Earning a doctoral degree is a complex process that involves the crossing of several thresholds leading to successful graduation (Kiley, 2010; McAlpine & Lucas, 2011; Protivnak & Foss, 2009). Across disciplines, the doctoral dissertation is historically the final requirement between a doctoral candidate and the completion of a doctoral degree (Aitchison, Catterall, Ross, & Burgin, 2011; Pillay & Kritzinger, 2007). Of the stages that comprise a student's academic career, the dissertation process often prove the most challenging and may result in degree non-completion (Carter, 2011; Gardner, 2010; Kiley & Wisker, 2009). Over half the students who are admitted to doctoral candidacy quit before graduation, with a range from 11% in engineering to as high as 68% in the humanities (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Klaw, 2009). Completion rates for doctoral students admitted into counselor education programs consistently average about 50% (Lewis, Ascher, Hayes, & Ieva, 2010; Smith, Maroney, Nelson, Abel & Abel, 2006).

Despite the tolerable completion rates in Counselor Education, there remain serious consequences for institutions and their students who do not graduate. Energy, time, and financial resources seem wasted for students who discontinue their academic path. What can be done? Building a community of faculty and doctoral student researchers may minimize the attrition rate, support doctoral students to move into a research identity, and enhance motivation toward graduation (Griffiths, Thompson, & Hryniewicz, 2010). Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the creation of a research community and collateral activities meant to support doctoral students through the dissertation process.

For the current research study, the community of researchers is defined as a group of university faculty, especially dissertation advisors, and doctoral students at various stages in their doctoral work. Community members provide support and feedback, as well as ensure

accountability, while maintaining the flexibility to remain useful to the students as they progress through their doctoral studies. Promising practices in building this type of community in higher education involve: (1) collaboration among faculty and students, (2) guided socialization into academic and professional roles, and (3) mentoring (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Gardner, 2010; Gazzola, De Stefano, Audet, & Theriault, 2011; Mays & Smith, 2009). The researchers developed the research mentoring model (RMM) to support these practices in our counselor education graduate program.

Drawing upon the literature (Chang, 2010; Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2006; Gardner, 2010; Kiley & Wisker, 2009), the conference presentation of Ross, Rosenau, and Hakes (1999), and our professional experiences, we developed and implemented the model as part of a doctoral seminar course required for all first and second year doctoral students in the department.

Our work was an effort to develop a research community that encouraged doctoral student success, enhanced the development of a professional researcher identity, and reduced doctoral student drain. The purpose of this research is to explore the individual experiences of doctoral students participating in the RMM as an initial inquiry into its effectiveness as a fundamental activity of the research community. Doctoral students were given the individual opportunity for the RMM to explore their research ideas. All faculty and doctoral students in the counselor education program comprised the ongoing research community. Therefore, all members of our community were invited to participate in each RMM session held during our doctoral seminar class. While some of the members of the community were unavailable for every session, the participants necessarily included all students enrolled in doctoral seminar, the instructor of the class, and dissertation advisors. During each RMM session, one of the participants was the RMM facilitator who introduced each step in the model and enforced

adherence to the time constraints. In addition to the facilitator, participants included the *focus person*, his or her dissertation advisor, and members of the doctoral student community. The focus person was encouraged to invite additional participants he or she believed might contribute to the discussion about his or her future research (i.e., dissertation committee members).

The RMM is a structured intervention that supports the development of this research community. All faculty members joined the weekly doctoral seminar class meetings thus engaging in discussions about their research interests with the result of supporting the new doctoral students via an intentional activity of support. However, while as a single event the RMM was not sufficient to sustain a research community, the RMM sessions did seem to provide a first step toward community. The first year doctoral students felt welcomed and included as valued members of the existing research community. After the RMM sessions, the resultant positive energy also evoked various collaborative research teams among faculty and students that included all community members who were willing. In addition, faculty members and students endeavored to maintain the community by inviting newly admitted doctoral students to join the community and providing continued support of the advanced students.

This article begins by placing the RMM in the context of the background literature as a promising activity that may serve as a valuable component in building a vibrant research community. Next, we describe the five steps of the RMM including an additional sixth step, which we added in response to feedback of the research participants. Our methodology, research paradigm, and procedures follow the description of the RMM. We present the results as five themes that emerged during the research; themes are complemented by quotations from the participants. The article concludes with limitations, reflections regarding the process, benefits, and long-term implications, of the current study.

