NOVICE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT WAS MOST HELPFUL TO THEM ABOUT THEIR TEACHERS IN DIDACTIC CLASSES DURING THEIR MASTER’S PROGRAM

A dissertation submitted to Kent State University Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This research investigation was designed to explore the viewpoints of novice professional counselors to understand what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. Q methodology was selected for the research design used in this study, as it was well suited to exploring the viewpoints of novice professional counselors.

Thirty-five individuals participated in the study. They completed a 37-item instrument that assessed what they perceived as being “most unhelpful” to “most helpful” about their teachers in didactic classes during their master’s program. Participants in this study were novice professional counselors who met the following criteria: a) graduates of a counselor education degree program, b) accrued at least 500 post master’s direct hours of clinical service working with clients, and c) were no more than three years removed from graduating from their master’s degree program.

Data analysis was completed using the PQMethod 2.11 computer software, which completed a factor analysis. Three significant factors were found with high positive
between factor correlations. A secondary analysis was then completed that revealed an overarching super-factor that existed between Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3.

Two primary findings emerged from the data analysis of this study. First, three significantly different factors or shared viewpoints exist among novice professional counselors relative to the research question (i.e., Application Oriented Learner; Intrinsically Motivated Learner; Affect Oriented Learner). Second, although three different shared viewpoints exist among novice professional counselors (i.e., Application Oriented Learners, Intrinsically Motivated Learners, Affect Oriented Learners), there is also a high level of agreement among these three shared viewpoints, suggesting that master’s students in clinical mental health counseling may have similar learning preferences to one another. Similarities among the three factors were substantial enough to reveal a super-factor that represents a middle ground of commonality among the three factors of what is perceived as being helpful about teachers of didactic classes in clinical mental health counseling master’s degree programs.
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When I entered the doctoral program at Kent State University a wise person told me “always surround yourself with people that are smarter than you are.” Although “smarter” is too narrow a word to capture their superlatives, I have been fortunate to surround myself with wonderful people who have helped me complete my journey as a doctoral student. Reflecting on my journey I feel affection and gratitude for many people. The following paragraphs provide special recognition to several individuals who were particularly helpful to me.

I consider myself very lucky indeed to have such a supportive and encouraging family. Since I was old enough to remember my parents’ mantra to me has been, “you can do whatever you set your mind to doing.” They have always made this clear to me through their words and actions, and I have never questioned their love or belief in me. Despite the challenges I faced in school growing up and meandering through my early 20s without an apparent direction, their mantra never waned. Their unwavering love and belief in me gave me the time that I needed to find myself, and instilled in me a belief that I could achieve what I set my mind to doing. It cannot be overstated how much I love and appreciate my family, or how integral they have been to me obtaining my doctorate.

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Exiting my dissertation I am a better writer, am a more critical thinker, and have a deeper understanding of teaching than when I began, because of my dissertation co-chairs Dr. Cox and Dr. Bubenzer. The term “dissertation co-chair” is inadequate to encapsulate the ways that Dr. Cox and Dr. Bubenzer have been beneficial to me, as what I have learned from them extends beyond the scope of my dissertation. I have been enriched through working with them on my dissertation, and I will be a better professional because I got to closely watch two people who are very good at what they do. When working with them I appreciated their candor, thoughtfulness, and the discussions that arose about teaching and writing. I am particularly thankful for their generosity in sharing their time and wisdom, and for their willingness to help me whenever I felt stuck.

In the early stages of my dissertation I had some misgivings about using Q methodology for my study, as it was new and unfamiliar to me. Dr. Brown assuaged my worries by being patient and kind in his efforts to help me to learn Q methodology. I am thankful for his help and expertise. Through his guidance I gained a deeper understanding of Q methodology and developed confidence using it, which will help me in future research endeavors. In general, I am also appreciative of the conversations I
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The demands of professional counseling, and how clinical mental health counselor education programs are designed to prepare students to face these demands, are well known in the literature. Students who graduate from counselor education programs must complete examinations in order to receive professional licensure. After obtaining licensure, professional counselors must apply the knowledge and skills they learned in graduate programs, to work with clients with complex problems (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003), work in increasingly diverse roles and employment settings (Grant, 2006), and successfully navigate an acculturation process (Wilcoxon, Jackson, & Townsend, 2010) and adjustment processes (Schwitzer, Gonzalez, & Curl, 2001) in new work environments. Clinical mental health counselor education programs are designed to prepare students for the demands they will face in both obtaining licensure and working as professional counselors by offering courses that help students to acquire pertinent knowledge and develop clinical skills (Grant, 2006; Schwitzer et al., 2001). To address these needs, counselor education curricula typically offer didactic classes (e.g., theories, ethics, diagnosis, etc.) that focus on the acquisition of content knowledge and experiential classes (e.g., prepracticum, practicum, internship) that emphasize active and applied learning experiences (Schwitzer, et al., 2001).
Although considerable attention in the literature has been given to what should be included in counselor education curricula to prepare students for the demands of professional counseling, comparatively little attention has been given to students’ perceptions of what is most helpful in their process of learning to become a counselor (Granello & Hazler, 1998). Several pedagogies are present in the literature that provide differing viewpoints on how best to prepare students for their careers as professionals. Within the context of this dissertation, the term pedagogy is understood to be a comprehensive theory of teaching based on ideological assumptions about teaching and learning that to some degree may inform a teacher’s behaviors. Modernist (Guiffrida, 2005) and teacher-centered pedagogies (Baeten, Dochy, & Struyven, 2012) view teachers as the central component of the learning environment, and emphasize organization, structure, and the transmission of content knowledge to students as a means to help students learn important information. Constructivist (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998) and learner-centered pedagogies (Weimer, 2002) conceptualize teachers as facilitators of learning, who help create active and collaborative learning experiences for students to stimulate their personal processes of constructing knowledge.

Two aspects of teaching that have been identified as important in higher education literature are styles and approaches to teaching, and characteristics of effective teachers. Research on styles and approaches to teaching with non-counselor education student populations has revealed that no singular style or approach to teaching can be considered ideal for all student learners, and that different approaches to teaching are influential to
student learning in the classroom (Trigwell & Prosser, 1993; Zhang, 2004). Similarly, research on effective teaching has revealed that no singular model or definition can account for what an excellent teacher is, but rather excellent teaching can take on many different forms and is comprised of different characteristics (Pepe & Wang, 2012). Although there is considerable research in higher education on styles and approaches to teaching, and characteristics of effective teaching, there is little account of these aspects of teaching in the counselor education literature. Thus, little is known about what styles and approaches to teaching, or characteristics of instructors, are considered helpful by counseling students in their preparation for work as professional counselors.

**Purpose of Study**

The counselor education literature presents a fragmented picture of what aspects of teaching are helpful to counseling trainees to prepare them for the demands they will face as professional counselors. Several comprehensive pedagogical articles are available that discuss different conceptions of teaching. However, little is known about how a teacher’s style or approach to teaching, or characteristics of their teaching, are helpful to counseling students. This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature by exploring what novice counselors perceived as being most helpful about their teachers in didactic classes, that has been helpful to them in their work as a professional counselor. A unique aspect of this dissertation is the broad scope of factors considered. Rather than narrowing the focus to explore only one factor of teaching, the researcher wanted to
understand what aspects of pedagogy, styles of teaching, and characteristics of the teacher were perceived as being most helpful to students.

To achieve this end, this study sought the perspectives about helpful teaching of newly hired professional counselors who had accrued at least 500 hours of direct services and were no more than three years removed from graduating from their degree program. This population was sought with the idea that it might provide useful viewpoints based on several characteristics. First, participants were close enough to their degree experience to be reflective about their experiences as graduate students. Second, participants had the added perspective of working as a professional counselor, giving them a vantage point to reflect on what they perceived as being most helpful about their teachers in didactic classes, that has been helpful to them as a professional counselor. Third, no research studies in the counselor education literature have explored the viewpoints of novice professional counselors to understand what students perceive as being most helpful about their teachers.

The researcher selected teaching in didactic classes as a focal point in this study, based on anecdotal experiences with colleagues and students. Through participating in, and listening to, conversations with colleagues and students, the researcher noticed that some students struggle to see purpose and utility in certain didactic classes (e.g., “I don’t understand why I have to take ________; this has nothing to do with what I want to do as a counselor”), or certain information presented in didactic classes (e.g., “Why are we learning about ________, I don’t know if I’ll ever use that as a professional counselor”).
Whereas experiential and skill-based classes such as prepracticum and practicum may have a more obvious link between what is taught and how it will be useful to students in their professional practice, material covered in didactic classes can be abstract and have a tenuous connection to real world application. Since the purpose and utility of didactic courses may at times be obscure to students while they are completing their graduate program, it was interesting to explore the viewpoints of former students who were now working as professional counselors, to see what aspects of their teachers in didactic courses they perceived as being most helpful to the counselors they are today.

**Research Question**

The research question guiding this Q methodological study was: What was it about teachers of didactic classes during their master’s program, that novice professional counselors perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become?

**Review of the Literature**

The literature review serves as an overview of research and scholarship that is pertinent to this study. This chapter begins with an overview of the demands of being a professional counselor, to provide a context of understanding around the unique learning needs of counselor trainees, followed by a description of how counselor education programs are designed to address those needs. Relevant literature on pedagogy, teaching styles, and characteristics of effective teachers are then presented to highlight different aspects of teaching that impact student learning.
Demands of Professional Counseling

Graduates of counselor education programs who obtain employment as counselors are challenged by various demands in their new professional setting. Novice counselors must transition away from the relative support and safety offered by peers and mentors in their master's programs and begin to operate in a more independent manner. Novice professional counselors must be able to draw fluidly on their knowledge base and clinical skills in realtime, in situations that present complexity and ambiguity.

Being able to respond to complex social interaction with or between others is a fundamental demand of being a professional mental health counselor. Human beings are a complex and nuanced species, which can make it challenging for counselors to accurately assess, understand, and attempt to help their clients (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). The ambiguity and complexity present in the client-counselor relationship can be a major source of stress for novice counselors. Novice counselors are more susceptible to experiencing stressful interactions with clients, in comparison to mature counselors whose accumulated professional experiences may help to mitigate potentially stressful involvement with clients (Folkes-Skinner, Elliott, & Wheeler, 2010).

In addition to stressful involvement with client, Folkes-Skinner et al. (2010) stated that complex and challenging clients can represent a tipping point for novice counselors. On one hand, if a novice counselor experiences a positive outcome with a challenging client, it may serve to boost their self-confidence and strengthen their identity as a counselor. On the other hand, if the counselor has a negative outcome or experience
with a challenging client, it can undermine their perceived competence and emerging identity as a professional counselor. Folkes-Skinner et al. suggested that novice counselors are more susceptible to accumulate doubts about themselves as professional counselors as a result of negative experiences with challenging clients, because of their lack of professional experience. Folkes-Skinner et al. explained that a mature counselor’s larger body of professional experience may help to mitigate against self-doubt, whereas novice counselors may personalize negative outcomes as a reflection of their lack of skill and competency.

One area that may be particularly demanding for novice counselors is developing clinical thinking abilities that can be used to conceptualize their clients. Conceptualizing requires a counselor to absorb large amounts of information about a client and then organize that data into a working model of the client. Mayfield, Kardash, and Kivlighan (1999) conducted a study comparing differences between how novice and experienced therapists were able to conceptualize a client. The authors found that experienced counselors were quicker at cognitive mapping tasks and domain specific skill performances, which they attributed to experienced counselors’ extensive base of procedural knowledge in combination with their ability to use clinical skills with less thought and effort. They also found that experienced counselors were quicker at reading transcripts of sessions and organizing the pertinent information. Mayfield et al. concluded that experienced counselors appeared to have a greater aptitude for efficiently structuring knowledge about clients, while being able to organize this information at
greater speeds than novice counselors. This finding highlights the importance of counselor education programs helping trainees expand their critical thinking skills and increase their ability for client conceptualization.

In addition to using clinical skills and thinking abilities to work with complex client populations, the adjustment process of becoming familiar with a new professional work environment can be challenging for novice counselors. Newly hired counselors must adapt to the dynamics of their workplace environment, by familiarizing themselves with organizational dynamics, interpersonal climate, and political factors associated with their job (Schwitzer et al., 2001). Schwitzer et al. indicated that counselor education programs may fail to simulate the political elements of working in a professional setting, such as how to identify and successfully negotiate hierarchies, bureaucracies, and complex social dynamics that may reveal themselves in one’s work environment. Schwitzer et al. indicated that professional work environments often require counselors to interact and cooperate with other departments and professionals that may be present within a counselor’s workplace (e.g., various systems and professionals working together but independently at a hospital), or with other professional entities that are outside of a counselor workplace (e.g., a private practice counselor coordinating treatment with a psychiatrist working independently). Schwitzer et al. surmised that it is paramount that counselor trainees develop strong interpersonal skills and familiarity in working in complex social settings, so that when hired as a professional counselor they can adapt to these occupational dynamics.
One source of ambiguity that can cause dissonance for novice counselors is the professional acculturation process (Wilcoxon et al., 2010). Nascent counselors are confronted with a myriad of new perspectives, such as being a member of the counseling profession; the identity that accompanies the agency or practice where they work; an emerging self-identity of how they see themselves as a counselor; and diverse world views of clients with whom they work with that impel them to engage in a process of dissonance-integration (Wilcoxon et al., 2010). This process of dissonance-integration requires an expansion of the individual’s worldview to accommodate for the new viewpoints with which they have come into contact. Wilcoxon et al. suggested that therapists in training should be immersed in learning experiences where they encounter diverse values and world views so that they can strengthen their personal identity by sorting through contrasting points of view.

**Counselor Education Training Programs**

Clinical Mental Health degree programs in counselor education are designed to prepare students for work as practitioners. A unique aspect of a degree program in counselor education is that after graduates successfully complete a program of study they are eligible to seek licensure and obtain work as a professional counselor. This practitioner focus is reflected in the core standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling Related Education Programs (CACREP), which is the accrediting council charged with promoting excellence in counselor education program development and counselor competency. In the *Introduction* of the 2009 CACREP standards, it is stated
that accredited counselor education programs should “help students master the knowledge and skills to practice effectively” (p. 2).

Counselor education curricula are designed with a duel focus in mind, of (a) students acquiring mastery of certain content knowledge and (b) developing competency in using clinical skills (Grant, 2006). Typical counselor education curricula attempt to strike a balance between didactic and experiential-type classes (Schwitzer et al., 2001). Experiential or clinically-oriented classes such as prepracticum, practicum and internship classes tend to focus on students’ development of clinical skills or competencies, while didactic classes such as theories, ethics, diagnosis, or research-related courses are oriented towards knowledge acquisition (Sperry, 2012). Ultimately, counselor education programs aspire to train master's students to be capable of integrating core knowledge with the application of clinical skills, so that they are equipped to meet the demands of being a professional counselor (Grant, 2006).

When considering the duel focus of counselor education programs (i.e., acquisition of knowledge and the application of clinical skills), there are differing opinions within the literature on what is most helpful for counselor trainees. Based on their research of counselor education and supervision practices, Holloway and Neufeldt (1995) posited that the development of competent clinical skills may be easier for counselor trainees to attain than an ability to organize and synthesize knowledge into useful case conceptualizations. An implication for this finding was that counselor trainees be introduced to more cognitive-related learning, such as case conceptualization
or treatment planning, to expand their capacity for clinical thinking. Grant (2006) proposed that counselor education programs expand upon traditional didactic methods of content learning to include learning experiences that provide procedural knowledge, reflective opportunities, and experiential activities. Grant’s position is substantiated by the research of Orlinsky, Botermans, and Ronnestad (2001), who surveyed more than 4,000 therapists to understand better the influences on their development. Based on the findings of their survey, Orlinsky et al. concluded that “the overall impression is clearly that practical/experiential learning clearly takes precedence over academic learning as far as therapists are concerned” (p. 143).

**Pedagogy in Counselor Education**

Pedagogy is a term that is not clearly defined within the literature. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defined pedagogy as “the art, science, or profession of teaching.” After reviewing a variety of articles in the literature pertaining to pedagogy, a great disparity was found between how the term “pedagogy” was used. Some articles wrote about pedagogy from broad ideological perspectives, whereas other articles referred to pedagogy as an approach to teaching used in the classroom. This dissertation refers to pedagogy as a comprehensive theory of teaching that informs a teacher’s behaviors. Much of the literature on pedagogy is written from ideological viewpoints that sharply contrast with one another, often resulting in polarized perspectives. While theories of teaching are helpful in generating different ideas about teaching, they cannot adequately describe the complex practices of teachers (Barrett, 2007). Barrett suggested that in
practice, teachers use an array of pedagogies and methods that may not be reflected by
purist perspectives in the pedagogical literature.

Compared to other fields of study, teaching pedagogy has received relatively little
attention in the counselor education literature. Granello and Hazler (1998) stated that the
literature in counselor education has focused predominantly on what content should be
included in counselor education curricula, as opposed to what methods of teaching are
helpful for stimulating student learning. Literature that has addressed pedagogy has
narrowed its scope to the application of innovative methods in a specific class, or to a
topic of interest, such as counseling theories (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007;
Waliski, 2009), multiculturalism (Locke & Kiselica, 1999), social justice (Odegard &
Vereen, 2010), or counseling children and adolescents (Davis, 2008). Several
comprehensive models exist in the counselor education literature that reflect differing
views on the roles of teachers and students, instructional methods, the teacher-student
relationship, and desired learning outcomes (Granello & Hazler, 1998; Granello, 2000;
Guiffrida, 2005; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). These models include modernism and
constructivism.

**Modernist pedagogy.** Modernism and constructivism are two contrasting
paradigms that have influenced comprehensive theories of teaching in counselor
education (Guiffrida, 2005). Modernist philosophy is based on the assumption that there
is an objective reality in which factual knowledge can exist that is independent of those
trying to observe it. This independent or objective knowledge can become known and
validated through the rigors of the scientific process. Modernist pedagogy reflects these assumptions by placing a primacy on factual knowledge being imparted to students, so that they will have a foundation for future learning and mastery of the subject.

Modernist teaching pedagogy takes on the form of a hierarchical teacher-student relationship, in which the teacher represents an authority on the subject matter. In modernist pedagogy, teachers are identified as authorities due to their accumulated knowledge and experience with a subject matter, relative to their students’ inexperience and lack of knowledge. Guiffrida (2005) explained that it is the role of the modernist teacher to identify important knowledge, and then organize this information into a format that can be transmitted to students. The transmission of information from teacher to students through lecture or assigned readings tends to be the dominant methods of instruction in modernist pedagogy. This model assumes that teachers will predominately assume an active role of transmitting knowledge to students, while students will engage in learning by passively receiving knowledge from their teachers (Gulati, 2008).

Guiffrida (2005) described a modernist approach towards teaching a didactic class in counselor education as beginning by imparting content to students such as historical origins, important concepts and terminology, or specific procedural information. After students have familiarized themselves with core conceptual knowledge, they are then better prepared to having meaningful learning experiences from class demonstrations and experiential learning activities. From a modernist pedagogical standpoint, it may be beneficial to introduce students to experiential learning activities after they have acquired
some degree of familiarity with essential core knowledge about the subject. An example that highlights potential benefits of this approach would be introducing students to conceptual knowledge about a particular counseling theorist before introducing them to a class demonstration of that counseling theory, which might provide students with a framework for understanding what they are observing and a shared language to discuss their reactions to what they observed.

Developmental pedagogy. Granello and Hazler (1998) presented a model of developmental pedagogy for counselor education that shares several commonalities with modernist pedagogy. Two of these commonalities are the role and function of a teacher in the classroom and the deliberate progression of teaching strategies used throughout a class (Guiffrida, 2005). Informed by models of college student development, adult development, and novice-to-expert models of learning, developmental pedagogy maintains that teachers should select an approach towards teaching that is developmentally appropriate for their student population. Counselor educators use knowledge accumulated through the rigors of their training and composite of professional experiences to assess the development level of students that they are teaching and then match their method of teaching to correspond with students’ developmental needs. Ideally, an educator will select developmentally appropriate methods from a wide variety of teaching approaches that may include lecture, experiential learning activities, and self-directed learning opportunities to meet the changing needs of their students.
Granello and Hazler (1998) described student development as being multidimensional, in that students have multiple processes of development that occur within individual classes, while also having a process of development that occurs as they progress through their program. Novice students, who are either beginning a particular class or are near the start of their academic program, are anxious and less sure of themselves, requiring more structure and support from teachers. To meet the needs of novice students, developmental pedagogy proposes that teachers begin working with students using a structured approach that utilizes a more didactic style of teaching. Granello and Hazler reasoned a more defined approach may help to mitigate student stress and anxiety, while serving as a springboard that helps propel students to move through subsequent stages of development. In support of this claim, Guiffrida (2005) stated that this approach may help assuage students’ stress and anxiety, as it is an approach to learning that is familiar.

