

EDUCATION

Beginning counselor educators' experiences of growth and challenges in teaching

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Abstract

In our consensual qualitative research investigation of teaching development, beginning counselor educators' ($N = 13$) grew in transitioning from teacher-centeredness to student-centered learning approaches, as well as in student engagement, adaptation to student needs, and confidence. They felt challenged by setting boundaries with students and managing time.

KEYWORDS

counselor education, teaching, teaching development, teaching self-efficacy, student-centered learning

Developing as teachers is critical for beginning counselor educators. On average, counselor educators reported that teaching is the most highly weighted of their roles in their institutions' measurements of productivity (Taylor & Baltrinic, 2018). Teaching requires time and practice to develop the knowledge, skills, professional behaviors, and dispositions of a competent, student-centered counselor educator (Swank & Houseknecht, 2019). Yet, many beginning counselor educators reported feeling underprepared for their teaching responsibilities and can feel overwhelmed in the time- and energy-consuming process of teaching (Magnuson, 2002; Magnuson et al., 2004). Additionally, teaching at the graduate level may present unique pedagogical challenges (Semenza, 2016), including sensitivity to students' responsibilities outside of school. Overcoming pedagogical challenges is important because effective pedagogical practices are critical to preparing competent counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators (The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 2016; The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2015). Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to understand the experiences of teaching growth and challenges of beginning counselor educators to provide recommendations for intentional and developmental teaching support for pretenured faculty.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES

In developmental models of college teaching in the United States (e.g., Robertson, 1999; Simmons, 2011), beginning faculty start teaching in content-focused and teacher-focused ways, often influenced by anxiety to prove themselves. As they develop as teachers, beginning faculty move towards learner-centeredness, awareness of the complex interactive processes between teachers and learners, and higher self-efficacy (Gibson et al., 2015). In terms of classroom techniques, beginning faculty often start out using didactic, decontextualized lectures with the goal of passing on large amounts of content to passively listening students (Robertson, 1999; Simmons, 2011). As they grow, beginning faculty become more learner-centered and incorporate more active student engagement (e.g., class discussions, group activities) and responsiveness to students' development as learners (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010; Hoidn, 2017; Robertson, 1999; Simmons, 2011).

Broadly, approaches focused on student construction of learning are often referred to as student-centered learning (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010; Hoidn, 2017). Rooted in constructivism, student-centered learning encourages students to actively construct knowledge through exploration, discussion, cognitive monitoring, and metacognitive awareness (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010; Hodin, 2017). Student-centered learning emphasizes students' social and cultural environments often through application and realistic case studies. Teachers focus on students' learning and development and serve as facilitators of learning by using their subject matter knowledge to plan curricular experiences (Hodin, 2017).

TEACHING DEVELOPMENT IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION

Intentional and relational doctoral teaching preparation can have a positive impact on teaching identity development of doctoral students and beginning counselor educators (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Gibson et al., 2015). Open and genuine mentoring relationships in supervised doctoral teaching experiences can help build confidence (Baltrinic & Suddeath, 2020; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018). Longer term, supervised doctoral fieldwork in teaching combined with teaching coursework may help buffer against stress, burnout, and poor job satisfaction for counselor educators (Suddeath et al., 2020). Despite the potential benefits of doctoral teaching preparation, some doctoral teaching preparation lacks intentionality and consistency (Waalkes et al., 2018).

Yet, numerous structured teaching supports exist. CACREP (2015) calls for doctoral students to have foundational knowledge in models of adult development and learning (5B.3c), instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods (5B.3d), and assessment of learning (5B.3g). The CACREP (2015) standards emphasized the importance of doctoral students developing student-centered learning through teaching coursework, teaching internships, and supervised teaching experiences. Additionally, a number of counseling-specific textbooks about teaching exist (e.g., McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Similarly, the ACES (2016) teaching initiative taskforce documented numerous best practices for teaching in counselor education. However, these structured teaching supports focus primarily on doctoral-level preparation and may not apply to beginning counselor educators in faculty positions.

Satisfying and regular teaching supervision can support self-efficacy in teaching (Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2021). Yet, structured supervision of teaching at the faculty level is often inconsistent and unstructured. In a survey of counselor educators, the majority of participants did not have someone regularly review their teaching evaluations (63.2%; $N = 120$) or observe their teaching (54.0%; Taylor & Baltrinic, 2018). A lack of support may reinforce teacher-centered teaching approaches. Additionally, supervision may help beginning counselor educators think more reflectively about their teaching in ways that facilitate growth (Waalkes et al., 2018). Knowledge of areas of teaching that beginning counselor educators struggle with may help them reflect on ways

they can intentionally develop towards student-centered learning and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching in meeting student needs (Hodin, 2017).

Since beginning counselor educators can feel unprepared to teach (Magnuson, 2002; Magnuson et al., 2004; Waalkes et al., 2018), a framework of common challenges and successes may normalize the development of their teaching and help them set goals. Although numerous researchers have revealed the impact of doctoral teaching preparation in developing teachers (e.g., Baltrinic & Suddeath, 2020; Baltrinic et al., 2016; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018), few have examined how beginning counselor educators continue to develop after graduation from their doctoral programs. In addition, researchers (Baltrinic & Suddeath, 2020; Baltrinic et al., 2016; Waalkes et al., 2018) cautioned against a lack of intentional design and support in teaching preparation practices in counselor education programs. Therefore, an understanding of the common challenges and growth of beginning counselor educators can help in designing intentional supports targeting common developmental struggles in teaching. These supports can help counselor educators teach in student-centered ways, which can help their students learn more and become more self-regulated learners (Hodin, 2017) and more competent counselors (ACES, 2016). Therefore, in this study, we sought to answer two research questions: (1) How have beginning counselor educators experienced growth as teachers? and (2) What challenges have beginning counselor educators experienced in developing their teaching?

