

One goal of counselor education doctoral programs is to prepare doctoral students to gain competency in teaching future counselors. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2016) standards require all accredited university core faculty to hold a doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) or a related field. In reviewing a history of the CES doctoral degree, West et al. (1995) noted the intention of the degree is to develop leaders in the profession. As leaders, counselor educators have a responsibility to utilize and teach best practices in teaching and learning. Yet, literature about preparing CES students as teachers has seen only minimal contributions since Sexton (1998) called for the field to conduct research on pedagogy. Barrio et al. (2014) conducted a 10-year content analysis of journals fifteen years later and still found little literature on learning theory and counselor education.

### **Background and Rationale**

Counselor educators reported teaching is a significant portion of their workload (Magnuson et al., 2009). Davis et al. (2006) found that approximately 50% of counselor educators' time is spent on teaching or activities directly related to teaching (55.11% for assistant professors; 52.95% for associate professors; and 49.03% for full professors). Given the amount of work time spent on teaching activities, preparing faculty to teach is vital to the mission of CES doctoral programs. The importance of preparing teachers was underscored by the creation of the Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors (ACES) Teaching Initiative Taskforce (ACES, 2016). Swank and Houseknecht (2018) conducted a Delphi study that identified 152 teaching competencies for Counselor Educators. Thus, research into teacher preparation is gradually increasing.

Preparing CES students as teachers is important to the health and well-being of the counseling profession. Adkison-Bradley (2013) provided a history of the counseling profession,

specifically the establishment of the doctoral degree in counselor education as a key event in reinforcing the legitimacy of the counselor professional identity. Dollarhide et al. (2013) studied the transition from practitioner of counseling through the doctoral process to becoming a counselor educator. They noted the process of becoming a counselor educator involves internalizing the role and responsibilities of educating others into a professional identity. Individuals who feel unprepared or underprepared to teach will likely struggle to internalize the identity of teacher. There is a focus in doctoral programs on preparing researchers, rather than teachers, which is leaving those entering academia with less preparation in how to teach (Hunt & Gilmore, 2011).

Lack of preparation of doctoral students as teachers is a problem across all disciplines. Magnuson et al. (2006) summarized decades of studies reporting experiences of new faculty who feel unprepared and unsupported. As a result, many fields have increased training for doctoral students in the area of teacher preparation (Bell et al., 2017; Carlone, 2017). CACREP (2016) standardized the importance of utilizing pedagogical skills by requiring accredited programs to demonstrate assessment of student learning outcomes in the area of teaching, among others. CACREP's (2016) standards include pedagogical language in the description of a doctoral professional identity. Urofsky and Bobby (2012) noted that the CACREP shift to assessments was consistent with an overall shift in accountability requirements for higher education in the United States. Despite the recent initiatives and research about teaching competency, there is still a lack of empirical research on the preparation of CES students as teachers (Barrio Minton et al. 2014). In addition to identifying teaching competencies, there is a need to know how doctoral students are prepared to be teachers.

### **Purpose and Research Question**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to create a rich narrative to answer the research question: “How do CACREP-accredited doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) programs prepare students to teach?” A thematic analysis research design was used within a Social Cognitive Theory theoretical framework and a contextualist philosophical framework. Understanding what is being done to prepare doctoral students to teach can lead to greater consistency in teacher preparation across all CES doctoral programs. A qualitative approach is chosen because a more descriptive and detailed understanding of the process is needed for groundwork before a survey or quantitative approach could be developed.

### **Personal Position Statement**

Thematic analysis research requires the researcher to clarify their pre-existing beliefs and to monitor those beliefs throughout the data collection and analysis process to ensure they do not color the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2013). The following are the researchers’ beliefs: (a) Teaching and learning are distinct and interactive activities that are vital to human development; (b) Teaching and learning happen intentionally and unintentionally; (c) Learning is a social construct and therefore learning about learning is best studied by interacting with other human beings. The primary researcher was a white female doctoral candidate and the other researcher was an Asian American female counselor educator. Both researchers were trained and identify with relational cultural theory in their professional work.

### **Methods**

This study used a thematic analysis qualitative research design. Thematic analysis is frequently used in inter-disciplinary psychology research teams because its structure enables deliberate and rigorous examination of the research question while offering flexibility that is consistent with emergent design qualitative techniques (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Thematic analysis methodology has been used in counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychology, and mental health nursing research (Dimond, 2017; Chtereva et al., 2017; Riggs et al., 2016). The methodology can be used to produce a rich description of an entire data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect of the data set (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This study offers a thorough and rich description of the process of preparing CES students to be teachers.