As students accumulate knowledge and experience, they develop a stronger foundation that lends itself to increased self-confidence and autonomy (Granello & Hazler, 1998). Advanced students who have successfully integrated core knowledge into the self are then prepared for engagement in independent and self-directed learning opportunities. When working with student populations that are more advanced, Granello and Hazler suggested that teachers shift from authoritarian styles of instruction to a more egalitarian approach. This egalitarian approach transitions away from didactic instruction towards incorporating more experiential and applied learning activities that encourage
students to engage in self-directed learning. Although developmental pedagogy advocates for selecting appropriate teaching strategies based on normative development of counselor education students, Granello and Hazler acknowledged that students learn in different ways, and that regardless of developmental level, they should receive differentiated types of instruction.

**Constructivist pedagogy.** Constructivist pedagogy in counselor education is based on the underpinnings of the postmodernist philosophies of constructivism and social constructivism (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). Contrasting the modernist viewpoint of a fixed reality that exists independent of the observer, postmodernism regards knowledge as being relative to the context in which it occurs. From a constructivist perspective, knowledge is the result of a subjective process where an individual creates their own understanding based on an interaction between what they already know and believe, and encounters with new ideas and beliefs (Richardson, 2003). This process is perpetuated by social and relational interactions, as what an individual knows is constantly being reified, solidified, or modified based on contact with other objects and people. In regard to learning, students are seen as active participants who are constantly engaging in a process of considering, questioning, and evaluating information that is already known, which in turn results in the creation of new information (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

Constructivist pedagogy in counselor education has several critiques of modernist approaches that highlight fundamental differences in their teaching focuses. Guiffrida (2005) stated that although the didactic instruction model of knowledge transmission
predominantly used in modernist pedagogy may be helpful for students preparing to pass professional licensure and certification exams, it may hinder students from developing their capacity for client conceptualization. This is based on the assumption that students who primarily tend to be passive recipients of knowledge will develop rote memorization skills rather than an aptitude for critical thinking skills. Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) reflected this concern, suggesting that modernist pedagogies may fail to stimulate reflective thinking in students. Reflective thinking is regarded as an essential component of experienced counselors, that increases a practitioner’s capacity for complex thinking and tolerance for ambiguity (Schon, 1983).

Constructivist pedagogy in counselor education emphasizes students’ development of critical and reflective thinking abilities, along with their capacity for understanding and future learning (Guiffrida, 2005). These learning ideals are reflected in the teacher-student relationship, which tends to be more egalitarian and less hierarchical than modernist models. Teachers diminish power differentials by working with students in a manner that connotes a more open and tentative stance towards what they know (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). Rather than being the primary source of knowledge within the classroom, teachers assume a more facilitative role, encouraging students to share their insights and experiences to create a collective learning experience.

Although counselor educators using constructivist pedagogy share some similar classroom practices (e.g., experiential learning activities, small group discussion, videos and other media) with modernist pedagogy, they differ in the sequencing of learning
activities and emphases placed on specific learning outcomes. Constructivist teaching practices are designed to encourage students to use their experiences to deconstruct and/or critically think about what is known, so that students can develop a deeper personal understanding and expand their self-awareness. Constructivist pedagogy deemphasizes the importance of students acquiring specific content knowledge (e.g., names, dates, terminology, core concepts), which is reflected in teaching practices that minimize knowledge transmission through lecture. Students are encouraged to become active participants in their own process of learning, by sharing their personal insights and experiences with other members in their learning environment (Nelson & Neufelt, 1998). As opposed to modernist pedagogy, which advocates for experiential learning activities only after students have familiarized themselves with a requisite level of knowledge, constructivist teaching practices are more likely to incorporate experiential and applied learning activities at any point during a class.

Egalitarian teacher-student relationships and the emphasis on teacher as facilitator of learning are ideals of constructivist pedagogy that some authors have critiqued, suggesting that there may be limits to which these ideals are possible or helpful in practice. Gulati (2008) noted that power differentials are inherent to any teacher-student relationship where an instructor is placed in a position of evaluation. Gulati stated that in constructivist-oriented classrooms where discussion is the primary means of instruction, power differentials are still present, as learners may feel required to participate because they perceive that their grade is dependent on it. Using constructivist learning principles
as rationale, Horn (2009) argued that power differentials present in modernist-based lecture formats could in some ways be helpful to student learners. Horn explained that constructivist learning principles view learning as an interaction between an individual’s prior experiences and knowledge base, and encounters with new experiences and knowledge. Thus, Horn posited that if a student has constructed knowledge based on incorrect or harmful meanings, if left uncorrected by a teacher, any new information learned is likely to be wrong, and when put into application may manifest itself in ways that are unhelpful. For example, if a student in counselor education never received information that indicated the importance of suicide assessment, it is possible that student may construct a personal understanding that suicide assessment is an arbitrary task, rather than an essential requirement of being a professional counselor.

Constructivist pedagogy has also been criticized for not being culturally appropriate for all educational settings (Richardson, 2003). Richardson posited that the theoretical underpinnings of constructivism tend to reflect western ideals of liberalism and individualism, and that constructivist approaches towards teaching have been predominately developed within privileged classes. Richardson stated that minority cultures and individuals from lower socioeconomic statuses may be less interested in individualistic approaches to learning and place a greater importance on community development and hierarchical leadership from teachers.

Richardson (2003), a proponent of constructivist pedagogy, cautioned against constructivist pedagogy being portrayed as a superior theory of teaching. Richardson
explained that, based on the constructivist assumption that there are many ways in which people learn and construct knowledge, it is problematic for constructivist pedagogy to lay claim towards being the ideal method of teaching. Richardson cautioned against dogmatic constructivist literature that “may be imposing a dominant model of pedagogy on those who wish--and may have good reason--to operate differently” (p. 1635). Thus, Richardson surmised that it is helpful to consider constructivist pedagogy as one of many methods that may help students to learn.

**Contextual teaching.** Contextual teaching is a pedagogy in some ways akin to constructivist pedagogy, in that it acknowledges the social nature of learning (Granello, 2000). However, whereas constructivist pedagogy primarily focuses on the construction of knowledge in the classroom, contextual teaching is centered around teaching methods that connect learning experiences in the classroom to real-world experiences. Contextual teaching in counselor education is based on the premise that learning is connected to the context in which it is constructed (Granello, 2000).

Contextual teaching is based on the theoretical work of John Dewey (1916), who posited that a school’s educational structures should strike a balance between presenting knowledge to students and taking into consideration student interests and educational needs. In contrast to some postmodern pedagogical literature that stridently deemphasizes the purpose and function of content information, Dewey believed that content information about the subject matter was an important aspect of the learning experience. However, Dewey suggested that a simple transmission of content knowledge
in and of itself was not sufficient to maximize student learning. Rather, Dewey suggested that content information be presented in a manner that allows students to connect it to their prior experiences, or to current activities that are meaningful in their everyday lives. From this perspective, content can serve as a starting point for intellectual explorations, or it can be modified to supplement intellectual explorations that already engage students.

Contextual teaching pedagogy in counselor education programs is used to help students learn material in a manner that relates to real-world situations they have already experienced or will eventually encounter as professional counselors (Granello, 2000). While contextual learning approaches are often inherent to experiential classes, such as practicums and internship experiences, contextual learning pedagogy can be applied in didactic courses as well. Granello cited several examples of contextual teaching activities that are commonly used in counselor education programs, such as role plays with peers, use of actors as clients, student involvement in community based projects, and field trips. These activities provide simulations of real world experiences, which allow students to make connections between what they are learning and how they will use that knowledge.

Findings from an empirical study by Furr and Carroll (2003) seemed to be supportive of contextual teaching pedagogy. Furr and Carroll conducted a study that examined students’ perceptions of critical incidents that occurred during their program that influenced their development as a counselor. This study collected data from 84 students, including 29 first-year students, 14 practicum-level students, and 41 students in
Among the results yielded from this study, Furr and Carroll found that students perceived their development to be more heavily influenced by experiential learning activities and experiences that occurred outside of their program than they did courses based on cognitive learning strategies. Furr and Carroll noted that a surprise finding of their study was that students placed a relative lack of significance on the building of counseling skills and learning important conceptual knowledge. Furr and Carroll clarified that this finding did not signify that students found cognitive learning to be unimportant, but rather that they tended to be more heavily impacted by teaching experiences that involved immediate application of knowledge. Based on the findings from their study, Furr and Carroll concluded that teaching practices that connect what is taught in the classroom to real-world experiences that occur outside of the classroom may help create meaningful learning opportunities for counselor education students.

Granello (2000) provided several limitations of contextual teaching pedagogy, which she urged should be considered in light of its potential benefits. Granello cautioned that due to the tacit common sense of this approach, educators should not assume that it is sufficient to place students only in real-world situations as a means for learning. Rather, educators should find a balance between supplementing classroom-based learning with activities that simulate real-world experiences. Granello also indicated that time constraints imposed on teachers, when having to cover a large amount of material in a relatively short amount of time, may limit the applicability of contextual teaching in certain situations. Further, Granello stated that contextual teaching
is a method to help students develop greater understanding about the material, but is not intended to completely eliminate the use of didactic instruction.

**Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered Pedagogy**

Struyven, Dochy, and Janssens (2010) indicated that most of the literature on models of teaching in higher education can be broken down into two contrasting categories: teacher-centered and learner-centered pedagogy. Although the counselor education literature is silent on teacher-centered and learner-centered pedagogy, parallels can be drawn between these pedagogies and modernist and constructivist pedagogies.

**Teacher-centered pedagogy.** Similar to modernist pedagogy in counselor education, teacher-centered approaches are rooted in modernist and positivist philosophy. Congruent with its positivist underpinnings, teacher-centered pedagogy adheres to an expert-novice teacher-student relationship. Teachers are regarded as experts or possessors of knowledge, responsible for organizing and imparting pertinent content knowledge to their students. Teacher-centered approaches are associated with traditional, instructional, and didactic methods of teaching (Baeten, Dochy, & Struyven, 2012). Baeten et al. indicated that teacher-centered pedagogy is a theory of teaching with which students are familiar, and that this familiarity can help alleviate student anxiety.

In a teacher-centered approach, a teacher’s primary function within the classroom is to organize and disseminate pertinent information to students. A teacher’s primary focus is on students acquiring core content knowledge that is considered essential to the subject. Prosser and Trigwell (1999) described teacher-focused approaches as being
synonymous with information-transmission. This transmission of knowledge occurs predominately through a lecture-based format, which is considered to be one of the most common teaching practices in higher education (Cox, McIntosh, Reason, & Terenzini, 2011; Goldstein & Benassi, 1996, 2006). This approach to teaching places teachers as the central figure in the learning environment and creates a hierarchical teacher-student dynamic.

In a teacher-centered learning environment, students complement the active role of their instructor by adopting a more passive role. Whereas teachers are responsible for imparting valuable subject knowledge to students, students are responsible for receiving knowledge that is being transmitted (Wright, 2011). K. L. Brown (2003) suggested that a student’s success in a teacher-centered learning environment is contingent upon a desire and capacity to absorb and then reproduce information in a rote fashion. Brown posited that teaching practices that predominantly rely on lecture as a means for transmitting knowledge to students may have a polarizing effect in the classroom; students who are well suited to didactic instruction will tend to thrive, whereas those students who have difficulty grasping the content, or have alternative learning styles, may find it difficult to succeed.

Learner-centered pedagogy. Similar to constructivist pedagogy in counselor education, learner-centered pedagogy is based on postmodernist philosophy. From a postmodernist perspective, objective knowledge does not exist in a manner in which it can be claimed by an individual, and can only exist through a collective social
endorsement. Knowledge is viewed as a subjective phenomenon that is constructed through an individual’s experiences with other people, objects, and environments (Guiffrida, 2005). Thus, in learner-centered pedagogy, teachers are not regarded as experts or arbiters of knowledge, nor as authoritarians responsible for ensuring that students learn. Rather, there is an assumption that each student in the classroom has a natural inclination to learn, and that each student possesses experiences and perspectives that are essential towards creating an environment that stimulates learning (Weimer, 2002). McCombs (2004) described a learner-centered philosophy:

[Learning is]... non-linear, recursive, continuous, complex, relational, and natural in humans...Learning is enhanced in contexts where learners have supportive relationships, have a sense of ownership and control over learning processes, and can learn with and from each other in safe and trusting learning environments. (p. 7)

Learner-centered pedagogy focuses on facilitating learning experiences that stimulate a student’s processes of constructing knowledge and understanding knowledge with greater depth (Wright, 2011). Learner-centered pedagogy seeks to facilitate students taking a deep approach towards their learning, which is defined by a student’s intent to create personal understanding and meaning (Diseth, 2007). Deep approaches to learning contrast with surface approaches towards learning, characterized by a student’s intent to reproduce knowledge with precision so as to minimize mistakes (Diseth, 2007). To achieve learning outcomes that facilitate conceptual growth in students, learner-centered
teachers endeavor to create a classroom environment that will act as a catalyst to stimulate deep approaches to learning. Contrasting the traditional teacher-centered approach, learner-centered approaches tend to eschew learning environments where instructors are primarily responsible for imparting content knowledge to students through lecture. Struyven et al. (2010) described learner-centered classroom practices as being active, transitive, and designed to provoke conceptual changes within students.

A hallmark of learner-centered environments is that teachers use differentiated forms of instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all students within the classroom. K. L. Brown (2003) indicated that using a variety of approaches in the classroom is an inclusive approach that may be beneficial for lower performing students within a class. This is in contrast to primarily lecture-based formats, which tend to favor a certain type of learning style and that may exacerbate the gap between high achieving students and those students who are experiencing difficulties grasping the content. Cox, McIntosh, Reason, and Terenzini (2011) identified several examples of differentiated approaches that are prominent within the literature as active learning, collaborative learning, cooperative learning, small-group learning, and problem-based learning.

In a learner-centered classroom, the instructor assumes a facilitative role that is more peripheral rather then central to the learning experience (Wright, 2011). In contrast to the hierarchical student-teacher relationship present in the teacher-centered model, learner-centered student-teacher relationships have a more balanced distribution of power (Wright, 2011). Cornelius-White (2007) described learner-centered classroom dynamics
as being more egalitarian, in that students are given increased responsibility and
ownership over their learning experience. Rather than a teacher being primarily
responsible for teaching students what they should know, students are given opportunities
to teach one another what they have learned through their experiences and engagement in
self-directed learning activities. Students may also be provided an opportunity to give
input to how they will be evaluated, what projects they will complete, assigned readings,
and rules for classroom behavior (Weimer, 2002).

**Research on pedagogical approaches.** Contrary to purist ideals of
learner-centered pedagogy, some research has suggested that students benefit from
teaching that balance teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches (Lea, Stephenson,
& Troy, 2003; Mayer, 2004), or approaches towards teaching that are predominately
teacher-centered. Baeten et al. (2012) conducted a quasi-experimental study that
evaluated students’ approaches to learning and performance across four different
conditions. Participants ($N = 1098$), who were first year students in a teacher education
program taking a course in child development, were assigned to one of four conditions: a
lecture-based learning environment that used lecture with PowerPoint presentations as the
primary means of teaching ($n = 251$), a case-based learning environment that challenged
students to construct knowledge by selecting and applying knowledge to solve authentic
problems ($n = 307$), an alternated learning environment that vacillated between lecture-
based instruction and case-based learning ($n = 281$), and an environment that began using
lecture then transitioned into case-based learning by the end of the course ($n = 259$). In a
post-test assessment, participants in the lecture-based environment and the gradually integrated case-based learning environment performed better on assessments measuring knowledge than participants in the case-based learning group. Based on this finding, Baeten et al. concluded that lecturing can be a valuable method of teaching that can help students acquire a base of knowledge about a subject matter. Baeten et al. further surmised that once students possess a certain base of knowledge, it may allow students to correctly apply that knowledge in the future.

Another learner-centered ideal that has received criticism in the literature is that learner-centered pedagogy contributes to students adopting deeper approaches towards learning. Horn (2009) challenged the learner-centered idea that all people are highly motivated to learn, and that learning will naturally occur if people are placed in an appropriate environment. Some research has supported the idea that students who tend to use surface approaches to learning will develop deeper approaches to learning when placed in a learner-centered environment (Vanthournout, Donche, Gijbels, & Van Petegem, 2004; Wilson & Folwer, 2005). Yet other research has depicted a more tenuous relationship between learner-centered pedagogy and its effect on students’ approaches towards learning, such as the Baeten et al. (2012) study. In Baeten et al.’s study, 496 students from Belgium who were in a professional bachelor program for teacher education were assigned to either a teacher-centered, lecture-based environment (n = 98) or a learner-centered environment (n = 398), in which both groups of participants received a pre- and post-test that evaluated their approach towards learning. Participants
in the teacher-centered environment received instruction from a teacher who stood at the
front of the room and delivered content from the course reading material using a lecture
and PowerPoint presentation, while participants in the learner-centered environment had
a teacher who assumed a facilitative role of providing students with case-based and
problem-based learning tasks that required students to work both collaboratively and
individually. Participants were given the Approaches to Learning and Studying Inventory
(ALSI; Entwistle, McCune, & Hounsell, 2002), that measured what approach they took
towards their learning (i.e., deep approach, “I usually set out to understand for myself the
meaning of what we have to learn;” surface approach, “Often I have to learn over and
over things that don’t really make much sense to me”). Findings from this study
suggested that neither pedagogical approach was successful in enhancing students’ deep
approaches towards learning. One surprising result of this study was that students in the
learner-centered environment adopted a stronger surface approach than students in the
lecture-based environment. Based on information received from group interviews
conducted after the study was completed, Baeton et al. concluded that participants in the
learner-centered group adopted surface approaches to learning due to a lack of feedback
and structure from their instructors, acquiring fragmented knowledge, and poor group
dynamics that were not conducive to student learning. Baeton et al. surmised that rather
than a pedagogical practice being the primary catalyst that influences students’
approaches towards learning, that students’ approaches towards learning are more
impacted by their ability to understand the purpose of what they are doing. When
students are able to see a meaning and purpose to what they are learning, they are able to
develop greater personal understanding about material; if students cannot see meaning or
purpose in what they are doing, they approach their learning using rote memorization
skills.

**Approaches and Styles of Teaching**

Trigwell and Prosser (1993) proposed two conceptions of teaching that are
characterized by knowledge transmission and learning facilitation that influence what
approach a teacher uses in the classroom. A conception of teaching refers to a teacher’s
beliefs about teaching, which then inform a teacher’s classroom practices. Knowledge
transmission is a conception of teaching that prioritizes imparting knowledge and
relevant subject matter to students, and is associated with instructional and didactic
approaches to teaching. Facilitation of learning is a conception of teaching that is aimed
at assisting students’ personal construction of knowledge and conceptual change (Light &
Culkins, 2008). Approaches to teaching associated with the facilitation of learning are
active and interactive experiences during which students engage in problem solving and
collaborative learning.

Trigwell and Prosser’s (1993) model has been critiqued for its polarized depiction
of a teacher’s beliefs and approaches towards teaching. Trigwell and Prosser’s model
implies that a teacher is either a transmitter of knowledge or a facilitator of learning,
which does not account for different variations or combinations of these that may be
present within a teacher, and is suggestive that these concepts are mutually exclusive.
Light and Culkins (2008) suggested that the dualistic model presented by Trigwell and Prosser may be too simplistic and dualistic to capture accurately the complexities present in both teaching and learning. However, although Trigwell and Prosser’s model may lack complexity and nuance, it has been lauded as a practical conceptual framework that is useful for generating reflective thinking about teaching practices (Entwistle, 1997).

Light and Culkins (2008) stated that there is evidence in the literature that is in support of a relationship between a teacher’s conceptions of teaching and approaches towards teaching, and student learning approaches and outcomes. In a study that compared research findings on conceptions of teaching (Prosser, Trigwell, & Taylor, 1994) and approaches towards teaching (Trigwell, Prosser, & Taylor, 1994), Trigwell and Prosser (1996) found that teachers who had a particular conception about teaching were more inclined to use a like-minded approach towards their teaching. In a subsequent study, Trigwell and Prosser (1999) found that teachers who self-identified as a student-centered facilitator of learning approaches to teaching tended to have students who reported learning experiences of re-constructing knowledge and developing new world views, and that teachers who self-identified as transmitters of information were more likely to have students in their classroom report using rote memorization as their primary approach towards learning.

