplary teachers in counselor education employ during times of good teaching? Both of these questions were answered through examination of the structure of good teaching moments in CES as reported by participants.

In the following paragraphs each belief that was identified in the data analysis is further explored and discussed in relation to existing literature. The purpose of the following is not to review the supporting data of each theme or repeat participant quotes, but rather to summarize and discuss the information gleaned from participants in light of existing literature.

The process of teaching has similarities to the process of counseling. It was difficult to ignore participants’ frequent mention of using basic counseling skills (e.g., tracking, summarizing, empathizing, creating a safe and trustworthy environment, remaining in the here-and-now moment) while teaching. Part of the participants’ experiences of being in the moment of their own good teaching included them being rooted in their counselor identities and using the skill sets they employ as counselors to connect with students, facilitate reflective processes, create a non-judgmental and safe classroom climate, and remain in the present. When examining data units, all participants explicitly likened the process of teaching to counseling in some way or another. For example, Paul noted that attending to students’ feelings during class is important in the facilitation of learning and mentioned, “I would relate [good teaching] to good counseling.” Similarly, Glen remarked on the similarities between teaching and
counseling: “laid on top of [moments of good teaching] is just general counseling stuff that we should do as a good teacher.” Using counseling skills in the classroom might come naturally to someone trained as a counselor, and as a result it may be heavily relied on by counselor educators, as they have more experience using counseling skills and recognizing their benefits.

A predictor of successful counseling outcomes is primarily based on a supportive and sincere relationship between a client and a counselor (Lambert & Barley, 2001). Although no research studies specifically compared teaching to counseling, authors have noted the importance of maintaining a caring and respectful relationship with students (Fraser et al., 1986; Ginsberg, 2007; Lichtenstein, 2005; Lucas & Murry, 2002; Weimer, 2002; Winston et al., 1994). Pratt (1993) identified a particular assumption of teachers that leads them to build authentic relationships with students; a relationship he termed “Nurturing Conception: Facilitating Personal Agency.” Pratt described this belief about teaching as being learner-centered and included personal relationships and care between students and teachers. In their study, which offered counselor educators mentorship ideas for new faculty members, Niles and colleagues (2001) identified that successful counselor educators used counseling skills to connect with students. Similarly, participants in this study remarked that relationships and caring connections built with students are important. The teachers provided evidence of their belief that relationships are important as they described taking time to learn about their students before and after class, asking students how they are doing, and facilitating activities in which students shared their emotional well-being with one another. Paul and Zoe specifically mentioned
their belief that good teaching occurs when they feel a connection with students. Part of attending to a relationship with students is noticing when they are struggling and offering guidance and direction to students. Kember and Gow (1994) referred to this as providing “pastoral counseling” to students. Participants implied that they make themselves available by email or phone, or during office hours to offer help on assignments, loan resources to students, and provide hints to help them succeed.

Creating a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere in the classroom has also been identified as a characteristic of exemplary teachers (Bain, 2004; Hativa et al., 2001). Creating a safe classroom climate is noted as being important in the learning process (Weimer, 2002). Jenny stated that she works to create a safe classroom atmosphere by including comments in her syllabus that state her expectation that all students will be respectful, and she reported monitoring student comments to ensure she would be able to intervene in times of disrespect. Similarly, Ben and Glen discussed the importance of creating a sense of safety and trust in the classroom. Ben continually talked about confidentiality in class because he reported believing students should have a sense of trust that what they share during class is confidential. Glen spoke of the importance of refraining from making biased and judgmental comments in class so that students feel comfortable to contribute to the class without fear of being judged.

Perhaps some unique contributions that participants made to the literature about teaching in CES, by specifically comparing the process of teaching to counseling, were their remarks on the importance of noticing student affect during class, making empathic statements, and remaining in the here-and-now moment. Participants concurred that
during good teaching moments they used their counseling skills in the classroom. Participants noted that they listened intently to students, summarized student contributions during class discussions, and made empathic statements.

Similarly as in the process of counseling, Paul noted that he believed the recognition of affect is important for learning and as a result he is attuned to students’ verbal and non-verbal reactions during class, empathizes with their feelings, and uses open ended questions to help students connect their feelings to their learning processes. Likewise, Zoe remarked that she believes emotional reactions are important to the learning. During times of good teaching she uses counseling skills to help students deepen their reflective experiences and helps them understand and identify their emotional responses to what they are learning.

Ben indicated another parallel between teaching and counseling when he mentioned, “Good teaching involves motivating people to change, just as does good counseling.” He shared that he uses process-oriented questions and reflective activities to help students deepen their awareness of themselves, look at themselves in new ways, and critique themselves. Paul, Zoe, Susan, Jenny, and Glen also mentioned their belief that students must engage in self-reflection while learning and each mentioned using reflective and thought provoking questions while teaching.

Another unique contribution to the belief that teaching is similar to counseling is that each participant remarked on the importance of staying in the here-and-now moment with students. Susan mentioned that as she teaches, she tracks and attends to students wherever they lead her. Herron et al. (2006) noted that exemplary teachers remain
flexible when teaching by changing the course of the class depending on student reactions; however, they did not refer to this as being able to stay in the present moment and track student responses. Jenny remarked that one of her strengths while teaching is being able to remain completely present and refrain from thinking of anything but that current moment. Similarly, Glen and Paul mentioned their ability to manage other aspects of their lives so they do not invade their minds while teaching. Ben compared this present feeling to “Buddhist mindfulness” and Zoe remarked that, to her, teaching necessitates being balanced and present, which she reported was “similar to how [she] approached counseling.”

The belief that teaching is similar to counseling implied that the teachers remain close to their roots as counselors and see their counseling skill sets as helpful in the teaching and learning process. It is important to note that this does not mean the teachers engage in the process of counseling their students, but rather it might indicate that teachers believe that the values of the counseling relationship are similar to the process of teaching.

**Sharing professional experiences is helpful to students.** Participants agreed that moments of good teaching included recounting their own experiences as counselors to their students. In reviewing data, it appeared that sharing professional experiences with students was thought to be helpful as participants believed that they had experiences from which students could learn.

Pratt (1993) identified that some teachers in higher education have an assumption that it is their responsibility to socialize students in their discipline through role modeling
and mentoring. Pratt labeled this particular belief among teachers as the “Apprenticeship Conception: Modeling Ways of Being.” Equally, participants noted their desire to offer hints of the trade to students through recounting professional stories, sharing experiences, and answering questions about what it is like to be a counselor. For example, Zoe and Jenny indicated that they often shared experiences as counselors with their students in an effort to illustrate how skills, theories, and ideas they are learning look during moments of counseling. Ben and Susan shared that they sought opportunities to facilitate class discussions, in which they allowed students to ask them questions about what it was like being a counselor or how they used particular concepts in practice. Paul and Glen noted times when they would use their own experiences as a way to emphasize messages to students, encourage student reflection, or illustrate concepts.

Weimer (2002) and Bain (2004) described effective teachers as being able to process their own experiences with students and share times in which they had difficulties in learning or recount times when they were unsuccessful. Paul, Jenny, and Susan described times during moments of good teaching when they allowed themselves to be vulnerable with students as they recounted times when they had to learn from mistakes or when they could have made better choices while they were counseling.

Ben and Glen shared a unique perspective from other participants when they offered an additional viewpoint on sharing experiences with students. They each stressed the importance of not only sharing their experiences as counselors with students but also as counselor educators. Ben often told his students about former students’ processes of learning and shared research on professional identity development with students in order
to normalize their frustration and anxiety as novice counselors. Glen shared stories with students that he reported came from his experiences as being a researcher and while engaged in his own scholarship.

It was evident that participants wanted to be helpful to their students by informing them of what they might encounter as they become professional counselors and what skills might be expected of them. Similar to the concept of mentoring students (Pratt, 1993), some participants noted that they wanted to incorporate activities that would improve their students’ acclimation into professional counseling. In order to do this, participants identified not only their belief that they wanted to use their experiences as a counselor to help their students be good counselors, but they also had beliefs about what it actually means to be an effective counselor.

