Engaging Master's Level Students in Research at Primarily Teaching-Focused Institutions

Angie O'Gieblyn, PhD, LPC, NCC, Counseling Lecturer
Asha, Master's Student CMHC
Phil Treiber, Master's Student CMHC

Lynn University

Introduction & Presentation Overview

- **Introductions**
  - What lead us here...
- **What We Knew: Literature Review**
  - Practitioner-scholar model
  - Importance of Research Identity
- **What We Found: Study Results**
  - Descriptive statistics & interesting relationships
  - Summary of qualitative themes
  - Benefits & Challenges
  - Suggestions from the data
- **How Does This Apply To You: Pedagogical Implications**
  - Self- Assessment
  - Implementation Plan

Introduction

Who are we?
Who are you?
Why this topic & this population?

Learning Objectives

- ***Learning Objective 1:** As a result of attending this presentation, participants will be able to apply current research on counseling student's research identity to their pedagogical practice.

- ***Learning Objective 2:** As a result of attending this presentation, participants will demonstrate increased insight into their own strengths and challenges regarding engaging Master's level students in research.

- ***Learning Objective 3:** As a result of attending this presentation, participants will develop strategies for overcoming challenges and increasing research collaboration with Master's level counseling students.

What We Knew: Literature Review Big Picture

Student Characteristics:

- Engaging clinically minded students in scientific research is central to their development and also fought with challenges (Jorgensen & Duncan, 2014; Huber & Savage, 2009; Steel & Rawls, 2014)
- Graduate students in clinical programs at teaching-focused institutions are increasingly working full time, and focused solely on practice, not on continuing to doctoral work (Barraclough, 2006).

What We Knew: Literature Review Continued

Practitioner-scholar model:

○ Balkin & Kleist (2016) stated, "a major emphasis of the practitioner-scholar model is that research is beneficial to informing practice" (p. 243)

○ ACA Codes: "Counselors have a responsibility to the public to engage in counseling practices that are based on rigorous research methodologies," (ACA, 2014, p.8)

○ Houser (2015) notes that "practitioner-scientist more appropriately reflect(s) the realities of how many master's-level-trained counselors and educators use and participate in research (p.9)

○ The role of needs assessment and program evaluation in Master's level research identity

○ The needs assessment model impacted current study design

What We Knew: Literature Review Continued

Current State of Research at the Master's Level

- Jorgensen & Duncun (2015)
    - State that RI is on a continuum
    - Found 3 stages: stagnation, negotiation, stabilization
    - Students stressed the importance of being exposed to research early in their programs (Jorgensen & Duncan, 2015)

- Steele & Rawls (2015)
    - Overall, master's level counseling students moderately agreed that their research training prepared them to understand the six objectives of CACREP RPES (Steele & Rawls, 2015)
    - QAQ Results: highest rated was *Value,* lowest rated was *Efficacy* (Steele & Rawls, 2015)

What We Knew: Literature Review Continued

Development of Research Identity at the Master's Level

- Environment, faculty mentorship, and how/when students are introduced to research determine the development and growth of RI at the Master's level (Steele & Rawls, 2015; Jorgensen & Duncun, 2015; Barraclough, 2006).
  - "Again, although being involved in both research and practice, and using each to inform the other, were important, I was also shown that to fully integrate the two meant using the processes of one to improve the other," (Barraclough, 2006)
- Professional identity development triggers research identity.
- Research identity is an aspect of professional identity (Jorgensen & Duncan, 2015)
  - RI is considered an outcome of understanding what it means to be a counselor.
- Professional identity development is affected by interactions with self, others, and the professional community. Several overlaps in the RI development journey of participants. However, Each participants RI development is unique and is based on lived experiences. (Jorgensen & Duncan, 2015).

The Stages of RI Development in Master's-Level Counseling Students

Lower Level of RI *Stagnation* Stage	Moderate Level of RI *Negotiation* Stage	Higher Level of RI *Stabilization* Stage
Avoids research activities; mostly consumer-oriented (if anything); does not talk about research; skips the results section when reading articles	Starts to become active with research; consumes research (reads articles) more regularly; copresents at conferences; shows willingness to take some risk around research	Consumer and producer of research; conducts scholarly studies; pursues more rigorous research tasks such as scholarly publication; mentors others in their RI process; models research behaviors for others; demonstrates high levels of critical thinking, dedication, time management and persistence
Focuses more on using intuition to develop professionally; believes research is for researchers and practice is for counselors; believes research can take away from practice; has low research self-efficacy; does not believe research is a priority	Believes research may be important for some counselors, but does not have to be for all; research can produce positive outcomes and can enhance practice; makes gains in research self-efficacy	Believes research is core to the counseling practice; believes effective counseling practice does not come without research; believes research should be a priority; has high research self-efficacy
Mostly negative attitude toward research; says research is "stupid," "waste of time" and "not fun;" irritated by others with moderate-to-high levels of RI; low motivation (both internal and external) to research	Shows more internal motivation, but mainly motivated externally for research; ambivalent attitude toward research; says things like "it's a necessary evil"	Positive attitude toward research; says research is "exciting" and "crucial;" is frustrated by others' negative attitudes toward research; is predominantly internally motivated to research
Definition of research is narrow and science/math-oriented; supports the idea of not seeing self as researcher	Sees research in broader terms; starts to define research in a way they can connect with	Views research as broad and all encompassing; sees self within conceptualization of research
Sees self solely as practitioner; does not see self as researcher	RI is being negotiated; starts to consider seeing self as researcher; practitioner identity remains most salient	Views self as both a researcher and counselor; has negotiated and integrated the two identities

