THE EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS
EXPOSED TO POPULAR FILM AS A PEDAGOGIC TOOL IN
COUNSELOR EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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THE EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS EXPOSED TO POPULAR FILM AS A PEDAGOGIC TOOL IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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This constructivist grounded theory research study explored Master’s level counselor education students’ perceptions and experiences of being exposed to popular film clips for pedagogic purposes in the classroom. Over an eight month period, students in seven different counselor education courses were exposed to pedagogic film clip experiences in their classrooms. From this group of students drawn from two Midwestern universities, three rounds of face-to-face individual interviews and a focus group were conducted and forty participants described their classroom film experiences. Transcriptions of the interviews and focus group were used to gather data and to develop a constructivist grounded theory.

Participants’ descriptions of their experiences and perceptions indicated that students engage in a complex experiential meaning-making process as a result of exposure to and discussion of their film experiences. This experiential meaning-making process involves students making assessments regarding the level at which they will engage with the film experience, and includes personal reactions that surface for students. The experiential meaning-making process is also evident as students interact and discuss their film experiences within the social context of the classroom; as they attempt to connect the film clip material with course content; and as they integrate the film experience into their learning. Students’ experiential meaning-making processes,
dynamics of engagement, personal reaction experiences, social interaction processes, and involvement with cycling course content as a result of film experiences mutually influence each other.

Students who participated in this study also described the significance of peer interaction and a positive and encouraging classroom environment in their experiential meaning-making processes. Students further endorsed film clips as being a powerful tool for those who are visually-oriented, and emphasized that the clips assisted in bringing course concepts to life. Additionally, students described their film experiences as being most effective when clips are introduced, delivered, and then adequately processed and connected with course content. A discussion of each round of data collection, analysis, and triangulation is provided. The constructivist grounded theory of student engagement with popular film clips used as a pedagogic tool is provided. Professional implications, limitations, and implications for future research are also included.

Approved: Thomas E. Davis

Professor and Chair of Counseling and Higher Education
Acknowledgments

Pursuing a doctoral degree and writing this dissertation has been a significant, and often challenging, endeavor. Reaching this point is far from a solitary process, and a number of extraordinary people have played crucial roles in my being able to realize this dream.

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what I am doing. As a new chapter begins for us and we welcome another little one into our family, know how thankful I am for what we have and for the opportunity to walk the path of this life with you. You continuously amaze me.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Educators believe that teaching needs to be made more relevant to an increasingly diverse group of students and, at the same time, needs to develop students’ abilities to think critically (Bluestone, 2000). Accordingly, postmodern, constructivist, and contextual teaching styles have been advocated as a way of enhancing student learning (Lovell & McCauliffe, 1997; Sexton & Griffin, 1997; Gergen, 1985). These pedagogic approaches emphasize promoting interactions among all students in a learning environment, exploring a variety of teaching methods, grounding thinking in experiential exercises, and creating multiple opportunities for student reflection (Kolb, 1984; McCauliffe & Eriksen, 2000).

One pedagogic approach that has gained increasing popularity over the past two decades across a variety of disciplines is the use of popular film (motion pictures) as a contextual teaching tool. Within the social sciences, the field of psychology has done the most extensive writing about utilizing popular film for teaching. Articles in the psychology literature describe pedagogic applications of feature films in teaching social development (Boyatzis, 1994; Kirsh, 1998); psychopathology (Chambliss & Magakis, 1996; Fleming, Piedmont, & Hiam, 1990; Hyler & Moore, 1996); cognitive psychology (Conner, 1996); adolescent development (Desforges, 1994); personality theories (Paddock, Terranova, & Giles, 2001); social psychology (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2001); and countertransference (Swift & Wonderlich, 1993). Popular films have also been cited in the literature to teach a combined psychology and law course.
(Anderson, 1992), sociological concepts and theories (Tipton & Tieman, 1993), medical ethics (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993), family systems concepts (Newby, Fischer, & Reinke, 1992; Alexander, 2000), and small group processes (Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995).

Cinemaeducation in Counselor Education

While a review of the counseling literature indicated many references to teaching with film, only eight articles recommended using film in counselor education. Interestingly, seven of these eight articles were published since 1998, revealing that the use of popular film for pedagogic purposes (cinemaeducation) is a relatively recent and unexplored approach in counselor education. It is striking that while popular film use has been advocated as an effective teaching medium in disciplines closely related to counselor education, a dearth of research exploring the pedagogic processes of using popular film in the counselor education literature continues to exist.

Despite an article published within counselor education over 20 years ago by Gladstein and Feldstein (1983) on using film to increase counselor empathic experiences, the pedagogic use of feature films has been largely unaddressed. Current counselor education literature addresses using film for teaching core counseling courses (Toman & Rak, 2000); group counseling (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998); diversity sensitivity training in the counseling curriculum (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998); rehabilitation counselor education (Davis, 2000); counseling theory (Koch & Dollarhide, 2000); and family systems and marriage and family counseling (Hudock & Warden, 2001; Higgins & Dermer, 2001). Each of these authors echoes the sentiments shared by others in social science disciplines who have written about the educational use of film; cinema has a powerful and immediate capacity to educate learners about a variety of psychological
issues (Wedding & Boyd, 1999). However, largely absent from the literature advocating the pedagogic use of popular film is a clear understanding of what makes the medium effective as an educational tool. Many authors (Anderson, 1992; Newby, Fischer, & Reinke, 1992; Tipton, 1993; Desforges, 1994; Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995; Chambliss & Magakis, 1996; Alexander, 2000; Bluestone, 2000; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2001) offer anecdotal accounts of instructional successes they have experienced in using film, but only a few (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993; Boyatzis, 1994; Conner, 1996; Paddock, Terranova, & Giles, 2001) describe well-developed research that closely examines how using film stimulates learning. Even fewer authors (Toman & Rak, 2000; Koch & Dollarhide, 2000) adequately research the experiences that students themselves report receiving from the application of film in the classroom, and instead tend to offer subjective accounts of students’ experiences. Consequently, research that establishes a basis for understanding how popular film use affects student learning in counselor education is warranted.

In order to develop an understanding of how film influences student learning, research needs to be focused on exploring the experiences of students who are exposed to film in their classrooms. Understanding how the learning process works might assist educators in being more intentional and strategic in implementing popular film, and could serve to enhance teaching techniques. These are areas within the literature where a dearth of research currently exists. Presently, the rationale for using film is essentially theoretical and without a research base. Recent theoretical perspectives for the educational use of popular film have emerged from the bibliotherapy and cinematherapy literatures, and briefly reviewing these techniques will help to explain the growth of film
use as a pedagogic tool. Additionally, the evolution and rationale of cinemaeducation (the pedagogic use of film) will be more clearly understood as its history and theoretical roots in both bibliotherapy and cinematherapy are made evident.

Bibliotherapy, Cinematherapy, and Cinemaeducation

Mental health practitioners have long recommended the use of books, plays, poetry, and the visual and performing arts as a means of teaching concepts of mental health and providing therapeutic experiences (Hesley & Hesley, 2001). It is clear that both therapeutic and pedagogic processes involve elements of communication and learning, and that there likely exists a variety of creative mediums for communicating therapeutic ideas and concepts to both clients and students (Wedding & Boyd, 1999). With cinematherapy and cinemaeducation both having their roots in bibliotherapy, a brief examination of bibliotherapy provides a view into how the theoretical underpinnings of these approaches surfaced.

Bibliotherapy

For over a century, therapists have made use of literature (bibliotherapy) to assist clients in overcoming a wide range of complications (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000). Bibliotherapy is the process of assigning material that involves characters dealing with similar conflicts and issues as clients, in an effort to help clients better comprehend and cope with their struggles (Newton, 1995). According to Sharp, Smith, and Cole (2002), bibliotherapy can only be effective if some meaningful processing of the book or material takes place. Morawski (1997) posits that there are three stages of self-development consistently identified in the process of bibliotherapy: identification, catharsis, and insight.
Identification, Catharsis, and Insight

According to Morawski (1997), the first stage in the bibliotherapy process is identification, and is marked by readers seeing some similarity or feeling some connection with a fictional character. Examination of the behaviors and motives of the fictional character can serve as a medium for the reader to begin self-exploration (Sharp et al., 2002). Secondly, observing an identified character grapple with a problem and release emotional tension can be cathartic for clients. Moreover, through identification with a fictional character, clients’ emotions and internal conflicts might begin to surface; addressing the feelings surrounding this identification may also provide a cathartic experience (Newton, 1995). Thirdly, through understanding the behaviors and motives of a fictional character with which clients have identified, a greater understanding and awareness of issues relevant to their own lives may be achieved. In addition to these stages, Jeon (1992) has proposed a fourth stage of client experience with bibliotherapy: universalization. This stage is based on the idea that through identification with characters in literature, clients are able to recognize that others have experienced the same difficulties and challenges which they are facing. This may be therapeutic in that clients’ sense of uniqueness and isolation is thereby reduced.

Overall, these authors describe anecdotal accounts of their clinical experiences with bibliotherapy, and the formulation of the bibliotherapy process into the abovementioned stages appears to be based on the subjective experiences of clinicians.

Cinematherapy

As an outgrowth of bibliotherapy, cinematherapy offers a creative medium for addressing therapeutic topics with clients (Hesley & Hesley, 2001). Cinematherapy is a
therapeutic technique that involves careful selection and assignment of movies for clients to watch with follow-up processing of their experiences during therapy sessions (Sharp et al., 2002). Others have referred to this process as “Video Work,” defined as using “films to facilitate self-understanding, to introduce options for action plans, and to seed future therapeutic interventions,” (Hesley & Hesley, 1998, p.5).

According to Dermer and Hutchings (2000), versatility is a main reason movies have found their way into therapy. These authors contend that feature films typically have universal appeal with clients, can be integrated into any therapeutic modality, and can be used in individual, couple, and family therapy. Interventions with film may also be used with diverse client populations, and issues such as class, culture, gender, and sexual orientation can be explored (Lappin, 1997). In addition, movie characters can model problem-solving behaviors for clients. Through film, a client may not only gain awareness of alternative coping strategies, he or she may also be able to explore various coping options without the risk of negative consequences from having implemented a decision directly into his or her life. Nichols and Schwartz (1998) refer to this as a safe distancing technique, and state that “if the proper aesthetic distance is maintained, people can become emotionally involved with a movie so that it has an impact but at the same time they remain sufficiently removed to be objective,” (p.162). Dermer et al. (2000) posit that movies have significant opportunity to be therapeutically beneficial because they can connect to clients on an emotional, cognitive, and/or behavioral level.

Sharp et al. (2002) suggest that using cinematherapy can increase the effectiveness of therapy by providing the client with a homework activity to complete between sessions. They add that a useful by-product of cinematherapy is that it may
increase the therapeutic alliance by providing a common experience that the therapist and client share. Unfortunately, the authors offer no support for these conclusions, and there exists no empirical evidence that cinematherapy either increases the effectiveness of therapy or stimulates the therapeutic alliance between client and clinician.

Berg-Cross, Jennings, & Baruch (1990) submit that as with bibliotherapy, therapist implementation of cinematherapy procedures should be done in a thoughtful and therapeutic manner. Dermer and Hutchings (2000) emphasize that special care is needed to insure the success of this technique, and offer guidelines for utilizing cinematherapy which encompass three stages: assessment, implementation, and debriefing.

Assessment, Implementation, and Debriefing

According to Dermer and Hutchings (2000), complete assessment is essential to any successful intervention, and cinematherapy is no exception. The authors propose that the assignment of a movie should be based upon therapeutic judgment regarding presenting problems, personal hobbies and interests, and the goal of the intervention (Dermer et al., 2000). Following the assessment phase and after making an appropriate match of movie and client, the therapist makes preparations to assign the movie. Therapists should watch the movie before assigning it to a client, and be prepared to offer the client a therapeutic rationale for viewing the film (Berg-Cross et al., 1990). Lastly, the therapist must process (debrief) the film with the client soon after it has been viewed. Dermer et al. (2000) emphasize that the session following the film viewing is crucial for exploring what the client thought about the message, the characters, the dilemmas, and the resolutions portrayed in the film.
Several authors share the conclusion that cinematherapy is best utilized as an adjunct to therapy (Berg-Cross et al., 1990; Dermer et al., 2002). As therapeutic tools, popular films provide an entertaining and creative way to both engage and challenge clients. Films can be used to educate, reframe, create metaphors, and to explore alternative solutions (Dermer et al., 2002).

What surfaces repeatedly in the cinematherapy literature are broad and unsupported claims for its therapeutic efficacy. Perhaps most surprising is the dearth of research that has been conducted on client experiences with the use of popular film as a part of their treatment. As previously noted, the lack of adequate research and client input has also been an issue in the bibliotherapy literature. Being that bibliotherapy and cinematherapy are the forerunners of cinemaeducation, the pedagogic use of film has unfortunately inherited such shortcomings as being based on insufficient research, overgeneralizations by academicians, and little emphasis having been given to student accounts of the impact of popular film use on their learning.

**Cinemaeducation**

In much the same manner that cinematherapy developed as an extension of bibliotherapy, use of popular film for educational purposes in the classroom surfaced as an outgrowth of cinematherapy interventions. Alexander (1995) actually coined the term *cinemaeducation* to refer to the practice of using film to teach multicultural sensitivity to medical students (Toman & Rak, 2000). Despite the coinage of this term, it should be noted that there is no universal agreement in the literature to consistently identify the pedagogic use of popular film. This teaching technique is also commonly referred to in the literature as “visual literacy” (Miller, 1994, p. 58), “visual case study” (Johnson &
Iacobucci, 1995, p. 177), and “teaching-with-cinema” (Toman & Rak, 2000, p.105).

Regardless of the exact term used, these techniques describe a similar process of using popular film in an educational context to promote student learning. In the remainder of this paper, the term “cinemaeducation” will be used to describe the pedagogic use of popular film in the classroom setting.

The Power of Sensory Images

As an outgrowth of cinematherapy, it is not surprising that the pedagogic advantages cited in the literature for utilizing cinemaeducation are strikingly similar to the therapeutic advantages posited for film use in cinematherapy. Using film as a teaching tool can “bring the personable and intimate study of human issues directly into the classroom, providing dialogue in the context of the film characters’ life circumstances,” (Toman & Rak, 2000, p. 105). According to Pinterits et al. (2000), with the added advantage of action and sound, popular film can envelop and captivate participants as can no other medium. Films can be also be used to present complex information to students in an engaging manner and can provide an entertaining and unique supplement to many classroom activities (Higgins & Dermer, 2001). Popular films may also be powerful educational tools because they represent diverse populations (including underrepresented populations), allow for multiple viewing, and provide an opportunity for students to have exposure to a variety of complex situations from the relatively safe environment of the classroom (Higgins et al., 2001).

Film Implementation

In much the same manner that bibliotherapy and cinematherapy should be implemented with careful thought having been given to their use (Sharp et al., 2002;
Dermer, 2002), introducing popular films for pedagogical purposes should also receive careful consideration (Bluestone, 2000; Chambliss & Magakis, 1996; Miller, 1994). However, it is not uncommon in the literature for the pedagogic use of film to be addressed without any theoretical or structural basis for its implementation. Additionally, there exists no universally accepted method for the pedagogic delivery of film in the literature. Two different film delivery approaches, the *stage* approach suggested by Pinterits & Atkinson (1998) and the *advanced organizer* approach posited by Tyler and Reynolds (1998), will now be explored in greater detail. These approaches are selected for discussion because they are cited by multiple authors in the literature, and they offer two distinctly different approaches for the delivery of film in the classroom.

**Stage Approach**

Pinterits & Atkinson (1998) suggest four key stages for the use of cinema education in the counselor education classroom: preparation, introduction, viewing, and discussion. These stages offer a structured process comparable to the processes of assessment, implementation, and debriefing cited in the cinematherapy literature (Dermer et al., 2000), and identification, catharsis, and insight cited in the bibliotherapy literature (Morawski, 1997).

**Preparation.**

After a particular video or digital videodisc (DVD) is selected, preparation involves the educator previewing the film with several purposes in mind (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998). Initially, facilitators should become highly familiar with the film’s content and examine their own reactions (Ponterotto and Pedersen, 1993). In addition, stimulus questions should be prepared, and selection of an appropriate time and place for
the film forum within the course should be made. The often lengthy running time of feature films has been cited as a deterrent to the use of popular films in the classroom (Anderson, 1992), and a pressing question in the literature is whether clips of film might be used in lieu of showing an entire film (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2001). These are considerations that the educator will need to make during the preparation stage.

Introduction.

A brief introduction prior to viewing the film can help focus students’ attention on important aspects within the film. However, the introduction must be done in a manner that it doesn’t detract from the drama or stifle students’ spontaneous reactions (Summerfield, 1993). Students should also receive an explanation as to how the film’s content relates to the purpose and content of the course (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998).

Viewing.

Viewing films in a group setting followed by discussion is likely to be a novel experience for many graduate students (Pinterits & Atkinson., 1998). In this context, the viewer becomes part of a communal response; diversity and differences of perspective in the classroom can lead to a stimulating and complex viewing process from which students gain access to a variety of viewpoints. With video and DVD, educators also have the luxury of being able to stop or repeat scenes in a film, thereby imparting new insights and promoting more sophisticated interpretations of highlighted issues (Summerfield, 1993).

Discussion.

The final step in the process involves film discussion, and should immediately follow the film presentation in order to optimize learning associated with emotional
arousal (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998). Personal reactions should be given full attention before launching into a theoretical debate of the issues raised in the film (Summerfield, 1993). It is advisable to have a designated facilitator (the instructor and students can act as facilitators and cofacilitators) to lead discussion, particularly following an emotionally intense or controversial viewing; it is also helpful to have some questions prepared to encourage discussion (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998). The discussion phase requires that the facilitators create an environment in which people feel safe to share and reframe the emotions elicited by the film. Through the discussion, facilitators also assist students in making connections between what they have seen and experienced during the viewing, and what they are learning in classes and experiencing in fieldwork and their personal lives.

In summary, the stages of preparation, introduction, viewing, and discussion proposed in Pinterits & Atkinson’s (1998) stage approach, offers a commonly cited and structured procedure for organizing the delivery of popular film in the classroom. In contrast, Tyler and Reynold’s advanced organizer approach (1998) will now be explored.

*Advanced Organizer Approach*

In order to present the advanced organizer with greater clarity, Tyler and Reynolds (1998) connect the approach with a theoretical foundation, Epstein’s cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST) (1994). This theory proposes two parallel, interacting pathways through which people process information. One pathway, referred to as the experiential system, is viewed as holistic, affective based, and concerned with connecting stimuli: a “system that encodes information by using exemplars and narrative,” (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998, p. 9). This system is seen as both the primary as well as the more
primitive system, and change within this system is slow and occurs through repetitive and intense experiences. The other pathway by which people process information, according to Epstein, is the rational system. This is conceived as a more analytic, logical, and “highly differentiated system that encodes information in a more abstract manner by using symbols, words, and numbers,” (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998, p. 9). According to CEST, it is the experiential system that is likely to be the first pathway accessed when decisions are to be made and behavior implemented (Epstein, 1994).

The CEST model is of interest to the discussion in that Tyler and Mathews (1995) have tied Epstein’s model to film pedagogy. These authors propose that classroom activities which focus on experiential learning may have a stronger impact on student attitudes and behaviors than rationally-based approaches. Furthermore, these authors contend that popular films may be accessed as valuable experiential learning tools, particularly if the instructor shifts the emphasis from “the viewing of material to that of experiencing material; a move from a cognitive to a more affective experience,” (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998, p.9).

Tyler & Reynolds (1998) recommend using film as an advanced organizer, and define this as “a bridge between what learners already know and what they need to know before they can learn the task at hand,” (p.11). In using film as an advanced organizer, a feature film or film clip is utilized toward the onset of a course to provide students with a visual representation of the course material in a manner that can be easily remembered. Students will be asked throughout the remainder of the course to connect new material with the film or clip that was previously introduced.
The advanced organizer approach differs from the stage approach discussed earlier in that with the advanced organizer, film is delivered without the level of introduction and discussion that occurs in the stage approach. Tyler & Mathews (1995) suggest that students will gain the most from popular film use if they are not presented with a list of specific objectives they are to watch for, or questions they will be expected to answer. Rather, students should be afforded the opportunity to view a film without excessive prompting or leading by the instructor, thereby allowing the narrative of the film to be processed experientially. This is more likely to create an affective experience that may have a greater impact on student attitudes and intuitive responses (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998).

It should be emphasized that both the stage approach (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998), and the advanced organizer approach (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998) are based largely on anecdotal accounts and the authors fail to offer any systematic research into the impact of their film approaches on student learning. However, these approaches are generally accepted methods of film delivery in the literature and when compared with each other, offer two uniquely different approaches for pedagogic film implementation.

Cinemaeducation in the Counselor Education Classroom

Every article written in the counselor education literature on the topic of popular film use was developed by instructors who implemented film in teaching their own courses (Davis; 2000; Gladstein et al., 1883; Higgins et al., 2001; Hudock et al., 2001; Koch et al., 2000; Pinterits et al., 1998; Higgins et al., 2001; Gladstein et al., 1983; Toman et al., 2000; Tyler et al., 1998). As a result, these authors are suggesting first-hand recommendations for the creative use of popular film to promote student learning.
In looking more closely at the paucity of articles submitted on this topic in counselor education, it is evident that the following points are typically addressed in those few articles which have been submitted: how using popular film is significant in the learning process; how particular skills or theoretical information are connected with film use; how topical films might be selected; how implementing a specific film intervention with students might be carried out; and the pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of using popular film.

*Lack of Student Input*

What is clearly absent from these authors’ submissions, as in the literature of closely related disciplines, is little to no input from students themselves on how effective or ineffective they found popular film use to be in their learning. The majority of counselor education articles provide anecdotal accounts from professors as to how they perceive the film experience to unfold for their students. Examples include: “The video forum provides a rich learning environment that helps counselor trainees to respect and appreciate diversity,” (Pinterits et al., 1998, p. 31); “…learning was enhanced by the (film) experience … students were able to build on each other’s ideas, and they noticed behavior that had not been noted by authors,” (Koch et al., 2000, p. 206); “discussing the clips in class helped broaden students’ views of the family and reinforced the idea of looking at patterns and interactions rather than just individual behaviors,” (Higgins et al., 2001, p. 191). Again, such conclusions tend to be generalized in nature, and are often made without making any connection to students’ accounts.

Only two of the counselor education articles on popular film use indicated that a student evaluation was an integral component of the conducted course/s (Toman et al.,
Koch and Dollarhide analyzed the formal course evaluations in which popular films were used and reported that “students’ comments were generally positive,” (p.206), adding that comments indicated that students appreciated a different approach to teaching. Toman and Rak (2000) used a questionnaire to elicit feedback on the use of film from their students across four different courses (diagnosis, counseling theory, counseling interventions, and ethics). The authors reported positive feedback from students who appreciated the opportunity to learn through the use of film. It should be noted that the developed questionnaire included five Likert-type questions, all of which were based specifically around gaining input from students regarding the use of feature films in the classroom. Unfortunately, this methodology has the potential of being easily transparent, and the very creation of a quantitative questionnaire based solely around film usage possibly contaminates more naturalistic student responses.

In summary, there is a dearth of research in the social science literature that examines the lived experiences of students who are exposed to popular film in their courses. While the literature is full of assumptions, anecdotal accounts, and recommendations for implementing popular film into pedagogy, much of it lacks a research foundation and no known research has looked at students’ experiences in building a theory for how popular film use might affect their learning. This research is a step toward building such a theory within the discipline of counselor education.

Statement of the Problem

There is a paucity of systematically conducted research that addresses the influence of popular film on student learning (Bluestone, 2000). A vast portion of the existing literature on this topic is written from the perspective of educators who describe
anecdotal accounts of having used films with their students. While such accounts may be useful to an extent, a seemingly more important question involves how film actually affects student learning. To date, little research has focused on students’ responses following their engagement with cinemaeducation in the classroom, and this is an area where systematic research is greatly needed.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to conduct an exploratory investigation into the unaddressed and qualitative experiences of students exposed to cinemaeducation in their counselor education courses. This systematic investigation is designed as an alternative to many of the anecdotal accounts found in the literature by instructors using cinemaeducation.

Specifically, this study will explore how counselor education students learn from popular film by placing emphasis on what students report as being significant in their learning processes. The outcome of this proposed study will be the development of a theory describing the connection between popular film use and student learning. While several theories and perspectives have been posited in regard to popular film use and learning, none have been grounded in students’ reports of direct involvement with film. Consequently, the main research question being explored in this study is:

“How do Master’s level counselor education students experience and perceive their exposure to popular film in the classroom as a didactic process?”
Significance

The research approach for this study will be qualitative, following a grounded theory that will progressively develop from interviews and interactions with students exposed to popular film in their courses. In particular, employing a constructivist grounded theory is warranted as this approach assumes that people create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectical processes of conferring meaning and acting within them (Charmaz, 2000). As such, a constructivist grounded theory fosters the development of qualitative traditions through the study of experience from the standpoint of those who live it (Charmaz, 2000). Adopting a constructivist grounded theory, therefore, will allow the researcher to focus on the meaning that students are ascribing to their in-class experiences with popular film, a clear aim of this investigation. It is worth noting that a qualitative research approach has yet to be conducted in the area of popular film use and student learning.

In implementing a constructivist grounded theory methodology, the theory which emerges will be entirely based in student experiences and perspectives. The findings will hopefully add valuable information to the literature regarding the use of popular film in counselor education, and the theory generated from this study will have implications for counselor training and for building on pedagogy within the field of counselor education.

Limitations

As mentioned, this study will be based on a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000). The following inherent weaknesses of grounded theory and constructivist grounded theory have been cited (Richardson, 1994): the possibility that authors choose their evidence selectively, clean up subjects’ statements, unconsciously
adopt value-laden metaphors, assume omniscience, and bore their readers. Conrad (1990) suggests the manner in which data are fractured in grounded theory research might limit understanding because grounded theorists aim for analysis rather than the portrayal of subjects’ experiences in its fullness. The researcher will bear such criticisms in mind while moving forward with the belief that a focus on meaning while using constructivist grounded theory furthers, rather than limits, interpretive understanding.

It is argued by radical empiricists that this approach is contaminated by the manner in which grounded theorists shape data collection and redirect their analyses as new issues emerge. No effort is made to deny the fact that grounded theory methods do not detail data collection techniques; however, they systematically move each step of the analytic process toward the development, refinement, and interrelation of concepts. In light of potential limitations and criticisms of adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach, the researcher will make no claims of constructing a reality that is objective, true, and external. Rather, an image of a reality will be constructed; a reality based on the researcher’s experience in combination with the research participants’ portrayal of theirs (Charmaz, 2000). Therefore, knowledge gained from the study may not be generalizable and will remain bound in the research context.

Research participants will be Master’s level counseling students attending courses at two Midwestern universities in the Fall of 2004, and Winter and Spring of 2005. Primary research emphasis will be placed on exploring and understanding the meaning participants ascribe to their learning through interaction with popular film in the classroom. Qualitative strategies are needed for this research in order to address
questions that are not answerable through the employment of traditional research methods (Morrow & Smith, 2000).
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature is organized into four major sections: learning and instruction through popular film; popular film use in counselor education and supervision; psychotherapy depictions and depictions of mental illness in popular film; and cinematherapy and self-help using popular film. These sections (and their subsequent subsections) are organized in such a manner as to convey the primary areas in which the connections between helping relationships, therapeutic interventions, mental health, and education have been explored in the literature examining popular film use.

Learning and Instruction with Popular Film

Learning Perspectives

This initial section examines what has been posited regarding how popular film use is directly related to how people learn. Through this examination it will become evident how little is actually known in regard to the connection between popular film use and learning. The major perspectives cited in the literature which connect learning processes with film use will now receive brief address.

Wetzel, Radtke, and Stern (1994) insist that before educators implement film into their classes, they bear in mind that the capabilities of film are only potential capabilities; using film offers an opportunity rather than a guarantee to benefit learning. While the authors suggest that films can be a valuable benefit to student learning, they caution educators to possible negative ramifications of classroom film use. Examples include the
possibility of film being less effective than actual hands-on experience, and being
detrimental when the pace of a film exceeds what learners can tolerate.

Miller (1999) contends that if educators use films in their courses they have a
responsibility to follow certain “common-sense procedures for reinforcing what students see,” (p. 59). She refers to this as developing student skills in “visual literacy,” (p. 58), and suggests that the effectiveness of classroom film use is enhanced by following a series of systematic steps. These steps include careful selection of a film by the instructor; preparing students for the film so that its relationships to the instructional objectives are clear; and structuring classroom lessons in such a manner that students are encouraged to integrate the film experience into their other knowledge, feelings, or information. The ultimate objective of teaching students to be visually literate, according to Miller, is to help them to be more analytical, more actively engaged, and more critically evaluative of the images they experience.

*Active learning and critical thinking.*

Gregg, Hosley, Weng, and Montemayor (1995) suggest that analyzing film may actually enhance learning opportunities for students through engagement with complex dramatic vignettes. According to Bluestone (2000), films may stimulate students’ active mental engagement with concepts, thereby promoting increased involvement with course material. Chambliss and Magakis (1996) suggest that using films in teaching psychopathology can enhance critical thinking skills, pushing students to grapple with film characters who don’t fit into clear diagnostic categories. Through such film-based exercises, the authors contend, students receive preparation for the unclear diagnostic situations they will eventually confront professionally. Chaffee (1994) suggests that the
first step in critical thinking is thinking actively, which may foster higher-level cognitive
tools so that students can learn to apply and evaluate course concepts more thoroughly.
Bluestone (2000) contends that critical thinking involves the ability to consider issues
from a variety of viewpoints as well as the ability to evaluate the evidence for conflicting
arguments. The conflict and drama in film can encourage students to go beyond simply
identifying conceptual material to analyzing more critically the multiple perspectives
which may be at play. Feature films can therefore be used to build on lecture material
and readings, and can provide engaging opportunities for increasing comprehension, for
refining critical thought, and for examining new perspectives (Anderson, 1992).

In support of her contention that the use of popular film can advance critical
thinking, Bluestone (2000) reports results from an informal and anonymous student
evaluation on the use of popular films conducted in three undergraduate psychology
sections she taught in the Spring of 1998. The author reports that 94% of the students
(total number of students is not given) responded “favorably” or “very favorably” to the
use of films; 5% were “neutral,” and none of the students reported unfavorable responses.
In addition, approximately 73% of students surveyed indicated that they felt that the films
made them think more realistically about the issues discussed in class. The author admits
that such anecdotal data “does not directly address the issue of whether critical thinking
was enhanced or whether connected learning was facilitated,” (p. 145). In spite of this,
Bluestone suggests that student responses indicate that utilizing popular film provided
unique learning opportunities within the classroom, and posits that the “more realistic,
intimate quality of films further enhances students’ ability to understand and apply
concepts,” (p.146).
Cognitive learning theory.

Feature films are not only extensively popular, the use of this medium as a proficient teaching tool is also strongly supported by current cognitive learning theory (Bailey & Ledford, 1994). This theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning as well as interactions with other people, interactions which can be direct or vicarious (Bandura, 1986). According to Bailey & Ledford (1994), popular films have instructional value for two significant reasons: the visual format of film delivers a sensory impact for the viewer, and film provides a form of vicarious interaction with other people and circumstances.

In addition, Hergenhahn & Olson (1993) submit that an environment rich in sensory stimulation may enhance the learning process. Neuroscientists have encouraged educators to design instruction which communicates to both the right (visually-oriented) hemisphere, and the left (language-oriented) hemisphere of the brain. Cross-communication via the corpus callosum, to both cerebral hemispheres is most likely to facilitate learning (Bailey et al., 1994), and the use of popular film for educational purposes may serve to enrich the sensory environment in which students are engaged.

Unfortunately, these authors offer no supportive research for the intriguing claims they make regarding learning and film use; consequently, the connections between cognitive learning theory, bi-hemispheric brain stimulation, and the instructional use of popular film use are unsubstantiated and largely speculative.

Perceptual, conceptual, and executive skills.

Several authors address the teaching of family systems concepts by connecting the use of feature films with a skills training paradigm (Hudock & Warden, 2001;
Higgins & Dermer, 2001). According to these authors, counselors who work with a couple or a family must have the requisite skills to work with an individual, but obviously must also possess skills to work with more than one person at a time. Cleghorn and Levin (1973) suggest three types of skills necessary for working with couples and families: perceptual, conceptual, and executive. Perceptual skills include the ability to gather information, observe the interrelationships of people in system, and collect information about the connections among multiple systems (Higgins & Dermer, 2001). Conceptual skills include the ability to bring together observations in a coherent manner and to understand them within the context of the entire system. Lastly, executive skills describe the ability to synthesize the content (what one observes), with comprehension (how one understands what one observes) into a way of influencing clients (Higgins, et al., 2001).

The process of gaining proficiency in these skill areas (perceptual, conceptual, and executive) with an actual case or case study can be both complex and confusing to a beginning-level counselor trainee (Hudock et al., 2001). These skills are also likely to appear ambiguous without concrete classroom techniques designed at elucidating them.

According to Higgins et al. (2001), popular films have some distinct advantages over traditional methods (reading, lecturing, role-playing) in reinforcing perceptual, conceptual, and executive skills. Films serve as live-action vignettes, and do not reflect “a neat and straightforward account of conflict or family dynamics as a “canned” case study or role-play might offer,” (Hudock et al., 2001, p. 117). Moreover, movie clips give students information about clients which the students can use as foundational material for writing treatment plans, formulating hypotheses, conceptualizing cases, and
observing the interaction among characters (Gladding, 1994). Perhaps most importantly, according to Higgins et al. (2001), is that carefully chosen film clips may be a significant pedagogic tool when used in developing students’ observational, conceptual, and executive skills, and in helping them to make a shift from linear to circular systems thinking (Higgins et al., 2001).

While these authors discuss a variety of classroom film exercises designed to promote systemic conceptualization, they offer no research into whether developing students’ observational, conceptual, and executive skills actually promotes increased ability to think in circular systems terms. The authors also fail to offer any student feedback as to how following this film approach affected their learning; consequently, outside of authors’ accounts, the effect of this approach on student learning is unknown.

*Instruction with Popular Film*

The discipline of Psychology has produced a significant amount of literature on using popular film for instruction and learning. This section will be organized into sections that most appropriately address how the psychology literature discusses pedagogic applications with popular film; in highlighting film use within specific course areas and for emphasizing particular psychological concepts.

*Social, child, and adolescent development.*

Several authors address using popular films for teaching in the areas of Social, and Child and Adolescent development (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos Ewoldsen, 2001; Boyatzis, 1994; Kirsh, 1998; Desforges, 1994). Boyatzis (1994) discusses using film analysis in teaching a Middle Childhood development course. The author reports having students select a popular film from a list of instructor-approved choices; in order to not
use an excessive amount of class time for the viewing of films, students are required to view their selected films at home. After the films are viewed, students write an essay analyzing some aspect of the film characters’ social development. Students are instructed to “use the psychological theory and research from the course as a framework in which to understand the social development of the children in the movie,” (p. 99). To facilitate their analysis, students are given a number of specific questions on a handout which they are asked to address in a 2-4 page paper they are required to submit.

Regarding the selection of films from which students may choose, Boyatzis (1994) contends that “European filmmakers use a style of realism that is usually lacking in American movies,” (p.100) and that European filmmakers tell stories from the perspective of children themselves, thereby providing an authenticity usually missing from American films. As a result, the list of films generated by Boyatzis from which students may choose their projects is comprised largely of European films.

In reporting how students evaluated the use of film in the Middle Childhood course in 1992, the author states that of 26 students in the class, 23 (88%) gave the film assignment the highest rating and the remaining 3 students gave it the next highest rating (for a mean rating of 3.88 of a possible 4). Students also submitted positive written accounts of the assignment, leading Boyatzis to conclude that “based on the richness of student connections between their film and course topics, I believe the assignment promoted students’ critical thinking,” (p. 100).

Kirsh (1998) discusses having used animated films to teach undergraduate psychology students about childhood development. The author reports that the film assignment provided students with the challenging task of applying multiple
developmental concepts in a medium that they likely viewed without a critical eye.

Therefore, the aim of the animated film assignment was to enrich students’ understanding of theory and research relevant to children’s social and personality development. Students were asked to write a term paper in which they addressed 10 aspects of childhood social and personality development depicted in an animated film; these aspects included attachment patterns and child outcomes, discipline techniques and child outcomes, Erikson’s psychosocial stages, parenting styles and child outcomes, friendship development, the value of peer support, the effect of parental loss on a child, individuation during adolescence, coping techniques, and moral development. For each aspect of development identified, students provided at least two examples from the animated film that clearly explained how the examples depicted that aspect of development.


In evaluating the film assignment, Kirsh obtained information from 16 students who anonymously responded to a five-item questionnaire at the conclusion of the course. The first three questions used a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). Students gave a mean rating of 3.38 ($SD = .50$) to the question of how well the assignment improved their ability to understand course material. In rating the assignment’s usefulness for critical thinking, students gave a mean rating of 3.69 ($SD =
Students also rated the assignment in terms of its ability to challenge their thinking and the assignment’s enjoyability; 69% of the students rated the assignment as “fun and challenging,” 6% rated it as “fun but not challenging,” 25% rated it as “challenging but not fun,” and no one rated the assignment as “not fun and not challenging.” In addition, 94% (n = 15) of students recommended the film assignment for future classes.

Students were also given an opportunity to give written comments regarding the assignment, and Kirsh reports that the comments were favorable and reflect that “the positive attitudes that students reported about the assignment were accompanied by quality work,” (p. 50). The author contends that the experience of applying developmental concepts to a medium typically viewed without critical examination may challenge students to apply theoretical concepts beyond the classroom, hence giving students a deeper understanding of course material.

Desforges (1994) discusses using the film *The Breakfast Club* (Tanen, Hughes, & Hughes, 1985) in teaching a course in adolescent psychology. The author explains that three developmental theories were presented in the course; Kohlberg’s moral reasoning, Erikson’s psychosocial development, and Marcia’s identity statuses. After exploring how these theories have application to adolescent development, Desforges reports having introduced the film to “further enhance understanding of these theories,” (p. 245). Following the film’s viewing, students were placed into small discussion groups and assigned the task of applying theoretical concepts to characters in the film. While offering no formal assessment of how students learned through this exercise, Desforges reports that at the end of the course students rated the film exercise as having been “very enjoyable and important in their understanding of the concepts involved in the theories.
mentioned,” (p.245). Interestingly, the author makes no mention of the numerous weaknesses of such an anecdotal account.

Roskos-Ewoldsen and Roskos-Ewoldsen (2001) introduce the idea of using short video clips from feature films to highlight theoretical concepts in teaching a social psychology course. The authors describe a course they taught in which each class period began by showing a short video clip (2-6 minutes) taken from a popular film. Following the showing, students were asked questions about the clip and this provided a transition into discussing the critical concepts that were part of the day’s lecture material. At the end of the semester, the authors asked students to evaluate the course in which a total of 16 video clips were used. A total of 45 students provided general ratings on the use of video clips, and this evaluation was a part of the overall course evaluation.

Students used a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (disagree) to 3 (agree) to make their ratings, and made a total of 10 general judgments of the video clips. Several questions assessed the educational benefits of the video clips: The video clips enhanced my learning, the clips were distracting, the clips were confusing, the clips made the concepts discussed in class seem more “real world,” and the video clips helped me understand abstract concepts (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2001). Three additional questions assessed the students’ level of enjoyment: The video clips were enjoyable, the clips were boring, the clips were a nice change of pace from the lecture.

According to Roskos-Ewoldsen and Roskos-Ewoldsen (2001), students rated the video clips as enhancing their learning (M = 2.49, SD = 0.73), as helping them understand abstract concepts (M = 2.02, SD = 1.29), and as helping them apply the concepts to their everyday lives (M = 2.14, SD = 1.26). Student ratings also indicated
that the clips were not judged to be confusing (M = -2.53, SD = 0.99) or distracting (M = -2.42, SD = 1.23). In addition, students judged the video clips as enjoyable (M = 2.82, SD = 0.49) and not boring (M = -2.64, SD = 0.77). At a more general level, students judged the video clips as making the class more enjoyable (M = 2.84, SD = 0.56).

The authors contend that the clips “may have made the class more enjoyable partly because students saw the video clips as a nice change of pace from the standard lecture format (M = 2.66, SD = 1.01),” (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2001, p. 214). The authors conclude that their study demonstrates that their students believed that using short video clips was an effective teaching tool, and that the clips helped them to more thoroughly understand the lecture and specific concepts covered in course lectures.

*Psychopathology.*

Chambliss and Magakis (1996) discuss the possibility of incorporating popular film in teaching an abnormal psychology course, and submit that film can help to enliven the class and engage students in the diagnostic process. These authors write from an entirely anecdotal perspective, and the majority of their article is devoted to discussing particular films they and their colleagues have used with “pedagogic success”; unfortunately, the authors fail to explain just how their selected films proved to be successful. The authors further posit that using popular film in teaching psychopathology “requires more involvement on the part of instructors, who need to point out inaccuracies, structure discussion, and actively integrate material with course syllabi and readings,” (Chambliss & Magakis, 1996, p. 2). The authors conclude that ambiguities presented in popular film can offer certain pedagogic advantages; as with real-life diagnostic situations, the characters portrayed in film do not conform perfectly to DSM criteria.
Having students debate a diagnosis that is most accurate, Chambliss & Magakis (1996) submit, is an important exercise in critical thinking and in developing clinical judgment.

*Cognitive psychology.*

Conner (1996) discusses the implementation of popular film into a cognitive psychology course. The author describes introducing thirty-nine undergraduate students to a feature film activity after one half of the semester had been completed. This allowed students appropriate time to begin accumulating knowledge about cognition and cognitive terminology before building on and using that knowledge. Working in pairs, students were then instructed to select a peer-reviewed journal article and a related feature film that represented a relevant topic in cognitive psychology. Students were required to write three-to five-page papers for submission, and had the option of giving class presentations in which they reported theoretical and/or empirical connections among the cognitive topic, journal article, and film.

Students were given an opportunity at the end of the semester to make comments on their experiences in the course on a standard evaluation form. Specifically, the form asked for comments regarding “strengths of the course” as well as “positive aspects about the entire class experience,” (Conner, 1996, p. 34). The author reports that 85% of the students (33 of 39) wrote favorable comments about the film activity, with no negative comments being written under the “weaknesses of the course” and “aspects of the course that could be changed to benefit students” sections (Conner, 1996, p. 34).

The author concludes that both he and his students found the film activity a useful tool in helping to define the parameters of cognition and making connections among these parameters and elements outside of the academic setting.
Anderson (1992) reports regularly using popular films in teaching an undergraduate psychology and law course. In so doing, students are prepared for two types of discussion. For the first, students apply to the film what they have learned in class and through readings. They are required to identify legal doctrines and psychological research relevant to the events in the film and must critique the accuracy of the film’s representation of this material. The second discussion is directed at critical thinking, emphasizing psycholegal issues rather than factual applications. Students are required to examine the psycholegal issues evoked by the film and critique the film’s position on those issues. Each film (and the author recommends utilizing no more than 3 films in a given semester) is followed by a 1-hour discussion of its psycholegal content and another 1-hour discussion of the psycholegal issues it raises (Anderson, 1992).

The author reports having found three films particularly valuable for exercising students’ application and critical thinking skills (Anderson, 1992). These films include *Nuts* (1987), which portrays the relationship between a woman charged with manslaughter and her attorney who suspects she may be too mentally ill to stand trial. *The Onion Field* (1979), which concerns the aftermath of a police officer’s killing for his partner and accused killers. Lastly, *Taxi Driver* (1976), which portrays the mental deterioration of a would-be political assassin who turns vigilante (Anderson, 1992).

A clear strength of Anderson’s article is the candid manner in which she discusses the disadvantages of using film in the classroom. These include: the logistics of film rental and scheduling; the amount of class time to view the film; the time students need to digest a film before discussing it; the possibility of powerful film scenes having a
negative impact on students; and students getting so caught up in the immediacy of the film that they accept its worldview without question (Anderson, 1992). A weakness of this article is the highly subjective and anecdotal perspective in which it is written. While the author claims that students respond positively to this film approach, she offers only generalized comments from students as to what constitutes a “positive response,” (Anderson, 1992). The author also fails to offer any type of systematic evaluation for implementing film into her psychology and law course.

In spite of such shortcomings, the author submits that films seem to be a valuable teaching tool that can build on lecture material and readings through structured in-class discussions. They can “provide opportunities for increasing comprehension, for refining critical thought, and for examining new perspectives,” (Anderson, 1992, p. 157).

Countertransference.

Swift & Wonderlich (1993) contend that countertransference is a vital clinical concept that is difficult to teach well. The authors suggest utilizing the film House of Games (1987) to teach about countertransference, and to supplement the more traditional methods of instruction such as seminar readings and supervision. The authors suggest that a number of important countertransference issues arise throughout House of Games, and the following predispositions to countertransference are explicitly discussed within the context of the film: absence of a social support system, limited professional collaboration, and working with a difficult patient population.

The authors submit that the purpose in writing their article was two-fold: 1) to illustrate how cinema can be used to teach about countertransference-related issues, and 2) to provide a teacher’s manual for the House of Games, in which countertransference
themes are especially abundant (Swift & Wonderlich, 1993). The authors emphasize that film should not be used as a replacement for supervision or didactics in the teaching of countertransference; rather, that it be employed as a supplementary tool. They add that utilizing a film “that portrays countertransference from a number of crucial perspectives,” (Swift & Wonderlich, 1993, p. 56) can lead to a rich understanding of the concept of countertransference for both neophyte and experienced clinicians.

While the authors offer a thorough and compelling case for utilizing the film *House of Games* for instructional purposes, at no point in their article do they offer suggestions for evaluating the effectiveness of this film approach as a teaching tool. The authors also readily admit the subjective nature of their article, and are quick to indicate that their suggestions for using the *House of Games* be implemented only after thorough review of the film by an instructor (Swift & Wonderlich, 1993).

