Beginning Counselor Educators' Experiences of Teaching Mentorship

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Mentoring can positively impact counselor educators' teaching in terms of self-efficacy and growth in skills. Yet, counselor educators have reported a desire for more mentoring in the development of their teaching. Utilizing consensual qualitative research methodology, we explored the teaching-specific mentorship of beginning counselor educators' ($N =$ 13) within their first 2 to 4 years as faculty. Emergent themes included mentoring structure such as mentors' methods of providing mentorship, mentoring relationship dynamics such as relational supports and frustrations, and the positive and negative impacts of mentoring relationships. In addition to building rapport and strengthening mentees' self-efficacy, mentors and mentees can develop intentional mentoring relationships with a comprehensive focus emphasizing the development of teaching knowledge and skills through practices such as teaching observation and feedback. Additionally, discussing the needs, goals, and expectations of both parties and the inherent power differential of the relationships can help focus the mentoring experiences.

Keywords: teaching, mentoring, teaching mentoring, counselor education

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2015) has emphasized the need for quality education and supervision of future counselors. To improve as educators, counselor educators can develop their teaching in terms of knowledge, skills, professional behaviors, and dispositions with standards (e.g., Swank & Houseknecht, 2019). Yet, for many beginning counselor educators within their first five years as a faculty member, teaching is challenging. In a consensual qualitative research study, beginning counselor educators have reported not feeling adequately prepared to teach by their doctoral programs (Waalkes et al., 2018). In other qualitative studies, many beginning counselor educators felt overwhelmed by the time and energy required to teach new courses and improve their teaching through trial and error (Magnuson, 2002). Yet, supports such as mentoring may help address these teaching challenges. Mentorship can help counselor educators feel validated, decrease their anxiety, increase their self-efficacy, and help them grow in their teaching (Baltrinic et al., 2016; Suddeath et al., 2020). Additionally, mentorship can serve as a buffer to reduce counselor educators' burnout and turnover intentions (Woo et al., 2019). Furthermore, mentoring can empower mentors and mentees to define their professional identities, including their strengths and areas for growth (Black et al., 2004). Despite these positive impacts of mentoring, there is limited research on beginning counselor educators' experiences of mentoring in their teaching.

Teaching Mentoring in Counselor Education

Typically, whether formal or informal, mentoring relationships for beginning counselor educators involve a more senior faculty member supporting their development over an extended period of time. Numerous authors have argued for intentional and regular teaching-related mentoring in counselor education. Borders and colleagues (2011) recommended that tenure seeking faculty receive feedback

from their mentors through regular teaching observation and review of teaching portfolios including teaching evaluations. Additionally, they recommended that pretenured faculty observe other faculty members' teaching. For doctoral students, weekly supervision of teaching is recommended by the CACREP standards (2015) and can strengthen development in teaching skills (Baltrinic et al., 2016). Furthermore, experience in teaching and mentoring does not necessarily mean that these experiences are beneficial for mentees or focused on the learning needs of students (Suddeath et al., 2020).

Mentoring relationships in counselor education are complex and improve with intentionality (Black et al., 2004; Borders et al., 2011). Both parties must take responsibility for the relationship and participate in its development (Black et al., 2004). Therefore, intentional mentorship often involves discussions of goals and expectations, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and balancing the demands of other tasks for beginning faculty (e.g., research, teaching, and service; Black et al., 2004; Borders et al., 2011; Purgason et al., 2018). Additionally, since there is an inherent power differential in the relationship, mentors and mentees should have open and honest discussions about power dynamics and cultural differences (Borders et al., 2011; Purgason et al., 2018). Yet, as revealed in a Q methodology study of counselor educator award recipients, mentors often do not attend to the impact of their mentees' cultural backgrounds in their relationships (Purgason et al., 2018). Despite these recommendations, counselor educators have reported wishing they had more mentoring in the development of their teaching (Hall & Hulse, 2009; Waalkes et al., 2018). Beginning counselor educators want structured mentorship, encouragement, collegiality, and feedback on their teaching (Magnuson, 2002; Waalkes et al., 2018). However, some beginning counselor educators reported they had trouble seeking out mentoring (Waalkes et al., 2018).