The first author contacted both Ross and Rosenau to obtain permission to use the initial concepts of their 1999 conference presentation and inquire about any additional research they conducted. Rosenau responded indicating that the presenters did no additional work with their model after their conference presentation; she was unaware of the theoretical foundations for the model, and she advised us to proceed with our study (Rosenau, personal communication, February, 21, 2010). Thereupon, the RMM was developed, enhanced, and then implemented in our university department as a primary step in developing a research community.

Background

As reported by the Council of Graduate Schools (2010), specific practices in higher education encourage doctoral student graduation rates. Collaboration within a community provides members of that community with a sense of identity and belonging, which can be empowering (Gazzola et al., 2011). According to Gardner (2010), socialization into the environment of academia is also vital to a doctoral student's success. Finally, formal mentoring by faculty and peers supports doctoral students in determining a sense of direction and building confidence, helping them overcome feelings of isolation and self-doubt (Driscoll, Parkes, Tilley-Lubbs, Brill, & Bannister, 2009). The RMM endeavors to create a collaborative and supportive community to address these practices.

Collaboration among Faculty and Students

Building a collaborative departmental community in higher education engages students with faculty and peers, facilitates a supportive environment, and provides maximum opportunities for scholarly success that lead to graduation (Driscoll et al., 2009; Mullen, Fish, & Hutinger, 2010). Collaboration offers common goals for working together and supporting each other to maximize effectiveness and success (Gardner, 2010; McGrath & Tobia, 2008). The alliance facilitates

active engagement among department members, which contributes to empowerment and meaning making in the learning environment (Gazzola et al., 2011; McAlpine & Lucas, 2011). In academic areas such as counselor education, collaboration between faculty and students socializes members (both faculty and students) in their roles as competent professionals who are comfortable and always growing in their identities as researchers (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Gazzola et al., 2011; Protivnak & Foss, 2009). The process of moving into a counselor educator role requires that students discover their professional roles and begin understanding how to function within the structure of academe.

Socialization into Academic and Professional Roles

Socialization assists individuals in gaining the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to become competent members of a group or community. According to Mays and Smith (2009), one of the major challenges a doctoral student faces to complete a dissertation successfully is the integration of a new professional identity as a researcher. This identity shift is among the most challenging tasks for many doctoral students (Kiley, 2009). Mays and Smith (2009) offered the metaphor of a phoenix rising out of the ashes to describe the identity shift that occurs during the process of obtaining a doctoral degree. As with many transformations, this new identity is not easy to create. It is not enough to complete required courses that focus on reviewing existing information in the field (Aitchison et al., 2012). Students must cross a threshold to become independent researchers who produce original work, shifting from consumers of information provided to them by their professors, textbooks, and scholarly articles (Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2006; Powers & Swick, 2012).

In their conceptual article, Meyer and Land (2005) described a liminal stage before doctoral students achieve independence; in this liminal stage, they begin developing confidence

with academic inquiry. During this stage, young researchers often find themselves feeling stuck, confused, and frustrated. The sense of feeling stuck without experiencing support can lead to a decrease in self-efficacy and self-esteem (Myer & Land, 2005). Formal and informal student-faculty research meetings can help reduce feelings of inadequacy and frustration, clarify use of resources, and specify tasks and operationalize ideas for research (Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2006; Powers & Swick, 2012). Consistent support and mentoring from faculty members and other doctoral students can assist students in handling the anxiety of meeting the expectations set out by programmatic and accreditation requirements (Gardner, 2010). The RMM attempts to be an initial step toward supporting students as they develop their researcher identity.

Mentoring

Mentoring promotes successful completion of doctoral work including the dissertation (Black, Suarez, & Medina, 2004). It is a developmental partnership through which knowledge, skills, and perspectives are shared to support personal and professional growth (Black et al., 2004; Buck, Mast, Latta, & Kaftan, 2009; Ku, Lahman, Yeh, & Cheng, 2008). Mentees often seek various types of support from their mentors involving personal accountability, support, friendship, promotion of personal growth, and constructive feedback about student progress (Black et al., 2004).

The mentor-mentee relationship can also foster a sense of independence and confidence in the mentee (Buck et al., 2009). Although both doctoral students and faculty benefit from the relationship, it is important that the nature of the relationship is based on the needs of the students (Mullen et al., 2010). By allowing the students to direct the terms of the relationship, they are able to develop an independent professional identity while seeking support from mentors (Gazzola et al., 2011).