*Instruction in Other Related Disciplines*

*Healthcare education.*


Alexander (2000) submits that family systems education is a significant component in the training of family physicians, family therapists, and other healthcare professionals whose purview includes work with families. The author adds that using clips of popular film can provide powerful and entertaining ways to expose learners to
such family therapy concepts as the family life cycle, differentiation, coalition, and homeostasis. In addition, the author suggests that film clips may also serve to broaden awareness of students to such family related issues as ethnicity, class, domestic violence, incest, drug and alcohol addiction, and sibling relationships (Alexander, 2000).

The author recommends using film clips in two separate pedagogic formats: 1) to stimulate guided discussions and 2) to set the stage for role-plays. As an example of the first format, Alexander reports showing the first five minutes of *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape* (1993) to demonstrate to medical students how to construct a family genogram. An example of the second format, the author describes using a clip from *Steel Magnolias* (1989) in which a mother and her adult daughter are caught in a power struggle concerning the daughter’s health. The scene is used to “set the stage” for a role-play around a physician initiating and leading a family medical conference (Alexander, 2000).

Alexander concludes that film clips are invaluable tools for teaching family systems to physician learners. The author adds that while he consistently receives enthusiastic verbal feedback from learners about their enjoyment and long-term recall of clips used to teach family systems concepts, he has not conducted research to show that a cinema-based approach develops greater competence than other means of teaching family systems concepts (Alexander, 2000).

Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez (1993) conducted a controlled study of 114 first year students at Texas A&M University Health Sciences Center College of Medicine in 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92. Participants included: (1) 48 (20 women and 28 men) who participated in an elective course on social issues in medicine, which consisted of weekly one-hour discussions of short films; (2) 37 (18 women and 19 men) who participated in
the elective social issues course over two academic quarters: and (3) a control group of 29 (8 women and 21 men) who did not take the course and so had no exposure to the film discussions. The students in these three groups were similar in age and background (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993).

The students’ moral-reasoning skills were prestested and posttested on the Defining Issues Test (DIT), an instrument widely used for assessing moral-reasoning and one that has been used in hundreds of studies (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993). The DIT scores of the three groups of students were compared by using multivariate analysis of variance, with a significance set at $p < .05$. Statistical analyses showed that there were statistically significant increases in the moral reasoning scores of both the course registrants with one-quarter exposure to the film discussions ($p < .002$) and those with two quarter exposure ($p < .008$) compared with the scores of the students who did not take the course and had no exposure ($p < .109$) (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993).

The authors recommend that the results of their investigation be interpreted with caution. They point out that the noticeable differences in pretest scores no doubt reflect a self-selecting bias on the part of the course registrants. In general, the authors surmise, students whose levels of moral reasoning are higher appear more likely to elect additional courses that explore and further develop the moral-reasoning skills in which they are proficient (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993). The authors conclude that the results of their investigation suggest that educators can have a positive influence on the moral reasoning of students by paying careful attention to the structure and method of the medical education curriculum. They add that students’ moral reasoning skills are likely
enhanced through vigorous in-class discussions of carefully selected films in which students are actively engaged (Self, Baldwin, & Olivarez, 1993).

*Family therapy.*

Newby, Fischer, & Reinke (1992) offer an entirely subjective account of how family systems concepts and techniques may be taught through viewing the film *Mary Poppins* (1934). The authors cite examples from the film which exemplify complex topics and techniques such as triangulation (Bowen, 1978), the Confusion Technique (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Johnson, 1967), subsystem identification (Minuchin, 1974), paradoxical injunction (Erickson, 1967), therapy of the absurd (Whitaker, 1975), therapeutic double-bind (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956), and termination (Whitaker & Keith, 1981). The article presents an entertaining portrayal of Mary Poppins as an astute family therapist who wields her therapeutic prowess on a family with deeply engrained patterns of dysfunction.

Unfortunately the authors offer no research in support of the efficacy of *Mary Poppins* as a family therapy teaching tool, nor do they offer accounts or feedback from students who have been exposed to this pedagogic intervention.

*Small group communication.*

Johnson & Iacobucci (1995) suggest using the film *The Dream Team* in teaching about small group communication. The authors suggest that the film offers an “excellent visual case study, presenting clearly and in detail many of the most central group development processes,” (Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995, p.177). The authors identify the group concepts of cohesiveness, norms, roles, leadership, and group development, and
connect each concept with specific scenes from *The Dream Team* in which they are elucidated (Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995).

The article is written in an essay format, and consequently, reflects ideas and suggestions that are completely subjective. In spite of this, the authors report that they have had success in using this film as a pedagogic tool a number of times, and emphasize that *The Dream Team* provides excellent opportunities for students to observe the growth and changes within a small group (Johnson & Iacobucci, 1995).

*Sociology.*

Tipton & Tieman (1993) discuss using popular films to demonstrate the relevance of sociological thinking and to show how the sociological imagination helps to make sense of the one’s social world. Specifically, students are asked to complete a sociological analysis of a film from one of two theoretical approaches; either a conflict or a structural functional perspective (Tipton & Tieman, 1993). The authors provide students with a handout to guide them in writing their course papers; the handout contains questions that must be addressed and includes a list of major characters from the film.

The authors report that they have had success with two films in particular: *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988) and *Roger and Me* (1989). They add that papers submitted by students typically illustrate a sound understanding of the theoretical perspective they have applied in analyzing these films. When students do have difficulties with applying a theoretical perspective to a film, the authors work with these students individually, often recommending that they review a previously assigned reading to help them organize their work or to decide which theoretical perspective to utilize (Tipton & Tieman, 1993).
The authors submit that students consistently make positive comments regarding the film-based assignments on their course evaluations, and contend that the exercise presents a creative challenge in application, and stimulates critical thinking (Tipton & Tieman, 1993).

**Popular Film Use in Counselor Education and Supervision**

As mentioned previously, there are only a limited number of articles which currently exist in the counselor education literature that specifically address the use of popular film as a pedagogic tool. To date, only eight articles have been identified. In order to gain a more complete understanding of what has been submitted in the counselor education literature, each of these articles will now receive address.

**Increasing Counselor Empathic Experiences**

The first authors in the counselor education literature to suggest using popular film in teaching were Gladstein and Feldstein (1983). In their article, the authors address the potential of counselor educators and supervisors using popular film to increase counselor empathic experiences. They suggest that the aesthetic experience of film always involves the transmission of emotion to audience via the human technology of speech, facial expression, gestures, touch, special distances, and the nonhuman technology of scenery, sound, and lighting so that audiences may feel along with the film characters (Gladstein and Feldstein, 1983). The authors submit that students can learn the early stages of empathy in counseling from in-class film experiences, and emphasize that counselor educators and supervisors can promote such empathic experiences by showing films that elicit emotional reactions from students, and then processing these emotional reactions.
A limitation of this article is that general claims are repeatedly made by the authors from their anecdotal teaching experiences with using film. Gladstein & Feldstein also fail to adequately discuss the process of film selection and implementation, cautions of introducing films to elicit emotional responses, and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of using film to increase counselor empathic experiences.

Group Counseling

The work of Tyler and Reynolds (1998) has been previously addressed in discussing the “advanced organizer” approach. In introducing the advanced organizer in their article, the authors discuss using the film *Twelve Angry Men* (1987) during the first meeting of a group counseling class and then building on the material from the film throughout the remainder of the semester.

Tyler & Reynolds (1998) argue that using *Twelve Angry Men* as an advanced organizer is a poignant tool to teach about groups for the following specific reasons: 1) students can be challenged to identify the purpose of the group depicted in the film, which can then lead to a discussion of different types of groups; 2) students can be directed toward specific character interactions in the film and toward a discussion of the role that conflict plays within a group; 3) specific group intervention strategies may be discussed as students conceptualize how they might address working with different members of the film group as well as the film group as a whole; and 4) students can address personal insights, changes in behavior, or other growth that was noticed in the film, which may serve to integrate counseling theory into specific group practice.

The authors submit that from a cognitive perspective, an advanced organized which serves to integrate the material for a course is a sound pedagogic approach. From
an affective perspective, the authors submit that film may serve as a tool to provide a shared social experience, to promote social interaction, and to create meaningful affective experience in the classroom (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998). They conclude that *Twelve Angry Men* is merely one example of many films that might be used to teach group concepts; if a film is used as a tool to encourage discussion and exploration, the authors suggest that many different films may be used to facilitate the process (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998).

*Marriage and Family Counselor Education*

Two articles in the counselor education literature address marriage and family counseling through the use of popular film.

In the first, Higgins & Dermer (2001) discuss specific advantages for using popular film as an instructional tool in teaching marriage and family counseling concepts. In particular, they discuss using film in the classroom to help develop three types of skills they identify as being essential in working with couples and families: perceptual, conceptual, and executive skills (Higgins & Dermer, 2001). These skills received closer address earlier in discussing learning perspectives connected with film use.

The authors also discuss specific strategies that may be introduced in utilizing popular film. These include: evaluating films from different theoretical orientations; evaluating films through different characters perspectives; watching a film with no sound; analyzing student reactions (an opportunity to examine feelings that are generated from film viewing in the safe environment of the classroom); developing hypotheses and demonstrating how they were generated; and developing treatment plans for film characters (Higgins & Dermer, 2001). The authors submit that these strategies may be
implemented by marriage and family counseling instructors to enhance the perceptual, conceptual, and executive skills of their students.

Hudock & Warden (2001) also discuss the training of counselors in marriage and family counseling with the use of popular film. These authors again echo the importance of developing perceptual, conceptual, and executive-level skills in counselor trainees. As such, these authors describe similar approaches as Higgins & Dermer (2001) in developing these skills. One training intervention unique to Hudock & Warden (2001) is the movie-based assignment entitled the “integrated paper,” (p. 119). This is described as an assignment that requires students to apply a conceptual framework in the analysis of a film, by leading trainees to think at levels of synthesis, and moving from interpretation to creative application of a knowledge base of information (Hudock & Warden, 2001). As an example, students viewed the film *When a Man Loves a Woman* (1994), and then began writing their integrated papers by addressing specific questions the instructor posed regarding marriage and family concepts evident in the film. Students were required to justify their answers by basing them on material they extrapolated from the course’s textbooks.

Disappointingly, neither Hudock & Warden (2001) or Higgins & Dermer (2001) address how students respond to their film-based approaches, and neither offer a means of evaluating the techniques they recommend. These would seem to be clear limitations.

*Diversity Sensitivity Training*

The work of Pinterits and Atkinson (1998) has also been previously addressed in discussing the “stage” approach. While the film implementation stages of preparation, introduction, viewing, and discussion will not again be reviewed in this section, an
examination of these authors’ recommendations for infusing diversity training into the
counselor education curriculum via the use of popular film will be addressed.

Pinterits and Atkinson (1998) suggest that appropriate use of popular films may help to reduce prejudice and inaccurate portrayals of minority groups. The authors submit that looking at racism, cultural identity, and assimilation through film use in the classroom may encourage empathic responses in viewers and at the same time provide a visual representation of these concepts. Toward this end, the authors emphasize the importance of avoiding the selection of films that reinforce old stereotypes, create new stereotypes, or provide other insensitive portrayals of a particular minority group. The ultimate responsibility for selecting the best film to portray the experiences of a specific minority while also addressing the educational needs of a particular group of trainees ultimately rests with the individual counselor educator (Pinterits and Atkinson, 1998).

A valuable contribution of these authors is a list of diversity-sensitive videos which they include as an appendix to their article. In developing this list the authors sent a questionnaire to 11 multicultural-diversity centers on university campuses across the United States requesting that they identify popular films they deemed as appropriate for promoting diversity sensitivity; responses were received from five of them (Pinterits and Atkinson, 1998). The authors report that the combined number of films they received from these five multicultural-diversity centers numbered over 200. The list was then reviewed by students in a class on diversity issues and faculty with multicultural-diversity expertise in counseling; films that judged as inappropriate by at least one member of the group being portrayed were dropped from the list (Pinterits and Atkinson, 1998).
The authors conclude that using appropriately selected film in counselor education can provide a rich learning environment that helps counselor trainees to respect and appreciate diversity. In addition, verbal feedback from students indicates that this approach exposes them to reactions to film that differ from their own and provides a relatively safe setting in which to explore how they might respond to the views of others (Pinterits and Atkinson, 1998).

**Teaching of Counseling Theories**

Koch & Dollarhide discuss using the film *Good Will Hunting* (1997) in teaching a counseling theories course. The authors report using this film because it presents a relatively detailed and believable depiction of the counseling process, given the client’s and counselor’s cultural milieu. The film also contains some blatantly inappropriate and unethical behaviors by the counselor, which the authors felt could be explored through the lens of different theories (Koch & Dollarhide, 2000).

The authors indicate that the film was used as a semester-long teaching tool – “a continuous thread of focus woven throughout the semester,” (Koch & Dollarhide, 2000, p. 204). Each week the students used a different counseling theory to critique the counseling sessions portrayed in the movie. This allowed them to reflect on the content of the movie and generate examples of theoretical application.

Regarding evaluation, the authors suggest that there was a high level of participation and energy in class: “the movie seemed to make the use of theory more realistic and applicable, and it seemed to involve emotive and cognitive processing to a higher degree than discussions of a hypothetical or textbook case alone,” (Koch & Dollarhide, 2000, p. 209). On formal course evaluations, the authors report that student
comments were generally positive. Unfortunately, they don’t elaborate on student comments and the experiences of those students who participated in the described course remain unknown.

Using Cinema in Multiple Counselor Education Courses

Toman & Rak (2000) present the possibility of infusing popular film into teaching a variety of counselor education courses including diagnosis and treatment, counseling theories, counseling interventions, and ethics within the counseling profession. The authors indicate that they have used popular film clips in teaching all of these courses in the past; they report that students have in the past verbally indicated their both their approval and enjoyment of this approach. In the current article, Toman & Rak (2000) report the results of a 5-question Likert-type evaluation instrument they developed to properly evaluate students’ responses of popular film being used in the classroom. The authors collected one hundred and eighty two student evaluations that represent a total of nine courses in which film was used from 1994 – 1998. Items 1,2,3, and 5 queried students about their satisfaction with using films to encourage class discussion, how well films created boundaries between their own issues and client issues, their satisfaction with film depictions of typical counseling issues, and their assessment of their own class participation. On a scale that ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well), the mean responses ranged from 4.23 to 4.51. Item 4 was an open question asking students to indicate the movies that worked best for them in terms of representing client issues and which worked the least (Toman & Rak, 2000).

The authors conclude from their analysis that students’ responses to the use of film in counseling classes was positive and supports further development of this teaching
They submit that their results suggest that films can be useful in providing visual case examples for role plays, serving as catalysts for class discussions, bringing the tenets of theory to life, giving students the opportunity to rewrite ethical endings to replace unethical depictions, and bringing dialogue and context into the classroom (Toman & Rak, 2000). The authors also offer a summary of films they have implemented in their courses as a component of this article.

**Rehabilitation Counselor Education**

The final article addressed in this review of counselor education literature and popular film, comes in the area of rehabilitation counselor education. Davis (2000) discusses how feature films can make an important contribution to rehabilitation counselor education by engaging student interest, encouraging formation of personal meanings, and extending the range of student experience. The author discusses the use of specific films that may be used in discussing a variety of rehabilitation issues, and points to more recent films in which persons with disabilities have “become genuinely interesting characters, not mere clichés,” (Davis, 2000, p.174). The author also addresses how popular film may be used for ethics instruction in rehabilitation counselor education, in addition to comparing and contrasting various counseling theories.

The fact that the author submits his analysis and recommendations for film use entirely in anecdotal terms may be seen as a limitation. Moreover, Davis (2000) fails to mention the responses students have had to this film-based approach to rehabilitation counselor education.
Psychotherapy Depictions and Depictions of Mental Illness in Popular Film

As a preface to this section, it should be noted that “Hollywood is thoroughly confused about the difference between psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, psychologists, social workers, and other assorted counsellors and therapists,” (Gabbard, 2001, p. 366). Consequently, the roles of these professionals are often blurred or inaccurately portrayed within popular film. To simplify discussion, the term “psychotherapy” will be used when addressing the therapeutic interplay between clients and cinematic mental health clinicians; be they counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists.

Therapeutic Themes in Hollywood

Hollywood seems to have a considerable fascination with psychotherapy. Gabbard (2001) cites that over 400 theatrically released films have featured some portrayal of a mental health professional conducting psychotherapy. Instructors who chose films as a pedagogic tool need to keep in mind that accurate portrayals of psychotherapy are often compromised in the name of cinematic genre, and that several misleading themes are repeatedly seen in a large majority of popular films depicting psychotherapy. Gabbard (2001) defines these as the cathartic cure, love as the ultimate healer, and the ineffectual nature of psychotherapists.

The Cathartic Cure

The cathartic cure is highly dramatic, stirring, and tends to keep the audience on the edge of their seats. This dramatization has been used repetitively throughout the history of American film (Gabbard & Gabbard, 1999), and depicts patients being cured after they have explored a traumatic memory through a highly emotional process with the aid of a sympathetic therapist. Gabbard (2001) cites The Three Faces of Eve (1957) and
Ordinary People (1980) as two cinematic depictions of the cathartic cure that are highly misleading in presenting grossly oversimplified pictures of pathology and treatment. The climax of The Three Faces of Eve, for example, depicts a cure by a heroic therapist who has the main character de-repress a traumatic memory by having her kiss her dead grandmother. The heroic therapist in Ordinary People courageously struggles with his patient and encourages him to remember something he does not want to remember. The clients in both of these films are dramatically “cured” by a cathartic event through which they have been guided by their therapist. As Gabbard concludes, “such reductionistic formulas of psychopathology are much more satisfying to audiences and produce a catharsis for them as well as the patient,” (p. 367).

Love as the Ultimate Healer

The second thematic depiction of psychotherapy in film cited by Gabbard (2001) is that of love as the ultimate healer. An example of this theme is conveyed by Judd Hirsch (the therapist) in Ordinary People when he hugs Timothy Hutton (the client) and tells him that he’s his friend. According to Gabbard (2001), the underlying message of this theme is that a therapist’s technique and training are ultimately insignificant; it is his or her love that makes the therapeutic difference.

Gender of the psychotherapist.

Love as the ultimate healer is a theme much more fully developed anytime a female psychotherapist treats a male patient (Gabbard, 2001). This is evident in such films as the Prince of Tides (1991) and Mr. Jones (1993), involving predictable scenarios where an attractive female psychotherapist who lacks any type of romantic involvement in her personal life is swept off her feet by a dashing male patient. It is also common in
such depictions for the female therapist to be shown as more disturbed than the male patient, and ultimately the love of the male patient heals the female therapist and helps her transform into a “real woman,” (Gabbard, 2001).

Bischoff & Reiter (1999) researched the top-grossing films (over $5 million) between 1988 and 1997, and identified those in which a mental health professional (counselor, marriage and family therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker) was present. The purpose of his study was to determine the manner in which gender influences how mental health clinicians are presented in the movies. Major themes were analyzed from the 61 films that met the criteria for the study and film-portrayed clinicians were subsequently coded for competence (determined by ratings of skillfulness and helpfulness), sexualization, inappropriateness in their professional activity, and engagement in dual relationships with clients. As a result of this study, Bischoff and Reiter submit that female clinicians are more likely than males to be sexualized in their professional relationships, and male clinicians are more likely than females to be portrayed in the movies as incompetent.

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of the love as the ultimate healer theme is that in addition to creating and perpetuating a significantly distorted picture of mental health clinicians, the therapeutic process itself is often inaccurately portrayed to the public. In the case of *Prince of Tides* for example, the sexual relationship that develops between Dr. Lowenstein (Barbara Streisand) and Tom Wingo (Nick Nolte) is presented as a natural outgrowth of change simultaneously occurring in both of their lives. Lane (1995) contends that from an ethical and professional standpoint, Dr. Lowenstein repeatedly ruptures the therapeutic frame; these ruptures include time (anytime), money (no concrete
arrangements), place (yours, mine), extratherapeutic contacts (everywhere), analyst self-disclosures (in abundance), lack of sexual prohibitions (no avoidance of intimacies), and no specific arrangements of any kind. Levenson (1992) argues that while Dr. Lowenstein literally makes every mistake in the book, at no point in the film is it suggested that this relationship is inappropriate. In fact, according to Bischoff and Reiter (1999), it is presented as therapeutic for both patient and therapist. The theme becomes evident; love is the ultimate healer.

The Ineffectual Psychotherapist

The third thematic depiction of psychotherapy in film cited by Gabbard (2001) is that of the ineffectual nature of psychotherapists. According to Gabbard (2001), Woody Allen has been a leading voice in keeping this theme alive, and has created a host of films featuring psychotherapists that always seem to highlight that treatment really isn’t helpful. One of Woody Allen’s flippant remarks about the uselessness of psychotherapy comes in Manhattan Murder Mystery (1993), where Allen’s character pleads with his wife to not go back to her therapist, stating, “You don’t have anything that can’t be cured by a little Prozac and polo mallet.” As previously mentioned, Gabbard (2001) submits that while female clinicians are more likely to be sexualized in popular films, male clinicians are more likely to be depicted as incompetent. According to Bischoff and Reiter (1999), perhaps this perpetuates the common gender stereotype in American culture that males are not equipped to handle the psychological, emotional, and interpersonal problems of others, let alone themselves.

In the 1993 box-office hit, Groundhog Day, Phil Connors (Bill Murray) consults a male psychotherapist who is obviously nervous and uncomfortable (Gabbard, 2001); the
ineffectual therapist is unable to be of help, and Phil eventually commits suicide repeatedly day after day, always waking up alive the following morning. The film clearly presents the male therapist as unqualified, unskilled, and unhelpful.

Additional Clinician Themes

Wedding and Niemic (2003) identified eight core themes that regularly recur when mental health professionals are presented in films. The authors briefly present each theme and give specific cinematic examples, unfortunately without much elaboration or support for how the themes themselves were developed. These themes are: Learned and Authorative (Equus, Psycho, Three Faces of Eve), Arrogant and Ineffectual (The Exorcist, What About Bob?), Seductive and Unethical (Mr. Jones, Final Analysis), Cold-Hearted and Authoritarian (One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Titicut Follies); Passive and Apathetic (Patch Adams, There’s Something About Mary); Shrewd and Manipulative (Spellbound, Basic Instinct); Dangerous and Omniscient (Silence of the Lambs, Dressed to Kill); and Motivating and Well-Intentioned (The Sixth Sense, Good Will Hunting, K-Pax).

While many of these stereotypes have a humorous side to them, they are deeply imbedded cultural icons, and influence the behaviors and expectations of individuals contemplating or receiving psychotherapy (Wedding & Niemic, 2003). The authors conclude that “misrepresentations of psychotherapists, distortions of the psychotherapy process, incorrect portrayals of client populations, and frequently perpetuated myths have pervaded the movie industry,” (Wedding et al, 2003). Furthermore, they urge that psychotherapists have a responsibility to understand these myths and, in turn, need to educate the public by dispelling misconceptions of psychotherapy.
Portrayals of Mental Illness

In much the same manner in which psychotherapists have been stereotyped in popular film, depictions of mentally ill persons in the movies also fall into several stigmatizing categories. Instructors who use popular film as a pedagogic tool should be aware of these stereotypes and even explore with their students the implications of such stereotyping. Hyler, Gabbard, and Schneider (1991), identified several stereotypes into which mentally ill persons are typically depicted in film: the mental patient as rebellious free spirit, homicidal maniac, enlightened member of society, narcissistic parasite, and zoo specimen. The authors also contend that these stereotypes have an important and underestimated negative effect on the public’s perception of people with mental disorders.

Stigmatizing Stereotypes

Rebellious free spirit.

Contemporary representations of the mental patient as rebellious free spirit appear in the films *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975), *The Dream Team* (1989), and *The Couch Trip* (1989). Mental patients in such films are painted as clowns, buffoons, or harmless eccentrics who are grossly misunderstood by society-at-large (Hyler, Gabbard, & Schneider, 1991). Story lines in these films typically portray a protagonist who compels others to escape the institutionalized setting in search of amusement and adventure. A clear example rests in the character of R.P. MacMurphy, the liberated free-spirit portrayed by Jack Nicholson in *Cuckoo’s Nest*. The depicted adventure includes the hijacking of a bus, a boat, and MacMurphy giving his fellow patients instructions in deep-sea fishing. The authors state that this portrayal of mentally ill patients “suggests
that there is really nothing wrong with them that a little freedom and fresh air cannot

*Homicidal maniac.*

According to Hyler et al. (1991), depictions of mentally ill persons as violent and
dangerous are frequently evident in contemporary horror films. The *Psycho* series,
(1960, 1983, and 1986), *The Exorcist* (1973), and the *Friday the 13th, Nightmare on Elm
Street,* and *Halloween* series all convey misleading messages that mental illness is closely
aligned with the uncontrollable propensity for evil and violent actions. The more recent
film *Sling Blade* (1996) depicts a mentally handicapped man who commits a second
murder after leaving a psychiatric hospital 25 years after murdering his mother and her
lover; this perpetuates the myth that people with mental illness and mental handicaps
represent a danger to society (Wedding & Boyd, 1999).

*Enlightened member of society.*

This theme of the mentally ill person as an enlightened member of society
received considerable attention in the 1960’s. During this decade, controversial views of
mental illness were forwarded by Thomas Szasz (1961), who posited that mental illness
does not exist, and R.D. Laing (1969), who suggested that persons with deviant views
and behaviors might be more enlightened members of society due to the fact that they
resist the constricting (and even harmful) norms of society (Hyler et al., 1991).

A clear example of this stereotype is found in the French film, *King of Hearts*
(1968) which enjoyed considerable success in the United States in the late 60’s. The
setting for the film is a small French town during World War II that has been evacuated.
All of the townspeople have cleared out of the town, save for the patients at a local
asylum. The patients leave the asylum and take over the deserted town, revealing themselves to be “thoroughly fun-loving, non-aggressive individuals capable of creating a utopian society through their benevolence,” (Hyler et al., 1991, p. 1046). In a significant scene in the film, the German and Scottish armies brutally battle each other while the perplexed patients look on, unable to comprehend the annihilation they see. In a socio-historical context, it is worth noting that this film became popular in the United States at a time when the country was deeply involved in Vietnam, an involvement viewed by many Americans as a sign that society had gone mad (Hyler et al., 1991).

*Narcissistic parasite.*

The narcissistic parasite represents a stereotype in which the person with mental illness is depicted as a self-centered attention seeker. According to Hyler et al. (1991), this depiction is frequently reinforced in popular film as outpatient clients are often portrayed as over-privileged, oversexed, and inherently narcissistic individuals who have little better to do with their time than enter therapy and recount trivial problems. Narcissistic parasite clients are depicted in such films as *Lovesick* (1983), *Annie Hall* (1977), and *What About Bob?* (1991).

*Zoo specimen.*

The final stereotype of mental illness cited by Hyler et al. (1991) is that of the mental patient as a dehumanized specimen for scientific observation. Wedding and Boyd (1999) submit that such depictions degrade people with mental illness by treating them as objects of derision or a source of amusement or entertainment for those who are “normal.” As an example, Woody Allen’s *Zelig* (1983) portrays a patient who is subjected to intense psychological dissection by his psychiatrist. The impact of this
dissection to the patient’s welfare is clearly depicted as insignificant and the analytic process itself (at whatever cost) is portrayed as having primary importance.

Addiction and Stigma in Popular Film

Roberts, Henriksen, & Christensen (1999) conducted a study of the 200 most popular movie rentals during 1996-97; significantly, more than 90% of these films depicted drug, alcohol, or over the counter/prescription drug use. Cape (2003) argues that popular films, as a medium for mass communication, have a powerful influence on the public and perpetuate popular mythologies regarding alcohol and other drug use. He identified common character stereotypes of alcohol and other drug users as portrayed in motion pictures and in so doing, utilized Hyler, Gabbard, and Schneider’s (1991) six stereotypes of mental illness as a framework. Cape suggests the following adapted stereotypes fit more appropriately with depictions of alcohol and drug use in popular film: Tragic hero; rebellious free spirit; demonized maniac/homicidal maniac; humorous/comedic user.

According to Cape, the tragic hero is a user depicted as a likeable and readily identifiable character who epitomizes “humanities inherent flaws,” (2003, p. 168). The hero may be seen as tragic as a result of the compulsion to use alcohol and drugs as well as battling against the conformist norms of society within which he or she does not easily fit. With this stereotype, there is usually a theme of redemption (or death) as the plot unravels; the Nicholas Cage character in Leaving Las Vegas (1995) is a clear example of this tragic hero.

Cape (2003) identifies the rebellious free spirit as evidenced in the popular film character who takes drugs or alcohol against the accepted norms of society. Through this
portrayal, the drug use is more inclined to be depicted as “recreational”, and used by an individual to enhance his or her own life. The film *Human Traffic* (1999) is an example of a movie that depicts drug use as a normalized part of daily living.

The demonized addict/homicidal maniac represents the most common and stigmatizing addiction stereotype, according to Cape (2003). Male characters are usually portrayed as individuals who are intoxicated both on substances and anger, the result of which leads to explosive consequences. Cape contends that this stereotype is also designed to stimulate the film viewer’s fascination with “schadenfreude – the taking of pleasure in the misfortune of others,” (2003, p. 168). Examples of this stereotype include *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Nil by Mouth* (1998).

The final stereotype of drug and alcohol use in popular film highlighted by Cape is that of the humorous/comedic user (2003). Through this depiction, excessive drug or alcohol use is glamorized without any real-life consequences; the effects of the drug or alcohol use are also typically highly exaggerated. Examples of this film stereotype include *Blazing Saddles* (1974), *Up In Smoke* (1978), and *Saving Grace* (2000).

Cape acknowledges that his categorization of the abovementioned four stereotypes – tragic hero, rebellious free spirit, demonized addict, and comedic user – is selective and subjective; however, he posits that this categorization may serve as a useful framework for additional analysis of drug and alcohol use and the popular mythologies that are perpetuated through the mass communication format of feature films.

*Popular Film and Diagnostic Categorization*

Several books were discovered in the literature that catalog specific films by highlighting particular educational or therapeutic issues (Solomon, 1995; Hesley &
Hesley, 2001; Teague, 2000; Peske & West, 1999). The book *Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology* (Wedding & Boyd, 1999) is unique, however, in that it is the only known text that organizes films along the diagnostic categories of the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Wedding & Boyd (1999) emphasize that their book is designed to supplement a core text in abnormal psychology and psychopathology, and they underscore the importance of reading the material in core texts before reading the corresponding chapters in their book. In their introduction, the authors discuss having written the text as a result of their conviction that films are a powerful medium for teaching about the “fascinating world of psychopathology,” (Wedding & Boyd, 1999, ix). The book presents a comprehensive analysis of how films might be used as a pedagogic tool for teaching about mental illness. A significant contribution of this text rests in the way the authors address stereotypes and inaccurate depictions portrayed in films, and the emphasis they place on the critical thinking component that needs to accompany the viewing of cinematic presentations of mental illness.

This section has highlighted the primary literature that addresses depictions of psychotherapy and mental illness in popular film. It is apparent through this review that many negative and misleading stereotypes about psychotherapy and mental illness are perpetuated by the film industry. As Bischoff and Reiter (1999) point out, one of the most disturbing aspects of many popular film presentations of mental illness and mental health treatment is that these depictions may be the primary source of information that inexperienced clients and the public-at-large receive. Gabbard (1999) highlights that patient advocacy groups such as the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
currently play a significant role in the effort to monitor and respond to negative stereotypes in the media. He calls for increased collaboration between mental health professionals, educators, and patient advocacy groups to enhance the effectiveness of countering these negative stereotypes.

It is important to emphasize at this juncture that not all films depicting psychotherapy and mental illness are inaccurate or derogatory in their portrayals. Wedding and Boyd (1999) readily admit that negative stereotypes exist in popular film but also emphasize a variety of films that can be used in accurately learning about aspects of mental illness. In addition, it is conceivable that films depicting inaccuracies or stereotypes of psychotherapists or mental illness might be used with clients or students specifically to draw attention to the inaccuracies portrayed, thereby giving clarity to a distorted presentation. Mental health professionals and educators can also challenge those who might believe Hollywood’s depictions of mental illness, reminding them that movies are created primarily for entertainment and lucrative purposes, not necessarily for accuracy (Gabbard, 1999).

Cinematherapy and Film Self-Help Interventions

The history and process of cinematherapy has been addressed previously. The purpose of this section is to discuss the key cinematherapy and film self-help literature that exists, identifying the strengths and shortcomings that are present both in the literature and in these approaches themselves.

Berg–Cross, Jennings, & Baruch (1990) are widely credited as having made the first attempt in the literature to organize the theory and application of cinematherapy. In their 1990 article, the authors address the historical roots of cinematherapy as stemming
from bibliotherapy, and emphasize the utility of popular films in building a therapeutic alliance, creating meaningful therapeutic metaphors, and infusing clients with optimism and hope for their particular life predicaments. These authors were also the first to offer some type of structure to the cinematherapy process and outlined steps to consider in carefully applying this technique (Berg-Cross et al., 1990).

Cinematherapy is emphasized as an adjunct to therapy by Berg-Cross and colleagues, not as a primary approach to working with clients. In terms of an evaluative component, the authors offer little in the way of suggesting how to assess whether this technique is effective. Case studies are presented by the authors and circumstances highlighted where cinematherapy is utilized in treatment with subsequent positive results for clients. These case studies raise questions about what, specifically, worked or was helpful for the clients. Was it the message in the film, the discussion with the therapist, other techniques that were simultaneously being implemented, or natural change over time that made a difference for the client? Such questions are left unaddressed by the authors.

The use of cinematherapy also raises questions regarding which films are best utilized in addressing a variety of potential issues presented by clients. In the case of Berg-Cross and colleagues, the authors give an annotated film bibliography at the end of their article with a list of films falling into specific categories (e.g., adolescence; alcoholism; facing death; elderly parents, etc.). The authors admit that while they have not seen all of the films they list, their bibliography was compiled through recommendations “by colleagues or respondents to an electronic bulletin board for film buffs,” (Berg-Cross et al., 1999, p. 145) and add that critiques for the listed films were
adapted from two popular video guides. It is uncertain whether this procedure is the most robust and appropriate for gathering film recommendations to be used for therapeutic purposes.

In a more recent article on cinematherapy, Dermer & Hutchings (2000) provide guidelines and suggestions for systematically integrating cinematic interventions into marital and family therapy. The authors identify the stages of assessment, implementation, and debriefing as necessary in the appropriate use of cinematherapy, and highlight the debriefing stage as the platform for processing the couple’s or family’s reactions to a selected film. As with Berg-Cross and colleagues, however, the authors do not address any type of evaluative component for cinematherapy, surmising in general terms that “films supply a springboard for metaphorical and literal communication,” (p. 167), and “powerful films have the potential to touch people on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels,” (p. 168).

Dermer & Hutchings (2000) also include a film appendix at the close of their article, cataloguing movies that might be useful to marriage and family therapists or other therapist who work with couples and families. In compiling the appendix, the authors sent letters and surveys to members of the Kansas Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, directors of accredited marriage and family programs, and other family therapists who expressed interest in cinematic interventions. The resulting appendix represents input from 37 people who work in some clinical or therapeutic capacity with couples or families, and indicates an effort by the authors for a more systematic recommendation of films for intervention in therapy.
Sharp, Smith, & Cole (2002), highlight that there is a paucity of research on the effectiveness of cinematherapy as a therapeutic technique. The authors suggest that the process of cinematherapy is strengthened when therapists make careful movie selections in their assignments to clients. They warn that inappropriate content should be considered when selecting movies, and emphasize that the therapeutic value of a film always needs to be weighed against the level of profanity, violence, or other content that the client might find offensive. In addition, Sharp et al. (2002) posit that cinematherapy may be most effective through its use of metaphor, allowing meaning to be conveyed to the symbolic and creative parts of the brain while bypassing the more analytic and logical parts. The authors point to research that has been done on the use of metaphor in therapy (e.g., Barker, 1996; Groth-Marnat, 1992; Erikson, Rossi & Rossi, 1976), and contend that the therapeutic use of popular film can benefit clients by suggesting solutions to problems, planting seeds for growth, reframing problems, and building rapport by providing a shared experience between client and therapist. While Sharp et al. (2002) recognize the paucity of research on the effectiveness of cinematherapy, they offer no research themselves in this area and emphasize process and theoretical issues over evaluative ones.

Books on Cinematherapy and Self-Help through Cinema

A number of cinematherapy and cinematic self-help books have surfaced over the past decade as the use of popular film for therapeutic purposes has increased. What follows is a brief review of several of these books, followed by an analysis of these highlighted materials.
Perhaps the most systematic book currently available on cinematherapy is Hesley & Hesley’s Rent Two Films and Let’s Talk in the Morning (2001). The authors utilize the term “VideoWork” instead of cinematherapy, and define VideoWork as a “therapeutic process in which clients and therapists discuss themes and characters in popular films that relate to core issues of ongoing therapy,” (p. 4). The authors use the first half of their book discussing the roots of VideoWork, the benefits of using film as homework, utilizing films as an aid to treatment planning, the integration of films into therapy, the process of selecting films for therapy, and putting VideoWork into action. The second half of the book offers an anthology of therapeutic films for therapists to use, and films are organized according to primary therapeutic applications (e.g., specific issues within family therapy, couples therapy, and individual therapy).

A strength of Rent Two Films and Let’s Talk in the Morning rests in the way that Hesley & Hesley devote significant time discussing the process of VideoWork and accentuating the preparation that is needed for interventions with film. When discussing specific films in the anthology section, the authors also address precautions, discuss suggested viewers, and highlight key lessons portrayed in a film; information that is likely useful for a clinician to consider in selecting a film for therapeutic use. Disappointingly, the authors give little attention to discussing the evaluation of VideoWork and offer only a brief section which addresses how a therapist might respond when a suggested movie fails to connect with a client. There is no emphasis in the book on assessing the effectiveness of VideoWork as a technique, and no research offered in support of this approach.
In the category of self-help books on using popular film for personal transformation and exploration, several books have emerged as interventions with popular film have gained greater foothold as a therapeutic technique. Solomon’s *The Motion Picture Prescription: Watch this Film and Call Me in the Morning* (1995), offers a characteristic example of how the cinematic self-help literature tends to be structured. The book is written in a manner that is simple and even conversational; a brief discussion is offered as to how films significantly depict “healing stories,” (p.13) that have broad application. The majority of *The Motion Picture Prescription* is devoted to a list of 200 alphabetized films, each with a brief synopsis and subsequent commentary by the author. Solomon, however, offers no outside citations in his book and no explanation or rationale for how the films discussed in the text were selected for inclusion. The final chapter in the book is comprised of a 3 page section that makes recommendations on using films in therapy, including specific tips for therapists on using movies with their clients. No research support is offered in this final section, providing additional evidence that the selected films and commentary in the text represent the sole perspective of the author.

Teague’s *Reel Spirit: A Guide to Movies that Inspire, Explore, and Empower* (2000), is an example of a self-help book that focuses primarily on using popular film for the exploration of spiritual issues. The author describes over 400 films, each film containing a brief synopsis, a “meta-view” section in which the film’s main metaphysical ideas are presented, and three specific questions designed to help viewers draw out spiritual themes and issues for contemplation and discussion. As with Solomon, Teague offers no explanation for how the 400 films in the text were selected, and outside of a list
of three questions to accompany each film, gives little attention to the process of viewing and discussing the films.

While such self-help books on using popular films to examine life issues are intriguing, they tend to represent the potentially biased perspective of the author, offer little to no research for the claims they posit, and devote the bulk of their attention to a listing and synopsis of author-selected feature films. Despite the fact that the cinematherapy and cinematic self-help literature offer little in the way of evaluating their effectiveness as approaches, they do offer stimulating and even creative suggestions for linking therapy and self-exploration to popular film use. Inherent in these approaches is the contention that popular films may be used for emphasizing learning; be it learning about specific aspects of oneself, one’s relationships with others, or broader existential issues. It is precisely this connection between popular film use and learning possibilities that has stimulated interest in using films within the classroom setting.

**Summary**

This review has organized the existing literature into four primary sections: learning and instruction through popular film; popular film use in counselor education and supervision; psychotherapy depictions and depictions of mental illness in popular film; and cinematherapy and self-help using popular film. This organization represents an effort to present the major areas in which the connections between helping relationships, therapeutic interventions, mental health, and education have been explored in the literature examining popular film use.

It is apparent in reviewing the relevant literature that a lack of systematically collected information exists pertaining to college-level students’ learning experiences
with cinemaeducation in the classroom. Discussion of student learning with popular film focuses on using film in the context of specific courses and in teaching particular concepts, but the literature fails to adequately address what students’ indicate was helpful or beneficial about popular film use in their learning processes. Research addressing student learning experiences with cinemaeducation focuses largely on the procedural issues regarding film selection and anecdotal accounts by authors for the benefits of implementing popular films to enhance student learning (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998; Koch & Dollarhide, 2000; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2001; Chambliss & Magakis, 1996). Moreover, the existing research represents methodological approaches that fail to address the lived experiences of students’ exposure to film, and reflects anecdotal evidence and assumptions which are subsequently drawn. In light of the dearth of systematically conducted research which examines students’ direct accounts of their learning processes in relation to popular film use, implementing exploratory research in this area is highly warranted.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

In order to address the limitations of prior literature and research, this study utilized methodology designed to describe and explore the experiences and perceptions of master’s level counselor education students exposed to popular film clips in their coursework. This study employed a qualitative methodology, grounded theory, in exploring students’ perceptions and experiences of their learning as it relates to being exposed to popular film in their coursework.

Grounded Theory

The qualitative genre encompasses many different approaches, grounded theory being only one of them (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Grounded theory methods consist of systematic inductive guidelines for gathering, synthesizing, analyzing, and conceptualizing qualitative data to construct theory (Charmaz, 2003). Being that the research process under grounded theory is highly inductive, the researcher begins analysis early in the data-collection process. Additionally, initial data analysis is used to organize subsequent data collection and the researcher begins to define categories and expand evolving properties using constant comparison analysis in which ideas and concepts in the data are compared with one another. The objective of the grounded theory researcher, therefore, is to relate categories to one another, looking for overarching core categories and themes which might be emerging (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Operating from a grounded theory methodology means that the researcher maintains continuous involvement in data collection and analysis, and this emerging
analysis shapes subsequent data collection decisions. Early analytic work leads the researcher to collect more data around emerging themes and questions (Charmaz, 2003). In creating a grounded theory based on the impact of popular film clips on student learning, it was imperative that the researcher took care to ensure that themes, concepts, and relationships that emerged from the data were representative of a given learning reality. In so doing, the emergent theory speaks not only to the population being studied, but has transferability to similar contexts related to how students learn.

Qualitative methodology, and specifically, grounded theory were essential to the goals of this research. It was evident that qualitative design presented a suitable method for in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of students as they were exposed to popular film clips in their coursework. Moreover, employing grounded theory procedures served as a base for developing a theory regarding the perceptions and learning experiences of master’s level counselor education students as they were exposed to popular film clips. In addition, findings from this exploratory research will contribute to the literature on student learning, the use of popular film as an instructional tool, constructivist approaches within counselor education, and other research in the area of enhancing student learning and the pedagogic use of popular film in counselor education.

**Constructivist Grounded Theory**

Charmaz (2000) submits that traditional grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; Strauss, 1987) remains imbued with positivism, making assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, reductionistic inquiry of manageable research problems, and objectivist rendering of data. Charmaz (2000) identifies that a shift began to occur in traditional grounded theory through the work of Strauss & Corbin
(1990, 1998), who moved their theoretical position in a more post-positivist direction. In so doing, these authors proposed giving greater voice to their respondents, representing them as accurately as possible, discovering and acknowledging how respondents’ views of reality conflict with their own, and recognizing art as well as science in the analytic product and process. Charmaz (2000) further suggests another vision for future qualitative research: constructivist grounded theory. This approach celebrates firsthand knowledge of empirical worlds, takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21st century (Charmaz, 2000).

Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretative understanding of subject’s meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A constructivist approach to grounded theory, therefore, reaffirms studying people in their natural settings and redirects qualitative research away from the more positivist leanings of traditional grounded theory. The constructivist approach recognizes that the categories, concepts, and theoretical level of an analysis emerge from the researcher’s interactions within the field and questions about the data (Charmaz, 2000). Additionally, a constructivist approach does not seek truth – single, universal, and lasting; the approach assumes that what we take as real, as objective knowledge and truth, is based upon our perspective (Schwandt, 1994). In this manner, the constructivist approach to grounded theory pushes the researcher to try to find what research participants define as real and where their definitions of reality take them. It is researchers’ attention to detail in the constructivist approach that sensitizes them to multiple realities and the multiple
viewpoints within them; it does not represent a quest to capture a single reality (Charmaz, 2000).

In addition, a constructivist approach to grounded theory necessitates a relationship with respondents in which they can cast their stories in their terms. It means listening to their stories with openness to feeling and experience (Charmaz, 2000). The questions constructivist grounded researchers ask their respondents aim to get at meaning, not truth, and an emphasis is placed in this approach on researchers viewing their data afresh, again and again, as they develop new ideas.

A constructivist grounded theory was most appropriate for this study as the researcher was looking to develop an understanding of cinemaeducation in counselor education through the study of experience from the standpoint of those who lived it: students who were exposed to popular film in their courses. This approach (a) recognized the importance of entering subjects’ worlds to understand their experiences as fully as possible; (b) acknowledged subjective experiences within social contexts; (c) rejected the researcher’s authority as expert observer; and (d) moved analysis away from objectivist procedures and in a direction where the researcher sought to understand and interpret emergent meaning within a given context. Moreover, assuming a constructivist grounded theory approach was an effort to move past the largely anecdotal accounts of existent cinemaeducation research toward a richer understanding of the lived experiences of students and their accounts of the impact of popular film upon their learning.