Intentional mentoring may help counselor educators improve their teaching, which in turn may help their students more effectively facilitate growth for their clients. Understanding beginning counselor educators' (i.e., those within their first 2 to 4 years as faculty) experiences could illuminate the ways

mentoring promotes growth in teaching and inform more consistent and intentional mentorship practices (Baltrinic et al., 2018; Black et al., 2004; Woo et al., 2019). Understanding beginning counselor educators' experiences of teaching-related mentoring is a useful step toward more supportive, structured, and growth-oriented mentorship. Therefore, in this study, we sought to answer the following research question: What are beginning counselor educators' experiences of teaching-related mentorship?

Method

We utilized consensual qualitative research (CQR; Hill, 2012) to answer our research question with depth and rigor. CQR is a rigorous qualitative method used to understand participants' experiences through multiple viewpoints in a consensus-based approach to data analysis (Hill, 2012; Hays & Singh, 2012). Using open-ended, semi-structured interview questions, CQR allows for an in-depth exploration of experience through individual interviews, cross-analysis to identify commonalities among participants, a consensus process, and an external auditor to increase rigor and trustworthiness.

Participants

Following the recommendations of Hill (2012), participants for this study included a homogenous sample of 13 counselor educators. We utilized multiple participant criteria to attain a homogenous sample (Hill, 2012). Criteria included being in the second, third, or fourth year working as counselor educators, currently employed at a CACREP accredited counselor education program as a nonclinical tenure-track faculty member, and involved in mentoring. For the purpose of this study, the definition of mentorship included a minimum of three interactions with a mentor. Mentorship relationships did not have to be entirely teaching focused but had to include teaching as a central conversation topic.

Of the 13 participants, 6 identified as male and 5 as female. Ten participants identified as Caucasian/White, two as African American/Black, and one as Hispanic/Latino/a. Participants' ages ranged from 30 to 43 ($M = 35$, $SD = 3.57$). Eight participants worked at public institutions and five at private institutions. The average years teaching was 2.5. Nine participants reported having scheduled meetings with their mentor and the average frequency was .053 meetings per week or roughly

once every 2 weeks. These meetings lasted, on average, 36.11 minutes. Participants also reported impromptu meetings with their mentor ranging from once per day to once per month.

Sampling Procedure

A list of all CACREP-accredited counseling programs ($n = 320$) was compiled from the information available through the CACREP website. From this database, we selected a random sample of 75 programs. A list of assistant professors was gathered from program websites ($n = 192$) and each individual was sent a recruitment email, which included a detailed set of participant criteria. Fifteen assistant professors communicated interest in participating, yielding a response rate of 7.8%. Of the 15 who expressed interest, 1 did not fit the criteria for participation and 1 did not complete their demographic data form. Both were removed from the study. Our sample of 13 participants fell within Hill's (2012) recommendation of using a sample size of 12 to 15 to yield consistency in results.

Interview Questions

Based on Hill's (2012) recommendation, we utilized a semi-structured interview format. The interviews consisted of 13 open-ended questions, followed by unscripted follow-up probes. After institutional review board approval, we conducted interviews with participants over the phone or through video conferencing. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and the first two authors of the study transcribed each interview. Once transcribed, each participant received a copy of their interview to make corrections or amendments. The first two authors developed interview questions based on themes within the literature on teaching mentorship. We then sent the interview protocol to two counselor educators with experience in mentoring for review and revisions. Based on this feedback, we included a question geared at the most frequent mentorship interaction and a question about the impact of the mentorship relationship on the participant. Interview questions included: "Describe the relationship that you have with your mentor."; "In what ways has your mentor supported you?"; and "In terms of support in teaching, what do you wish you had more of in your mentoring relationship?"

Coding Team and Bracketing

The coding team consisted of three members. All members are White. Two members are male and one member is female. All three members have experience in conducting CQR research. All three researchers are in their 30s. Prior to beginning the coding process, the coding team met to engage in a bracketing reflective journaling process (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hill, 2012) to acknowledge and record biases and expectations around the topic of the study. All three researchers noted biases that mentoring relationships are focused on problem solving based on their previous experiences with being mentored as new faculty. All the researchers also recognized that they are relatively new to academia, with an average of 2 years as faculty members. Team members discussed these biases throughout data analysis when it appeared that a member's bias might be influencing their objectivity.