Thematic analysis allows two ways to select a data set, or chunk of data, from the data corpus (i.e. entire data set): either a specific group (e.g., all faculty from large universities) or analytic interest (e.g., pedagogy) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data sets were selected by analytic interest in this study. Theoretical thematic analysis, which includes constant comparative analysis, was conducted starting with the first data gathered. Care was taken to establish the researcher's perspective and mitigate the risk of that perspective influencing data analysis by being transparent with research participants and by working with a faculty advisor and a qualitative research methodologist throughout the research process.

### **Theoretical and Philosophical Frameworks**

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. SCT was developed by Albert Bandura (2001) and posits that social interaction and personal agency are vital components of the learning process. Three components of SCT (observational learning, self-efficacy, and agency) provided a theory of the actions, both conscious and unconscious, that contribute to the preparation of CES doctoral students as teachers.

Thematic analysis research also requires the researcher to select and report the philosophy from which the study was conducted (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This study used a contextualist philosophical framework. Contextualists acknowledge the existence of a knowable reality while also believing that each individual makes meaning of their experiences and is influenced by

societal messages and cultural schema (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The contextualist philosophical framework influenced how the data was interpreted as it was examined for both known truths and meaning making by the participants.

### **Participants**

This study involved one-on-one interviews with faculty (n = 6) and doctoral students (n = 10). The sample was large enough to include perspectives from R1-, R2-, and R3-rated universities, while maintaining feasibility. Qualified students had completed all coursework and achieved doctoral candidacy. Faculty were eligible if they had a minimum of 3 years' experience teaching in a doctoral program. These criteria helped to ensure participants had enough experience with the process to answer the research question. Some faculty had as much as 25 years' experience.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher's IRB approved the study. All 83 CACREP-accredited doctoral programs were solicited for participants through emails to program chairs and posts to the CESNET list serv. Purposive sampling was used to ensure the sample was experienced and knowledgeable about the process of preparing CES doctoral students to teach. Table 1 provides an overview of participants. Ten unique universities were represented with no more than two participants from a single university. Participants did not receive incentives for participating.

**Table 1***Participant Demographics by Community and Level of Participation*

Setting & Carnegie Rating	US Region	Primarily In-person or Online	Participant #, Role	Race	Gender	Member Check
Public, R1	South	In-person	1, Student	Caucasian	male	X
		In-person	2, Student	Caucasian	female	X
		In-person	4, Faculty	Caucasian	male	X
		In-person	5, Faculty	Caucasian	male	X
		In-person	3, Student	Caucasian	female	X
Public, R2	South	In-person	11, Student	African American	female	X
	Midwest	In-person	15, Student	International	female	X
Public, R3	Midwest	In-person	8, Student	African American	female	X
		In-person	13, Student	African American	female	X
Private, R1	West	In-person	6, Faculty	Caucasian	female	X
		In-person	7, Faculty	Caucasian	male	X
Private, R3	South	In-person	10, Student	Caucasian	male	X
		In-person	14, Student	Caucasian	female	X
		In-person	9, Faculty	Caucasian	male	X
Private, R3	South	Online	12, Student	Caucasian	female	X
		Online	16, Faculty	African American	female	X

The primary investigator conducted one-on-one interviews over a 3-week period. Each lasted 1-2 hours. Interviews were recorded using Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant software and transcribed using a HIPAA compliant and CITI-certified professional transcription service. An emergent, responsive interview style utilized probing and inquiry skills to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Initial interview questions, shown in Table 2, were developed following a review of the literature. Initial questions elicited information about changes in mindset, personal and professional growth, beliefs, and expectations, as well as knowledge about teaching and learning facilitated by faculty. The questions were written to establish rapport, enable probing, be open-ended in nature, and be limited in number to allow time for emergent questions. Participants were given the initial questions one week prior to the interview to allow time for reflection before data collection began. The emergent design process was explained so that participants were aware that additional questions may be asked based on the responses they gave.

**Table 2**

*Initial Interview Questions*

Faculty Questions	Student Questions
FQ.1. How are you preparing doctoral students to teach? FQ.1a. How is your program preparing doctoral students to teach?	SQ.1. How are you being prepared to teach?
FQ.2. What are you teaching them about teaching?	SQ.2. What are you learning about teaching?
FQ.3. What are you teaching them about the role and responsibilities of a teacher?	SQ.3. What are you learning about your role and responsibilities as a teacher?
FQ.4. Describe an experience where you've prepared a doctoral student to teach.	SQ.4. Describe an experience or person you've learned from most.
FQ.5. Please review the description of teaching provided in the CACREP doctoral standards. How are you preparing students in these specific areas?	SQ.5. Please review the description of teaching provided in the CACREP doctoral standards. How are you being prepared in these specific areas?
FQ.6. What else do you think I should know about how you are preparing doctoral students to teach?	SQ.6. What else do you think I should know about how you are being prepared to teach?
FQ.7. How were you prepared to teach?	SQ.7. What were you like as a student?