Assuming a constructivist approach was well-suited for this research endeavor as it emphasized the interplay and process between the researcher and research subjects, and the emergence of meaning which was co-constructed and continuously evolving.
Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was particularly significant in this qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morrow & Smith, 2000). Because the aim of qualitative research is to understand participant actions in context, the researcher had to be present in the participants’ natural worlds closely enough (spatially and psychologically), that participants revealed the meanings they were making of their experiences (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Hence, the conventional distance between the researcher and the participants had to be bridged by negotiating access with participants in such a way that they were fully informed and empowered.

Qualitative research, therefore, acknowledged the researcher as an instrument, and subjectivity was considered inevitable and indeed the only way that one person could adequately understand the actions of another (Charmaz, 2003). As a result of the subjectivity of this approach, various authors have addressed researcher responsibilities such as negotiating research relationships, maintaining ethical standards, and balancing objectivity and sensitivity (Maxwell, 1996; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000).

One responsibility of the researcher was to negotiate and maintain the research relationships with participants (Maxwell, 1996). The negotiation of relationships with participants was significant in this qualitative study as it is through the researcher relationship that the research gets done (Maxwell, 1996). Therefore, the quality of this study relied heavily upon the researcher negotiating relationship with participants so that participants candidly shared both cognitive and emotive responses. Toward this end, the researcher’s training as a professional counselor, group facilitator, and counselor educator...
was called upon for negotiating relationships and promoting opportunities for participants to share their experiences with candidness.

A second area of researcher responsibility was the maintenance of ethical standards throughout the research process (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Issues such as boundaries of competence; informed consent; benefits, costs, and reciprocity; harm and risk; honesty and trust; privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity; and research integrity and quality were considered in the development of this study (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The protection of the confidentiality and rights of participants were particularly emphasized. This research investigation was submitted to the Ohio University Institutional Review board for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects, and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, prior to the onset of information collection.

In compliance with university standards, participants read and signed an Informed Consent Form (Ohio University) or were given a Summary of Research Project handout (UW Oshkosh) before the interviews began. The researcher also was careful to verify that participants had a clear understanding of the information within these forms prior to proceeding. Participants at Ohio University signed two identical copies of the Informed Consent Forms, keeping one copy and returning the other to the researcher before the initial interviews commenced; participants at UW Oshkosh kept the Summary of Research Project handout that was reviewed with them prior to their interviews. A copy of the Participant Informed Consent form is included as Appendix A to this research document, and a copy of the Summary of Research Project handout is included as Appendix B.
A critical third area of researcher responsibility in this study was balancing objectivity and sensitivity (Maxwell, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Morrow & Smith, 2000). Maxwell (1996) suggests that a balance of objectivity and sensitivity is imperative in developing the conceptual context of a qualitative study. Seeking an appropriate balance of sensitivity and objectivity assisted the researcher in utilizing knowledge and experience without overly-imposing that knowledge and experience on the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Furthermore, Strauss & Corbin (1998) emphasize this balance as necessary to arriving at impartial and accurate interpretations of events while remaining sensitive to nuances, subtle meanings, and connections in the emerging data. In addition, balancing objectivity and subjectivity was imperative to the process of theoretical sampling in this research; this involves the use of emerging concepts and theories to refine and shape further data collection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In order to conduct quality research, the researcher actively employed methods which assisted in achieving an objective and sensitive stance; this meant pursuing data collection and interpretation in such a manner as to eventually portray a balanced and “data saturated” perspective, contextually reflective of the studied phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Strauss & Corbin (1998) suggest that sensitivity may be developed in two ways. First, relevant literature may provide researchers with a basis of information to stimulate thinking and the development of conceptual questions. Second, personal experiences may provide the researcher with a foundation of information that may serve in the process of being able to relate to the meanings other people are ascribing to their experiences (Maxwell, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For this investigation, the
researcher utilized a review of the literature in addition to drawing upon personal experiences as a means of sensitivity integration.

Maintaining objectivity in the qualitative research involved an ongoing process of the researcher staying open to participant viewpoints, meanings, and experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Objectivity was developed in this study through the use of comparative thinking, inclusion of multiple viewpoints, multiple data gathering techniques, maintaining an attitude of skepticism, and adhering to established research procedures of questioning, comparing, and sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Morrow & Smith, 2000).

In summary, the role of the researcher is an essential component in qualitative research and grounded theory methodology. As the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis within these paradigms, the researcher in this investigation assumed the responsibilities of negotiating research relationships with participants, ensuring that participants’ rights were consistently maintained, and upholding ethical standards throughout the research process. Moreover, to produce a theory reflective of the phenomena under investigation, the research followed procedures for maintaining a balance of objectivity and sensitivity throughout the process of developing a grounded theory.

Grounded Theory Process

Grounded theory methodology consists of specific procedures that are utilized to establish scientific significance. When followed, these procedures result in a grounded theory study that is trustworthy, credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The procedures described for this grounded theory study met these established criteria. The foundation of this study, and
an appropriate starting point for a qualitative research design, was the development of a conceptual context (Maxwell, 1996). According to Maxwell (1996), the conceptual context of the study is “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research,” (p. 25). The conceptual context (or theoretical framework) served to inform subsequent design decisions made in this study (Maxwell, 1996).

Conceptual Context

The conceptual context served as a formulated and tentative theory of what was happening with the phenomena under investigation (Maxwell, 1996). Establishing a conceptual context in this study served as a base for developing a research problem and grand research question, and was utilized in informing further data collection and methodological issues and in identifying potential validity threats to conclusions drawn. Maxwell (1996) suggests that there are four main sources from which a researcher may draw information in developing a conceptual context. These are experiential knowledge, existing theory and research, pilot and exploratory research, and thought experiments.

This study drew upon experiential knowledge, prior research, and existing theory in its development of a conceptual context. As stated previously, maintaining a balance between objectivity and sensitivity is an essential undertaking in conducting qualitative research. This researcher, therefore, made continuous efforts to maintain a balance of objectivity and sensitivity so that the conceptual context blended relevant literature, existing theory, and researcher experience in a way that informed, not dictated, a beginning framework for understanding participants’ realities (Maxwell, 1996).
The conceptual context of this investigation of Master’s level students’ perceptions and experiences was based, in part, on the researcher’s personal experiences of being exposed to popular film as a Master’s student, and instructional experiences with film that the researcher has implemented as an educator. These experiences resulted in the formulation of three assumptions: (a) students’ experiences with popular film in the classroom have cognitive and emotional components, (b) students’ perceptions and experiences with popular film are influenced by the social context of the classroom, and (c) students’ learning processes are affected by the use of popular film when it is used as a pedagogic tool. The researcher’s experiences also contributed to a desire to broaden the understanding of students’ experiences and perceptions of popular film use in their courses, primarily for the purposes of strengthening counselor education pedagogy and the preparation of Master’s level counselors-in-training.

Another source of information that was used in building the conceptual context of this investigation was existing theory and research (Maxwell, 1996). A review of the relevant literature suggested a dearth of exploration into students’ reports of their exposure to popular film in their courses, while offering a wide range of anecdotal accounts by instructors promoting and lauding popular film for pedagogic use. The limited state of research regarding the experiences and perceptions of students themselves during their exposure to popular film in the classroom indicated a need for further exploration within this area. In addition, the literature on this topic offered no systematic or exploratory research. The process of grounded theory research began with the selection of a researchable problem (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000) and, as identified, a researchable problem existed within this context.
The next step, according to grounded theory methodology, was the development of a grand research question. This question specifically identifies the area of investigation and what the researcher wants to know about the subject (Maxwell, 1996). Moreover, the focus of the research question in grounded theory is oriented toward both action and process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The primary purpose of this investigation, as previously noted, was to explore the experiences and perceptions of students as they are exposed to the pedagogic use of popular film within their coursework. Accordingly, this study utilized as the grand research question:

- How do Master’s level counselor education students experience and perceive their exposure to popular film in the classroom as a didactic process?

**Data Collection Procedures**

The conceptual context also shaped decisions regarding the collection of data. These decisions included the selection of specific research questions, making initial sampling choices, and selecting appropriate methods to collect data (Maxwell, 1996). While the grand research question in this study was intended to identify what the researcher wanted to understand, the interview questions were designed to provide the actual data that the researcher needed to understand the larger question. Therefore, it was important to consider developing interview questions that were clear, understandable, and answerable by participants; able to provide useful data in answering the grand research question; and that did not dictate or shape specific responses (Maxwell, 1996).

In developing specific interview questions for this investigation, the researcher began by reviewing the conceptual context of this study. To further bolster the strength and relevancy of the interview questions, the researcher consulted with a faculty member
who is seasoned in qualitative methodology and grounded theory, and who is familiar with the conceptual context of this research. The resulting questions included:

- What thoughts and feelings surface when you view the film clip?
- Describe your experiences of being in class with others when film is used as a teaching device.
- Describe how the use of film in class influences how you learn course material.

These questions were designed to relate directly to the conceptual context and grand research question of this study, while at the same time allowing flexibility for unique responses from participants.

In following grounded theory methodology, the interview questions utilized in this study were subject to continual review and recalibration (Maxwell, 1996). Thus, as the interviews progressed, questions moved from broad explorations to those that were more focused and theme-based. Allowing the interview questions and process to change (based on the evolving demands of the data and analysis) added to the depth, complexity, and richness of the theory that resulted from this investigation (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

The next step in grounded theory methodology was to determine the selection process for participants. According to Maxwell (1996), the most important consideration in this process is selecting participants who can provide the information needed to answer the research questions. Hence, the sampling for this investigation reflected the setting and participants that were most appropriate in exploring and developing a theory grounded in the perceptions and experiences of Master’s level counselor education.
students, during courses in which they were exposed to the pedagogic use of popular film.

This study utilized theoretical sampling, a particular kind of purposeful sampling, in which the researcher sampled participants on the basis of their potential contribution to the development and testing of theoretical constructs (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This process is iterative: the researcher picks an initial sample, analyzes the data, and then selects a further sample in order to refine emerging categories or theories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The process is continued until the researcher reaches “data saturation,” or a point when no new insights would be obtained from expanding the sample further (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Consequently, the initial sample for this study was drawn from currently enrolled Master’s level counselor education students at Ohio University.

Sample selection.

The initial sample in the Fall quarter of 2004 consisted of eight students that were enrolled in two different counselor education courses at Ohio University; four students were selected from each course for individual interviews. Two primary pedagogic approaches were blended together for film delivery in this study (Pinterits & Atkinson’s stage approach, 1998; and Tyler & Reynolds’ advanced organizer approach, 1998). Students in both courses were exposed to this same approach, hence creating an opportunity for interviews to reflect students’ experiences with film according to a consistent method of film implementation.

Subsequent rounds of interviews occurred in the Winter and Spring of 2005; sixteen students (with no repeat interviews) were selected from another four counselor education courses in Winter and Spring of 2005, with students in each of these courses
being exposed to the same pedagogic film delivery approach. In selecting different students to interview across a variety of courses at two universities, the researcher hoped to capture diverse data that may be used to build an emerging theory regarding the learning experiences and perceptions of students who are exposed to popular film (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Lastly, a focus group interview of 16 students who had not been previously individually interviewed, was conducted in Spring 2005. The focus group served as a forum for the researcher to present the emerging theory to a group of participants who had also been exposed to popular film in their classroom. The focus group interview was utilized primarily to clarify and confirm the emerging theory of popular film use as it connects with student learning (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Selection of participants, therefore, was made from a sample of students who were willing to participate in this investigation. In striving toward maximum variation sampling (Maxwell, 1996), an effort was made to increase the heterogeneity of the represented population. Participants selected for interviews reflected a variety of Master’s level counselor education students, varying along factors such as age, gender, race, year within the program, and area of degree emphasis (community, school, or rehabilitation). The researcher utilized two primary sources of input in identifying a qualified and diverse group of participants: (1) reviewing general information collected on the consent forms of students willing to participate in this investigation, and (2) consulting with course instructors regarding potential participants.
Types of data collection.

Data collection procedures used in this grounded theory investigation included: (a) individual participant interviews, (b) a focus group interview following several rounds of individual interviews, and (c) the researcher’s journal, consisting of observations, conceptualizations, and consultation memos.

As this study examined how students describe their learning experiences and perceptions following exposure to popular film, the first method of data collection, individual interviews, were scheduled as soon as possible following a class session in which popular film was utilized. The participants were informed in advance that participation in the study involved 30-45 minute interviews that would focus on their experiences of being pedagogically exposed to popular film clips.

Following completion of the initial round of interviews and data analysis, second and third rounds of individual interviews (following the same format as initial interviews) occurred during the subsequent quarter (Winter 2005 at Ohio University) and semester (Spring 2005 at UW Oshkosh). Different students were selected for each round of interviews. The interview questions during the second and third rounds of interviews were informed and adapted based on analyzing students’ responses from the preceding interview rounds. In conducting individual interviews over three quarters of instruction with different students enrolled across several courses and at different institutions, an effort was made to achieve a redundancy and thick description in the data that is necessary to build a grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A second method of data collection was a focus group interview that was conducted during the Spring quarter of 2005 at UW Oshkosh, following three rounds of
individual interviews. As stated, this focus group provided an opportunity for the researcher to present an emerging theory of student learning as it connects with pedagogic film use. Group participants (who were exposed to film in the classroom), had an opportunity to react and comment on this presented model. In so doing, they assisted the researcher in clarifying and modifying the emergent theory so that it became increasingly representative and consistent with students lived experiences and perceptions. Collection of data from a group of participants was significant for the purpose of this study as the pedagogic use of film in a course involved not only individual student experiences, but a group experience in which students were included within a social context (the classroom). The focus group involved an entire classroom of students who met once, for a period of an hour and a half. In addition, the focus group met immediately following a class session in which popular film was utilized.

The individual and focus group interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were analyzed between each round of interviews in order to further develop concepts and inform questions for subsequent interviews. This procedure pushed the researcher to become more alert to respondents’ implicit meanings, to have greater awareness of the nuances of participants’ language, and to better define the directions where the data might be leading (Charmaz, 2003).

The researcher’s journal was the third method of data collection. This journal was utilized to record such items as descriptive notes regarding participants’ dialogue and emotion. The journal also included reflective notes regarding the researcher’s personal thoughts, ideas, feelings, and reactions that occurred during the data collection and analysis process; as well as consultation memos that described interactions regarding
collected data with the researcher’s dissertation chairperson, methodologist, and peers (Creswell, 1997).

Popular Film Selection and Implementation

The literature is replete with books and articles that catalogue popular films by the types of psychological issues or mental health topics which they address (Solomon, 1995; Chambliss & Magakis, 1996; Wedding & Boyd, 1999; Teague, 2000; Toman & Rak, 2000; Hesley & Hesley, 2001). With such a sizeable number of popular films from which to draw, the researcher faced the challenge of maintaining objectivity during the film selection process and not making arbitrary or overly subjective choices. Several areas of consideration assisted in the process of remaining objective and sensitive: (1) the limitation of time (2) recurring mention of specific popular films used for pedagogic purposes in the literature, and (3) ongoing consultation with course instructors.

Regarding the limitation of time, Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen (2001) submit that a considerable disadvantage of showing feature films in a classroom is that they are time consuming. These authors submit that short video clips can be effectively extracted from full length films for pedagogic purposes, taking only a small portion of class time. While questions loom in regard to choosing clips from selected films that have the greatest pedagogical effectiveness, using film clips (as opposed to full-length feature films) in this study was warranted due to the sheer amount of material instructors are obliged to cover in their courses.

Secondly, the selection of popular films and the clips to be used from them was informed by a careful review of the literature. In addition, close thought was given to the subject matter of a given course and clips from popular film that best exemplified that
subject matter. In considering addressing the topic of counselor boundary violations in a counseling ethics course, as an example, the researcher reviewed the literature to determine those popular films that have been used in elaborating this issue. The researcher identified a film that is cited by multiple authors in addressing the issue of boundary violations by a therapist, and then selected a clip of film that best captured the essence of a particular boundary violation. In order to remain objective and sensitive during this selection process, the researcher consulted with course instructors regarding the timing and appropriateness of selected film clips; this lead to the final sensitivity and objectivity check that was considered in regard to film selection. A complete list of film clips that were utilized in this research study are included as Appendix C.

Finally, it was important for the researcher to bear in mind that the primary aim of those courses in which he interacted was for students to learn course material, not for them to be exposed to popular film clips for the purpose of research. Theoretical sampling and emergent design are, of course, impossible to achieve without interaction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); however, as an investigator in the classroom, the researcher made every effort to ensure that interactions are as undisruptive as possible and connected with the goals and objectives of courses.

The researcher gained entry into courses by approaching instructors, explaining the purpose of this investigation, and receiving permission to interact within courses. As individual interviews and focus groups were conducted primarily outside of class time, the principle area of negotiation with instructors was in regard to implementing film clips during class meetings. Working with instructors was important in selecting clips of film that best spoke to course material and the elucidation of key concepts. Selection of
specific film clips, therefore, involved the considerations cited previously, in addition to working collaboratively with instructors regarding issues of appropriateness, timing, and delivery.

*Implementation Approaches*

After reviewing the literature on using popular film for pedagogic purposes, it is apparent that an area lacking much address is the manner in which films are actually delivered in the classroom. However, two differing approaches were identified in the literature for establishing pedagogical effectiveness of popular film use. These approaches are (1) the stage approach of preparation, introduction, viewing, and discussion (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998), and (2) the advanced organizer approach (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998). Both approaches are significant in that they synthesize other perspectives that are more loosely organized in the literature. While both approaches emphasize a rationale and process for implementing film, the delivery methods they propose are slightly different. The stage approach advocates instructor explanation and dialogue prior to film delivery, preparing students for how the film is connected with course material (Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998). Alternatively, the advanced organizer approach supports only a brief instructor introduction prior to a film’s delivery, allowing students to make their own interpretations and using the film as an anchor for concepts that will be taught later in the course (Tyler & Reynolds, 1998).

These approaches were discussed in detail in the introduction; they receive mention at this time as the researcher decided to blend these two approaches together in implementing the film clips. For example, certain clips that were selected required a greater amount of explanation before they were shown; in other instances, the researcher
chose to not introduce a particular clip, instead allowing students to have spontaneous experiences with the film. Implementation choices were discussed with instructors and joint decisions were made as to the method of delivery that would be most appropriate considering the course and film content, the actual clip selected, and the makeup of students in a given classroom.

_Data Analysis Procedures_

Data analysis in grounded theory is a process of discovering or constructing meaning from the data (Morrow & Smith, 2003). This involves “a process of breaking down and building up again, of breaking apart data from their original context in time and space and reordering them in the form of categories, themes, stories, propositions, or theories,” (Behrens & Smith, 1996). Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher followed procedures to ensure that an objective and sensitive stance was maintained (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Data analysis began in this study with a review of transcripts, digital recordings, and the researcher’s journal. As mentioned, transcripts will be produced from video recordings of participant interviews. These transcripts will then be edited for accuracy by the researcher, and will be analyzed to discover emerging themes and to assist in the development of follow-up interview questions.

Following transcription, the data was analyzed following a series of grounded theory analysis procedures that include open coding, axial coding, selective coding, and the generation of a conditional matrix (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These procedures are designed to abstract data, through the use of conceptualization and theoretical sampling, such that distinct categories, relationships, and theory emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).
Common tools derived from these procedures include making comparisons, asking questions, closely analyzing words, phrases, and sentences, and remaining vigilant of bias (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These tools were applied in this study through the utilization of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Data analysis began with the coding of initial data sets; open coding consisted of a focused analysis of transcribed data in which the researcher examined the text in detail and made marginal notes and memos about each category or unit of meaning (Morrow & Smith, 2000). A meaning unit refers to pieces of data as small as a word or as large as a paragraph but should be able to be described by a code for a specific category or concept that reflects the basic idea of that incident or portion of the text. The section of data is called an incident, or concrete referent to the abstract category (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The researcher aims to define and flesh out the category by finding its properties or aspects (who participates in the phenomenon; under what circumstances; what proceeds and follows it; levels of duration, intensity, and frequency of the phenomenon; and the like) (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

The analysis of data in this research proceeded through constant comparison, in which every instance of data referring to the phenomenon was compared with every other one to define the category in a cohesive and internally consistent way. This process of reassembling data that is broken down during open coding and making connections between categories is known as axial coding (Charmaz, 2000). In axial coding, comparison is again used to identify the properties of various categories and explicate their relationships to one another and to the subcategories that fall under them (Morrow & Smith, 2000).
Finally, selective coding was employed in an effort to reach even higher levels of abstraction to identify a core category that integrates all other categories that have emerged from the data. The core category or basic social process is inclusive of all relevant data, and from it emerges a description of the finding in narrative form or a midlevel theory (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Techniques to aid integration included: writing a storyline, using diagrams, and sorting and reviewing analysis memos (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Selective coding also involved refinement of categories and relationships to develop clear explanations and descriptions of the phenomena under investigation. Methods for refining theory that were employed in this research process include: reviewing for internal consistency and logic, filling in poorly developed categories, validating the theory against the data and with participants, and building in variation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process ended when the categories and propositions were saturated; that is, no new properties of the categories are found by collecting new data, and the data and analytic results are brought into fit (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Open, axial, and selective coding procedures were used to identify and develop categories and relationships. In addition, the data was analyzed for process relationships, which refers to the sequences of actions and interactions that occur in a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Data was examined in this study for changes in conditions that influence actions, interactions, and participant responses over time (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Interactive processes that emerged during axial and selective coding was further integrated into a theory through the use of a conditional matrix.

A conditional matrix is an analytic diagram that maps the range of conditions and consequences related to the phenomenon or category (Charmaz, 2000). Strauss & Corbin
(1990) introduce the conditional matrix as a created diagram to facilitate understanding of the subtle interplay of structural conditions and process. Throughout data analysis, the conditional matrix may assist in providing a graphic means to maintaining perspective, tracking connections, and sharpening the researcher’s explanations of and predictions about the studied phenomenon (Charmaz, 2000).

The outlined data gathering and analytic process was repeated until categories were saturated and redundancy was achieved. This process is intended to produce meaningful descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation and a theory that is truly representative of the experience of participants. For this reason, descriptions of categories, relationships, and the emerging theory were closely examined, questioned, and compared throughout the analysis process to ensure credibility (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Attaining Research Rigor

In conducting qualitative research, researchers must continuously build integrity into their analyses through strong supportive data. However, the conventional standards of reliability, and internal and external validity that are touted in quantitative research give way to different rigor criteria (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue for parallel criteria for qualitative research – credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The rigor of this investigation will be enhanced through the use of methods that address each criterion.

Credibility

The credibility of a qualitative study relates to the synthesis of the researcher’s findings with the reality of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Threats to the
credibility of a qualitative investigation include reactivity of participants to the researcher and researcher bias (Maxwell, 1996). In order to address these threats and to build credibility into the study, the following techniques were employed: prolonged engagement, triangulation, negative case analysis, peer debriefing, and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researcher biases and assumptions were also bracketed (Creswell, 1994) as a further means of increasing credibility into this investigation.

*Prolonged engagement.*

Prolonged engagement consists of spending enough time in the field to understand the culture, build trust, and become aware of distortions (of either investigator or participants) that may creep into the data (Morrow & Smith, 2000). In this investigation, the researcher worked closely with various participants and instructors over the course of an entire academic year of instruction. This provided the researcher opportunities to fully engage with participants, the research setting, and field data over an eight-month period.

*Triangulation.*

Methods of triangulation were also implemented to increase the credibility of this investigation. Triangulation is a strategy where multiple sources, methods, investigators, and perspectives provide validation of categories, relationships, and theory generated during the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Patton (2002) suggests that there are different forms of triangulation that may be utilized in providing diverse ways of looking at the phenomenon under investigation and strengthening subsequent conclusions. Two types of triangulation were utilized in this study: Triangulation of sources and triangulation through multiple analyses (Denzin, 1978).
Triangulation of sources involves comparing data from different qualitative methods. As noted, conducting multiple individual interviews, a focus group interview, and keeping a researcher journal are data collection methods that were employed in this triangulation category. In addition, the researcher will perform an ongoing review of the literature, designed to enhance theoretical sensitivity and strengthen theory generated from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Triangulation through multiple analyses includes consultation with another analyst/s in order to compare and check data collection and interpretation (Denzin, 1978). For this investigation, the researcher intentionally arranged the consultation services of a faculty member who is a seasoned qualitative methodologist. The researcher consulted with this faculty member at every stage of the research investigation in an effort to infuse greater objectivity and reduce potential bias in this process.

**Negative case analysis.**

The credibility of this investigation was also enhanced by the use of negative case analysis. This process involves continuous refinement of a hypothesis until it accounts for all known cases without exception (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (1997) describes this endeavor as a means of revising the initial hypothesis until all data fit into a thick description of emergent themes. Negative case analysis is designed to assess the best possible explanation for collected data, and therefore enhance credibility. In this investigation, stringent theory revision continued until all relevant were accounted for and a thick description achieved.
Peer debriefing.

Peer debriefing is a credibility enhancing technique that involves presenting an analytic discourse to disinterested peers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process is designed to open researchers to a variety of questions regarding their investigations, and to hold researchers accountable for their reasoning and decision-making within their research. All questions are in order during a peer debriefing, whether they pertain to substantive, methodological, legal, ethical, or any other relevant matters (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Over the course of this investigation, the researcher utilized this peer debriefing technique with selected fellow doctoral students. Written records of these exchanges were maintained in the researcher’s journal where they were made easily accessible for reference throughout the investigation.

Bracketing of biases and assumptions.

Creswell (1997) encourages researchers to clarify at the outset of their studies any biases or assumptions that might impact the investigations. In this study, it was important for the researcher, who has had several experiences with the use of film as a pedagogic tool, to bracket his assumptions and biases in regard to film use in the classroom. These assumptions included: (a) students’ experiences with popular film in the classroom have cognitive and emotional components, (b) students’ perceptions and experiences with popular film are influenced by the social context of the classroom, and (c) students’ learning processes are affected by the use of popular film when it is used as a pedagogic tool. The researcher utilized the input of peers and consultants throughout the research process to identify further biases and assumptions.
**Participant checks.**

Member – or participant-checking is a powerful tool that was used to enhance the credibility of this study (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Member-checking involves soliciting participants’ views of the credibility of the general findings and interpretations of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This feedback process allows participants to verify or negate interpretations the researcher has made of the data, and thereby establishes a match between the constructed realities of the respondents and the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This investigation utilized participant-checking throughout the research process, culminating in a focus group interview in which the emerging theoretical framework was shared with participants for group feedback. In this way, credibility was bolstered as participants became co-analysts of the data (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

**Transferability**

Transferability refers to the applicability of this investigation’s research conclusions to other settings, and is analogous to the concept of generalizability in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve transferability, the researcher is responsible for including detailed descriptions of the context of this investigation as well as the investigation procedures; this enables others to make decisions regarding the applicability of findings to their own research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this investigation, the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the participants, setting and events that are necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Dependability and Confirmability

For this investigation, a single technique was employed to establish dependability and confirmability. Dependability rests on the reproducibility of results, while confirmability depends upon the relation of the data to the reality under investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both criteria were addressed through the use of a confirmability audit. This technique requires a detailed audit trail, which includes raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, and research development notes and materials (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this investigation, all information needed for a confirmability audit were recorded, retained, and made available for use in the future.

This study was designed to meet the criteria of rigorous and trustworthy research. Through the use of the abovementioned techniques that promote credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the resultant theory not only represents the reality of participants, but also generated information that is hopefully of use to other research settings and investigations.

Conclusion

Grounded theory procedures were employed in investigating the experiences and perceptions of Master’s level counselor education students exposed to popular film in the classroom as a didactic process. These procedures included: a) defining the role of the researcher, b) developing a conceptual context and grand research question, c) collecting data, which includes development of initial interview questions, identification of participants, interview of participants, and use of the researcher’s journal, d) analyzing the data, which involves organizing data, open coding, axial coding, selective coding,
incorporating process, and utilizing a conditional matrix, and e) establishing rigor and
trustworthiness. Adhering to these procedures enabled the researcher to fulfill the goal of
this investigation; the development of a grounded theory of the perceptions and
experiences of Master’s level counselor education students exposed to popular film in the
classroom as a didactic process.
CHAPTER FOUR

Section I - First Round Interviews

Introduction

Individual face-to-face interviews with eight Master’s level counseling students were used to gather first round interview data. The data derived from these interviews were subsequently analyzed using open coding procedures to construct categories, properties and dimensions. Axial coding procedures were also employed to explore relationships between categories and to ensure complete analysis of the transcripts.

Four major categories emerged from the analysis that represented the participants’ experiences and perceptions of their exposure to popular film clips in the classroom. These categories described participants’ perceptions and experiences of becoming engaged with clips, having personal reactions to clips, processing the clips within a social environment, and being exposed to clips in the context of a learning setting with other pedagogic influences. These categories were conceptualized as engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, peer interaction process, and contextual factors. These four categories further contained properties in addition to dimensions that described them. Axial coding revealed that participants’ responses described relationships between the categories through their properties and dimensions.

Engagement Dynamic

Engagement dynamic emerged as a category after the first round of interviews. Participants described having reactions to clips as they were introduced, which in turn led to them becoming further or lesser engaged with the clips. Engagement dynamic is
therefore defined as immediate responses to film clips that were introduced, and the processing that occurred regarding the level at which participants became involved and stayed engaged with the clips. Further analysis revealed properties, which included media history, conceptual relevance, personal history, and information history. The following participants’ statements illustrate engagement dynamic.

P.3  It’s a movie worth watching more than once … and … wow, I did – I just got real drawn into it. I was totally oblivious to everyone else around me. I didn’t want the clip to stop.

P.2  Like I said, I’ve been in a clinical setting before, but I think especially if a film clip is illustrating something that I’ve never done before – it makes it really a lot easier to be able to kind of imagine myself in an interactive setting … if I can’t do something hands-on.

P.1  I think if you had come in and shown us some obscure clips from movies I wasn’t aware of, or necessarily don’t like, I might have thought, “This isn’t a guy who even likes the same movies that I like,” so I may not have been as interested if you came in with some movie from the 1950’s – in black and white.

Media history. Participants discussed having immediate reactions to film clips based on a history with the selected clip. These descriptions were used to create the property media history. Media history was described by specific references participants made regarding whether or not they had been previously exposed to a selected film clip. Participants further described their engagement in a film clip being directly related to viewing a clip of film that they had never seen before. Additionally, participants also described engagement in a film clip that related directly to having seen a clip of film on at least one previous occasion. Media history, therefore, varied along a dimension from novel, to previous exposure. This dimension described whether or not participants had an established media history with selected film clips, and the manner in which knowing or
not knowing a clip affected their level of engagement. Some examples of *media history* follow:

P.7 And then One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest, which we talked about a bit last night – I remember seeing that in the theater when it first came out.

P.3 Once I saw what was going on – that was the thing – I remember sitting there thinking, “wow – it’s been a while since I’ve seen this.” I had lost how much impact this movie has on me.

P.1 I love the story – the first time that I saw it I thought it was realistic. Looking back on it, I’m not sure that it was.

P.2 But a lot of the little clips in class – a lot of the times it’s like you know the movie and know where it’s headed.

Novel emerged as one end of the dimension along which *media history* varied. On this end of the *media history* continuum, participants described becoming involved with a clip based on an attraction to its novelty. In addition, novel included participants’ comments regarding a desire for greater novelty in popular films that are introduced within courses, and descriptions of being drawn into previously unseen films based on the fact that a counseling relationship was depicted in the film. Some examples of novel comments follow:

P.7 The first one, with the grieving, looked … and maybe just because it appeared to be a foreign film … had a different, and to me, a more educational piece in it.

P.2 I think if you could find something that maybe we all haven’t seen before, it would make it even more interesting because it’s like a fresh perspective, and we all get to analyze it for the first time and it’s not like, “well – I’ve seen the whole movie,” and other people are like, “I’ve never seen that movie.”

P.1 Well it’s funny because, I guess last weekend I was having the realization as I went to see yet another movie with a therapist in it … I said, “my profession is apparently pretty interesting to the outside world,” because there are therapists in almost every T.V. show and all kind of movies and things like that.
At the other end of the *media history* dimension participants described becoming engaged with a clip based on having seen it before. Previous exposure, therefore, emerged to counter novel at the other end of the *media history* continuum. Previous exposure describes participants’ engagement levels being directly related to having viewed a selected film clip on at least one prior occasion. In addition, previous exposure may also include participants’ decisions to become involved with a film clip based on previous popular film experiences (either positive or negative) in other courses. Some examples of previous exposure to media follow:

P.1 I’m trying to think exactly what I was thinking about, because I know whenever I see a scene from a film in class, a lot of other parts of the movie will come back to me.

P.7 I just remember that the movie had an effect, and I had not – well, I probably have seen it once on T.V. or something over the last thirty years. I remember scenes … I remember the effect that movie had, personally; to be able to recall this long ago.

P.2 Because in fact, Good Will Hunting I’ve seen in two other classes this year – and not the full thing but specifically, the part that you showed us too. Um, and Ordinary People is one that we watched twice this year. So there are a lot of – I think – really mainstream examples that occur to people to bring in as an illustration. So it wasn’t a surprise.

*Conceptual relevance.* A second property of the *engagement dynamic* category was formulated as conceptual relevance. Participants described how their engagement level with clips related to assessments of how closely film clip material aligned with course content. The property *conceptual relevance* was therefore depicted as participants’ engagement with film being directly related to their determination of whether or not a selected film clip was relevant to the material being covered in the course. Some comments reflecting conceptual relevance are:
P.4 I guess when you prepared us with the clips we were going to watch, I started thinking about how those relate to class and everything we’re talking about.

P.7 And then the use of silence – we didn’t … because it was a movie and the camera was on the grieving person, we don’t know that the counselor wasn’t nodding her head and looking. When we saw her, she didn’t appear to have any empathy … but we don’t know that’s the way it was the entire time.

P.8 Well, you can see the use of silence on the counselor’s part and how that was letting the client get her emotions out … and she didn’t stop her or anything, and we’re obviously learning about that.

The property *conceptual relevance* varied along a dimension that extended from relevant to non-relevant. The extremes of this dimension relate directly to decisions or reactions students had regarding relevance and, consequently, their level of engagement or involvement with the clips.

One end of the *conceptual relevance* dimension was relevant. Participants endorsed being engaged with film clip material based on their judgment that the clips resonated with material that was being covered in class. Also at this dimension extreme were participants’ endorsements of film clips offering credible and valid portrayals of course concepts. Comments reflecting relevance include:

P.1 I like the way they talk to each other in that movie – it doesn’t sound scripted. I enjoy the relationships that they have in the movie and the way that the characters are three-dimensional; even the people that may seem like the bad guys, you can figure out where they’re coming from.

P.5 I realized that the instructor was showing us something grey so that we could talk about it, and was this appropriate – was it a violation? Was it just a crossing? So, I think that the clip did help explain to me what she means by “it depends.” That’s her catch phrase … “it depends.” And so I thought that the clip depicted that very well.

P.8 Empathy was not used in that piece, but I saw how critical it could have been in that situation. Even though it wasn’t used, I saw how it should have been and where there was great opportunity to use it.
Irrelevant represented the other extreme of the dimension of conceptual relevance. Irrelevant describes participants’ endorsements of film clip material not resonating particularly well with course content. Moreover, participants described a lower level of engagement when they determined film clips to not be particularly relevant. The irrelevant dimension extreme includes participants’ endorsement of film clips conveying unrealistic or invalid portrayals of course concepts, or a decreased sense of credibility based on a determination that particular concepts are excessively emphasized. Examples of irrelevance conveyed within the conceptual relevance property include:

P.7 For me, personally, I’m sensitive to the entertainment value and that it may not be an accurate portrayal of the point the professor is trying to make. So … that’s probably just cynicism …

P.2 A lot of other times the use of film clips doesn’t really change the way I think – it maybe reinforces what I thought … especially in this context, because we go over a lot of these ideas in a lot of separate classes. So, at the point where we’re at it’s like, “yeah …” like I know where we’re going and it maybe reinforces what I learn, but we have learned it so clearly – or I have learned it so clearly that by now it’s kind of like, “yep – check. Got that.”

Personal history. A third property in the category of the engagement dynamic was personal history. This category was conceptualized as addressing participants’ levels of engagement with film clips based on selected clips conjuring events or issues from participants’ personal pasts. Additionally, clips appeared to be particularly engaging for participants (either positively or negatively) if they connected in some manner with their personal histories; i.e., were clips from a favorite or enjoyable film or portrayed an issue of personal significance (grief, addiction, depression, family strife,
etc.) The following comments convey connections between film clips and participants’ personal histories:

P.7 I didn’t have anger that the person left me … it was that his life was cut short – so in that sense. But also how long it takes to get over it … and the sobbing – the uncontrollable sobs that I remember feeling. That it took years to get over the loss of someone very close. So I did connect with that scene …

P.3 If I had the type of emotional impact hit me the other night like it did just now, I would have either probably … just my own personality … tried to just kind of withdraw and hide from it, or gotten up and left – just because of my own socialization within my family. Not because of anything anybody else would do, but … just me … one of my own issues.

P.6 I remember when I watched the clip with the English lady, and the counselor was so removed … when she was sobbing hysterically … it made me think of my own relationships. It made me think, “Oh gosh – I feel terrible that I had that argument with my husband this weekend.”

P.3 I found myself going back to my original feelings regarding Good Will Hunting. At the time that I saw it was a time when my son was experiencing a lot of problems in school … and my frustration in trying to help him, to advocate for him … to be a mom; but also educating myself so that I could go in and try to present information as objectively as possible – and still running up against a brick wall.

Information history. The fourth property that emerged in the category of engagement dynamic was information history. Participants described reflecting on film clip scenarios as a means of challenging the skills and information they might need to utilize in a depicted situation, as well as becoming involved with clips as a result of being stimulated by new information or knowledge. Information history, therefore, describes participants’ engagement with film clips being influenced by whether or not they have previous knowledge or information regarding a topic or scenario raised within a clip of film. The following participants’ statements describe information history:

P.5 I think it can help to see it in action. Especially in a counseling situation when a lot of us coming into the program don’t really know what goes on
in counseling … and what ideas they’re talking about … so to actually see that happen, and see the interaction between counselor and clients – because we don’t get to see a lot of that. We don’t get to sit in on sessions as a first-year student … and watch that happen. So this is one way we can kind of do that.

P.6 I remember thinking, “If I were the counselor in that role, and somebody was in my face yelling – regardless if they’re angry at me or the situation that they’re projecting onto me – how would I handle that? It kind of took me back to say, “how would you handle that?” You’ve got to have your emotions in-check.

P.2 In one of my undergrad classes I had to watch The Deerhunter, because we had been talking about Vietnam and what it was like to be out in the swamps of Vietnam. That was something that just talking about in class – you know, here in Athens, Ohio; it wasn’t really … you know … my imagination kind of picked up and filled in all of my own blanks. Then we watched The Deerhunter and it was a lot more gruesome – and a lot more intense than my mind had created. That is an example where I guess it really facilitated my thinking a lot and kind of pushed on my brain a little bit.

The property information history was further broken down along a dimension comprising the extremes of previous knowledge and no previous knowledge. A participant’s description depicted previous knowledge when describing engagement with a film experience being connected with having prior information regarding the topic addressed in the clip. Previous knowledge may be seen in the following comment:

P.8 It just brings it all to reality. Sometimes you’ll read things on paper but it’s not realistic to you. But if you watch the film it’s like, “wow – this does happen or this could happen.” It brings a more realistic perspective to it.

No previous knowledge represents the other dimensional extreme contained within the property of information history. Accordingly, no previous knowledge was conveyed when a participant’s description involved being engaged with a film that was based on not having previous knowledge or experience with a particular topic that was
addressed through a clip of film. No previous knowledge is evident in the comment that follows:

P. 6 In the group therapy situation … the one with Sandra Bullock; I found that humorous …, but then again, I thought how tough it must be in a group counseling situation to manage the respondents – to let people share without attacking. Letting everybody feel like their voice is heard … is anybody being stifled? I felt like my brain was working pretty fast, as far as thinking about how it would all come together.

Data on the dimension of previous knowledge and no previous knowledge within the information history property were limited, however, indicating a need for further exploration. Figure 1 illustrates the category of engagement dynamic and its properties, media history, conceptual relevance, personal history, and information history. Figure 1 also illustrates the dimensions, if applicable, of each property.

Personal Reaction Experience

Personal Reaction Experience emerged as a second category in the analysis of first round interview data. As participants described their perceptions and experiences of being exposed to popular film clips in their classes, they convey internal reactions that resulted. The concept personal reaction experience, therefore, is simply defined as the internal reactions that participants recall having during the time period when film clips were being shown in the classroom setting. Participants described reactions of being quickly drawn into film depictions, and becoming deeply absorbed and involved in cinematic scenarios that were being portrayed. Some quotations that aptly illustrate personal reaction experience include:

P.4 I know that with film at least, you are drawn in quicker to the characters and whatever is going on.
Yeah, I was pretty absorbed in them. It’s after, when we discussed it that I realized what I would have done. When I watch video, I’m really involved and there’s not a whole lot of thought process.

Well when you’re watching a film you get really involved – like watching any movie, you get really into it. You feel like you’re there … like you can experience what’s going on. So that’s the “hands-on” mode I’ll remember – it will stick out in my mind much more than the lecture we had last Thursday.

Analysis revealed two properties that further described personal reaction experience. These properties were cognitive and emotional, and each property also contained dimensions along which they varied.

Cognitive. In describing their personal reaction experiences, the comments of some participants were marked with a cognitive tone. Cognitive in this sense describes thought-based personal reactions that participants reported having while viewing film clips. Participants conveyed cognitive reactions in describing the desire to discuss clips of film as they were being viewed. Participants further described cognitive reactions in comments they made about looking at film content more critically as counseling students, and in analyses that clips could have provided greater challenge to their conceptualization of issues being emphasized. Participants’ cognitive descriptions illuminated the thinking component of the personal reaction experiences category. The following comments demonstrate cognitive reactions that participants reported having during the viewing of selected clips:

I get very involved in T.V. or movies, even though I know it’s not real. I get kind of caught-up and yell at the screen – or I call a friend and say, “can you believe they just did that?”

I guess I was surprised by my reaction to Good Will Hunting … because I’ve seen it before … when it came out five or six years ago … and never thought anything about that scene or those scenes; but now I’m a
Figure 1: Engagement dynamic.
counseling student thinking, “well, that’s not appropriate,” and having never had that reaction before. Like the first time I saw it, not thinking that much about it …

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P. 5 I guess I was surprised by my reaction to Good Will Hunting … because I’ve seen it before … when it came out five or six years ago … and never thought anything about that scene or those scenes; but now I’m a counseling student thinking, “well, that’s not appropriate,” and having never had that reaction before. Like the first time I saw it, not thinking that much about it …

P. 1 I’ve kind of realized that I am looking at things more critically, and anytime that I do see a therapist on a T.V. show, or even when I think back to a scene, I do look at it more critically – and did this person act ethically or is this just somebody that knows nothing about the profession writing some stereotypical role for a therapist to play. So I would say, no, I wasn’t necessarily surprised because I have been thinking critically about these types of things for a little while.

P. 2 I guess there would have been for me more of an interactive thinking piece – because for something that’s so straightforward, I’m like, “ah – accept this at face value,” and it’s not really a challenge to my ethical understanding … you know what I mean?

Personal reactions that were *cognitive* in nature varied along a dimension represented by the extremes of significance assignment and criticism formulation. Participants described significance assignment by comments that pertained to “figuring out” where a selected film is headed during its viewing. In addition, significance assignment was evident in endorsements participants made regarding ascribing importance to viewed material, as well as thinking about where it might fit with their learning. The statements that follow demonstrate participants’ descriptions of significance assignment:

P. 1 Well it’s funny, the girl that I talked to about the clip actually had the same experience – the instructor had shown us another clip from Good
Will Hunting, and the first thing that popped into my head was the scene that you showed us – I thought, “that’s a boundary violation,” and that the instructor should have shown us that. Then I realized why she showed us what she did, she wanted it to be a little bit more grey.

P.8 We had talked about boundaries with clients the week before, and the clips were kind of extreme on either end; the example of not setting boundaries or having diffuse boundaries with clients … and then setting really tight, strict boundaries with a client. So, it was hitting on what we had talked about the week before, and was an example on both sides of that.

P.4 I never saw the clips before and … I guess I really trusted the therapist judgment on knowing his client and setting boundaries. I felt really comfortable with that – that setting boundaries is a good thing. You want to be helpful, but you really need to set those boundaries.

P.5 I thought that was a good example of – a contrast to – the other clip, and kind of setting boundaries … clear boundaries and sticking with them with a client. I thought it was interesting. I’m not sure that I would do that really well … especially not starting out. But it’s something to see and alter to my own personality and say, “you know, this is what the rule is – and we’re going to stick with it.” So it’s interesting to think about that …

Within the *cognitive* property, criticism formulation is the dimensional extreme that contrasts significance assignment. Criticism formulation refers to participants’ reported cognitive experiences of criticizing or critiquing a film clip during their viewing of it within the classroom setting. Participants described thoughts surfacing during viewing that were critical of the accuracy of film portrayals. Participants also described critical thoughts surfacing around the excessive use of a particular film for pedagogic emphasis, and further critiqued the isolation of an issue based on seeing a clip from a film as opposed to the film in its entirety. The following comments demonstrate participants’ criticism formulation:

P.7 Like I said, my only concern would be that it’s Hollywood and how accurate is it?

P.2 A really good way to illustrate this, maybe, is like if you’re in an algebra class and you really have basic algebra down – like \( 1x X = 7 \) … what is
X? And then the example after that is also like $1 \times 7 = X$ … and you just look at it and you’re like, “yeah – I’ve seen that before.” And then you skim over it because you know it already. That’s kind of the feeling that I got when we were watching Good Will Hunting. I think if it was something a little bit less mainstream, it would force me to think a little bit more about what’s going on …

P.1 A lot of people would say, “well, I know how the relationship was in that movie and it seemed appropriate for how the two of them related to each other.” And they knew the background and all of that … so to see just one clip isolates the issue more, and you can try to justify by what outside details you might know.