Jorgensen & Duncan (2015)

What We Wanted To Know:

Objectives & Research Questions

The primary objective of this study was to better understand the benefits and drawbacks of engaging clinical Master's level students in research as well as strategies for improving this process. This objective was explored by investigating the following research questions:

1. What are counselor educators currently doing that is working for them?

2. What barriers and challenges are they experiencing when working with Master's level students in research?

3. What strengths and creative methods have they found for enhancing research relationships with clinical Master's level students?

What We Wanted To Know: Study Design & Methods

Study Design
    Mixed methods web-based survey
    12 quantitative questions, 9 qualitative
Population
    Full-time counselor educators at
    primarily teaching-focused institutions.
Recruitment
    CESNET and Social Media
Analysis
    Frequencies & correlations
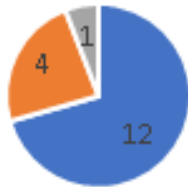   Descriptive coding & triangulation
Trustworthiness

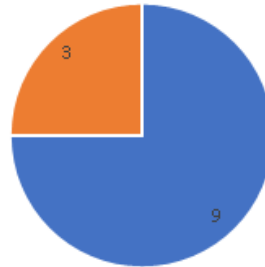# What We Found: Study Results Demographics

Response: N = 17

- Rank: 8-Assistant Professor 47% 5-Assos 3- Full 1-other
- Years working full time counselor education: Range 1-25, M-8.35 SD-6.6
- Age Range 29-59; M- 46, SD-10
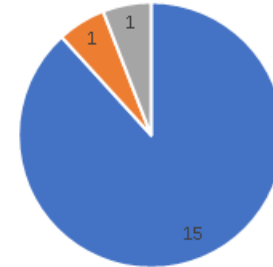- Optional Marital status and Kids (10 married 35% kids under 18 living at home)

Gender — Women 12, Men 4, Non-binary 1
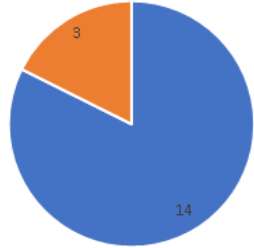

Race — Caucasian 9, Other - Latinex & Multiracial 3

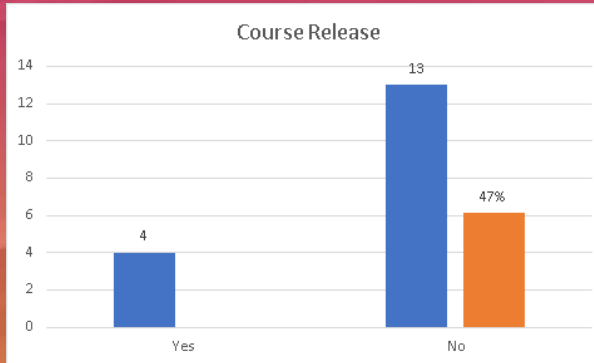CACREP — Yes 15, In Progress 1, No 1
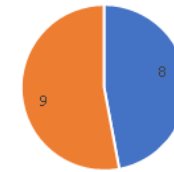
What We Found: Study Results Demographics

Note: No significant relationships were found between demographic variables. However, our sample size was small. These ideas could be worth exploring in a more in depth quantitative study.

What We Wanted To Know:
Qualitative Questions

Satisfaction
Question 2: Are you satisfied with the amount of time you are able to spend on research? Please briefly explain your answer.
Question 3: Are you satisfied with the number of students you are able to engage and/or mentor in the research process? Why or why not?

Challenges
Question 1: Do you include students as co-researchers in your current research projects? Why or why not? If you do, how many students are currently working on research projects
Question 4: What barriers do you find most prominent when attempting to engage Master's level students in the research process?
Question 7: Has engaging Master's level students in research hindered you in any way? If so, how have you dealt with these hindrances?

Benefits
Question 5: If you are currently collaborating with and/or mentoring Master's level students in research, what benefits have you found for both them and yourself?
Question 6: Has engaging Master's level students in your research helped you? If so, please share specifically how?

Suggestions
Question 8: Please share any suggestions for other counselor educators who may be struggling to make time for research and/or working with students on research related projects. What creative strategies have you used to improve this process?
Question 9 - Optional: Is there anything else you would like to share about engaging Master's level counseling students in research?