Data Analysis

Based on Hill's (2012) data analysis procedure, we first developed an initial list of domains for the first four interview transcripts that initially resulted in eight domains. Then, through a consensus process, the team coded all of the interview data into chunks, fitting in these domains for the first four interviews together, to develop consistency in coding. Second, the remaining transcripts were divided between the team members and coded independently. The primary researcher coded approximately half of the transcripts and the two other researchers divided the remaining transcripts evenly. The team members then reconvened to come to a consensus of domain coding on all transcripts. Third, the team developed core ideas that summarized the essence of each chunk of data coded within a domain. The team coded the core ideas for the first four transcripts together to develop consistency and then divided the remaining transcripts among the team members for independent coding in the same manner as the domains. The team then met and came to consensus on the core ideas for all transcripts. Fourth, the research team conducted a cross-analysis, examining all core ideas coded in each domain across cases to develop common categories. The team compared cross-analysis for the first transcript and the remaining transcripts were divided amongst the research team, with the primary researcher cross

analyzing half the transcripts and the two other authors dividing the remaining transcripts. Fifth, based on Hill's (2012) recommendation, we assigned frequency ratings for each category (i.e., general, typical, variant). General categories appeared in all or all but one (i.e., 12 or 13 cases), typical categories appeared in more than half (i.e., 7–11 cases), and variant appeared in at least two cases (i.e., 2–6 cases).

Trustworthiness

We established trustworthiness in the present study through bracketing, an external auditor, data saturation, and triangulation (Hill, 2012). The external auditor for the present study identifies as a White female beginning counselor educator with experience in CQR. She reviewed the data analysis product and provided feedback at each step in the CQR process. The research team discussed the data, developed consensus, and incorporated her feedback before moving to the next step in the process. Additionally, we achieved saturation in our data based on the relatively large and homogeneous sample size and by continuing to return to individual data during the cross-analysis process to assure that important components of participants' experiences were addressed within the thematic structure (Hill, 2012; Patton, 2014). To achieve triangulation, we utilized multiple researchers to code the data independently, then reached consensus at each stage of the data analysis process (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hill, 2012). Finally, an intentional and ongoing bracketing conversation occurred throughout the data analysis (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hill, 2012). Our study demonstrates transferability based on the fact that numerous specific recommendations for the field emerged from our study (Patton, 2014) and all of our domains had general frequencies and many of our categories had general or typical frequencies (Hill, 2012).

Results

The category structure of the domains are described next, focusing on categories coded most frequently. These domains are mentoring structure (i.e., what the mentoring looked like in practice), mentoring relationship dynamics (i.e., interactions and dynamics between the mentor and mentee), and impact of mentoring (i.e., how the mentoring process changed the mentee). See Table 1 for an overview of the domain structure.

Mentoring Structure

The mentoring structure domain includes the logistics, frequency, format, and duration of the mentoring meetings. It also includes the ways that mentors were intentional about helping participants

Table 1

Beginning Counselor Educators Experiences of Teaching-Related Mentoring

Domain	Category Structure
Mentoring Structure	1. Mentor's Methods of Providing Mentorship (General) 2. Structure of Contact With Mentor (General) 3. Desired Qualities Missing in Mentoring Structure (Typical)
Mentoring Relationship Dynamics	1. Relational Support Offered by Mentor (Typical) 2. Defining the Relationship (Typical) 3. Relational Frustrations (Variant)
Impact of Mentoring Relationship	1. Positive Impacts on Development (Typical) 2. Negative Impacts on Development (Variant)

develop their teaching and what participants wished was included in the mentoring structure. This domain frequency was general.

Mentor's methods of providing mentorship. This general category involved the methods that mentors used to support their mentees and help develop their teaching. The most frequent method through which participants described receiving mentorship was the answering of their questions. Many of these participants discussed appreciating how their supervisors took the time to answer their questions. Others felt frustrated in how the relationship focused on addressing technical questions in a didactic way. One participant felt his mentor did not treat him as a peer based on the mentor's didactic style:

> Part of what I needed is confidence and … developmentally it's important [that] it's a reciprocal relationship, because I think that conveys to the mentee, "hey, you've got this."… so at this point when that mentor kicks in in more that didactic way, I think the meta message behind that can sometimes be like, "oh, you're still needing my advice."

Other mentors helped them brainstorm and problem solve in collaborative ways. For example, one participant stated,

> I'm developing my syllabus and I'll say, "I can't fit all this in" … so she just engages in kind of a Socratic dialogue with me and pushes me to know the things that I think are of most importance and then to try and cut the rest.