*Emotional.* A second property of the *personal reaction experience* category was conceptualized as *emotional.* *Emotional* in this sense describes feelings-based personal reactions that participants reported having while viewing film clips. Participants conveyed *emotional* reactions in describing poignant personal reactions that surfaced during the viewing of film clips. Participants also described *emotional* reactions in expressing a desire to not forget feelings that surfaced during a viewing that they attribute as important in their development as counselors. *Emotional* reactions were evidenced in the following participants’ statements:

P.3 That particular film – there is a very strong parallel. Even talking about it, it still has that same effect. Um … because too many of these kids are given up on. Yeah … wow, I can’t believe it – even thinking about it has that same effect.

P.6 What I also want to stay with me is the way I felt when the counselor seemed to show absolutely no empathy for the woman that was crying … now certainly there could have been umpteen reasons why that particular method was working, but I don’t ever want one of my clients to feel as if, “click – time’s up. You’re done.” I thought that was incredibly insensitive.

The *emotional* property varied along the dimension of positive emotions and negative emotions. At the positive emotions extreme, participants described having emotions surface for them during the viewing of film clips that they identified as being
positive or powerfully moving in nature. In describing positive emotions, several participants described being inspired to see an entire film following being stimulated by the viewing of a clip. Additionally, participants commented that powerful film clips pushed them in a positive sense to be more reflective of their personal biases. Comments reflecting positive emotions include:

P.3 I remember my reaction the first time I saw it … so then seeing it the other night, it’s like - “I need to watch this again,” because it’s such a good movie.

P.7 My description of multicultural films – the amount of emotion they created in each of the people in the room. It really made you think, “How do I feel about people that are different than me? What are my biases?” It was extremely powerful, and something that just talking about in a controlled classroom … isn’t going to uncover it the same way as feeling it in your gut like when you watch it. It’s very, very powerful …

On the other dimensional extreme, negative emotions involved participants’ descriptions of having emotions surface during the viewing of film clips that they identified as being negative in nature. Negative emotions included participants’ descriptions of having feelings of shock, disgust, irritation, or a sense of uneasiness in response to material viewed in a film clip. Negative emotions are depicted in the following participants’ comments:

P.4 A lot of people said, “well … I know that seeing the movie, this is how Will has to be worked with.” But from stepping outside of that – which I’ve never seen it – I think my feeling and perspective were totally different; where I was shocked by it, and even disgusted by it.

P.8 We had a big discussion about how things could have been better in the scenes we saw – we wanted to get in there and fix what wasn’t working, but we couldn’t. So I guess those irritating feelings are the first thing I remember.

P.3 Seeing a child in my son – similar to the young man that Will Hunting was … and the crime … that he had been allowed to slip through the cracks that he had – partly because of the psychological barriers that he had built
around himself for protection and survival … and … what it cost him. It had a very emotional effect on me, that film did.

P.6 As we spoke to in class last night, I expected to be impacted and influenced by tears … and found that while I felt something, it certainly wasn’t as strong an emotion as when intense anger was displayed. I had physical evidence of that impacting me … whereas I didn’t when I saw tears. That really surprised me.

Figure 2 was constructed to illustrate the category of personal reaction experience and its properties, cognitive and emotional. Figure 2 also illustrates the dimensions within each property.

Social Interaction Processes

The third category was conceptualized as social interaction processes. Social interaction processes was defined by participants’ experiences of being exposed to film clips in a social context, and involved their general perceptions of viewing and dialoguing about clips in the classroom setting (with peers and instructor present). Participants’ descriptions involved reactions to verbal as well as non-verbal interaction within the classroom, reactions that related specifically to instructors, and reactions in regard to assessing whether the classroom was conducive for sharing and exchanging ideas. These descriptions were conceptualized as properties called peer interaction reaction, classroom observation reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment. The category social interaction processes is identified by participants in the following comments:

P.2 For me, I pay a lot more attention when interactive stuff is going on because I guess I put a little bit more validity on real-world kind of stuff … in the hands of other experts in the room – and what are they saying and what are they going to be doing with their clients? How do those different things contribute to the counseling world in which I will be taking part? It’s a lot more real to me than the other stuff we do.
Figure 2: Personal reaction experience.
P.5 I think for the class in general, people are slower to start. When you can get into a smaller group to discuss clips, you can throw things out there that maybe don’t make sense – kind of process it that way … bouncing ideas off of each other.

P.4 What’s nice about a small group is that you have an opportunity to speak as like a group member – taking the different ideas and bringing them all together to have the opportunity to say, “well, what did your group think?” And say, “some of us thought this,” and make sure that every opinion is shared … which is kind of nice. So it’s not just everyone having to raise their hand to speak out – it’s more of a summarization of what your four people – your three people thought. And what’s interesting … I never thought about that … but you kind of get everyone’s opinion about the clip.

Peer interaction reaction. Within the category social interaction processes, peer interaction reaction surfaced as a property addressing participants’ reactions to verbal processing that occurred in relation to discussing film clips with their peers. Peer interaction reaction, therefore, is defined as participants’ reactions that resulted from being in an interactive classroom setting where information and ideas regarding film clips was verbally exchanged with peers. Participants’ quotations indicating peer interaction reaction follow:

P.4 It helped me see how this does happen … how my peers, whom I respect, could see a video clip that I see as inappropriate … but since they kind of know what the therapeutic relationship was – and I do respect their opinions – that they could find rationale for the therapist’s behaviors.

P.8 I mean I probably still would have gotten the concepts, I think, but I wouldn’t have been able to reflect on what others said or share how I was feeling. I wouldn’t have picked up on the things I missed, so the groups are definitely a huge part of the process.

P.2 Like I said, it’s funny that in our group we were like, “yeah, yeah – that’s what I think too.” But then from our baseball diamond, this girl from another group came out of left field and we were like, “what are you talking about?” But it was really what she was thinking about, and for me that’s a lot better; it’s a lot different working on that level with my peers because I feel like at some point, we’re all going to be professionals and
it’s helpful to get where they’re coming from – even if it’s not where this little group of five of us were coming from. It adds perspective.

P.6 It certainly made me realize that we all – because of our own biases – picked up on different aspects of those videos and we related to them in one way or another. What I found emotional, somebody else did not … and vice-versa. And different levels of emotion that’s expressed and how it’s expressed … I thought was really very, very interesting and valuable to know. “O.K., well I saw this,” and the person behind me saw exactly the same thing, heard exactly the same thing, but they interpreted it so much differently than I did, and it’s just because of the different experiences that we each have had to get to that point …

On one end of the peer interaction reaction continuum was challenge. Challenge involved participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding film clips that ran contrary to their ideas, or challenged the ideas and opinions they had formulated. Participants described thinking about concepts and film material from a different perspective following peer interaction. Participants also described that while their perspectives were challenged by discussion with their peers, they often appreciated the input of perspectives that differed from theirs. Descriptions of the peer interaction reaction dimension promoting challenge included the following:

P.8 Yeah, there were things I missed … or I thought that in a clip a person handled a situation poorly and a classmate said, “Well that could be good, the way it was handled.” So if I was looking at something negatively, a classmate might see it more positively. It helped me realize what I had missed.

P.4 I know a lot of times in the multicultural class we’ll watch videos, and there’s definitely a lot of discussion that can come from that. Sometimes just a three minute clip can give you ten, fifteen minutes of discussion, just from different perspectives. And it’s not always positive. Somebody might say something and it’s a chance for me to say, “Oh, I disagree, and this is why I disagree,” or for others to do the same thing.

P.5 I know that everyone can’t agree with me – so it’s good to hear where other people are and what they are thinking about, and get different perspectives.
P.3 One of my classmates made a comment regarding the ethics of it and the manipulation … and I did kind of question from an ethical point of view – “am I missing something here – would I be too open? Would I step into unethical waters by supporting what he did?” So it made me stop and think, “hum – is there something here that I missed?”

Participants described the other extreme of peer interaction reaction as resonate.

Resonate involved participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding film clips that solidified or affirmed their own ideas.

Participants also described gaining greater clarity of issues or concepts by hearing input from peers that resonated with their own perspectives. Descriptions of the peer interaction reaction dimension promoting resonate/affirm included the following:

P.2 That made me think that for her – knowing the whole background – it became a really ambiguous situation. So I guess it reinforced that these kind of things are not as blatant when we’re struggling with our own kind of moral issues or agendas.

P.3 The person I chose to talk with, he and I both had a lot of the same reactions. Neither one of us – we saw the ethical boundaries, for all intents and purposes, being breached – in any other setting that would have been the end of the relationship all together. But again, this was a unique situation, and a unique young man … and sometimes there’s that grey area of boundaries, and that’s what we were looking at.

P.4 Well one comment that was made … it was a comment that I thought, but just never said. So it was something that I really connected with when that person said it. You know, it’s exactly what I thought.

Classroom observation reaction. Within the category social interaction processes, classroom observation reaction surfaced as a second property. Classroom observation reaction describes the non-verbal interplay occurring within the classroom setting. It is therefore defined as participants’ reactions to non-verbal social cues exhibited within the classroom, both during the viewing of film clips and during the post-viewing discussion period. Data regarding classroom observation reaction were limited
but substantial enough to warrant a property designation within *social interaction processes*, and to signal the need for greater research in this area. The following participants’ comments are indicative of *classroom observation reaction*:

P.1 I noticed other people laughing at certain parts … some of the lines that people laughed at, it wouldn’t occur to me to laugh at those …

P.4 I guess that what surprised me the most is not really my reactions, but the reactions of everyone else compared to mine.

*Instructor assessment.* *Instructor assessment* surfaced as a third property within the category *social interaction processes*. Participants made references to the role of instructors within the social context of courses they have taken or are taking in which popular film was or is utilized for a pedagogic purpose. *Instructor assessment*, therefore, is defined as general comments participants make regarding the role of an instructor within the classroom setting, and more specifically, perceptions participants form related to the manner in which instructors integrate film clips into their courses. *Instructor assessment* varied along a relational dimension from effective to ineffective. The following comments illustrate *instructor assessment*:

P.2 I think most of the time when our instructors show little clips of film, it’s to illustrate a point they just made about something that we’ve been talking about as a class for a long time.

P.3 There have been times where instructors place a lot more focus on the video and not so much on the introduction or the processing, and that’s where it kind of loses its educational value and just becomes a little bit more like entertainment for me.

P.5 If I don’t understand the concept that an instructor is trying to emphasize, then what I’m supposed to be seeing … the interaction I’m supposed to be looking for just doesn’t make any sense to me.

Effective emerged as one extreme of the relational dimension of the *instructor assessment* property. Effective was defined by participants’ assessments that instructors
provided proper structure for utilizing film clips, including perceptions that instructors adequately elucidated the didactic points the clips were intended to emphasize. Effective also indicates a sense of confidence by participants in the process of learning via film clips being directly connected with a perception that instructors are credible. The participants’ statements that follow demonstrate the effective dimension of instructor assessment:

P.4 These films take so much time to make, and there are so many people on a film crew. So there are people that actually research what a therapist would do and they go and talk with therapists. I think that they are pretty accurate and that’s why instructors shown them. They also provide great examples of what to do and what not to do as a therapist.

P.7 It’s helpful when an instructor says, “here’s what I would suggest not doing that the counselor in this clip did,” or, “here’s what I like about what the counselor in this clip did and suggest you think about it.” Those highlighted pieces can be very valuable for learning.

P.5 Film clips work really well, especially when the instructor chooses a clip that is right-on with what we’re talking about.

The other end of the relational dimension of instructor assessment was ineffective. Participants described ineffective as involving an assessment that instructors provided a lack of appropriate structure for utilizing film clips in the classroom, including perceptions that instructors could offer greater guidance in describing how the content of chosen film clips relates to course material. Ineffective also includes perceptions of ineffective instruction in general, and a subsequent lack of confidence in the process of learning via film clips in such instances. The participants’ statements that follow demonstrate the ineffective dimension of instructor assessment:

P.4 What sometimes happens is that since you are in a classroom setting, you know that the instructor is showing the film clip with an intention – they want you to get something out of it. And I think sometimes the hardest thing is where you’re talking about a topic, and they don’t really tell you
about the clip … they kind of want you to figure it out on your own – what you see going on. “How does this relate to our topic?” They pop in the video and you watch it, and you have no idea how it relates.

P.2 I guess it would be worth noting that a lot of times in the classroom, especially when you’re being graded on participation, I feel that there’s this pressure to jump in with an answer. I feel that it sets it up so there’s this feeling like we’re in second grade … and we’re called upon to shout out obvious answers that we all know for the benefit of the instructor. That doesn’t make me want to participate in film discussion, and the participation credit isn’t incentive for me.

P.5 We had class discussion after we watched the clip, and all of us were sitting around together thinking, “I didn’t understand what we were supposed to get – I didn’t understand what was going on.” It was that the clip was so out-of-context that we couldn’t really tell what was going on in the clip. So … there was a little bit of discussion, but it was really kind of surface, and it didn’t really go very far. It was like pulling teeth to get discussion going.

Risk assessment. Risk assessment surfaced as the fourth property within the category of social interaction processes. Participants described risk assessment in their descriptions of how open they perceived classroom settings to be in terms of sharing and exchanging ideas and opinions. Risk assessment is therefore defined as the calculation participants make regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and the subsequent assessment as to whether or not these environments are perceived conducive for sharing openly. Risk assessment varied along a relational dimension from safe to unsafe. The comments which follow illustrate the property of risk assessment:

P.1 In the past I would have been intimidated about giving my opinion in class, but I think I’m getting more and more used to it as I go through the counseling program with other people I know.

P.4 Sometimes it’s hard to share your opinion … wondering what people might think … or sometimes you might feel a certain way and not be able to articulate it – or wondering if others might misinterpret what you say … I think that happens a lot.
Well, and we know each other too. I mean, most of the time you’re in classes with people that you already know – people that you’ve had conversations with because you’ve had classes together.

Safe emerged as one extreme of the relational dimension of the risk assessment property. Safe was described by participants as they discussed feeling a solid rapport with their classmates or a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. Such assessments also led participants to conclude that the classroom was a safe and open environment for sharing ideas and divulging opinions about clips of film viewed in this social context. The participants’ statements that follow illustrate a sense of safety felt within the classroom:

That class in particular is a very cohesive group … so I didn’t feel intimidated by the material that was being presented in the film clips. I didn’t feel awkward even though the language and the content were very highly charged, very emotional.

I feel pretty comfortable offering my opinion – most of the people in the class, we’ve gone through at least a year of this program together, so being familiar with classmates helps. Plus, we do a lot of participation in that class anyway because it’s part of our grade – so you have to get used to raising your hand and saying things.

I think it’s a group of self-selected sharers when you’re in a counseling class. I mean … people have selected this field knowing that sharing feelings is a huge part of it, and that commonality spills over into my willingness to share in class.

The other end of the relational dimension of risk assessment was unsafe. Unsafe was described by participants in their assessments that the classroom environment was not conducive for sharing their ideas and feelings honestly. Unsafe was further described as participants discussed weak or unexplored relationships with classmates and consequently, hesitation to become involved in class discussion or share ideas about clips
of film that were viewed. The following comments portray participants’ risk assessments as being unsafe:

P.4 I think it makes it more difficult when then the class is a larger group. There’s room for a lot of misinterpretation in what you say, because there’s a lot of people hearing it. There’s not that ability to have clarification – being able to ask somebody for clarification or somebody asking you exactly what you meant. So I think it’s a little bit more intimidating.

P.3 Normally I’m alright with just speaking up and saying what I believe. I might not speak if I felt that my opinion might be misconstrued, and so it’s better to keep my opinion to myself and not cause any discord within the environment. Sometimes there’s almost this vibration – this gut feeling like, “now would not be a good time to talk,” – you’re better to just sit back and listen and keep your opinion to yourself because it’s not going to be well-received.

P.5 I don’t always benefit from class discussion because it involves trial and error and with a controversial topic, you never know how your opinion is going to be received.

Figure 3 illustrates the category of social interaction process and its properties, peer interaction reaction, classroom observation reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment. Figure 3 also illustrates dimensions of properties if applicable.

Content Cycling

The fourth category was conceptualized as content cycling. Content cycling was described when participants gave accounts of receiving the content of their counselor training courses through a variety of learning modalities. Participants’ descriptions included their experiences of having training content delivered through such pedagogic exercises as small and large-group class discussion, engagement in role-play activities, reading and processing text material, and drawing from present and previous didactic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. Furthermore, content cycling includes participants’ accounts of learning effectively by having material and concepts
Category 3: Social Interaction Processes

Peer Interaction Reaction
Challenge ↔ Resonate

Classroom Observation Reaction

Instructor Assessment
Effective ↔ Ineffective

Risk Assessment
Safe ↔ Unsafe

Figure 3: Social interaction processes.
repeated and addressed in their courses in a variety of formats, and references to comprehending concepts more fully via the synergistic combination of learning approaches that serve to further emphasize and engrain those training concepts. Analysis of the data revealed properties that further clarified content cycling. These properties accentuated a number of participants’ comments relating to learning associated with visual content, and to learning being enhanced through repetition. Accordingly, these properties include visual input and repetition. The following participants’ statements describe content cycling:

P.1 We did some role plays about how to explain to your client that you have to do mandated reporting – and that stands out to me. And the movie clips that we’ve seen and talked about stand out to me … and the panel discussion that we had last night when we had the experts come in and really tell us about the stuff they saw, that stands out to me.

P.5 I really prefer both … to read about a topic and then to see it in action … to kind of get the conceptual side of it and then see it played-out. Because I think if I just watch the film first without understanding the concept or theory behind it – I’m not really sure I’d understand what I was supposed to be picking up on in the film.

P.4 I couldn’t have learned about boundaries and ethics just from watching those two video clips. I needed the class … I needed the reading to do that. So, I think the video is just a nice supplement in a classroom – definitely.

P.3 Role-playing can be beneficial, but it’s hard. You’re asking people to create a role that they may not have had experience with … or they may be uncomfortable doing it. The film clip is a little bit more of a benign way getting the same point across without asking people to don an actor’s mask and say all of a sudden, “I’m going to emote,” and not know if they can or not. So film clips are really good – valuable in that respect.

P.6 There was a labor relations class that I had … and a video was used showing the subtlety of sexual harassment … and it was especially valuable because it shows how subtle it can be, and what one person interprets as completely acceptable, may be highly offensive to somebody else.
Visual input. Visual input emerged as one of the properties of the category content cycling. A number of participants described a particular affinity for having visual examples to underscore their learning of specific training concepts. Visual input is reflected in participants’ endorsements of film clips being introduced to emphasize course material, and in their testimonies that visual examples provide beneficial and poignant illustrations for learning course content. The following participants’ quotations describe visual input.

P.4 Film actually helps my comprehension – just for the fact that I’m a visual learner. So something, after reading it, could still be a little fuzzy – or it may be hard to take a theory or take something you’ve learned and think about how to apply it. But thank goodness there are a lot of movies that involve counseling, and so you can kind of see how it’s applied.

P.2 Film is more engaging and it’s easier to see an illustration – it’s not as flat as just reading it.

P.5 Film clips give an example of what we’re talking about and it makes it more concrete. If we’re talking about an ethical issue – to see it actually played out … an example of it, then it kind of clarifies what the issue really is and why it’s an ethical issue. Why there are two sides to it …

P.3 I like to see the use of clips because, for me, they help to kind of pinpoint a particular issue or theory or whatever. When something is presented out of the textbook – even in lecture – we’re trying to imagine how it is actually applied. Seeing it in a film clip helps me identify specifically how that is used.

P.1 It’s nice to see a situation or scenario acted out instead of talking about a theory or talking about what if this happened or what if that happened. Having that concrete example I think really does help me apply that knowledge that I’m learning into what a situation would actually look like.

Repetition. Repetition emerged as a second property of content cycling. Data suggested that several participants emphasized not only being drawn to training content as its cycled and presented through various pedagogic approaches, but further indicated
that even rote repetition of content is critical in order for it to become firmly established in their learning. The following participants’ comments illuminate repetition:

P.4 I guess what’s big with me in learning is that it needs to be repetitive … and the different ways … the reading … and then there’s the watching – the visual. And then you do the talking afterwards, the processing. And then usually there’s writing – a paper to write or a test to take. So it’s just kind of making sure that you’re clear. I think that’s what film helps us to do.

P.5 I’m pretty visual … and I learn by repetition. Like if I go to class, or whatever, I have to read through my notes again – read the text … yeah, so there’s a lot of repetition.

P.7 I have to write everything out … even if I’ve read the chapter, so that I can discuss it for class. When it comes to a test, I have to go over material again and outline everything, because I can then picture it. By the time I’ve read it twice, pictured it in the book and pictured it in my own handwriting, then I’ve got it. So film, in that sense, would be very in my style of learning.

Figure 4 illustrates the category of **content cycling** and its properties *visual input* and *repetition*.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation was utilized to confirm and establish trustworthiness of the initial findings. Maxwell (1996) described how qualitative researchers often have to “deal with validity threats as particular events or processes that could lead to invalid conclusions,” (p. 90). According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), triangulation involves the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, or extend, inferences drawn from the data. Fielding and Fielding (1986) argue that the value of triangulation lies in extending understanding and adding breadth and depth to our analysis through the use of multiple perspectives. It is toward a deeper and more trustworthy understanding of the data that three main triangulation procedures were employed following first round data
Category 4: Content Cycling

Visual Input

Repetition

Figure 4: Content cycling.
analysis. These involved a review of relevant literature and an analysis of researcher observation notes and memos (triangulation of sources), and ongoing consultation with the methodologist of this research study (triangulation through multiple analysis) (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Literature triangulation involved comparing and contrasting findings with relevant existing literature. This process involved referring to appropriate literature in order to counter-check findings, with the main objective being to check for consistencies as well as inconsistencies between findings and the concepts explored in the literature.

A review of relevant literature indicated a large body of literature describing various aspects of classroom learning environments, interpersonal interaction between students, experiential and cooperative learning, and pedagogic approaches. It is noteworthy that in looking through this material, only a small amount of the relevant literature was based in actual research; the vast majority was founded on theoretical assertions. However, there were several important concepts that surfaced from the first round of interviews that were consistent with the literature.

Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning model is one of the best know educational theories in higher education (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). The theory presents a way of structuring a class session or an entire course using a learning cycle. The core of Kolb’s four-stage model is a simple description of a learning cycle that shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). Kolb refers to these four stages as concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984).
According to Kolb, once the learning cycle is entered, the stages should be followed in sequence. Kolb emphasizes that it is important to systematically take the learner through each stage of the cycle, ensuring that effective links are made between each stage (1984). In applying Kolb’s experiential learning model to classroom activities, Svinicki and Dixon (1987) argue that instructors can and should provide a more complete learning experience by designing exercises that develop students’ abilities in all four stages. Carefully constructed classroom activities should not merely address the four stages, but also give students with different learning strengths an opportunity to use these abilities.

Sprau and Keig (1999) submit that the ultimate purpose of incorporating Kolb’s experiential learning model into curriculum and instruction is so student learning takes place at increasingly sophisticated levels of understanding. It should be noted that the model is not strictly cyclical; this would imply that learners simply move through the

Figure 5: Kolb’s experiential learning model.
stages without acquiring advanced levels of understanding with which to address subsequent experiences.

In reviewing Kolb’s theory, many parallels become evident between his stage model and the four categories that surfaced following first round analysis. The first stage of Kolb’s model, concrete experience, is briefly defined as involving the direct experience of any given event using one’s senses. Similarly, the category of engagement dynamic addresses students using their senses in making decisions about the level at which they will become involved with the film clip experiences.

Kolb (1984) defines the second stage of his model as reflective observation, and describes this as the process of learners reflecting upon a concrete experience in which they were engaged. The category of personal reaction experience that surfaced following first round interviews describes a similar process of students reviewing both the cognitive and emotional reactions that surfaced for them as a result of their film exposure and discussion experiences.

The third stage, abstract conceptualization, is described by Kolb as a place where “one interprets, analyzes, reasons, evaluates, and draws conclusions in order to explain the earlier experience,” (Sprau & Keig, 1999). It is suggested that exercises in this third stage might involve lecture, analogies, text readings, and discussion groups (Svinivki & Dixon, 1987). The category of social interaction processes that became evident following first round interviews similarly describes student engagement in the processes of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of film experiences that were generated within the social context of the classroom.
During the fourth stage, active experimentation, Kolb (1984) conveys that students are able to actually apply what they have learned in the previous three stages. This is similar to student descriptions that defined the fourth category, **content cycling**, following first round interviews. *Content Cycling* was defined by rich accounts of students taking what they had learned from the film experience and being able to connect it with material they had covered previously in their courses. Moreover, a number of students endorsed that the overall film experience had solidified their understanding of concepts and given them greater confidence in applying them (as is suggested in active experimentation).

Another strong parallel between Kolb’s experiential learning model and the emerging conceptual map from first round analysis is that in both examples, learning process components (and their corresponding stages or categories) are seen as multi-directional and not simply unfolding in a linear fashion. In other words, the categories of **engagement dynamic**, **personal reaction experience**, **social interaction processes**, and **content cycling** are highly interactive, do not necessarily occur in any specific order, and are complexly linked together as students learn and process a given experience.

Healey & Jenkins (2000), highlight how Kolb’s experiential model and the pedagogic practices he suggests closely parallel the work of Gardner (1999). Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences has had major impacts on educational delivery in the United States, and both Gardner’s and Kolb’s theories emphasize the different learning styles of individual students and the necessity for instructors to utilize a wide range of teaching methods to meet their needs. This echoes a sentiment that was repeatedly discussed by students as they described **content cycling**, and the emphasis they gave to
learning most effectively through a number of different teaching approaches being employed in the classroom (i.e., lecture, role-play activities, case studies, reading/writing assignments, multimedia presentations, etc.).

Gardner (1999) advocates that there are at least eight intelligences that need to be considered when examining how it is that people learn. Briefly, these intelligences are verbal-linguistic (the potential to use language, as used in reading, writing, telling stories, and thinking in words); logical-mathematical (the potential for understanding cause and effect and for manipulating numbers, qualities, and operations, as used in logic and reasoning); spatial (the potential for representing the spatial world internally in one’s mind as used in imagining and visualizing); kinesthetic (the potential for using one’s whole body or parts of the body, as used in athletics, crafting, and using tools); musical (the potential for thinking in music; for hearing, recognizing and remembering patterns, melodies, and rhythms); interpersonal (the potential for working with others, as used in understanding people, communicating, and resolving conflicts); intrapersonal (the potential for understanding ourselves, as used in self-reflection and recognizing one’s own strengths and weaknesses); and naturalistic (the potential for discriminating among plants, animals, rocks, and the world around us, as used in understanding nature).

In essence, Gardner suggests that each of these eight intelligences may be paired with instructional methods and activities that best facilitate learning and that build on inherent strengths of a given intelligence. As examples, a spatial learner might learn best in working with pictures and colors, visualizing and using the mind’s eye; an interpersonal learner might learn best through sharing, comparing and relating with others, and cooperating (Denig, 2004).
In examining the first round interviews and the emerging data, there appear to be a number of significant connections with Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory (1999). Four of Gardner’s eight intelligences appear to have a close resemblance with certain categories, properties, and dimensions that surfaced following first round interviews. Specifically, the verbal-linguistic and interpersonal intelligences that Gardner describes speak quite closely to the experiences that were conveyed by participants in discussing *social interaction processes*. Moreover, the property *peer interaction reaction* and its dimensions (challenge and resonate) provide a host of student accounts that resonate with Gardner’s descriptions of verbal linguistic and interpersonal intelligences: learning best through “hearing and seeing words and speaking; writing, discussing, and debating ideas,” and learning best through “sharing, comparing, and relating with others, and cooperating,” (Denig, 2004, p. 107).

As previously noted, Gardner (1999) describes spatial intelligence for those persons who learn best in working with pictures and colors, and who are able to readily visualize and learn from visual stimulation. This type of learning is closely connected with a number of first round student accounts that define the property *visual input* within the category of *content cycling*.

A final connection may be made with the intelligence that Gardner depicts as intrapersonal. People who fall into this learning category do well when working alone, doing self-paced projects, and having the opportunity to reflect (Nelson, 1998). In the category *personal reaction experience*, several students described having an appreciation for being able to experience and process the film clip material on their own before they met with small groups and the larger class for discussion. A couple of students
emphasized in their interviews that they learn most effectively on their own and while they tolerated the small and larger group experience, they were most drawn to the personal reflection (either cognitive or emotional) stimulated by the film experience.

In considering that the film experiences and subsequent processing in this research occurs within a classroom setting, Goodenow (1992) suggests that students’ experience of the classroom includes social and interpersonal processes as much as intellectual ones. Along the same lines, Green, Weade, and Graham (1988) propose that there are two texts in any classroom lesson: an academic text and a social text. The academic text refers to “the content of the lesson and the structure of this content,” and the social text refers to “information about expectations for participation (e.g., who can talk, when, where, in what ways, with whom, for what purpose)” (Green et al., 1988, p.13). Green and colleagues also suggest that these two texts “co-occur and are interrelated” (Green et al., 1988, p.13), mutually and inextricably influencing each other. This idea represents a central tenet of a socio-constructivist view that learning springs from social interactions, with language as a key mediating tool (Wertsch, 1991).

The academic and social texts referred to by Green and colleagues (1988), and the socio-constructivist view emphasized by Wertsch (1991) offer credence to the manner in which the categories have been conceptualized following the first round of interviews. The academic text, for example, addresses the content and structure of a lesson - in this research this represents a classroom lesson that revolves around a film experience. The academic text mirrors and describes the content and structure issues that are discussed by students in the engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, and content cycling categories. Aspects of the social text, as discussed by Green et al. (1988), are clearly
evidenced in the **social interaction processes** category and its subsequent properties. The category **social interaction processes**, is given further credibility after examining the numerous comments made by participants regarding the role of social interaction throughout the film experience, and the repeated role they place on the importance of the social context on their learning. This data further supports the position that learning is a social phenomenon and (reflective of a socio-constructivist perspective), generated through social interaction (Do & Schallert, 2000).

In addition to the literature triangulation described above, researcher observation notes were also used as a triangulation method. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe how researcher observation notes provide conceptual density and integration by providing details for the research process. They also indicate that the use of researcher observation notes helps the researcher to gain analytical distance from the data that is crucial in helping the researcher maintain a level of distance in data conceptualization.

Immediately following the individual interviews, the researcher made notes of participants’ behavior, affect, and demeanor as they responded to interview questions.

Researcher observation notes supported the conceptualization of the category **engagement dynamic**. The researcher observed the participants exhibit excitement as they discussed becoming engaged and staying engaged with the film clips. These notes also described how participants became enthusiastic in talking about their levels of engagement if they were able to see the film clips as *relevant*; conversely, participants expressed significantly less enthusiasm in expressing their level of engagement if they described having difficulty in seeing the clips as relevant to the course content.
The researcher also observed a wide range of responses from participants as they conveyed their *personal reaction experience*. During the interviews, it became clear that participants were reflecting on the film clip material and the responses that were elicited for them. Those who expressed having *emotional* reactions to the clips seemed to need to process the emotions that surfaced for them during the viewing; interestingly, on several occasions participants’ *emotional* reactions were directly connected with their *personal histories* (a property within *engagement dynamic*), and in these instances the researcher noted that both emotional reactions and engagement levels for participants were high. The researcher observed that when participants described having primarily *cognitive* reactions to film clips, they did not appear to need the same level of time to process their experience as those who described having *emotional* reactions.

In addition, the researcher observed that participants spent a good amount of time in their interviews discussing *social interaction processes*. Participants were energetic in discussing the property *peer interaction reaction*, and expressed excitement in regard to being able to discuss film reactions with peers and the significance of being able to hear the perspectives of classmates with whom they had a shared film experience. The majority of participants expressed a level of comfort with their instructors and their classmates, and the researcher noted a positive relationship between participants’ level of comfort in the class and their willingness to share.

The researcher also observed participants expressing *content cycling* during the interviews. Most participants made strong assertions that they needed to learn course content through a variety of pedagogic approaches, and enthusiasm was clearly evident when participants described learning environments wherein various learning approaches
are utilized to stimulate learning. On the other hand, several participants described (and even visibly conveyed) a sense of boredom and dissatisfaction in discussing courses they had experienced that were primarily lecture-based. All students expressed excitement at the use of popular film as a teaching tool, and many endorsed that visual input played a significant role in the manner in which they learned and retained information.

In addition to researcher observation notes and literature triangulation, memos were made during the process of data analysis. The memos often were made about the researcher’s conceptualizations based on his theoretical sensitivity and feelings experienced in reaction to the data. Additional memos were made during consultation meetings and phone calls with the researcher’s committee methodologist and during consultation meetings with peers. These memos helped the researcher to bracket preconceived notions about participants’ experiences as data were analyzed.

Memos made during data analysis recorded observations that participants seemed to go through a complex process of attributing significance and meaning to the film clips that were shown, determining how the experience would fit into their learning. Memo notes supported the process of participants becoming involved with film clips, which in turn led to personal responses to being engaged with the clips. Memo notes of this involvement and response supported the conceptualization of the categories engagement, dynamic, and personal reaction experience. Furthermore, the memos noted participants’ endorsements of the significance of the social context in their film experience and processing, and the importance of ensuring that the films moved beyond mere entertainment value by connecting directly with course content. These observations were
used to further enhance the conceptualization of the categories social interaction
processes and content cycling.

In summary, current literature, the accumulated researcher observation notes, data
analysis and consultation memos, were used to triangulate the initial categories,
properties, and dimensions that had been generated from first round interview data.

Discussion

A tentative conceptual framework of Master’s-level counseling students exposure
to popular film clips in their coursework emerged following analysis of first round
interview data. The perceptions and experiences of eight participants generated four
main categories: engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction
processes and content cycling. These categories described how participants’ perceptions
and experiences of becoming engaged with the film media, their personal reactions
regarding their engagement level, how they perceived the film experience occurring
within a social context, and their experiences and perceptions of how film fits into their
training content. These categories contained properties, and the majority of these
properties contained dimensions that further described them. Axial coding revealed that
relationships existed between the categories through their properties and dimensions.

Engagement Dynamic

Participants described having reactions to clips as they were introduced, which in
turn led to them becoming further or lesser engaged with the clips. These descriptions
were conceptualized as engagement dynamic. Engagement dynamic conceptualized
participants’ immediate responses to film clips that were introduced, and the processing
that occurred regarding the level at which participants became involved and stayed
engaged with the clips. Further analysis revealed properties, which included *media history, conceptual relevance, personal history, and information history.*

*Media history.* Participants discussed having immediate reactions to film clips based on a history with the selected clip. These descriptions were used to create the property *media history.* *Media history* was described by specific references participants made regarding whether or not they had been previously exposed to a selected film clip. Participants further described their engagement in a film clip being directly related to viewing a clip of film that they had never seen before. Additionally, participants also described engagement in a film clip that related directly to having seen a clip of film on at least one previous occasion. *Media history,* therefore, varied along a dimension from new/novel, to previous exposure. This dimension described whether or not participants had an established *media history* with selected film clips, and the manner in which knowing or not knowing a clip affected their level of engagement.

Novel emerged as one end of the dimension along which *media history* varied. On this end of the *media history* continuum, participants described becoming involved with a clip based on an attraction to its novelty. In addition, novel included participants’ comments regarding a desire for greater novelty in popular films that are introduced within courses, and descriptions of being drawn into previously unseen films based on the fact that a counseling relationship was depicted in the film. At the other end of the *media history* dimension, participants described becoming engaged with a clip based on having seen it before. Previous exposure, therefore, emerged to counter novel at the other end of the *media history* continuum. Previous exposure describes participants’ engagement levels being directly related to having viewed a selected film clip on at least one prior
occasion. In addition, previous exposure may also include participants’ decisions to become involved with a film clip based on previous popular film experiences (either positive or negative) in other courses.

*Conceptual relevance.* A second property of the *engagement dynamic* category was formulated as conceptual relevance. Participants described how their engagement level with clips related to assessments of how closely film clip material aligned with course content. The property *conceptual relevance* was therefore depicted as participants’ engagement with film being directly related to their determination of whether or not a selected film clip was relevant to the material being covered in the course.

The property *conceptual relevance* varied along a dimension that extended from credible to non-credible. The extremes of this dimension relate directly to decisions or reactions students had regarding relevance and, consequently, their level of engagement or involvement with the clips.

One end of the *conceptual relevance* dimension was credibility. Participants endorsed being engaged with film clip material based on their judgment that the clips resonated with material that was being covered in class. Also at this dimension extreme were participants’ endorsements of film clips offering credible and valid portrayals of course concepts. Non-credible represented the other extreme of the dimension of *conceptual relevance*. Non-credible describes participants’ endorsements of film clip material not resonating particularly well with course content. Moreover, participants’ described a lower level of engagement when they determined film clips to not be particularly relevant. The non-credible dimension extreme includes participants’
endorsement of film clips conveying unrealistic or invalid portrayals of course concepts, or a decreased sense of credibility based on a determination that particular concepts are excessively emphasized.

**Personal history.** A third property in the category of the *engagement dynamic* was personal history. This category was conceptualized as addressing participants’ levels of engagement with film clips based on selected clips conjuring events or issues from participants’ personal pasts. Additionally, clips appeared to be particularly engaging for participants (either positively or negatively) if they connected in some manner with their personal histories; i.e., were clips from a favorite or enjoyable film or portrayed an issue of personal significance (grief, addiction, depression, family strife, etc.)

**Information history.** The fourth property that emerged in the category of *engagement dynamic* was information history. Participants described reflecting on film clip scenarios as a means of challenging the skills and information they might need to utilize in a depicted situation, as well as becoming involved with clips as a result of being stimulated by new information or knowledge. *Information history*, therefore, describes participants’ engagement with film clips being influenced by whether or not they have previous knowledge or information regarding a topic or scenario raised within a clip of film.

The property *information history* was further broken down along a dimension comprising the extremes of previous knowledge and no previous knowledge. A participant’s description depicted previous knowledge when describing engagement with a film experience being connected with having prior information regarding the topic
addressed in the clip. No previous knowledge represents the other dimensional extreme contained within the property of information history. Accordingly, no previous knowledge was conveyed when a participant’s description involved being engaged with a film that was based on not having previous knowledge or experience with a particular topic that was addressed through a clip of film. Data on the dimension of previous knowledge and no previous knowledge within the information history property were limited, however, indicating a need for further exploration.

Personal Reaction Experience

In addition to the experiences categorized as engagement dynamic, participants described internal reactions that resulted from being exposed to popular film clips in their classes. These reactions were conceptualized as personal reaction experience, and is simply defined as the internal reactions that participants recall having during the time period when film clips were being shown in the classroom setting. Participants described reactions of being quickly drawn into film depictions, and becoming deeply absorbed and involved in cinematic scenarios that were being portrayed. Analysis revealed two properties that further described personal reaction experience. These properties were cognitive and emotional, and each property also contained dimensions along which they varied.

Cognitive. In describing their personal reaction experiences, the comments of some participants were marked with a cognitive tone. Cognitive in this sense describes thought-based personal reactions that participants reported having while viewing film clips. Participants conveyed cognitive reactions in describing the desire to discuss clips of film as they were being viewed. Participants further described cognitive reactions in
comments they made about looking at film content more critically as counseling students, and in analyses that clips could have provided greater challenge to their conceptualization of issues being emphasized. Participants’ cognitive descriptions illuminated the thinking component of the personal reaction experiences category.

Personal reactions that were cognitive in nature varied along a dimension represented by the extremes of significance assignment and criticism formulation. Participants described significance assignment by comments that pertained to “figuring out” where a selected film is headed during its viewing. In addition, significance assignment was evident in endorsements participants made regarding ascribing significance to viewed material, as well as finding a place for it to fit with their learning.

Within the cognitive property, criticism formulation is the dimensional extreme that contrasts meaning assignment. Criticism formulation refers to participants’ reported cognitive experiences of criticizing or critiquing a film clip during their viewing of it within the classroom setting. Participants described thoughts surfacing during viewing that were critical of the accuracy of film portrayals. Participants also described critical thoughts surfacing around the excessive use of a particular film for pedagogic emphasis, and further critiqued the isolation of an issue based on seeing a clip from a film as opposed to the film in its entirety.

Emotional. A second property of the personal reaction experience category was conceptualized as emotional. Emotional in this sense describes feelings-based personal reactions that participants reported having while viewing film clips. Participants conveyed emotional reactions in describing poignant personal reactions that surfaced during the viewing of film clips. Participants also described emotional reactions in
expressing a desire to not forget feelings that surfaced during a viewing that they attribute as important in their development as counselors.

The *emotional* property varied along the dimension of positive emotions and negative emotions. At the positive emotions extreme, participants described having emotions surface for them during the viewing of film clips that they identified as being positive or powerfully moving in nature. In describing positive emotions, several participants described being inspired to see an entire film following being stimulated by the viewing of a clip. Additionally, participants commented that powerful film clips pushed them in a positive sense to be more reflective of their personal biases.

On the other dimensional extreme, negative emotions involved participants’ descriptions of having emotions surface during the viewing of film clips that they identified as being negative in nature. Negative emotions included participants’ descriptions of having feelings of shock, disgust, irritation, or a sense of uneasiness in response to material viewed in a film clip.

*Social Interaction Processes*

The third category was conceptualized as *social interaction processes*. *Social interaction processes* was defined by participants’ experiences of being exposed to film clips in a social context, and involved their general perceptions of viewing and dialoguing about clips in the classroom setting (with peers and instructor present). Participants’ descriptions involved reactions to verbal as well as non-verbal interaction within the classroom, reactions that related specifically to instructors, and reactions in regard to assessing whether the classroom was conducive for sharing and exchanging ideas. These
descriptions were conceptualized as properties called peer interaction reaction, classroom observation reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment.

Peer interaction reaction. Within the category social interaction processes, peer interaction reaction surfaced as a property addressing participants’ reactions to verbal processing that occurred in relation to discussing film clips with their peers. Peer interaction reaction, therefore, is defined as participants’ reactions that resulted from being in an interactive classroom setting where information and ideas regarding film clips was verbally exchanged with peers.

On one end of the peer interaction reaction continuum was challenge. Challenge involved participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding film clips that ran contrary to their ideas, or challenged the ideas and opinions they had formulated. Participants described thinking about concepts and film material from a different perspective following peer interaction. Participants also described that while their perspectives were challenged by discussion with their peers, they often appreciated the input of perspectives that differed from theirs.

Participants described the other extreme of peer interaction reaction as resonate. Resonate involved participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding film clips that solidified or affirmed their own ideas. Participants also described gaining greater clarity of issues or concepts by hearing input from peers that resonated with their own perspectives.

Classroom observation reaction. Within the category social interaction processes, classroom observation reaction surfaced as a second property. Classroom observation reaction describes the non-verbal interplay occurring within the classroom
setting. It is therefore defined as participants’ reactions to non-verbal social cues exhibited within the classroom, both during the viewing of film clips and during the post-viewing discussion period. Data regarding *classroom observation reaction* were limited but substantial enough to warrant a property designation within *social interaction processes*, and to signal the need for greater research in this area.

*Instructor assessment.* *Instructor assessment* surfaced as a third property within the category *social interaction processes*. Participants’ made references to the role of instructors within the social context of courses they have taken or are taking in which popular film was or is utilized for a pedagogic purpose. *Instructor assessment*, therefore, is defined as general comments participants’ make regarding the role of an instructor within the classroom setting, and more specifically, perceptions participants form related to the manner in which instructors integrate film clips into their courses. *Instructor assessment* varied along a relational dimension from effective to ineffective.

Effective was defined by participants’ assessments that instructors provided proper structure for utilizing film clips, including perceptions that instructors adequately elucidated the didactic points the clips were intended to emphasize. Effective also indicates a sense of confidence by participants in the process of learning via film clips being directly connected with a perception that instructors are credible.

The other end of the relational dimension of *instructor assessment* was ineffective. Participants described ineffective as involving an assessment that instructors provided a lack of appropriate structure for utilizing film clips in the classroom, including perceptions that instructors could offer greater guidance in describing how the content of chosen film clips relates to course material. Ineffective also includes perceptions of
ineffective instruction in general, and a subsequent lack of confidence in the process of learning via film clips in such instances.

Risk assessment. Risk assessment surfaced as the fourth property within the category of social interaction processes. Participants described risk assessment in their descriptions of how open they perceived classroom settings to be in terms of sharing and exchanging ideas and opinions. Risk assessment is therefore defined as the calculation participants make regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and the subsequent assessment as to whether or not these environments are perceived conducive for sharing openly. Risk assessment varied along a relational dimension from safe to unsafe.

Safe emerged as one extreme of the relational dimension of the risk assessment property. Safe was described by participants as they discussed feeling a solid rapport with their classmates or a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. Such assessments also led participants to conclude that the classroom was a safe and open environment for sharing ideas and divulging opinions about clips of film viewed in this social context.

The other end of the relational dimension of risk assessment was unsafe. Unsafe was described by participants in their assessments that the classroom environment was not conducive for sharing their ideas and feelings honestly. Unsafe was further described as participants discussed weak or unexplored relationships with classmates and consequently, hesitation to become involved in class discussion or share ideas about clips of film that were viewed.
Content Cycling

The fourth category was conceptualized as content cycling. Content cycling was described when participants gave accounts of receiving the content of their counselor training courses through a variety of learning modalities. Participants’ descriptions included their experiences of having training content delivered through such pedagogic exercises as small and large-group class discussion, engagement in role-play activities, reading and processing text material, and drawing from present and previous didactic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. Furthermore, content cycling includes participants’ accounts of learning effectively by having material and concepts repeated and addressed in their courses in a variety of formats, and references to comprehending concepts more fully via the synergistic combination of learning approaches that serve to further emphasize and engrain those training concepts. Analysis of the data revealed properties that further clarified content cycling. These properties accentuated a number of participants’ comments relating to learning associated with visual content, and to learning being enhanced through repetition. Accordingly, these properties include visual input and repetition.