Mentoring relationships among peers provide another essential cornerstone of doctoral student support (Driscoll et al., 2009). Peer mentors offer stability and foster interdependence in the institutional culture of higher education. As part of a department's mentoring program, assigning doctoral students who are further along in the doctoral program as formal mentors to incoming students can enhance levels of trust and respect and can assure meaningful collaborations among mentors and mentees. Although these relationships do not specifically help students complete their dissertations, they serve to build a research community in a doctoral program that helps students develop their identities as researchers, which has the secondary impact of encouraging dissertation completion. These relationships increase personal connections that often provide specific opportunities for successful mentoring among all members of a department research community. Mentor-mentee relationships can also increase connection and support for the mentors in the final stages of their doctoral work by ensuring continued interaction with their peers and colleagues.

Therefore, we introduce the RMM as a means of bringing together best practices for creating a community of researchers who support doctoral students for completion. The RMM offers students opportunities to discuss research topics and philosophies using a specific structure that facilitates the discussion of dissertation topics in a supportive community. In addition, the community time aids in the development of a researcher identity. Such discussions seem to help students move through the liminal stage (Meyer & Land, 2005) of researcher identity development and manage the inevitable ambiguity associated with the processes of graduate school. Finally, students develop the skills of scholarly discourse necessary to complete the doctoral dissertation and graduate.

The Research Mentoring Model

The research mentoring model, RMM (see Appendix), is a group format that supports students in the process of thinking aloud and reflecting on their research. Five to ten participants in each RMM session is the optimum number, including the individual focus person, the individual's faculty advisor, and other appropriate members of the research community (student peers, faculty in and out of the department). One of the members who is familiar with the RMM process acts as the research mentoring model *facilitator*. The process provides opportunities to explore ideas, identify possible research questions, and gain feedback about dissertation ideas from session participants. This structured model is a collaborative process for students to discuss their ideas, hopes, and apprehensions about the dissertation process while receiving feedback from peers and faculty mentors. Meanwhile, other students and faculty can begin to understand the interests and needs of their colleagues during the six discrete steps of the model (see Appendix).

During Step One, the Opening Big Picture discussion, The focus person discusses the vision of research and scholarly interests. This process lasts 10 minutes, during which the other participants remain silent and listen to the focus person's ideas. The ten minutes are designated specifically for the focus person, even if used for silent reflection. Silence can be a valuable tool allowing the focus person to solidify ideas and allowing for additional research questions and ideas to arise.

The second step is a 45-90 minute period during which all participants attending the session engage the focus person with questions and muses about research possibilities. The Questioning Period invites a dialogue between focus person and other participants introducing a variety of ideas and various research directions. The participants ask questions, and the focus

person can choose to respond (or not). Participants may wonder, "When you are done with your dissertation, and writing an article on the results, what will be the key words?" or, "You are so passionate when discussing play therapy. Where is that passion when talking about your current research ideas and questions?" Questions and the resulting discussion can help the focus person discover previously unaware thoughts and emotions regarding his or her research topic.

The next three steps last 30 minutes, during which the focus person is invited to remain silent. Step three offers participants the opportunity to make observations and reflect for ten minutes on the focus person's initial big picture discussion and questioning period. These observations include insights, reflections of the meaning, and emotions expressed as well as identify their perceptions of the important content and process aspects of the second step. The focus person listens to these reflections without responding. The purpose of the silence is to encourage the focus person to listen without attempting to justify or react to the feedback. Instead, the focus person can just absorb and contemplate the reflections of others, in keeping with the concepts of a reflecting team (Chang, 2010).

During the fourth step, participants provide appreciation and encouragement for five minutes to the focus person. Again, the focus person remains silent and can feel empowered by the positive energy and multiple perspectives (Chang, 2010). RMM participants can also offer resources and connections to help the focus person move forward into the identified research. Step five lasts 15 minutes while the participants provide feedback and thoughtful ideas in the form of suggestions about the research interest. This respectful feedback often takes the form of "If this were my research…"

The RMM was the impetus of the research and preceded the research interviews of this study. The researchers explored the experiences of the doctoral students in the use of the RMM,

seeking to understand how the participants understood and made meaning from their experiences with the RMM sessions.