While there seems to be agreement in the literature that a complex relationship exists between teachers’ approaches towards teaching and students’ approaches towards learning, there is disagreement over the extent to which teaching conceptions affect a
teacher’s approach towards teaching. Several research studies have yielded results that depict a tenuous relationship between conceptions of teaching and approaches towards teaching. Eley (2006) conducted a qualitative study that consisted of 29 university teachers that included professors of various ranks from a wide range of academic fields (i.e., biology, chemistry, engineering, physics, mathematics, law, English literature, politics, and history). During the interviews, Eley asked participants to respond to a brief teaching episode that had occurred for them during a recent class, and then to respond to the thinking that went into planning that class. After interviews were completed, the data were transcribed and a preliminary analysis was conducted, from which six categories emerged that represented issues considered by some of the participants: (a) sensitivity to existing student knowledge, (b) prompting student engagement, (c) awareness of student thinking during teaching, (d) student thinking as a basis for planning, (e) introspection as a source of models of student thinking, and (f) explicit use of conceptions of teaching in decision making. Eley organized these six categories into a scoring scale that consisted of three levels, and had two independent raters analyze the transcripts and denote whether a categorical theme was present, apparently present, or not present. Scoring results indicated that “sensitivity to existing student knowledge” (25 instances) and “student thinking as a basis for planning” (23 instances) were themes that were most present or apparently present in the transcripts, and “explicit use of conceptions of teaching in decision making” was the least present or apparently present (5 instances). In light of these results, Eley concluded that the approaches a teacher selects for teaching are most
influenced by context-embedded decision making such as thoughtfulness about what students already know, or anticipating reactions that students might have to a particular topic, rather than being guided by their beliefs about teaching. These results were supported by results from studies by McAlpine and Weston (2000) and McAlpine, Weston, Beauchamp, Wiseman, and Beauchamp (1999) that explored how teachers make decisions during short time frames. These studies found that teachers tended to make decisions about how they would teach based on immediate concerns of their teaching environment.

In contrast to the dualistic model of Trigwell and Prosser (1993), Grasha (1994) presented a model that depicted multiple styles of teaching. Grasha conceptualized a teaching style as comprised of how a teacher interacts with students, presents information during class, manages classroom tasks, supervises coursework, acculturates students to the field, and provides mentorship to students. After interviewing faculty members in higher education about how and why they taught in their preferred methods, Grasha identified five themes that emerged from the data that he categorized as different teaching styles: expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator. An expert teaching style is associated with instructors who possess expertise and knowledge about a subject, and focus on transmitting that knowledge to students. Instructors using this style of teaching establish an expert status among students by demonstrating intricate knowledge of the subject matter and by challenging students to have a firm grasp of relevant information. A formal authority style is characterized by an instructor being
perceived by students as an esteemed authority on a subject, based on demonstrations of knowledge and rank as a faculty member. Instructors using a formal authority style will establish defined learning objectives, clear expectations for student performance and behavior, and provide direct student feedback. A personal model style is typified by an instructor acting as a personal model to explain how students should think and complete tasks. Instructors using a personal model style tend to take an active role in overseeing how students do things and use a hands-on approach to teach students. A facilitator style is distinguished by an instructor’s emphases on creating personable teacher-student relationships, and helping students to learn by asking questions, considering various perspectives, offering potential alternatives, and being supportive of student autonomy. The delegator style is typified by a hands-off approach by an instructor, where students are given large amounts of freedom to function independently. Delegator styles of teaching focus on helping students develop the ability to function autonomously, by creating projects where students can work independently or collaboratively as a member of a group.

Differing from the dualistic either/or model of Prosser and Trigwell (1993), Grasha (1994) described a teacher’s style as being a unique and nuanced combination of several different style combinations. Rather than a teacher having a purely expert or facilitator teaching style, Grasha suggested that it is more plausible that a teacher possesses qualities representative of each teaching style to some degree. Grasha used a metaphor of an artist and a pallet of paint to describe the relationship between his five
general styles of teaching, and the unique combination of styles that are engendered in a teacher’s personal style of teaching. Teachers begin with five primary colors on their pallet, but those colors can then be blended with one another to create more complex hues. Grasha stated that a teacher’s dominant style(s) are similar to the colors that stand out in the foreground of a painting, and that their less dominant styles are like the muted colors in the background of a painting.

Grasha (1994) described a complex and multidimensional array of considerations that inform how a teacher selects a style of teaching. Similar to the findings of Eley (2006) and McAlpine and Weston (2000), teachers interviewed in Grasha’s study indicated that they selected a teaching style based on contextual variables such as class size, subject matter, experience level of students, how much they liked the class, time constraints, the need to prepare students for standardized exams, willingness to take risks, and fear of departing from college teaching norms. Grasha found that expert and formal authority styles were more prevalent in large class sizes, with students who were less advanced, and in areas of mathematics, sciences, and business administration. Facilitator and delegator styles were more commonly used with advanced students, when teachers were willing to take more risks or took more enjoyment in a particular course, or in areas of education, humanities, and applied sciences.

Zhang (2004) proposed a different model for teaching styles, that is based on Sternberg’s (1988) theory of mental self-government. Sternberg’s theory of mental self-government assumes that an individual’s actions are governed by their style of
According to Sternberg, an individual’s style of thinking is the bi-product of several variables that include preference, familiarity, demands of the situation at hand, and socialization processes. Sternberg’s theory indicated that there are 13 different thinking styles (i.e., legislative, executive, judicial, hierarchical, monarchic, oligarchic, anarchic, global, local, internal, external, liberal, and conservative) that occur across five different dimensions (i.e., function, form, level, scope, and leaning). Zhang extended this theory to account for how teachers select a style of teaching, postulating that teaching behaviors are a manifestation of a teacher’s style of thinking.

Through a series of studies (Zhang, 2000, 2001, 2002,; Zhang & Sternberg, 2000), Zhang determined that certain thinking styles present in Sternberg’s theory could be categorized into three different groups (i.e., Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3) that account for different styles of learning and teaching. The Type 1 category is typified by styles of thinking (i.e., legislative, judicial, hierarchical, global, and liberal) that are creative and are capable of higher levels of cognitive complexity (Zhang, 2004). Zhang stated that teachers who use a Type 1 style are associated with facilitating creative thinking and complex information processing in their students. The Type 2 category is defined by styles of thinking (i.e., executive, local, monarchic, and conservative) that tend to be more conventional and suggestive of lower levels of cognitive complexity (Zhang, 2004). Zhang stated that teachers who use a Type 2 teaching style tend to emphasize structure, the following of rules, and simplistic information processing. The Type 3 category consists of thinking styles (i.e., anarchic, oligarchic, internal, external) that do not fit in
either Type 1 or Type 2. Teachers who use a Type 3 teaching style will exhibit characteristics of both Type 1 and Type 2 styles, which reveal themselves based on situational demands in which the teacher is working (Zhang, 2004).

Zhang (2004) proposed that students’ style of learning influences what their beliefs are about an effective teacher, and what type of teaching style they prefer. To test this hypothesis, Zhang recruited 255 participants (121 men, 134 women) from the University of Hong Kong to participate in his study. Participants were students who were enrolled in three different classes that included 2nd year undergraduate students in Education ($n = 40$), a post-graduate certificate class in education ($n = 25$), and a critical thinking class that was open to students of all levels at the university ($n = 190$). Participants responded to three different inventories; the Thinking Styles Inventory-Revised (TSI-R), the Preferred Thinking Styles in Teaching Inventory (PTSTI), and the Effective Teaching Inventory (ETI). After data collection was completed, Zhang ran a preliminary statistical analysis using a $t$ test and multivariate analysis of variance to identify potential group differences based on age, gender, and academic field of study. Zhang reported finding several group differences, which he then put under control, by conducting a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. In the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the dependent variable was preferred teaching style, and independent variable was the thinking style scale. Additionally, Zhang used a hierarchical multiple regression analysis to ascertain the predictive relationships between students’ thinking styles and their conceptions of effective teachers.
The results from Zhang’s (2004) study yielded several interesting findings. First, students with a particular style of thinking showed a strong predilection for teachers with a corresponding style of teaching (e.g., Type 1 teacher styles were preferred by Type 1 thinking styles, Type 2 thinking styles were preferred by Type 2 thinking styles, etc.). Second, whereas students showed preference for teachers that had a style of teaching that was congruent with their style of thinking, Type 2 and Type 3 students also indicated a strong preference for a Type 1 teaching style. Zhang explained that while the results did notreveal a singular teaching style that was favored among all students, that as a group, the Type 1 teaching style was the most preferred approach towards teaching. Third, after examining specific thinking styles of students (i.e., judicial, legislative, liberal, executive, monarchical, oligarchical), Zhang found that each student thinking style had a different valuation of what characteristics were essential in an effective teacher. For example, monarchical-minded students preferred teachers they perceived as skilled and organized in classroom operation, whereas executive-minded students valued teachers who were prepared for teaching and who were equipped with subject knowledge. These findings suggested that students have diverse learning needs and preferences, and that the different ways in which students think influence what they perceive as being important characteristics of effective teaching.

**Characteristics of Effective Teachers in Higher Education**

Characteristics of effective college teachers has received considerable attention in the literature. The difficulty associated with clearly defining effective teaching is well
known (Young & Shaw, 1999; Pepe & Wang, 2012), as it may be a concept that is too subjective about which to reach a consensus. At present, there is no mutually agreed upon definition of an effective teacher in the literature. Nonetheless, researchers have been able to extrapolate certain characteristics that are ascribed to effective teaching. This section discusses characteristics of effective teachers that have been substantiated by research.

One method that has been used to examine characteristics of effective teaching has been to explore the perceptions of student and faculty members. A prominent study using this approach was conducted by Feldman (1988), who completed a meta analysis of the available literature on effective teaching. Feldman found 31 studies where college students or faculty members were asked to identify characteristics that they considered to be representative of “good,” “effective,” “best,” or “ideal” teaching. Feldman then pared down the pool of 31 studies to 18 studies, on the basis of his ability to code and categorize items from these studies into 22 dimensions of effective teaching. Feldman then created a 22-item instrument that he used to assess findings from the 31 studies on effective teaching, so that he could rank order, and then compare, student and faculty perceptions of important characteristics of effective teaching. The results from Feldman’s study indicated that students ranked the five most important characteristics of effective teaching as teachers’ sensitivity to and concern with class level and progress (ranked first), teachers’ preparation organization of the course (ranked second), teachers’ knowledge of the subject (ranked tied for third), teachers’ stimulation of interest in the
course and its subject matter (ranked tied for third), and teachers’ enthusiasm for
teaching/subject (ranked fifth, p. 311).

An interesting finding from Feldman’s (1988) study was that students and faculty
members tended to be relatively like-minded about how they rank ordered the
characteristics. Both students and faculty members indicated that knowledge about the
subject matter, teachers’ sensitivity to the class level and progress, and clarity as a
communicator were important characteristics, and were in relative agreement over less
important characteristics such as the clarity of course objectives, the instructor’s
personality, or productivity in research or other related scholarly agendas. In total, the
average correlation between student and faculty responses was .71. However, students
and faculty members did significantly differ on the rank ordering of three characteristics:
instructors intellectually challenging students to engage in independent thinking (rank
17.5 students, rank 6 for instructors), instructors stimulating the interest of students (rank
3.5 for students, rank 13.5 for instructors), and teachers motivating students to do their
best (rank 17.5 for students, rank 7.5 for instructors). This finding highlights that
although students and faculty members may tend to have similar perspectives on effective
teaching, differences do exist, and that faculty members should be cognizant of potential
differences in perspective.

One issue that has been raised in the literature is how to discern effective
teaching. Studies such as Feldman’s (1988) depict certain core characteristics as being
representative of effective teaching. Yet based on contextual variables, such as class size
or students’ level of experience, and personal variables such as preferred methods of thinking, teachers may use approaches for teaching that are quite different from one another. In considering the two most prominent approaches towards teaching, lecturing, and facilitating discussion, Benassi and Goldstein (1996) questioned whether different characteristics are ascribed to effective lectures and effective leaders of discussion.

To explore this query, Goldstein and Benassi (1996) recruited 30 undergraduate students majoring in psychology, to respond to questionnaires that assessed what characteristics they believed were important in an excellent lecturer and an excellent discussion leader. Goldstein and Benassi found that participants attributed strong interpersonal skills, openness to self-disclosure, having a propensity for creating a safe and supportive classroom environment, flexibility, and forming egalitarian relationships with students to an ideal discussion leader. Contrasting the ideal characteristics associated with the excellent discussion leader condition, excellent lecturers were characterized by strong organizational skills, preparation by the instructor, and command of factual knowledge.

Based on the findings from their 1996 study, Goldstein and Benassi (2006) concluded that excellent teaching can occur in two different dimensions, structural and process. The structural dimension consists of characteristics such as the instructors preparation for class, maintaining a well structured and organized classroom environment, and facilitating factual learning, which are attributes typically ascribed to effective lecturers. The process dimension consists of characteristics such as the
instructor’s sociableness with students, willingness to self-disclose as a means of being open and engaging, and encouraging autonomous thinking in their students, which are attributes typically ascribed to effective discussion leaders.

Goldstein and Benassi completed a 2006 study that compared teachers’ and students’ beliefs about ideal lecturers, ideal discussion leaders, and an ideal instructor, that bridges the gap between their 1996 study and Feldman’s (1988) study. Goldstein and Benassi (2006) collected questionnaires from undergraduate students ($n = 414$) and faculty members ($n = 128$), that assessed what characteristics they thought were most important in an excellent lecturer and in an excellent discussion leader. Participants were provided with a short description of each type of teacher so that they could clearly delineate the different roles associated with each type. The researchers also included a control group for excellent instructors, which was an approach neutral category designed to explore participants’ beliefs about the characteristics of good teaching in general.

Results from Goldstein and Benassi’s (2006) study yielded several important findings. Consistent with the findings from Feldman’s (1988) study, student and faculty member participants were found to have similar factor structures on their beliefs about characteristics of excellent lecturers and discussion leaders. Consistent with the findings from their 1996 study, Goldstein and Benassi found that participants rated process dimensions higher in the excellent discussion condition and structure dimensions higher in the lecturer condition. A new finding of this study was that participants in the effective instructor control group reported higher ratings for characteristics associated with the
process dimension than the structural dimension. Goldstein and Benassi concluded that this finding may indicate that effective teaching in general is more closely associated with characteristics of the process dimension, such as strong interpersonal skills and openness with students. This finding does not suggest that teachers must have strong process dimension related characteristics in order to be considered an effective teacher, but that these characteristics may be welcomed by students in all types of teaching.

Goldstein and Benassi’s (2006) conclusion has been supported by the findings from several research studies that found traits associated with strong interpersonal skills are linked with effective teaching by students in higher education. In a study that used factorial analysis to analyze 202 responses from undergraduate students, Sprinkle (2008) found that students preferred when their instructors used humor, conveyed compassion and empathy, and demonstrated that they were interested in students, both inside and out of the classroom. These findings are similar to the Best and Addison (2000) study, that found that undergraduate psychology students preferred teachers who demonstrated warmth-inducing behaviors, such as empathy and compassion. Sprinkle (2008) surmised that traits such as empathy, concern, and compassion may signify to students that their professors are approachable and can be related to as human beings.

As was aforementioned, it has proven difficult for researchers to establish a singular model for effective teaching. In an effort to address this ambiguity, Young and Shaw (1999) completed a study in which they attempted to discover characteristics that profiled an effective teacher. Young and Shaw gathered a sample of 912 participants,
comprised of undergraduate (n = 382) and graduate students (n = 530), and asked them to complete an instrument that rated the effectiveness of a professor of their choosing.

Young and Shaw created the 25-item instrument by identifying prevalent themes from the literature on effective teaching, and included an additional item designed as a global measure of the overall effectiveness of the instructor. For each item, participants rated their professors on a scale from 1 to 9, where 1 represented “not at all descriptive” and 9 represented “very descriptive.” Young and Shaw analyzed the data by using a multiple regression and discriminant analysis. The regression analysis allowed the researchers to regress the global measure of teaching effectiveness into the 25 items. The discriminant analysis allowed the researchers to isolate a subset of predictor items that delineated effective instructors from ineffective instructors. Results from the multiple regression and discriminant analysis were then used in a cluster analysis to create profiles of effective instructors.

Results from Young and Shaw’s (1999) study indicated that several items on their instrument demonstrated a great degree of predictive power in determining whether a teacher was effective. As a group, the items, effective communication, comfortable learning atmosphere, concern for student learning, student motivation, course organization, and value students placed on the course were highly related to teacher effectiveness. Young and Shaw reported that these findings were consistent with other research, with the exception of the value students place on the course. Young and Shaw stated that this was a surprise finding, and that in fact, students’ appraisal of the value of a
course was the item that was the most highly correlated with the global measure of teacher effectiveness. Although this finding only indicates that student valuation of a course is a key variable in effective teaching, it stands to reason that a teacher’s ability to help students understand how material they are learning will be useful to them, may be an important characteristic of effective teaching.

A major finding from Young and Shaw’s (1999) study was derived from the cluster analysis. In order for an instructor to be considered effective they had to be rated highly on genuine respect for students, concern for student learning, and the value of the course. However, outside of satisfying that criteria, effective instructors did not have to be rated very highly on other significant variables (e.g., effective communication, organization, etc.). Rather, if an effective instructor was able to demonstrate excellence in several significant areas, it had the effect of mitigating against shortcomings in one or two other areas. Thus, if an instructor was rated highly in respect towards students, concern for student learning, value of the course, and had highly rated communication skills, they could still be rated as an effective teacher, even if they were deficient in being organized. Young and Shaw stated that this finding reflects that there is no singular model of effective teaching, but rather that excellent teaching can take on many different forms.

**Summary**

Chapter 1 outlined various important concepts from the literature that provide a context of meaning for the present study. The demands of being a professional counselor
were discussed to establish a context in which to understand the needs of counseling trainees. An explanation was then provided about how counselor education programs are designed to prepare students to work as professional counselors. Subsequently, three areas of teaching were presented (i.e., pedagogy, styles of teaching, characteristics of effective teachers) to highlight different aspects of teaching that may be helpful to student learners.

The research question that guided this dissertation was to understand what novice professional counselors perceived about their teachers in didactic classes during their master's programs that was most helpful in becoming the professional counselor they are today. Chapter II explains why Q methodology was selected to study this research question and describes the procedures that were used to complete this study.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This study used Q methodology to investigate the viewpoints of the participants, to understand what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their master’s program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. This section provides a rationale for why Q methodology was used to investigate this research question. Additionally, the research question, concourse, P sample, Q sample, and Q sort procedures that were used during the study and delimitations of the study are presented.

Q Methodology Design

The researcher selected a methodology that permitted exploration of the viewpoints of novice professional counselors, to understand what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. Q methodology’s foundation is a combination of philosophical tenets, qualitative data-gathering techniques, and statistical methods that are used to systematically study human subjectivity (S. R. Brown, 2008). Designed by Stephenson (1978) as a means of studying human subjectivity, Q methodology uses objective procedures to systematically study subjective phenomena (Stenner, Watts, & Worrell, 2007). Using a Q methodological approach allowed the
researcher to study subjective concepts, such as what novice professional counselors perceived as being helpful about their teachers (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

In some respects, Q methodology can be understood as an approach that bridges the gap between qualitative and quantitative research methods (Sell & Brown, 1984). Q methodology combines the relative strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, by using the objective rigor of statistical analysis to reveal patterns within the subjective perspectives of the participants (S. R. Brown, 1996). In contrast to qualitative methodologies where the researcher is considered to be the instrument, Q methodology uses factor analysis as a means to objectively reveal significant and shared perceptions within the P sample. S. R. Brown (2008) indicated that this is a strength of the Q methodology, as it allows the researcher to notice all shared and significant patterns, which could easily be overlooked by even an experienced qualitative researcher.

**The Present Study**

The present study was completed in two parts. In the first part of the study six novice professional counselors were interviewed to gather data on their responses to the following question: What was it about teachers of your didactic classes during your program (e.g., personal characteristics or traits, style of teaching, type of classroom environment they created, etc.) that was most helpful in becoming the professional counselor you are today? Statements from participants’ interviews and from prominent themes in the literature were used to create a concourse that represented a collection of
viewpoints about helpful teaching. Viewpoints present in the concourse about teaching were consolidated into 37 statements that were the basis for the instrument used in the second part of this study, known as the Q sample.