Visual input. Visual input emerged as one of the properties of the category content cycling. A number of participants described a particular affinity for having visual examples to underscore their learning of specific training concepts. Visual input is reflected in participants’ endorsements of film clips being introduced to emphasize course material, and in their testimonies that visual examples provide beneficial and poignant illustrations for learning course content.
Repetition. Repetition emerged as a second property of content cycling. Data suggested that several participants emphasized not only being drawn to training content as it is cycled and presented through various pedagogic approaches, but further indicated that even rote repetition of content is critical in order for it to become firmly established in their learning.

Second Round Questions

As previously mentioned, data on the information history property within the engagement dynamic were limited, indicating a need for further exploration. Therefore, two exploration questions were constructed to gather more information on both the information history property and its relationship with the larger engagement dynamic category. These questions were also designed to examine the temporal component of the in-class experience, exploring whether engagement levels changed as the cinema experience progressed. The questions were:

- Initially, when the film clip/s was/were presented and you began to be exposed to their content, what was your experience of becoming involved with the clips?
- Later, as the film clip/s progressed and another clip was shown, what other reactions did you have regarding how involved you would become in the film experience?

In addition, data regarding classroom observation reaction were limited but substantial enough to warrant a property designation within the category social interaction processes. In order to explore this area more fully, two interrelated
exploration questions were developed to address the non-verbal communication and observation interaction that occurs within the social context of a classroom:

- As you were watching the film clips and later discussing them, what reactions did you see or hear from other students and your course instructor?
- How did your observations influence how you responded to the film clips and later participated in class interactions?

Lastly, two confirmation questions were developed to describe the personalized reaction experience category more thickly, in addition to exploring possible connections with other categories:

- What reactions did you have, personally, as you viewed the clips?
- What did you experience, personally, in regard to sharing your ideas and reactions?
Section II - Second Round Interviews

Introduction

Following the completion of the first round interviews and data analysis, another eight students were selected for participation in the second round of interviews. In the same format as with participants who were interviewed in the first round, each of the eight participants in the second round was involved in an in-class popular film experience that was facilitated by the researcher. Within 48-hours of these in-class experiences, individual interviews were coordinated.

First round interview data analysis resulted in the conceptualization of initial categories and properties. Second round interview questions were constructed to further clarify and describe categories and properties that emerged from the initial interviews. These follow-up questions focused on the initial conceptual categories of *engagement, dynamic, social interaction processes,* and *personal reaction experience.* Analysis of second round data clarified and thickly described the concepts that emerged from the first round of interviews. Second round interview data also clarified participants’ perceptual descriptions of their in-class pedagogic film experiences. These descriptions confirmed and saturated the concepts that emerged from the initial data analysis. Axial coding procedures explored relationships between the categories and ensured complete analysis of the transcripts.

In addition to clarifying and confirming the first round data analysis findings, participants in second round interviews provided data that thickly described and supported the reconceptualization of categories and properties emerging from the initial
interviews: *Engagement Dynamic, Personal Reaction Experience, Social Interaction Processes*, and *Content Cycling*. Axial coding revealed that participants’ responses described relationships between the categories through their properties and dimensions. These descriptions clarified and enhanced the relationships between the initial categories, their properties, and their dimensions.

**Experiential Meaning-Making Process**

*Experiential meaning-making process* emerged following analysis of second round interview data as a contextual category through which all the initial categories were conceptualized and organized. *Experiential meaning-making process* was defined as participants’ experiences of mulling over their classroom exposure and subsequent reactions to the content of popular film clips; this included film-analysis reactions that surfaced for participants following their interactions with instructors and peers. This category was further conceptualized as the process participants used to attribute meaning to their popular film experiences, and involved a deliberation process through which participants determined how they would integrate material generated through the experiences into their learning. Participants’ descriptions depicted *experiential meaning-making process* as an internal process in that the clips stimulated personal reactions to both past and present experiences, or even stimulated reactions in regard to contemplating possible future experiences. In addition, *experiential meaning-making process* characterized the process participants used to understand social interactions and experiences with instructor and peers within the class environment, and further involved connections with participants’ personal, social, pedagogic, and occupational issues outside of class.
Participants’ descriptions indicated that they engaged in an *experiential meaning-making process* prior to the film experience as they attempted to understand how the clips would connect with the course content; during the exposure to clips themselves; during the social interaction discussion component; and following class as they continued to integrate the film exposure into their experience. Participants’ descriptions further revealed that the *experiential meaning-making process* permeated all the other categories and was consistently experienced in all facets of their being exposed to the pedagogic use of popular film clips.

P9: That’s what I found so useful about the film experience - it wasn’t just relating on the cognitive level and not just relating on the emotional level, but it was both. I don’t know if you’re going to ask this question, but as an aside, one of the benefits of that is that now when I’m reading, I have a context within which to place my learning and say, “Oh yeah, that’s like that little boy in Shine or It’s a Beautiful Life.” It’s very helpful. It brings it to life.

P10: It was interesting to hear other people and what stood out for them. It helped to give me a broader picture of what I didn’t pick out. When I was explaining what I thought about the relationships in the clips, perhaps the way I explained it was a bit different … or something I thought about issues of self-esteem in the clips might have been slightly different than what someone else said. Others brought up good points that I just didn’t think about … so things like that.

P11: Oh yeah – It was a very emotional experience watching the clips. I thought about them all the way home last night … I was thinking about the different clips and all of the different ramifications and aspects and how that applies to real life, and to people I know. I was putting faces to the characters … with people that I know. Yeah, it stayed with me for a long time.

P12: For me … since I was young … I have been a visual person. I can learn ten times better with things like flashcards, where I’m able to see something in play and where I can incorporate what I’m learning more than just seeing it on a slide and hearing a concept talked about. My whole family is made up of visual learners and all of my life, visually is how I have learned the easiest. I mean I can learn other ways … but it takes a lot more effort.
P13: With the first clip, I found something in common with my culture. In Chinese culture the father is often a very strong character ... so I could understand his actions in the clip and also the reactions of the children and the mother. I think the clips showed a family very typical of one you might find in China – not necessarily a “good” sense of typical. The high expectations from the parents and the way they sometimes live through the children, perhaps putting their own hopes and dreams onto them. That seemed to be the case in this film Shine.

P14: I felt that it was exciting because we were actually applying the information to something real ... because I feel that the characters are more real in a film than they are on paper. It felt like we got to observe characters and families and then discuss how we’d work with them – weaving theory into that. Much more effective than reading a case study that feels so dry. It felt exciting to get my hands in there and get gritty with it ...

P15: You know, I really like it when professors show popular film clips ... I was definitely into the activity and was excited about it. I thought it was a very good and different way to look at the theories we had been discussing. It added to the standard ways that we receive information ... like reading the text and getting information on Powerpoint in the classroom. I think that clips should be integrated into more classes ... when I think of What’s Eating Gilbert Grape, I’ve seen the movie before but have never been asked to look at it from an Adlerian perspective. It was both informative and challenging.

P16: I definitely think it’s helpful for me to talk with other people and see what their perspectives are of a clip or of something that transpires in class. Getting a group consensus – the give and take that occurs when you have to hash-out different ideas – I think that’s really useful for me. Personally, I might get more information or a clearer idea from someone and that can facilitate my learning – it helps me to put everything together better. It’s also more useful to me to sit down and talk about the clips with my peers, as opposed to an instructor just giving his or her comments ... because you’re coming up with ideas and you take a sense of ownership for what you’ve conceptualized.

Figure 6 illustrates the contextual category, *experiential meaning-making process* in relation to the other categories, *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*.
Experiential Meaning-Making Process

- Engagement Dynamic
- Personal Reaction Experience
- Social Interaction Processes
- Content Cycling

In and Out of the Classroom Environment

*Figure 6:* Experiential meaning-making process in relation to categories.
**Engagement Dynamic**

*Engagement dynamic* was confirmed as a category and supported by data analyzed following the second round of interviews. *Engagement dynamic* was defined as participants’ immediate responses to film clips that are introduced, and the processing that occurs regarding the level at which they will become involved and stay engaged with film clips. In the second round interviews, participants described more deeply their initial reactions of being exposed to popular film clips, and richly described how they became involved and stayed engaged with the film material. No new information was provided by participants regarding *engagement dynamic*. The additional data from round two interviews both supported and deeply described the category, *engagement dynamic*.

Furthermore, second round data analysis did not support the conceptualization of *information history* or *personal history* as stand-alone properties of *engagement dynamic*. Information gathered during the second round interviews and a constant comparative process clarified *information history* and *personal history* and revealed them to be addressing many of the same process components. In addition, the data from first round interviews which spoke to these properties were reexamined along with new data concerning these areas that was gleaned from the second round interviews. As a result, a determination was made to combine the properties of *information history* and *personal history* into a single property; *personal history* remained as the heading for this unified property. In order to more appropriately represent the combination of data into a single property, the definition for the re-conceptualized property of *personal history* was expanded.
**Personal history.** Personal history is defined as engagement with a film that is based on whether or not a film clip conjures an event or issue from participants’ pasts. Personal history also involves participants’ engagement being related to their having some personal, conceptual, or occupational connection with the content depicted in the clips. Film clips, consequently, are likely to have a greater impact for students if they connect in some manner with their personal history (i.e., are clips from a favorite or enjoyable film or portray an issue or circumstance of personal significance). The following participants’ statements are from round one interviews and serve to illustrate the redefined property of personal history:

P.3 I found myself going back to my original feelings regarding Good Will Hunting. At the time that I saw it was a time when my son was experiencing a lot of problems in school … and my frustration in trying to help him, to advocate for him … to be a mom; but also educating myself so that I could go in and try to present information as objectively as possible – and still running up against a brick wall.

P. 6 In the group therapy situation … the one with Sandra Bullock; I found that humorous … but then again, I thought how tough it must be in a group counseling situation to manage the respondents – to let people share without attacking. Letting everybody feel like their voice is heard … is anybody being stifled? I felt like my brain was working pretty fast, as far as thinking about how it would all come together.

P.5 I think it can help to see it in action. Especially in a counseling situation when a lot of us coming into the program don’t really know what goes on in counseling … and what ideas they’re talking about … so to actually see that happen, and see the interaction between counselor and clients – because we don’t get to see a lot of that. We don’t get to sit in on sessions as a first-year student … and watch that happen. So this is one way we can kind of do that.

In addition, the following second round participants’ statements bolster the redefined property of personal history, and add credence and clarity to its position as a property within the category of engagement dynamic:
With Gilbert Grape I didn’t feel as personally connected – I was looking at it more as entertainment. I was absorbed by it, but was more distant in that I felt like I was along for the ride and not relating on such a personal level with one of the characters. The first clip was more relative to my personal life.

Again, film clips are a good way to have some hands-on experience. In undergrad it was helpful to get an understanding as to what schizophrenia is and what it looks like … instead of just talking about it. To be able to show something like It’s a Beautiful Mind and show the character having hallucinations – having it depicted that way.

In addition to the re-conceptualized property of *personal history* emerging within the category of *engagement dynamic* following round two interviews, the property *personal history* became dimensionalized along the extremes of event specific and broader association. On one extreme of the *personal history* dimension, event specific is defined as participants’ engagement being connected with their linking the content of a film clip directly to a specific personal event or situation. The following participants’ quotations taken from both first and second round interviews, further illustrate event specific:

Despite the overwhelming sense of sadness and emotion that I was experiencing, I was at some level … although my cognitive side was not coming through as much … I was thinking, “Gosh – what’s this going to do to this little boy’s self-esteem?” You know, I was thinking of all the damage that’s being done to the little boy in Shine … and I was connecting all of this with a special little boy in my own life.

I remember when I watched the clip with the English lady, and the counselor was so removed … when she was sobbing hysterically … it made me think of my own relationships. It made me think, “Oh gosh – I feel terrible that I had that argument with my husband this weekend.”

I didn’t have anger that the person left me … it was that his life was cut short – so in that sense. But also how long it takes to get over it … and the sobbing – the uncontrollable sobs that I remember feeling. That it took years to get over the loss of someone very close. So I did connect with that scene …
In one of my undergrad classes I had to watch The Deerhunter, because we had been talking about Vietnam and what it was like to be out in the swamps of Vietnam. That was something that just talking about in class – you know, here in Athens, Ohio; it wasn’t really … you know … my imagination kind of picked up and filled in all of my own blanks. Then we watched The Deerhunter and it was a lot more gruesome – and a lot more intense than my mind had created. That is an another example where I guess it really facilitated my thinking a lot and pushed my brain a little bit.

At the other dimensional extreme of personal history is broader association.

Broader association is defined as participants’ engagement that is connected with their linking the content of a film clip to a more general area of their lives; (i.e., being stimulated to reflect on one’s role as a parent or one’s childhood). The following participant’s comments (taken from first and second round interviews) further clarify the dimension of broader association:

If I had the type of emotional impact hit me the other night like it did just now, I would have either probably … just my own personality … tried to just kind of withdraw and hide from it, or gotten up and left – just because of my own socialization within my family. Not because of anything anybody else would do, but … just me … one of my own issues.

You know, with all of the clips I was drawing from my experience as a parent. Now I don’t know whether the experience would have been different had I not been a parent – it’s hard for me to say. But I was coming at the film experiences from the perspective of being a parent.

Well I too have an over-bearing mother so I was definitely relating to Terms of Endearment … I could easily relate to Debra Winger’s anger and frustration with her mother.

The two clips that we saw really spoke to my strong maternal instincts, and that’s what really grabbed me.

Further analysis of second round data supported the initial conceptualization of the remaining properties within the engagement dynamic category, which included media history and conceptual relevance.
Media history. Participants discussed becoming engaged with their film experiences based on whether or not they had been previously exposed to selected film clips. These descriptions supported and clarified the property media history. In addition, the dimensions along which media history varied became increasingly clear following round two interviews. At one extreme of this dimension, novel described participants’ engagement in film that is directly related to the fact that they had never seen the film clip before. Participants’ richly described being drawn-in by clips they had never seen before, and several participants indicated a desire to see films in their entirety after the film clip experience. Additionally, participants’ indicated appreciating the opportunity to see and analyze something entirely new and the opportunity to be exposed to material with which they had no preconceived notions. The following participants’ comments further solidify novel as a dimension within the media history property:

P.16 I watch a lot of movies and I think I have a sense of if a movie is going to be good by just seeing a little clip of it. For example, I can tell that Gilbert Grape is probably a decent film based on the fact that I became pretty deeply moved on an emotional level just by seeing four minutes of it.

P.12 I didn’t really have any expectations for the clip, and so it was all new to me. I was easily able to reengage with the last clip even though we had spent quite a bit of time talking about the first two clips. I was able to focus and give my complete attention to that last clip.

P.14 I was even more intrigued with the second clip because I was like, “OK – now I see what we are doing here.” I also didn’t have any previous exposure to Gilbert Grape, so I was looking at it from a totally fresh perspective.

At the other extreme of the media history dimension, participants described that their levels of engagement with film were directly related to having viewed particular clips on at least one previous occasion. The dimension of previous exposure was more deeply described and clarified following second round interviews, and participants gave
vivid accounts of becoming involved in film clips based on the fact that they had seen the films on previous occasion or had been involved in popular film experiences in other courses. The following participants’ statements underscore the previous exposure dimension of media history, and further emphasize the redundancy and saturation of data regarding media history following second round interviews:

P.16 I didn’t remember a whole lot from the movie, but I quickly became engaged and found myself remembering the basic story-line. As far as my group goes, I was the only one who had previously seen it, so I was kind of adding in other things that I remembered. I talked more about the relationship the main character had with her mother, so I think I was focusing on things which had happened prior to the clip that you showed. That was interesting because my peers had only seen the little clip that you showed.

P.14 I had seen the movie before and was like, “yeah – it’s Terms of Endearment,” but I was engaged immediately. I was kind of expecting you to show a documentary or some dry professor droning on, so it was a pleasant surprise seeing a clip of popular film.

P.9 I was instantly drawn-in to the clip and remember seeing it before – it’s such a compelling story.

P.10 I’ve seen film clips in other classes and can honestly say that if it’s a good film then I get very engaged. Last night, I think I became more engaged with the film that I had already seen – I knew the characters already. With the first clip, I had to figure out what was going on and that’s a different experience than having seen a film already and knowing something about it. I didn’t have to do as much deciphering with the film that I already knew, and I was able to look for concepts more easily.

Conceptual relevance. Descriptions from the second round of interviews confirmed analysis of first round interview data regarding the property conceptual relevance. Conceptual relevance was defined as participants’ levels of engagement with film clips being based on their determination of whether or not selected film clips are relevant to the material being covered in their courses.
In the second round of interviews, participants primarily described being positively engaged with film clips due to the fact that they were able to readily relate course concepts to the clips they were viewing. Participants’ descriptions during second round interviews also confirmed that conceptual relevance varied along the continuum of relevant and irrelevant.

The dimension of relevant described participants’ endorsements of film clip material having relevance with material being covered in the class. In addition, this dimension also included student endorsements of films clips offering credible portrayals of course concepts. In the second round data analysis, the majority of participants confirmed that the film experiences assisted them in conceptualizing course concepts more fully, and as a result they found the experience to be engaging. Participants further described their film experiences as beneficial in helping them to synthesize their ideas about course concepts to which they had been exposed, and endorsed the film portrayals as realistic and credible. Data from second round interviews illustrating participants being engaged with clips due to their assessing the clips as relevant was redundant and the descriptions saturated. The following statements illustrate participants’ engagement levels and endorsements of clips as relevant:

P.11 Another thing I think that film clips do is spark your thinking about real situations that surround your own life – real people that you know and real situations that they are dealing with. It helps me to also think about the possible situations that I might be faced with as a counselor. The clips are useful because they help me to think about different situations I might be addressing at a later time.

P.16 Like I said, whenever you get a chance to translate a theory in “mid-air” by applying it to a situation – like a situation in film – I think that’s helpful.
The clips were really good selections because they hit on many of the topics we’ve been discussing in class. Seeing them left me with wanting to see more of the films ... I just thought they were good examples for incorporating ideas we’ve been addressing.

Placing it within the context of what we have been talking about in class, it allowed me to very easily relate to the characters in the film. The film experience was as if I was in the room watching the fathers and sons interact. It brought to life a lot of the comments we’ve been making, and a lot of the things I’ve been reading about. So, it helped me relate to the written word much better than if we had just verbally discussed the ideas.

At the other end of the conceptual relevance property, the dimension irrelevant described participants’ endorsements of being minimally engaged in film clips due to the clips not being particularly relevant to course material. Irrelevant also described participants’ endorsements of film clips conveying unrealistic or invalid portrayals of course concepts. While the majority of data that fit into conceptual relevance supported the relevant dimension, some participants’ comments conveyed leeriness at the credibility and accuracy of the film clip material as it related to course concepts. These second round interview comments further saturated the dimension irrelevant, and added redundancy to the property conceptual relevance. The following participants’ comments illustrate the dimension irrelevant:

I did have some difficulty believing the characters and found myself wondering about how accurate the scene was. Not that this ruined the experience for me, but I was aware that this was a movie designed for entertainment.

I was thinking about the concepts as I had studied them, and the film clips weren’t entirely in-line with the way I had conceptualized the psychosocial stages. They made me think – don’t get me wrong – but I did conclude on several occasions that these were Hollywood creations.

Figure 7 illustrates the category engagement dynamic and its properties and dimensions.
Figure 7: Engagement dynamic category, properties, and dimensions.
**Personal Reaction Experience**

*Personal reaction experience* was confirmed as a category in the analysis of second round interview data. The concept *personal reaction experience* was defined as the internal reactions that participants had to film clips both during and following their viewing. As participants described their perceptions and experiences of being exposed to the film clips, they illuminated the reactions that they experienced. Participants described having both cognitive and emotional experiences during their exposure to the clips, and several participants described experiences of having both cognitive and emotional reactions simultaneously. Participants also described being more invested in clips that drew them in (either cognitively or emotionally), and indicated that they were more likely to remember film material that was more stimulating on cognitive or emotional levels. In the second round, participants readily discussed having had internal responses to the film clips they viewed and through this articulated how *personal reaction experience* was an integral aspect of exposure to popular film. Data from second round interviews was redundant and the descriptions saturated. The following quotations illustrate participants’ accounts of their *personal reaction experience*:

P.16 I think that both clips are going to stay with me. With the first one, I was studying it to try to determine how I was going to fit a particular theory with what I was viewing. As far as the second clip goes, I’ll remember it because of the emotional reaction I had to it. I was still cognitively aware during the second clip – keeping track of how many kids were in the family and trying to determine birth order and family dynamics … things like that. But that didn’t stop me from also having emotional reactions at the same time.

P.9 That’s what I found so useful, that it wasn’t just relating on a cognitive level and not just relating on an emotional level – it was both. I don’t know if you’re going to ask this, but as an aside, one of the benefits of that is that now when I’m reading, I have a context within which to place my
learning and say, “Oh yeah – that’s like that little boy in Shine or Life is Beautiful.” That’s very helpful for me.

P.11  At times I was putting myself in the counselor role thinking, “What would I do … what tools do I have at this point? What things do I still need to learn?” So on a cognitive level I was thinking about where I am with my training and what do I have available that I could bring to the table right now in regard to this situation. And then from a very personal perspective I allowed myself to feel … sometimes as if I were a child; sometimes as if I were a parent. I tried to look at it from both sides and that was very emotional. I had an extraordinarily happy and loving childhood – getting back to that role of being a child … I just allowed myself to feel all of those things. The tears were just pouring for me …

Analysis of second round interview data confirmed and expanded on the properties of the personal reaction experience category. These properties were maintained as cognitive and emotional. Each of these properties also contained dimensions along which they varied.

Cognitive. Cognitive was confirmed as describing thought-based personal reactions that participants had to film clips either during or following their presentation in class. Cognitive emerged as participants described reactions to the clips that stimulated thought processes and the sorting of information:

P.9  My cognitive side was busy comparing the clips – comparing the two little boys and comparing their fathers … how one was doing so much damage and the other was so unconditional with his love.

P.14  I was curious to know as the clip was going … “OK, so how much of this are we going to watch?” And my mind was engaged in thinking, “OK, this is interesting - he’s showing this part before she dies.” So I was busy wondering why you selected this particular portion of a two hour film. I was also thinking about how you decided to end the clip.

P.12  I think I was coming more from the perspective of, “OK – this is a classroom and I’m obviously supposed to get something from this to connect with what we’re learning.” So I was focusing more on the educational aspect of the clips and didn’t connect so deeply on an emotional level with them. Some of my group members were really
emotionally distraught by what they saw in the clips – that just wasn’t my experience.

P.15 I was trying to take note of key things I was seeing in the clips – making mental notes about the characters and things like that. Also trying to relate what I was seeing to the theories we were covering … so my brain was working pretty quickly.

The cognitive property within the category personal reaction experience varied along a dimension that extended from significance assignment to criticism formulation. Round two interview data and analysis confirmed and verified this property as defined and dimensionalized in round one data analysis. Participants described significance assignment in comments they made pertaining to their efforts of trying to “figure out” where a film clip is headed. Significance assignment also reflected participants’ endorsements of ascribing importance to what they were viewing in the clips, as well as contemplating how it might fit within their learning. Participants further emphasized significance assignment in descriptions they gave of film clip material helping them to better mentally integrate and connect material they were covering in their courses. Other comments reflected participants’ ease with relating to film characters and scenarios, and subsequently relating concepts more fluidly to those characters or circumstances that had come to life for them in the clips. The following statements demonstrate participants’ descriptions of significance assignment:

P.10 I am always quick to analyze films – I’m usually thinking as I’m watching, trying to figure things out. So last night I was paying attention to the relationships, looking at the father and son relationships and how the dynamics of that was working.

P.12 At the same time I was watching the clips, I was looking for things that stood out … things that we might discuss later on. I was trying to make a connection between what we had been talking about in class and what you said we might discuss in regard to the clips. The clips really pulled me in and when I think of the second clip, Life is Beautiful, I definitely wanted
to watch more … it really left me with wanting to see where things would go. My main thoughts and connection with the clips was in trying to relate them to what we were learning.

P.15 I kind of placed myself right in the situation I was seeing and found it easy to become involved with the characters I was seeing. It’s different from a session where you hear about what has happened with a client – with the clips, you actually have the opportunity to see a situation unfold and so, you can analyze it differently.

P.14 This film experience was pretty powerful for me. A lot of times in class you’ll get a case study and you are assigned to do a similar process as to what we did with discussing the clips. I always feel detached from an activity like that … I don’t know what the characters are like. But with the clips, I really felt like Debra Winger had come into my office several times on previous occasions and so I felt like I knew the character better and knew what I was dealing with. I really felt like I could apply something because I felt like I knew her.

At the other dimensional end of the cognitive property is criticism formulation.

Criticism formulation describes participants’ reported cognitive experiences of criticizing or critiquing film clips either during or following their viewing of them. Participants’ described becoming involved in mental activity that led them to be critical of the material they were viewing, and while involved with critical processing, participants further described feeling some distance from the film content and difficulty in finding film material helpful in elucidating course concepts:

P.16 I was trying to let it all sink in. I knew we were going to have to talk about the clip later, but I wasn’t finding a lot that was really connecting things for me. Maybe I was over-analyzing it?

P.9 Yeah, there are things that come into play when you’re watching videos. For example, I can’t stand Sean Penn … and quite honestly, I think that affected my interaction with that clip. I don’t think he did a horrible job as an actor, but I just don’t like him and couldn’t get past the fact that he was portraying the role. It’s hard to filter those things out.

P.14 I was focusing on all of the characters in the clip because I really thought that you were going to highlight the death and dying that’s portrayed in the film - the scene that was shown depicted the overbearing mother, so I
found myself almost annoyed in that you didn’t show the clip I was expecting, and critiquing why you picked the clip you did and what I was supposed to get out of it.

P.15 I was really closely analyzing the clips and was making a lot of notes in my head while they were showing. I found the clips to be very brief and I guess I was really hoping to see more of them. I would say that my experience was very cognitive. The clips really held my focus, but I also found them to be such intense scenes that we only saw in brief … so I became a bit frustrated and critical of the experience.

Emotional. Another property of the personal reaction experience category was conceptualized as emotional. Emotional described participants’ experiences of having feeling-based personal reactions to film clips either during or following their presentation in class. Participants described being emotionally affected by material they were viewing, and conveyed resulting internal feelings that stayed with them during and following the film experience:

P.11 I’m assuming I became very engaged because I became very emotional. So I was definitely focused and listening and trying to feel – not trying to feel, I was feeling and reacting very strongly to what was going on.

P.10 I don’t really do a lot of thinking when I watch films. If it’s a good film then I will usually have emotional reactions to the content. I would also say that if there’s a film I’ve gone to and it’s been really emotional or has hit me pretty deeply, then I’ll remember that more than a mediocre experience with film … if that makes any sense.

Second round interview data and analysis confirmed and verified the emotional property as defined and dimensionalized in the round one analysis. Thus, emotional was confirmed and saturated by the data from the second round of interviews. Emotional varied along a perceptual and experiential dimension that varied from positive to negative emotions. This dimension described internal, emotional reactions that participants experienced, and the circumstances surrounding these experiences.
One extreme of the *emotional* property was characterized as positive emotions. Positive emotions were described by participants as emotional reactions to film that they identified as positive in nature (i.e., joy, happiness, calm, surprise). Participants described emotional experiences that left them wanting to discuss their reactions with others, emotional experiences that were uplifting, and emotional experiences that surfaced for them by which they were positively surprised:

P.9 Usually it’s my cognitive side that dominates, but as I was watching the clips my emotional side was dominating and there were many feelings surfacing for me. So I would say that I had a wonderful experience with the clips.

P.11 I mean I was ready to talk about my experience viewing the clips. When I read a good book or see something that stimulates me, I immediately think about whom I can share it with – somebody needs to hear about this! Or when I learn something I think, “Oh – so and so would love this, would appreciate this concept.” So I was ready to go – ready to process after viewing the clips. I didn’t want to sit on it …

P.12 Everybody else was sharing their emotions too – one of the women had seen Life is Beautiful and was telling us that even though it’s a dark subject, the movie as a whole is very uplifting. She was telling us that after she’d first seen the movie it really made her feel good. And actually, her words were along the lines of realizing that life truly is beautiful. So I think we were all sharing emotions and I didn’t have any trouble communicating the emotions I was experiencing.

P.10 The clips you chose were very stimulating on an emotional level. I think you’d have to be a really cold and hard person to not have felt something. To be able to talk about those feelings is something else, but it did prompt for me some sharing on an emotional level.

The other dimensional end of the *emotional* property was described as negative emotions. Negative emotions were defined as emotional reactions to film clips that surfaced for participants that they identified as being primarily negative in nature (i.e., offended, sad, angry, agitated, embarrassed). Negative is not meant to imply that participants did not wish to be experiencing the strong emotions which surfaced, but
rather, is meant to convey that there was a level of discomfort associated with their emotional responses. Participants described intense emotional reactions to the clips they viewed and were quick to identify that they experienced levels of agitation following exposure to film scenarios. Participants further described these internal reactions as staying with them for a period of time, and several participants described a need to process their reactions with their peers. The following participants’ comments illustrate negative emotions:

P.16 I can’t say that I wanted to cry or anything like that … but I did feel the discomfort in the family situation and found myself a little “on-edge” by it. The discomfort was very real – very real in the sense that I truly got immersed in what was happening with the family.

P.10 I’m the type of person who really becomes involved with films. If it’s a sad or upsetting movie then I’m going to cry. For the first clip it was difficult to watch because I felt so badly for the little boy. With the second clip, I’ve seen the entire film and it’s an extremely sad story. So for the second clip I automatically knew what it was and began to feel sad. I guess I just get really involved while the films are showing …

P.9 My emotional meter was rising throughout both of those clips because I felt so sad for both of those little boys – I was definitely drawn in.

P.11 Now during the second clip, Life is Beautiful, a lot of times I would have to look down because I would become so emotional. It’s like I didn’t want to see it anymore … because it was very painful. I could identify with what a parent does when a child is in a scary situation … the things that a parent does to try to make that more comfortable and better for them. So it was very painful … very painful to watch. Somehow if you look away you think it will go away – but you can still hear the film.

P.15 I was anxious. I was anxious to share what I thought and how it made me feel and I was anxious to get feedback from others regarding things I experienced, as well as hear what their experiences were like.

Figure 8 illustrates the category *personal reaction experience* and its properties and dimensions.
Figure 8: Personal reaction experience category, properties, and dimensions.
Social Interaction Processes

The third category was conceptualized as *social interaction processes*. In the second round of interviews, participants described more deeply the interactions they had with their classroom peers and instructors during and following the film presentations; this included interactions that occurred both in and out of the classroom. No new information was provided by participants regarding *social interaction processes*, and the additional data from round two supported and deeply described this category.

In addition, second round data analysis did not support the conceptualization of *classroom observation reaction* as a stand-alone property. Information gathered during the second round interviews and a constant comparative process clarified *classroom observation reaction* and revealed that it was addressing data which belonged more appropriately within other properties and in some instances, within other categories. Following careful scrutiny, a couple of data items were included within the same category (*social interaction processes*), but under the property *peer interaction reaction*. It also became apparent that several *classroom observation reaction* data items were actually addressing processes described by the *personal reaction experience* category; under the *cognitive* property, and within the dimension of meaning assignment. Accordingly, this specific *classroom observation reaction* data was collapsed and moved to the more appropriate location.

Data analysis also led the researcher to carefully examine the *social interaction processes* category definition as it was conceptualized following round one analysis. In looking carefully at both first and second round data, it became increasingly evident that much of the data that were originally placed within the property of *classroom observation*
reaction could be collapsed and placed within the actual category definition – provided
that the definition was slightly expanded. In slightly expanding the category definition, it
evolved in such a manner as to include that an awareness of others and the learning
milieu is a critical component of the social interaction processes which occur in a
classroom environment.

In spite of these minor conceptual changes, second round interview data expanded
significantly on the themes and concepts that were developed during the analysis of first
round interview data. Social interaction processes are therefore defined as participants’
experiences of being exposed to film clips in a social context. This includes viewing and
dialoguing about the clips in the classroom setting (with peers and instructor present), and
interactions which extend beyond the classroom setting as a result of being exposed to a
shared cinematic experience. Social interaction processes also include participants being
aware and affected by the verbal and non-verbal interplay that occurs within the context
of the classroom. The following participants’ comments reflect social interaction
processes:

P.9 My reaction to being in a social setting was very positive. It was very
interesting to hear other peoples’ viewpoints, and I think that what
surprised me to some extent was the intellectual level of conversation that
followed. Everybody was trying to relate concepts that we learned about
to what was going on in the film clips.

P.12 I would say that my main awareness was that during class you can usually
hear papers shuffling or someone whispering to a friend – things like that.
During the clips, it was totally silent – I couldn’t hear any of those
background noises … so I thought that was different. No one was talking,
no one was moving papers around; it was just instantly quiet once the
clips started. I didn’t glance around the room, but I did sense how quiet it
was.

P.11 Seeing the clips is a way to connect with others in class whom you may
not know very well. It allows you to draw off of that shared experience.
If I see classmates I can ask them, “So what did you think of that clip?” So absolutely, it’s a way to find common ground with those you share classes with.

P.13 My sense is that people were really involved. It’s not like I was looking around the room while the films were being shown … I guess you could say that I was pretty focused on what I was watching. I think you could probably say the same for everyone else – people were engaged.

P.15 To be honest, I don’t think that small group work is very effective for me. I found that it was easy for our group to go in a lot of directions and talk about things that were not related at all to the film experience or the class. So I think it’s a good idea to have a facilitator keeping everyone involved and on task: I find that’s a better way to discuss things and keep them on-track.

P.10 I wanted to talk and wanted to listen to others. We had a common experience and so I wanted to explore what the experiences of others were like … how similar or dissimilar were they from mine?

Participants’ descriptions within the social interaction processes category were further conceptualized as properties entitled peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment, and each property was subsequently dimensionalized.

Peer interaction reaction. In the second round interviews, participants frequently described the importance of peer interaction to their overall film experiences, and readily described reactions they had as a result of engaging with peers in the classroom. This supported and confirmed initial conceptualizations from round one analysis. Peer interaction reaction describes participants’ reactions to processing that occurred in relation to discussing the film clips with their peers, and involves participants’ reactions that resulted from being in a highly interactive setting where information and ideas were exchanged:

P.12 Within my group – during the discussion part, three out five people said, “Oh my gosh … I was so upset by that clip. It was horrible, what was happening to the child in that scene.” They really focused on … and I thought this was surprising, their emotional feelings toward the clips and
how they felt about the clips. Not necessarily looking at the content and incorporating it with what we are learning, but focusing more on the emotional reactions they had.

P.9 I would say that from an intellectual standpoint, the social discussion was very good because you’re using a different side of your brain when you’re applying something like art – which is what I consider film to be – to intellectual concepts. And if you don’t have the opportunity to bounce ideas off of others, I think you lose something. You lose a lot of something; a lot of the ability to pull things together. So the social aspect of the experience was a big positive as far as I was concerned.

P.15 Somehow, we really got off topic in our group. We did talk about the clips and how they related to the theories, but we didn’t spend the entire time focusing on this. I do think we could have covered things more thoroughly than we did in the small group …

P.10 I always think that what if my eyes only see one aspect of the clip? There are other perspectives that are certainly out there and when we pull our ideas together, it’s a much richer experience. The group exposes you to different things that you might not have seen.

P.14 For me, I’m sometimes hesitant to raise my hand in the larger group because what if my experience is vastly different than what others experienced? So I tend to hold back a bit with the larger group and see what other have to say before I offer my perspective. With smaller groups it’s so much easier to share what you’re thinking than with the class as a whole. I learn much better with the smaller group because you can talk things through much easier.

P.11 I knew that we all just experienced the same thing – so I knew there was going to be something common for us to discuss. That might have made it more comfortable … that I knew we were all on the same page with having had a shared experience.

Participants’ descriptions indicated that peer interaction reaction varied along a dimension ranging from challenge to resonate. This dimension was more deeply described and clarified following round two data analysis.

On one end of the peer interaction reaction continuum was challenge. Challenge involved participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding the film clips that ran contrary to their ideas, or challenged the ideas
and opinions they had formulated. When participants had their perspectives challenged through peer interaction, they described needing to broaden their perspectives to incorporate viewpoints about concepts and film material that differed from theirs.

Second round interview data deeply described and clarified the concept of challenge within the peer interaction reaction property:

P.14 For instance, when we were talking about scenes from the clips, there were things that others pointed out that I missed … little tidbits where you first might not agree with that somebody is saying, but then they’ll add a tidbit from the clip and it will make sense. They’ll be right on target with what they’re saying.

P.12 I was kind of hesitant because I was sort of going the opposite direction that my group was going … but it was kind of nice knowing that they had such an emotional connection to the clips, and to hear them explain why they connected so deeply with what they saw. Hearing about how clips touched others was helpful, instead of hearing only educational comments about the content. One group member shared that her father was very similar to the father in the first clip; that nothing she did was ever good enough in his eyes. When it came to me, I told them that my focus was on the class lesson and tying the clips with the concepts we’re covering … and they were completely understanding and open to what I shared. So from that point, we began to look more at content...

P.10 It was interesting to hear other people and what stood out for them. It helped to give me a broader picture of what I didn’t pick out. When I was explaining what I thought about the relationships in the clips, perhaps the way I explained it was a bit different … or something I thought about issues of self-esteem in the clips might have been slightly different than what someone else said. Others brought up good points that I just didn’t think about.

P.11 It’s interesting that when we were talking about Life is beautiful, right away I went into, “It’s hard, It’s sad.” Another person went into, “Oh, but it has a great ending.” And I’m like, “But the whole content, the whole history of it with the Holocaust is just so sad for me that no matter how happy the end of the film is, it doesn’t matter.” Other individuals in the group were more light and said, “But you walk away feeling so good,” and I’m like, “You feel good about the Holocaust?” But it’s true … the story is really amazing, so I can see how we had differing opinions.
The other dimensional extreme of peer interaction reaction was conceptualized as resonate. Resonate was described by participants as relating to their experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding the film clips that solidified or affirmed their own ideas. Participants also described gaining greater clarity of issues or concepts by hearing input from peers that resonated with their own perspectives. The data describing the concept of resonate within the peer interaction reaction property was redundant and the descriptions saturated:

P.13  It helped me to go into the discussion … picking up on the enthusiasm of others. We actually had a lot of ideas in common: I think we complimented each others ideas when we put our different perspectives together. Our discussion helped to make the concepts more concrete and yet more varied at the same time.

P.15  We were all pretty much on the same page as far as what we got from the clips and how we responded to what we saw. There weren’t a lot of discrepancies in what we took from the clip material.

P.16  It seems that there was a lot more personal reaction to the second clip, and I’m saying that because I was more touched by the second clip and it seems like those around me were also.

P.9   I think that the content of the film clips – you’d have to be a pretty hardened person not to get the emotional side of it and it affect you. So, that was kind of nice to have your feelings validated because everybody in my group shared that they were feeling the same way.

P.11  Mostly I was very engaged in the film, but periodically I would hear a sniffle or I would see somebody wipe their eye or something … which made me think that they must be getting emotional too because I certainly was – I had tears rolling down my cheeks.

Instructor assessment. This property was defined as involving participants’ references to the role of instructors within the social context of courses they have taken or are taking, in which popular film was or is utilized for a pedagogic purpose. This includes general comments that participants make regarding the role of an instructor
within the classroom setting and more specifically, perceptions participants form related to the manner in which instructors integrate film clips into their courses. The second round interview data and analysis confirmed and verified this property as defined and dimensionalized in the round one analysis. Consequently, instructor assessment was confirmed and saturated by the data from round two interviews.

Descriptions of instructor assessment revealed that participants’ perceptions and experiences with the pedagogic use of popular film depended greatly on assessments they made as to how effectively instructors selected, implemented, and processed film material. Instructor assessment varied along a dimension that varied from effective to ineffective.

Effective described one end of the dimension along which instructor assessment varied. Effective was described as participants cited instructors providing proper structure for utilizing film clips, including participants’ perceptions that instructors adequately elucidated the didactic points the clips were intended to emphasize. Effective also described a sense of confidence in the process of learning via film clips being directly connected with perceptions that their instructors are credible:

P.13 I would say that there was a lot to work with in the clips that were shown by the instructor. Not an overdose of film to where you got lost, but a fitting amount to be able to generate thought and discussion about the concepts we’re learning.

P.14 One thing that really stumped me was wondering how you and our instructor knew what clip to pull out and when to begin and end it. I felt that the clips were good choices for what we’re learning because the characters seemed so real – they depicted people that could easily be living next door to you.

P.12 Like I said, a film clip was used by another instructor last quarter and I can still instantly connect the clip with the concepts we were discussing. I can probably go back through my undergraduate schooling and tell you about
clips that were used and the exact concepts that they were discussing. That really surprises me, and I think says something about there being skill involved as instructors select clips.

Second round data analysis confirmed ineffective as the other extreme of the effectiveness dimension of instructor assessment. Ineffective described participants’ assessments that instructors provided a lack of appropriate structure for utilizing film clips, including perceptions by participants that instructors could offer greater guidance in describing how the content of chosen film clips relates to course material. Ineffective also included participants’ comments regarding perceptions of ineffective instruction in general, and a subsequent lack of confidence in the process of learning via film clips when an instructor is deemed non-credible:

P.12 I have been in situations where an instructor showed clips of popular film but really missed the boat on allowing us to process it ourselves. Instead, he just offered his opinions as an instructor … which sort of sent a message that his was the correct perspective on the clips and that what we were thinking or feeling was not as valid. When you can run your ideas by your peers then you can get reassurance from them and build or clarify what you are thinking. I think a lot of ideas can get lost in lecture …

P.13 It was a class that I was in where the instructor gave us a film assignment for a class presentation. Several groups were formed and each group had to pick a film clip that showed particular concepts. I’ll admit that I liked the activity and seeing different film clips, but I don’t think the instructor did a very good job with tying all of the information together. It became more like a film festival and I think a lot of opportunities for processing were missed …

P.16 I vividly remember one class I was in where a professor showed a clip of popular film that was pretty “out there.” I remember looking around the room when it was done and all I saw were puzzled looks from people. The worst part was that she never tied the clip to what we were discussing, so it left me feeling like I really missed something.

Risk assessment. Second round interview data confirmed and verified risk assessment as a property in the category of social interaction processes. Risk assessment
was described in participants’ comments that related to how open they perceived classroom settings to be and, subsequently, how willing they were to share and exchange ideas and feelings that resulted from exposure to film. *Risk assessment* is therefore defined as the calculation participants make regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and the resulting assessment as to whether or not these environments are perceived as conducive for sharing. Participants’ descriptions indicated that they were much more apt to become involved in the social context of the classroom if their assessment led them to feel that the classroom was a safe place to share. Additionally, participants described that they were more willing to become involved in classes where they knew other students and had been involved with them in previous courses.

Participants also described greater likelihood to share thoughts and feelings regarding the film clips if they identified their peers as taking risks with sharing. Second round interview data confirmed and supported that *risk assessment* varied along the dimension ranging from safe to unsafe.

Safe was described by participants as they discussed feeling a solid rapport with their classmates or a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. Such assessments also led participants to conclude that classrooms were safe and open environments for sharing ideas and divulging feelings about clips of film viewed in social contexts. The following participants’ comments illuminated safe as a dimensional end along which the property risk assessment varied:

P.16   Like I said, I knew the people in my group and I’m also a pretty outgoing person; so I didn’t have any difficulty sharing what I thought about the clips. Even when I didn’t agree with what someone was saying, it wasn’t a threatening place to share your view.
P.10 I’d say that a lot of my classes have involved group discussion, group interaction. So I’m kind of used to it … and I know the people in my group, so it wasn’t uncomfortable or scary or anything like that.

P.12 I found my group members to be very involved in discussing the clips and I think that affected me – drew me in even more. I first listened to what other people were saying and then I talked a bit about what some of my thoughts were. I could tell that my group members were very enthusiastic about this experience and this made it more comfortable for me to share.

P.14 I like to share my point of view with others and also hear the perspectives of others in the class. Also, I’ve worked with the others who were in my small group so we already had some rapport built … so I felt comfortable discussing the clips within the group.

The other end of the risk assessment dimension was defined as unsafe. Participants described making assessments that classroom environments were unsafe based on perceiving the environments as not conducive for sharing their ideas and feelings openly. Unsafe was further described as participants discussed weak or unexplored relationships with classmates and consequently, hesitation to become involved in class discussion or share ideas about clips of film that were viewed:

P.14 I think it’s unfortunate that we ran out of time and could only process the film in the larger group. In bigger groups like that there are usually one or two people who kind of dominate the discussion and the rest of people sort of become spectators. With the smaller groups there’s much more intimacy and you are kind of placed in a situation where you need to talk. So I didn’t share in the large group … it just felt too big.

P.15 Some of the people in class I don’t know very well, and I guess that I need to have some rapport established with people before I feel comfortable sharing. If we were to dig really deep, I’m sure that I’m probably afraid of what people will think of me if I say the wrong thing or something stupid. Having some people around me that I’m comfortable with and who I know won’t judge me is a big help.

P.13 I think I’m just a little bit shy in the American culture, but I’m not that way in my native Chinese culture. I wasn’t confident in myself when I started this program last quarter, but I’m starting to feel more comfortable and am sharing more in classes. I still don’t know the people who were in
my film group very well, and I didn’t say as much as I might have if I knew them better or had more experiences with them.

Figure 9 illustrates the category of \textit{social interaction processes} and its properties, peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment. Figure 9 further illustrates the dimensions of each property.