Two forms of questions were used to account for faculty and student perspectives. There were five goals for the data: detail, depth, vividness, nuance, and richness (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using a systematic, constant comparative approach. Data analysis strategies were implemented manually and electronically. The strategies, adapted from Creswell (2013), included: capturing themes and ideas during interviews, autocoding by question and speaker, identifying codes, reducing codes to parent categories and then to themes, counting the frequency of codes, relating categories, identifying points of view, and displaying the data both in compare/contrast formats and through the development of tables and diagrams. NVivo qualitative research software was used to organize and analyze the data. Theoretical analysis was used to conduct a structured examination of the data looking for evidence of learning theory as a way of “knowing” that teaching and learning skills, as well as knowledge, are being taught. The

focus is on how students are prepared rather than whether the preparation was effective. The thematic analysis was considered complete when the data extracts provided a rich description of the process of preparing CES students to teach.

Theoretical analysis began with the development of a coding frame. Learning theory literature was used to guide the development of a coding frame because it involves the study of what it means to teach and to learn (Bethards, 2014; Lee, 2016; Ormrod, 2017). Care was taken to ensure the coding frame only drove organization, not interpretation, of the data. The initial coding frame included concepts and terminology from learning theory that are accepted as integral to teaching and learning (e.g. direct and observational learning, beliefs, and assumptions, and shared language). The coding frame was expanded and refocused based on analysis of interviews as they were completed. Constant comparison between the data, the literature, and the design was conducted throughout and changes were made as supported by the analysis. For example, the initial code includes “pedagogy” as one area for coding. Once analysis began, that coding category was edited to “direct learning” to more appropriately reflect what participants were communicating.

The first student and faculty interviews were coded to the initial coding frame. Every experience and interaction discussed by participants was considered important. Analytic memos were kept describing each theme and reflecting on emerging ideas during analysis. Analytic memos were frequently reviewed to ensure interpretation reflected participants’ intended meaning. Once all interviews were coded, nodes were categorized into parent nodes, which were ultimately reduced to themes. The thematic analysis was considered complete when the data extracts provided a rich description of the process of preparing CES students to be teachers.

### ***Identifying Themes***

An item was identified as a theme if any of the following were true: (a) it contributed to understanding student and faculty experiences of preparation, (b) it described a prescribed process for becoming prepared as a teacher, (c) it illuminated an unexpected path to preparation as a teacher, or (d) it answered part of the research question not addressed elsewhere. An item was not considered a theme based solely on the number of times it appeared in the data.

Themes were identified at the latent, or interpretive, level. Latent or interpretative level identification of themes is an investigation beyond the semantics of what participants say to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, ideologies, and beliefs that may be shaping the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Latent level identification is consistent with a contextual framework in that it examines not only the meaning made by the participant but also the influences from society and reality that may be shaping the meaning. Faculty and students in CACREP-accredited programs are likely influenced by professional standards, university standards and expectations, beliefs about the roles of faculty and students, conceptualizations of how learning occurs, and assumptions as to how their responses were interpreted by the researcher. Looking at themes at the semantic level alone would not have sufficiently addressed the research question. Particularly, this study sought to identify observational learning that contributes to the preparation of CES students, as well as direct instruction. It would have been difficult to identify observational learning without looking beyond the semantic to the latent level.

A member check was conducted to verify the interpretation for accuracy and clarity. The check included summaries of the participant's interview and the overall results. Participants were asked to verify that the summary and report reflected what they had intended in their interviews and make any changes, including additions. Twelve of sixteen participants completed the member check. Edits were made to the final report based on responses to the member check.

## **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was ensured throughout the research process and guided by Levitt et al. (2017). Fidelity was ensured through these steps: (a) data was gathered from multiple perspectives, (b) the researcher's perspective was acknowledged transparently, (c) all volunteers were allowed to participate to eliminate selection bias, (d) a structured ethical reflection was completed, and (e) the findings were based on and reported using the data to enhance understanding of the process being studied. Utility was ensured by: (a) contextualizing the findings, (b) using an emergent design interview so participants were unconstrained in the way they described the preparation process and were encouraged to give rich descriptions that provide insight into the process being studied, (c) using thematic analysis to yield meaningful insight into the preparation process, and (d) describing the data in relation to one another to ensure the findings were coherent across the data corpus.