During the second part of this study, the researcher had 35 participants, known as the P sample, complete a Q sort. Participants who completed the Q sort were asked to rank order the 37 items from the Q sample on a continuum that represented “most helpful” to “most unhelpful.” After participants completed the Q sort, they were asked a series of questions so they could explain what was meaningful about viewpoints that they either strongly thought were helpful or strongly thought were unhelpful.

The Concourse

A definitive feature of Q methodology is the concept of a concourse (Stephenson, 1978). A concourse represents a collection of thoughts, sentiments, or statements about a particular topic (S. R. Brown, 1996). These statements are subjective and are based on people’s opinions and personal understandings about the phenomenon. This collection of statements can be gathered from interviews, publications, popular media, and various other sources (S. R. Brown, 2008). Concourses are not fully formed narratives with a beginning and end, but rather represent burgeoning snippets of partially formed thoughts that may occur during day dreaming or personal reflection (Stephenson, 1978).

The concourse for the present study was generated through two methods. First, interviews were conducted with six participants who were representative of the P sample. The demographics that comprised the P sample are discussed later in this chapter.
Second, an additional portion of the concourse was based on prominent themes from the scholarly literature on pedagogy, styles of teaching, and characteristics of effective teachers presented in Chapter I.

After approval was obtained from the Kent State Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), participants for the concourse formation aspect of the study were recruited through email messages (see Appendix B) that were sent to supervisors and owners of counseling agencies, private practices, and in-patient hospitalization units in Northeast Ohio, and through snowball sampling (i.e., one participant identifying other potential participants). Supervisors and owners who were contacted through email were instructed to forward the recruitment email to potential participants. Contact information for potential participants that was given to the researcher by participants who had already completed the study was used to contact new potential participants with a copy of the recruitment email. Via the recruitment email, potential subjects were instructed to contact the researcher by phone or email if they were interested in participating in the study, at which point the researcher provided them with an informed consent form (see Appendix C) and a copy of the interview question (see Appendix D) they would be asked during the interview, so that they would have time to reflect and generate thoughts on it. Informed consent and the interview question were sent to participants in email messages attached as Portable Document Format (PDF) files, as well as instructions for setting up a time to be interviewed by the researcher. The researcher collected informed consent
forms from participants before the interview began and stored the completed informed consent forms in a file folder in the dissertation director’s office.

Those who agreed to participate were interviewed individually and were asked to respond to the following question: “What was it about teachers of your didactic classes during your program (e.g., personal characteristics or traits, style of teaching, type of classroom environment they created, etc.) that was most helpful in becoming the professional counselor you are today?” Participants were prompted to respond to the question in whatever manner they preferred and told that the researcher might ask subsequent questions to clarify their statements. The researcher recorded participants’ statements using a laptop computer and at the conclusion of the interview shared with participants their recorded statements so that they could verify their accuracy (see Appendix E). As the need arose during the interview, the researcher asked participants to clarify statements that were either tangential (e.g., “it’s hard for me to remember most of the things I learned in school”) or ambiguous (e.g., “my professor was just such a cool guy”). Other than asking questions to clarify participants’ responses, the researcher did not ask participants any additional questions and remained quiet while the participants shared their responses. Interviews were concluded when participants’ responses became repetitive or when participants indicated that they had nothing else to say.

A diverse sample of participants was interviewed while constructing the concourse, to ensure that viewpoints within the concourse would be representative of demographics being used in the P sample. Although no concourse can ever be considered
complete, the researcher attempted to engender a representative and robust concourse by collecting perspectives from at least one member of each demographic variable being studied in the P sample (i.e., gender, type of employment, and work setting). The researcher was able to achieve a diverse sample of participants by continuing to recruit participants until each variable was represented at least once in an interview. Three male participants and three female participants were interviewed to help generate statements for the concourse. Two participants worked in a private practice, two participants worked in a community agency, and two counselors worked in a hospital environment. Four of the participants reported working in urban settings and two of the participants reported working in a rural setting.

The Q Sample

A Q sample is a composite of stimulus items that is given to participants for rank-ordering in the Q sorting process (Stenner et al., 2007). To create a Q sample, the amalgamation of viewpoints represented within the concourse is pared down into approximately 30 to 60 statements and may be organized or categorized with or without a conceptual framework in mind (S. R. Brown, 2008). The size of the Q sample is set by the researcher, based on its capacity to be broadly representative of the sphere of opinions about a topic or phenomenon (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Q samples that are too small are more likely to have gaps, where certain opinions are underrepresented or not represented at all, thus not revealing a variety of perspectives concerning a topic. On the other hand, Q samples that are overly large can negatively impact the ability of the
participant to complete a Q sort in a timely and efficient manner and be experienced by
participants as confusing or overwhelming (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Watts and Stenner
noted that no Q sample can ever claim to be complete in the sense that it perfectly
represents all viewpoints on a topic.

After data collection was completed for the concourse through participant
interviews, the researcher analyzed the compilation of statements from the literature and
the interviews. Data obtained from interviews were analyzed by the researcher by
placing the statements alongside one another and identifying statements that were
discrete, and grouping statements together that were similar in nature. Groups of similar
statements were analyzed and the researcher selected one statement from each group.
Participants’ statements were edited by the researcher to abbreviate lengthy statements, or
change the tense of statements, as is consistent with Q methodological practices. To
ensure the fidelity of the statements selected or constructed by the researcher, dissertation
committee members were used to validate the researcher’s analysis.

After the analysis of the interview data was triangulated by committee members,
the researcher searched for important themes from the literature that were unaccounted
for by participant responses. To ensure a robust and balanced Q sample, the researcher
generated statements from the literature to address gaps in the participants’ statements.
After organizing participants’ statements and supplementing those viewpoints with
statements from the literature, the researcher was left with 37 items (see Appendix F) that
comprised the Q sample. These 37 items were then printed on a set of index cards that the P sample could use to complete the Q sort.

The P Sample

Q methodology studies do not require large numbers of participants; however, the number of participants used in a Q study must be large for shared viewpoints to emerge. Although participant groups vary in size, Watts and Stenner (2012) suggested that an ideal sample size is typically between 40 and 60 participants. S. R. Brown (1996) stated that it is possible for studies using Q methodology to be successful with sample sizes that are considerably smaller than 40 participants. However, when the sample size becomes too small, it may be difficult for shared viewpoints to be identified within the P sample (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Exceedingly large sample sizes can also be problematic in studies using a Q methodology. Watts and Stenner (2012) stated that a very large P sample can obscure rich qualitative aspects of the data, by muddling the complexity and nuances of the participants.

The present study had a P sample that consisted of 35 participants. To ensure a balanced P sample, the researcher devised a conceptual scheme for selecting participants. Gender, location of employment, and work setting were three variables that were identified as potentially being important to the study. Gender was selected as a variable as men and women may have different viewpoints on what they find helpful about their teachers. Location of employment (i.e., urban and small town) was included as a variable as different types of knowledge may be needed to work in these different types of
environments. The researcher selected work setting (i.e., community agency, hospital, private practice) as a variable after considering that professional counselors may have different demands placed on them unique to their work setting and that these unique demands may influence what they perceived as helpful about their teachers. The study ensured that each variable had at least six participants in the study, a number large enough to demonstrate the existence of a perspective if it were present.

For participants to be eligible for inclusion in this study, they were required to meet the following criteria. Participants were required to be a graduate of a graduate counselor education program working currently as a licensed professional counselor. After graduating from a program in counselor education and obtaining professional license, participants were required to have accrued at least 500 hours of direct clinical hours working with clients. Participants were also required to be no more than three years removed from completing their program in counseling.

Relative to the research question, the benefits of selecting participants from this demographic were threefold. First, because participants were no more than three years removed from being a graduate student, it was assumed they were close enough to their experiences as a graduate student to be reflective about their teaching preferences. Second, because participants had been working in professional counseling settings for at least 500 hours of direct service, their viewpoints on what was helpful about their teachers were seasoned by their experiences as professional counselors. Third, past research on students’ perceptions of teaching has focused on students’ perceptions either
during or at the end of a course. Thus it is unclear what aspects of teaching are perceived as being helpful to former students who are now working in professional environments that require them to utilize their knowledge base and skills.

After approval for the Q study was obtained from the Kent State Institutional Review Board (see Appendix G), participants were recruited in several ways. General recruitment emails (see Appendix H) were sent to supervisors and owners of counseling agencies, private practices, and in-patient hospitalization units in Ohio that instructed them to forward a participant recruitment email (see Appendix I) that included an informed consent form (Appendix J) to potential subjects. Supervisors and owners were also contacted directly by phone, where the researcher read from a script (see Appendix H) to explain the study and asked them to forward the participant recruitment email and informed consent form to potential subjects. The researcher also recruited participants by advertising the study in-person during staff meetings at counseling agencies, private practices, and in-patient hospitalization units in Ohio. Potential subjects who were present at staff meetings were provided a copy of the informed consent that instructed them to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating in the study. Snowball sampling (i.e., one participant identifying other potential subjects) was also used to recruit participants. Potential subjects who were recommended to the researcher by existing participants in the study were contacted directly through email and were sent a copy of the participant recruitment email and informed consent form.
Potential subjects recruited through one of the aforementioned methods were instructed on the recruitment email and informed consent to contact the researcher if they wished to participate in the study. After potential subjects contacted the researcher and stated their desire to become participants in the study, the researcher and participant negotiated when and how they would complete the Q sort.

The Q Sort

In Q methodology the Q sort statements represent the instrument that is used to investigate the phenomenon (S. R. Brown, 1996). The Q sort itself is a procedure through which the data are obtained that will later be used in the factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Participants are given the Q sample statements and asked to rank order them according to a prescribed criterion on a continuum that reflects a normal distribution. The size of the distribution used in a Q sort determines the number of items that can be ranked at each position (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Watts and Stenner stated that 9, 11, or 13-point scales are commonly used for Q sorts. For a 9-point scale, participants rank ordered statements on a continuum from +4 to +1 for statements that they find are most like their viewpoint, and -1 to -4 for statements that they find are most unlike their viewpoint. Those items placed at 0 are considered neutral, neither like or unlike their point of view.

In the present study participants completed a Q sort with 37 statements that were rank ordered on an 9-point scale. Before beginning the Q sort, participants were asked to reflect on who they have become as a counselor, recall teachers whom they had in non-
experiential classes during their master’s program, and consider what was most helpful to them about their teachers in becoming the counselor they are today. Participants were then directed to read each Q sort statement and separate the statements into three piles that represented “most helpful,” “most unhelpful,” and neutral (see Appendix K). Participants were then instructed to select two statements from the “most helpful” pile that they perceived as being most helpful to them, and to place those statements under the +4 marker on the response grid; and then to select two statements from the “most unhelpful” pile that they perceived as being most unhelpful to them and to place those statements on the response grid under the -4 marker. Participants then placed 3 statements under both the -3 and +3 point, 4 statements under both the -2 and +2 point, 6 statements under both the -1 and +1 point, and 7 statements under the 0 point (see Figure 1 for the shape of the distribution) in a similar fashion. After participants completed rank ordering statements on the response grid, they recorded their Q sort on a score sheet.

![Figure 1. Distribution shape.](image)
Participants in this study completed the Q sort in one of two ways. Participants who were able to meet in person met with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon site that was quiet and had a table upon which participants could complete the Q sort. Participants were given a Q sort packet (see Appendix K) that included a brief demographic form, instructions on how to complete the Q sort, and several follow up questions to be completed post Q sort. In addition to the written directions, the researcher provided these participants with verbal directions on how to complete the Q sort. Participants who were not able to meet with the researcher in person, but who wanted to participate in the study, were mailed a Q sort packet (see Appendix K) of information that included a brief demographic form, instructions on how to complete the Q sort, and several follow up questions to be completed post Q sort. After these participants completed the packet they were instructed to place the packet in a return envelope provided to them, and then mail the envelope to the researcher.

Post-Q Sort Interview

After participants completed the Q sort, they provided written responses to several interview questions that ascertained why certain statements were significant to their perspective of what was most helpful and most unhelpful. Participants also provided written responses to a question that asked them which, if any, statements they had had difficulty placing. As a final interview question, participants wrote about what, if any, thoughts emerged for them during the Q sort about helpful aspects of their teachers in didactic classes during their master's program. Participants who completed the Q sort in
person had their responses reviewed by the researcher. The researcher then verbally asked questions as needed to participants to clarify any responses that were unclear. Participants who completed the Q sort via postal mail were not asked subsequent clarification questions about their written post-Q sort interview responses. Data obtained from post-Q sort interview questions were incorporated in the results section in Chapter III, to substantiate a context of meaning around factors that emerged as being significant.

**Analysis**

After the Q sort data collection was completed, data were compiled and entered into PQMethod 2.11 software package (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2002). PQMethod computes a by-person correlational matrix and facilitates the processes of factor extraction and rotation (Watts & Stenner, 2012). After the correlational matrix was generated, the data were factor analyzed using a varimax rotation. The varimax rotation revealed clusters of individuals who ranked statements in a similar fashion. These clusters were arranged to represent a commonness of perspectives relative to the helpfulness of teachers.

**Delimitations**

This study was designed to expand understanding of, and promote conversations about, the aspects of teachers that novice professional counselors perceived as being most beneficial in their didactic courses during their program. Q methodology allowed the researcher to understand what novice professional counselors perceived as being most helpful about their teachers in didactic classes during their program. While it is useful to
understand student perceptions, results from this study only indicate shared and significant opinions within the population studied. Results from this study cannot claim knowledge of most effective teaching practices or best teaching practices.

The factors that emerged through statistical analysis in this study represent the significant and shared viewpoints of participants in the sample. These data can only be interpreted as the viewpoint that the participants expressed and it cannot be assumed that these viewpoints are consistent with an individual over time (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Watts and Stenner indicated that though the manifold of shared viewpoints amongst participants has a measure of consistency over time, individual viewpoints are less consistent and subject to change. These temporal limitations are acknowledged in Q methodology and the results from this study should be considered in light of this delimitation. Results from this study will provide understanding about “what is currently being said about ‘X’” as opposed to “who said what about ‘X’” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 86).

Summary

Chapter II explained the purpose of this study and provided a rationale for why Q methodology was selected to study the perceptions of novice professional counselors. The two parts of this study were described: the first part involved conducting interviews with six participants and studying the literature to create a balanced and robust concourse, which was then used to create the 37 items of the Q sample; and the second part involved describing how the 35 participants completed a Q sort by rank ordering items from the Q
sample and responded to post-Q sort questions that explored how items with which they strongly identified, or with which they did not identify, were meaningful to them. Additionally, statistical analysis used to analyze data from the Q sorts was explained, as were delimitations of this study. Chapter III provides the results from this study, which will demonstrate significant and shared perceptions within the P sample.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This study used Q methodology to explore viewpoints of novice professional counselors to understand what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their counselor preparation program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. This chapter includes the demographic variables of the participants and the results from the analysis of the data. Discussion of the results are presented in Chapter IV.

Participants

To be eligible for inclusion in this study, participants were required to meet the following criteria: (a) graduate of a counselor education master’s degree program, (b) accrued at least 500 direct hours of post-master’s clinical service working with clients, and (c) were no more than three years removed from graduating with their degree. In total, 35 participants met the criteria and completed the study. Sixty-three percent (22) of the participants in this study were between 20-30 years old, 32% (11) were between 31-40, and 5% (2) were between 41-50 years old. Sixty-nine percent (24) of the participants identified as female and 31% (11) of the participants identified as male. Fifty-seven percent (20) of the participants indicated that they worked in community counseling agencies, 26% (9) indicated that they worked in a private practice, and 17% (6) indicated that they worked in a hospital setting. Forty-nine percent (17) of the
participants reported that they had accrued between 500-1000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 17% (6) of participants reported that they had accrued between 1001-1500 direct clinical hours working with clients, 20% (7) of participants reported that they had accrued between 1501-2000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 5% (2) of participants reported that they had accrued between 2001-2500 direct clinical hours working with clients, and 9% (3) of participants reported that they had accrued 2500 or more direct clinical hours working with clients. Table 1 presents basic demographic information for each participant.

It is important to note that the demographic variable work setting (i.e., urban or rural) discussed in Chapter II was not used for analysis in this study. Due to a lack of clarity and specificity of what constituted an urban work setting versus a rural work setting, participants had difficulty answering this question accurately. The researcher observed that numerous participants who worked in the same place of employment responded differently on their Q sort packets as to whether they worked in an urban or rural setting. For this reason the decision was made to exclude work setting as a demographic variable in the investigation.
Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Work Setting</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>over 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>over 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>over 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>community agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

Analysis for this study included data correlation, factor analysis, and computation of factor scores, which are consistent with Q methodological practices (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Data from the 35 completed Q sorts were entered into PQMethod 2.11 (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2002), a DOS-based software program developed specifically for Q methodological studies. The PQMethod 2.11 software program computed a factor analysis of the data. The factor analysis computed in this study revealed shared and significant viewpoints that existed amongst novice professional counselors concerning what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become.

Correlation

A beneficial aspect of Q methodology is that the researcher is able to explore how each individual Q sort relates with all others (S. R. Brown, 1993). The initial step in Q methodology analysis is to conduct a by-person correlation that correlates each participant’s response with all others, rather than the more typical item-by-item correlation. The resultant correlational matrix shows the degree of similarity between the participants’ responses (S. R. Brown, 1993). A perfect positive correlation between participants (+1.00) indicates complete agreement about placement of sort items, whereas a perfect negative correlation (-1.00) indicates complete disagreement about item placement. The correlation of individual participants’ viewpoints is a transitory step in
discovering shared viewpoints that exist amongst groups of participants. Different groups of shared viewpoints are revealed through factor analysis.

**Factor Analysis**

In Q methodology, factor analysis is used to discover clusters of individuals that share similar viewpoints about the research question (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Through statistical computation, the factor analysis reveals different common factors that exist among participants by identifying Q sorts that are strongly correlated with one another. A cluster of Q sorts that are highly correlated with one another share a similar structure, which suggest a shared and significant viewpoint (S. R. Brown, 1993). Factors that emerged in this study were based on similarities and dissimilarities that existed between how participants rank-ordered the statements comprising the 37-item Q sort. Thus, factors in this study represent clusters of shared viewpoints that existed among novice professional counselors, of what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their counselor preparation program, that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become.

Data in this study were factor analyzed using principal components analysis (PCA). PCA was selected instead of centroid analysis because it is considered more mathematically precise and is more commonly accepted in other types of quantitative methodologies (Watts & Stenner, 2012). After the PCA was executed, a Varimax rotation was used to determine reliability, scores, and factor loadings.
A Varimax rotation was selected for this study to maximize the amount of variance provided by each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Varimax rotation is designed to find a simple structure by maximizing factor loadings on one factor and minimizing loadings on other factors. The PQMethod 2.11 software is designed to provide an 8-factor solution. Of the eight factors presented in the PCA analysis, three were selected by the researcher for inclusion in the study. A 3-factor solution was selected for this study because it accounted for each participant to load onto at least one factor, whereas four participants were unaccounted for using a 2-factor solution. Because each participant was accounted for by a 3-factor solution it made it unnecessary to search for a fourth factor. The 3-factor solution accounted for 56% of the total variance in the correlation matrix. Factor 1 had 14 participants loading on it, accounting for 20% of the variance. Factor 2 had 8 participants loading on it, accounting for 18% of the variance whereas Factor 3 had 11 participants loading on it, accounting for 18% of the variance. Table 2 displays the details of the rotated factor loadings.

Factor loadings represent correlation coefficients demonstrating the strength of the relationship between individual sorts and factors (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). To determine which correlations are statistically significant, McKeown and Thomas indicated that the following formula can be used: \( SE = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} \). In this equation, \( N \) is equal to the number of items contained in the Q sample. In this study there were 37 items, which provided a standard error of \( SE = \frac{1}{\sqrt{37}} \) or .164. Correlations that were greater than .43 were considered significant in this study, as they were 2.5 times the standard
error. If a Q sort loaded significantly on more than one factor it was not used because it was a mixed case (i.e., participants 26 and 30). There are exceptions (e.g., participant 1) in which loadings are technically significant, but the association with one of the factors is greater than with the other factors. This distinction is made by the PQMethod program and is based on an algorithm that is built into the software.