For example, Zoe believed good counselors collaborate effectively; therefore she incorporated learning activities in which students had to practice collaborative skills. Jenny also mentioned that during moments of good teaching “she feels[s] like [she has] an idea of what an effective counselor does.” Jenny believed that good counselors should make themselves vulnerable, therefore she showed her own vulnerability by admitting when she has made mistakes or struggled as a counselor while teaching in hopes that her students would also share struggles and ask for help. Jenny, Susan, Ben, and Paul wanted their students to feel empowered to answer their own questions and continue their learning processes on their own, as they would have to as counselors, and therefore did not answer students’ questions, but rather encouraged them to explore their own strengths, ask peers for help, and answer their own questions. Finally, Glen reported that
he used his own experiences as ways to further illustrate points and provide examples to students on how course material may manifest in the frontline of the profession.

The idea that teachers had experiences that could be helpful to students suggested that the participants believed they had a responsibility to assist students to enter the field by not only sharing important counseling content but also by incorporating their own experiences and professional lessons into class. Informing students about experiences that lead to more effective counseling suggested that the participants spent time as counselors, as well as counselor educators, and use their experiences as tools for teaching. Although the idea of mentoring exists in teaching literature (Pratt, 1993), the data revealed in this study illuminate the idea that teaching specific to counselor education might serve a dual purpose: (a) teach important field related content necessary to build a knowledge foundation in counseling, while (b) incorporating “first-hand” information about counseling (e.g., the nature of the job, the culture of the profession, professional identity development, professional advocacy) that might not be formally included in some textbooks into lessons and activities. The latter can be accomplished by creating moments of parallel process in the classroom, in which the teacher creates an environment that mimics what he or she believes will be important for students to be effective as counselors and in the counseling relationship. Zoe specifically discussed doing this in her teaching (see Chapter 3 Belief 2 for data).

**Students are capable of teaching themselves and each other.** Participants reported that during moments of good teaching, they are able to step back from being the focus of attention and allow students to teach one another and make their own personal
meaning out of the material they are learning. The techniques of facilitating class discussions and encouraging introspection were used almost exclusively when considering the belief that students have the ability to teach themselves and each other.

Participants appeared to maintain a sense of humility as they taught and reduced power and hierarchy in the classroom by removing themselves from the expert role. Each participant reported using class discussion as a medium for encouraging students by viewing their ideas as being worthy and useful. Participants alluded to a belief that students come to class already having knowledge and information about what they are learning, and that the multiple perspectives students have about course topics should be appreciated.

The teacher as a facilitator of classroom discussions is seen throughout literature related to effective teaching in higher education. Ginsberg (2007) and Kember and Gow (1994) identified that effective teachers use class discussions as a learning tool so that students have opportunities to voice opinions and hear multiple perspectives. Pratt (1993) identified a group of his participants as having the belief (“Developmental Conception: Cultivating the Intellect”) that students must take information they already know to a deeper level by exploring their knowledge through activities such as self-reflection and discussions.

Each participant noted that moments of good teaching included times in which students had the opportunity to lead class discussions. Participants shared their beliefs about why teaching one another through discussion and activities was important in a counselor education classroom. Jenny focused on the importance of creating
opportunities for students from marginalized groups to share experience in an effort to teach classmates what it might be like to experience the world through a multi-cultural lens. She reported that she wanted her students to hear perspectives and viewpoints that they might not hold and indicated this as an important part of teaching, as well as essential in counseling. Zoe remarked that students must learn to share ideas with one another because they will engage in similar processes when they are counselors. Susan, Paul, Ben, and Glen explained that students often have ideas that they, as teachers, would never have considered and by allowing students to share new perspectives it creates unplanned learning experiences for themselves and students, alike.

Herron et al. (2006) identified exemplary teachers as wanting to empower their students. Similarly, Susan, Jenny, and Ben focused on their desire for students to build confidence as they rely on themselves for answers. They remarked how this is an important aspect of being a counselor and learning to self-supervise or feel confident to take risks while counseling.

Paul, Ben, and Susan shared a common belief in the social construction of knowledge, which they attributed to incorporating discussion in their classroom. Gergen (1999) described knowledge as being constructed through conversations and relationships. This was most evident as Paul, in particular, shared his perspectives of good teaching coming from discussion in which all members of the class contribute ideas. He remarked that he has “nothing to offer” to students, but instead when the class comes together in conversation they begin to co-construct the knowledge they will take away from the class. Paul’s discussion about teaching seemed to fit with Finkel’s (2000)
notion that the subject matter should be the center and focus of class (versus the teacher
or the students). By asking provocative questions that the teacher might not even know
the answers to or by allowing the topic to unfold by inviting students to ask one another
questions, knowledge is constructed. Paul described not knowing how the class would
evolve, but allowing course material to develop and become present through
conversations. He shared techniques of inviting students to pose reflective questions
about readings to one another, encouraging students to share emotional reactions to
course topics, and coming from a position of “curiosity and not knowing” when
approaching class.

The phrase “meaning-making” was used often across participants as they
described their goal for students. Participants used this term to explain the process in
which students consider what they are learning, assimilate it into their own ideas, put
their own meaning to it, and apply it in their lives and work. Biggs (2001) described the
ability to make meaning during the learning process as being imperative. Bain (2004)
and Finkel (2000) offered the idea of asking students reflective questions to facilitate a
process in which they grapple with information and assimilate it into their own personal
meaning. Participants described a similar process in creating space for students to reflect
and apply what they are learning. Glen reported that as he lectured he posed reflective
questions to students to help them consider what he is teaching. At times these questions
would lead to a rich group conversation. Zoe and Ben reported that they often encourage
students to reflect on class material and experiential activities in an effort to determine
how they make sense of what they are doing and how they see themselves using what
they learn. Jenny and Susan explained that they often will encourage students to think critically about what they are doing and to be able to put what they learn in their own words and then apply it to their future work as counselors. Paul remarked that his focus on student affect, and their ability to recognize and process their emotional responses to course material, is essential for the process of meaning-making. Paul explicitly stated that the process of learning was more important in his class than the outcome of learning because he wanted his student to be life-long learners.

The belief that students are self-directed learners who can teach themselves and one another appears to be an umbrella belief that contains other, more specific assumptions about teaching and learning. For example, if teachers encourage students to participate in class it would be easy to think that they also assume students are knowledgeable. In addition, there is an assumption that teachers do not—nor do they have to—know everything there is to know about a subject, and they can express vulnerability by allowing students the opportunity to fill in gaps of understanding and ideas.

When considering the belief that students can teach themselves through a process of self-reflection and meaning-making, it may be worthwhile to consider two related ideas. One idea suggests that it is an essential task of students to be introspective during class discussions, lectures, and assignments. This leads to the second assumption that the process of learning is just as important as what students are learning, which would indicate that students are learning how to continually teach themselves as a life long process.
Students learn to become counselors through experiencing content.

Participants reported using a combination of methods while teaching in order to best prepare students as counselors. By delivering important counseling information to students through formal presentations or discussion and encouraging students to practice skills through experiential activities, participants believed that they have a responsibility to prepare students to be effective counselors. Participants noted the importance of being prepared to teach whether they intended to lecture, lead discussions, or facilitate experiential activities. They reported that they desired to feel comfortable in their ability to provide information to students, keep up with them as they are discussing topics, and be prepared to fill in gaps of information so that their students get the information they need when learning about counseling. Participants reported that they spend time reading, finding supplementary material for class, staying current with topics and trends in counseling, and reflecting on assignments.

Pratt (1993) reported an assumption that some teachers believe that learning is based on acquiring knowledge through content delivery and that the teacher has the responsibility to transmit knowledge to students. Kember and Gow (1994) identified that teachers who believe in the importance of transmitting knowledge to students often use the technique of lecturing. Bain (2004) suggested that teachers who effectively lecture supplement their presentations with open-ended questions and provide time for students to reflect on what they are learning. Hativa et al. (2001) mentioned that exemplary teachers often use humor and share anecdotes as a way to effectively lecture. Glen explicitly identified the belief that students must leave courses with a strong knowledge
base and that they rely on him to provide them with information. He shared that he often uses lectures and tactics (e.g., humor, stories, reflection) recommended in literature to make his lectures interesting and avoid being a “talking head.” He reported he fits discussions and activities into his lectures in which students might have to apply concepts. Above all, Glen reported that he uses whatever teaching methods will help students most effectively understand course material.

Jenny, Susan, and Zoe also wanted to ensure that students walk away from class with a strong knowledge base and thus might begin a class with a lecture and then provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge to their future work as counselors. For example, Jenny offers concrete recommendations to students during lectures on how to use information when they are counselors. Susan lectures about concepts such as developmental theories to students and then provides them with case studies to apply what they are learning in an effort to ensure that they will use information effectively. Zoe might start a class with a brief PowerPoint and then role model activities (e.g., meditation, empty chair) to students before asking them to try it for themselves.