Process checking was conducted at two points during the study by a qualitative research methodologist. The first process check was conducted after the codebook was created to ensure that the interview, transcription, and coding process were conducted according to qualitative research best practices. The initial process check also included a review of how parent node creation and analysis would be completed. The second process check was conducted after the analysis to ensure the report of findings was consistent with best practices.

## **Findings**

Three themes were identified from the data analysis: relationship, pedagogy, and effort. The following is a detailed illustration of the themes showing how they were defined and how they address the research question.

## **A Foundation Built on Relationship**

The preparation of doctoral students occurs in and through relationships. The relationship theme was identified in all participants' responses. Participants described the preparation process as occurring any time faculty and students were engaged in relationship – whether in a class, during shadowing or observations, during private conversations, in group discussions, in person, and in writing. The emphasis from all participants was on the interaction between the faculty and student, rather than the specific activity in which they were engaged.

Participants described the role faculty-student relationships play in giving and receiving feedback and in the flow of information. Healthy relationships, described as trusting and enabling vulnerability, prepared students to feel competent and confident as teachers. Strained or non-existent faculty-student relationships created roadblocks to the preparation process. Trust was described as the ability to rely on the faculty member to be willing and able to impart useful and accurate information. Vulnerability was a state of being open in the relationship that allows students to accept feedback and change. Where there was a lack of trust, there was a sense that information was being withheld or that faculty did not have the expertise needed to deliver useful knowledge. Where vulnerability was lacking, a sense of students' inability or unwillingness to learn and grow was implied.

Collaborative relationships between faculty and students prepare students to teach by enabling accurate feedback. Two key ingredients were described: (a) feedback was personal and developmentally appropriate, and (b) safety in the relationship allowed students and faculty to be open to feedback. Relationships that include safety and support were cited as supporting openness, self-efficacy, respect, and competence.

He's very intelligent, and very warm, and compassionate, able to give really good feedback in a way that's gentle. [...] I don't know how to explain it other than he's just very loving

and compassionate towards his students but also very demanding of them, as well, in a way that's not harmful. (Participant 10, student, male, R1, private)

I want to be able to build enough trust with you that I can say, 'Okay, this is where I think you need to try to be aware of this.' [...] I know the more that I know them and really know who they are and understand what matters to them, then I think it helps me help them more, and to be more effective. (Participant 4, faculty, male, R1, public)

Students and faculty learn what they are doing correctly and what needs to be changed through the feedback process. Feeling respected and cared about reduces fear and increases students' feelings of competence.

Positive relationships create a healthy learning environment, whereas lack of relationships or poor relationships between students and faculty are detrimental to the learning process. Where open relationships enabled accurate feedback, lack of a relationship led to a lack of trust in the quality of feedback received.

If [faculty with strong relationship] told me something, that I took it, I ate it, I lived on it. But [second faculty with no strong relationship] yeah, no. No. Nothing she ever told me that didn't have something to do with data analysis, that I paid any attention to whatsoever. (Participant 11, student, female, R1, public)

Where healthy relationships created a safe environment where students felt open to giving and receiving feedback, poor or unhealthy relationships had the opposite effect. Not only did students not feel open in that relationship, they also described shutting down in other relationships and struggling to be open to the entire learning process.

I had a higher expectation for this professor because he's been in the profession for so long. [...] So, that experience almost crippled me from opening up more to...because I had in my mind to consult him in the future, but that decision kind of...I have to rethink about that. (Participant 15, student, female, R1, public)

I feel like she's punishing me for not doing what she felt like I should have done. [...] And instead of having a direct conversation about, 'Hey, what happened here? This is what I saw that maybe you should do differently, or this is what I think I need to do differently,' there was no conversation. (Participant 14, student, female, R1, private)

Instead of offering developmentally appropriate guidance for students, participants perceived faculty in poor relationships as hurtful to students and to the learning process.

Participants also describe the faculty-student relationship as determining the information doctoral students receive. Observational learning occurs when students observe faculty while co-teaching, being a TA, and in their doctoral classes. Participants described learning ways of teaching and ways of thinking about teaching from these faculty interactions.