Table 2 presents the factor matrix for this study with significant loadings noted in bold type. It is important to note that an 8-digit code was used to enter participants’ Q sort data into the PQMethod 2.11 software program. This code accounted for the participants demographic information such as age (20-30 = 20, 31-40 = 30, 41-50 = 40), gender (female = f, male = m), location of work (rural = r, urban = u), work setting (community agency = a, private practice = p, hospital setting = h), and direct clinical hours accrued (500-1000 = 100; 1001-1500 = 150; 1501-2000 = 200; 2001-2500 = 250; more than 2500 = 300).
Table 2

*Factor Matrix with Bold Font Indicating a Defining Sort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q Sort</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 20fra100</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td><strong>0.58</strong></td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 20fra200</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td><strong>0.52</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 20mua200</td>
<td><strong>0.69</strong></td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 20fau100</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td><strong>0.72</strong></td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 20fua100</td>
<td><strong>0.67</strong></td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 40frp150</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td><strong>0.69</strong></td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 30mup250</td>
<td><strong>0.55</strong></td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 20fup200</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td><strong>0.63</strong></td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 20fup100</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td><strong>0.58</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 30muh150</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td><strong>0.57</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 20fuh250</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td><strong>0.68</strong></td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 30fua150</td>
<td><strong>0.55</strong></td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 30fua100</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td><strong>0.74</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 30muh100</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td><strong>0.57</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 20fuh200</td>
<td><strong>0.60</strong></td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 20fuh100</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td><strong>0.51</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 20fua200</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td><strong>0.48</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 40mua100</td>
<td><strong>0.57</strong></td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 20mua150</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td><strong>0.72</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 20fua300</td>
<td><strong>0.51</strong></td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 30mra200</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td><strong>0.64</strong></td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 20mra100</td>
<td><strong>0.54</strong></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 30fra100</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td><strong>0.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 20fau100</td>
<td><strong>0.62</strong></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 20mrh100</td>
<td><strong>0.72</strong></td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 20mrp150</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 20frp300</td>
<td><strong>0.58</strong></td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 20fra100</td>
<td><strong>0.75</strong></td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 20fup100</td>
<td><strong>0.50</strong></td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 20fup150</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 30fra300</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td><strong>0.82</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 30frp100</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td><strong>0.61</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 20fau100</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td><strong>0.67</strong></td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 30fra100</td>
<td><strong>0.54</strong></td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 30mra200</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td><strong>0.67</strong></td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Variance | 20 | 18 | 18
Factor Correlation and Characteristics

Table 3 presents the correlations among the three significant factors selected for the study. The highest correlation was between Factor 1 and Factor 3 (0.62) and the lowest correlation was between Factor 2 and Factor 3 (0.56). In general, the correlations between factors were quite high in this study, indicating a lack of independence among the three factors. Therefore, although there are three different viewpoints that exist relative to the research question, there is also a high level of agreement or commonality that exists among the three factors.

Table 3
Correlations Between Factor Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Q methodology, a factor is defined by the cluster of Q sorts that load significantly onto it (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Watts and Stenner (2012) referred to these Q sorts as “factor exemplars,” as these individuals’ perspectives most exemplify the shared viewpoint that is characteristic of the factor. In this study, Factor 1 consisted of 14 defining sorts, Factor 2 consisted of 8 defining sorts, and Factor 3 consisted of 11 defining sorts. Table 4 provides more information regarding each factor, including the
average reliability coefficient, composite reliability, and the standard error of factors scores.

The data presented in Table 4 suggest that there is a high degree of reliability for participants in this study. Reliability can be understood as the likelihood that a participant completing the same Q sort twice would place items in the same manner. McKeown and Thomas (2013) indicated that a factor’s reliability can be determined using the following formula: \( r = .80 \frac{p}{1 + (p - 1) \cdot 0.80} \). In this formula, .80 is the estimated reliability coefficient for each person and \( p \) is determined by the number of individuals that purely loaded on a factor. All three factors in this study have strong reliability coefficients: Factor 1 (.98), Factor 2 (.97), and Factor 3 (.98).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Characteristics</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Defining Variables</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rel. Coef.</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Reliability</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.E. of Factor Scores</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distinguishing Statements

In Q methodology, distinguishing statements are specific items from the Q sort that best capture the viewpoint or perspective of individuals who significantly loaded on a factor. Distinguishing statements are rendered through statistical computations and are
items that are both representative of a factor and differ significantly from other factors. In essence, distinguishing statements differentiate viewpoints that exist amongst multiple factors. Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7 contain distinguishing statements for Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3, respectively.

Data analysis in Q methodology prioritizes factor interpretation, which marks a prominent difference between Q methodology and other studies that use factor analysis (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Contrary to the direction of most factorial analysis studies, Q methodology focuses on factor scores for interpretation. In this study, each factor has a factor array that consists of rankings that range from +4 to -4, consistent with the 9 point scale that was used in the Q sort. Distinguishing statements of items with higher positive rankings (e.g., +3 and +4) indicated that they were perceived as being most helpful to individuals who loaded on that factor, while distinguishing items with the lowest rankings (e.g., -3 and -4) indicate items that were perceived as being most unhelpful to individuals who loaded on that factor. Distinguishing statements ranked closer to 0 represented items about which participants were ambivalent or neutral.

The gestalt of each factor’s distinguishing statements is the subject for analysis and interpretation in Q methodology. Analysis and interpretation of these statements provide the narrative for the shared viewpoint(s) of individuals who loaded significantly on that factor. The researcher analyzed distinguishing statements for Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 by examining the rankings of items on each factor and comparing and contrasting disparate rankings that existed among factors. Through this process the
researcher was able to notice one or more themes that emerged that defined each factor.

In Chapter IV, the researcher provides narratives that describe prominent themes defining each factor.

Table 5

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1 (column 1)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 1 Rank</th>
<th>Factor 2 Rank</th>
<th>Factor 3 Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>A professor presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to “real world” counseling.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A professor offered “real life” examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A professor modeled desirable counseling skills that I could emulate.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A professor provided specific “how to” knowledge on how I should do something.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A professor pushed me and held me to a high standard.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A professor asked questions that helped me become reflective and thoughtful about the subject.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A professor frequently gave me feedback about my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A professor demonstrated that the profession of counseling is meaningful to them.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A professor used a flexible format during class that allowed for spontaneity, tangents, and for topics of interest to be explored in depth.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>A professor referenced things outside of counseling (e.g., popular music, movies, news, and culture) during lectures that I was able to identify with.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A professor established relationships with students that were more egalitarian and less authoritative.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>A professor conveyed that there were many possible “right” answers, and encouraged students to find their own understandings.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>When I knew that a professor was still practicing as a counselor.</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material.</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts.</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 2 (column 2)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 1 Rank</th>
<th>Factor 2 Rank</th>
<th>Factor 3 Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A professor frequently gave me feedback about my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A professor offered “real life” examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to investigate areas I was interested in for class assignments.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A professor used a flexible format during class that allowed for spontaneity, tangents, and for topics of interest to be explored in depth.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>A professor conveyed that there were many possible “right” answers, and encouraged students to find their own understandings.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>A professor referenced things outside of counseling (e.g., popular music, movies, news and culture) during lectures that I was able to identify with.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>When I knew that a professor was still practicing as a counselor.</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A professor created a classroom environment that felt open, accepting, and a safe place to make mistakes.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A professor asked questions that helped me become reflective and thoughtful about the subject matter.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>A professor first presented a question or problem about a topic, before sharing their knowledge/understanding about the topic.</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A professor modeled desirable counseling skills that I could emulate.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A professor demonstrated that the profession of counseling is meaningful to them.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>When I could sense that a professor was confident in their identity as a counselor.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 3 (column 3)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 1 Rank</th>
<th>Factor 2 Rank</th>
<th>Factor 3 Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A professor was authentic, empathetic, and compassionate with students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A professor was passionate about the material they were teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A professor asked questions that helped me become reflective and thoughtful about the subject matter.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A professor demonstrated that the profession of counseling is meaningful to them.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A professor frequently gave me feedback about my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A professor modeled desirable counseling skills that I could emulate.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A professor offered “real life” examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>A professor conveyed that there were many possible “right” answers, and encouraged students to find their own understandings.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>A professor was patient and did not try to rush the learning process.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>A professor had an organized style of teaching.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>A professor provided activities/assignments that gave me an opportunity to apply what I was learning.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>A professor was willing to work with me outside of class.</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A professor would integrate their personality into lectures by using humor, personal disclosure, and relevant stories.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>When I knew that a professor was still practicing as a counselor.</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>When a professor used a flexible format during class that allowed for spontaneity, tangents, and for topics of interest to be explored in depth.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>A professor referenced things outside of counseling (e.g., popular music, movies, news and culture) during lectures that I was able to identify with.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Second-Order Analysis**

A second-order analysis of the data was completed in this study as a result of the high degree of shared viewpoints among individuals in Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3.
This high level of agreement was reflected in strong positive correlations between factors that ranged between 0.56 and 0.62. Secondary analysis of the data provided information that depicts an area of commonality among the three factors relative to the research question.

The second-order analysis was completed by entering the factor scores from first-order Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 into PQMethod 2.11 and running another Q analysis; in effect, factor analyzing the original factors to determine what they have in common. Secondary analysis was according to the principle components method—hence, the factors are actually components—and the unrotated solution was retained and is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Second-Order Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st-Order Factors</th>
<th>Factor A</th>
<th>Factor B</th>
<th>Factor C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Factor 1</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Factor 2</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Factor 3</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalues</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Variance</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results indicate, Factor A is overwhelmingly strong from a statistical standpoint, accounting for almost 70% of the total variance and overshadowing both Factors B and C, which combined for only 31% of the variance. Moreover, Factor A’s
loadings are all positive, indicating that this factor alone of the three subsumes what first-order Factors 1, 2, and 3 share in common. Thus, Factor A represents a single overarching super-factor describing commonalities that exist among the differing groups (i.e., Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3) of what was perceived as being most unhelpful and most helpful.

Only second-order Factor A is retained for inspection and Table 9 displays important statements for this factor that were perceived as being most helpful (i.e., denoted by rankings of +4, +3, or +2) and most unhelpful (i.e., denoted by rankings of -4, -3, -2) to participants.
### Table 9

**Important Statements for Factor A of Second Order Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>A professor presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to “real world” counseling.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A professor offered “real life” examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A professor was authentic, empathetic, and compassionate with students.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A professor frequently gave me feedback about my work.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>A professor had a creative style of teaching, which challenged me to think about material from a variety of perspectives.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A professor created a classroom environment that felt open, accepting, and a safe place to make mistakes.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>A professor provided activities/assignments that gave me an opportunity to apply what I was learning.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A professor was passionate about the material they were teaching.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A professor would integrate their personality into lectures by using humor, personal disclosure, and relevant stories.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A professor was regarded as a specialist in the topic they were teaching.</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>A professor first presented a question or problem about a topic, before sharing their knowledge/understanding about a topic.</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>When I could sense that a professor put in time preparing for class.</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>A professor was willing to work with me outside of class.</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material.</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A professor required me to do a lot of reading on the subject.</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Summary

Chapter III presented the results that were computed from the PQMethod 2.11 software. Results from the primary analysis revealed three factors that accounted for 56% of the variance. These three factors represented three clusters of novice professional
counselors who had shared viewpoints of what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. Due to a strong positive correlation between factors, a second-order analysis was completed to determine commonalities that existed among the three factors. The second-order analysis yielded results indicating that there is a super-factor that accounted for 69% of the variance among Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3. A discussion of the results are presented in Chapter IV that includes qualitative data collected from each participant based on post-Q sort interview questions.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This dissertation was designed to explore the viewpoints of novice professional counselors to understand what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their preparation program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. To objectively study subjective phenomena such as people’s perspectives, the researcher selected Q methodology for this dissertation. A Q sort was created through interviewing six novice professional counselors about their perspectives on the research question, and generating 37 statements that were culled from those interviews and from prominent themes in the literature. Then a total of 35 novice professional counselors completed the Q sort and responded to post-Q sort interview questions. Among the 35 novice professional counselors who participated in this study, there were at least 6 participants who represented each of the key variables of gender (i.e., male, female) and workplace setting (i.e., community agency, private practice, hospital), ensuring representativeness within the sample. The collected data were entered into a computer software program, PQMethod 2.11, which used factor analysis to process the data. Data analysis revealed that within the manifold of individual viewpoints present in the study, three significant groups of viewpoints (i.e., factors) emerged. Due to strong positive correlations among these three factors, a second-order analysis was then conducted to search for commonalities that existed among these three viewpoints.
Results from the second-order analysis revealed an overarching super-factor that revealed
common viewpoints that exist among the three differing groups.

The three factors that represent groups of shared viewpoints that existed among
the 35 participants and the super-factor that represents commonalities that existed among
the three factors are discussed in this chapter. An interpretation of each factor and the
super-factor are presented, followed by consideration of how these results relate to
prominent themes in the literature. Limitations of this study and recommendations for
future areas of research are discussed.

**Factor Correlations**

In Chapter III, Table 2 presented results of the between factor correlations. Three
different factors or viewpoints emerged among participants relative to the research
question. Between these three factors there were relatively strong positive correlations:
Factor 1 and Factor 2 (.58), Factor 1 and Factor 3 (.62), and Factor 2 and Factor 3 (.56).
The strong positive correlation between factors indicates a high level of agreement
among the differing viewpoints of Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3. This high factor
intercorrelation drove the decision to seek a super-factor (see Table 3).

**Factor Interpretations**

Results from the initial factor analysis displayed in Chapter III indicated that three
different factors or viewpoints exist. They accounted for 56% of the variance among the
sample. Results from the secondary factor analysis displayed in Chapter III indicated that
there was a common factor or viewpoint that accounted for 69% of the variance among
Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3. Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 represent clusters of shared viewpoints about the research question, that are comprised of individuals who completed the Q sort in a similar manner. Factor A (i.e., the super-factor) represents a common viewpoint that exists among the differing viewpoints of Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3.

Factors are delineated from one another by distinguishing statements, which are items from the Q sort that were statistically significant and characteristic of a factor. Distinguishing statements for each factor with high positive ranking (i.e., +4 and +3) indicated statements that were perceived as being most helpful, whereas distinguishing statements with the highest negative rankings (i.e., -4 and -3) indicated statements that were perceived as being most unhelpful. The range of distinguishing statements that were closer to neutral (i.e., +2, +1, 0, -1, -2) were statements about which individuals of that factor were more ambivalent about.

**Factor 1: Application Oriented Learners**

Factor 1 was the most prominent factor in the study, accounting for 20% of the variance in the sample. A total of 14 participants loaded onto Factor 1, that included Q sorts from participants 3, 5, 7, 12, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, and 34. Of the participants who loaded onto Factor 1, 36% (5) were male and 64% (9) were female; 64% (9) participants worked in community agencies, 14% (2) of participants worked in hospitals, and 22% (3) of participants worked in private practice; 36% (5) of participants had accrued between 500-1000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 29% (4) of
participants had accrued between 1001-1500 direct clinical hours working with clients, 7% (1) of participants had accrued between 1501-2000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 14% (2) of participants had accrued between 2001-2500 direct clinical hours working with clients, and 14% (2) of participants had accrued over 2500 direct clinical hours working with clients. It appears the demographic variables gender and work setting are relatively typical of the total group of participants. Some moderate differences were noticed on the demographic variable of direct client hours, as Factor 1 participants were more experienced (i.e., 28% of Factor 1 participants reported having 2001 or more direct client hours) on average than the total group of participants (i.e., 14% of total participants reported having 2001 or more direct client hours). Demographic information for participants who loaded onto Factor 1 can be found in Table 10.
Table 10

Demographic Information for Participants on Factor 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Work Setting</th>
<th>Direct Clinical Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>over 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>over 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants who loaded onto Factor 1 found the following statements to be most helpful to them in their professional work, as is denoted by rankings of +4 and +3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>A professor presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to “real world” counseling.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A professor offered “real life” examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A professor modeled desirable counseling skills that I could emulate.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A professor provided specific “how to” knowledge on how I should do something.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item #24, “A professor presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to ‘real world’ counseling,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 15, 25, 28, and 34 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item included:

Participant 15: “The concept of ‘application’ of class material to the ‘real world’ felt practical, and permitted the instructor to bridge basic information to how I would ultimately use it to help clients.”

Participant 25: “The purpose of my education was to gain skills that I could use on the job.”

Participant 28: “The most helpful professors demonstrated how to use a technique and explained why it would be helpful. I enjoyed leaving class and thinking ‘ok, so this is how I will actually complete this activity.’”

Participant 34: “I always appreciated practical information on how to work with clients. It helped to take a theory/conceptualization and apply it to how I would work with a client.”

Item #7, “A professor offered ‘real life’ examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 5, 24, and 34 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:
Participant 5: “I learn best by using a ‘how to’ approach, and item #7 addresses techniques (videos, role plays, examples) that helped me understand the possible ways I could handle a situation.”

Participant 24: “I learn well from observing and hearing a professor’s stories, which help me to feel comfortable doing the same.”

Participant 34: “This was particularly helpful for diagnosis class. Sometimes you can read and talk about something all you want, but your understanding increases the most by watching a concept in action.”

Item #9, “A professor modeled desirable counseling skills that I could emulate,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 3, 7, and 15 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 3: “It is helpful to have specific examples, especially when the professors are using the skills, or are talking about experiences with clients when they used those skills, that they are teaching us to use.”

Participant 7: “Modeling was a powerful teaching technique for me, and I still think back to professors who used it to assist me in my practice.”

Participant 15: “I watch my professors closely and knowingly and unknowingly emulate their phrases, body language, and philosophies. Years later, I can identify in my practice the professors I emulate in different situations.”
Item #11, “A professor provided specific ‘how to’ knowledge on how I should do something,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 20 and 28 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts on this item included:

Participant 20: “It provided direct instruction on how to properly assess, diagnose, and treat with minimal-to-no ethical or legal risk.”

Participant 28: “I appreciated getting details on how to do something, actual instructions, that included enough flexibility to alter the technique depending on setting and target population.”

The following statements were found to be most unhelpful by participants in their professional work who loaded onto Factor 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item #32, “A professor took a more ‘hands off’ approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 3, 22, 28, and 34 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:
Participant #3: “I prefer to hear from someone who is experienced instead of learning on my own. I’m not paying for class to learn on my own and from my peers, who equally don’t know as much about the subject.”

Participant #22: “While it was nice to have others’ opinions, the professor is the professor for a reason. A lot of the other students knew as little about the subject as I did.”

Participant #28: “I preferred a professor to lead during class. I wanted to be taught and guided rather than being allowed to make personal/group discoveries, that can be done outside of the class setting.”

Participant #34: “I enjoyed discussions and group work, but I found it confusing and frustrating when a professor had a hands off approach.”

Item #29, “A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 3, 25, and 28 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant #3: “Working in small groups is not helpful. I felt as though it wasted time as after the group meeting, the professor would have the class discuss things we just discussed in the group.”

Participant #25: “I often felt like I understood mental health topics more in depth than my classmates, and given that I would not be working in groups in my career, it did not always feel beneficial.”
Participant #28: “I strongly dislike small group work. It often becomes a member or two completing a majority of the work, and is a complete waste of class time.”

Item #2, “A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 7, 12, 28, and 29 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant #7: “I have never liked PowerPoint and I felt that it drew my attention away from the professor and toward the bulleted material.”

Participant #12: “Powerpoint presentations are not good teaching tools, when all a teacher does is to read off of them.”

Participant 28: “I understand why PowerPoint is used but it is not my preference. Often if I had a PowerPoint during the lecture I would tune out. I like a mixture between lecture and activity, because then I am forced to listen and connect.”

Participant #29: “Powerpoint presentations need to be limited and not used as a primary way to teach. I was frustrated at professors who only used these.”

Item #25, “A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 5, 15, and 29 who loaded onto Factor 1. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 5: “Lecturing is fine to initially present topics and teach concepts, but every single class should not be lecturing because then I feel like a machine just meant to ‘spit out’ facts and information.”
Participant 15: “I enjoy lectures when they are engaging, however, some lectures were not. I enjoyed a variety of approaches in my class.”

Participant 29: “I work and learn best when professors utilize a variety of ways to teach materials, not primarily using one.”

**Factor 1 themes.** Participants who loaded onto Factor 1 were application oriented during their master's degree program and preferred to learn from their professor rather than from their peers. They evaluated their class time, course content, and professors’ teaching styles against criteria of perceived “real world” counseling applicability suggesting a significant focus on becoming effective counselors. These individuals identified information or activities presented with a clear link to practical skills and future clinical work as helpful. Contrasting these helpful traits, participants in Factor 1 considered teaching approaches with tenuous or ambiguous connections to applicability as unhelpful. Professors who were pragmatic, contextual, and had an active role in the classroom were preferred, distilling information into a format that was essential and efficient. Of note, in-class demonstrations and specific directives on how to apply conceptual knowledge with clients were valued by Factor 1 participants.