Paul thought that the best thing he could do for students was to facilitate discussions about assigned readings. He reported that he refrained from lecturing about concepts and ideas that students read about in assigned readings (unless they specifically asked for clarification), but instead engages students in conversation to co-construct information that they learn.
Jenny and Ben were unique when discussing their desire to ensure that students master course concepts before they pass their classes. To ensure this they refrain from using traditional grading, but instead use complex pass/fail grading in which students must complete satisfactory work before they can move on to new assignments. This leads students to redo work that is not their best. Jenny remarked that she chooses to do this because she believes that “clients want [counselors to demonstrate] mastery,” implying that she wants students to learn something until they are able to exhibit evidence that learning has occurred. Ben reported that his pass/fail system came from his belief that he wanted students to have an intrinsic motivation to learn and understand counseling concepts rather than complete work to earn a grade.

Experiential activities were also important in the belief that teachers must prepare students to be effective counselors. Zoe, Jenny, and Ben reported that the majority of their class time is spent doing experiential activities. For Zoe experiential activities were important so that students (a) had practice in using skills and interventions and (b) experienced what their future clients might experience. Zoe reported that she often leads interventions during class so that students had a sense of what they looked like and could experience what it might feel like to be in the position of a client, in an effort to increase their sense of empathy for what clients might experience. Jenny remarked on the importance of students practicing in the presence of others—as that is what they will be doing as counselors, and as a result she incorporates experiential activities in class. Ben said most of his class is spent doing activities because he wants students to construct their
own understanding of how to use particular theories or interventions and then increase their self-awareness of how to interact with others while counseling.

The belief that teachers have the responsibility to prepare students to be effective counselors appears to lead teachers to provide students with content through lectures, encouraging them to apply information to case studies or through discussions, to engage in experiential activities, and to provide feedback to students through exams and assignments. All participants, except Paul, contributed data to this theme. It appeared that participants had the dual belief that (a) there is important content to be learned in order to build a foundation of knowledge as a counselor, and (b) students benefit from participating in experiential activities (as a counselor and “client”) by using skills in the presence of another person.

**Self-reflection and evaluation is important to teaching.** An underlying assumption of participants that led to moments of good teaching was the belief that as teachers it was important to be mindful and reflective of their practices in the classroom. Participants reported on many ways in which being thoughtful and reflective contributed to moments of good teaching; for example, it allowed them to deepen their awareness about what they do while teaching and creating space for change, it allowed them to be mindful about the purpose of assignments and topics covered in class, and it allowed themselves to be influenced by students.

Participants made it clear that they continually evaluated themselves and their work through multiple means, many of which can be found in existing literature. Palmer (2007) noted that it behooves teachers to consider being reflective about their teaching by
considering why they do the things they do in the classroom and to attempt to be authentic while teaching. Participants provided examples of how they attempt to be thoughtful and reflective by being intentional as they are determining assignments and as they choose to cover particular topics in class. Susan, for example, noted that she carefully considers each assignment or activity she uses in class and can always provide a specific rationale of how it will further learning and achieve the goals that she has for students. Glen and Paul remarked about the perceived power and control they had in choosing the topics of study and in constructing syllabi for their classes and implied that it was important to take this seriously and remind students of the other information that might not be included in the course. It was clear that participants did not simply choose an activity without being confident that it would serve a particular purpose.

If considered and reflected upon by teachers, student feedback and evaluation can be a helpful way for teachers to evaluate their teaching and make changes to suit the needs of their students (Centra, 1993; Pregent, 2000). Participants consistently incorporated student feedback (informal and formal) into the classroom. For instance, Jenny and Susan found ways to incorporate student feedback into their classes and seek opportunities for teaching evaluations throughout the semester by asking questions about assignments, course topics, books, and teaching methods. Specifically, Jenny remarked on times that she asks students to evaluate a class period by asking them to write down their thoughts about class (“What did you learn?” “What do you want to talk more about?”). She then uses that information in subsequent classes by altering class agendas in order to provide additional information to the class. She shared that she believes
honoring her students’ requests and thoughts about class helps them to feel more connected to the class.

Other participants remarked how their own ideas and thoughts changed as they allowed themselves to be influenced by their students. They saw themselves as being flexible in their thinking and allowed their students to teach them as they shared ideas and participated in discussions. In hearing participants talk about their own learning it appeared that they listened to students and were thoughtful about how the students’ ideas could be incorporated into their own thinking. Ginsberg (2007) noted the aforementioned as a quality of effective teachers.

Finally, reflection about teaching through conversation with peers was noted by one participant in particular. Susan remarked how important it was for her to talk about teaching, get feedback from peers (particularly those in other disciplines), and voice her opinions about her own teaching. Literature notes these peer conversations as being a prerequisite for good teaching (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Herron et al., 2006; Inch & McVarish, 2003; Palmer, 2007). It was Susan’s belief that participation in peer conversations with other faculty members to identify and strive for more moments of good teaching was important.

To summarize, this theme clearly reflected the belief that being mindful and reflective of teaching practices, self-awareness, and ideas was an important aspect of teaching for the participants in this study. A contribution to the literature in Counselor Education might be the importance of student impact on good teaching. All participants reported how students fit into their moment of good teaching by offering new ideas,
leading discussions in new directions, and providing non-verbal feedback. Participants agreed that during moments of good teaching they are open to feeling a connection with students, and their students influence them.

**Authenticity is important in teaching.** Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of the structure of good teaching, as indicated by the participants, was that each teacher exhibited a sense of authenticity and congruence in their presentation during the interview, when compared with their beliefs about teaching. This authenticity is particularly noteworthy.

Parker Palmer (2007) challenged readers of his book to look beyond teachers’ methods of how they teach and instead look at the person who teaches. That is, consider the teacher and his or her unique contributions to the class, beliefs about teaching, and strengths. Palmer noted the importance of teachers being able to have a sense of authenticity and genuineness while teaching and finding methods of teaching that are most congruent to his or her sense of self and beliefs about teaching. O’Reilley (1998) also wrote about the idea of having an authentic presence in the classroom as a teacher, when she noted that teachers are most successful in their teaching when they are able to feel completely present and comfortable. When examining literature about teaching philosophies, authors have noted the importance of teachers being introspective about the beliefs they have about themselves and teaching and subsequently about finding ways to teach that are congruent with their unique character (Ellis & Griffin, 2000; King, 2003; Pike et al., 1997; Pratt, 2005; Witcher et al., 2001).
Brookfield (2006) noted how authenticity expressed through sharing stories and excitement for the discipline, of which teachers teach, is an aspect of good teaching. Participants revealed genuine interest and passion about counseling and teaching. Susan shared that during moments of good teaching she finds herself being more enthusiastic and passionate about the field of counseling, and she reported that she shares this with her students. Paul also remarked about his passion for the topics he teaches and allowing this genuine excitement, which he believes is contagious to students, to shine through his teaching by being genuinely curious about his students’ ideas. Glen remarked how excited he gets when he sees students understanding and learning. Overall, most participants indicated they became excited as students learn.

When examining data from the conversations with participants, it was clear that each brought a sense of themselves into the classroom as they described their moments of good teaching. For example, Glen remarked that he identified as a funny person: “[I have] a comedian inside of me . . . jokes are great, I’m Jewish and all great comedians are Jewish.” During data collection Glen made jokes and told humorous stories through the interviews and shared that he used his humor during moments of good teaching, as well. Ben and Paul also noted that they believed they have good senses of humor that often comes out during moments of good teaching.

Much of the data that Paul shared supported the belief that students can teach one another and themselves by deepening their self-awareness and paying attention to emotional reactions. Similarly during interviews he made comments such as, “I’m smiling as I think about that question.” This may indicate that similar to what he
encourages in students, he also attends to his emotional responses and attempts to be self-aware.

Zoe shared her strong counselor identity from the start by saying that she spent over 30 years as a counselor before becoming a counselor educator. She reported this experience as a counselor as a rationale throughout her interview for choosing to use counseling skills to connect with students, likening being a teacher to being a group counselor, emphasizing the use of experiential activities and modeling counseling skills in class, and recounting numerous stories of being a counselor to her students.

Jenny reported that she has felt like a teacher her whole life and felt a sense of comfort in the classroom. She reported having a strong teacher identity, and shared that teaching energizes her.