Each individual time when I was just co-teaching, it was more so learning from the instructor, their personal style of teaching, and why they did the things they did.  
(Participant 2, student, female, R1, public)

However, participants also noted that preparation is not consistent for every student in every cohort. A student may learn something by observing a faculty member while co-teaching that other students do not have the opportunity to observe. In addition to observational learning, faculty share resources with the students they work with but not necessarily with others.

What I could tell you is that both of my [...] TA's said to me that they were especially appreciative of that opportunity because none of their other cohort members had it.  
(Participant 16, faculty, female, R3, private)

Some students are privy to more resources or more learning opportunities than others within the same program or even the same cohort.

Many students described the pairing of faculty and students as a product of chance or fortune. Those self-described as “lucky” to be paired with a knowledgeable and engaged faculty member described positive learning experiences that helped them feel prepared to teach. Whereas, individuals describing poor luck or “haphazard” pairing also experienced a lack of training and/or feeling as if they had missed valuable training.

And what happens now is that it's just pretty haphazard and usually driven by the student. So, the student has to then take the responsibility of saying, 'Well, I think I want to know this so let me go approach that person.' [...] Especially, if no one's giving the doctoral students feedback about how they did, how well they did, or what they need to invest more

time etcetera. So, they end up finding out by trial and error that something either is working or it's not working. (Participant 8, student, female, R2, public)

Participants who felt that faculty-student pairings were left to chance also expressed distrust in the process. They felt they might not be receiving the best preparation possible.

### **A Partnership of Counseling and Teaching Pedagogies**

The second theme describes the pedagogy of preparing counselor educators to teach, though no single counselor education pedagogy was found in the data. The pedagogy theme is comprised of nodes that captured the reports of what was taught (content) and how it was taught (delivery). Faculty use a combination of counseling and teaching skills to prepare doctoral students to learn. Some of the skills were explicitly named, others were discerned through latent analysis.

#### ***Content***

Participants described what is being taught and what needs to be taught that is not. Gatekeeping, grading, syllabus creation, and classroom management skills are among the content areas covered by almost every participant's program; while models of adult learning is being discussed in-depth in some programs but missing from others.

If there's some dispositional things that I might see that she doesn't, I will encourage her to kind of think about those things. [...] 'How is that impacting what she did when she was practicing her skills?' And bringing that up and helping her to put those things together, and then saying, 'Now, how do we handle that?' [...] Starting from awareness to actual implementation. And then I gave her a couple articles to read about gatekeeping. (Participant 16, faculty, female, R3, private)

Adult learning models is one area of the CACREP standards that most participants say is not covered in their program. There are a few exceptions where adult learning is covered in-depth. However, the predominant message from participants is that adult learning either is not covered at all or not covered sufficiently: "Models of adult development and learning, still don't know what that would look like" (Participant 13, student, female, R2, public). Overall, participants reported

theories of adult learning as important to being prepared as a teacher in counselor education, even when they did not perceive the theories were adequately covered.

**Delivery**

The delivery subtheme consists of nodes that described the experiential learning activities students engaged in to teach and the pedagogical skills faculty used to prepare students. Table 3 provides a summary of the experiential learning activities described by participants. Descriptions of experiential learning activities and delivery methods were intertwined with the descriptions of the content delivered through those experiences.

**Table 3**

*Experiential Learning Activities Mentioned by Participant*

Activity	Participant number															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Course on college teaching	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advanced counseling courses				X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X
Supervision	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X					
Teaching Pract/Internship	X		X				X			X	X	X		X		
Co-Teaching	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X
Independent Teaching: class	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X		
Independent Teaching: presentation	X		X	X		X	X	X					X			X

Specific skills and techniques from counseling and teaching theories are being utilized in CES programs to prepare students to teach. Participants used the technical name for skills in some instances and described them in others. For example, faculty often described coaching doctoral students to think about their thinking, a concept called metacognition (Ormrod, 2017), but rarely was it labeled as such by participants.

I think that maybe part of that wish is maybe more explicit explanation or somewhere in writing about the purpose of... I just feel like that's so important. [...] Give a reason for why you believe what you believe, what you're doing and why you're doing it. (Participant 1, student, male, R1, public)

Some language was used interchangeably to describe the same phenomenon. For instance, one participant stated students like to “sit and stew” to process what they are seeing while another described the same experience as “a Socratic approach to let us wrestle” with the experience.

### **A Disconnect Around Effort**

The third theme describes the individual effort from students and faculty in the preparation process. The effort theme is the point where participants’ views diverge significantly. The two nodes that make up this theme are faculty intentionality and student initiative. This theme is not a comparison of faculty vs. student effort but rather indicates that both faculty and students put forth effort in the process of preparing students/being prepared to teach.