Methods

Research Paradigm

Hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to understand the lived world, and this paradigm guided our data collection and analysis. Heidegger (1929/2010) argued that people cannot be separated from their personal history and context. Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology allows for close examination of a participant's lived experience (Newman, Cashin, & Waters, 2010). Both participants and researcher experience a phenomenon through a lens that reflects personal culture, history, socialization, and religion, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge, they co-construct knowledge through dialogue with the research participants (Charalambous, Papadopoulos & Beadsmore, 2008). The participants and researchers co-construct the data through discourse. It becomes paramount that the researcher is in constant dialogue with him or herself throughout the research process in an attempt to understand the context of any interpretation. We chose hermeneutic phenomenology because of the active, overlapping roles. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided the researchers opportunities to reflect upon their experiences and biases throughout the research, without the necessity of bracketing themselves out. Our individual experiences with the RMM influenced the research process underscoring the importance of recognizing our expectations and the influence those expectations may have on our interaction with results (Wojnar & Swanson 2007). Because the first author was also a doctoral student participant, the focus of hermeneutic phenomenology to contextualize experience using dialogue and reflection was the most appropriate research methodology

Participants

Participants in the study were five first-year doctoral students, at a western university with high research activity (The Carnegie Foundation, 2005). The research participants ranged in age from 26-30 in their second semester of full time doctoral study. Of the four women and one man, three of the five participants were international students from Southeast Asia; the remaining two students were born and raised in the United States (40%). Each student's specific demographics and research interests are provided.

The first author of the article who also participated in the study is a single Caucasian woman who joined the cohort after completing her master's degree in counseling in the southeastern United States. Initially, she expressed dissertation ideas related to adoption, or spirituality and addictions; she was undecided when she began the first step of the RMM session.

The authors use pseudonyms for the other participants. Isaac was an international student who brought his family to the United States. He declared an interest in focusing on effectively treating adults with addictions. Samantha, an international student who also brought her family to the U.S., disclosed wide interests ranging from play therapy to gerontology. Cathy, whose family lives in the local area, matriculated with a master's in clinical counseling from a Midwestern university. She was inspired by working with adolescents in residential treatment and wanted to conduct her research with the same population. Kate, an international student who also brought her family to the U. S., had a focus on career counseling to make a difference in helping students when she returned to her country.

As members of the doctoral seminar class, two second year doctoral students participated and facilitated the RMM sessions. Additionally they supported and mentored the first year students formally and informally throughout the academic year. The faculty members, two

women and one man who participated in the sessions, were members of the first year students'
committees. Two of those faculty members had tenure at the university, and the third was an
assistant professor in a tenure track position.

Procedure

All participants were students in doctoral seminar, a required course that occurs in a
series of four. All doctoral students were required to complete the series of courses as part of
their graduation requirements. The class met once weekly for three hours. Each first and second
year doctoral student was required to participate in the RMM during class. The goals of the
RMM were to build an active research community within which the first year students were
encouraged to explore dissertation topics while being mentored by advanced students and
faculty. The research community aided students in moving through the liminal researcher
identity phase into a research identity and developing dissertation research questions.

The authors obtained participant agreement and university Human Subjects Review
Board approval for research about the mentoring sessions. We also adhered to the American
Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics regarding research throughout the research process
(ACA, 2005). During the RMM sessions, each first year doctoral student (research) participant
was the focus person during one session and participated in other sessions as a member of the
community providing support to their peers. In addition to the five-first year doctoral students,
two-second year doctoral students and three faculty members participated in all of the sessions.

Research Mentoring Model. During each session, a faculty member or second year
doctoral student acted as the facilitator thus ensuring adherence to the RMM by distributing the
model protocol (see Appendix) and monitoring the time. The sessions occurred over the course
of three weeks. Each of the mentoring sessions was scheduled for 90 minutes with time allotted

for the five discrete steps described above. During the first week there was only one session, the two subsequent weeks the class was split into two groups, and two sessions occurred concurrently.

Interviews. All the first year doctoral students consented to participate in 30 minute, semi-structured individual interviews following their Research Mentoring Session. The first researcher conducted all the interviews at least one month following the RMM sessions, which allowed participants time to reflect on their experiences of the sessions prior to the interview. The authors developed the interview questions to elicit responses that addressed the experience of the participants in their role as the focus person, although the final prompt requested any other comments about the RMM. According to the developed protocol, the five participants first responded to questions about their ideas about the relative helpfulness of the RMM sessions. We created this protocol based on reflections and ideas from previous students who participated in previous years' dissertation discussion sessions loosely based on the work of Ross et al. (1999). Next, the participant had an opportunity to reflect on the sessions with any other information believed relevant. The second author conducted the first interview with the first author. The first author then scheduled and conducted the interviews with the other four participants. The first author recorded and transcribed all interviews.