Finally, Susan shared how important thoughtfulness (e.g., reflection) was to her as a teacher and how it contributed to her moments of good teaching. During her interviews, she mirrored this as she took time to answer questions and choose words carefully. It was also apparent that she had taken time before the interview to consider the topics of interest.

The idea that teachers bring a sense of themselves into their classrooms as they teach has been suggested in literature numerous times as outlined in the paragraphs above. The current study illuminates this idea by describing how participants made their classrooms unique by bringing their own strengths, values, beliefs about themselves, and characteristics into their teaching. This belief that exemplary teachers in counselor education bring a sense of authenticity to the classroom infuses a personal uniqueness
into teaching and suggests that there is not a single way to teach, but rather teachers create their own styles based on their beliefs and sense of self.

**Implications for Teaching in Counselor Education**

Although this phenomenological research study yields results that may resonate with some counselor educators, the conclusions might only be a small representation of the beliefs and experiences of exemplary counselor educators. The study can be viewed as a springboard into additional conversations about what good teaching might look like and what additional beliefs about teaching in counselor education may exist. This study provides a starting point, and generates some implications for consideration in counselor education.

The descriptions of good teaching moments reported by participants included diverse teaching techniques (e.g., use of lectures, discussions, experiential activities, reflective activities, skills/theories/concepts with case studies, emotive responses to deepen learning process, video recording, tests, and papers). Although different participants used some methods more than others, the commonality was that each participant reported being intentional with their preferred teaching approaches. There was supporting data that the participants had been thoughtful about their process of teaching, the assignments they used, and their presence in the classroom. There was certainty that if asked, each participant would be able to confidently explain the reasons they made particular pedagogical decisions. The teachers were thoughtful about how they teach and reflective about the pedagogical processes they used. Their beliefs about what it meant to engage in good teaching, what it meant to prepare good counselors, and
their beliefs about their own identity were underlying motivations for their pedagogical decisions. Oftentimes, beliefs and goals for teaching may exist outside of one’s awareness (Louie et al., 2003). Therefore, it behooves counselor educators to engage in reflective practices before, during, and after teaching in order to carefully consider their objectives for students and make decisions about methodologies that harmonize with these goals.

Practices of thoughtfulness about teaching are found in literature and include considering past role models and mentors (King, 2003; Palmer, 2007; Pike, 1997), engaging in peer discussions about teaching (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Herron et al., 2006; Inch & McVarish, 2003; Palmer, 2007), finding ways to be evaluated (Palmer, 2007), being mindful about goals (Palmer, 2007), and attending conferences about teaching (Ginsberg, 2007). Teachers should seek opportunities to consider their teaching. They should find times to discuss their teaching with peers in an attempt to reconnect to their values about teaching, co-construct new ideas for teaching, and create space for thoughtfulness and growth. Even by simply participating in this research and having the opportunity to talk about their teaching, some faculty members reported feeling a deeper sense of connection to their teacher identities and their purpose in the classroom. Upon completion of the member check interview, Zoe shared:

I’m so glad that I took the time to do this because it really helped me to—especially in reading this [textural-structural summary]—it’s like that really is what’s important to me and to see it in writing, wow that’s really cool.

Similarly, Paul reported:
One thing I noticed this morning, when I read your summary statements of my quotes, [is that] I felt a connection to my beliefs within those themes that have been with me the whole time, and I actually started thinking back about where in my doctoral program…that I started developing those attitudes of teaching because what I felt I was reading fits my core-beliefs of good teaching and it certainly has been a part of what I do each and every year at [university].

Participants were not only mindful about their teaching, but also mindful about themselves. As they described their moments of good teaching, they defined themselves as being comfortable in their role as teacher. They shared how they allowed their sincere passion and excitement to come through their teaching. They permitted their personalities to come through their teaching and their relationships with students. Each exemplary teacher brought something unique to his or her classroom: thoughtfulness, experiences, passion for counseling, and humor. Even through times when they shared experiences with their students that were not always favorable, such as times they made mistakes or felt vulnerable, they appeared to be confident and maintain their sense of self. Teachers appeared to also bring different identities, or roles, into the classroom such as: counselor, teacher, helper, facilitator, mentor, and motivator. Teachers should be themselves when teaching and remain congruent with their personalities and beliefs. Finding comfort in the classroom and practicing multiple roles could be beneficial in creating moments of good teaching.

Aside from being reflective about teaching beliefs and beliefs about one’s self, the counselor educators were mindful about what they believed was important in counseling
and used these ideas to generate good teaching moments. Participants reported being motivated by what they believed was essential to be good counselors and incorporated these ideas into the classroom through role modeling and the process of teaching or facilitating activities. This implied how important it might be for counselor educators to use their experiences as counselors as tools in facilitating the learning process as they prepare students to be effective counselors. In addition, they might consider what their latent beliefs about counseling are and how these beliefs might influence their teaching.

Another idea generated from this study came from the participants’ discussion of how the teaching process can be a parallel process for counseling. As participants described their moments of good teaching it appeared to be multifunctional in that teachers were teaching students how to be effective counselors through textbook learning (lectures, activities, assignments, discussion), while they simultaneously included process oriented learning that mimicked what they believed to be useful for counselors. This further suggested the importance of counselor educators exploring what they believe to be useful in the counseling profession and incorporating it into the classroom.

A final implication from this study is that counselor education doctoral programs might create courses on pedagogy that are specific to preparing students to become teachers in counselor education. Such teaching would have many dimensions. Teachers must ensure students have the knowledge necessary to build a strong foundation and understanding of counseling. Simultaneously, it is necessary for teachers to provide opportunities for students to apply the knowledge they are using to fictional cases or situations, similar to what they will work with as counselors. The application of
information can occur theoretically during discussion and through assignments or practically through experiential activities. Further, counseling students must learn self-awareness as they are preparing to work in the human service field. As one participant shared, counselor educators are not only teaching foundational information on counseling, but they are also teaching students what it is like to be in the presence of another human and applying the information they learned to a counseling context. In addition, as indicated by participants, counselor educators are using themselves as tools in the classroom as they provide information, share experiences, and role model skills. It would seem beneficial for counselor educators to be prepared to teach by having had a specific course on counseling pedagogy during the doctoral program.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The participants in this study revealed experiences of their own self-perceived good teaching in counselor education. Specifically, participants discussed the methods they use while teaching and provided rationales, or beliefs, that lead them to make pedagogical decisions. When considering the future research, variations of the existing study could yield additional information. In addition, outcomes from this study extend possibilities for future research.

To begin, it may be worthwhile to consider variations to the current research study. For this study, the researcher’s initial interest was to explore how exemplary teachers think about their teaching and how they teach. What makes an exemplary teacher? What do they do while teaching that is remarkable and creates moments that they deem as “good teaching,” and why do they do those particular things? For the
purpose of this study, participants were asked to reflect upon times when they thought they were in the moment of good teaching. A variation of this study could have focused more on current acts of teaching by building more observational aspects into the research process. For example, the researcher could have observed the participants’ classes to experience and witness their teaching and make note of (a) how the teachers taught, (b) the visual response of the students in the class, and (c) the atmosphere in the classroom. After immersed in the culture of the class, the researcher could have interviewed the teachers about their teaching to gain more information on specific behaviors the researcher witnessed, as well as information about beliefs that guided their teaching.

Another variation of this study could have included the way participants were identified. In this study, the researcher relied on participants’ faculty chairs/coordinators/directors to identify them as exemplary teachers. It is possible that these informants may have different ideas than students on what makes particular teachers more or less exemplary. For this reason, another variation of the current study might have students identifying who they believe is a good teacher in their program. It is possible that students might identify different faculty members than program chairs/coordinators/directors. Students might then be more included in the data collection process. For example, students could identify the exemplary teacher and participate in an interview of what they experience during moments of good teaching. Then, the teacher could be similarly interviewed. This might lead to enriched information about what it is like to be in the exemplary teacher’s classroom from the perspective of the learner and the teacher.
In this study, only tenured counselor educators (i.e., faculty members at the associate or full professor rank) who were identified as being exemplary by their program chair/coordinator/director were eligible to participate. A follow-up qualitative research study might include counselor educators at varying ranks (e.g., adjunct, assistant, associate, full) to potentially determine a wider range of beliefs. Perhaps another phenomenological investigation of good teaching moments among all of the faculty ranks would yield additional information about how different counselor educators hold different beliefs and use different methods of teaching. This might also provide information on how beliefs and methods evolve over time.