\textit{Content Cycling}

The conceptual category \textit{content cycling} was supported by data emerging from second round interviews. This category emerged as participants gave accounts of receiving the content of their counselor training courses through a variety of learning modalities. Participants’ descriptions included their experiences of having training content delivered through such instructional exercises as small and large-group discussion, engagement in role-play activities, reading and processing text material, and drawing from present and previous pedagogic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. \textit{Content cycling} also includes participants’ accounts of learning effectively by having material and concepts repeated and addressed in their courses in a variety of formats, and involved references to comprehending concepts more fully via the synergistic combination of learning approaches that serve to further emphasize and engrain those training concepts. The following participants’ statements further described the category \textit{content cycling}:

P.10 I think that using film clips is an excellent way to show concepts rather than just having them explained. It’s a way to think more about applying knowledge – being able to take what we read in the text and hear from a lecture, and then apply it directly to a film clip situation. So it emphasizes that application piece …

P.16 I don’t know if I have one learning preference over another. I would just say that I learn in a variety of ways. I take in information well through reading and through lecture. Having said that, I do think that being able to
Figure 9: Social interaction processes category, properties and dimensions.
take a look at video clips gives you more of a hands-on approach to learning. I also learn well through most experiential exercises in class – things which require me to be active with my learning.

P.11 Whenever I learn a new concept, right away I want to attach something to it – words alone are garbled for me. I need to be able to really see to know what something means … to be able to categorize what I learn and say, “That’s what that concept means.” So film is very helpful. I can’t personally think of a better way to elucidate concepts than with film or story-telling. When a professor or somebody relates a personal story, then I go, “Oh – that was such and such concept,” or when they relate a film, that really sticks with me. Case studies also help me gain clarity … they bring things to life much more than just a technical definition of something.

Visual input. Visual input was supported and confirmed by second round data analysis as one of the properties of the category content cycling. Visual input was described as participants emphasized having a particular affinity for visual examples to underscore their learning of specific training concepts. The property of visual input was also reflected in participants’ endorsements of film clips being introduced to emphasize course material, and in their testimonies that visual examples provide beneficial and poignant illustrations for learning course content. Second round interview data provided rich descriptions by participants that saturated the conceptual property of visual input; however, extensive analysis of the second round data did not warrant visual input being dimensionalized. Consequently, visual input stands as a thickly saturated property without additional dimensional descriptors. The following participants’ comments illustrate the visual input property within the content cycling category:

P.10 I think that film clips are a good way to provide an example. For me, I remember concepts better if I can see them … instead of just talking or being lectured at. I think it’s easier to remember a film clip and what was said about it, compared with just sitting in class and taking notes on material.
Because of the concepts we were talking about and were asked to think about, I was quickly able to put a visual to those concepts, and for me I’m a visual person and that helps – it really helped to drive home some of the points that we’ve been studying.

If you gave me a script of what we saw in the clips on a piece of paper or a lecture slide … if you did that, I wouldn’t connect nearly as well as being able to visualize characters and see them in action. The connections are a lot easier for me when I’m able to actually visualize them.

With clips you can actually hear voices and see the expressions in the characters’ faces. When I read a case study I always think, “Well this is here-say … it’s a perspective … what’s the truth of the situation?” When you can see it yourself you are there – you can formulate your own perspective and it makes it much more authentic.

I’m a visual learner and the clips helped me to integrate the material we’re learning. The clips help me to make connections with what I’m learning and help me to recall information much easier. The images just really stay with me, particularly when I am able to link them to concepts.

I think that clips fit in really well with the way that I learn – being able to look at something hands-on and try to piece it together or even fit a theory to what you’re viewing. I think it gets better engrained for me, being able to see it …

Repetition. Repetition was confirmed and clarified as a second property of content cycling. The concept of repetition was reflected in participants’ comments that emphasized being drawn to training content as it is cycled and presented through various pedagogic approaches. Moreover, repetition was evident in participants’ comments indicating that repetition of content is critical in order for it to become firmly established in their learning. As with the property visual input, second round data analysis saturated the repetition property but did not warrant repetition being dimensionalized. The following participants’ statements reflect the property of repetition within the category of content cycling:
I really need to have material repeated in order to it to stick. I also think that what works well for me is to have concepts repeated in different ways – in lecture, in readings, visually, through role-plays; things like that.

I know a lot of people who run-off their Powerpoint notes. I don’t – I copy mine by hand. When I review them, I copy them again by hand. I have to have the material repeated and one way to do that is to put them in my own writing.

From a counseling perspective, film clips are a wonderful way to look at human nature and a wonderful way to look at how we treat each other. I think it’s a fabulous way to learn because it draws on ideas presented in the textbook, and in the lecture … and it does so by bringing out emotions. You have the music and the drama and the acting and all of those pieces that serve to pique one’s emotions. It’s a way of repeating what we’ve been talking about in a manner that truly brings concepts to life.

Figure 10 illustrates the category of content cycling, and its properties – visual input and repetition.

Triangulation

Triangulation was utilized to confirm and establish the trustworthiness of the second round interview analysis findings. Triangulation procedures, when well-applied, also guard against the potential for researcher bias and invalid conclusions (Maxwell, 1996). It is toward a deeper and more trustworthy understanding of the data that three main triangulation procedures were employed following second round data analysis. These included a review of relevant literature and an analysis of researcher observation notes and memos (triangulation of sources), and ongoing consultation with the methodologist of this research study (triangulation through multiple analysis) (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Literature triangulation involved comparing and contrasting findings with relevant existing literature. This process involved referring to appropriate literature in order to counter-check findings, with the main objective being to check for consistencies as well
Figure 10: Content cycling category and its properties.
as inconsistencies between findings and the concepts explored in the literature. A review of relevant literature indicated a large body of literature describing various aspects of classroom learning environments, interpersonal interaction between students, experiential and cooperative learning, and pedagogic approaches. It is noteworthy that in looking through this material, only a small amount of the relevant literature was based in actual research; the vast majority being founded on theoretical assertions. However, there were several important concepts that surfaced from the second round of interviews that were consistent with the literature, as well as with concepts that initially emerged in first round interviews.

As previously noted, strong parallels could be draw between Kolb’s experiential learning model (1984) and the four conceptual categories that surfaced following first round analysis. These parallels were strengthened following second round interviews as the conceptual categories became increasingly saturated with participants’ comments. As participants described their film experiences, they emphasized their actual exposure to the films, their reactions and reflections to processing this exposure both internally and with peers, their linking film material with course concepts, and their conceptual insights that were enhanced and challenged through engagement with the film experience. These descriptions correspond quite directly with the four stages of Kolb’s model (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation), and demonstrate congruency with the emerging conceptual categories (engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling).
Another strong parallel between Kolb’s experiential learning model and the emerging conceptual map from second round analysis is that in both examples, learning process components (and their corresponding stages or categories) are seen as multi-directional and not simply unfolding in a linear fashion. In other words, and as emphasized in the stages of Kolb’s model, the categories of *engagement dynamic*, *personal reaction experience*, *social interaction processes*, and *content cycling* are highly interactive, do not necessarily occur in any specific order, and are complexly linked together as students learn and process a given film experience.

In addition, Terry (2001) discusses implications of Kolb’s experiential learning model in creating positive classroom learning environments. She underscores the importance of ensuring that students have the opportunity to cycle through the various stages of the model. Toward this end, she specifically highlights the significance of both large and small-group activities, the presentation of material that may be closely applied to real-life scenarios, and the responsibility instructors have in creating ample time in their classes for questions and answers (both instructor and student initiated), and the process of material. These recommendations reflect categories and properties that surfaced in participants’ comments in both first and second round interviews; specifically, the *engagement dynamic* category; *conceptual relevance* property; *personal reaction experience* category; cognitive and emotional properties; and *social interaction processes*: peer interaction reaction and instructor assessment properties.

Second round interview data continued to exhibit close connections with Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory (1999). Following first round interviews, four of Gardner’s eight described intelligences appeared to have a close resemblance with certain
categories, properties, and dimensions that surfaced; second round data analysis demonstrated deeper resonance with these four intelligences. Specifically, the verbal-linguistic and interpersonal intelligences that Gardner describes connected closely to the experiences that were conveyed by participants in discussing social interaction processes. Moreover, the property peer interaction reaction and its dimensions (challenge and resonate) provided numerous participants’ accounts that resonate with Gardner’s descriptions of verbal linguistic and interpersonal intelligences; learning best through “hearing and seeing words and speaking; writing, discussing, and debating ideas,” and learning best through “sharing, comparing, and relating with others, and cooperating,” (Denig, 2004, p. 107).

Gardner (1999) describes spatial intelligence as depicting persons who learn best in working with pictures and colors, and who are able to readily visualize and learn from visual stimulation. This type of learning reflects close resemblance with second round participants’ accounts that define the property visual input within the category of content cycling. Lastly, Gardner describes an intelligence that is intrapersonal. People who fall into this learning category do well when working alone, doing self-paced projects, and having the opportunity to reflect (Nelson, 1998). In the category personal reaction experience, participants continued to emphasize that they would find themselves thinking about the film clips several days following their film experiences, and expressed an appreciation for being able to revisit and reflect on the clips at their own pace outside of the classroom environment.

Second round interview data was thickly saturated with participants’ descriptions of the importance of social interaction processes to their film experiences. Within the
property of peer interaction reaction, students confirmed the dimensions of challenge and resonate. Pugh (1996) contends that during social-interaction activities, cognitive development emerges through accommodation of new ideas or points of view into one’s own present cognitive framework. Taking this a step further, Vygotsky (1978) maintained that social interaction is a prerequisite to learning and cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, knowledge is co-constructed and learning always involves more than one person. The number and depth of participants’ comments in second round interviews that reflect the significance that participants placed on social interaction certainly resonates with this social constructivist idea.

Participants’ second round interview descriptions increasingly described their film experiences as complex processes involving both highly interactive process and content components occurring within a social context. Descriptions further indicated that students engaged in an ongoing process of assessing their film experiences for meaning and relevancy, and made determinations regarding how to incorporate these experiences into their overall learning. Data that richly described multidirectional and interconnected processes occurring between the conceptual categories confirmed the contextual category, experiential meaning-making process. This process was consistent with the descriptions of Do & Schallert (2004), who conveyed that interactive classrooms provide an opportunity for students to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings which surface following exposure to class material. The authors contend that such interaction provides an opportunity for students to make explicit their emerging ideas and thus explore the meaning of content and classroom activities through discussion. Dirkx (2001) also alluded to an aspect of experiential meaning-making process when he described that
“emotionally charged images, evoked through the contexts of adult learning, provide the opportunity for a more profound access to the world by inviting a deeper understanding of ourselves in relationship with it,” (p.64).

During the second round of interviews, researcher observation notes supported the initial conceptualization of the category engagement dynamic. The researcher observed that the participants exhibited excitement and enthusiasm as they described their engagement with the film clips in the classroom, and the vast majority of participants in second round interviews endorsed the film clips as engaging. Additionally, the researcher noted that engagement dynamic described a process that recurred for participants on various occasions throughout their film experiences. In other words, observation notes emphasized that engagement was not simply a one-time phenomenon, but a process that recurred on various occasions as participants fluctuated at various levels of involvement in processing their film experiences.

The researcher also observed that during interviews, participants became involved and energetic in describing their overall experiences of being exposed to film in the classroom. Participants’ comments richly described both process and content components in their film experiences, and the interplay between the conceptual categories of engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling became increasingly evident. Moreover, observation notes identified that as participants described and reflected on their film experiences, they discussed efforts they were making to determine how the experience would most appropriately fit within their learning. The researcher observed participants exhibiting considerable energy in reflecting on their film experiences, the connections with course material, and their
interactions with peers. This reflection and analysis process supported the conceptualization of the contextual category, **experiential meaning-making process.**

**Social interaction processes** received considerable attention during second round interviews. The researcher observed and noted that participants would consistently remark about their film experiences having taken place within a social context, and noted that the majority of participants would express excitement regarding being able to process the film clips with peers and their instructor. Participants’ tone of voice and demeanor reflected that hearing about the reactions of their peers to film content and being able to discuss clips as they related to course content was a significant positive component of their overall experiences. Participants often smiled and nodded their heads in affirmation as they described having a richer experience with the clips through being able to both hear and share experiences openly with instructors and peers. These descriptions further confirmed the properties **peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment.**

In addition to researcher observation notes and literature triangulation, memos were frequently made during the analysis process. The memos often reflected the researcher’s conceptualization based on his theoretical sensitivity and feelings experienced in reaction to the data. Additional memos were made during consultation meetings and phone calls with the researcher’s committee methodologist and peers. These memos helped the researcher to bracket preconceived notions about participants’ experiences as data were analyzed.

Memo notes made during second round data analysis supported the process of participants becoming involved with film clips, which in turn led to personal responses to
being engaged with the clips. Memo notes of this involvement and response supported the conceptualization of the categories *engagement dynamic* and *personal reaction experience*. Furthermore, the memos noted participants’ endorsements of the significance of the social context in their film experience and processing, and the importance of ensuring that the films moved beyond mere entertainment value by connecting directly with course content. These observations were used to further enhance the conceptualization of the categories *social interaction processes* and *content cycling*.

In addition, memos made during data analysis recorded observations that participants seemed to go through a complex process of attributing significance and meaning to the film clips that were shown and determining how the film experiences would fit into their learning. Memos also noted that the interaction between the conceptual categories became increasingly complex and multidirectional, and that participants’ comments frequently involved interplay between various components of the conceptual categories. These memos supported the conceptualization of the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process*, which encompassed the conceptual categories and their properties and dimensions.

In summary, current literature, the accumulated researcher observation notes, data analysis and consultation memos, were used to triangulate the conceptualized context and all four initial categories, properties, and dimensions that had been generated from the data. Current literature, data analysis, researcher observation notes, methodologist consultation, and memos were used to triangulate the categories *engagement dynamic*, *personal reaction experience*, *social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*. 
Additionally, these same procedures were used to triangulate the contextual category, 
emph{experiential meaning-making process}.

Discussion

A tentative framework for conceptualizing the experiences of participants exposed to popular film clips as a pedagogic tool emerged following analysis of second round interview data. The perceptions and experiences described by the participants generated one contextual category and confirmed four categories from the initial round of interviews. The contextual category was referred to as \textit{Experiential Meaning-Making Process}, while the four categories maintained from the initial round of interviews were referred to as \textit{Engagement Dynamic}, \textit{Personal Reaction Experience}, \textit{Social Interaction Processes}, and \textit{Content Cycling} (see Figure 11). These categories described how participants became involved with film material, the cognitive and emotional reactions which resulted, the social interaction and dynamics that occurred in discussing and examining the film experiences, and connections made with film clips being another modality in which course content may be elucidated.

These categories, with the exception of the contextual category \textit{Experiential Meaning-Making Process}, contained properties, and in most instances, dimensions that further described them. Axial coding procedures explored and clarified relationships between the categories through their properties and dimensions, and ensured complete analysis of the transcripts.

\textit{Experiential Meaning-Making Process}

\textit{Experiential meaning-making process} was defined as participants’ experiences of mulling over their classroom exposure and subsequent reactions to the content of
Figure 11: The experiential meaning-making process.
popular film clips; this included film-analysis reactions that surfaced for participants following their interactions with instructors and peers. This category was further conceptualized as the process participants used to attribute meaning to their popular film experiences, and involved a deliberation process through which participants determined how they would integrate material generated through the experiences into their learning.

*Experiential meaning-making process* emerged as a contextual and global category through which all other categories were conceptualized and organized. This category emerged as a global reflective process that permeated all the other categories and was consistently experienced in all facets of participants’ exposure and processing of popular film. Participants’ descriptions depicted *experiential meaning-making process* as an internal process in that the clips stimulated personal reactions to both past and present experiences, and even stimulated reactions in regard to contemplating possible future experiences. In addition, *experiential meaning-making process* characterized the process participants used to understand social interactions and experiences with instructor and peers within the class environment, and further involved connections with participants’ personal, social, pedagogic, and occupational issues outside of class.

Participants’ descriptions also indicated that they engaged in an *experiential meaning-making process* prior to the film experience as they attempted to understand how the clips would connect with the course content, during the exposure to clips themselves, during the social interaction discussion component, and following class as they continued to integrate the film exposure into their experience. Participants’ descriptions further revealed that the *experiential meaning-making process* permeated
all the other categories and was consistently experienced in all facets of their being exposed to the pedagogic use of popular film clips.

While data analysis clearly revealed and supported the conceptualization of the contextual category, experiential meaning-making process, participants did not adequately identify and explore this process. Data was therefore limited on how the experiential meaning-making process occurred. Therefore, the following question was constructed to gather more information on experiential meaning-making process during third round interviews:

- As you think back on your exposure to film, describe your experience of reflecting on what you saw in the film clips and how this affected you.

Engagement Dynamic

Engagement dynamic was defined as participants’ immediate responses to film clips that are introduced, and the processing that occurs regarding the level at which they will become involved and stay engaged with film clips. In the second round interviews, participants described more deeply their initial reactions of being exposed to popular film clips, and richly described how they became involved and stayed engaged with the film material. These descriptions supported and confirmed the category engagement dynamic and the contextual category, experiential meaning-making process. Engagement dynamic conceptualized participants’ engagement decisions with the film material, and included variables that played a role in informing their engagement decisions.

Analysis of second round interview data did not support the conceptualization of information history or personal history as stand-alone properties of engagement dynamic. Information gathered during the second round interviews and a constant
comparative process clarified *information history* and *personal history* and revealed them
to be addressing many of the same process components. In addition, the data from first
round interviews which spoke to these properties were reexamined along with new data
concerning these areas that was gleaned from the second round interviews. As a result, a
determination was made to combine the properties of *information history* and *personal
history* into a single property; *personal history* remained as the heading for this unified
property. In order to more appropriately represent the combination of data into a single
property, the definition for the re-conceptualized property of *personal history* was
expanded.

*Personal history.* *Personal history* was defined as engagement with a film that is
based on whether or not a film clip conjures an event or issue from participants’ pasts.
*Personal history* also involves participants’ engagement being related to their having
some personal, conceptual, or occupational connection with the content depicted in the
clips. Film clips, consequently, are likely to have a greater impact for students if they
connect in some manner with their personal history (i.e., are clips from a favorite or
enjoyable film or portray an issue or circumstance of personal significance). As a result
of data being collapsed and the property definition undergoing a change of definition, the
data clearly linked *personal history* and *engagement dynamic* to *experiential meaning-
making process*.

In addition to the re-conceptualized property of *personal history* emerging within
the category of *engagement dynamic* following second round interviews, the property
*personal history* became dimensionalized along the extremes of event specific and
broader association. On one extreme of the *personal history* dimension, event specific
was defined as participants’ engagement being connected with their linking the content of a film clip directly to a specific personal event or situation. At the other dimensional extreme of personal history is broader association. Broader association is defined as participants’ engagement that is connected with their linking the content of a film clip to a more general area of their lives; (i.e., being stimulated to reflect on one’s role as a parent or one’s childhood).

Further analysis of second round data supported the initial conceptualization of the remaining properties within the engagement dynamic category, which included media history and conceptual relevance.

Media history. Participants discussed becoming engaged with their film experiences based on whether or not they had been previously exposed to selected film clips. These descriptions supported and clarified the property media history. In addition, the dimensions along which media history varied became increasingly clear following round two interviews. At one extreme of this dimension, novel described participants’ engagement in film that is directly related to the fact that they had never seen the film clip before. Participants’ richly described being drawn-in by clips they had never seen before, and several participants indicated a desire to see films in their entirety after the film clip experience. Additionally, participants’ indicated appreciating the opportunity to see and analyze something entirely new and the opportunity to be exposed to material with which they had no preconceived notions. Data analysis indicated that these novel experiences were evaluated through an experiential meaning-making process.

At the other extreme of the media history dimension, participants described that their levels of engagement with film were directly related to having viewed particular
clips on at least one previous occasion. The dimension of previous exposure was more deeply described and clarified following second round interviews, and participants gave vivid accounts of becoming involved in film clips based on the fact that they had seen the films on previous occasion or had been involved in popular film experiences in other courses. Data from second round interviews regarding media history was redundant and the descriptions saturated.

*Conceptual relevance.* Descriptions from the second round of interviews confirmed analysis of first round interview data regarding the property *conceptual relevance.* *Conceptual relevance* was defined as participants’ levels of engagement with film clips being based on their determination of whether or not selected film clips were relevant to the material being covered in their courses. Participants’ descriptions of how they determined the relevancy of film material to their coursework revealed an *experiential meaning-making process* and indicated that both relevance and credibility determinations were influential.

In the second round of interviews, participants primarily described being positively engaged with film clips due to the fact that they were able to readily relate course concepts to the clips they were viewing. Participants’ descriptions during second round interviews also confirmed that *conceptual relevance* varied along the continuum of relevant and irrelevant.

The dimension of relevant described participants’ endorsements of film clip material having relevance with material being covered in the class. In addition, this dimension also included student endorsements of films clips offering credible portrayals of course concepts. In the second round data analysis, the majority of participants
confirmed that the film experiences assisted them in conceptualizing course concepts more fully, and as a result they found the experience to be engaging. Participants further described their film experiences as beneficial in helping them to synthesize their ideas about course concepts to which they had been exposed, and endorsed the film portrayals as realistic and credible. Data from second round interviews illustrating participants being engaged with clips due to their assessing the clips as relevant were redundant and the descriptions saturated.

At the other end of the *conceptual relevance* property, the dimension irrelevant described participants’ endorsements of being minimally engaged in film clips due to the clips not being particularly relevant to course material. Irrelevant also described participants’ endorsements of film clips conveying unrealistic or invalid portrayals of course concepts. While the majority of data that fit into *conceptual relevance* supported the relevant dimension, some participants’ comments conveyed leeriness at the credibility and accuracy of the film clip material as it related to course concepts. These second round interview comments further saturated the dimension irrelevant, and added redundancy to the property conceptual relevance.

*Personal Reaction Experience*

*Personal reaction experience* was confirmed as a category in the analysis of second round interview data. The concept *personal reaction experience* was defined as the internal reactions that participants’ had to film clips both during and following their viewing. As participants described their perceptions and experiences of being exposed to the film clips, they illuminated the reactions that they experienced. Participants described having both cognitive and emotional experiences during their exposure to the
clips, and several participants described experiences of having both cognitive and emotional reactions simultaneously. Participants also described being more invested in clips that drew them in (either cognitively or emotionally), and indicated that they were more likely to remember film material that was more stimulating on cognitive or emotional levels. In the second round, participants readily discussed having had internal responses to the film clips they viewed and through this articulated how personal reaction experience was an integral aspect of exposure to popular film.

Analysis of second round interview data confirmed and expanded on the properties of the personal reaction experience category. These properties were maintained as cognitive and emotional, and each of these properties also contained dimensions along which they varied.

**Cognitive.** Cognitive was confirmed as describing thought-based personal reactions that participants had to film clips either during or following their presentation in class. Cognitive emerged as participants described reactions to the clips that stimulated thought processes and the sorting of information. Second round interview data and analysis confirmed and verified this property as defined and dimensionalized in first round data analysis. Cognitive varied along a dimension that extended from meaning assignment to criticism formulation.

Participants described meaning assignment in comments they made pertaining to their efforts of trying to “figure out” where a film clip is headed. Meaning assignment also reflected participants’ endorsements of ascribing meaning to what they were viewing in the clips, as well as finding a place for it to fit within their learning. Participants further emphasized meaning assignment in descriptions they gave of film clip material
helping them to better mentally integrate and connect material they were covering in their courses. Other comments reflected participants’ ease with relating to film characters and scenarios, and subsequently, ease in relating concepts more fluidly to those characters or circumstances that had come to life for them in the clips.

At the other dimensional end of the cognitive property is criticism formulation. Criticism formulation describes participants’ reported cognitive experiences of criticizing or critiquing film clips either during or following their viewing of them. Participants’ described becoming involved in mental activity that led them to be critical of the material they were viewing, and while involved with critical processing, participants further described feeling some distance from the film content and difficulty in finding film material helpful in elucidating course concepts. Data revealed how the cognitive activities of meaning assignment and criticism formulation emerged out of the experiential meaning-making process, which in turn influenced personal reaction experience.

Emotional. Another property of the personal reaction experience category was conceptualized as emotional. Emotional described participants’ experiences of having feeling-based personal reactions to film clips either during or following their presentation in class. Participants described being emotionally affected by material they were viewing, and conveyed resulting internal feelings that stayed with them during and following the film experience.

Second round interview data and analysis confirmed and verified the emotional property as defined and dimensionalized in the first round analysis. Thus, emotional was confirmed and saturated by the data from the second round of interviews. Emotional
varied along a perceptual and experiential dimension that varied from positive to negative emotions. This dimension described internal reactions that participants experienced, and the circumstances surrounding these experiences.

One extreme of the *emotional* property was characterized as positive emotions. Positive emotions were described by participants as emotional reactions to film that they identified as positive in nature (i.e., joy, happiness, calm, surprise). Participants described emotional experiences that left them wanting to discuss their reactions with others, emotional experiences that were uplifting, and emotional experiences that surfaced for them by which they were positively surprised. The other dimensional end of the *emotional* property was described as negative emotions. Negative emotions were defined as emotional reactions to film clips that surfaced for participants that they identified as being primarily negative in nature (i.e., offended, sad, angry, agitated, embarrassed). Negative is not meant to imply that participants did wish to be experiencing the strong emotions which surfaced, but rather, is meant to convey that there was a level of discomfort associated with their emotional responses. Participants described intense emotional reactions to the clips they viewed and were quick to identify that they experienced levels of agitation following exposure to film scenarios. Participants further described these internal reactions as staying with them for a period of time, and several participants described a need to process their reactions with their peers. *Emotional* reactions that varied from positive to negative appeared to be filtered through the *experiential meaning-making process*. 
**Social Interaction Processes**

The third category was conceptualized as *social interaction processes*. In the second round of interviews, participants described more deeply the interactions they had with their classroom peers and instructors during and following the film presentations; this included interactions that occurred both in and out of the classroom. The additional data from second round interviews supported and deeply described this category.

In addition, second round data analysis did not support the conceptualization of *classroom observation reaction* as a stand-alone property. Information gathered during the second round interviews and a constant comparative process clarified *classroom observation reaction* and revealed that it was addressing data which belonged more appropriately within other properties and in some instances, within other categories. Following careful scrutiny, some data items were collapsed and included within the same category (*social interaction processes*), but under the property *peer interaction reaction*. It also became apparent that several *classroom observation reaction* data items were actually addressing processes described by the *personal reaction experience* category; under the *cognitive* property, and within the dimension of meaning assignment. Accordingly, this specific *classroom observation reaction* data was collapsed and moved to the more appropriate location.

Data analysis also led the researcher to carefully examine the category heading and definition as it was conceptualized following round one analysis; *social interaction processes*. In looking carefully at both first and second round data, it became increasingly evident that much of the data that were originally placed within the property of *classroom observation reaction* could be collapsed and placed within the actual
category definition – provided that the definition was slightly expanded. As a result, the
definition for social interaction processes evolved to include that an awareness of others
and the learning milieu is a critical component of the social interaction processes which
occur in a classroom environment.

In spite of these minor conceptual changes, second round interview data expanded
significantly on the themes and concepts that were developed during the analysis of first
round interview data. Social interaction processes are therefore defined as participants’
experiences of being exposed to film clips in a social context. This includes viewing and
dialoguing about the clips in the classroom setting (with peers and instructor present), and
interactions which extend beyond the classroom setting as a result of being exposed to a
shared cinematic experience. Social interaction processes also include participants being
aware and affected by the verbal and non-verbal interplay that occurs within the context
of the classroom. Through the experiential meaning-making process, participants’
descriptions revealed the significance of the social context and social interaction upon
their experiences and perceptions, and the influence of these components in regard to
their integration of film material, class interaction processes, and course concepts.
Participants’ descriptions within the social interaction processes category were further
conceptualized as properties entitled peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment, and
risk assessment, and each property was subsequently dimensionalized.

Peer interaction reaction. In the second round interviews, participants frequently
described the importance of peer interaction to their overall film experiences, and readily
described reactions they had as a result of engaging with peers in the classroom. This
supported and confirmed initial conceptualizations from round one analysis. Peer
interaction reaction described participants’ reactions to processing that occurred in relation to discussing the film clips with their peers, and involved participants’ reactions that resulted from being in a highly interactive setting where information and ideas were exchanged. Participants’ descriptions further indicated that peer interaction reaction varied along a dimension ranging from challenge to resonate. This dimension was more deeply described and clarified following round two data analysis.

Challenge involved participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding the film clips that ran contrary to their ideas, or challenged the ideas and opinions they had formulated. When participants had their perspectives challenged through peer interaction, they described needing to broaden their perspectives to incorporate viewpoints about concepts and film material that differed from theirs. Second round interview data deeply described and clarified the concept of challenge within the peer interaction reaction property.

The other dimensional extreme of peer interaction reaction was conceptualized as resonate. Resonate was described by participants as relating to their experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding the film clips that solidified or affirmed their own ideas. Participants also described gaining greater clarity of issues or concepts by hearing input from peers that resonated with their own perspectives. The data describing the concept of resonate within the peer interaction reaction property was redundant and the descriptions saturated.

Instructor assessment. This property was defined as involving participants’ references to the role of instructors within the social context of courses they have taken or are taking, in which popular film was or is utilized for a pedagogic purpose. This
includes general comments that participants make regarding the role of an instructor within the classroom setting and more specifically, perceptions participants form related to the manner in which instructors integrate film clips into their courses. The second round interview data and analysis confirmed and verified this property as defined and dimensionalized in the round one analysis. Consequently, instructor assessment was confirmed and saturated by the data from round two interviews.

Descriptions of instructor assessment revealed that participants’ perceptions and experiences with the pedagogic use of popular film depended greatly on assessments they made as to how effectively instructors selected, implemented, and processed film material. Instructor assessment varied along a dimension that varied from effective to ineffective.

Effective described one end of the dimension along which instructor assessment varied. Effective was described as participants cited instructors providing proper structure for utilizing film clips, including participants’ perceptions that instructors adequately elucidated the didactic points the clips were intended to emphasize. Effective also described a sense of confidence in the process of learning via film clips being directly connected with perceptions that their instructors are credible.

Second round data analysis confirmed ineffective as the other extreme of the effectiveness dimension of instructor assessment. Ineffective involved participants’ assessments that instructors provided a lack of appropriate structure for utilizing film clips, including perceptions by participants that instructors could offer greater guidance in describing how the content of chosen film clips relates to course material. Ineffective also involves participants’ comments regarding perceptions of ineffective instruction in
general, and a subsequent lack of confidence in the process of learning via film clips when an instructor is deemed non-credible. Data in this area were redundant and descriptions saturated.

*Risk assessment.* Second round interview data confirmed and verified *risk assessment* as a property in the category of *social interaction processes.* *Risk assessment* was described in participants’ comments that related to how open they perceived classroom settings to be and, subsequently, how willing they were to share and exchange ideas and feelings that resulted from exposure to film. *Risk assessment* is therefore defined as the calculation participants make regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and the resulting assessment as to whether or not these environments are perceived as conducive for sharing. Participants’ descriptions indicated that they were much more apt to become involved in the social context of the classroom if their assessment led them to feel that the classroom was a safe place to share. Additionally, participants described that they were more willing to become involved in classes where they knew other students and had been involved with them in previous courses. Participants also described greater likelihood to share thoughts and feelings regarding the film clips if they identified their peers as taking risks with sharing. Second round interview data confirmed and supported that *risk assessment* varied along the dimension ranging from safe to unsafe.

Safe was described by participants as they discussed feeling a solid rapport with their classmates or a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. Such assessments also led participants to conclude that classrooms were safe and open environments for sharing ideas and divulging feelings about clips of film viewed in social contexts. The
other end of the risk assessment dimension was defined as unsafe. Participants described making assessments that classroom environments were unsafe based on perceiving the environments as not conducive for sharing their ideas and feelings openly. Unsafe was further described as participants discussed weak or unexplored relationships with classmates and consequently, hesitation to become involved in class discussion or share ideas about clips of film that were viewed.

**Content Cycling**

The conceptual category content cycling was supported by data emerging from second round interviews. This category emerged as participants gave accounts of receiving the content of their counselor training courses through a variety of learning modalities. Participants’ descriptions included their experiences of having training content delivered through such instructional exercises as small and large-group discussion, engagement in role-play activities, reading and processing text material, and drawing from present and previous pedagogic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. Content cycling also included participants’ accounts of learning effectively by having material and concepts repeated and addressed in their courses in a variety of formats, and involved references to comprehending concepts more fully via the synergistic combination of learning approaches that serve to further emphasize and engrain those training concepts.

**Visual input**. Visual input was supported and confirmed by second round data analysis as one of the properties of the category content cycling. Visual input was described as participants emphasized having a particular affinity for visual examples to underscore their learning of specific training concepts. The property of visual input was
also reflected in participants’ endorsements of film clips being introduced to emphasize course material, and in their testimonies that visual examples provide beneficial and poignant illustrations for learning course content. Second round interview data provided rich descriptions by participants that saturated the conceptual property of *visual input*; however, extensive analysis of the second round data did not warrant *visual input* being dimensionalized. Consequently, *visual input* stands as a thickly saturated property without additional dimensional descriptors.

*Repetition.* *Repetition* was confirmed and clarified as a second property of *content cycling.* The concept of *repetition* was reflected in participants’ comments that emphasized being drawn to training content as it is cycled and presented through various pedagogic approaches. Moreover, *repetition* was evident in participants’ comments indicating that repetition of content is critical in order for it to become firmly established in their learning. As with the property *visual input,* second round data analysis saturated the *repetition* property but did not warrant *repetition* being dimensionalized. It is evident following second round analysis that while *visual input* and *repetition* inform the category *content cycling,* all of these components are filtered through the larger context of *experiential meaning-making process.*
Section III - Third Round Interviews

Introduction

Third round interview questions were constructed to further clarify and confirm categories and properties that emerged from the first and second round interviews. Additionally, the primary purpose of the questions was to describe inter-relationships between categories, properties, and dimensions more deeply. These follow-up questions focused on the contextual category *Experiential Meaning-Making Process*, and the conceptual categories of *Engagement Dynamic, Personal Reaction Experience, Social Interaction Processes*, and *Content Cycling*.

Third round interview data analysis resulted in the confirmation and saturation of the developed categories and properties. This data also clarified and thickly described the concepts that emerged from second round interviews. More specifically, third round interview data clarified participants’ descriptions of their experiences and perceptions with being exposed to film in the classroom. These descriptions confirmed and saturated the concepts that emerged from the second round data analysis. Axial coding and conditional matrix procedures explored the relationships between the categories and ensured complete analysis of the transcripts.

In addition to clarifying and confirming second round data analysis findings, participants in third round interviews provided data that thickly described and supported the conceptualization of the contextual category, *Experiential Meaning-Making Process*. Findings from data analysis also supported the conceptualization of categories and properties emerging from the first and second round interviews: *Engagement Dynamic*. 
**Personal Reaction Experience, Social Interaction Processes, and Content Cycling.**

Moreover, third round data analysis clarified and confirmed relationships between the contextual category *Experiential Meaning-Making Process*, and the conceptual categories, *Engagement Dynamic, Personal Reaction Experience, Social Interaction Processes, and Content Cycling*. Axial coding revealed that participants’ responses described the relationships between the categories through their properties and dimensions. These descriptions clarified and enhanced the relationships between the categories, properties, and their dimensions.

*Experiential Meaning-Making Process*

**Experiential meaning-making process** was confirmed as the contextual category through which all the initial categories were conceptualized and organized. *Experiential meaning-making process* was defined as participants’ experiences of mulling over their classroom exposure and subsequent reactions to the content of popular film clips; this included film-analysis reactions that surfaced for participants following their interactions with instructors and peers. Third round interview data supported and confirmed this contextual category as a conceptualization of the process participants used to attribute meaning to their popular film experiences, and involved a deliberation process through which participants determined how they would integrate material generated through the experiences into their learning. Participants’ descriptions in the third round depicted the *experiential meaning-making process* as an internal process in that the clips stimulated personal reactions to both past and present experiences, and even evoked reactions in regard to contemplating possible future counseling experiences.
Furthermore, **experiential meaning-making process** characterized the process participants used to understand social interactions and experiences with instructors and peers within the class environment, and also involved connections with participants’ personal, social, pedagogic, and occupational issues outside of the classroom. Participants’ descriptions indicated that they engaged in an **experiential meaning-making process** as they attempted to understand how the clips would connect with the course content, during the exposure to clips themselves, during the social interaction discussion component, and following class as they continued to integrate the film exposure and discussion into their experience. The comment which follows clearly conveys one participant’s account of the **experiential meaning-making process** involving the interplay between the categories of **engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling**, as well as their respective properties and dimensions:

P.21 The film clip tied right in with what we’re learning at this time – right in with the book, and it was a dramatic display of confrontation. It was more intense than what we’ve been learning, and beyond any type of confrontation we would likely use in practice within class. So it was extreme, but as counselors we’re going to get the extreme too. Even as a school counselor I’m sure that I’m going to get kids who don’t want to see me – and in the community there’s always court-ordered clients … so the film hit in a relevant way. I also like that it got us all talking and seeing another aspect of confrontation; it also allowed our group to talk about other things that relate to the film – things we’ve already covered in this class or other classes. So the videos don’t just reflect one thing – they can also reinforce what we’ve already learned.

As third round interview participants reflected on their reactions to being exposed to popular film clips, several described engaging in an **experiential meaning-making process** that was largely internal, or self-reflective in nature. Third round interview data revealed a realization by participants that the **experiential meaning-making process**
initiated by the film experience was significant as it helped them to assess where they are
in their personal growth as counselors. Such comments are primarily rooted in the
category of personal reaction experience, but are also connected with the categories of
engagement dynamic, social interaction processes, and content cycling (as well as their
properties and dimensions). The following participants’ comments serve to accentuate
the self-reflective emphasis of the experiential meaning-making process, in addition to
demonstrating the inseparable manner in which the conceptual categories are linked and
imbedded within experiential meaning-making process:

P.22 One emotion I experienced was fear – fear of the future and wondering
whether I can have the type of flexibility in therapy that is needed. The
things we saw in the clips, the experiences I saw on film … I guess I fear
that I have never had such experiences, but at the same time I’m intrigued
too. I know that the things we see in class we can learn from and apply
when we do our taping … and I want to try pushing myself; push beyond
that fear feeling. I know that a certain amount of fear and intimidation is
probably good, and I know I also need to move out of my comfort zone.

P. 18 I really liked the clips because a couple of the scenes made me reflect on
where I am at this stage of my life. This is really fitting because I’m
actually working on a timeline project for another class right now – we’re
supposed to identify and chart important experiences or things we’ve gone
through at different times in our lives that have shaped us to the point
where we are now. The clips reminded me of the work I’m doing on this
project and all of the things I’ve been thinking about lately and how
connected they are when you look at them closely – this happened which
spurred this … which in turn led to this, and all of a sudden I was here. I
guess in my growth I’m getting to see what’s there and what’s not there …

P.19 I related very closely with the second clip, but as I watched it, I wondered
whether I’d be able to relate as closely if the lead character would have
been from a different culture or ethnic background. She was a white,
female, Christian counselor; and as a sister, I’m guessing that she was also
Catholic. Now I’m not a nun, but everything else fit very closely for me –
I felt right in her shoes. It really made me think about who I am and what
I believe, and also made me ponder how that will play itself out when I’m
counseling people. So I really appreciate when we do experiential
learning in the classroom – things like the film clips …
P.24 I was pretty mesmerized with watching Denzel Washington’s character and how he worked with the client. I was taken with the setting … the military … and how the counselor was trying to be flexible even in a fairly rigid environment. I thought about the limitation of the three sessions that was placed on the counselor and wondered how I would handle such a situation – how I will handle working in a managed care environment in the future. The whole situation seemed truly unfair to the client, and yet I know that it is going to be a reality I have to work in – how am I going to handle that?

Other participants’ descriptions emphasized the significance of interaction and process within a social context as being fundamental aspects of the *experiential meaning-making process*. Participants consistently commented that they were stimulated by the social context to think more broadly about issues that surfaced through class discussion about the clips, and also discussed that they were introduced to (and even challenged by), ideas and perceptions from the class discussion that became important in their understanding concepts more thoroughly. Such comments draw much of their energy from the conceptual category *social interaction process*; yet when seen through the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process*, connections with the other conceptual categories of *personal reaction experience, engagement dynamic, and content cycling* become clearly evident:

P.18 This was the second week that we’ve taken a look at multicultural issues and have had to look at our own biases, experience, and heritage. I think that made everybody in class, myself certainly included, think very closely about those biases – I think it was good because it expanded the way that we’ve been thinking about some of the multicultural material we’ve already discussed, and while we’ve talked about it more on the surface, the film clip pushed us to go a bit more deeply. The film was a good one to be used for that purpose.

P.22 The clips really helped because they serve to open up my experience – there are obviously so many experiences out there beyond what I have experienced in my own life. I think that in that way it really benefits me to have seen a different counseling confrontation in the film and then hear the comments of my peers as we discuss how it might be used as well as
misused. So basically, I move beyond my own isolated experience and can have an expanded experience through others.

**P. 20** I think as students, we tend to put ourselves into whatever it is that we’re watching – I definitely think we were all involved in the clips that you showed us yesterday. The film clips are also so much more effective, I think, than when we do role plays – with the role plays people have to get themselves into the role and honestly – they aren’t always effective. Then there’s the people watching who are more focused on the people getting into the role than on their actually being in it, if that makes any sense. But watching a popular movie and picking it apart is much more interesting. A group of students can be exposed to a number of different experiences through watching a film, picking it apart, and then talking about it. I think film gives us pictures of how complex and interesting life can really be …

**P. 21** In a class like this where there are only nine people, when somebody talks it always seems to bring up a different perspective and I think that’s really good. If we look at the viewing of the film clips, they generated a lot of discussion and it seems each person took away something different from the clips that they were able to share and relate to the class. I think that as a counselor, we have to be able to see things from a number of viewpoints – we have to be able to see outside of the box and consider a variety of things. Exercises like we did with the film clips are great because for me personally, they help me to consider the viewpoints of others when we’re looking at course material.

**P. 24** When it came to discussing the first clip in the smaller groups, I was on the same page as the other two people in my group. It seemed at that point that we had similar values and could understand each other because our values were commonly reflected in the way we interpreted the counselor’s interactions with the client. With the second clip, however, I had a very different interpretation than my group members; they immediately jumped to Christian values in their interpretations whereas I, even with going to Catholic school for eight years, didn’t. I saw the storyline as involving a person trying to figure out an appropriate path based on having a difficult history – the others saw a lot of religious connotations as they watched the same material. Even with this different experience, we were able to appreciate and respect each others interpretations.

Participants’ descriptions further revealed that the *experiential meaning-making* process permeated all the other categories and was consistently experienced in all facets of their being exposed to the pedagogic use of popular film clips.
Figure 12 illustrates the contextual category, *experiential meaning-making process* in relation to the other categories, *engagement dynamic*, *personal reaction experience*, *social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*.

**Engagement Dynamic**

*Engagement dynamic* was confirmed as a conceptual category by data analyzed following third round interviews. In the third round of interviews, participants richly described their experiences becoming involved and staying involved with the film clip material. While no new information was provided by participants regarding *engagement dynamic* and round three data was redundant and saturated, it became increasingly evident that participants’ *engagement dynamic* comments were inseparably linked with other conceptual categories. Participants thickly described processes of becoming engaged with clips and having personal reactions to what they saw. Several participants gave descriptions of having a high engagement level in discussing the clips with peers, becoming engaged specifically in response to exposure to visual images, and an engagement in the process of fitting their film experiences into their learning.

In addition to containing *engagement dynamic* remarks, the following comments also involve the conceptual categories of *personal reaction experience* (both *cognitive* and *emotional* properties), *social interaction processes*, *content cycling* (the property *visual input*), and the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process*:

P.22 I was really surprised when the clip started because I didn’t think it would be a popular film. I thought it was going to be an educational clip because you even said that we might have see it before … so I was thinking back to all of my undergrad psych classes and all of the training videos we saw there. So I was truly surprised that it was an actual movie, but I was immediately drawn-in …
Figure 12: The experiential meaning-making process in relation to categories.
The clips were interesting and provocative to me from the moment they started. I was pulled into them because they were direct and charged examples, and they pushed me to think more deeply than just staying on the surface. I think that if you are pushed to take a look at things in class that are intense, then there’s more of an intensity in what you, in turn, think and feel – and when it comes time to discuss with other students, it takes the entire class to a different level.

Media history. Throughout third round interviews, participants discussed their experiences with the film material and made references to whether or not they had been previously exposed to the clips that were presented. Participants’ comments confirmed media history as a property within engagement dynamic and firmly established novel and previous exposure as extremes upon which media history is dimensionalized. Moreover, participants’ media history comments reflect that while they initially became engaged with clips based on whether or not they had seen them previously, they quickly moved to having personal reactions to the content, and also began to make determinations as to how the clips were associated with course material. The following comment, for example, depicts the previous exposure dimension within the property of media history; in addition, connections with the category personal reaction experience (cognitive property), social interaction processes (peer interaction reaction and instructor assessment properties), and content cycling (repetition property) may be seen:

I’ve seen both of the films – it’s been a while, but I knew what the films were and could remember some of the storyline for both of them … so I could enjoy the clips for what they were. At the same time, though, I knew that you as the instructor had selected these particular pieces in order to connect them with things we’ve been looking at in this class. So I had to really jog my memory to think about the topics we’ve been addressing and how the clips relate – I also knew that we’d talk about them as a larger class so I began to think about the points I wanted to make during the discussion time.
Conceptual relevance. Descriptions from the third round of interviews confirmed and supported analysis of first and second round interview data regarding the property conceptual relevance. Conceptual relevance was defined as the determinations participants made regarding whether or not selected film clips had relevance with material being covered in their courses. Data confirmed and more thickly described the processes participants used to make determinations about the relevance of film material. Following third round interview analysis, it became evident that the vast majority of participants did endorse the clips as being relevant to their learning and applicable to course content. Participants’ comments readily identify that early in their exposure to a clip, they assess the clip material for its relevancy to course content; this assessment plays a role in how engaged they will remain with the clip. Whether deemed relevant or irrelevant, all participants endorsed a desire to discuss their assessments of the clips with their classmates.