Data Analysis. The researchers used Hermeneutic Phenomenology to analyze the data. To ensure that the interviewees were understood accurately, the authors provided a copy of individual interview transcripts to each participant. The transcript was accompanied by a request for review of the transcript to check for errors and offer edits. As a result, a few minor changes were made.

After the initial transcript reviews, the first and second authors met and identified the themes that arose from the interview process. First, the two authors checked emergent patterns and salient themes. Next, they examined for alternate explanations. The researchers identified, modified, re-evaluated, and reduced the themes into the final five themes based on the interview transcripts (Merriam, 2009). After the authors identified salient themes, they conducted member checks whereby the four non-author first year doctoral student participants were contacted via email and asked to review the themes identified and ensure that the themes were congruent with their experiences. Each participant also had the opportunity to reflect further on the identified themes. Participants all responded confirming that the themes were congruent with their experience.

Researchers' Position. Hermeneutic phenomenology requires transparency of the researcher's position to explain context and mediate some of the potential limitations. All three authors were tied integrally to the research topic, as advisors and research chairs, and as participants in the process, whether faculty or students. It is important to acknowledge these positions and situate each author within the context of the Research Mentoring process, and in relationship to the study (Merriam, 2009). The first author, as stated above, was a participant in the Research Mentoring process. She experienced the process first hand; thus, she was able to understand personally, and theoretically, the content and themes identified during the data analysis. She also met regularly with the second and third authors in order to maintain awareness and address perceived biases about how her experiences with the RMM related to and interacted with the research project. The second author, a full professor in the Counselor Education program, was the dissertation advisor of three of the participants, and was present for three of the five mentoring sessions (she was only able to attend one session during the weeks

when two sessions occurred concurrently). The second author met weekly throughout the academic year with her advisees for individual mentoring. Often, readings and possible dissertation ideas were the topic of discussion accompanied by follow-up reflection related to the RMM sessions. The third author was the instructor of the doctoral seminar course and introduced the RMM as part of the course. He was also the dissertation chair of one of the participants, and was present for three of the five mentoring sessions (see above).

Trustworthiness. The qualitative nature of the interviews created a need to ensure trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This presented unique challenges because the first author was also a first year doctoral student, thus a participant-observer (Spradley, 1980) in the mentoring sessions and the interviews. The first author was the first participant to be interviewed, ensuring that the first author reflected and became aware of her experience before conducting the other interviews.

Throughout the study, the first and second authors met to debrief and evaluate their biases, not to remove those biases, but instead to make the implicit biases explicit in the research process. The fact that the first author was also a participant was the repeated object of discussion in order to evaluate the emotions and beliefs that might bias the interview process. By means of ongoing conversations, the authors were able to maintain awareness about their assumptions and thus contextualize the researchers as well as the research topic (Merriam, 2009). The second author also offered reflections and observations about possible biases of the first author to help maintain trustworthiness. This process was especially important during the data analysis phase of the study when the first author worked with the second author evaluating her own interview, as well as the responses of the other interviewees.

Results and Discussion

The intentions of the RMM were threefold: to build a research community, enhance students' researcher identity, and aid the students in developing dissertation research questions (Gardner, 2010). A secondary goal was to increase the experience of tangible support by faculty and peers. In this study, the RMM was a component of a required doctoral seminar course. Five major themes emerged based on the experiences of RMM sessions by the first year doctoral student participants during the semi-structured interviews: structure of the sessions, researcher identity, confidence/self-efficacy, motivation, and support.

Structure of the Research Mentoring Model Sessions

Participants were quite eager to address the structured steps of the model itself. The majority of the participants identified the questioning period as one of the most helpful steps during the session. The first author indicated, "Hearing my thoughts coming out of somebody else's mouth was really helpful because it opened my eyes and helped me gain a little more perspective." While Isaac stated that "just throwing out ideas, 'hey what do you think about this' was nice."

Offering another perspective, Cathy said that the initial step of ten minutes during which she discussed her ideas without interruption was the most powerful part of the model:

> I think it was ten minutes to just talk about my ideas, like it just, I knew no one would interrupt me. That I could just play around with my thoughts, and so, kinda' getting all that out on the table was good because it helped me to continue to process them.

The initial step, according to Cathy, allowed her to express her thoughts and provided her an opportunity to set the stage for the subsequent discussion with faculty members and peers to develop her next strategic steps.

Samantha expressed appreciation for the concepts she identified during the overall session, although she did not walk out with a specific action plan for moving forward with her dissertation work. Instead, during her session, Samantha felt comfortable and safe among colleagues to share cultural implications related to her research investigation.