Another variation could be choosing participants based on their teaching of a particular course to determine if there are particular beliefs that are associated with specific courses. For the purpose of this study, the researcher asked teachers to reflect on good teaching moments across any content-filled counseling course (e.g., theory, career, diagnosis) and thus a structure of the experience of teaching content courses was identified. The researcher could have further deduced variability by focusing on a particular course. For example, the research question could have been: “What are exemplary counselor educators’ experiences of their own good teaching in counseling theory courses?” This research question would limit the participants to those who are identified as being an exemplary teacher in the area of counseling theories, and as a result the beliefs and methods of teaching a theories course would be identified.

The outcomes of this research indicated that there were common beliefs among participants that led to the structure of their good teaching moments. To continue the line
of research it might be useful to further examine the differences in beliefs among various levels of counselor educators. Perhaps in the future, a Q-methodology study would be of interest to determine if particular groups of counselor educators have similar beliefs about teaching that differ from other groups of faculty members. The data from this study (i.e., beliefs about teaching) might be listed as statements that counselor educators at varying ranks (i.e., adjunct, assistant, associate, full) could sort from *most like my beliefs* to *least like my beliefs* in an effort to determine if particular groups of counselor educators based on factors such as rank, sex, age, years of experience hold similar beliefs about teaching. Likewise, participants could sort a concourse of methods employed in teaching to identify if there are similarities across groups of counselor educators. It might also be interesting to do a Q-sort study with the same participants, over time, to determine if groups of counselor educators have similarly evolving beliefs about teaching.

Former research studies about teaching in higher education, as well as this study, suggest that there might be a relationship between beliefs about teaching and methods of teaching. A future quantitative research study in CES might examine the specific relationship between methods and beliefs among faculty. Perhaps a scale that measures teaching beliefs could be created and a measure for teaching techniques could be used. A study that examines the frequency of particular methods employed by participants who report similar beliefs about teaching might result in research indicating that there is indeed a relationship between certain beliefs and methods of teaching.

The origin and evolution of beliefs about teaching and methods of teaching might also be an interest in future research inquiries. As noted throughout literature, beliefs
may evolve after becoming a more mature and experienced teacher, through peer conversations, and through workshops and continuing education (e.g., Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Ginsberg, 2007; Inch & McVarish, 2003; King, 2003; Pike et al., 1997). Many participants made comments such as “I didn’t always do things this way” and “I didn’t start out this way.” In the existing literature about teaching in higher education, authors reference the change of beliefs and thoughts about teaching. A future research study of teaching might examine how and why counselor educators have changed their methods of teaching throughout their professional experiences and how their beliefs about good teaching have evolved and compare the results to the ideas in literature about how beliefs change over time (e.g., peer conversations, workshops).

Further examination of the particular themes identified in this study in relation to student learning might also provide useful information in the research on teaching in CES. For example, one theme in this study was the belief that teaching in counselor education has similarities to counseling. Participants revealed that moments of good teaching were contingent upon them using the skills they learned as counselors (e.g., ability to create a safe atmosphere in the classroom, asking process oriented questions, being empathic) and to encourage their students to feel cared for in class and to facilitate a feeling of safety in order for students to explore their emotions and learning processes. Future research might investigate the relationship between the teacher using counseling skills and student learning. For example, does the frequency of empathic statements in the classroom relate to student learning? A qualitative research question related to this might be: “What is the experience of teachers using counseling skills in the classroom?”
A different example might come from the belief that using experiential activities is important to skill based learning. A relevant research question might be: “What is the experience of facilitating experiential activities in CES classrooms?”

An implication from this study is that it may behoove counselor educators to consider their beliefs about teaching in order to feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom. An area of further research concerning this implication might be to explore the process of being more aware of one’s teaching beliefs. Literature suggests various recommendations for connecting with beliefs about teaching such as peer conversations and self-reflection (Palmer, 2007). Research on the process of identifying beliefs might be beneficial in creating more opportunities for teachers to consider their beliefs.

This study offered a glimpse into the idea that teachers who have a sense of authenticity between their beliefs about teaching and their methods of teaching lead to good teaching moments. Exploring this concept further through research could lead to a rich discussion about the beliefs teachers bring to classrooms and open ideas about various stories and ideas surrounding the definition of good teaching.

**Research Limitations**

Limitations are found when examining this research study. Although the criteria for participants were purposefully exclusive to include tenured counselor educators who were identified as exemplary teachers, variability in sex and race could have been possible. The sex of the participants varied equally as there were three male and three female participants; however, there was no variability in race. All participants identified
as Caucasian. Consequently, the experiences of exemplary teachers of counselor education who are not from the dominant culture are unknown.

Other limitations can be found in the process of participant recruitment. The recruitment process was to contact the counseling program chairs, coordinators, or directors of CACREP accredited counselor education programs in an effort to identify exemplary teachers among the faculty. The researcher relied on program websites in order to determine what faculty members were the chairs/coordinators/directors, which at times proved to be outdated. At times this led to faculty members who were not necessarily program chairs/coordinators/directors being contacted for referrals. In addition, during recruitment, program representatives were asked to nominate tenured counselor educators whom they believed to be exemplary teachers; however, there was no scale to measure exemplary. Because there was no scale or further direction on how to identify an exemplary faculty member, the identification of exemplary faculty members was subjective. Therefore, it is possible that there is a lack of consistency between the criteria to rate participants. At the time of the research study there was no clear way to identify a faculty member as being an exemplary teacher, as there were no national teaching awards or recognitions for counselor educators.

Triangulation is a strategy used in qualitative research to enhance the validity of results by using multiple methods of inquiry in order to obtain data for the research question (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). A limitation in this study was that triangulation was not used to further examine good teaching in counselor education. When examining the procedures of this research study, triangulation could have been used when recruiting
participants by requesting student evaluations from the nominated participants. The purpose of this could have been to gain additional evidence that students, as well as the faculty representatives, perceived the nominated teachers as exemplary teachers.

Although a sub question of this research study explored what exemplary teachers believed about good teaching in counselor education, there were no questions that explicitly sought participants’ beliefs regarding teaching in the initial interview. The first interview contained questions that specifically asked for concrete descriptions of good teaching moments (see Chapter 2). During data analysis, it was evident that there were latent beliefs emerging as most participants made comments such as “I believe” or “I do [this while teaching] because.” These statements were summarized in the textural-structural summary of the experience of good teaching for each participant and were used in the member check interview. It may have strengthened the research process, however, if there were specific questions regarding the participants’ beliefs about good teaching in the initial interview.

**Researcher Experience**

Van Manen (1990) suggested that the researcher of a phenomenological investigation should have a stake in the phenomenon under study. My interest in the study of counselor education pedagogy stemmed from my desire to be a professor of counseling. My decision to seek a doctoral degree in counselor education was motivated by my desire to work with aspiring counselors and help them feel prepared and confident in their work. Perhaps my desire to be a counselor educator is partly because I have been fortunate to have had exemplary teachers in my preparation to be a counselor.
As a counselor, I have an interest in human nature, beliefs people have about themselves and others, self-understanding, reflection, and relationships. I was interested in Parker Palmer’s (2007) notions that we should look beyond teaching methods and instead look at the person who teaches and in his suggestion that teachers should engage in introspection to determine how they can be more congruent in the classroom. I felt compelled to learn more about the teachers behind the many skilled and knowledgeable counselors I know. As I collected data and learned from my participants, I was simultaneously humbled by their thoughtfulness and modest recollection of their moments of good teaching and excited to embark on my own aspiring career. As I analyzed data and wrote participants’ textural-structural summaries, I was honored to mix my thoughts and words with theirs. When I presented our co-constructed textural-structural summaries to the participants, I was met with gratitude, acceptance, and kindness. I believe I had a glimpse of what their students may feel when working with them.