A few participants discussed how their mentor observed their teaching and offered them feedback. Uniformly, participants viewed this specific feedback in positive terms. One participant described how her mentor conducted an observation: "She just kind of came in and took notes and pointed out things that she really liked and made suggestions and then she gave me the feedback at the end of class."

Structure of contact with mentor. This general category included the frequency and format of meetings, the formal or informal nature of the mentoring, and the focus of the mentoring. Numerous participants mentioned the meaningful ways their interactions with their mentors extended beyond talking about teaching. These included research collaborations and discussions of balancing life and work. One participant discussed how she appreciated talking to her mentor about balancing raising her children and being a faculty member:

> My mentor has young kids so we talked about parenting and the struggles of balancing your children and trying to be a good faculty member and do your research … she's someone that I feel like I can open up to who understands what I'm going through, who understands the challenges that I've faced.

Some participants mentioned meeting with their mentors in scheduled meetings and some in impromptu meetings. Others mentioned taking part in both kinds of meetings. A few participants mentioned formally assigned mentoring relationships through programs at their institutions. All but one of these mentors were outside of the field of counselor education and none of these participants found these formal outside mentoring relationships helpful. One such participant discussed how time constraints inhibited her from taking advantage of a formal mentoring relationship with a faculty member outside of her department:

> There wasn't any formalized program, any definition of what that would mean, what that would entail, now I suppose looking back on it, the onus really was on me to develop that and make it what I want, but because I was busy teaching, I was busy learning the ropes, I was busy figuring it out myself and probably myself didn't reach out.

In contrast, a number of participants appreciated the way their mentoring relationships were informal and developed through an organic connection. Availability of her mentor for impromptu meetings helped one participant develop a connection organically: "I developed a relationship with

the mentor we're talking about now because he was always in his office and so I knew that three days a week he'd be in there and I could just walk right in."

Finally, a few participants stated that their mentoring relationship had increased in its level of reciprocity and collaboration over time based on their needs. These participants recognized this dynamic as starting out by focusing on the mentor helping the participant with more structure and guidance and later shifting toward bigger picture topics and more collaboration and consultation. One participant felt empowered by the way his mentor consulted with him as their relationship developed:

> There is a reciprocity in terms of like her coming to me for things, like let me look at your resources and everything, which can communicate a sense of like, "wow … you've got this, you have something to offer."

Desired qualities missing in mentoring structure. This typical category involved the qualities that participants felt were missing or wished were part of their mentoring including more observation and feedback and more structure and formality. The most frequently mentioned quality was the desire for more observation and feedback. Most participants did not receive direct observation and feedback on their teaching, but felt it would have helped them refine their teaching with more specific suggestions on, in the words of one participant, "what you are actually doing in the moment." Other participants discussed wanting to observe their mentors' teaching to learn from their examples.

Some participants wished their mentoring process was more intentionally structured to meet their needs as teachers. One such participant described the structured process that would have been useful for him:

> I do wish that there had just been a more formal process that everybody could feel more invested in and more purposeful about … [such as being] able to sit and have a mid-year check in, an end of the semester check in and then have that for both the fall and the spring with an overarching, well, how did this year go? What do

we need to do? And be able to develop some concrete goals.

A few participants wished there was more time for meetings with their mentors. One participant felt like her mentor sent indirect messages of being too busy to provide more than concrete, direct answers: "I got five minutes for you. Emails were very direct. I use this book. I have them [transcribe] 5 minutes of a 20 minute tape." Additionally, a few participants wished their mentor had more specific knowledge to support them around topics such as online teaching, multicultural competencies, and teaching specific content areas.

Mentoring Relationship Dynamics

The mentoring relationship dynamics domain encompasses relational characteristics of mentorship including how the mentor offered relational support, how the participant defined the mentoring relationship in relational terms, and relational frustrations of participants. This domain frequency was general.

Relational support offered by mentor. This typical category included all of the relational ways that mentors helped support participants in developing their teaching. Although these areas are related, this category was framed more in terms of mentors provided emotional support and developed relationships with participants and less in terms of strategies and methods of developing teaching skills. Participants reported that their mentors supported their teaching development in numerous relational ways. Nearly half of the participants felt that their mentor created an environment of support and validation. One such participant mentioned,

> [My mentor's] a confidante …. I feel like I can talk to her and share with her and behind closed doors can ask her about a certain person or a certain reaction that I got and she can be pretty real with me and honest with me.