At the same time, the structure also posed some challenges for the participants. Isaac and Kate both acknowledged that they had high expectations after participating in their RMM sessions. However, they were surprised to finish the session with more questions than answers related to becoming a successful researcher and action steps regarding their dissertations. Kate stated with a bit of disappointment, "maybe I expected I would be able to make a decision immediate[ly] after the process" and then get going on my dissertation ideas, although, I did get "more focus and determination."

Most participants expressed difficulty in listening, without engaging in a dialogue, during the final three steps of the mentoring session. Both Cathy and the first author specifically identified the requirement to remain quiet during the final steps during the session to be a challenge. Each had questions swirling and ideas they would have liked to bring forward to the group. These reflections along with the underlying tenet of offering respect for collaborative closure are the justifications for adding the sixth step as necessary to the RMM.

Emerging Researcher Identity

Another theme that participants brought forward, socialization into a researcher identity, is another area identified in the literature (Lovitts, 2005; Mays & Smith, 2009) to be crucial for students during their dissertation work. The notion of emerging researcher identity encompasses preparation (prior to the session), actual researcher identity, and the process of becoming, all of which are identified in the literature as occupying the liminal stage (Kiley, 2009). The first

author's statement about developing a research identity seems to express clearly the experience of the transition inherent in this liminal stage.

> I think I'm beginning to see myself more as a person who wants to identify research questions and figure out how to answer them…I don't know I that I would call myself a researcher, but I think that my research identity is definitely developing…I get excited about it.

This expression of increased comfort as a researcher is echoed by Cathy, the "class research sessions helped my confidence in terms of how to find a literature review…I learned a lot."

All participants told of mentally preparing for their session. All five reported they planned prior to the session to provide a foundation for their confidence with the structure and expectations of the RMM. This was best expressed by Cathy when she stated: "I had a general…a big idea to funnel down later." All participants were satisfied that they were able to identify their general, broad topic; Samantha indicated, "I already had the population in mind… so I had the general topic and then I had the population but I didn't know what to do about that [topic specifically]." This theme came across in each of the participants' interviews. They had a general idea about their research interest, and the RMM helped "funnel down" their research topic as Cathy stated.

Related to the process of becoming researchers, participants expressed satisfaction that the session helped them feel more comfortable with their roles as emerging researchers. Cathy indicated that the session "encouraged me to think out of the box" indicating an increased comfort in thinking and conducting novel research. Samantha stated that she's "positive I can get there [to a completed dissertation]." Samantha reported that her sense of herself as a researcher dramatically improved since she began the doctoral program though participation in

research classes, through participation in the RMM, and with continued support from faculty members and peers.

Confidence and Self-Efficacy

The theme of confidence and self-efficacy emerged because participants expressed increased confidence not directly related to their researcher identity. The focus of increased confidence was the comfortable shift to overall socialization and understanding of the norms of the graduate school environment (Gardner, 2010; Mullen et al., 2010). All five participants reported an increase in their confidence and self-efficacy at the prospect of completing their dissertation. This increase grew out of three experiences: the actual RMM session, the process of preparing for the session with most students conducting a brief review of the literature related to their topic of interest, and follow-up conversations with faculty members and peers.

Kate stated: "it [the RMM] helped me choose my topic" and "I recognize my strengths and weaknesses." Isaac described the increased confidence using the metaphor of "opening windows" that helped him see different aspects of his research interest. Cathy indicated that she planed to use the audio recording of her research mentoring session to "remind myself to work through the…ups and downs of the process." Each of the participants also used the word "confidence" and described how personal clarity and sense of confidence had increased because of the RMM.

Motivation

The motivational changes associated with the RMM seem to have affected both the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of the study participants. A number of the participants indicated that they became more extrinsically motivated to learn about their topic prior to the session; while this may have been a desire to be prepared in front of colleagues, participant's

described this as motivation from outside themselves. Kate stated that knowing about the upcoming session "encouraged me to search for information." Meanwhile, Cathy stated that the session "…gave us a jump start and kicked things off." This shift in motivation seemed to be directly associated with the knowledge of the upcoming session.

Following the session, participants also reported an increase in their intrinsic motivation to discover more about their topic of interest. Cathy stated that the "research session allowed me to continue that conversation" and motivated her to "continue to read and search things out…I feel more sparked about my topic." Isaac indicated a similar change in motivation, reporting he has the "energy to move on [in the research process]." Isaac also indicated that he has increased clarity about his future career, an experience also expressed by Kate who indicated that the session helped her "focus and choose the best topic to suit my need in the future, to suit my interests."