What We Found: 7 Themes

- 1. ST-Student Limitations (Motivation, Attitudes, Skill, Time)

- 2. FT-Faculty Time

- 3. US-University Support

- 4. M-Mentoring

- 5. SD-Student Development

- 6. IO-Intentionality/Organization

- 7. B-Benefits

We then developed the summary statements for each of those seven themes back into the four categories from the questions....

What We Found: Study Results

Satisfaction

- Are you satisfied with the amount of time you are able to spend on research? Please briefly explain your answer.
  - 9-no; 7-yes
- Are you satisfied with the number of students you are able to engage and/or mentor in the research process? Why or why not
  - 7-no; 6-yes
- <u>Mentorship:</u> Mentorship emerged as an important aspect of research collaboration that added meaning and value for both the faculty and the student.

Research…"helps build relationships with students, I enjoy the mentorship process that typically occurs during the research process."

What We Found: Study Results

Benefits

- <u>Overall Benefits</u>: Engaging students in research is beneficial for both students and faculty. Specifically, students' critical and analytical skills improve; it inspires students, increases a sense of connection to faculty; and facilitates students' professional development. Benefits for faculty include gaining inspiration, higher productivity, and allows for opportunities to implement research projects.
- <u>Student Development</u>: Faculty report that students who engaged in research experience enhanced development in the following areas: research experience, writing skills, presentations, confidence, PhD preparation, and overall professional identity.

"They learn as they do the research with me. We inspire each other. They feel more connected to faculty. It is good for students' professional development. It not only gives skills and knowledge but builds their CV."

What We Found: Study Results

Challenges

- <u>University Support:</u> Faculty expressed a consistent desire for university support through an environment that supports research in the following ways: expedited IRB processes, course releases, funding and educational assistance (stats/grant writing).
- <u>Student Limitations:</u> Faculty reported that student time and motivation as the primary student limitations. They reported that students being busy professionals and additional family obligations, their normal coursework, followed closely by level of skill/preparation to engage in research, as the main barriers.
- <u>Faculty Time:</u> In relation to faculty time, the most common response is that they purely did not have enough of it. This was due to other responsibilities such as teaching or administrative tasks, or their own projects. Next, they reported that training and teaching the students to engage in research (statistics, writing, study design) added an additional time requirement.

"Time. Most of our students are also working and/or family caretakers, so they do not have time or the ability to cut back on work to make time to do research."

"Yes, the learning curve is steep, and some students need more supervision that others, have varying levels of maturity and motivation, and undeveloped writing skills."

What We Found: Study Results

Suggestions

- <u>Intentionality & Organization:</u> Faculty recommend that educators should be purposeful and intentional in involving students in research. They recommended taking a developmentally appropriate perspective in working with students, along with taking advantage of class assignments in creating research ideas and opportunities

"I recommend finding developmentally appropriate strategies to involve masters level students in research…"

"Possibly create a research interest group to outline what students can help with and help them identify their personal strengths and provide training if necessary."

How Does This Apply To You: Pedagogical Implications

Application: The importance of active learning in bridging the gap between professional identity and research identity

Self- Assessment

- How satisfied are you with the amount of time you are able to spend on research with master's level students?
    - 1-Not at all Satisfied   to   5-Very Satisfied
- How satisfied are you with the number of students you can engage or mentor in the research process?
    - 1-Not at all Satisfied   to   5-Very Satisfied
- Do you believe it is beneficial for master's level students to engage in research? Why or why not?
- Do you currently have the time and/or motivation to incorporate or increase your research collaboration with master's level students?
    - What would you need to create this space for yourself?
    - How might engaging master's level students in research benefit you?

Application: Implementation Plan

Our handout provides a few questions to help you apply what you heard today. We hope the information presented today will assist you setting goals for improving your experience of engaging master's level students in research.

Question & Answers

Thank you for attending our presentation!

For additional questions regarding the presentation, please email aogieblyn@lynn.edu or akadirga@lynn.edu

References

American Counseling Association. (2014). ACA Code of Ethics. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Barraclough, D. (2006). Improving what we do: Putting scientist-practitioner training into practice in a master's-level counsellor education program. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 19*(3), 281-281. doi:10.1080/09515070600959367

Balkin, R., & Kleist, D. (2016). Counseling research : A practitioner-scholar approach. Newark: Wiley.

Houser, R. (2015). *Counseling and education research: Evaluation and application.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Huber, C., & Savage, T. (2009). Promoting research as a core value in master's-level counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 48*(3), 167-178.

Jorgensen, M., & Duncan, K. (2015). A grounded theory of master's-level counselor research identity. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 54*(1), 17-31.

Jorgensen, M. & Duncan, K. (2015). A phenomenlogical investiation of master's-level counselor resrch identity development stages. *The Professional Counselor, 5*(3),327-340.

Rehfuss, M., & Meyer, D. (2012). Turning counselors into researchers: Enhancing quantitative research courses with experiential learning activity. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, 4,*53-64

Steele, J. & Rawls, G. (2015).Quantitative research attitudes and research training perceptions among Master's-level students. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 54,*134-146