Participants also appreciated when their mentors reached out to them in a way that showed they genuinely cared. These mentors would not just leave it up to their mentees to ask questions, but would reach out in ways that felt natural and helped participants feel more comfortable being vulnerable.

One participant stated,

> It can be intimidating in some ways to ask questions or to show my weakness when I know that they are evaluating me but, when they reach out to me, it kind of makes it seem like it's okay. It's okay to be vulnerable and it's okay to share … [it helped] to have someone be that person to start that process.

A few participants appreciated the ways that their mentors offered them encouragement and affirmation. One participant stated,

> [My mentor's] been incredibly encouraging to me … when I'm talking through something and I'm not sure if this was the right thing or I'm missing a strength that I have, she points those out … she always seems to appreciate like my energy … she was encouraging when she would see that I was going above and beyond.

Participants also appreciated being challenged by their mentors and receiving feedback from their mentors when it was rooted in relational depth. One participant described a story of receiving helpful feedback from his mentor:

> I have to go through and grade 25 10-page papers and I'll moan and complain and drag my heels and she'll come along and kick me in the butt and say, "this is what it is, right? You got to get this graded and you need to do a good job of grading this, right? You didn't choose this assignment but you can still put your stamp on the assignment and so the feedback you give to the students and how you respond to the student can still be uniquely yours." It was a very kind kick in the butt.

A few participants appreciated the ways they felt they could trust their mentors. One such participant felt he could trust his mentor because of their nonjudgmental support:

> I would say like her availability and support really helped me feel like I had someone to turn to, someone I can trust, I think as beginning faculty I certainly had that imposter syndrome at first, like oh, who am I, what do I … so in terms of self-confidence, I think that helped me grow, and it helped me feel truly supported, like someone was not judging, but truly was being helpful.

Defining the relationship. This typical category encompassed statements by participants defining the nature of the relationship between them and their mentors, including equal, collegial relationships and friendships. About half of participants described their relationship with their mentor as an equal, reciprocal, and collegial relationship. One participant discussed the way that her mentor sent clear messages that they were on equal ground:

> She was curious about and open to asking me my perspective … so I think that's how it shifted from purely feeling like she's all the way up here and I'm down here, so like no, she sees me as a colleague and not just a person down here.

A few participants described how their relationship with their mentor had evolved into a friendship. One participant stated that "we have a very friendly relationship and we're really allies for each other as well."

Relational frustrations. This variant category included factors that participants felt harmed their relationships with their mentors. A few participants mentioned how their mentor's lack of expertise as a teacher served as a barrier to the development of their teaching abilities. One such participant felt she was not able to learn about student engagement and innovative teaching from her mentor:

> I get a lot of mentoring from her and support from her, but in terms of learning how to teaching, learning new innovative methods, [and] learning how to better engage my students, there's other people that I would turn to.

A few participants were frustrated with how

their mentors approached the relationship didactically instead of more relationally. One such participant reported,

> [I was] being talked to by her like I'm 20 years old. So because of that, my defenses would be up … so my receptivity to what the person had to say was a little low because of that. I used her more as a resource for technical questions than anything about growth and development, which I think is what we all need.

Finally, some participants discussed how their mentor's insecurities played out in their relationship in harmful ways. One such participant said, "[my mentor's] very easily shaken … she will lash out in ways to bring me down."

Impact of Mentoring Relationship

The impact of mentoring relationship domain encompasses both positive and negative impacts of mentoring relationships on teaching development. This domain frequency was general.

Positive impacts on development. This typical category included ways that participants felt that their mentoring had positively impacted their teaching. Nearly all participants talked about ways that their mentors had positively impacted their development as a teacher. More than half of participants mentioned that their mentors had helped to increase their self-efficacy by validating them. For some participants, this helped them gain confidence and competence in handling student issues and confronting imposter syndrome as well as reducing their isolation and normalizing their experiences. One participant summed up how this relationship reduced her feelings of isolation:

> It's made me feel validated and supported and encouraged. I have found that being a faculty member … can feel lonely at times or isolating when you don't have that constant encouragement that what you're doing is right.