**Factor 2: Intrinsically-Motivated Learners**

Factor 2 accounted for 18% of the variance in the sample. A total of eight participants loaded onto Factor 2, that included Q sorts from participants 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 21, 33, and 35. Of the participants who loaded onto Factor 2, 25% (2) were male and 75% (6) were female; 63% (5) participants worked in community agencies, 12% (1) of
participants worked in hospitals, and 25% (2) of participants worked in private practice; 25% (2) of participants had accrued between 500-1000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 25% (2) of participants had accrued between 1001-1500 direct clinical hours working with clients, 13% (1) of participants had accrued between 1501-2000 direct clinical hours working with clients, and 37% (3) of participants had accrued between 2001-2500 direct clinical hours working with clients. It appears the demographic variables (gender, work setting, and direct clinical hours) are typical of the total group of participants. Demographic information for participants who loaded onto Factor 1 can be found in Table 11.

Table 11

**Demographic Information for Participants on Factor 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Work Setting</th>
<th>Direct Clinical Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>2001-2500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants who loaded onto Factor 2 found the following statements to be most helpful to them in their professional work, as is denoted by rankings of +4, +3, and +2:
Item #17, “A professor frequently gave me feedback about my work,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 1, 4, 11, and 35 who loaded onto Factor 2. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 1: “It helped me practice receiving constructive criticism in a non-experiential format; which has helped me to receive feedback from my supervisor as a practicing counselor, and contributed to confidence in my ability.”

Participant 4: “Feedback let me know if I was on the right track and gave me other ideas from different perspectives.”

Participant 11: “I was able to make adjustments to my counseling skills as well as my writing skills while still in school, which has helped me attain better job opportunities.”

Participant 35: “I enjoyed getting feedback because it allowed me to push myself to become better in areas that I was weak in as a counselor.”

Item #7, “A professor offered ‘real life’ examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience”
was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 6, 21, and 35 who loaded onto Factor 2. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 6: “Real life examples were very helpful to me. It took the lectures or readings from theory to practice. I learned what it looked like to apply what I learned in a counseling session and what to expect once I started counseling.”

Participant 21: “The use of ‘real life’ examples made the learning process seem more applicable. It helped me to connect learning with practice. It also let me know the instructor actually practices counseling.”

Participant 35: “I tended to pay closer attention when professors made connections between what we were learning in class and real life counseling. Thinking about real life situations helped me to think about the material from different perspectives.”

Item #36, “A professor gave me opportunities to investigate areas I was interested in for class assignments,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participant 21 who loaded onto Factor 2. Although other participants of Factor 2 rated this item highly, no other participant’s provided a response to this item on the written interview questions. This participant’s thoughts, taken from a written interview question on this item, included:

Participant 21: “I loved being able to take topics/areas that I was passionate about and learn more about them.”

Item #13, “A professor used a flexible format during class that allowed for spontaneity, tangents, and for topics of interest to be explored in depth,” was ranked as
being highly helpful to participant 35 who loaded onto Factor 2. Although other participants of Factor 2 rated this item highly, no other participants provided a response to this item on the written interview questions. This participant’s thoughts, taken from a written interview question on this item, included:

Participant 35: “I liked when professors were open in their style, and allowed discussions to occur on important or interesting topics. While I appreciated what my professors had to say, I often learned the most from debates and discussions during class.”

The following statements were found to be most unhelpful by participants who loaded onto Factor 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>When I could sense that a professor was confident in their identity as a counselor.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item #29, “A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participant 33 who loaded onto Factor 2. Although other participants of Factor 2 rated this item highly, no other participants provided a response to this item on the written interview questions. His or her thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 33: “When working within small groups, I ended up doing more work than other group members because they were not motivated to do the work, and didn’t hold the same learning/academic standards I do.”
Item #16, “When I could sense that a professor was confident in their identity as a counselor,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participant 8 who loaded onto Factor 2. Although other participants of Factor 2 rated this item highly, no other participants provided a response to this item on the written interview questions. This participant’s thoughts, taken from a written interview question on this item, included:

Participant 8: “Some professors seemed to be confident in their identity as a counselor but that did not necessarily make them a good professor.”

**Factor 2 themes.** Participants who loaded onto Factor 2 were characterized as individuals with internal motivation to learn during their program. Compared to the focus of Factor 1 individuals whose learning interests seemed constrained to that which they perceived as being directly useful to future clinical work, individuals on Factor 2 had a broader interest in learning for the sake of learning. These individuals perceived professors who were able to utilize a variety of teaching approaches and topics in the classroom as helpful. Professors who imposed less structure and used a flexible approach to instruction were preferred, as these individuals valued having freedom to explore areas of interest as they arose inside and outside of the classroom. Autonomy in learning was important to these individuals, as some of their most impactful learning came from spontaneous discussions that arose in class or through opportunities to explore topics of interest through class assignments. Feedback from educators was also helpful to Factor 2 individuals, as they preferred to be challenged and evaluated on their progress as aspiring counselors.
**Factor 3: Affective-Oriented Learners**

Factor 3 accounted for 18% of the variance in the sample. A total of 11 participants loaded onto Factor 3, which included Q sorts from participants 2, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, 31, and 32. Of the participants who loaded onto Factor 1, 27% (3) were male and 73% (8) were female; 55% (6) of the participants worked in community agencies, 27% (3) of the participants worked in hospitals, and 18% (2) of the participants worked in private practice; 46% (5) of the participants had accrued between 500-1000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 27% (3) of the participants had accrued between 1001-1500 direct clinical hours working with clients, 18% (2) of the participants had accrued between 1501-2000 direct clinical hours working with clients, 0% of the participants had accrued between 2001-2500 direct clinical hours working with clients, and 9% (1) of the participants had accrued more than 2500 direct clinical hours working with clients. It appears the demographic variables (gender, work setting, and direct clinical hours) are typical of the total group of participants. Demographic information for participants who loaded onto Factor 3 can be found in Table 12.
Table 12

Demographic Information for Participants on Factor 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Work Setting</th>
<th>Direct Clinical Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>agency</td>
<td>over 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants who loaded onto Factor 3 found the following statements to be most helpful to them, as is denoted by rankings of +4 and +3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A professor was authentic, empathetic, and compassionate with students.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A professor was passionate about the material they were teaching.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A professor asked questions that helped me become reflective and thoughtful about the subject matter.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>A professor demonstrated that the profession of counseling is meaningful to them.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item #10, “A professor was authentic, empathetic, and compassionate with students,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 9, 10, 19, 23, and 31 who
loaded onto Factor 3. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 9: “Creating a space for authenticity allows others to be authentic, and I responded just that way. It felt safe.”

Participant 10: “It is helpful to feel like professors care about me and my success. It makes me feel more motivated to learn.”

Participant 23: “I feel very strongly that a teacher should be passionate about counseling, and therefore practice basic skills at all times.”

Participant 31: “When a professor displayed these positive characteristics it helped me model these same characteristics throughout my graduate studies and in my role today.”

Item #3, “A professor was passionate about the material they were teaching,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 2, 10, 14, and 32 who loaded onto Factor 3. Their thoughts taken from written interview questions on this item included:

Participant 2: “A teacher’s attitude and passion are contagious and it was more engaging to learn from someone who was passionate about counseling.”

Participant 10: “When teachers are passionate about the topic I am more motivated to learn and I get more excited about the topic. It also becomes more interesting.”
Participant 14: “It’s hard to be motivated and excited by material when your professor is clearly not interested. Having someone who cares passionately about their work is affirming of my passion for the profession.”

Participant 32: “Teachers who were passionate were very positive role models for me.”

Item #12, “A professor asked questions that helped me become reflective and thoughtful about the subject matter,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 10 and 19 who loaded onto Factor 3. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 10: “Being reflective encourages me to think more deeply about topics and their impact on working with clients.”

Participant 19: “Asking deep reflective questions inspired critical thinking. Those critical thinking answers are big components for learning truly memorable lessons that stick with you.”

Item #18, “A professor demonstrated that the profession of counseling is meaningful to them,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 19 and 31 who loaded onto Factor 3. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 19: “Counseling is something that should be inherently meaningful to each professor.”
Participant 31: “When a professor appeared passionate about counseling it made it easier to learn. This also helped me recognize why I pursued the career, especially on difficult days during my program.”

The following statements were found to be most unhelpful by participants who loaded onto Factor 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>A professor referenced things outside of counseling (e.g., popular music, movies, news and culture) during lectures that I was able to identify with.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item #32, “A professor took a more ‘hands off’ approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 14 and 16 who loaded onto Factor 3. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 14: “I feel that often what would happen is students would use this time to socialize, or guess at what the professor was looking for, as opposed to learning on their own.”

Participant 16: “I appreciated having the opportunity to learn through discussion, however at times I appreciated a more ‘hands on’ approach by my professors.”

Item #26, “A professor referenced things outside of counseling (e.g., popular music, movies, news and culture) during lectures that I was able to identify with,” was
ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 13 and 31 who loaded onto Factor 3. Their thoughts on this item included:

Participant 13: “I like when professors utilize those strategies but I am not sure if they are necessary for learning at the graduate level.”

Participant 31: “While this could be helpful, it was not essential to my learning.”

**Factor 3 themes.** Individuals who loaded onto Factor 3 identified professors who were positive role models as helpful. Factor 3 individuals were attuned to affective and relational aspects of their professors in the classroom, contrasting Factor 1 and Factor 2 individuals who were more cognitively oriented. Professors who were charismatic and active during class inspired Factor 3 individuals to learn and become professional counselors. Specifically, positive appraisals of professors as people (e.g., authentic, empathetic, compassionate), counselors (e.g., counseling profession is meaningful to them), and teachers (e.g., passionate about what they were teaching) inspired learning for Factor 3 individuals. Factor 3 individuals benefited from thoughtful reflection about course content generated through observations of their professor’s way of being and incisive questioning.

**Factor A**

Factor A revealed a common viewpoint that existed among Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3, accounting for 69% of the variance. Items that were perceived as being (in general) most helpful among all three of the factors are as follows:
To provide a balanced array of viewpoints about significant Factor A items, the researcher selected an interview response from one participant in each of the three factors. The researcher selected a response from a participant of each factor who ranked the item as being highly helpful (+4, or +3 if no +4 statements were available). In instances where multiple participants of a factor rated a statement as being highly helpful, the researcher selected a response from among them based on the depth and clarity of their explanation.

Item #24 “A professor presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to “real world counseling” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 15, 1, and 2, who loaded onto Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3, respectively. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 15 of Factor 1: “The concept of ‘application’ of class material to the ‘real world’ felt practical, and permitted the instructor to bridge basic information to how I would ultimately use it to help clients.”
Participant 1 of Factor 2: “It gave me reassurance that the concepts that were being taught weren’t just idealistic, but that I could actually use them in everyday practice.”

Participant 2 of Factor 3: “Text book or classroom lecture application was essential; I needed to know how to apply the material to real world situations.”

Item #10, “A professor was authentic, empathetic, and compassionate with students,” was ranked as being highly helpful to participants 22, 33, and 10, who loaded onto Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3, respectively. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 22 of Factor 1: “I enjoyed having a professor that I could relate to and seemed understanding about what we were going through.”

Participant 33 of Factor 2: “I related to professors as people and hope that they share themselves and their personality in their teaching approach.”

Participant 10 of Factor 3: “It is helpful to feel like professors care about me and my success. It makes me feel more motivated to learn.”

Items that were perceived as being most unhelpful among Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 were:
Item #1, “A professor required me to do a lot of reading on the subject,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 22, 1, and 31, who loaded onto Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 respectively. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 22 of Factor 1: “Reading was boring and very wordy/difficult to understand at times. I preferred real-life application and processing.”

Participant 1 of Factor 2: “I still continue to do a lot of reading research, but ‘hands on’ experience was more important to my development as a counselor.”

Participant 31 of Factor 3: “I am a visual learner and I am able to apply my skills the best from an example, versus through what is said in an article.”

Item #25, “A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 5, 6, and 9, who loaded onto Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3, respectively. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A professor required me to do a lot of reading on the subject.</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material.</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant 5 of Factor 1: “Lecturing is fine to initially present topics and teach concepts, but every single class should not be lecturing because then I feel like a machine just meant to ‘spit out’ facts and information.”

Participant 6 of Factor 2: “I do not recall many of the lectures or materials from the lectures until we had the chance to learn how to apply concepts or discuss them in groups.”

Participant 9 of Factor 3: “Too much lecturing caused me to lose focus. It was hard for me to digest all of the material. Teachers who used mixed delivery methods were preferable to me.”

Item #2, “A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 28, 6, and 9, who loaded onto Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3, respectively. Their thoughts, taken from written interview questions on this item, included:

Participant 28 of Factor 1: “I understand why powerpoint is used but it is not my preference. Often if I had a powerpoint during the lecture I would tune out. I like a mixture between lecture and activity, because then I am forced to listen and connect.”

Participant 33 of Factor 2: “Powerpoint presentations are useless. I feel that they limit the opportunities for tangential conversations and explorations in discussing material.”
Participant 10 of Factor 3: “Powerpoint presentations are not important. As a graduate student, using them in class was not necessary. I would rather learn from a person than a presentation.”

Item #32, “A professor took a more ‘hands off’ approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work,” was ranked as being highly unhelpful to participants 22, 8, and 14, who loaded onto Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 respectively. Their thoughts taken from written interview questions on this item included:

Participant 22 of Factor 1: “While it was nice to have others’ opinions, the professor is the professor for a reason. A lot of the other students knew as little about the subject as I did.”

Participant 8 of Factor 2: “Some professors did this more productively than others. In some classes this was helpful. In others it was a waste of time.”

Participant 14 of Factor 3: “I feel that often what would happen is students would use this time to socialize, or guess at what the professor was looking for, as opposed to learning on their own.”

**Factor A themes.** Themes from Factor A represented an overarching common viewpoint that individuals from Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 agreed upon. This shared viewpoint was typified by preferences for applied learning over decontextualized content knowledge, creative methods of instruction, an active role of the professor in the classroom, and positive personal characteristics of the professor.
Professors considered most helpful used contextual teaching approaches to present information with clear links and applicability to professional counseling. In contrast, educational experiences perceived as unhelpful included reading assignments and academic learning with a more tenuous link to “real world” applicability. Varied styles of instruction during class engaged student learning, whereas teaching that primarily relied upon lecturing or PowerPoint presentations to disseminate course content lost the interest of Factor A individuals. It was considered helpful when professors assumed an active role during class and shared their knowledge and understanding about the topic being studied. Additionally, professors who related to students with person-centered ways of being, and demonstrated verve for the class they were teaching, provided helpful learning experiences for Factor A.

**Results As Informed by Literature**

**Factor 1**

Factor 1 (Application Oriented Learners) is linked with several themes in the literature. One such theme is contextual pedagogy, which emphasizes placing what is being taught in a context of how it will be useful to students in their work as professional counselors (Granello, 2000). Contextual teaching approaches are typified by counselor educators using role plays, demonstrations, field trips, and other applied learning activities, to encourage students to observe and participate in the application of what they are learning (Granello, 2000). This teaching approach appeared to be valued by Factor 1 individuals, who perceived it as helpful when their professors presented information in a
way where there was a clear link between what was being taught and how it applied to “real world” counseling, and offered “real life” examples of what counseling was like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.

In addition to a context oriented approach to teaching, Factor 1 individuals demonstrated a preference for counselor educators who are active, efficient, and structured in their teaching style. This style of teaching is congruent with Grasha’s (1994) description of the personal model style of teaching. Grasha’s personal model is characterized by a style of teaching that provides practical knowledge to students of how to think and complete tasks through the use of personal examples, and by teachers who take an active role in overseeing student learning in the classroom. This style of teaching may be well suited to the preferences of Factor 1 individuals, who found it helpful when their professors provided them with specific “how to” information, and provided demonstrations of desirable counseling skills that they could emulate.

In addition to Grasha’s personal model style of teaching, preferences of Factor 1 individuals suggest that they may be partial towards Zhang’s (2004) Type 2 styles of teaching. Zhang’s Type 2 teaching style is practical and simple, focused on providing students with structure and clear directives. Straightforward and unambiguous methods of teaching may appeal to Factor 1 individuals, who prefer a clear-cut understanding of what they need to know to become an effective counselor.

The Factor 1 predilection for teachers who are structured, active leaders in the classroom, who distill content into essential information, seems to suggest a preference
for teacher-centered forms of instruction. In teacher-centered pedagogy it is the teacher’s responsibility to determine what information is important, and then organize and disseminate that information to students (K. L. Brown, 2003). Despite these preferences, Factor 1 individuals indicated that they did not perceive didactic intensive forms of instruction (e.g., lecture and powerpoint presentations), often associated with teacher-centered methods of instruction, to be helpful. Therefore, although appreciative of a teacher-centered emphasis in the classroom, Factor 1 individuals may find it most helpful when their teachers adopt a combination of teacher-centered and learner-centered methods of instruction.

**Factor 2**

Similar to Factor 1, Factor 2 (Intrinsically Motivated Learners) found contextual teaching approaches that incorporated applied learning and “real life” examples to be helpful. However, in contrast to Factor 1 individuals’ narrower focus and preference for efficiency in their learning, Factor 2 individuals had a broader interest in their learning (e.g., Participant 35: “While I appreciated what my professors had to say, I often learned the most from debates and discussions during class”). Thus, in addition to links with contextual teaching, Factor 2 individuals also seemed to find constructivist and learner-centered pedagogies helpful in their learning (Guiffrida, 2005; Wright, 2011).

Constructivist and learner-centered methods of instruction that tend to be more creative and less directive seem to match Factor 2 individuals’ broader interest in learning. Professors who utilize constructivist or learner-centered approaches strive to be
more egalitarian in their classroom relationships, impose less structure, and emphasize the process of learning rather than students’ mastering specific content (Guiffrida, 2005; Wright, 2011). Egalitarian teacher-student relationships, in combination with a less strict adherence to course content, are intended to provide a learning environment that is more flexible to students’ learning interests (K. L. Brown, 2003). Preferences for flexibility and autonomy were characteristic of Factor 2, as they found it helpful when they were able to pursue areas of personal-professional interest both inside and outside the classroom. These characteristics seem congruent with learner-centered beliefs that students have a natural inclination to learn, which should be nurtured by providing students opportunities for self-directed learning (Cornelius-White, 2007; McCombs, 2004).

Factor 2 individuals’ preferences for flexibility, autonomy, and ample feedback from their professors suggests that they may be partial to formal authority and facilitator styles of teaching. Teachers using a formal authority style provide clear expectations to students and provide them with frequent direct feedback about their performance, and facilitative styles of teaching emphasize the process of learning, and provide students with autonomy in their learning experience (Grasha, 1994). A combination of these teaching styles may provide Factor 2 students with the space and flexibility for different types of learning in the classroom, while providing frequent feedback that serves as a measuring stick for evaluation of their progress and growth as aspiring counselors.
Factor 3

Factor 3 (Affect Oriented Learners) is characterized by an appreciation of social and relational aspects of professors. Professors who were viewed as helpful to Factor 3 participants possessed certain desirable characteristics that served as an impetus for inspiring learning. Ostensibly, the primacy of relational aspects of professors of Factor 3 more closely aligns with the body of research that has focused on characteristics associated with effective teachers.

Two aspects of professors that Factor 3 individuals perceived as helpful were passion about what they were teaching and demonstrating that the profession of counseling was meaningful to them. These characteristics of counselor educators are similar to findings from Feldman (1988), who indicated a teacher’s stimulation of interest in a course and its subject matter, and a teacher’s enthusiasm for teaching and the subject matter were associated with effective teaching. Factor 3 individuals also perceived their professors as being helpful when they were viewed as authentic, empathetic, and compassionate in their relationships with students. Those characteristics are congruent with research (Best & Addison, 2000; Sprinkle, 2008) that found undergraduate psychology students associated professors who demonstrated empathy and compassion with effective teaching. It may be that these personality attributes meet the affective needs of Factor 3 students, making their teachers seem more approachable and relatable.

The sundry characteristics of the professors preferred by Factor 3 may be encapsulated by Goldstein and Benassi’s (1996) process dimension of effective teaching.
The process dimension of effective teaching is characterized by a professor’s sociableness with students, willingness to self-disclose as a means of being open and engaging, and encouragement of autonomous thinking in their students. Goldstein and Benassi stated these characteristics are typically associated with teachers who are effective discussion leaders. One method of generating discussion is through asking incisive questions of students, which in turn can generate deeper understandings of course material (Goldstein & Benassi, 2006). Professors who asked students questions eliciting thoughtfulness and reflectiveness were perceived as helpful by Factor 3 participants.