The participants’ comments that follow are noteworthy in that they emphasize the conceptual relevance property of the engagement dynamic category, and also speak to the manner in which conceptual relevance is dimensionalized along the extremes of relevant and irrelevant. Additionally, it is apparent in the following comments that aspects of the categories personal reaction experience (cognitive and emotional properties), social interaction processes (peer interaction reaction and risk assessment properties), and content cycling (visual input and repetition properties) are evident. Moreover, participants’ descriptions alluded to their involvement in an experiential meaning-making process as they assessed for relevancy in the film material and a way to integrate the film experience into their learning:
P.24 The films definitely connected with what we’ve been talking about. We ended up discussing in our group that there are so many ways that films and clips can be utilized. We could have looked at the exact clips that you showed us and focused only on the minimal encouragers or non-verbal communication that was at play. So for me, I think that film is a powerful learning tool – as long as the discussion and the processing afterwards are well thought-out and there’s a chance for reflection. I’ve always said that doing something in a class like reading a book or watching a movie without processing it, is like reading a fairytale without a moral – there’s no point to it …

P.19 What you end up taking from the clip depends, I think, on your personality and on the actual content of the clip. While I thought the clip was valuable, I wished that it would have gone just a bit longer so that I could have been hooked into it more. For me, it was just too fast-moving and I don’t think it allowed for enough character development. On the other hand, the two people in my group liked the clip and seemed to get much more from it than I did; they, in turn, were able to share their experiences and that helped me to process my own personal values even more deeply.

P.18 A lot of these counseling concepts are new to me because my undergrad is in business … so there’s a certain shock to my system because I’m doing a lot of growing and some catching-up right now. What I liked about the film clips is the way that certain topics were emphasized not through some safe, canned, lip-service gig – you know, “you’ve got to be multicultural, you’ve got to respect cultural diversity, blah, blah, blah.” The film clips immediately took the entire class to what I think is a more realistic level. For me, and for the others in my group, it was a powerful experience and much more valuable than some training video – it’s was more blunt, more direct, and more realistic in getting us to think about multicultural experiences we’re likely to face in counseling.

Personal history. Descriptions from the third round of interviews confirmed and supported analysis of second round interview data regarding the property personal history. Personal history was defined as involving participants’ engagement with a film being based on whether or not a clip conjured an event or issue from their pasts. Personal history also involved participants’ engagement being related to their having some personal, conceptual, or occupational connection with the content depicted in the clips. Data confirmed analysis drawn from first and second round interviews indicating
that participants are more likely to be drawn into clips if they connect in some manner with their personal histories. The following participant description addresses the category of personal history, alludes to the conceptual category of personal reaction experience (emotional property), and demonstrates the participant’s engagement in an experiential meaning making process of acknowledging and making an effort to move forward and make meaning from a difficult personal history:

P.20 The clip didn’t necessarily show physical violence – but it was certainly confrontationally violent. For me, that anger in the film was touchable. I know this reaction was due to the fact that I grew up in a violent home … and so I tend to be a bit more intimidated by displays of anger. I know that’s something I need to work on so that I can be a more effective counselor.

Additionally, third round data analysis confirmed that personal history dimensionalized from event specific to broader association. This involved participants’ personal history comments that described engagement in clips being connected with their linking the content of films directly to a specific personal event or situation (event specific), or linking the content to more general areas of their lives (broader association). As participants connected the film experience with the event specific and broad association aspects of personal history, they became further engaged with the clips. As involvement increased, so did the opportunity for thoughts and feelings to surface. The comments that follow reflect how participants became involved with clips, and also indicate that participants simultaneously became involved in personal reaction experiences as they engaged with film material. The comments are also noteworthy in that they describe participants mulling-over their personal history responses to the film experience, further underscoring the manner in which personal history is an aspect of the larger contextual category of experiential meaning-making process:
In Goodwill Hunting, the clip we saw immediately triggered some of my past experiences and also was a foreshadowing of some confronting I would have to do later that same day. As a Hall Director you need to take that tough approach with students at times … you need to add some personal insight to make it kind of – well, to get a reaction from the person you’re meeting with. I don’t think that is going to be the approach I take with my future clients, necessarily; but I do think there are times that confrontation can probably benefit what’s happening in the counseling session.

I tend to be intimidated by physical violence and aggressive language – and … the way the characters were portraying themselves in the first clip was kind of hard for me to watch. Probably because of the anger involved with it … but I think that was also a good part of the experience for me. Certainly made me realize how much I’m affected by the anger of others.

**Personal Reaction Experience**

Third round interview data thickly confirmed *personal reaction experience* as a conceptual category. As participants described their perceptions and experiences of being engaged with the film clips, and in their subsequent discussions related to those clips, they more deeply illuminated the personal reactions they experienced with the entire process. Participants described more fully how their personal reactions were both emotional and cognitive, and many endorsed that their elicited personal reactions were a significant aspect of what made the film experience valuable for them. Comments reflected that participants had a wide range of personal reactions as a result of being exposed to film clips.

Participants’ descriptions endorsed that their *cognitive* and *emotional* responses to the film clips had an affect on their engagement level in the remainder of the class period, on the level at which they interacted with other students, on the manner in which they reflected on concepts emphasized through the film, and in the way they contemplated integrating the experience into their development as counselors. In this
manner, participants’ comments further articulated the interrelatedness between the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process* and the conceptual categories of *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*. The comments which follow elucidate participants’ *personal reaction experience*, but also emphasize the connectedness with other categories:

P.19 I did a lot of mental processing during the clips. Since I started this program I’ve been looking at things differently – analyzing everyday life through the education I’m receiving and looking more deeply at both my own life and the world around me. So with the clips I was looking at them closely to see how they fit … to see what I could gain from the points they were making.

P.20 As I told you, I had an emotional response to that clip … to the anger that was shown. I’ve always known that I don’t like confrontation, but now I’m definitely becoming more aware that it’s something I need to work through because there are going to be times when people come in for counseling and they’re going to be angry … and demonstrating their frustration. I need to be able to be with anger and not be so intimidated by it. There was another person in class who spoke up about having a similar reaction to anger and confrontation, and that really helped to hear that another classmate was having a similar experience …

P.21 When I first saw the film I definitely had a strong emotional reaction to it. But this was an entirely different context and I was aware that I needed to be watching and paying attention to the counselor and client relationship. I knew we’d probably process the clip as a class and I wanted to be able to make comments about the content.

*Cognitive*. Third round interview data confirmed *cognitive* as a property within the category of *personal reaction experience*. Data confirmed that *cognitive* addressed the thought-based personal reactions that participants had in regard to their film experiences. *Cognitive* emerged repeatedly during third round interviews as participants described their exposure to film clips.

Participants’ descriptions also revealed that *cognitive* responses reflected that they were stimulated to ponder how the film content was portraying and connecting with
larger concepts from their courses. As participants had cognitive reactions to film experience, they reported becoming further engaged in the clips, and also discussed thinking about what they would take-away from the experience and how it might integrate with their growth as counselors-in-training. The following comments illustrate that participants’ cognitive personal reaction experiences also reflect interwoven connections with the other conceptual categories, engagement dynamic (media history and conceptual relevance properties), social interaction reaction (peer interaction reaction property), and content cycling (visual input property). In addition, the participants’ descriptions further revealed how the experiential meaning-making process influenced the cognitive property as participants alluded to thoughts that were generated from the film experience, and how these thoughts affected and influenced the manner in which they are viewing their emerging role as counselors:

P.24 My experience with that clip was definitely cognitive. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that I was very unaware of the story – I had heard about the movie Antwone Fisher, but didn’t really know anything about it. So I was extremely focused while it was playing, trying to understand and comprehend the story line so that I could integrate this with what we were talking about in class.

P.17 The Susan Sarandon clip really got me to thinking, probably because it deals with such a controversial issue – the death penalty. It made me think about other hot-button issues like abortion and gay marriage. Honestly, I don’t know exactly where I stand on those issues right now. In talking with other members of my group after the film, it became clear to me that I need to have a better understanding of my own personal values because they are going to affect the counseling that I do and how I respond to things. I’m going to have to do some more reflecting, and figure out where I stand on such difficult issues.

P.22 I was busy while watching the clips – doing a lot of thinking about what I was seeing in the counseling situations on film and wondering, “OK – if I was in that situation what would I do, and would it be effective?” So, I was doing a lot of placing myself in the film situations and thinking about what my responses might be.
I think popular film clips, like the ones we saw, are important supplements to the meat and potatoes of the issues we focus on in the course. I honestly don’t think we would have had the same type of discussions in our smaller groups if we hadn’t seen the clips. We’ve talked about some of the same topics, but the clips we saw today took those topics to another level – at least they did in our group. We ended up talking about things we normally don’t get into.

Third round interviews also confirmed and supported the cognitive property as being dimensionalized along the extremes of significance assignment and criticism formulation. Significance assignment was defined by participants’ comments pertaining to “figuring out” where film clips are heading, and endorsements they made regarding ascribing importance to the clips that they viewed. Criticism formulation, at the other extreme, was defined by participants’ comments addressing their cognitive experiences of criticizing or critiquing film clips either during or following their viewing.

Perhaps most interesting, participants’ significance assignment and criticism formulation comments reflect that regardless of which extreme they emphasized, their comments evidenced a connection with other conceptual categories that is clearly discernable. As participants gave descriptions of significance assignment, they alluded to the film material being highly relevant in portraying course concepts (*engagement dynamic* category; *conceptual relevance* property). In addition, several participants also described significance assignment in terms of being able to share and discuss material with their classmates (*social interaction processes*, *peer interaction reaction* and *risk assessment* properties); participants who gave significance assignment descriptions were also likely to make comments regarding their efforts to tie-in the film experience with their learning and growth (*experiential meaning-making process*):
The clips really pushed our discussion group. I mean, that’s part of the reason we’re here is to expand what we know about ourselves and about each other … and the farther you push the boundaries, the more you uncover. So I think taking risks is crucial – you don’t get that far if you just stay in your own little cocoon.

After seeing the clip, in our group we discussed the type of clients that might be difficult for each of us to work with … you know, the type of scenarios that might push our buttons. This is only my third class in the program, and we haven’t spent a lot of time studying how to respond if you are having a significant reaction to a client. So last night I went home and thought quite a bit about figuring out what my triggers are and what gets under my skin …

We talked a lot in the group about the second clip – the one with the death penalty issue. It’s really got me thinking … mostly about my own personal values … and the challenge that I might face as a counselor in being respectful of others values and not trying to impose my own. I think that’s going to be really difficult, particularly if the client is saying something that I strongly disagree with.

At the other end of the spectrum, participants who gave criticism formulation descriptions tended to see the film experiences as fragmented, referring mostly to the fact that the clips were too brief and didn’t allow for proper character development.

Participants described criticism formulation as they commented on needing more information from the clips in order for them to have proper relevance with course concepts (content cycling category & engagement dynamic category; conceptual relevance property). In addition, criticism formulation descriptions alluded to participants’ feeling as though the film experience did not affect them in a manner that significantly contributed to their learning or helped them to integrate concepts; in other words, participants described that an unfulfilled or disjointed experiential meaning-making process:

When done in such short clips, it’s really hard for me to become engaged in the story … and if there’s not any opportunity for character development, then a film doesn’t affect me at all.
The second series of clips was actually a bit confusing for me. As I watched them, my mind kind of got caught-up in thinking about this being a trailer for the movie … an advertisement for a film that’s going to be out in the theater – that type of thing. So I was drawn in, somewhat, but didn’t get into it and wasn’t moved by it in the same way I was with the first clip.

I think if there would have been more setup of the scene, then I might have been able to grasp more of what was happening. You introduced the first clip and that really helped. With the second clip – I hadn’t seen the movie before, and so wasn’t familiar with the characters and with what was happening. It just moved too quickly … and I was wanting to get into it – particularly after the experience with the first clip.

Emotional. Emotional was also confirmed as a property within the category personal reaction experience following third round data analysis. Emotional described the feeling-based reactions that participants endorsed as a result of their film experiences. The dimensionalization of emotional into the extremes of positive and negative emotions was also confirmed by the data. It became apparent during analysis of third round interviews that while participants’ comments were captured by the emotional property and its dimensions, these comments also described strong connections with other conceptual categories and dimensions.

As participants described their emotional reactions to the film clips, they also conveyed that having emotional reactions kept them closely engaged with the clips (engagement dynamic category). Additionally, several participants described having strong reactions to seeing emotionally charged material presented in a moving picture format (content cycling; visual input property). Other participants described having emotions surface during their discussions and interactions with their classmates (social interaction processes), and some participants alluded to ascribing meaning to the emotional reactions they experienced (experiential meaning-making process). The
participants’ comments that follow portray the *emotional* property and elucidate close connections with other categories:

- **P.21** I was drawn-in to the clips, and if I can be drawn-in then I can be empathic … I can be in the shoes of the counselors in the clips and I can sense a lot of the feelings that come with that position. I can relate … and even if I’m not able to relate, what is it that’s standing in my way of being able to relate – am I not feeling enough? Am I not present enough?

- **P.20** I was truly drawn in to feeling the conflict the character was experiencing. I was thinking of those times in my life where I’ve been in those same shoes where you’re thinking one thing and you’re confronted with a whole different truth. Trying to rationalize and come to terms with that – trying to make it OK in your head and in your heart. Kind of like a spiritual crisis where you think, “Oh my gosh - I thought I had this figured out …”

- **P.19** I was obviously moved by the film – when it stopped, I had a tear going down my cheek and I quickly brushed it away, hoping that no one would notice. Then I noticed that a couple of other people were doing the same thing, and that helped me to feel connected with those classmates. It also reminded me of how powerful film material can be and how helpful it is in emphasizing so many points that we end up addressing in our counselor training.

- **P.22** I had a mixture of feelings after we watched the clip. I felt somewhat intimidated by the thought of, “am I really going to be able to handle all of the intensity that can come with this profession?” So I guess the feeling was something close to intimidation or even fear – fear of my own inability. At the same time, though, there’s a feeling I get that tells me to face that fear and that intimidation. That’s the stronger part of me, the part that knows that I have a lot of growing to do but that also knows that this is what I really want to do with my life …

Data on the *personal reaction experience* category and its properties and dimensions were redundant and the descriptions saturated.

*Social Interaction Processes*

*Social interaction processes* was also confirmed as a category following third round data analysis. Analysis of third round interview data expanded on the themes and concepts developed during the analysis of first and second round interview data.
Participants’ descriptions of their exposure and discussion of film clips confirmed the importance that they place on the *social interaction processes* inherent in the in-class film experiences. Participants’ descriptions were further conceptualized as properties called *peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment,* and *risk assessment*; each of these properties also contained corresponding dimensions. Participants’ descriptions thickly saturated the conceptual category of *social interaction processes.*

*Social interaction processes* was defined by participants’ comments regarding their experiences of being exposed to film clips in a social context, which included their viewing and discussing the clips in the classroom setting (with peers and instructor present). In addition, *social interaction processes* also involved participants’ comments of being aware and affected by the verbal and non-verbal interplay that occurred within the context of their classrooms.

As participants discussed their film experiences, social interaction was consistently revealed as an important component of their experiences. Participants commented that they often became increasingly engaged in the film material after they had an opportunity to discuss it with peers (also addresses *engagement dynamic* category). Others emphasized that their experiences were enriched through being able to share their personal reactions with peers, in addition to being able to have personal reactions as a result of peer discussion surrounding the film clips (also emphasizes *personal interaction reaction* category, both *cognitive* and *emotional* properties). Additionally, participants described the importance of being able to discuss course concepts as they were presented in the clips (connects with *content cycling, visual input* and *repetition* properties), and the increased depth their film experiences were given as a
result of being able to hear the perceptions and experiences of others (*experiential meaning-making process*). The following participants’ comments reflect the conceptual category of *social interaction processes*; in addition, they serve to emphasize the significance of social interaction as participants learn, and to underscore the interrelatedness of the conceptual categories within the contextual category *experiential meaning making process*:

P.20 This class has been great – particularly in getting to know others and the perspectives they hold. A lot of us are non-traditional students … some of us have really dealt with a lot of things – some haven’t dealt with much at all. It was interesting to hear what others were thinking based on what they had seen. While I did some sharing, I was more of a voyeur during the discussion yesterday because I found it incredibly interesting to hear the different thoughts and watch the emotions that evolved from different people.

P.18 I appreciated the interactive nature of yesterday’s class. I’m usually not a person who has difficulty speaking up in class; what was nice about the clips and the discussion, is that instead of just a couple of people making comments about the clips, several people who normally are pretty quiet spoke up and had valuable comments to share. My hope is that they’ll now share on a more regular basis … because that adds to the overall experience of the class.

P.24 I think that hearing what others had to say about the clips complimented my thinking. It gave me a different perspective. With one of the clips, I had a very strong emotional reaction and didn’t do a lot of thinking while it was showing. One of my group members had a cognitive reaction to the same clip, and so it was helpful to hear her reaction – she helped me to see things that I otherwise would have missed.

P.23 I get a lot out of working in small groups. I think it’s an effective way to analyze and process what you’re learning. The group I was in did a lot of processing of the clips, and that made it a much richer experience for me.

*Peer interaction reaction.* Third round interview data confirmed and verified *peer interaction reaction* as a property in the category of *social interaction processes.*

*Peer interaction reaction* was deeply described as participant’s reactions that resulted
from being in an interactive classroom setting where information and ideas regarding film clips was verbally exchanged with peers. Participants thickly described the significance of being able to verbally exchange ideas and reactions that surfaced from their film exposure. Comments reflected that participants’ became engaged in discussions with peers, largely in response to what stood out in clips and in sharing perceptions as to how it connected with course concepts (*engagement dynamic*, *conceptual relevance property*). Additionally, participants described having personal reactions as a result of engaging with their peers (*personal reaction experience*), and added that their perspectives of course content was enriched through this process (*content cycling*). The following quotations highlight the property of *peer interaction reaction*, convey close connections with other conceptual categories, and emphasize the meaningful nature participants ascribed to being able to interact with fellow classmates (*experiential meaning-making process*):

P.20 I think the experience with the clips was really good. I thought it was most interesting to hear other people’s perspectives that were very different from my own – that was an effective part of the overall process.

P.17 I’ve done a lot of thinking about the clips since I saw them yesterday. I think to watch clips like that and then be able to pick them apart … and talk about how we felt about different aspects of them in our small group was powerful. We were three very different people with three very different perspectives, so it gave us an opportunity to really explore what we were feeling in relation to what others were feeling as well.

P.22 Discussing the clips after they played was a neat experience because I sort of know the people in my group. I know that one of the group members is pretty spiritually based, so it was good to see different aspects of our differing personalities and what stood out for each of us in the clips. So I appreciated being able to hear other peoples’ thoughts and feelings and I definitely learned from that process.
P.23 It was good to hear other points and to see what other people thought of the clips. I definitely heard things that I didn’t catch – things that I even missed visually. So it was good to grasp everybody’s point of view and to even modify my own based on listening to the input of others.

Peer Interaction Reaction was further dimensionalized by the extremes of challenge and resonate. These dimensional extremes were confirmed and saturated following third round interviews. Challenge described participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from their peers that ran contrary to their own, or challenged the ideas and perspectives they had formulated; resonate described participants’ reported experiences of hearing comments and ideas from other students regarding the film clips that solidified or affirmed their own.

It is significant that even in the dimensions of the property peer interaction reaction, vivid connections with other conceptual categories, properties, and dimensions were seen. The following participants’ challenge and resonate comments describe that as a result of peer interaction, their re-engagement with film material and course concepts was necessary (engagement dynamic category; conceptual relevance property; relevance dimension). Other challenge/resonate comments describe connections with cognitive and emotional reactions (personal reaction experience category), while other participants described benefit to their learning, their comprehension of course material, and their development as counselors through challenge and resonate interactions with peers (content cycling category and experiential meaning making contextual category):

P.21 There were three of us in the smaller group discussion. The first person who shared had pretty much the same viewpoint that I had. The third person had a completely different perspective … and I think that’s good. I remember thinking to myself, “Wow! This is totally different than how I saw it.” I think getting a perspective that’s vastly different than your own can really stretch your learning.
The most interesting part of the entire film discussion was being able to find out other people’s views and discovering what would push their buttons. I realized that everyone in that class is different and everyone is going to have their own thing that offends or turns them off. Just like with religion – that’s not a huge part of my life, but for one of the group members it is … and she really struggled with what she called the “religious issues” in the clip.

There was a sense of relief in knowing that I wasn’t the only one tearing-up with that clip. I actually bonded with others who became emotional and I even went up to one person after class to talk more about this common experience we shared.

I’m not sure that I felt uneasy, exactly. It was just more of a struggle to try to fully explain my views to the other people in my group who shared a perspective on the clip. I didn’t have another person to back me up and validate my perspective … the other two could go back and forth and add to each other’s analysis. The good part is that it truly made me think hard about where I stand …

**Instructor assessment.** Third round interview data confirmed and verified *instructor assessment* as a property in the category of *social interaction processes*.

*Instructor assessment* was defined as participant’s references to the role of instructors within the social context of courses they have taken or are taking in which popular film was or is utilized for a pedagogic purpose. In third round interviews, participants confirmed *instructor assessment* as they discussed the role of instructors within the classroom setting, and more specifically, when they shared the perceptions related to the manner in which instructors integrated film clips into their courses.

*Instructor assessment* was further broken down into the dimensions of effective and ineffective; third round interview data supported this dimensionalization. Effective referred to participants’ assessments that instructors provided proper structure for utilizing film clips, including perceptions that instructors adequately elucidated the didactic points the clips were intended to emphasize. Ineffective described assessments...
opposite to that of effective, and reflected participants’ assessments that instructors did a poor job in providing appropriate structure for utilizing the film clips and in linking them with course material.

As participants described the property instructor assessment and the dimensions effective and ineffective, their comments directly to other conceptual categories and the contextual category of experiential meaning-making process. Participants described how instructor comments surrounding the films helped them to have a firmer grasp of course material they had been studying (content cycling category; repetition property). Participants also commented that instructors played a role in their becoming more or less engaged in the film experience, depending on participants’ assessments as to how relevant clips were with course material (engagement dynamic category; conceptual relevance property). Participants further described that instructors played a significant role in posing reflection questions for small and large group discussion, in monitoring the overall tempo of the film experience, and in creating a safe classroom environment (social interaction processes category; peer interaction reaction and risk assessment properties). Experiential meaning-making process was also expressed as participants’ acknowledged personal growth from a learning experience facilitated by their instructors in a supportive and encouraging environment:

P.23 I found the instructor’s comments very helpful. She certainly didn’t monopolize the discussion, but interjected enough that it helped our group to look at the clips more deeply. She did the same thing with the other small groups, and did a nice job of helping us connect the film with the course material.

P.21 Ultimately, professors have the power to steer the direction and focus within the classroom. I’ve been in a situation before where films were used to emphasize points the instructor was very invested in making – there wasn’t a lot of room for disagreement with this particular professor,
and so in that situation I didn’t get a lot out of it and I think the experience was pretty flat for others as well.

P.18 I liked the way that both you and our professor helped to guide the larger group discussion. There was a lot of good exchange, and you both were helpful in pulling different ideas and comments from the various small groups. This was important because I heard a couple of comments from other groups that helped me to understand the concept of countertransference more thoroughly.

Risk assessment. Third round interview data confirmed and clarified risk assessment as a property in the category of social interaction processes. Risk assessment described how open participants perceived classroom settings to be in terms of being able to share and exchange ideas and feelings. Risk assessment, therefore, described a calculation participants made regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and their subsequent assessments as to whether or not these environments were perceived as conducive for sharing.

Third round data further confirmed risk assessment as being dimensionalized along the extremes of safe and unsafe. Safe reflected participants’ comments indicating that they felt a solid rapport with their classmates and a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. Such assessments led participants to conclude that the classroom was a safe and open environment for sharing ideas and divulging opinions about clips of film viewed within this social context. Unsafe, on the other hand, conveyed participants’ assessments that the classroom environment was not a conducive environment for openly sharing ideas and feelings about film clips.

Participants third round risk assessment comments were notable in that they reflected quite closely material from other conceptual categories. Participants described that when clips were viewed in a classroom environment that they perceived to be safe
and encouraging, they would engage more readily with the film experience (engagement dynamic category); would share their thoughts and feelings more openly (personal reaction experience category); would interact with classmates and the instructor more frequently (social interaction processes category); would show greater enthusiasm in connecting film concepts with course material (content cycling category); and would indicate that the overall film experience was beneficial to their learning and development (experiential meaning-making process contextual category). Participants’ unsafe risk assessment comments also reflected other conceptual categories, albeit from perceptions that reflected negative, limiting, and disconnected experiences. The following participants’ comments describe the risk assessment property and its dimensions, and their connection with the conceptual and contextual categories:

P.21 Like I told you, that one professor would show clips but wouldn’t allow for a lot of discussion following them. It was like a lecture interrupted on occasion by video clips. Not very interesting, and an experience I don’t think helped me to learn a great deal. You certainly didn’t want to make any comments about the videos – no way!

P.17 It’s a great group of people and the instructor is awesome. There’s only nine of us in there so there’s a lot of process that goes on around everything that we do. The clips were a really nice touch, I feel, in getting us to talk about confrontation from a different perspective. I valued the comments my peers made about the clips and I think their input helped me to integrate the material more effectively.

P.22 We do a lot of activities in small groups in that class, and we even mix up the groups on a regular basis. Because of that, I know the people in the class pretty well … and that helps when it comes to class discussion. It’s a class where I feel that I can say just about anything, and I think others in there are pretty comfortable as well. That’s what made the film clip exercise so interesting – not just seeing it and having your own ideas about it, but also knowing the people in the class would also have some good and insightful things to say …
Content Cycling

The conceptual category content cycling was supported by data from third round interviews. This category was confirmed as describing participants’ accounts of receiving the content of their counselor training courses through a variety of learning modalities. Participants’ descriptions of content cycling included their experiences of having training content delivered through such pedagogic exercises as small and large-group class discussion, engagement in role-play activities, reading and processing text material, and drawing from present and previous didactic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. Content cycling further described participants’ accounts of learning effectively by having material and concepts addressed in their courses in a variety of formats, and included references to comprehending concepts more fully via a combination of learning approaches that served to elucidate and engrain those concepts.

Content cycling differs from the other categories in that its emphasis is primarily content-based, while the conceptual categories of engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and the contextual category of experiential meaning-making process place emphasis primarily on process. It is important to underscore that process and content are equally significant components, reliant on each other and existing simultaneously. Content cycling, as it is conceptualized in this emerging theory, deals mostly with the material of what is presented within classrooms and the format in which this material is delivered and addressed. As “cycling” implies, content is not static, and participants’ comments verify that content needs to be given life through a venue in order to be processed and
subsequently learned. Participants’ statements further confirm that they identified their film experiences as a beneficial means of examining course content.

Because of the inseparable connection between content and process, participants content cycling comments are deeply engrained with the other categories (both conceptual and contextual) that have been thus far described. Therefore, the following content cycling comments are also reflective of engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and experiential meaning-making process:

P.21 In knowing myself, I need more than what’s in the textbook and lecture in order to truly get a grasp of something. With the clip, I felt that it was a way to help tie-in the learning. For me personally, confrontation and aggressive and assertive delivery were kind of jumbled concepts before today’s class. After the clip and the discussion, I felt like I had another way to look at it and it solidified for me. So, I read about it, I heard about it, and I saw it in action – all of that worked together to help me understand more clearly.

P.18 The clips certainly make what we’re learning more interesting. I told our professor during class today that these popular film clips were much more thought-provoking than the Corey training videos we’ve been watching. Those certainly have their place, but the popular clips were a lot more real and a lot more direct. I guess I see it as “hands-on,” and that’s more interactive than a lecture or a typical discussion. The clips pushed the concepts a bit deeper and then the discussion helped us to focus on what we see our personal biases to be. That type of stuff stays with you.

P.23 The clips helped to actually see some of what we’ve been discussing. I am also drawn to role-play activities and case studies because I think all of those help to hone my conceptualization skills – something I’m really working on right now. I also got a lot from being able to talk about the clips with my group members and to hear their ideas. I guess there’s many ways to teach these counseling concepts, but for me personally, I think that when you’re asked to look at an idea from a variety of directions – through the textbook, through a case study, through a film – then that’s when you really learn it …

Visual input. Visual input was supported within the conceptual category content cycling, following third round interviews. Visual input represented a specific mode of
**content cycling** that participants consistently confirmed through all three rounds of interviews. *Visual input* conveyed participants’ descriptions of having particular affinity for visual examples to underscore their learning of specific training concepts. *Visual input* was also reflected in participants’ testimonies that visual examples provided beneficial and poignant illustrations for learning course content. The examples which follow describe *visual input* within the category **content cycling**, and also demonstrate connections with the categories of **engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience**, and **social interaction processes**:

P.23  I think that visual examples help me to best learn and process material – That just the way my mind works. I’m much more likely to have a meaningful reaction to something I experience visually, and therefore … am also much more likely to remember it.

P.17  I don’t respond particularly well to the traditional lecture format. I’m also aware that I learn the best when I can see something occur … when I can get a mental picture of it in my head. The clips were right up my alley because they connected with things we’ve been looking at and were “live” examples. We had some great conversations in our small groups about feelings that were raised for each of us during the viewing, and those conversations are going to be what I remember when it comes to thinking about some of the specific ideas from this class.

**Repetition.** *Repetition* was confirmed as a second property within the conceptual category **content cycling** following third round interviews. *Repetition* also represented a specific aspect of **content cycling** that participants confirmed across three rounds of interviews. *Repetition* addressed participants’ comments of not only being drawn to training content as it is cycled and presented through various pedagogic approaches, but accentuated that the repetition of content is crucial in order for it to be firmly established in their learning. As participants described *repetition*, they endorsed that film clips were useful in that they could be seen on multiple occasions, or could be re-examined at a later
time as a means of repeating and reinforcing what had occurred in regard to the film clip experience within the classroom environment. Participants endorsing repetition also explained that they needed to have concepts repeatedly addressed in order to comprehend them appropriately, and explained that the film experience was another means of repeating material. While the following clips serve to emphasize the repetition property within content cycling, they also serve to highlight significant interrelatedness with the contextual category of experiential meaning-making process, and the conceptual categories of social interaction processes, personal reaction experience, and engagement dynamic:

P.18 For me, I learn most effectively by going over something again and again. I will usually read the text material at least twice, make notes from it, and go over those notes a couple of times before it starts to sink in. Once I have it, though, a concept will stay with me. With the film clips, our class had already taken a look at confrontation and examining client issues within a larger social context – so as I watched them I was able to appreciate the way these issues were being presented, and therefore had a pretty rich experience with them. Then being able to discuss the issues and the clips with my group was also important because hearing their reactions drove the concepts home even more. Those clips will stay with me because of the way they were linked with material I already looked at a number of times.

P.24 Sometimes I think I learn much more slowly than others because I have to go over material repeatedly before I grasp it. This isn’t anything new – I’ve always had to do this. What I like about our Process class is the way we end up looking at stuff over and again … and are pushed to tie concepts together. It takes me a lot of work outside of class to keep up with class discussion, but activities like showing and talking about the movie clips are helpful because it’s not just hearing the material in a way that we have already – the material is the same, but the way we receive it is different. So we get the material again, but we get it in another form that helps us to remember it …
Triangulation

Triangulation was utilized to confirm the findings of the third round interview analysis. Triangulation procedures, when well-utilized, also guard against researcher bias and invalid conclusions (Maxwell, 1996). Four main triangulation procedures were used following round three data analysis: literature review, researcher observation notes, memos, and a focus group.

Literature

Literature triangulation involved comparing and contrasting findings with relevant existing literature. This process involved referring to contemporary literature sources as a means of counter-checking findings. The main objective was to check for consistencies between findings and the concepts explored in the literature.

A review of relevant literature indicated a large body of literature describing various aspects of classroom learning environments, interpersonal interaction between students, experiential and cooperative learning, and pedagogic approaches. As previously noted, only a small amount of the relevant literature was based in actual research; the vast majority being founded on theoretical assertions. However, there were several important concepts that emerged from the third round of interviews that were consistent with the literature, as well as with concepts that surfaced in first and second round interviews.

The literature reviews following first and second round interviews emphasized similarity between the emergent theory in this research study and Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning model. Parallels between these two models during third round
interviews became increasingly strong, as both place emphasis on the processes in which students learn through their experiences.

As participants described their film experiences in third round interviews, they emphasized their actual exposure to the films, their reactions and reflections to processing this exposure both internally and with peers, their linking film material with course concepts, and their conceptual insights that were enhanced and challenged through engagement with the film experience. These areas of emphasis closely resemble the descriptions of Kolb’s experiential learning model (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation), and also serve to affirm the *experiential meaning-making process* as a contextual category in the emergent theory. In examining Kolb’s model more extensively, Claxton & Murrell (1987) emphasize that the stages of this model should not be construed as a linear process, but rather, multidirectional and systemic. This resonates with data that emerged in round three confirming the highly interactive nature of the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process* with the conceptual categories of *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes,* and *content cycling.*

Third round interview data continued to exhibit close connections with Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory (1999), and these intelligences have been described in greater detail following first and second round interviews. In regard to third round data, the verbal-linguistic and interpersonal intelligences that Gardner describes connected closely to the experiences that were conveyed by participants in discussing *social interaction processes* following third round interviews. Participants conveyed on numerous occasions that their learning was enhanced through discussion with peers and
the ability to interact with the perceptions of others in regard to the film material. In addition, Gardner (1999) describes spatial intelligence as depicting persons who learn best in working with pictures and colors, and who are able to readily visualize and learn from visual stimulation. This type of learning reflects close resemblance with third round participants’ accounts that define the property *visual input* within the category of **content cycling**. These accounts endorsed that the visually presented depictions of counseling-related scenarios provided through the clips was beneficial in their attaining a deeper understanding of course concepts.

Resnick (1991) submits that the physical (environmental) and social context within which learning occurs is an integral part of any learning activity. This contention is supported in third round interview data that was thickly saturated with participants’ descriptions of the importance of **social interaction processes** to their film experiences. Participants numerous descriptions of *peer interaction reaction* as facilitative to their learning gives credence to Vygotsky’s (1978) claim that social interaction is a prerequisite to learning and cognitive development. Marshall (1998) elaborates on this idea and speaks to the connection of **social interaction processes** as evidenced through the **experiential meaning-making process**:

Through discussion with others – where ideas are shared, challenged, negotiated, and justified – new levels of conceptual understanding can be reached; knowledge of the world is thus based on negotiated understandings (p.452).

Marshall’s idea of negotiated understandings was apparent in third round interview descriptions; most specifically, as participants described the *peer interaction*
reaction property and the dimensions of challenge and resonate. During third round interviews, participants increasingly described their film experiences as involving a complex engagement of interactive components that occurred within a social context. These film experiences, according to participants, required proper attention, reflection, and discussion in order to be properly learned and understood, and this alludes to the larger contextual category of the *experiential meaning-making process*.

Descriptions further indicated that students engaged in an ongoing process of assessing their film experiences for meaning and relevancy. Data richly described multidirectional and interconnected processes occurring between the conceptual categories, and these further confirmed the contextual category, *experiential meaning-making process*. Third round interview participants also stated that their film experiences were useful in that they provided opportunities that allowed them to immediately apply and discuss in small groups the points and concepts that surfaced through the film experience. These participants’ comments are significant in that they highlight all of the conceptual categories (*engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling*), interacting simultaneously. Additionally, such comments elucidate a point made by Furr & Carroll (2003), emphasizing that learning experiences that involve immediate application of knowledge have a greater and more lasting impact on students. This proposition resonates with participants’ comments emphasizing the significance of *content cycling* immediately following their film experiences to solidify their learning, and again, confirms the contextual category of the *experiential meaning-making process*. 
Researcher Notes and Memos

During the third round of interviews, researcher observation notes supported the initial conceptualization of the contextual category, the *experiential meaning-making process*, and the developed conceptual categories of *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling*.

Researcher observation notes supported the developed contextual category of the *experiential meaning-making process*. The researcher observed that the participants appeared reflective as they described the *experiential meaning-making process*. Their demeanor during the interviews appeared consistent with their descriptions of the *experiential meaning-making process*. As participants reflected on their film experiences, they described engaging in a process of deliberation regarding their reactions, their interactions, and their assessments of the impact the film experience would have on their learning and understanding of counseling concepts. Often during these descriptions, participants would pause and appeared to be contemplating their film experiences and the information they were sharing with the researcher.

As participants described *engagement dynamic* in third round interviews, the researcher noted that this described a process that recurred for participants on various occasions throughout their film experiences. Observation notes emphasized that engagement was far from a steady process, but rather one that participants moved in and out of at different levels as they processed their film experiences.

The researcher also observed that during interviews, participants became involved and energetic in describing their overall experiences of being exposed to film in the classroom. Participants’ comments richly described both process and content
components in their film experiences, and the interplay between the conceptual categories of engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling became increasingly evident. Moreover, observation notes identified that as participants described and reflected on their film experiences, they discussed concerted efforts they were making to determine how the experience would most appropriately fit within their learning. The researcher observed participants exhibiting considerable energy in reflecting on their film experiences, the connections with course material, and their interactions with peers. This reflection and analysis process supported the conceptualization of the contextual category, experiential meaning-making process.

Social interaction processes received considerable attention during third round interviews. The researcher observed and noted that participants would consistently remark about the importance of their film experiences having taken place within a social context. Most participants would express excitement regarding being able to process the film clips with peers and their instructor. Participants’ tone of voice and demeanor reflected that hearing about the reactions of their peers to film content and being able to discuss clips as they related to course content was a significant positive component of their overall experiences. These descriptions further confirmed the properties peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment, and risk assessment.

In addition to researcher observation notes and literature triangulation, memos were frequently made during the data analysis process. Memos often reflected the researcher’s conceptualization based on theoretical sensitivity and feelings experienced in reaction to the data. Additional memos were made during consultation meetings and phone calls with the researcher’s committee chairperson, methodologist, and peers.
These memos helped the researcher to bracket preconceived notions about participants’ experiences as data were analyzed. Additionally, these memos provided further confirmation of the developed categories and their properties and dimensions.

Memos made during third round data analysis recorded observations that participants’ were increasingly describing the *experiential meaning-making process* as the core of their pedagogic exposure to popular film clips. As participants responded to questions posed in third round interviews, it was evident that the *experiential meaning-making process* influenced their *content cycling, social interaction processes, engagement dynamic,* and *personal reaction experience.*

**Focus Group**

A focus group was convened to present the emergent theory to the research participants. In this study, students were exposed to popular film clips and then discussed the clips in both small and large-group formats during the first half of a class period. During the remainder of the class time and following a break, the researcher presented the emergent theory to the entire class of students who had been previously exposed. The purpose of the focus group was to confirm the theoretical conceptualizations of students’ pedagogic exposure to popular film clips within the classroom setting. Participants were presented descriptions of the contextual category, *experiential meaning-making process,* and the conceptual categories, *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes,* and *content cycling.* Participants were also presented diagrams and information that depicted the relationships between *engagement dynamic,* *personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, content cycling,* and the *experiential meaning-making process.*
At the end of the presentation, participants were asked to discuss their reactions to the emergent theory. Participants’ discussions were guided by the following questions:

- How does this theory fit for you?
- What are your perceptions of the model in terms of how it captures your experience?
- Can you share examples of the pieces of this theory that worked the most for you?

Participants in the focus group confirmed that the theoretical conceptualizations of students’ pedagogic exposure to popular film were consistent with their experiences. Participants verified and confirmed theoretical conceptualizations regarding the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process*, and the conceptual categories, *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, content cycling*. Participants’ responses supported the emergent theory of students’ pedagogic exposure to popular film. Responses to questions posed also confirmed the relationships between the contextual category and the conceptual categories, in addition to relationships between their properties and dimensions.

Participants indicated that the theory fully described their experiences and made no suggestions for changes to the emergent theory:

**FG.4** I think the theory just puts words to my experience and talks about what happens naturally. It makes a lot of sense to me – when you were talking about aspects of the theory I kept saying to myself, “Right, right.”

**FG.5** The theory presents a nice picture of what my experience was like with the film and the discussion that followed.

**FG.1** For myself, I think this theory fits really well. It ties together what I experienced and what we worked through today.
Participants supported the *experiential meaning-making process* as the core concept that described the essence of their experiences and perceptions of having been pedagogically exposed to popular film clips.

**FG.1** I sensed the experiential process that you described as fitting with the film experience that I had prior to your presenting the theory. You showed a clip … I became engaged and I had a personal reaction. We then went into our small groups and I again became engaged and also had another personal reaction to interacting with others. All the while I was assessing my reactions, the reactions of others, and also trying to think closely about how all of this fit with the larger concepts.

**FG.8** My personal reactions were far more intense after watching these film clips today than after reading the chapter last night. It’s a different level of experience and involvement for me, and in terms of the model, I think the film clips do help with the meaning-making part of my learning. Those clips are going to stick with me in terms of what we’re learning.

Participants also confirmed the category *engagement dynamic*, as well as the property conceptual relevance. Participants also indicated that *engagement dynamic* influenced their *personal reaction experience*.

**FG.6** For me, the individual categories seem to fit really well together and there is definitely an interplay between them that occurs. I also think you’re right when you describe the theory in terms of not holding to any set linear process. I was jumping all around, in terms of this model, during the film experience today and was engaged at different levels during different parts of the experience.

**FG.9** I found myself truly engaged in this experience. I found myself having some pretty strong thoughts and feelings as I listened to the reactions and ideas of others.

Participants supported the conceptual category *social interaction processes*, as well as affirming the interaction that occurs between its properties of *peer interaction reaction, instructor assessment*, and *risk assessment*. Additional connections may be seen with the conceptual categories of *engagement dynamic* and *personal reaction experience*. 
FG.10 I agree with the comment about the discussion part of this experience being so valuable. Ideas and concepts don’t come to life for me until I’m able to share them or have someone share them with me.

FG.12 There’s a lot more opportunities to become engaged in the experience when you watch something and then discuss it in your groups – even if you don’t have a real personal reaction to the clips. Sometimes just having that social aspect can give you more of a place to become engaged.

FG.13 There were things that people said in our group that I was thinking, that I didn’t necessarily feel comfortable enough myself to say out loud. So when another group member said those things out loud it gave me some comfort in knowing that another person was having the same thoughts. So it made me feel more relaxed knowing that there were others having similar reactions.

FG.3 This made me think about how useful a theory like this could be if a professor who showed a film clip would then take students through the model and discuss it. I can imagine if the pieces of the theory were discussed within a class, a lot of rich material might surface – talk about a meaning-making process!

Participants supported the conceptual category, **content cycling**. Moreover, participants endorsed the properties of **visual input** and **repetition**, and affirmed **content cycling** as a component of the larger contextual category, **experiential meaning-making process**.

FG.2 I struggled initially with the category of **content cycling** because I was thinking about how I learn and how many of the counseling concepts get repeated in a variety of classes. After you explained the larger category I was able to get a clearer picture of the overall theory, and realized that it is through experience – which is a very complex phenomenon – that I, personally, am introduced to content, reflect and discuss it, and then add it to my learning. That process seems to be well represented in this model.

FG.7 For myself at least, I have a far deeper reaction when I see something visually … so the film clips are powerful and resonate with me more than the written word. In that sense, the visual input piece in that **content cycling** category really stood out. I actually think I became engaged and excited in this entire process today because of the visual component.
One focus group participant’s reaction summed up the focus group response to the theory:

FG.11 Words on a page can have meaning, but what we learn in our counseling classes can have so much more meaning when you do more with them than just read about them. I think the power of the clips you showed today and the theory you shared with us clearly demonstrate how valuable it is to bring concepts to life for students.

In summary, the current literature, accumulated researcher observation notes, data analysis and consultation memos, and a focus group were used to triangulate the contextual category and all four developed conceptual categories (including properties and dimensions) that had been generated from the data. Each of these triangulation methods provided support for the emergent concepts.

Discussion

Third round interviews were conducted to further clarify and confirm categories, properties, and dimensions that emerged from analysis of first and second round interview data. Third round interviews completed the individual interview data collection process. The purpose of the third round interview questions was to describe more deeply interrelationships between categories, properties, and dimensions. These follow-up questions focused on the contextual category of experiential meaning-making process, and the conceptual categories of social interaction processes and content cycling.

Experiential Meaning-Making Process

Third round interview data thickly described and supported initial conceptualization of the contextual category, experiential meaning-making process. Data analysis supported the initial conceptualization of this category as the process participants used to make sense of their perceptions, experiences, interactions, and
reactions as they are exposed to film experiences. *Experiential meaning-making process* was additionally confirmed as the contextual category through which all the initial categories were conceptualized and organized. Third round data consequently clarified and confirmed relationships between the contextual category, *experiential meaning making process* and the conceptual categories, *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*.

Participants addressed the following question drawn from the *experiential meaning-making process*:

- Describe your experience of reflecting on what you saw in the film clips and how this affected you?

As participants responded to this question, they elucidated a process in which they engage in order to attribute understanding and meaning to their popular film experiences. Moreover, this involved a deliberation process through which participants determined how they would integrate material generated through the experiences into their learning. Participants’ depicted the *experiential meaning-making process* as an internal process in that the clips stimulated personal reactions to both past and present experiences, and even evoked reactions in regard to contemplating possible future counseling experiences.

Participants’ descriptions further illuminated the *experiential meaning-making process* as a process they used to understand social interactions and experiences with instructors and peers within the classroom environment. As students described their reactions to the film clips, an *experiential meaning-making process* was evident as they made connections between the film material and their personal, social, pedagogic, and occupational issues outside of the classroom. Participants’ descriptions indicated
engagement in an *experiential meaning-making process* as they attempted to understand how the clips would connect with the course content during the exposure to clips themselves, during the social interaction discussion component, and following class as they continued to integrate the film exposure and discussion into their experience.