Many participants remarked on how their relationship with their mentor positively impacted their professional identity development by encouraging

them to speak up or be more genuine. One participant stated, "I tend to second guess myself … so [it] was very helpful for me in her calling that out in me and encouraging me to be more confident." A few participants also discussed ways that they followed their mentor's example or have emulated parts of their mentor's style. For example, one participant appreciated getting to observe his mentor's teaching after hearing "students … talk about him as being able to facilitate these really in-depth conversations and those are things I'm still trying to do myself." A few participants discussed how their mentor helped them with having permission to fail, developing emotional regulation, wanting to stay at their current job, being more successful in their careers, gaining perspective, avoiding burnout, increasing their knowledge of teaching, and brainstorming. For example, as a result of his mentorship, one participant felt more "sturdy …. I just feel a lot less blown in the wind when it comes to student frustration or student need."

Negative impacts on development. This variant category included ways that participants felt that their mentoring harmed their teaching. A few participants discussed ways their relationship with their mentors had negatively impacted them or harmed their teaching. These negative impacts included feeling drained, wanting to leave their current job, feeling confused about navigating unhelpful feedback, feeling confused about when and who to ask for help, feeling isolated with a lack of mentorship, and feeling hurt caused by a ruptured relationship with their mentor. For example, one participant felt "more isolated than I want in my department" because of a lack of informal mentorship. Although multiple participants were represented in this category, none of these negative impacts appeared for more than one participant.

Discussion

Although the purpose of this study was to examine participants' teaching-related mentorship experiences, the domain structure and some of the individual categories (e.g., Mentoring Extending Beyond Teaching) revealed that participants viewed the emotional and relational elements of mentoring as central components of their teaching mentorship. Participants appreciated receiving validation, support, and encouragement, and being able to open up

in their mentoring relationships. Conversely, participants in this study whose mentoring relationships were less warm and genuine felt serious negative consequences (e.g., isolation, confusion, drained energy, a desire to leave their current jobs). In general, emotions and validation seemed more salient to participants than discussing specific teaching skills (e.g., class management, assessment, creating a syllabus) or knowledge. These findings align with previous findings about the importance of a nurturing and supportive relationship for developing confidence in teaching (Baltrinic et al., 2016; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018).

Participants reported a variety of different needs in their mentoring relationships. Although positive relational characteristics seemed appreciated by most participants, they expressed different needs in terms of the structure and content of their discussions with their mentors. Some participants appreciated the ways their mentors offered them specific advice about dealing with problematic student issues or specific teaching-related questions. Other participants appreciated the ways that their mentors allowed space and autonomy to explore their identities and values as teachers. Some participants appreciated their mentors' modeling of teaching strategies, such as Socratic questioning and critical problem solving, and opportunities to observe their mentors' teaching. Others felt frustrated with their mentors' didactic approach to their relationships and felt there was a significant gap between their mentors' style and their needs as beginning counselor educators. Aligning mentors' styles with the needs of mentees may lead to more intentional supports (Baltrinic et al., 2018). Instead of utilizing a one-size-fits-all perspective, mentors of beginning counselor educators can be transparent about their mentoring styles and strengths with mentees and invite discussion about the expectations and goals of their relationships (Baltrinic et al., 2018; Black et al., 2004).

Around half of participants wished that they could have more opportunities for teaching observation and feedback from their mentors, which may indicate a desire to discuss specific teaching skills more frequently. Accordingly, beginning counselor educators may benefit from more comprehensively structured teaching mentoring with a focus on skills,

knowledge, professional behaviors, and dispositions (Swank & Houseknecht, 2019). More strategic mentoring interventions like structured teaching observations also may help promote faculty success and retention (Woo et al., 2019).

As a whole, hierarchical and didactic mentorship seemed less helpful to participants than mentoring that was egalitarian and individualized. Many participants discussed ways power differentials, such as the didactic tone of their mentors, impacted their mentoring relationships. Other participants valued the way their mentor lessened power differentials by helping create collegial, equal relationships with open communication. Relationships that were more negative involved a larger gap in the power differential between mentors (e.g., mentors in an evaluative position over participants, mentors who sent messages that they did not have much time to spend with their mentees). This finding supports that discussions of power are critical to more intentional mentoring (Borders et al., 2011; Purgason et al., 2018). Yet, few participants mentioned discussions of power in their relationships. Discussions about power differentials and boundary setting may help both parties understand their roles in the relationship.