Although Factor 3 individuals seemed to prefer personal characteristics of their teachers associated with those of an effective discussion leader, it appeared that they also had a more teacher-centered focus in the classroom. Whereas Factor 1 participants were oriented towards essential applied information, and Factor 2 participants were oriented towards learning in general, Factor 3 individuals were oriented towards their teachers as role models. In teacher-centered pedagogy the teacher is the central figure in the learning environment, which in some respects places a greater onus on them to engage students (Weimer, 2002). The pivotal position of teachers in the classroom in teacher-centered instruction appears to be congruent with the expressed learning needs of Factor 3, as these individuals report finding it helpful when their professors inspire them to learn.
**Factor A**

An interesting result of this study was the high positive correlation among factors. The high positive correlation among factors suggests that although there are differing perspectives about the research question (i.e., Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3), there is also a shared viewpoint among those differing perspectives (i.e., Factor A). This finding suggests a unity among clinical mental health counseling students’ learning preferences, which may be encouraging for counselor educators. Research such as Zhang (2004) has suggested there is a diverse range of learning needs present in classrooms with undergraduate populations, which can make it difficult for instructors to equally meet a wide range of learning preferences. The unity among factors in this study suggests that counselor educators working with clinical mental health students may be able to teach to a more integrated range of learning preferences, making it potentially more feasible to meet their learning needs.

One overarching learning preference that emerged in the Factor A cluster was a predilection for applied and practical learning. The Factor A cluster found it helpful when their professors of didactic classes presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught and how it applied to “real world” counseling. This finding is similar to Orlinsky et al. (2001) findings that professional therapists recalled practical learning as being more helpful than academic learning on their development as professionals. This finding is also consistent with Furr and Carroll (2003), who found that counselor education students were more heavily impacted by
learning experiences that involved immediate application of knowledge, rather than more abstruse cognitive-based learning. The practical and application-oriented teaching approaches found helpful by Factor A point towards a preference for contextual teaching approaches that frame content and learning activities within a context of how it will be useful to students in their work as professional counselors.

Results from this study suggest that the Factor A cluster did not perceive didactic intensive formats of teaching helpful. Furthermore, Factor A individuals indicated that professors who used lecture or PowerPoint presentations as the primary means for classroom instruction were not perceived as being helpful:

Participant 9 of Factor 3: “Too much lecturing caused me to lose focus. It was hard for me to digest all of the material. Teachers who used mixed delivery methods were preferable to me.”

This result supports the assertion that counselor educators should move beyond traditional didactic intensive methods of teaching to incorporate more instances of experiential and applied learning (Grant, 2006; Guiffrida, 2005). Varied forms of instruction associated with learner-centered pedagogy (Wright, 2011), constructivist pedagogy (Guiffrida, 2005; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998), and contextual pedagogy (Granello, 2000) may help captivate clinical mental health counseling students by keeping them engaged and active in class.

Although the Factor A cluster respondents preferred varied forms of instruction associated with learner-centered, constructivist, and contextual pedagogies, they did not
find it helpful when professors took a “hands off” approach toward facilitating learning through small groups and discussion:

Participant 22 of Factor 1: “While it was nice to have others’ opinions, the professor is the professor for a reason. A lot of the other students knew as little about the subject as I did.”

This finding is interesting insofar as learner-centered and constructivist teaching pedagogies are associated with small group work and teachers assuming a less active role in the classroom (Guiffrida, 2005; Wright, 2011). It appears that learner-centered and constructivist notions of professors taking a more distant stance toward being the source of all knowledge and diminishing an expert-based role in the classroom were not appreciated by the Factor A cluster.

Ostensibly, the Factor A preference of finding both lecture and PowerPoint (often associated with more teacher-centered forms of instruction) and facilitating small group work (often associated with learner-centered forms of instruction) to be unhelpful may appear daunting to counselor educators as these teaching modalities are often primary tools used by counselor educators to teach students in didactic classes. To eschew these common methods of teaching altogether would create a narrow path for counselor educators to traverse to try to meet the stated learning preferences of the Factor A cluster. However, analysis of interview statements from participants suggests a more nuanced viewpoint about the helpfulness of lecturing, PowerPoint presentations, and small group work:
“I enjoy lectures when they are engaging, however, some lectures were not. I enjoyed a variety of approaches in my class.”

“[In reference to small group work and using a “hands off” approach]… Some professors did this more productively than others. In some classes this was helpful. In others it was a waste of time.”

One possible interpretation of these statements is that these teaching modalities have the potential to be either helpful or unhelpful, depending on the teachers’ skills used for implementation. It may be that teachers who excel at lecturing or facilitating small group work are perceived as helpful to students, and that these teaching modalities are perceived as unhelpful only when they are used in a disingenuous or unskilled manner. Another possibility is that lecturing, PowerPoint presentations, facilitative approaches, and small group work all have the potential to be helpful if they are accompanied by other attributes that are perceived as being highly helpful by participants. For example, lecture-intensive teachers who present content in a way where there is a clear link to real world application (Item #24, +4 score for Factor A) and interact with students in a manner that is authentic, empathetic, and compassionate (Item #10, +3 score for Factor A) may be perceived as helpful to students, whereas lecture-intensive teachers who do not display these attributes may be perceived as unhelpful.

In addition to indicating preferences for certain teaching modalities in the classroom, the Factor A cluster indicated that certain characteristics of the professor were important and helpful. Examples include professors who demonstrated authenticity,
empathy, and compassion, and were also able to create a classroom atmosphere of openness and acceptance. This finding is consistent with research that has found warmth-inducing behaviors (Best & Addison, 2000) and a comfortable learning atmosphere (Young & Shaw, 1999) as characteristics associated with effective teaching. Although only found as moderately helpful (i.e., +2 ranking), Factor A individuals also indicated that it was important that their teachers demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject they were teaching, which is a characteristic that has been linked with effective teaching (Feldman, 1988). These findings (i.e., desirable attributes of the teacher) suggest that the ways in which a counselor educator works with students may be at least equally important to the methods of teaching they employ in the classroom.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Several limitations and considerations should be kept in mind when reading results from this study. First, diversity of race and ethnicity was not accounted for in participant selection, as the researcher was not confident that representativeness could be achieved including racial and ethnic demographic variables. Thus, it is unclear if minority students perceive different items as being more or less helpful than majority students. Future studies similar to this investigation could account for racial and ethnic diversity in participant selection variables to ascertain whether differences in learning preferences may exist among people of diverse populations.

A second potential limitation of this study was wording that was used in two of the Q sort statements that the Factor A cluster ranked as being highly unhelpful. Item #32
“A professor took a ‘hands off’ approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work” had two potential areas for improvement. On responses to post-Q sort interview questions for Item #32, several respondents included the term “hands off” in quotations marks, indicating a dislike for teachers who used this style. It may have been that the term “hands off” had a negative connotation to respondents and that a more neutral phrase (e.g., “Professors who facilitated discussion...”) may have been perceived more favorably. Another potential improvement of this statement would have been greater specificity with the term “small group work.” Post-Q sort interview responses indicated that some participants responded to positive and negative experiences with in-class small group activities/discussion, whereas other participants responded to negative experiences with group projects that occurred outside of the classroom. It would have been helpful if this item had been more specific, clearly emphasizing small group experiences that occurred in the classroom.

The second Q sort item that could have been improved was item #25 ("A professor required me to do a lot of reading on the subject"), which was perceived as being highly unhelpful to participants of Factor A. In retrospect, the wording of this item may have had a negative connotation to participants, inferring that they were assigned inordinate amounts of reading. It may have been advantageous to use a more neutral statement (e.g., “A professor consistently provided me with relevant reading assignments”) that could have assessed more accurately whether participants perceived some reading assignments as being helpful. As course reading assignments are a
pervasive learning tool used by teachers in counselor education programs, it would be helpful to understand what, if any, reading assignments are perceived as helpful to students. Future research might investigate the amount and types (e.g., peer reviewed counseling journals, counseling books, non-counseling related books, text books, non-counseling related periodicals) of reading assignments that are perceived as helpful or unhelpful by students.

When reading the findings of this study it is important to keep in mind that this investigation studied what novice professional counselors perceived as being helpful about teachers of their didactic classes during their master’s program. Q methodology cannot measure what teaching styles, interventions, or characteristics were most helpful to novice professional counselors, only what they perceived as being most helpful. Thus, it is possible that items in this study perceived as being unhelpful (e.g., Item #25 “A professor required me to do a lot of reading on the subject”) to a participant may have actually been helpful in some ways, and vice versa. It may be that certain items were perceived as being either helpful or unhelpful based on a participant’s recollection of it being either a pleasurable or unenjoyable experience. Future research on teaching in counselor education might additionally focus on quantitative inquiry that can shed light on best teaching practices.

When reading the results of this study it is also important to keep in mind that this investigation studied the perceptions of novice professional counselors. Thus, it is not clear how these learning preferences align with clinical mental health counseling students
who are in the process of completing their master’s degree. It is interesting to consider whether students’ perceptions of what is helpful is relatively congruent with the perspectives of novice professional counselors or if they have different developmental needs that would skew their learning preferences. For example, novice professional counselors were neutral or ambivalent about such items as #22, “A professor was interested in what I had to say,” #30, “A professor had strong interpersonal skills (e.g., friendly, good sense of humor, personable) during class,” #31, “A professor was an outstanding communicator,” and #37, “A professor created a classroom where I felt like an active participant in the learning process.” It is possible that items such as these may have greater significance to counseling students who are actively sitting in classrooms with their teachers rather than reflecting on their experience. Future research might address what mental health counseling students perceive as being helpful about teachers of their didactic classes during their master’s program, to create a more nuanced and complete understanding of student learning preferences.

Concluding Thoughts

This study was designed to explore the following research question: “What was it about teachers of didactic classes during their master’s program that novice professional counselors perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become.” To investigate this question the researcher solicited the viewpoints of novice professional counselors. Two primary findings emerged from analysis of the data that
may be helpful to counselor educators teaching clinical mental health counseling students in didactic classes.

One important finding of this study was that three different shared viewpoints exist among novice professional counselors relative to the research question. These three shared viewpoints can be conceptualized as three different student learner archetypes that counselor educators are likely to encounter when teaching didactic courses in mental health counseling. The Factor 1 Application-Oriented archetype student learner finds it helpful when counselor educators teach contextually, are pragmatic and application oriented, and are active in their role in the classroom. The Factor 2 Intrinsically-Motivated Learner archetype student learner has a broad enjoyment of learning and prefers when counselor educators use a flexible teaching approach that is less structured, who provides opportunities for autonomy inside and outside of the classroom, and who challenges them through feedback about their work. The Factor 3 Affective-Oriented archetype student learner is attuned to emotional and relational aspects of counselors educator, finds it helpful when professors inspire them to learn through modeling desirable characteristics, and shows a passion for the subject matter they are teaching.

Counselor educators may benefit from being thoughtful about the three student learner archetypes presented in this study when reflecting on their own teaching practices. It is unlikely that most counselor educators will have a way of teaching that is equally well suited to the learning preferences of each student learner archetype. More likely, most counselor educators will have a way of teaching that is inherently preferable
towards one or two of the student learner archetypes. Similarly, like student learners who have preferred ways of teaching, it is probable that counselor educators will have preferences towards certain types of student learners over others. By considering different student learner preferences outlined in this study, in relation to their own way of teaching and potential preference for certain types of student learners, counselor educators may be able to increase their helpfulness to student learners who are less well suited towards their way of teaching. An awareness of one’s way of teaching in light of the three student learner archetypes could lend itself to counselor educators adopting more diverse, flexible, and inclusive pedagogical practices in didactic classes. Applications reflecting this awareness could be used at the macro-level, such as introducing new teaching behaviors or activities in the classroom and designing course syllabi, or at the micro-level when counselor educators work with students on an individual or small group basis (e.g., extra help inside or outside of class, remediation work, scholarship projects, small group work).

A second important finding of this study was that although three significantly different shared viewpoints exist among novice professional counselors (i.e., Application-Oriented Learners, Intrinsically-Motivated Learners, Affect-Oriented Learners), there also appears to be a high level of agreement among these three shared viewpoints about what is helpful about teachers of didactic classes in clinical mental health master’s degree programs. Contrary to scholarship and research on other student populations that suggest a wide range of student learner preferences in the classroom, findings from this study
point towards master’s students in clinical mental health counseling having fairly similar learning preferences. This finding is encouraging for counselor educators as it suggests that they can be less concerned with attempting to reach students with a vast range of learning preferences and instead focus on meeting a narrower range of student learner preferences described by Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3 in this study. Although counselor educators should remain mindful that important differences exist among students of these three factors, the high level of similarity among the three factors suggests that it may be possible to teach to a middle ground that satisfies a large portion of student learner preferences in the classroom.

Similarities among the three first-order factors were substantial enough to reveal an overarching super-factor, which was arrived at through a second-order factor analysis of the three first-order factor arrays. The super-factor details a tangible middle ground of commonality among the three factors of what is perceived as being helpful about teachers of didactic classes in clinical mental health counseling master’s degree programs. Student learners of the three factors prefer when their teachers are active during class, knowledgeable about the subject they are teaching, and present subject matter in a context of how it will be useful to the student as a professional counselor. They also prefer when teachers demonstrate enthusiasm about what they are teaching and model authenticity, empathy, and compassion for students. Although each counselor educator will likely have a way of teaching that is more suited to a certain type of student learner, by focusing on learning preferences outlined in the super-factor it may help them meet
the needs of students of Factor 1, Factor 2, and Factor 3. The pedagogical middle ground illuminated by the super-factor in this study can act for counselor educators as a veritable target to shoot for when teaching didactic classes to master’s students in clinical mental health counseling.

Although findings of this study may present counselor educators with a helpful set of teaching practices to aim for, they also highlight the need for further research and scholarship on teaching in counselor education. For example, quantitative data from the super-factor revealed that participants perceived teaching practices such as lecture, PowerPoint presentations, and facilitation of small group work as highly unhelpful. However, several participants who ranked these items as highly unhelpful provided written interview statements that suggested these items had the potential to be helpful, dependent on how they are used:

“Lecturing is fine to initially presenting topics and teach concepts, but every single class should not be lecturing because then I feel like a machine just meant to ‘spit out’ facts of information.”

“Too much lecturing caused me to lose focus. Teachers who used mixed delivery methods were preferable to me.”

(in reference to facilitating small group work) “Some professors did this more productively than others. In some classes this was helpful. In others it was a waste of time.”
These statements highlight the need for exploration of how common teaching practices (e.g., assigned course readings, lecture, small group work, facilitating discussion) can be used in ways that are perceived as helpful by counselor trainees.

The literature in counselor education has little research or scholarship that sheds light on how to execute common teaching practices in a way that is perceived as helpful to counselor trainees. Even less evidence exists of literature that elucidates how counselor educators are taught and learn how to teach to counselor trainees. Future research and scholarship should address this gap in the literature by exploring what training methods are being implemented in doctoral programs to prepare aspiring counselor educators to teach counselor trainees. Increased understanding of how aspiring counselor educators are taught to teach and tangible information about how to use common teaching practices in ways that are perceived as helpful to student learners could contribute to more impactful learning experiences for counselor trainees.

This study helped to address a gap in the counselor education literature about teaching preferences of clinical mental health counseling students. Novice professional counselors were sampled for the study, as they provided a unique and valuable viewpoint, being professionals in the field reflecting on what they perceived as being helpful about their teachers. Due to the paucity of research on student learner preferences of teaching in the counselor education literature, it would be fruitful for future research to focus on replicating this study with other key student populations such as master’s students in clinical mental health counseling, master’s students in school counseling, and novice
professional school counselors. Investigation of these key student populations may reveal learning preferences similar to or different than those described in this study, which would be helpful to counselor educators trying to improve the efficacy of their teaching practices.

Summary

This investigation used Q methodology to study the viewpoints of novice professional counselors to understand what it was about their teachers in didactic classes during their program that they perceived as being most helpful to the professional counselor they have become. Thirty-five participants completed Q sorts in this study. During the Q sort, participants rank ordered 37 items on a 9-point scale that ranged from -4 “most unhelpful” to +4 “most helpful,” and then provided written responses to post-Q sort interview questions. Q sort data were then entered into the PQMethod 2.11 software program, which was used to analyze the data. The results indicated three significant factors that had high positive correlations with one another. The three factors represented three separate viewpoints on the research question, yet a high degree of commonality existed among them. Due to the high between-factor correlations, a secondary analysis was computed, which revealed one overarching super-factor. This super-factor explained a common factor, or viewpoint, that was present across the three factors. This chapter displayed distinguishing statements of each factor with qualitative data from participants’ interview responses to explain the theme of each factor and the super-factor. Findings of
this study were then explained in light of the professional literature, as were limitations of this investigation and implications for future research.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

KENT STATE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN
PARTICIPATION APPROVAL FORM, CONCOURSE INTERVIEW
Appendix A

Kent State University Institutional Review Board for Human Participation Approval

Form, Concourse Interview

Hello Counselors!

My name is Randy Moate and I am conducting a study that investigates what professional counselors found helpful about their teachers, during their master’s program. This study is designed to explore what it was about your teachers, that helped you to become the counselor you wanted to become.

If you decide to participate in this study you will be interviewed by the researcher. During that interview you will be asked to make statements about a research question that pertains to your experiences with your teachers, during your master’s program. Participation in this study will require approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time.

This study has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (Protocol #12-299).

You are eligible to participate in the study if you are currently 1-3 years removed from graduating from your master’s program in counseling, and have had approximately 1 year of supervised experience as a professional counselor.

If you are willing to participate in this study or have any further questions, please contact me at rmoate@kent.edu or 717.875.7469. After you confirm your interest in participating in this study, you will be sent a PDF copy of the interview question and a informed consent form. You may discontinue participating in this study at any time without risk of penalty.

Thanks for your help, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Randy Moate NCC, P.C.
Teaching Fellow
Counseling & Human Development Services
Kent State University
APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL, CONCOURSE INTERVIEW
Hello Counselors!

My name is Randy Moate and I am conducting a study that investigates what professional counselors found helpful about their teachers, during their master’s program. This study is designed to explore what it was about your teachers, that helped you to become the counselor you wanted to become.

If you decide to participate in this study you will be interviewed by the researcher. During that interview you will be asked to make statements about a research question that pertains to your experiences with your teachers, during your master’s program. Participation in this study will require approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time.

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You are eligible to participate in the study if you are currently 1-3 years removed from graduating from your master’s program in counseling, and have had approximately 1 year of supervised experience as a professional counselor.

If you are willing to participate in this study or have any further questions, please contact me at rmoate@kent.edu or 717.875.7469. After you confirm your interest in participating in this study, you will be sent a PDF copy of the interview question and a informed consent form. You may discontinue participating in this study at any time without risk of penalty.

Thanks for your help, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Randy Moate NCC, P.C.
Teaching Fellow
Counseling & Human Development Services
Kent State University
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION, CONCOURSE INTERVIEW
Appendix C

Informed Consent for Participation Concourse Interview

Kent State University

A Q Methodological Analysis of Teachers of Didactic Courses in Counselor Education: What do Graduates Remember as Helpful?

Consent Form

This study is designed to begin an exploration of what professional counselors found to be most helpful about their teachers during their master’s program. The primary investigator of this study is Randy Moate who is a doctoral student at Kent State University. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Jane Cox of Kent State University, and has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB# 12-299).

Participation in the study will require approximately 30 - 60 minutes and is strictly confidential. Participants will be interviewed and asked to make statements about what they found to be most helpful about their teachers during their master’s program. All responses are treated as confidential and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and used to construct an instrument for a forthcoming study.

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. No deception is involved in this study. Participation in this study may benefit you personally. You may benefit from reflecting on your experience as a master’s student, and what you have learned. What we learn from the study may help us to better understand the diverse learning needs of master’s students in counselor education.

Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participating in this study at any time without risk of penalty.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complain or concern, they may contact the principal investigator, Randy Moate; his faculty supervisor Dr. Cox, (330) 672-0698; or the Kent State University IRB at (330) 672-2704.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, please sign and date below.

____________________________  ____________________
Participant                     Researcher
__________________  _____________
Date                        Date
APPENDIX D

CONCOURSE INTERVIEW QUESTION
Appendix D

Concourse Interview Question

As a participant in this study you will be asked the follow question. The researcher may ask additional follow up question(s) to your responses, to further clarify what you are saying.