Support

The theme of support includes general support, the experience of a collaborative community, and the use of external supports. All participants indicated that the mentoring session highlighted the support and trusting community prevalent in the university's counselor education program. Many of the students also highlighted their experience of support from outside the department and sometimes outside of the university community as they engaged in discussions about their progress as a doctoral student.

The most salient type of support was the encouragement experienced by the participants during and after the session. Students indicated their appreciation of specific verbal acknowledgements from faculty and peers in addition to nonverbal support, such as thoughtful nods, during both the times of victory and struggle as students tried to find the words to express

themselves during the session. The participants also emphasized the importance of being heard carefully and feeling understood. Another especially constructive type of support was receiving helpful feedback and the insightful perspective of others. The first author expressed that the session "provided some support and helped me see that it [completing a dissertation] is possible and that…I have the support, not only that I felt it then [during the session] but that it exists within the department…so, if I need it I know that I can get it." The support provided by peers, faculty mentors, and student mentors was an important part of the mentoring sessions.

The idea of belonging to a supportive community also emerged. Cathy and the first author both expressed a feeling of connection to the community. Cathy stated that it was helpful to realize

> We're all struggling with these ideas and where we're headed and what-not, and just realizing the reinforcing fact that we're all in this together. We're all going through the same thing, so it's not just me out on my own trudging along on this dissertation without any sight of anyone else…you can feed off the positive people…to help motivate all of us to work through that.

This seems to express the importance of feeling like a member of the community, focusing on how each member of the community can provide support, motivation and encouragement to all the other members and value everyone's contributions.

Additionally, four of the five participants indicated that one benefit of using external supports is the increased perspective outside of the counseling lens. Isaac stated that he has a continuing dialogue with a colleague in his home country, which helps him maintain a dual perspective, i.e., from his community support at the university he is currently attending and from the community where he will return when he completes his education. Samantha identified a

member of the Adult Education faculty, and she offered, "I notice that he provides more articles and additional reading materials…I know he knows that we won't really have time for all of the articles he send[s], but it's good." She also has a standing meeting with this professor during which she takes an opportunity to discuss her research ideas with a person from outside counselor education. Finally, the first author discussed the support she finds from a member of her committee from outside the counselor education department, and her father (a mental health professional) "about what makes sense and what doesn't… the way that I think isn't always linear or logical.... I think most of it is interaction…interaction with literature helps me think more, but then interaction with people helps me think different[ly]." The use of external support seems to help participants feel supported and realize a different perspective about their topic of interest.

Limitations

As related to trustworthiness, each of the authors was integrally connected with the research personally and professionally. Although personal interaction with participants is the strength of qualitative research, it is also a potential limitation. It reduces generalizability and has the potential to bias the research. The authors used constant dialogue in an effort to ensure trustworthiness; however, it is not possible to remove this limitation entirely.

Another limitation is the first author's participation in this research as both participant and researcher. Ethnographic research has long used participant observation (Spradley, 1980); however the current research is not an ethnography. As such, the author's identity as participant and researcher may limit the research and was a careful consideration throughout the entire process.

Another limitation of this study is that three of the five participants were international students from Southeast Asia. This means that the majority of participants in this study were

minorities and international students. Often, international students deal with the pressure of acculturating into their academic institutions (Gómez, Urzúa, & Glass, 2014); as second semester students, they had a brief time to acculturate. In addition, all three students were living with their families and had developed a support network with other international students from their home country. Family and social support may have increased comfort with the community where they were living, but the absence of large family support networks still may have impacted their experience. The two semesters of their study also provided an academic support system within their cohort, the cohort from which all the study participants were drawn. In this way, the first author being the interviewer may have helped the international student participants speak candidly about their experiences of the RMM.

Implications

Finding the most effective practices to support doctoral students toward degree completion and success can benefit students, faculty members, families, and institutions (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010). Acknowledging that doctoral programs may provide an initial sense of good will and respect, participating in research activities together provides a long-term commitment to effective mentoring and a facilitative department community (Butler & Schnellert, 2012; Cassidy et al., 2008). While a variety of literature provides strategies for supporting doctoral students, the authors of this article propose that participating in the RMM sessions accomplishes several goals in an efficient and effective manner. With less expense and time as compared to other strategies for creating collaborative communities (McAlpine & Lucas, 2011), the mentoring sessions can be integrated into existing graduate courses and provide the basis for building an inclusive research community of mutual trust.