#### ***Faculty Intentionality***

The word “intentionality” is used to describe faculty effort because it is more effective in conveying the tone of the data. Every faculty participant described a very intentional process, individually and as part of a faculty team, to train students.

It is intentional from the get-go. And it's something to which our entire program's faculty are bought in. [...] If you come to [this] doctoral program, everybody's program is exactly the same. And that is a purposeful intent that faculty have developed over the years. (Participant 9, faculty, male, R1, private)

Intentionality was described as a long-standing, ongoing process that is frequently revisited and revised as faculty determine the needs of their current students.

#### ***Student Initiative***

Student initiative captures the work students put into their own preparation. Student participants predominantly discussed their effort as necessary to fill a deficit in the preparation they received. Often, student initiative was described by students as an attempt to make meaning out of activities or expectations that were not clearly understood. Both faculty and students identified personal agency and effort as a strength demonstrated by successful students. However,

faculty seem to view it as a normal developmental process while students view it as a survival technique. The tone of faculty participant descriptions of student initiative was positive, often sounding like admiration for the work they see students putting into their own learning. Faculty described student initiative as autonomic and confidence-building:

We often let them do that on their own. [...] We continue to give them the experiences they need to grow in, but at the same time, we let them celebrate. [...] Not only as we see them gaining in their confidence but as they feel confident in that. It's a joint collaborative decision. (Participant 6, faculty, female, R2, public)

Student participants, on the other hand, described a sense of discordance between the programmatic messages they receive (e.g. that teaching is a valuable skill) and the amount of personal initiative and effort they must exert to learn to teach. Almost every student participant expressed frustration about the discord:

There was this expectation that, as a doc student, you would take initiative, go buddy-buddy up with a particular professor, and that you would ask them if you could co-teach with them. And that's how your teaching experience happened. And if you didn't take the initiative you may not get the best experiences. (Participant 1, student, male, R1, public)

I would say communication is really important. When people don't understand what's being expected of them, they flounder, and they get worked up and they get stressed. (Participant 12, student, female, R3, private)

The predominant message from student participants was that the specific activities that prepare individuals to teach should be available to, and perhaps required of, all students because of the importance of being able to teach as a counselor educator.

## **Discussion**

The detailed narrative provided in the Findings section answers the research question: “How are CES doctoral students prepared to teach?” The following is a discussion of the findings in the context of existing literature.

### **Relationship is Key to Access and Success**

The findings suggest that relationships facilitate the preparation of doctoral students as teachers. The importance of relationships, typically referred to in the literature as a "working alliance", between counselors and clients in individual and group counseling has been widely researched (Klemperer et al., 2017). The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that has shown relationships to be pivotal in counselor training (Dickens et al. 2016), especially in supervisory relationships (Bell et al., 2016), and multicultural training (Estrada, 2015). Kleist (2019) echoes the importance of relationship between doctoral faculty and students when describing the unique "teacher-as-colleague" dynamic that blurs the lines of traditional teaching interactions (p. 24). Relationships are the avenue through which information is transmitted to students. New knowledge and feedback are delivered from overt faculty communication and through modeled behaviors. The interdependence of students on faculty for learning makes power differentials inherent to the relationship. This mirrors what De Stefano et al. (2017) reported on the dynamics of supervisory relationships. The health of these relationships can enable deep understanding or alienate the learner from the instructor and the learning process.

Although faculty and students agreed on the importance of the faculty-student relationship to success, the perception of whether healthy relationships exist in doctoral programs is inconsistent. A lack of trust and safety prevents openness to new information and corrective feedback that makes mastery of new skills possible. The importance given to trust and safety in relationships when learning to teach echoes the research of Kuo et al. (2017) who reported on the negative effects of fear in preparing CES to be researchers.

### **Pedagogy Incorporates Counseling and Learning Theory**

The pedagogy theme outlines the skills and techniques adopted from both counseling and teaching theory that are used to teach doctoral students how to think critically and intentionally

about the skills that facilitate learning. The findings corroborate what is reported in the extant literature about the experiential learning activities used in counselor education to prepare students to teach (Hunt & Gilmore, 2011; Moody et al., 2014). The findings also provide new insight into the content taught through experiential activities.