I am appreciative of the time that the exemplary teachers have shared with me to create this research study. Their experiences were rich and thoughtful. Their wisdom, confidence, and self-awareness were inspiring. Throughout my time studying moments of good teaching, I have increased my awareness of the beliefs and assumptions I have about teaching and about myself. I am a novice, and I have much to learn. However, the ideas and thoughts generated from the exemplary teachers have caused me to be more thoughtful in my discussions about pedagogy, to consider my own sense of belonging in
the classroom, and to stay curious on ways that I can strengthen my teaching. It is possible that this study can produce similar experiences for others.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to gain a rich description of exemplary counselor educators’ experiences of their own good teaching. A phenomenological research approach was used as it allowed for multiple voices to be heard while simultaneously looking for commonalities of the phenomenon among participants. Data revealed that the structure of good teaching moments includes a combination of the teachers’ beliefs about good teaching and methods of teaching. Conclusions from the data offer six beliefs about good teaching in counselor education that account for the experience of good teaching per the exemplary teachers who participated in this study. Additional research could be useful to refine the understanding of counselor education pedagogy and the beliefs that exemplary teachers of counselor education have about good teaching.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS APPROVAL
Appendix A

Kent State University Institutional Review Board for

Human Participants Approval

March 10, 2010

Michelle Hinkle
Counseling and Human Development Services

Re: # 10-072: “Exemplary Counselor Educators’ Experiences of Their Own Good Teaching”

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your protocol through the expedited (Level II) review process. Approval is effective for a twelve-month period:

March 10, 2010 through March 9, 2011.

Federal regulations and Kent State University IRB policy require that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email as a courtesy. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials. Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 330-672-2704 or Pwashko@kent.edu.

Sincerely,

Paulette Washko
Manager, Research Compliance, Communications and Initiatives
cc: Dr. Don Bubinzer

Division of Research and Sponsored Programs
Office of Research Safety and Compliance
(330) 672-2704 Fax: (330) 672-2056
P.O. Box 5109, Kent, Ohio 44242-0009
APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO PROGRAM COORDINATORS/CHAIRS/DIRECTORS
Appendix B

Recruitment Email to Program Coordinators/Chairs/Directors

Dear Dr._______,

My name is Michelle Hinkle, and I am a doctoral candidate at Kent State University. My dissertation research is a qualitative study on the experiences of good teaching as reported by tenured counselor educators. Don Bubenzer, Ph.D. and John West, Ed.D. are my dissertation co-directors, and this study has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. I believe this research will benefit the counselor education community by identifying how exemplary teachers in counselor education define and experience good teaching. In addition, I believe it will provide continued recognition to exemplary teaching as an important aspect of our profession.

The participants in my study must be tenured and promoted counselor educators who provide exemplary teaching. In order to find participants I am contacting program chairs/coordinators/directors at CACREP accredited institutions that have a doctoral program in order that they might help me identify one or two tenured faculty member in their program that they believe to be an exemplary teacher. Can you please identify at least one tenured faculty member (who has a Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision) in your program that you believe is and exemplary teachers; one that you believe excels in teaching and might be willing to articulately and reflectively discuss his or her teaching? If you have one or two people in mind, please provide me with the faculty members’ names, office phone numbers, and professional e-mail addresses, so that I may 1) add their names to a pool of potential participants and 2) contact them to determine if they are interested in participating in this dissertation research study. If you'd prefer, or if you have questions, you can also contact me by phone at (330) 571-2333. If possible, please inform your colleagues that you are referring him or her to me, before giving me contact information.

Thank you for your time and consideration in assisting me with my dissertation research.

Sincerely,

Michelle Hinkle, MA
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling and Human Development Services
Kent State University
APPENDIX C

EMAIL TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS
Appendix C

Email to Potential Participants

Dear Dr.___________,

My name is Michelle Hinkle. I am a doctoral candidate at Kent State University in Counselor Education and Supervision, and I am doing a qualitative study on the experiences of good teaching in counselor education for my dissertation. Don Bubenzer, Ph.D. and John West, Ed.D. are my dissertation co-directors, and this study has been approved by the Kent State University Internal Review Board. I believe this research will benefit the counselor education community by identifying how exemplary teachers in counselor education define and experience good teaching. In addition, I believe it will provide recognition to exemplary teaching as an important aspect of our profession.

Dr.___________ recommended that I contact you to see if you might be interested in participating, as he identified you as an exemplary teacher among your faculty. He also believed that you might be willing to articulately and reflectively discuss your teaching. My study is a phenomenological investigation and therefore requires participants to engage in at least two interviews over a period of 2-3 months. In addition, the criteria to participate is: a) holding at tenured and promoted position in a CACREP counseling program, b) a doctorate in counselor education and supervision, c) teaching at least one content based counseling course (e.g., theories, diagnosis, career, etc.) as opposed to only teaching clinical courses (e.g., practicum, internship) within the past year, and d) ability to participate in at least two interviews in the next 2-3 months.

Would you be interested in hearing more about my study and/or possibly participating? Please email me or call me (330-571-2333) to express your interest or to state that you are uninterested. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you might have that would assist in helping you decide your interest.

Thank you for your consideration and congratulations on being recognized for your exemplary teaching.

Sincerely,

Michelle Hinkle, MA
Doctoral Candidate
Kent State University
APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM AND AUDIOTAPE CONSENT FORM
Appendix D

Participant Consent Form and Audiotape Consent Form

Exemplary Counselor Educators’ Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching

I am conducting a qualitative research study on the experiences of good teaching as described by tenured counselor educators in order to fulfill the requirements of my Ph.D. dissertation. You have been recognized by your program coordinator as an exemplary teacher, and therefore I invite you to be one of the six participants in this study.

Upon your agreement to participate in this study, I will e-mail or call you (based on your preference) to schedule our first interview. Our first interview will last for approximately one hour and it will be audio recorded. I will transcribe our first interview and create a narrative (preliminary data organization) of how you described your experiences of good teaching. I will send this narrative to you via e-mail for you to review for accuracy and to ensure that I have taken the meaning of your description of good teaching as you intended in the interview. We will then schedule a second interview to review the narrative and for you to make changes to the initial narrative if necessary. Finally, I will send you the themes in the experiences of good teaching that emerged from the composite of all six participants. We will schedule our third and final interview, in which we will discuss the themes of good teaching as described by tenured counselor educators and you will have the opportunity to react or comment on these themes.

Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire research process. Your identity will be known only to the researcher and her dissertation co-directors, John West, Ed.D. and Don Bubenzer, Ph.D. Confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways: (a) all research consent forms will be kept in the Counseling and Human Development Services Program office in 310 White Hall, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242, (b) all transcriptions of interviews will be kept as electronic files and will be labeled with pseudonyms rather than the participants’ names, (c) identifying information (i.e., names, institution, course taught) will be removed from transcripts, (d) the peer reviewer involved in this study will not be given participants’ names or identifying information, and (e) all transcriptions and audio recordings will be destroyed upon completion of this study.

I invite you to participate in this study and share your experiences of good teaching with the counselor education community. Participation in this research study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, please know that you may stop at anytime without penalty.

Counseling and Human Development Services Program
P.O. Box 5150 • Kent, Ohio 44242-0001
Program Area Web site: http://chdsw.educ.kent.edu
330-672-2662 • Fax: 330-672-2472 • http://www.kent.edu
Exemplary Counselor Educators' Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching

To know more information about this study please contact me at (330) 571-2333 or via e-mail at mhinkle2@kent.edu. My dissertation co-directors John West, Ed.D (jwest@kent.edu) and Don Bubenzer, Ph.D. (dbubenze@kent.edu) may also be contacted at (330) 672-2662. This research study has been approved by the Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board. If you have questions about Kent State University’s rules for research please call Dr. John L. West, Vice President for Research, Division of Research and Graduate Studies at (330) 672-2581.

I have sent you two copies of this consent form and a demographic questionnaire. Indicate your willingness to participate by sending a signed copy and the completed demographic form in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope. Please keep the second copy of the consent form for your records.

Sincerely,

Michelle S. Hinkle, M.A., PC, Doctoral Candidate
Counseling and Human Development Services Program
Kent State University

Consent Statement

Exemplary Counselor Educators' Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching

I have read this consent form, and I agree to take part in this project. I know what is required of me as a participant. I am aware that I can cease participation at any time without penalty.

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

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Audiotape Consent Form

Exemplary Counselor Educators’ Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching

I give my consent to have all three of my interviews with the researcher audio recorded. I am aware that the recordings will be transcribed and portions of the interviews will be data that may be used in a publishable dissertation, manuscripts, and presentations following the completion of this dissertation research. I am aware that my name and identifying information will not be linked to the audio recordings of my interviews. Only the researcher and her dissertation co-directors will know my identity.

Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audiotapes before they are used. I have decided that I:

_____ do not want to hear the recordings  _____ want to hear the recordings

Sign below if you do not want to hear the recordings. If you want to listen to the audiotapes, you will be asked to sign after hearing them.

Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

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APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM
Appendix E
Demographic Form

Exemplary Counselor Educators’ Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching

Please complete the following demographic questions and return this form with your informed consent. All answers will remain confidential.