Past student participants have expressed appreciation for the chance to experience a careful balance of listening, encouragement, and input from faculty and peers during their participation in the RMM. In the model, all input is equally valued, which furthers meaningful collaboration thus lessening the fear of hierarchical power and control issues (Cassidy et al., 2008; Dricoll et al. 2009). Also, the sessions can result in continuing follow-up conversations and more intensive, connective relationships within the context of a collaborative department community.

In addition, as the RMM sessions are regularly planned and clearly offered as a counselor education program activity, mentoring and socialization in academe can flourish, resulting in the formation of ongoing research teams in which all members are involved as teachers and learners (McAlpine & Lucas, 2011). Faculty members and students collaborate on research teams regarding conference proposals and presentations as well as writing manuscripts for refereed publication.

At our university, the RMM sets up expectations for successful collaborations. Students are socialized to realize expectations for themselves and faculty members, gain understanding of action steps for success, and begin thinking of themselves as moving from student identities to that of professional colleagues.

According to McAlpine and Lucas (2011), working as a team within the context of an institution enhances cohesive connections and group identity among faculty and students. Confidence and motivation related to active research and scholarship also increase. Another benefit is the sense of allegiance to the institution and possible long-term connections based on shared meaning and understanding.

Reflection, Directions for Future Research

Reflections of past student participants of the RMM reveal additional insights that may allow the model to offer more benefit for students and faculty members. Prior to the RMM meetings, students can prepare by visiting consistently with their major advisor and others to select areas of dissertation interest. Next, by studying the related literature to explore issues and current trends enables the participant to bring forward tentative thoughts and goals.

As part of a department's community activities, integrating the RMM as a required activity demonstrates structured mentoring as a priority with a focus for research and realistic research expectations. Thus, investigating the benefits of multiple sessions to consider ongoing research projects across the entire doctoral program may be helpful related to reinforcing and sustaining student research motivation and identity. Also, examining the interplay between the RMM and research courses, normally taught by faculty outside the program, may provide intriguing strategies for enhancing doctoral students' research identities.

A long-term qualitative study could be conducted with interviews before and after the Research Mentoring session, and the sessions could be recorded. Students could also be interviewed as they progress through their doctoral coursework and dissertation research. Research of this kind may aid in understanding particular steps of the RMM that is designed to provide support, aid in the development of a researcher identity, share ideas, and help doctoral students gain confidence in their ability to produce original research.

Conclusion

The RMM facilitates students to move past the idea that the doctoral dissertation is an arduous task to be completed before graduation. Rather, students realize the dissertation is an opportunity to begin creating what they really want for their lives and the world. Students begin

to embrace the identity of a researcher and realize that a dissertation can be a vital foundation component of a research agenda, which can lead to desired goals on their career trajectory. While the time required for intensive sessions with individual doctoral students requires careful planning and scheduling, the resources are well spent. Aligned with the Council of Graduate School's (2010) suggestions for student success, the RMM offers a professional development opportunity to receive continuing mentoring support from faculty members as well as other students.

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Appendix A

Research Mentoring Model (RMM)

I.   Opening and big picture discussion ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ 10 minutes
   - Focus person expresses ideas, passions and dreams about a possible research agenda and dissertation direction
   - Participants carefully listen without speaking
   - Focus person identifies needs and wants in order to move forward
   - Everyone honors silence as needed

II. Question Period ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ 45-90 minutes
   - With a purpose of understanding the Focus person's ideas and intentions, a lively exchange of questions and discussion among everyone occurs which usually leads to further questions
   - Questions are asked with the purpose of helping the Focus person explore possibilities
   - Focus person has the right to pass rather than answer a question

III. Observation and Reflection ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ 10 minutes
   - Participants restate what they perceive the focus person said
   - Participants offer their understanding of the focus person's intention
   - Participants give their impressions of the Focus person's feelings and behaviors
   - Focus person carefully listens to gain self-awareness

IV. Acknowledgement and Encouragements ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ 5 minutes
   - Participants affirm the work already done by the Focus person
   - Participants identify specific strengths and resources of the Focus person
   - Focus person carefully listens to absorb affirming recognitions

V.   Feedback and Ideas ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ 15-30 minutes
   - Participants respectfully offer their personal strategy for moving forward, "If this were my research, I would …"
   - Focus person carefully listens

VI. Focus Person Reflection (optional) ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺ 5 minutes
   - Focus person reflects on feedback from the final three phases of the RMM.
   - Focus person requests clarification of comments.