### ***Inconsistencies in Preparation***

Participants described inconsistencies between programs, cohorts within the same program, and even across a single cohort. Inconsistency of content suggests not all CES doctoral students are receiving the same preparation as teachers. Inconsistent content raises concerns for the professional identity of counselor educators. Professional identity development is a heavily-researched area in counseling and counselor education (Kaplan et al., 2014; Murphy, 2011). Dollarhide et al. (2013) found that adopting a counselor educator identity requires internalizing the roles and responsibilities of educating others. Inconsistent training could influence a student's confidence in their ability to teach, thus making it difficult to internalize an educator identity. Counselor education programs need to balance meeting a student's needs with ensuring every student is prepared to teach.

Student participants indicated a lack of preparation as a teacher. Some specifically identified pedagogy, evaluation of learning, or curriculum development as areas of need. Others simply indicated the need for more or better preparation. Students' perceived lack of preparation seems to conflict with the amount of preparation described by faculty participants. It is also inconsistent with the findings of Lockard III et al. (2014), who reported students feel prepared in the area of teaching. This conflict suggests further research is needed to determine if these results would be consistent from a larger sample and whether student perceptions are consistent with their actual preparedness. It is possible students in the learning process have not developed enough self-

efficacy to feel prepared even if they are effective educators. They may also struggle to verbalize what they need because they do not know what to ask for.

### **Effort Requires Initiative and Intentionality**

In this study, effort describes the intentionality required by program faculty to prepare students to teach, while also illuminating the drive and initiative required by doctoral students to prepare themselves. Given the very thoughtful and intentional ways faculty prepare students, it was surprising to hear that students felt they largely prepared themselves. All student participants expressed willingness to engage in the learning process. They were dissatisfied with having to seek out content they felt should be standard in CES programs.

This disconnect suggests more needs to be done to ensure both content and delivery are effective. Consistent with Loughran (2013), more overt discussions of faculty's metacognition and decision-making processes may help students connect with the material they are learning and ensure faculty's well-intentioned messages are being absorbed as intended. Even in healthy faculty-student relationships, better communication about student expectations and faculty intentions may increase learning. The frenetic nature of the doctoral learning experience and the immense amount of information doctoral students are processing may influence students' ability to learn. Increased metacognition could help students sort through the large amount of information received during observational learning to be sure they capture the intended skills.

It may be beneficial for faculty to consider dividing duties instead of students. For example, faculty who have greater proficiency with teaching skills could be responsible for co-teaching, while faculty stronger in writing work with students on getting published. Dividing duties may reduce students' reliance on a single faculty member and increasing consistency in preparation. Division of duties also encourages faculty collaboration and support of one another.

## **Implications for Counselor Education**

The findings of this study have three implications for counselor education. Preparing doctoral students to teach requires (a) stewardship of faculty-student relationships, (b) greater transparency in teaching, and (c) consistency in student preparation. These implications are consistent with the values shared by counseling professionals. Counselors pay close and careful attention to the complexities of client relationships, the balances and imbalances of power, and intentionally creating space to address concerns on both sides of the relationship. Transparency is a commonly used tool in counseling relationships to help clients understand why and how the counselor is acting in and upon the therapeutic relationship to help the client learn and apply those same skills in their own lives. Finally, counselors strive for consistency within relationships to build trust while also recognizing the need to fairly and appropriately customize the approach with each client. Applying these skills to the CES training process can resolve some of the roadblocks identified in this study.

Stewardship is required to safeguard the health of faculty-student relationships because they are so influential to the success of the doctoral training process. Increased transparency is needed to help students connect to what is being taught, especially through observational learning. Students and faculty share responsibility for carefully communicating their intentions and areas where there is confusion during the training process. Open discussions about the balance between personal initiative and program responsibilities could also be helpful for faculty and students. Programs should also consider formalizing the teacher preparation process to communicate what students can expect to learn via observation versus didactic instruction. Programs should also consider formalizing a process for addressing concerns in faculty-student relationships. Methods of raising concerns should include direct feedback processes as well as the opportunity to report

concerns anonymously or discretely. Oversight and shared responsibility for the success of faculty-student relationships should be formalized.

The inconsistent preparation of doctoral students reported in this study also has implications for the field and for programmatic decisions. While some inconsistencies between programs may reflect the unique style and approach of the program, it may also contribute to challenges in professional identity development. Students within the same program and even the same cohort may not be receiving the same level of preparation in teaching or access to training materials and opportunities. The result is that some students may struggle with self-efficacy and identity integration. Inconsistent preparation may also make it difficult for hiring programs to determine the preparedness of candidates. Programs should consider creative ways to address consistency in preparation. Are one-to-one relationships most effective or would students be better served by a panel of mentors to increase access to knowledge while also reducing the reliance on a single faculty member? Course requirements, internship expectations, and feedback mechanisms should be formally outlined as a means of setting expectations for students and faculty. Involving students and faculty in discussions about the challenges and potential solutions will help develop buy-in while also modeling the collaborative program decision-making practices counselor educators need to succeed in academia. The findings of this study also strongly suggest that a single course on pedagogy is not sufficient. Programs should consider additional training in pedagogical skills and learning theory.