What is your age? ________________________

What is your gender? ________________________

What is your race? ________________________

How many years have you held a tenure track position rank? ______________

What is your faculty rank (e.g., Associate Professor, Professor): ______________

On average, how many counseling content courses (e.g., theory, diagnosis, career, substance abuse) do you teach each year? (Do not include clinical courses such as practicum or internship.)?

________________________________________

In the last year, what counseling courses (excluding clinical courses such as practicum or internship) have you taught? For each one, indicate how many total times you have taught the class.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Please list any teaching awards that you have received.

________________________________________

________________________________________
APPENDIX F

EMAIL TO PARTICIPANT ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE INITIAL INTERVIEW
Appendix F

Email to Participant One Week Prior to the Initial Interview

Dear Dr. ________________,

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my qualitative study, “Exemplary Counselor Educators’ Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching.” As we arranged earlier, our initial interview will be on ________ at ________. I will contact you by telephone for the interview.

Prior to our interview I would like you to reflect on times, as a counselor educator and in your own classroom, when you believe you were engaged in the act of good teaching. Be prepared to talk about these experiences during our first interview. I think your reflection on this topic will help you answer my interview questions when we speak next week.

Thank you for this consideration and for the time you are giving to my dissertation research. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Michelle Hinkle, MA
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling and Human Development Services
Kent State University
APPENDIX G

AUDIT LETTER
Appendix G

Audit Letter

June 1, 2011

To: The Dissertation Committee of Ms. Michelle Gimenez Hinkle
    Ms. Michelle Gimenez Hinkle
From: Travis W. Schermer, PhD
Re: Dissertation External Audit

I have performed the function of external auditor for Ms. Michelle Gimenez Hinkle’s dissertation entitled, “Exemplary Counselor Educators’ Reported Experiences During Their Own Self-Perceived Good Teaching.” As an external auditor I am working independently from Ms. Hinkle’s dissertation committee. In an effort to remain transparent I declare that Ms. Hinkle and I have been professional collaborators and good friends since 2006. The following letter outlines my qualifications and processes for performing this function.

My qualifications as an external auditor include my PhD in Counseling and Human Development Services from Kent State University. During my studies I completed advanced coursework in qualitative research methodologies. I am also a visiting professor of Counseling Psychology in the Counseling Department at Chatham University. I have taught research methods at Chatham for the past four years. Finally, I have supervised student research projects and conducted my own phenomenological research.

Ms. Hinkle and I met on May 7, 2011 to discuss my role as auditor and I received her materials. She provided me with her research questions, solicitation materials, interview prompts, interview transcripts, follow-up interview transcripts, horizontalization materials from all interviews, the textural/structural narratives, emergent themes and beliefs, finalized themes, and methodology (i.e., Chapter II). Ms. Hinkle also provided me with her field journal. The combined materials elucidated the process she went through in her study construction, data collection, and data analysis.

Ms. Hinkle’s research question addressed self-reported beliefs of counselor educators and their reported teaching methods. She chose a qualitative phenomenological research methodology, which fits with this line of inquiry. Being an external auditor in a phenomenological study requires that I review the materials provided to ensure that the research is dependable and confirmable. This includes an examination of the research questions, research design, sampling procedure, data collection methods, and the processes for ensuring the trustworthiness of her conclusions.

My function as an auditor was influenced by the work of Moustakas (1994). I asked the following three questions (a) Did Ms. Hinkle influence the content of participant responses to the extent that what emerged is not reflective of the participants’ experiences? (b) Are there other conclusions that could be drawn from the data that were not captured by Ms. Hinkle and were these identified? And (c) is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcription and see the connections? These questions shaped my audit of Ms. Hinkle’s dissertation materials.
After reviewing Ms. Hinkle’s research materials, I have concluded that her research is of high quality. Ms. Hinkle ensured that she was accurately reflecting the views of the participants by performing member checks. She conducted one member check for two participants and three member checks for the remaining participants. Ms. Hinkle utilized a color coded system that indicated the data that was integrated into the themes. In my opinion, the remaining unused data was related to building rapport or the participant was giving context to a particular example of teaching. I found no indications of “negative” or inconsistent evidence nor did I find any alternative inferences. I was able to link the textual/structural narratives to the original data and the themes. In my opinion, her labeling of the data was accurate and was reflected in the themes. Her consolidation of relevant quotes to support the emergent themes assisted me in understanding her research process. I commend her organization of materials and the transparency in her presentation.

In summary, Ms. Hinkle’s methodology and conclusions are well founded. The conclusions that she draws are reflected in the data and the participants’ viewpoints were captured. I find her project to be of high quality and her process rigorous. If anyone should have questions regarding this external audit, I can be reached by email at tschermer@chatham.edu.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Travis W. Schermer, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS
Visiting Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology
Masters of Science in Counseling Psychology
Chatham University
217 Dilworth Hall
Woodland Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Reference:
Appendix H

Excerpt of Themes and Meaning Units for Susan

Theme: Good teaching involves an active exchange and dialogue between teacher and student and between students

There is a sense of “back and forth.”
1. “I think for me one of the things I value about teaching is what I call an active exchange and that includes [the sharing of] ideas and concepts and experiences. In those moments when there’s really . . . when I know that the teaching is working . . . there’s a continuous kind of flow . . . and not only toward me, but it becomes this interaction between students in the class as well. And that’s really . . . I love seeing that . . . and I can kind of sit back then (laughs) and just kind of watch it happen and umm . . . so I guess that’s a big difference.”
2. “There are those moments in class where I can feel an energy um, and that energy is coming from that on going exchange.” “The students are engaged; they’re sharing; I can tell that they’re present and that gives me a great sense of energy as well. They’re looking at me; they’re nodding they seem ready to go, they are quick to get in a partnership with someone, they’re smiling, they’re asking questions, umm, they’re active.” “I didn’t have to work so hard, I didn’t have to try to tell the students or give the students what I wanted them to know . . . or what I thought was important . . . they were bringing up things and sharing and applying information and asking questions and I did not have to . . . I didn’t have to give it.”
3. “Those are the moments that I know things are going right (laughs) . . . um and I do believe that that is that sense of back and forth.”

Students are involved in the teaching and learning because they have valuable information to share.
4. “They (students) would be engaging each other more frequently and just jumping in and (pause) just . . . it’s like it’s a . . . continuous motion of activity.”
5. “I guess I get some cues from the students, their non verbal attentiveness, if they’re . . . kind of . . . engaged—I can tell that they’re engaging me.”
6. “Somebody laughing and joking and seem to be not too worried about what they’re supposed to be doing.”
7. “I get a sense that students are feeling like they’re um, taking ownership of what’s happening in the room and that they . . . it’s a moment where it’s like a conversation that both sides are feeling like they’re really engaged in getting something out of it.”
Teachers must create an environment that provides students with comfort and safety to share.

8. “But at those moments I think they can just feel freer to really engage and ask questions and . . . and . . . um . . . it also gives them an opportunity, I think, to share what they know, or what they think they know and put it out there, and it puts us on a different level in terms of, umm, being able to share information . . . I don’t know if that’s making any sense . . . but I (pause) there’s that freedom, I guess, there when the environment is open and energetic.”

9. “They [teachers] are willing to share they are encouraging they make and attempt to pull out and follow up with things that students say to try to keep that engagement going, they appreciate and they let students know that they’re interested in what the students are saying and they are encouraging of activity and participation.”

10. “I do try at every instance to honor their input with their experiences with their thoughts and with their questions and I think that I do a pretty good job with being very open to those . . . um . . . questions and honor where people are coming from.”

11. “I don’t have any problem with challenges and I let them know that they can challenge me, I don’t pretend to know everything . . . and so those are the kind of things that I hope do allow for that environment of exchange.”

12. “Working to create an environment where students are involved in what’s happening in the class, where they’re utilizing the information the content the readings in some way that they’re asking questions that they’re talking with each other, and that they’re active and that there is a exchange of information and questioning and sharing with teacher and or professor and students.”

13. “It seemed to work pretty well and it could have been, too, the composition of the class. I think they did tend to feel comfortable with each other, I think that made a difference. I think there are some ways to help people feel comfortable.”

14. “They (students) tend to be more responsive, I think they tend to share more, I think they tend to relate to each other better, I think they umm, let go of some of the concerns about saying the right thing or just, I think it just creates that environment where there is more of a sense of, and that’s . . . of freedom to just share things.”