Implications

The findings of this study may help mentors and beginning counselor educators develop intentional, structured, and relational mentoring relationships. Many participants wanted more structure in their mentoring relationships including help working toward specific teaching skills and more feedback on their teaching from mentors. To help address these needs, mentors and mentees should work together to set specific teaching goals for the mentee. An initial formal or informal teaching abilities assessment, possibly based on the competencies developed by Swank and Houseknecht (2019), may help mentors and mentees identify strengths and areas for growth in the mentee's teaching. Identifying these areas can help mentors and mentees set concrete goals for the development of the mentee's teaching and set direction for the mentoring relationship. Focusing mentorship on established competencies or best practices can help assure that a wide variety of components of the mentee's teaching are addressed in the mentoring relationship and

can help frame the goals of the mentoring relationship in terms of increasing student learning. Additionally, including teaching observations and evaluations as a systematic part of a mentoring relationship can help beginning counselor educators get specific feedback about improving their teaching skills (Borders et al., 2011). Setting specific goals for developing the beginning counselor educator's teaching can help provide purpose and individualized specificity to the feedback that mentor's provide mentees after their teaching observations.

Participants in this study universally appreciated positive relational qualities in their mentoring relationships and the ways their mentors helped build their self-efficacy in teaching. Therefore, mentors should build rapport and supportive relationships with their mentees. For many participants, mentoring relationships were less helpful when the mentor focused more on information sharing at the exclusion of relationship building. Therefore, a more relational approach with an awareness of the unique teaching needs of the mentee may help reach a broader variety of the mentees' needs. To develop more relational mentoring, both parties should engage in an ongoing conversation about their needs and expectations of the relationship (Black et al., 2004; Borders et al., 2011; Borders et al., 2012). For example, a mentor may start a mentoring relationship by genuinely stating their desire to help the mentee grow, discussing the mentee's needs and expectations, and communicating their willingness to communicate in person or through email and text outside of regularly scheduled mentoring sessions. A mentee can express their needs in the relationship, their goals for improving their teaching, and their expectations in terms of the time investment of the relationship. Considering the variety of needs that participants expressed, teaching mentoring relationships should be individualized through relational awareness, open dialogue, and goal setting to help meet the specific needs of individual beginning counselor educators. Since needs can change over time, mentors and mentees should adapt the structure of the relationships as they evolve.

Similar to participants in other studies, self-efficacy seemed critical for the development of participants' teaching (Baltrinic et al., 2016; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018). Therefore, mentors should intentionally create mentoring relationships with a focus on the unique self-efficacy needs of their mentee. For example, mentors can clearly communicate their belief in the mentee and the value they place on helping the mentee develop and avoid sending messages to their mentees that they view mentoring as another task to complete.

Limitations

Readers should consider the findings of this study within the context of the following limitations. First, beginning counselor educators who chose to participate in this study may have had more extreme mentoring experiences, either positive or negative. Numerous participants mentioned choosing to participate in the study because of their profoundly positive or negative experiences with their mentors, including some that felt expressing themselves in the interview was therapeutic. Therefore, the participants in our study may have had extreme mentoring experiences, potentially limiting the diversity of experiences in the sample. Second, participants self-reported their experiences of mentoring and, since their relationships were still ongoing, they may not have had as much objective distance to conceptualize the impact of their experiences. Third, we examined only one side of the mentoring relationship. Since mentoring relationships are complex and reciprocal, it is also important to understand mentoring from the perspectives of the mentors. Fourth, the coding team lacked diverse perspectives, as all members were White and beginning counselor educators who had not served as mentors to other counselor educators.

Directions for Future Research

Given that mentoring is an interactive relationship, future researchers could explore mentoring experiences from mentors' perspectives. Specifically, understanding mentors' perspectives may illuminate their conceptualizations of their mentees' needs, the strategies they use to meet those needs, and the way they navigate power differentials. Additionally, our participants had a mentor early in their careers, which is not always the case for beginning counselor educators. Future researchers could explore the impact of not receiving any teaching mentorship on beginning counselor educators who may have different paths in developing their teaching. Finally,

future researchers could gain a more in-depth understanding of the specific components that make the mentoring process a positive experience. For example, researchers could investigate the relationship between practices that mentors use to address power differentials, develop teaching skills and knowledge, or create supportive relationships with their mentees' reports of the quality of their mentoring relationships. Outcome research could illuminate the positive and negative impacts that mentoring can have on beginning counselor educators' teaching skills, self-efficacy, tenure status, and identity development.

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