### **Limitations**

This study involved ten of the CACREP-accredited doctoral programs in the U.S. While the themes identify patterns across participants, the results are not generalizable. More randomly selected and nationally representative samples could provide a clearer picture of what is happening

across all programs. Another limitation of this study is that the majority of participants identify as white. Caution should be taken in applying the findings to students or faculty of color. Due to this limitation, the views described here may be reflective of those who experience privilege in the education system. The type and amount of information provided by participants may also have been influenced by privilege.

The complex nature of teaching and learning is another limitation of this study. Preconceived ideas of what it means to teach or be taught may have influenced responses. This limitation became apparent as some student participants stated emphatically they were not taught anything about teaching but later described what they learned through observation. Student participants may only attribute what they learned from faculty as information given through didactic instruction. Meanwhile, assigning all observational learning to their own efforts. Another possible limitation is whether an individual can be fully aware of the teaching that is occurring while they are in a student role. It may not be possible for students or educators to self-report on the learning process while engaged in it.

Finally, this study does not specifically explore the role of supervision in the preparation of doctoral students as teachers. A couple of participants discussed supervision in detail, especially the process of being observed while teaching and receiving feedback. However, there was not enough content about supervision to identify it as a theme in this study. Supervision is clearly important in the counseling field and should be explored, as suggested below.

### **Future Research**

Future research is needed to verify that the findings of this study are applicable across all doctoral programs and with a more diverse sample of students and faculty. This study provides a deeper understanding of what is happening in the current doctoral landscape to prepare teachers.

However, it also raises new questions that should be explored through future research: What influences the development of healthy faculty-student relationships? What are the most effective ways of addressing power differentials in the faculty-student relationship that can influence the learning process? What do doctoral students need to learn to be an effective counselor educator? What influences the efforts of faculty and students? What can be done (i.e. best practices) to address inconsistencies in teaching preparation? What is the most effective way of measuring learning at a doctoral level? How can we help students who are learning to teach become more aware of the teaching process while in the student role? What are the developmental levels of a counselor educator? These questions should be explored qualitatively and quantitatively.

Additional research methodologies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the preparation of CES doctoral students. Studies with matched pairs should be used to examine the transfer of knowledge from faculty to students in doctoral programs. Phenomenological and ethnographic research designs might capture information that is not captured through self-reports. Quantitative studies could expand the reach of our understanding, capturing patterns and outliers across all CES doctoral programs that further explain the preparation process.

Supervision is a critical component of counselor training and counselor educator training. This study was focused on the preparation of teachers in CES programs. While supervision was mentioned by a couple of participants, there was not enough data to provide a clear picture of the role supervision plays in the teacher preparation process. Future studies should focus on the role of supervision in the preparation of teachers. Phenomenological studies of supervision might be particularly helpful as it may be difficult for the individuals involved in the process to clearly see the ways supervision is influencing the preparation process.

Further application of learning theory to counselor educator preparation could shed light on specific factors that may influence the effectiveness of CES programs. Future research should include studies of motivation, self-efficacy theory, and expectancy-value theory related to counselor educator preparation. In addition to applying learning theory, interdisciplinary research could be beneficial in not only understanding the preparation of CES graduates but also determining how the combination of learning theory and counselor education research might benefit academia at large.

This study provides a snapshot of what is being done but was specifically designed to determine what is being done rather than the effectiveness of preparation. Research into the effectiveness of the relationships, pedagogy, and efforts used to prepare counselor educators to teach could inform program development. It might also provide guidance to doctoral programs outside of counselor education who are struggling with a lack of preparation in teaching.

### **Conclusion**

Faculty and students share common goals for preparing CES to teach and put forth intentional effort to make the preparation process successful. Relationships had the greatest influence on the preparation process, influencing the flow of information and students' openness to learning. Pedagogy was also a key ingredient in the preparation process. Faculty modeled skills from counseling and learning theory, yet students longed for greater transparency about those skills. Effort on the part of faculty and students contributed to doctoral student preparation. However, a divide exists between what faculty intend and what students are experiencing. Continued research into the preparation of counselor educators may benefit counseling as well as contribute to the preparation of doctoral students in other disciplines.

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