Theme: Teacher is mindful and intentional.

1. “When I create them I’m thinking to myself ‘what are my, what is it that I hope happens, with giving this assignment, what kind of things am I looking for, what would be evidence that the students are learning, again, what concepts I’m basing the assignment on?’ So I base my assignments on specific aspects of what I think is important in the course, whether that be a particular concept, or the application of the concept or seeing how the students are able to write, or . . . for instance if I’m giving an assignment where I expect the students to give a presentation then I want to be mindful about ‘Okay what am I going to be . . . why would I have them
do this presentation to the other group, to their classmates?’ Well, I might think that if I do this that one of the things that I want the students to be able to be comfortable are doing presentation, and encouraging them to go to conferences with us and putting something together. What does it feel like when you’re up there trying to present information? What I really like again, is then students will sometimes call and say, ‘Okay well now I’m putting this presentation together, and I’m trying to decide whether I want to do this or something else? And I’m wondering what you think?’ When students engage me in that way I think that’s really good teaching, because I’m not telling them what to do, but I’m saying, ‘Well what are you thinking about?’ I like that. That shows me that they’re trying to figure out how to do this assignment and then they’ve engaged in the process, because not only are they coming in to do it, they’ve had to think through ‘Well how is it that I want to do this, do I want to give this activity?’ Then of course I give them feedback, I try to give them feedback on the things that I am asking them to do.”

2. “When I’m determining what assignments I give I really want to be clear to myself what is my purpose in giving those assignments and what do I, what do I think about in terms of how someone might approach that—like students.”

3. “I tell them everything that I ask them to do I have a purpose for . . . umm . . . and then all the assignments and the papers that they ask to write and being in class . . . I have a specific purpose in mind, and I ask them to be willing to put their part into it, I’m willing to put my part into it, and I ask them to put their part into it.”

**Theme 3: A goal of good teaching is that students can confidently converse about course material on a more than surface level.**

1. “I think this is particularly um, um, important at the graduate level because I think that there’s . . . again with sort of my expectations and in talking about you know . . . ‘you’re graduate students’ and there are these high expectations.”

2. “I didn’t have to ask myself ‘okay . . . I don’t think the students really are understanding these concepts . . . I’m not sure if they’re getting the theories’ . . . I knew . . . I knew that they were understanding . . . um . . . you know . . . Erikson’s theories of development . . . at least at a level where they could converse about it.”

3. “I think that’s one of the signs that students are . . . are . . . learning is when they can converse about the information in a way that’s comfortable and more in depth than just kind of spitting back what they’re reading but they’re able to engage in a conversation about it and there was a confidence level there about what they were talking about . . . those are signs to me that they’re getting it.”
4. “They start with talking about a situation and then integrate the fact that it reminds them of the theory or the concept or they’ve recognized a concept or theory in an application way of something that they’re doing or they will ask a question that takes it to the next level about . . .”
APPENDIX I

EXCERPT OF TEXTURAL-STRUCTURAL SUMMARY FOR SUSAN
Appendix I

Excerpt of Textural-Structural Summary for Susan

Having moments of good teaching starts before setting foot in the classroom. There is a thought process that involves reflection and being intentional about how material is presented, what students will be asked to do, and how they will be prepared to learn. These moments of good teaching, when the teacher can walk away satisfied that students are learning, begin with the teacher being thoughtful and reflective of what she wants to have happen during class. Susan believes that, for her, moments of good teaching happen more often when she takes time to reflect about her teaching and be thoughtful about the feedback she gets from her peers and her students. Susan is “willing to reflect constantly on what it is [she’s] doing, what [she’s] trying to do, and what [she] sees happening in the classroom.” Susan participates in a peer teaching program at her university in which she is paired with a faculty member, outside of counselor education, in order to observe each other’s teaching, do formative and summative evaluations, and discuss their teaching. Susan described this process as helping in identifying and maintaining moments of good teaching.

To encourage focusing in on [moments of good teaching] and striving for more of them, and to be able to talk about [our good teaching moments] is really nice . . . it’s an outlet for saying “You know what? I’m really excited, and I think this really went well, and I want to share it.” . . . we take teaching for granted, we just sort of suppose we’re doing it right, and I think that opportunities like these peer
evaluation programs encourage focusing more on [our moments of good
teaching] and being more mindful about what we’re doing in classes.
It’s during these conversations with peers that she is able to verbalize her successes, get
new ideas, and consider new ways of doing things in the classroom. Susan notes that
having a peer who is from a discipline other than counselor education is particularly
helpful.

Having someone who is outside of the counseling discipline is very useful
because since that person isn’t familiar with the content they’re often able to
focus more on the activities and the interaction in the classroom and we can talk
more about teaching and not get side tracked into content.

Susan “never teach[es] classes in exactly the same way the next semester
because [she] figure[s] there’s always something to try or something to do.”

I do consistently use some aspects [from course to course] . . . I don’t change my
syllabus completely every semester . . . the point, I think, is that I review what
I’m doing each semester and I often make those changes and try new things, I
have some consistent activities and ways that I present the information, but I do
try not to get too comfortable or complacent, in other words just pull out the old
syllabus every semester and just use it year after year after year.

Changing parts of her classes from semester to semester requires her to
continually be thoughtful about the courses she is teaching. It also requires her to
respond to students’ needs as they express them.  Susan believes that students have
valuable insights into her teaching process, and therefore she solicits their feedback and evaluation in order to create more moments of good teaching.

I do get a lot of feedback from students, we do have the typical evaluation that the university gives . . . but I ask [students] more specific questions. For instance, about the textbook . . . and I ask about the assignments, “if you were asked to do this assignment again, what would you change about it? What did you like about it?”

Susan has some assignments that she has “kept for years teaching it because [she’s] gotten very good feedback from the students and they seemed to find it useful” in their learning. Susan has also altered or removed assignments the students have not found to be useful, or which she finds not to be helpful. For example, Susan has stopped assigning group presentation projects that require students to meet outside of formal class time because she noticed that it wasn’t helpful for all students to be part of the full learning process.

I typically don’t use small group project work anymore [when assigning class presentations], unless we do everything in class . . . I stopped doing that because that always seems to end up being . . . well the typical things that happen in group work [for class presentations] in teaching, somebody does all the work or they just do their own thing, and then they just pull it together at the end and they say “you’re going to do this part and you’re going to do that part.” What I tell them when they’re going to do presentations is that I don’t want them to simply get up and do their part. What I want to see is evidence that they have really
interacted among themselves with the information and that they all have a pretty
good sense of what everyone else is going to say, and so that it truly is a group
effort.

Aside from being thoughtful and reflective of her peer and student feedback on
her teaching, Susan also believes moments of good teaching require her to be mindful
and intentional about how she presents course material and how she chooses
assignments. To encourage moments of good teaching Susan carefully considers what
she will ask students to do so as to ensure they have optimal learning experiences.
When determining assignments she “wants to be clear about [her] purpose in giving the
assignments” and she considers the assignment “in terms of how someone might
approach it—like students.” She lets her students know that everything she asks “them
to do [she] has a specific purpose for . . . and all the assignments and the papers that they
are asked to write or do in class—[she] has a specific purpose in mind.” When creating
assignments and activities that she believes contributes to moments of good teaching,
Susan is purposeful and intentional.

When I create [assignments and activities] I’m thinking to myself “What is it that
I hope happens with giving this assignment, what kind of things am I looking for,
what would be evidence that the students are learning, what concepts [am I]
basing the assignment on?” So I base my assignments on specific aspects of
what I think is important in the course, whether that be a particular concept, or
the application of the concept or seeing how the students are able to write, or for
instance, if I’m giving an assignment where I expect the students to give a
presentation then I want to be mindful about “Okay why would I have them do this presentation to their classmates?”

When she creates assignments, Susan is mindful about what she hopes her students will learn. She specifically thinks about how students can show evidence that they are interacting with material, making growth in their learning process, and becoming confident with particular counseling concepts. For example, if Susan wants the students to be comfortable and confident in verbalizing material to others, or if she wants them to feel encouraged to present at conferences, she might choose to give an assignment that requires students to present a topic to the class. Another example is if Susan wants students to be comfortable with applying developmental theories across the lifespan she might have students interview a person in a particular life stage and ask students to apply concepts and theory to the information they learn in the interview. These are just two illustrations on how Susan uses intentionality and mindfulness in creating assignments and activities that may promote moments of good teaching.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


*Counselor Education & Supervision, 39*, 270-284.