Directions: Please take some time and reflect on the following question. You will be asked to only respond to your experiences in didactic courses. Didactic courses are classes that are focused on content (e.g., theories, diagnosis, assessment, multicultural, etc.) as opposed to those based on small group discussion and/or practicing counseling (e.g., practicum class, techniques of counseling, internship class, etc.). While reflecting on this question it may be helpful to recall specific teachers and/or learning experiences that occurred for you, that were particularly meaningful or notable.

Q. What was it about teachers of your didactic classes during your master’s program that was most helpful in becoming the professional counselor you are today?
APPENDIX E

CONCOURSE
Interview Statements

Provided real life examples of what counseling is like, by using video’s, role plays, or examples from personal experiences.

Willingness to answers students questions.

Willingness to explore topics in depth, either in class or outside of class.

Created classroom environment that felt open and accepting, so that students felt comfortable sharing.

Created activities and assignments that required applying concepts that were learned in class.

Modeled desirable counselor behaviors as they taught (i.e. you modeled yourself as a counselor off some of their behaviors you found desirable)

Were honest and open with students during class.

Providing students opportunities to teach one another information (as it relates to the course)

Created a safe setting, where it is OK to make mistakes.

Provided concrete “how to” information to students, when it was applicable in class.

Acted in an authentic and/or genuine manner with students during class.

Challenged students with questions that provoked reflection and deeper understanding/meaning.

Had a flexible approach towards teaching -- would deviate from the syllabus/lesson plan, to explore/discuss issues that arose during class.

Had high standards and expectation for students’ capability and performance.
I could identify with as a human being.

Are still practicing counseling, versus those who are no longer seeing clients.

Were confident in themselves and their identity as a counselor.

Offered direct and honest feedback to students.

Created opportunities that encouraged me to reflect (as it relates to myself, the material covered in class, case studies, etc).

Inspired me, by modeling how counseling is meaningful in their own lives.

Teachers who utilized powerpoint presentations as the primary means for organizing and sharing information.

Were intelligent and knew a lot of information about the subject.

Showing videos of actual clinical cases or of specific disorders was helpful because you could put a face to it.

Teachers would over-assign reading materials... helped her to have a lot of sources that she can draw on now (put in the work then, so she can reap the benefits now).

Presented genograms to class after introducing it via powerpoint.... varied up her methods for how she taught this (differentiated instruction)

Teacher created a timeline on the floor of the history of counseling, and class was able to interact with it (ask questions about it)... interjectionally timeline.

Passionate about content.

She was fine with “old school approach”; powerpoint, go home and read.

Made lectures more interesting by weaving in their own personality with the lecture (humor, stories, etc).

Being forced to put herself in uncomfortable situations through class assignments (e.g., cultural immersion activities).
Teachers were very “open”. Lots of self disclosure, went to professors house, went to professors wedding. I like teachers that seemed like real people to me.

I appreciated when teachers didn’t seem like they were stuck in the ivory tower, and talked to me like one of their peers.

My teachers had lots of accessibility and time for me outside of class.

When teachers were supportive of me making my own choices, and were supportive of the choices I made.

Some of the most helpful aspects of teachers in didactic classes are their passion about the information they are teaching, ability to explain content in different ways, and providing options of how to apply the information in different environments and to different populations.

Teachers exemplified the content learned. While teaching theories/multicultural counseling and the importance of unconditional positive regard, teachers would role play/ exhibit the behaviors and techniques they taught. While teaching diagnosis and the significance of diagnosing a client, teachers exhibited the sensitivity through their teaching style.

It was helpful when they allowed and encouraged individual time with the teacher to ask questions.

They did not rush the learning process and development of counseling skills (while classes were content oriented, they were also student oriented and encouraged each student to focus on their strengths and be aware of their limitations).

Didactic classes helped prepare me for practicum/internship as it provided a foundation of knowledge I could build on when I was practicing counseling.

Classes provided scenarios and case studies allowing the opportunity to apply the information learned.
The projects/presentations and papers we had to complete were helpful because I was able to take the knowledge I was given and listened to in class and summarize the information in my own words and form it to fit my perspective.

Projects allowed us the opportunity to research information and become more invested in the knowledge. -Research, presentations, papers, etc. provided the opportunity to become an active participant in the learning process (rather than feeling like a spectator).

I loved when professors brought real life examples into the classroom: case studies, guest lectures from community came in, role play.

It was helpful when they were role models for me, and I saw their vulnerability.

I learned from seeing my professors vulnerabilities, and that its “ok not to be perfect”... I learned from professors who showed me that there are many possible ways to do things, instead of one “right” way.

It was helpful when professors were fair, clear cut, hard, and pushed me as a student.

Helped me develop a knowledge base and tools for licensure, to diagnose, to be an ethical counselor.

Situations where I received hard training that replicated what I do as a counselor, and the type of environment that I work in.

Helpful to replicate intensity of work environment. including disappointment, and candid feedback.

I learned how to set appropriate/clear boundaries, by professors would would appropriately self disclose.

Sensing my professors put in time, and are engaged with what I am doing, and the subject. This made me want to work harder and helped me to see relevance in what I was learning.

It was important when professors had a willingness to help others, and being patient with students. Watching this helped me to take a similar style with clients that I work with.
It was nice when theories that I learned were demonstrated by professors. I learned by watching professors model these theories, because I could then see myself doing it.

Application! When you teach something, you make it come alive, by making a connection with how you will use that as a clinician.

Preferred lecture based when starting out in my master's program; its too difficult to navigate a terrain when I am unsure what the landscape.

Lectures who related material/information that I was learning to good examples (popular culture, etc) that I could identify with. This helped me to remember.

Lectures were not a rehash of the book (i.e. what I already read)

Its was helpful to me when a professor did not provide a powerpoint before or during class, because I then tended to zone out or lose focus.

Spontaneity is helpful, rather then when a professor is scripted and does not allow for learning tangents to occur.

I learned a lot when lecturing felt open and was not a one way street.

When instructors pull in outside material (from the news, NPR, popular media).

When professors encouraged students to interact with other students through activities, or group projects, self directed learning. This has helped me in my work as a group counselor.

The professors that I connected the most with I notice that I use their style/advice in my current approach as a counselor.

**Literature Statements**

When teachers begin by using lecture to introduce me to new ideas, and then used in class demonstrations and activities so that I could practice what we were learning.

Space included in class for discussions, activities, and experiences to occur.

Teacher who present information in a way, where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to “real world” counseling.
Teachers first present students with a question or problem to solve about what they are learning, and then share their knowledge about the topic.

Instructors who use a structured approach towards sharing their knowledge about the subject, primarily through lectures, stories, and presentations.

Instructors who are experts on the subject matter, and structure their class around sharing information primarily through lectures and presentations.

Professors who possess status within their programs as an authority on a subject, hold students to a high standard of doing things the “right” way, and provide students with ample positive and negative feedback.

Professors who use themselves as a personal example to model how to think or behave as a student, and take an active approach to help students emulate their approach.

Professors who facilitate class by asking questions, exploring multiple viewpoints, suggesting alternative ideas, and do not provide student’s with the “right’ answer.

Professors who take a “hands off approach,” and give students ample opportunities for independent learning either on their own, or working with small groups.

Teachers that are creative thinkers, have a less structured classroom environment, and present complex ideas that challenge students to think about things from different perspectives.

Teachers that have a practical and organized style of teaching, where classes are structured, and information was given to students in a way where they have a clear understanding of important factual information.

When teachers are able to stimulate student’s interest in a course, or about the subject matter they are learning.

Teachers who are enthusiastic about the subject matter they are teaching.

Teachers who demonstrate empathy and compassion, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Teachers who have strong interpersonal skills (e.g., friendly, good sense of humor, personable), and demonstrate openness and authenticity during class.
Professors who create a comfortable learning atmosphere, where students feel safe to express their opinions.

When teachers are excellent communicators/speakers.
Appendix F

Q Sample

1. A professor required me to do a lot of reading on a subject.

2. A professor used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce new concepts.

3. A professor was passionate about the material they were teaching.

4. A professor was regarded as a specialist in the topic they were teaching.

5. A professor would integrate their personality into lectures by using humor, personal disclosure, and relevant stories.

6. A professor established relationships with students that were more egalitarian and less authoritative.

7. A professors offered “real life” examples of what counseling is like by using videos, demonstrating role plays, or providing examples from personal experience.

8. A professor created a classroom environment that felt open, accepting, and a safe place to make mistakes.

9. A professor modeled desirable counseling skills that I could emulate.

10. A professor was authentic, empathetic, and compassionate with students.

11. A professor provided specific “how to” knowledge on how I should do something.

12. A professor asked questions that helped me become reflective and thoughtful about the subject matter.

13. A professor used a flexible format during class that allowed for spontaneity, tangents, and for topics of interest to be explored in depth.

14. A professor pushed me and held me to a high standard.

15. When I knew that a professor was still practicing as a counselor.
16. When I could sense that a professor was confident in their identity as a counselor.

17. A professor frequently gave me feedback about my work.

18. A professor demonstrated that the profession of counseling is meaningful to them.

19. A professor provided activities/assignments that gave me an opportunity to apply what I was learning.

20. A professor conveyed that there were many possible “right” answers, and encouraged students to find their own understandings.

21. When I could sense that a professor put in time preparing for class.

22. A professor was interested in what I had to say.

23. A professor was willing to work with me outside of class.

24. A professor presented information in a way where there was a clear link between what was being taught/learned and how it applied to “real world” counseling.

25. A professor primarily used lecturing to teach material.

26. A professor referenced things outside of counseling (e.g., popular music, movies, news and culture) during lectures that I was able to identify with.

27. A professor was patient and did not try to rush the learning process.

28. When I sensed that a professor encouraged questions and discussion during class.

29. A professor gave me opportunities to work within small groups.

30. A professor had strong interpersonal skills (e.g., friendly, good sense of humor, personable) during class.

31. A professor was an outstanding communicator.

32. A professor took a more “hands off” approach and allowed students to learn things on their own through discussion and small group work.
33. A professor had a creative style of teaching, which challenged me to think about material from a variety of perspectives.

34. A professor had an organized style of teaching.

35. A professor first presented a question or problem about a topic, before sharing their knowledge/understanding about the topic.

36. A professor gave me opportunities to investigate areas I was interested in for class assignments.

37. A professor created a classroom environment where I felt like an active participant in the learning process.
APPENDIX G

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN PARTICIPATION FORM, Q SORT
Appendix G

Kent State University Institutional Review Board for Human Participation Form, Q Sort

Attachment A INFORMED CONSENT

Kent State University

Novice Professional Counselors’ Perceptions of What Was Most Helpful to Them About Teachers of Didactic Classes in Their Master’s Program

Consent Form

This study is designed to explore what novice professional counselors found to be most helpful about their teachers during their master’s program. This study is being conducted for Randy Moate’s dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Jane Cox of Kent State University, and has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB# XXXX).

Participation in the study will require approximately 20-30 minutes and is strictly confidential. Participants will be asked to rank order a series of statements from “most helpful” to “most unhelpful”. After participants have completed sorting the statements, they will be asked to write responses to a short series of questions about some of the statements. All responses are treated as confidential and in no case will the identities of individual participants be revealed in this study.

To participate in this study you must meet the following criteria:
1. You are a graduate of a Counselor Education degree program.
2. You have accrued at least 500 direct hours of clinical service with clients.
3. You are no more than 3 years removed from graduating your master’s program.

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would from a normal day of life. No deception is involved in this study. Participation in this study may benefit you personally. You may benefit from reflecting on your experience as a master’s student and what you have learned. What we learn from the study may help us to better understand the diverse learning needs of master’s students in counselor education.

Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participating in this study at any time without risk of penalty.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact the principal investigator Dr. Cox, (330) 672-0698; or the Kent State University IRB at (330) 672-2704.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely elected to participate in the study, please sign and date below.

Participant ____________________________  Researcher ____________________________
Date ________________  Date ________________

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APPENDIX H

RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO SUPERVISORS, Q SORT
Appendix H

Recruitment Email to Supervisors, Q Sort

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Randy Moate and I’m doctoral candidate at Kent State University conducting research to complete my dissertation. My dissertation will investigate what novice professional counselors found most helpful about their teachers, during their program. I would appreciate if you could forward the following email to any novice professional counselors working at your place of employment who meet the following criteria:

1. Are a graduate of a Counselor Education degree program.
2. Have accrued at least 500 direct hours of clinical service with clients.
3. Are no more than 3 years removed from graduating from their program.

This study has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB# 13-532). If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at rmoate@kent.edu or 717.875.7469.

Thanks for your help and support in completing my dissertation!

Sincerely,

Randall M. Moate MS, PC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling & Human Development Services
Kent State University
APPENDIX I

RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO COUNSELORS, Q SORT
Appendix I

Recruitment Email to Counselors, Q Sort

Hello Counselors!

My name is Randy Moate and I am conducting research for my dissertation that investigates what novice professional counselors perceived as being helpful about their teachers during their program. This study is designed to explore what it was about your teachers that helped you to become the counselor you are today.

If you decide to participate in this study you will be asked to rank order a series of statements from “most helpful” to “most unhelpful.” After you have completed sorting the statements, you will be asked to write brief responses to a short series of questions about some of the statements you ranked. Participation in this study will require approximately 20-30 minutes of your time. You are eligible to participate in the study if you meet the following criteria:

1. You are a graduate of a Counselor Education degree program.
2. You have accrued at least 500 direct hours of clinical service with clients.
3. You are not more than 3 years removed from graduating from your program.

This study has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB# 13-532).

If you are willing to participate in this study please contact me at rmoate@kent.edu or 717.875.7469. After you have contacted me, we can schedule a time to meet, or if that is unfeasible, I can send you a packet in the mail so that you can participate.

Please take a moment to open the informed consent below that is attached in a PDF document. You will be required to sign and date the informed consent in order to complete your participation in this study. If you and I are able to meet in person, I can collect your signed informed consent when we meet. If you and I are unable to meet and you will be participating in this study via the mail, you may send your signed informed consent in with your completed packet. You may discontinue participating in this study at any time without risk of penalty. Thanks for your help and support in completing my dissertation! I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Randy Moate MS, PC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling & Human Development Services
Kent State University
APPENDIX J

INFORMED CONSENT, Q SORT
Appendix J

Informed Consent, Q Sort

Kent State University

Novice Professional Counselors’ Perceptions of What Was Most Helpful to Them About Teachers of Didactic Classes in Their Program

Consent Form

This study is designed to explore what novice professional counselors found to be most helpful about their teachers during their program. This study is being conducted for Randy Moate’s dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Jane Cox of Kent State University, and has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB# 13-532).

Participation in the study will require approximately 20-30 minutes and is strictly confidential. Participants will be asked to rank order a series of statements from “most helpful” to “most unhelpful”. After participants have completed sorting the statements, they will be asked to write responses to a short series of questions about some of the statements. All responses are treated as confidential and in no case will the identities of individual participants be revealed in this study.

To participate in this study you must meet the following criteria:
1. You are a graduate of a Counselor Education degree program.
2. You have accrued at least 500 direct hours of clinical service with clients.
3. You are no more than 3 years removed from graduating your program.

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would from a normal day of life. No deception is involved in this study. Participation in this study may benefit you personally. You may benefit from reflecting on your experience as a student and what you have learned. What we learn from the study may help us to better understand the diverse learning needs of students in counselor education.

Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participating in this study at any time without risk of penalty.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact the principal investigator Dr. Cox, (330) 672-0698; or the Kent State University IRB at (330) 672-2704.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, please sign and date below.

__________________________   _________________________
Participant      Researcher

________________     ______________
Date       Date
APPENDIX K

Q SORT PACKET
Appendix K

Q Sort Packet

INSTRUCTIONS

(If you acknowledge that you are a willing participant in this study, make sure that you have read and then signed the consent form before you begin following these instructions.)

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this study! Read through this form and complete the items below. Please attempt to find a 20-30 minute block of time when you can complete these materials in a quiet area. Please return these materials to me within two weeks of when you received them. If you have any questions about the study, or the instructions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 717.875.7469 or randallmoate@gmail.com.

Thanks again for agreeing to participate in this study! I appreciate you taking time to assist me with my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Randall M. Moate MA, PC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate
Kent State University

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer each question by circling the letter that best describes you.

Age:
A) 20-30
B) 31-40
C) 41-50
D) 50+

Gender you identify as:
A) Male
B) Female

Location of your work setting:
A) Urban
B) Rural

Setting that you work in:
A) Private Practice
B) Community Agency
C) Hospital

Approximate amount of direct clinical hours you have accrued:
A) 500 - 1000
B) 1001 - 1500
C) 1501 - 2000
D) 2001 - 2500
E) 2500+

Q-SORT INSTRUCTIONS

1. You will need a large space (e.g., desk top, floor space, etc.) so that you are able to spread out all of the statement cards.

2. Take a moment to reflect on who you have become as professional counselor, and then consider:
   Recall the teachers who you had during your program that taught non-experiential classes (i.e., any class that you took in your program excluding your prepracticum, practicum, and internship class). Then consider, what was it about your teachers in non-experiential classes that was most helpful to you in becoming the professional counselor you are today?

3. After reflecting on this, take time to read through the deck of cards, so that you become familiar with the statements (statement cards are printed on white paper). These statements represent different points of view about helpful aspects of counselor educators in non-experiential classes.

4. Read through the deck of cards a second time, this time sorting the cards into three separate piles: a right pile, a middle pile, a left pile.
   Right Pile: statements in this pile represent your viewpoints about what was **most helpful about your teachers in non-experiential classes during your degree program, that helped you to become the counselor you are today**.

   Middle Pile: statements in this pile are viewpoints that you are neutral or uncertain about.

   Left Pile: statements in this pile represent your viewpoints about what was **most unhelpful about your teachers in non-experiential classes during your program, that helped you to become the counselor you are today**.

5. Refer to the response grid below as a model for arranging the marker cards (i.e., marker cards are on colored paper). Each marker card has two numbers on it: the first number represents the rating category and the second number in parenthesis represents how many statement cards you will place under that number (e.g., -4 marker requires 2 cards).

ILLUSTRATION OF HOW MARKER CARDS SHOULD BE ARRANGED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Unhelpful</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Most Helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>-4</strong></td>
<td>(2) cards</td>
<td>(3) cards</td>
<td>(4) cards</td>
<td>(6) cards</td>
<td>(7) cards</td>
<td>(6) cards</td>
<td>(4) cards</td>
<td>(3) cards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Starting with the right pile (i.e., “most helpful”), select two statements that are most like your viewpoint of what you perceived as being most helpful about your teachers in non-experiential classes during your degree program, and place them under the 4 category of the response grid. Next, select two statement from the left pile (i.e., “most unhelpful”) that are least like your viewpoint of what you perceived as being most helpful about your teachers in non-experiential classes during your degree program, and place them under the -4 category of the response grid.

7. Moving back to the pile on your right (i.e., most helpful), select three statements that are next most helpful to place under the 3 category of the response grid. Then move back to the left pile (i.e., most unhelpful) and select three statements that are the next most unhelpful, and place those under the -3 category and so on, until you have sorted out all of the stacked cards.

8. After all of the statement cards have been put in place, please record the card number (located in the upper left hand corner of each card) on the corresponding place on the grid below.

```
Most Unhelpful                  Most Helpful
-4  -3  -2  -1  0  1  2  3  4
(2)  (3)  (4)  (6)  (7)  (6)  (4)  (3)  (2)

```

*Note: The diagram represents the response grid with the card numbers entered in their respective positions.*
1. Describe how the two items you ranked at 4 (“Most Helpful”) were helpful to the counselor you have become.
   a. Item #_____ was helpful because:
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
   b. Item #_____ was helpful because:
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________

2. Describe how the two items that you placed at the -4 (“Most Unhelpful”) were not helpful to the counselor you have become.
   a. Item #_____ was less helpful because:
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
   b. Item #_____ was less helpful because:
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________

3. Describe other statements that you think help define your view (either positive, negative, or neutrally ranked).
   a. Item #_____ helped define my view because:
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
   b. Item #_____ helped define my view because:
      ____________________________________________________________
4. What, if any, were specific statements that you had difficulty placing? Please indicate why these items were difficult for you to place.
   a. Item #_____ was difficult because:
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
   b. Item #_____ was difficult because:
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________

5. Describe any other thoughts or ideas about helpful aspects of your teachers in non-experiential classes during your program that emerged for you while sorting these statements.
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

RETURNING MATERIALS

Please include this packet of forms and your consent form in the return envelope. You may dispose of the Q sort statements and marker cards if you wish. Thank you for choosing to participate in this study.
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REFERENCES


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