During third round interviews, several students commented that they found the film experience to be meaningful in bringing concepts to life and helping them to understand material more deeply. They further described being highly engaged in the film experience, having poignant personal reactions both as they viewed the clips and participated in discussion of them, receiving benefit from hearing the perspectives and interpretations of their classmates regarding the clips, and gaining a fuller understanding of specific course content following the experience. These accounts clearly convey participating in an *experiential meaning-making process* that involves complex and systemic interplay between the conceptual categories of *engagement dynamic*, *personal reaction experience*, *social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*, as well as their respective properties and dimensions.

As third round interview participants reflected on their reactions to being exposed to popular film clips, several described engaging in an *experiential meaning-making process* that was largely internal, or self-reflective in nature. Third round interview data also revealed a realization by participants that the *experiential meaning-making process* initiated by the film experience was significant as it helped them to assess where they are in their personal growth as counselors. Such comments are primarily rooted in the category of *personal reaction experience*, but are also deeply connected with the categories of *engagement dynamic*, *social interaction processes*, and *content cycling*.
Other participants’ descriptions emphasized the significance of interaction and process within a social context as being fundamental aspects of the *experiential meaning-making process*. Participants consistently commented that they were stimulated by the social context to think more broadly about issues that surfaced through class discussion about the clips, and also discussed that they were often challenged by ideas and perceptions from the class dialogue that became important in their understanding concepts more thoroughly. Such comments draw much of their energy from the conceptual category *social interaction processes*; yet when seen through the contextual category *experiential meaning-making process*, connections with the other conceptual categories of *personal reaction experience*, *engagement dynamic*, and *content cycling* become evident. Additional findings from third round interviews were redundant and data saturated.

**Social Interaction Processes**

A question was constructed to explore *peer interaction reaction* and *risk assessment* more fully in the third round interviews:

- Describe your experience of interacting with others regarding the film clips that were shown.

Participants’ responses confirmed the category *social interaction processes*, its properties of *peer interaction reaction* and *risk assessment*, and its interactions within the contextual category, *experiential meaning-making process*.

Participants discussed how the *experiential meaning-making process* influenced their *peer interaction reaction* both inside and outside of the classroom environment. Participants’ descriptions endorsed that *social interaction processes* were largely
determined by the reactions which surfaced for students as a result of the film experience, in combination with their assessments of how open they deemed the classroom to be for sharing (risk assessment property). In addition, participants commented that they often became increasingly engaged in the film material after they had an opportunity to discuss it with peers (also addresses engagement dynamic category). Others emphasized that their experiences were enriched through being able to share their personal reactions with peers, in addition to being able to have personal reactions surface as a result of peer discussion surrounding the film clips (also emphasizes personal reaction interaction category, both cognitive and emotional properties). Additionally, participants described the importance of being able to discuss course concepts as they were presented in the clips (connects with content cycling, visual input and repetition properties), and the increased depth their film experiences were given as a result of being able to hear the perceptions and experiences of others (experiential meaning-making process).

In the third round, participants frequently described the significance of being able to verbally exchange with their classmates, ideas and reactions that surfaced from their film exposure (peer interaction reaction). Comments reflected that participants’ became engaged in discussions with peers, largely in response to what stood out in clips and in sharing perceptions as to how it connected with course concepts (engagement dynamic, conceptual relevance property). Additionally, participants described having personal reactions as a result of engaging with their peers (personal reaction experience), and added that their perspectives of course content was enriched through this process (content cycling). As participants emphasized peer interaction reaction in the third round, their comments increasingly conveyed close connections with other conceptual categories, and
highlighted the meaningful nature participants ascribed to being able to interact with fellow classmates (*experiential meaning-making process*):

> It also became evident in the third round that a key component in *social interaction* processes involved calculations participants would make regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and their subsequent assessments as to whether or not these environments were perceived as conducive for sharing. Data indicated that participants are much more willing to share in the classroom setting if they feel a solid rapport with their classmates and a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. When such assessments were made, participants were more inclined to conclude that their classrooms were safe and open environments for sharing ideas and divulging opinions about clips of film viewed within this social context. On the other hand, when participants felt that classroom environments were unsafe for sharing openly they were less likely to share thoughts and feelings regarding film material, and were less likely to interact with others in general. Participants’ dialogue saturated and additionally confirmed both *peer interaction reaction* and *risk assessment*.

**Content Cycling**

As participants described their exposure to popular film clips, they depicted pre-existent learning style preferences, and how these were manifested in their film experiences. A question was therefore constructed to explore the conceptual category *content cycling* and its properties *visual input* and *repetition* more fully in third round interviews:

- How do you perceive that viewing film influences your learning?
As participants discussed the influence of film on their learning, they frequently made references to learning effectively through a variety of pedagogic approaches including small and large-group class discussion, engagement in role-play activities, reading and processing text material, and drawing from present and previous didactic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. Participants further identified that through receiving information in a variety of formats, they are able to better comprehend and engrain those concepts.

As participants described content cycling, their comments were reflective of both process and content components, and it was evident that they were attempting to integrate the film experience into assessments they were making of their own learning styles. Through such comments, the experiential meaning-making process became evident, and participants’ statements were laden with reflection of how they learn most effectively, and how they are actively incorporating what they are learning into their emerging identities as counselor-in-training.

Participants’ third round descriptions further identified visual input and repetition as properties within the conceptual category content cycling. These properties addressed specific modes of content cycling that were evident throughout all three interview rounds. Participants consistently described that visual examples were helpful in facilitating their learning of specific training concepts, and that poignant video illustrations were particularly beneficial in elucidating course content. Another point made by participants in third round interviews was that repetition of course content is crucial in order for it to be firmly established in their learning. As participants described repetition, they endorsed that film clips were useful in that they could be seen on multiple
occasions, or could be re-examined at a later time as a means of repeating and reinforcing what had occurred in regard to the film clip experience within the classroom environment. Participants endorsing repetition also explained that they needed to have concepts repeatedly addressed in order to comprehend them appropriately, and explained that the film experience was another means of repeating content. As participants described their exposure to popular film clips in the classroom, they illuminated an experiential meaning-making process that was came to life through content cycling. Data on content cycling was redundant and descriptions saturated.

Emerging Theoretical Framework

Participants’ responses in the third round deeply described all categories, properties, and dimensions. Third round data saturated and rendered participants’ descriptions redundant. All categories, properties, and dimensions were therefore saturated and redundant. Data analysis findings indicated that the contextual category experiential meaning-making process, and the conceptual categories, engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling, thickly described participants’ perceptions of their pedagogic exposure to popular film clips. These descriptions facilitated the development of a constructivist grounded theory of students’ pedagogic exposure to popular film clips within the counselor education classroom.

The contextual category experiential meaning-making process emerged as the core of the participants’ perceptions of their film exposure. This category emerged as the context within which students assessed their film experiences. Figure 13 illustrates the
interaction of properties and dimensions within the context of the *experiential meaning-making process*.

The conceptual categories *engagement dynamic, personal reaction experience, social interaction processes*, and *content cycling* also emerged as being interactively woven with the *experiential meaning-making process*. Participants constantly described the *experiential meaning-making process* as reflected in their *personal reaction experience*, and in attempting to better understand and integrate these experiences. As participants addressed *engagement dynamic* and *social interaction processes*, they described the *experiential meaning-making process* as the core of their relationship evaluation and decision-making processes. Accordingly, the emergent theory of students’ exposure to popular film in this study emphasized that the *experiential meaning-making process* was at the core of how they engaged with film material, experienced and processed personal reactions to film material and discussion, evaluated social interaction elements within the classroom, and interpreted and integrated the content of the film experience into their learning.
Figure 13: The experiential meaning-making process in relation to categories and properties.
CHAPTER FIVE

A CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY OF STUDENT EXPOSURE TO POPULAR FILM

Introduction

This study explored Master’s-level counselor education students’ experiences and perceptions of being exposed to popular film as a pedagogic tool in the classroom. The students who participated in this study described experiences and perceptions of their exposure during three rounds of face-to-face individual interviews and a focus group. Students’ descriptions served as the basis for the development of a grounded theory of student exposure to popular film. The following narrative describes students’ experiences and perceptions of their being exposed to popular film clips in their coursework. This narrative will illuminate the influences of a complex experiential meaning-making process on students’ engagement with film clips used pedagogically. The narrative will also reveal processes that describe student reactions to film use, their interactions with others in processing their film experiences, and how they link their cinematic experiences with course content. Figure 14 illuminates these complex processes.

A Constructivist Grounded Theory of Student Exposure to Popular Film

As individuals are pedagogically exposed to popular film clips in their classrooms, several factors play a role in affecting their experiences. These include their level of involvement and engagement with film material, the cognitive and emotional reactions which surface, the interaction and dynamics that arise in discussing and
Figure 14: A constructivist grounded theory of student exposure to popular film.
examining the film experiences within a social context, and connections students make with film material being another variation in which course content may be elucidated. Through the entire popular film experience, students engage in an experiential meaning-making process. Students engage in this experiential meaning-making process both inside and outside of the classroom environment.

When students engage in the experiential meaning-making process, they mull-over their experience of being exposed to popular film clips and consider the reactions they have to the content of the clips they view. This includes reactions that surface as they analyze the film content and interact in discussion and dialogue with their instructors and peers. As students consider and analyze their film experiences and their connections with course content, they attribute meaning to their popular film experiences and deliberate over how they will integrate material generated through the experiences into their learning.

The experiential meaning-making process is also evident in the internal reactions that students experience in regard to film clip material stimulating past and present experiences, or in stimulating contemplation of possible future experiences. Furthermore, students engage in the experiential meaning-making process as they attempt to understand the social interactions and experiences with their instructors and peers within the classroom environment. Experiential meaning-making also involves a process of students making connections between the film clip material and their own personal, social, pedagogic, and occupational issues that exist both in and out of the classroom.
Experiential meaning-making is a process in which students repeatedly reengage. They enter this process at several crucial junctures including prior to films being viewed as they attempted to understand how the clips will connect with the course content; during the exposure to clips themselves; during the social interaction discussion component; and following class as they continue to integrate the film exposure into their experience. Simply put, the experiential meaning-making process incorporates all facets of students’ exposure to the pedagogic use of popular film clips.

As film clips are shown within the classroom context, students immediately respond to them and begin to process and make decisions regarding the level at which they will become involved and stay engaged. Several variables interact to inform students’ engagement decisions; these include whether or not they have previously seen the clips, whether the clips trigger a connection with their personal lives, and how conceptually relevant they find the clips to be. Throughout the film experience, and not merely during the film viewing itself, students will make decisions about their engagement; engagement, therefore, is always in flux. If students have a particularly powerful reaction to a clip, to the content being discussed in relation to the clip, or to interactions with their peers, then their level of engagement will increase. The reverse is also true, and if students deem material as irrelevant or are not particularly invested in the group they are in, then their level of engagement will decrease.

Personal history describes an engagement variable that is based on whether or not a film clip conjures an event or issue from students’ pasts, and also speaks to engagement that is related to students having some personal, conceptual, or occupational connection with the content addressed in the clips. When the clips connect in some manner with
personal histories, students become more engaged in the film experiences. *Personal history* is triggered for students in two primary areas; the first is when students become engaged as a result of their linking the content of a film clip directly to a specific personal event or situation from their own lives. The second personal history area involves students becoming increasingly *engaged* when the *content* of a film clip generates involvement in regard to more general and thematic areas of their lives; reflecting on one’s role as a parent or one’s own childhood, as two examples.

Other students become engaged with film experiences based on whether or not they have been *previously exposed* to the film clips that are shown. On the one hand, if the film is *new* to their experience, students become engaged because they are interested in something which they have never seen. Seeing clips from films that students haven’t seen provides them with an opportunity to see and analyze something entirely new, and to engage with material with which they have no preconceived notions. Conversely, students’ engagement with film may be directly related to their having viewed selected clips on at least one previous occasion. With *previous exposure*, students become involved with film clips based on the fact that they have seen the films on previous occasions or have been involved in popular film experiences in other courses.

A third variable affecting students’ engagement in film experiences involves their assessment of how *conceptually relevant* they determine film material to be. When students are able to see film clip material as relating in some manner with *course content*, they are more apt to become positively *engaged*. Students also assess film material for how credible it is in portraying counseling concepts and are also more likely to become positively engaged when they determine the clips as beneficial in conceptualizing course
concepts more fully. At the same time, students may become disengaged from film experiences if they determine that clips are not conceptually relevant with course material. Students also deem clips as being irrelevant when they make the determination that film material conveys unrealistic or invalid portrayals of course concepts, or unrealistic depictions of counseling processes.

Assessing a film experience as relevant or irrelevant is a complicated process and certainly one that does not unfold in a linear fashion. As an example, students may be disengaged with a film due to its content; perhaps it is a film that they have previously seen and of which they are critical. Perhaps during the discussion of the film clip with peers, they are exposed to an interpretation that causes them to have an emotional reaction, and moves them to consider the film in a different light. Perhaps at this stage they might need to reintegrate their perception of the film and align this experience in a meaningful manner with the content of what they are learning in the course. This scenario is meant to convey one of a multitude of possibilities that could occur during students’ film experiences, and is meant to highlight the systemic nature of the experiential meaning-making process, and it’s interconnectedness with the conceptual categories of engagement dynamic, peer interaction reaction, social interaction processes, and content cycling.

As students make determinations about how deeply they will engage in the film experiences, they do so through the experiential meaning-making process. This involves students continuously assessing their in-class film experience as it unfolds, and refining their engagement decisions based on elements such as whether or not they’ve
seen the film, whether it resonates with their \textit{personal histories}, and how \textit{conceptually relevant} they determine the film material to be.

During and following popular film exposure, students also have significant \textit{cognitive and emotional internal reactions} to their film experiences. At times, students simultaneously experience both \textit{cognitive and emotional reactions} to film clips or the subsequent film discussion. When students have significant \textit{cognitive or emotional reactions} as a result of watching film clips or through film discussion, they become more profoundly invested in the film experience as a whole, and are more likely to remember the film scenes or discussion that occurred. When students experience both \textit{cognitive and emotional reactions} to the film clips or the film discussion, their film experiences are likely to become deeply engrained as their internal processing involves a complex combination of both thoughts and feelings.

Student reactions are deemed \textit{cognitive} as they engage in primarily thought-based \textit{personal reactions} to film clips, either during or following the presentation of the clips in the classroom. \textit{Cognitive reactions} include those that stimulate thought processes and the sorting and analysis of information. Cognitive reactions fall within a spectrum that more accurately describes the nature and tone of the reactions; this spectrum is defined on one end by significance assignment and on the other by criticism formulation.

As students cognitively assess the film clips and film discussions, they make determinations about where the clips or the clip discussions are headed. Students assign significance to clips or clip interaction if they are able to ascertain that the material is \textit{significant and meaningful}. This occurs primarily if students are \textit{engaged} and are actively attempting to find a place to connect what is surfacing in the film experience into
their own learning. In addition, students assign significance to the film experience if they assess that the process helps them to better mentally integrate and conceptualize material they are addressing in their courses.

Criticism formulation surfaces for students most frequently during the viewing of film clips and involves cognitive reactions that are marked with criticism or critique. Criticism formulation occurs most commonly as a result of students determining that clips are inaccurate or biased in some fashion. When this occurs, they become involved in mental activity that leads them to be more critical of the material they are viewing; as a result of this critical processing reaction, students are likely to create some distance from the film content and have difficulty in finding film material helpful in elucidating course concepts.

Student reactions are deemed emotional as they engage in primarily feelings-based personal reactions to film clips, either during or following the presentation of the clips in the classroom. When students become emotionally affected by the film material they view or discuss, they convey resulting internal feelings and reactions that stay with them during and following the film experience. Emotional reactions fall along a perceptual and experiential dimension that ranges from positive to negative.

Positive emotions encompass the emotional reactions to film experiences that students identify as being positive in nature. Examples of positive emotional reactions include, joy, happiness, calm, and surprise. Students endorse emotional experiences to film material as positive when the experiences leave them wanting to discuss their reactions with others, feeling uplifted and encouraged, and having an emotional experience surface which is positively surprising. Negative emotional reactions, on the
other hand, describe emotional responses to film that students identify as being primarily negative in nature. Negative is not meant to imply that students do not wish to experience the strong emotions which surface, but rather, is meant to convey that there is a level of discomfort associated with such emotional responses.

Examples of negative emotional reactions include feeling offended, sad, angry, agitated, and embarrassed. When students experience negative emotional reactions to film material or to film-related discussion, they often identify feeling a level of agitation following their exposure to the film scenarios. When this occurs, these negative emotional reactions may stay with students for a period of time and they may need or desire to process their reactions with their instructors and peers within a small or larger group format.

As students experience personal reactions to their film experiences, they do so within the larger context of the experiential meaning-making process. In other words, students engage in processing both the film material and their personal reactions which surface; at the same time they attempt to draw understanding and meaning from the film material and their reactions so that they may process connections with course content, and connections with areas of their personal lives that are stimulated by the experience.

Students’ film experiences occur within the social context of the classroom, and social interaction processes are significant as students react to, discuss, apply, and integrate film and course material. Social interaction processes include the reactions students experience as a result of interacting with their peers, assessments they make as to the effectiveness of their instructors, and assessments they make as to the openness of the classroom environment for sharing perspectives and engaging in dialogue. Social
interactions include interactions that students have with their classroom peers and instructors both during and following film presentations, and this includes interactions that occur both in and out of the classroom environment. These interactions include viewing and dialoguing about the clips in the classroom setting (with peers and instructor present), and interactions which extend beyond the classroom setting as a result of students being exposed to a shared cinematic experience.

In addition, social interaction processes include participants being aware and affected by the verbal and non-verbal interplay that occurs within the context of the classroom. Through the experiential meaning-making process, students assess the significance of the social context and social interaction upon their experiences and perceptions. The experiential meaning-making process incorporates the social interaction processes in which students are invariably exposed, and involves the efforts students undergo to integrate their reactions to the film material, their assessments of the classroom milieu, and their understanding of the broader counseling concepts that are being examined.

Interaction with peers is an important component as students process their film experiences within a learning environment and a social context. As students engage with their peers, they are able to discuss their film experiences within a highly interactive setting where information and ideas are exchanged. Students’ reactions to interacting with their peers can be conceptualized along a continuum that ranges from challenge to resonate.

Challenge is evident when students experience hearing others’ comments and ideas regarding the film clips that ran contrary to their own, or that challenge and bring
into question the ideas and opinions they have formulated. When students have their perspectives challenged through *peer interaction*, they are faced with the task of having to broaden their perspectives to incorporate viewpoints about concepts and film material that differ from their own. Conversely, resonate describes when students hear others’ comments and ideas regarding film clips that solidify or affirm their own ideas. When ideas and comments resonate with students, they are able to gain greater clarity of issues or concepts by hearing input from peers that connects and underscores their own perspectives.

The role of the classroom *instructor* is another significant aspect of *social interaction processes*, and instructors’ roles are important in determining how helpful students determine their film experiences to be in their learning processes. As students consider their instructors and how these instructors deliver film experiences within the classroom, it is common for students to recollect past instructors who also utilized film for a pedagogic purpose. Students assess their current instructors as they analyze how proficiently current film clips are delivered and integrated with course material in comparison to past pedagogic experiences with film. In cases where students have not previously experienced film clips being used in their courses, students simply assess the current instructor based on how adroitly the film experience is orchestrated and connected with course content. In summary, students’ assess their instructors based on the experiences they have with popular films that are used pedagogically, and the conclusions they draw as to how effectively their instructors select, implement, and process film material.
Instructors are characterized as effective by students if they are seen to provide proper structure for utilizing film clips; this includes students’ perceptions that instructors adequately elucidate didactic points the clips are intended to emphasize. Effective also describes a sense of confidence in the process of learning via film clips being directly connected with perceptions that their instructors are credible.

On the other hand, ineffective describes students’ assessments of their instructors that are directly opposite to that of an effective characterization. Instructors are deemed as ineffective when they provide a lack of appropriate structure for utilizing film clips; this includes perceptions by participants that instructors could offer greater guidance in describing how the content of chosen film clips relates to course material. An ineffective assessment also involves students’ perceptions of ineffective instruction in general, and a subsequent lack of confidence in the process of learning via film clips when an instructor is deemed non-credible.

A third significant aspect of social interaction processes involves risk assessment. Students naturally assess their classroom environments and make determinations regarding how open and encouraging they perceive these settings to be. These assessments directly affect how willing they are to share and exchange ideas and feelings that result from exposure to film clips.

Risk assessment involves the calculation students make regarding the general social context of their classrooms, and the resulting assessment as to whether or not these environments are perceived as conducive for sharing. Not surprising, students are much more apt to become involved in the social context of the classroom if their risk assessments lead them to feel that the classroom is a safe place for exchange.
Additionally, students are more willing to become involved in classes where they know other students and have been involved with them in previous courses. Students also are more likely to share thoughts and feelings in the classroom regarding the film clips they view if they identify their peers as taking risks with sharing.

When students assess classroom environments as safe, they describe feeling a solid rapport with their classmates and a positive milieu encouraged by their instructors. Such assessments also lead students to conclude that classrooms are safe and open environments for sharing ideas and divulging feelings about clips of film viewed within social contexts. Conversely, unsafe describes the other side of risk assessment. Students make assessments that classroom environments are unsafe based on perceiving these environments as not conducive for sharing ideas and feelings openly. Furthermore, students characterize learning environments as unsafe when weak or unexplored relationships exist between class members. This creates hesitation within the classroom, and class members are less likely to become involved in class discussion or share ideas about clips of film that are viewed.

*Social interaction processes* occur within the context of the *experiential meaning-making process*. Students’ film experiences within the social context of the classroom provide significant opportunities for them to process their exposure to film, and to simultaneously hear how others are assessing, ascribing meaning, and making connections between film material and course content. The *experiential meaning-making process*, therefore, involves a number of integrated components that often are interacting simultaneously. The *experiential meaning-making process* is best conceptualized as a systemic process through which *engagement dynamic, personal*
reaction experience, social interaction processes, and content cycling collectively interact.

As students discuss the role of popular film clips being used to emphasize course content, they also accentuate the importance of receiving the content of their counselor training through a variety of learning modalities. Students highlight a content cycling process as they describe learning effectively by having training content delivered through a combination of pedagogic formats. These include small and large-group class discussion; engagement in role-play activities; reading and processing text material; and drawing from present and previous didactic experiences with popular film use in the classroom. Additionally, content cycling describes students’ accounts of learning effectively by having material and concepts addressed in their courses in a variety of formats, and includes references to comprehending counseling concepts more fully via a combination of learning approaches that serve to elucidate and engrain material and concepts.

Content cycling, as the name implies, describes phenomenon that are largely based in content, as opposed to process. Process and content components are equally significant elements in looking at the pedagogic use of popular film within the classroom; content cycling, specifically, deals with the material of what is presented within classrooms and the format in which this material is delivered and addressed. As cycling implies, content is not static, and students’ emphasize that content must be given life through a venue before it can be processed and subsequently learned. When in-class popular film experiences are well-prepared, delivered, and processed, students repeatedly identify them as a beneficial means of examining course content.
Because of the inseparable connection between content and process, students' content cycling comments become deeply engrained with the other aspects of their pedagogic film experiences, including how engaged they become with their film experiences; the type of personal reactions they experience; how cycling content affects their interactions with others in the classroom, and the manner in which they engage in an experiential meaning-making process to integrate their film experiences.

A specific mode of content cycling is referred to as visual input. Visual input conveys students’ descriptions of having particular affinity for visual examples to underscore their learning of specific training concepts. Visual input is congruent with the manner in which some students are able to effectively learn; through visual examples that provide beneficial and poignant illustrations in emphasizing and elucidating depictions of course content.

Repetition is a second mode of content cycling. Repetition addresses students not only being drawn to training content as it is cycled and presented through various pedagogic approaches, but specifically accentuates that the repetition of content is crucial in order for it to be firmly established in their learning. Repetition is highlighted as students endorse that film clips are useful in that they can be seen on multiple occasions, or can be re-examined at a later time as a means of repeating and reinforcing what has occurred in regard to a film clip experience within the classroom environment. Students further endorse repetition in their explanations that they needed to have concepts repeatedly addressed in order to comprehend them appropriately, and that the film experiences serve as an engaging means of repeating material.
Based on students’ descriptions of perceptions and experiences of their exposure to popular film clips in the classroom, it is evident that their pre-existing learning styles and preferences also emerge during their film experiences. It is further evident that in general, students endorse the use of popular film clips in classes to elucidate course material. Through the *experiential meaning-making process*, film use within the classroom may be seen as a complex, non-linear, and multi-dimensional process. In looking at the components of this contextual process, it becomes evident that there are a variety of factors that simultaneously interact and influence the determinations of how useful students consider film clips to be in their learning. It is through the evolving nature of the *experiential meaning-making process* that students assess both internal and external stimulus and reactions to film experiences, and subsequently make determinations about the value and importance of film material to their learning.

**Limitations**

This constructivist grounded theory exploration of Master’s-level counselor education students’ experiences and perceptions of being exposed to popular film clips provided detailed descriptions of their exposure to popular film used as a pedagogic tool in the classroom. The study specifically explored the experiences and perceptions that influenced students’ learning through film clips within a social context. Constructivist grounded theory methodology was employed to generate, clarify, and validate concepts that described students’ experiences with popular film exposure in the classroom setting. The study also applied measures to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of its findings. Through this process, limitations to the trustworthiness and credibility of findings were taken into consideration and addressed.
The first major limitation of this study was reflected in the manner in which participants were recruited. As described in the methodology of this study, entire classrooms of students were exposed to the popular film experience. Following the film viewing, students met in smaller groups for discussion and then the entire class was reconvened for larger group discussion. All students who were present in the classroom, therefore, had some type of experience with the film exercise based on the fact that all students viewed the clips and participated at some level with discussion. Following larger group discussion, the researcher then asked for participants who would be willing to be interviewed to further discuss their experiences with popular film clips having been pedagogically utilized in the classroom. For individual face-to-face interviews, the researcher obtained four participants from each of six different classes; totaling twenty-four participants.

It is possible that all twenty-four of these participants shared commonalities which influenced the data that were collected. Namely, it is possible that all of the students individually interviewed enjoyed popular film in general, which could have influenced their endorsing their film experiences more positively than students less drawn to cinema. Along the same lines, it is similarly possible that all twenty-four participants were predisposed to learning styles that are more visually-oriented; hence, a definite limitation rests in the possibility that the data gathered from these twenty-four individuals reflects input from students who are naturally visually-inclined. This could certainly weigh the data in a direction that might truly only convey the experiences and perceptions of students whose learning styles respond well to visual stimulus.
Additionally, the researcher did not attempt to control for pre-existing circumstances that might influence the manner in which students respond. In other words, any student that took part in the classroom film experience became a candidate for an individual interview and, subsequently, a source of data. The researcher did not pre-screen students to determine if they had previously seen clips that were shown in the classroom, or whether they had previously been exposed to pedagogic film use and the nature of what those experiences had been (positive, negative, or neutral). Moreover, the researcher was completely unaware of how individual interview participants might respond to material that was being addressed in the film clips that were shown. As a result, there were a number of interview participants who had strong reactions to film material based on poignant connections it made with their past and present personal issues. While the pre-screening of participants potentially would have provided data that differs from that collected in this current study, such procedures were not undertaken.

Another limitation of this study was the use of a focus group as a triangulation procedure. Focus groups, by their very nature, create environments where participants influence each other’s participation and contributions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003); this study was no exception. Because of focus group dynamics and the fact that this study utilized an entire classroom of students as a focus group, some participants (class members) may have withheld their perceptions and experiences in a manner that they would not have if interviewed individually.

A third limitation in this study was the limited cultural diversity among research participants. Classroom discussions that followed the viewing of film clips, and subsequent individual interviews, were influenced by dominant culturally-based beliefs,
perceptions, and experiences of counseling concepts. While this study makes no claims for generalizability, it may have been enriching to the study to have more culturally diverse participants.

Other than the three limitations described above, this study met the criteria for credible and trustworthy research. Maxwell (1996) described how qualitative researchers often have to “deal with validity threats as particular events or processes could lead to invalid conclusions” (p.90). The researcher therefore used procedures to counteract any threats to the trustworthiness of this study. These measures included applicability, transferability, dependability, and bracketing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Regarding applicability, the researcher described the setting of the study, the participants, and the research methodology. This information was necessary so readers and subsequent researchers would be in a position to decide whether the theory was applicable to their settings. Marshall and Rossman (1995), in describing the related concept of “transferability”, state:

The burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests more with the investigator who would make that transfer than with the original investigator (p.142).

The development of a constructivist grounded theory was a constantly evolving process, requiring the researcher to be sensitive and adaptable to developments that occurred during the research process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this process as consistency, while Ritchie and Lewis call it dependability. Marshall and Rossman described consistency as involving adaptation to “changing conditions in the
phenomenon chosen for study as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting,” (1995, p.145).

To enhance transferability even further, the researcher also recommended the triangulation of multiple sources of data. Toward this end, the researcher used a journal of observations and conceptualizations, peer debriefing, a focus group, and contemporary literature on classroom, interactive, and experiential learning to provide multiple sources of data collection for the purposes of triangulation.

Multiple triangulation procedures, engagement in varied contexts, and peer debriefing were used to address threats of reactivity and researcher bias, and also to build credibility. Triangulation procedures applied to this study included, peer debriefing, continuous literature review, and a focus group. These procedures were used to enhance the credibility of the emergent concepts. Additionally, through the process of constant consultation and verification, the researcher’s personal biases were filtered, and statements or beliefs that could not be grounded in the data were eliminated from the emergent concepts.

As mentioned, engagement in varied contexts was also used to increase credibility in this research study. Over the course of eight months, a total of forty different students were involved in this study; including twenty-four students interviewed individually and sixteen collectively interviewed as a focus group. In addition, credibility was further enhanced as this study took place at two different Midwestern universities, therefore increasing the possibility that the data is reflective of phenomenon that could occur within multiple university contexts.
Implications

This study of students’ perceptions and experiences of being pedagogically exposed to popular film clips will contribute insight and provide deeper understanding of the perceptions and experiences of students as popular film is used within the classroom context. Additionally, a constructivist grounded theory of student exposure to popular film will not only serve as a starting point for further investigations regarding innovative interventions for enriching classroom learning, but will also provide valuable information regarding the pedagogic use of popular film, and enhance the manner in which it is structured and delivered by counselor educators.

Pedagogic use of popular film. A review of the literature indicates that the pedagogic use of popular film has been widely used as a teaching tool in the social sciences at the college level (Boyatzis, 1994; Kirsh, 1998; Chambliss & Magakis, 1996; Fleming, Piedmont, & Hiam, 1990; Hyler & Moore, 1996; Conner, 1996; Desforges, 1994; Paddock, Terranova, & Giles, 2001; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2001; Swift & Wonderlich, 1993). Despite the fact that the use of popular film in the classroom appears to be a commonly utilized technique in social sciences education, only a handful of articles exist within the field of counselor education (Gladstein & Feldstein, 1983; Toman & Rak, 2000; Tyler, and Reynolds, 1998; Pinterits & Atkinson, 1998; Davis, 2000; Koch & Dollarhide, 2000; Hudock & Warden, 2001; Higgins & Dermer, 2001).

Regardless of the discipline, the literature and research addressing the use of popular film as a pedagogic tool commonly fails to adequately describe the reactions and assessments of students exposed to the approach. This theory describes Master’s level counselor education students’ perceptions and experiences of being exposed to popular
film clips within the classroom setting. Moreover, the theory provides a language and vocabulary that students can use to describe their experiences and perceptions of their in-class interactions with film, as well as the film-based discussions that ensue following film exposure. The theory provides detailed and graphic descriptions of patterns of interactions, processes students could encounter in being exposed to popular film clips, and suggestions of measures other counselor education students have utilized to incorporate film viewing and discussion into their learning. This theory also reminds students and instructors of the importance and power of learning within a social context. Finally, the theory emphasizes that film experiences in a learning environment provides a means of receiving content in a different format, and such experiences challenge students to gain a fuller understanding of counseling concepts. As students engage, process, and reflect on film material and discussion, they attempt to give meaning to their film experiences; this requires assessment and integration of how the material might fit with both their learning and their growth as counselors in training.

*Counselor educators.* Counselor educators need to be knowledgeable about the pedagogic interventions they employ so that they are able to elucidate concepts clearly to students they are training. Using popular film clips can be an innovative and creative means of approaching counseling-related material, and is another means by which students may experientially receive information. This theory can serve as a guide to counselor educators regarding the social and psychological processes involved as students engage with film clips in the classroom. As the theory gives detailed and graphic descriptions of the perceptions and reactions students have as they are exposed to
film experiences, it may serve as a guide for counselor educators who wish to utilize popular film clips in their courses more thoroughly and effectively.

Additionally, this theory elucidates the importance of film clips being utilized in a highly purposeful manner, and emphasizes that clips should be carefully selected, implemented, and discussed as part of the overall film experience that is introduced to students. This theory also provides insight into the type of classroom environment that encourages interaction between students and creates an ambience that is conducive for film experiences to be delivered.

This theory also emphasizes the importance of students engaging in an experiential meaning-making process, the value of critical reflection, and the importance of risk taking and open exchange within the classroom. Counselor educators may benefit their trainees by emphasizing these areas in the training process. Trainees may also benefit from classroom environments that value the integration of experiential learning exercises, and that promote personal growth and risk taking as part of their training emphasis. Exposing students to popular film clips that creatively highlight course concepts may serve to facilitate personal growth, critical thought, and a more engaged classroom environment.

**Future Research**

The purpose of this study was to explore the Master’s level counselor education students’ perceptions and experiences of being pedagogically exposed to popular film clips in their classes. Concepts emerged in this study that described student engagement, cognitive and emotional reactions, social interaction processes, and reactions to learning course content in a different format via exposure to popular film. These emergent
concepts shed light on how students give meaning to their experiences within the social context of the classroom.

Further research in looking at how popular film clips affect student learning should explore concepts uncovered by this research, and counselor educators and others in the social sciences can use these concepts as the basis of future research. Some areas that could be the subject of future research include conducting similar studies with more culturally diverse groups to gain further understanding of how diverse individuals view and integrate popular film material, and the manner in which it has an impact on their learning. Additionally, an exploration could be carried out regarding implementing popular film clips throughout the entire duration of a course, and then determining the impact of such prolonged intervention on students’ perceptions and experiences of their learning. Lastly, future research might examine films and clips that students endorse as most beneficial in their specific courses. Educators would have powerful pedagogic tools at their disposal if they knew through systematic research that specific film clips provided stimulating exploration and enhancement of relative concepts.

In summary, any of the categories and properties that have emerged in this study could be the subject of future research on student engagement with popular film, as well as serving as a foundation for research examining student engagement with different types of pedagogically used popular media in general. The exploration of factors influencing engagement dynamics, personal reaction experiences, social interaction processes, and content cycling, would be enriching in informing instructional approaches using the medium of popular film, in addition to enhancing pedagogy within the field of counselor education at large.
References


APPENDIX A

Participant Informed Consent

Charles Vance Lindsey is conducting this research investigation under the supervision of Dr. Thomas E. Davis. This research is being done as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Counseling and Higher Education, College of Education, and Ohio University. You have identified yourself as a potential participant in this research because of your status as a Master’s level student in the Counseling department, in addition to your willingness to contribute to research in the area of counselor education. The purpose of this research is to explore your experiences and perceptions with popular film as it used in the classroom as a pedagogic tool. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Should you elect to not volunteer, you will not be penalized in any way.

In order to compile data, volunteers will participate in individual interviews or a focus group interview. Bear in mind that interviews are being conducted over two academic quarters and will involve different students on each occasion. Individual interviews will be conducted in the Fall quarter of 2004 and Winter quarter of 2005; a focus group interview will be conducted in the Spring of 2005. If you elect to volunteer for this study, you will meet with the researcher for a minimum of 25-45 minutes for an individual interview, and 60-90 minutes for a focus group interview. During these interviews, the researcher will ask you to reflect upon and discuss the experiences and insights that have surfaced as a result of your being exposed to popular film in the classroom. These questions are not intended to be intrusive or to serve in any way as an evaluation of your academic ability.

Your responses in the interviews will be digitally recorded. Compact discs of recordings will be delivered to a transcriptionist who has no prior personal interactions with doctoral students in counselor education, and no affiliation with the Department of Counseling and Higher Education. The compact discs will not include, or be attached to, any identifying information so that the transcriptionist will be unable to identify your voice. In addition, the transcriptionist will be instructed to omit from the transcripts any self-identifying information (including proper names, names of classes, and locations) from the audio recordings of the interviews. Once the transcripts are completed and edited for accuracy, the compact discs will be destroyed. The transcripts that will be analyzed by the researcher, therefore, will be anonymous and will include no self-identifying information. Transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the offices of the Counseling Department and after a period of six years, will be shredded. In addition, your “Participant Informed Consent Form” will be filed separately in a secure location. This is done so that it will be impossible to associate an informed consent form with the data to be generated in the study. This is an additional measure designed to ensure confidentiality.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participation in this study. It is possible that reflecting on your experiences of being exposed to popular film in the classroom may elicit an emotional response. In this instance (and if reactions are particularly intense), your interview will be terminated and your reactions discussed with your interviewer, who is an independently licensed counselor in Ohio. If necessary, referral sources will be given for counseling services. Should any unanticipated risks emerge in the process of this study, the investigation will be terminated and all participants informed of this event and debriefed. The only cost of participating in this study is the time you spend being interviewed; you will receive no monetary or academic extra-credit compensation for your participation in this study.

It is possible that participating in this research investigation may benefit your experience of being exposed to popular film in future courses. By being asked to reflect upon and discuss your film experiences with an interviewer, it is possible that you will become more fully aware of the process of popular film being used for didactic purposes. It is hoped that the results of this
study can also benefit the experiences of other students in counselor education. Ideally, this investigation will discover valuable information regarding the connection of popular film use with student learning; information that may be utilized by counselor educators in enhancing the learning experiences of students through more knowledgeable delivery of popular film.

The intention of this investigation is to partially fulfill the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Counseling and Higher Education at Ohio University. Therefore, the purpose is to generate a dissertation write-up, a manuscript for publication, and information that could be included in presentations at professional conferences. Be assured that the information you provide will remain strictly anonymous. Every possible precaution will be exercised so that you cannot be identified as a result of your participation in this study. Direct quotes may be included in the manuscript; any self-identifying information will be omitted from these quotes in order to ensure your anonymity.

If at any time during the study you do not wish to participate further, please inform the researcher or the faculty advisor. Your participation will be halted immediately and without prejudice. If you have any questions or concerns related to this research, contact the investigator: Charles Vance Lindsey – 608-837-5777 or sorrel1@earthlink.net or Dr. Thomas E. Davis, Faculty Advisor, Ohio University – 740-593-4460 or davist@ohio.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, 740-593-0664.

I certify that I have read and understand this consent form and agree to participate as a subject in the research described. I agree that known risks to me have been explained to my satisfaction and I understand that no compensation is available from Ohio University and its employees for any injury resulting from my participation in this research. I certify that I am 18 years of age or older. My participation in this research is given voluntarily. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which I may otherwise be entitled. I certify that I have been given a copy of this consent form to take with me.

Participant’s Signature __________________________________ Date ______________________

Printed Name __________________________________________

- Email address: ______________________________

I give my permission for direct quotes to be used in the preparation of the dissertation and manuscript.

Participant’s Signature __________________________________ Date ______________________

Printed Name __________________________________________

I have carefully explained to the participants the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the participant signing the consent form understands clearly the nature, demands, and risks involved in participating in this study.

Researcher Signature __________________________________ Date ______________________
APPENDIX B

Summary of Research Project

The purpose of this summary is to describe the research study, *The Experiences and Perceptions of Students Exposed to Popular Film as a Pedagogic Tool in Counselor Education: An Exploratory Study*, and to explain the study’s scope, aims, and purpose.

1. The reasonably expected benefits of the project include:

   a. The benefit to yourself of becoming more fully aware of the process of popular film being used for didactic purposes.

   b. The benefit to society due to the acquisition of knowledge that may eventually lead to enhanced pedagogy in the field of Counselor Education. It is hoped that this investigation will discover valuable information regarding the connection of popular film use with student learning; information that may be utilized by counselor educators in developing the learning experiences of students through more knowledgeable delivery of popular film in the classroom.

2. The procedures that will be used include participants being exposed to popular film clips within selected courses. Following film exposure and in order to compile data, volunteers will participate in individual interviews or a focus group interview. During the interviews, the researcher will ask you to reflect upon and discuss the experiences and insights that have surfaced as a result of your being exposed to popular film in the classroom. These questions are not intended to be intrusive or to serve in any way as an evaluation or your academic ability.

3. It is reasonably foreseeable that you will experience minimal discomfort. The risk of harm that could result from your participation in the project is also minimal.

4. The alternative procedures that could have been used in this study include having students anonymously write about their experiences and perceptions of being exposed to popular film clips in the classroom. It is also possible that students could have been interviewed and asked about their past exposure to popular film clips in their didactic coursework, therefore alleviating the exposure to poignant clips in the classroom environment. Such alternative procedures, however, do not capture the level of immediacy and student reaction that is sought in this study.

5. The expected duration of your participation is 20-30 minutes.
6. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary – you do not have to participate and you can stop at any time. If you refuse to participate now, or withdraw from the study later, it will have no effect on any regular services or benefits available to you at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

7. Any personal information used in this study will be treated confidentially. Information which identifies you as an individual will not be released, without your consent, to anyone for purposes which are not directly related to this research study.

8. If you have any question about this study, or your rights, you may call or write:

   Charles Lindsey  
   208 Valley Ridge Drive  
   Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
   608-837-5777

9. You will be given a copy of this statement, which serves to acknowledge the fact that you have been informed about the project and that you have voluntarily agreed to participate.
## APPENDIX C

### Listing of Pedagogically Utilized Popular Film Clips

**Round 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Film Title/ Year Released</th>
<th>Film Format &amp; clip beginning/end</th>
<th>Course concept/idea emphasized</th>
<th>Clip description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As Good As It Gets - 1997</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 40:40 End: 42:05</td>
<td>Boundary issues; maintaining appropriate boundaries</td>
<td>Client wanting to be seen by therapist immediately; therapist stays consistent with set boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 10 Begin: 31:08 End: 33:06</td>
<td>Individual counseling scenario</td>
<td>Client agitated in regard to therapy ending early – expresses feeling lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truly, Madly, Deeply - 1991</td>
<td>VHS (2 scenes) Begin: 00:00 End: 3:21</td>
<td>Individual counseling scenario</td>
<td>Opening scene – introduces that client’s partner is deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Begin: 16:01 End: 18:53</td>
<td>Individual counseling scenario</td>
<td>In session – client grieving death of partner; therapist maintains distance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foundations of Counseling (Continued)

28 Days – 2000
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest - 1975

DVD
Chapter 10
Begin: 33:32
End: 34:53

DVD
Chapter 10
Begin 39:50
End: 49:00

Group counseling scenario
Group counseling scenario

Group member is confronted by other members for avoidance behavior
Inpatient group setting. Controlling group facilitator is challenged by patients – group bonds as a result

Round 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Film Title/Year Released</th>
<th>Film Format &amp; clip beginning/end</th>
<th>Course concept/idea emphasized</th>
<th>Clip description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifespan Development</td>
<td>Shine – 1992</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 4:52 End: 11:37</td>
<td>Early childhood development; relationship dynamics between fathers and children</td>
<td>Authoritative father figure; ridicule and control displayed by father in regard to son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life is Beautiful 1998</td>
<td>DVD Begin: 1:02:02 End: 1:09:30</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>Concentration camp scene; father protects &amp; encourages son by turning horrific circumstances into a game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am Sam - 2001</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 24:15 End: 30:50</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>Cognitively disabled father raising a daughter; daughter mentally holding herself back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Round 2 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Film Title/Year Released</th>
<th>Film Format &amp; clip beginning/end</th>
<th>Course concept/idea emphasized</th>
<th>Clip description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Theories</td>
<td>Terms of Endearment – 1983</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 4:52 End: 11:37</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Theory</td>
<td>Woman in enmeshed relationship with her Mother; difficult family situation – woman suspects husband of affair; children acting out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 5 Begin: 25:35 End: 27:26</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>Family conflict surfaces; “shame” secret revealed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Round 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Film Title/Year Released</th>
<th>Film Format &amp; clip beginning/end</th>
<th>Course concept/idea emphasized</th>
<th>Clip description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Orientation</td>
<td>Do The Right Thing – 1989</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 45:10 End: 4816</td>
<td>Personal values and their role in counseling</td>
<td>Agitation between different racial/ethnic groups; racial stereotyping &amp; lack of tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Orientation (continued)</td>
<td>Dead Man Walking - 1995</td>
<td>DVD (2 scenes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 Begin: 27:40 End: 31:42</td>
<td>Chapter 8 Begin: 45:58 End: 54:04</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>Death penalty issue; different sides argued in court room scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VHS Begin: 45:35 End: 50:45</td>
<td>DVD (3scenes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Begin: 00:50 End: 2:55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9 Begin: 25:50 End: 29:20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 10 Begin: 31:08 End: 33:06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapist use of confrontation</td>
<td>Viewing client issues within a larger social context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene at side of pond; therapist confronts client on his issues and hiding behind his intellect</td>
<td>Opening scene; Antwone’s dream/vision of happiness &amp; connection with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive foster parent; therapy with Antwone ends abruptly &amp; prematurely</td>
<td>Antwone shown as agitated; raises with therapist the problem of therapy ending too soon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Film Title/Year Released</th>
<th>Film Format &amp; clip beginning/end</th>
<th>Course concept/idea emphasized</th>
<th>Clip description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am Sam - 2001</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 18:16 End: 22:20</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>Shows father with cognitive disability being mocked by daughter’s friend; daughter holding herself back cognitively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Waterdance 1992</td>
<td>VHS Begin: 14:05 End: 15:25</td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td>Hospital scene; client in denial regarding recent accident which left him paralyzed; downplays the circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>