METHOD

Using a social constructivist paradigm that aligns with the constructivist roots of student-centered learning (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hodin, 2017), we utilized consensual qualitative research (CQR; Hill, 2012) to investigate beginning counselor educators' experience of growth and challenges in developing their teaching. CQR is a structured approach to understanding a phenomenon utilizing an inductive team-based process to analyze data (Hill, 2012). The consensus-based and iterative data analysis process and the use of external auditors in CQR helped us understand data from multiple perspectives and increase trustworthiness (Hill, 2012). This investigation was part of a larger study about beginning counselor educators' teaching mentorship experiences (Waalkes et al., 2021).

Participants

Criteria for participation included: (a) being within the first four years of work as a counselor educator, (b) current employment at a CACREP-accredited counselor education program as a nonclinical, tenure-track faculty member, and (c) experience independently teaching at least one full course. We did not include clinical faculty members as their experiences teaching are likely to have categorical differences compared to tenure-track faculty members and CQR studies call for homogenous samples (Hill, 2012). Seven of the 13 participants identified as male and six as female. Ten participants identified as Caucasian/White, two as African American/Black, and one as Hispanic/Latino/a. Participants' ages ranged from 30 to 43 ($M = 35$, $SD = 3.57$). Their average years of teaching experience was 2.5. Five participants came from institutions in the Southern ACES region, three participants came from institutions in the Western ACES region, three participants came from institutions in the Northeastern ACES region, and two participants came from institutions in the North Central ACES region. Six participants worked at institutions with an R2 Carnegie classification (doctoral universities with high research activity). Five participants worked at institutions with an M1 Carnegie classification (master's colleges and universities with larger programs). One participant worked at an institution with a M3 classification (master's colleges and universities with smaller programs). One participant worked at an institution with a D/PU classification (doctoral/professional universities).

Sampling and recruitment

Adhering to Hill's (2012) recommendations for sampling, we collected a homogenous, random sample of 13 beginning counselor educators. To do this, we compiled a list of all CACREP-accredited counseling programs ($N = 320$) from the information available through the CACREP website. We randomly sampled 75 programs from this database and gathered a list of assistant professors ($n = 192$) from the websites of these programs. Then, after receiving Institutional Review Board approval, we sent each of these individuals a recruitment email and one follow-up email about a week later. Fifteen assistant professors expressed interest, yielding a response rate of 7.8%. Two interested individuals did not fit the criteria for participation and were removed from the study.

Interview questions

Consistent with Hill's (2012) recommendations, we utilized a semistructured interview format. The interview consisted of 13 open-ended questions, followed by unscripted probes (Patton, 2014). The first two authors developed the open-ended interview questions based on themes within the extant literature on teaching development, including areas of growth, and challenges as teachers and resources utilized. We sent the initial list of interview questions to two counselor educators with experience in teaching and CQR methodology for review. Based on their feedback, we made minor changes to the wording and content of several questions. Interview questions included: "How have you grown as a teacher since you started working as a full-time faculty member?" and "What parts of teaching have been most challenging for you since you started working as a full-time faculty member?" Each interview was recorded and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. One of the first two authors of the study transcribed each interview. Once transcribed, each participant received a copy of their interview to make corrections or amendments. Four participants made minor corrections.

Coding team and bracketing

The coding team consisted of three assistant professors in counselor education, all who identify as White, have experience in conducting CQR research, and graduated from the same doctoral institution. Two members identified as male and one identifies as female. Following Hill's (2012) recommendations, the research team individually wrote out their biases and expectations around the topic of the study before beginning data analysis and then met to discuss them (Hays & Singh, 2012). The team believed that participants would engage in on-the-job learning and that there would be a lack of structured and intentional support in teaching development and a lack of focus on intentional teaching development in the data.

Data analysis

The research team followed Hill's (2012) recommendations for the data analysis process. First, the research team individually read the interviews and developed an initial list of emergent domains. Then, the research team shared and discussed the individual lists and developed a consensus domain list. Second, the research team coded continuous sections of each interview transcript into one of the domains, assuring all parts of each transcript were coded into one of the domains. The team coded the first three transcripts together to develop consensus in the coding process, then, divided up the remaining transcripts and coded them independently. Once all transcripts were individually coded,

the team reconvened to reach consensus on the domain coding. Third, the team developed core ideas that summarized the essence of each coded chunk of data. Again, they coded the core ideas for the first three transcripts together to develop consistency, then divided the remaining transcripts among the team members for independent coding. Then, the team met and came to a consensus on all the core ideas. Fourth, the research team engaged in cross-analysis, developing a list of categories under each domain by comparing the core ideas across participants. Like in other steps, the team coded individually and then came together to achieve consensus. Finally, following Hill's (2012) guidelines, the team assigned domains and categories frequency ratings of general, typical, or variant. General categories appeared in all or all but one of the cases (i.e., 12 or 13), typical categories appeared in more than half (i.e., at least seven) but fewer than 12 cases, and variant categories appeared in less than half of the cases but at least two cases (i.e., two to six).

Trustworthiness

We promoted trustworthiness by using an external auditor, achieving data saturation, checking for transferability, using triangulation of investigators, reaching consensus throughout the data analysis process, and bracketing our biases and expectations (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hill, 2012; Patton, 2014). First, we used an external auditor to minimize groupthink after most steps of the data analysis process (Hill, 2012). The external auditor for the present study identifies as a White female and was selected due to her experience with CQR methodology and as a counselor educator. She provided feedback on the domain list, core ideas, and cross analysis. After each round of feedback, the research team adjusted our coding based on her feedback. Second, we reached saturation by achieving stability in the coding of domains and categories when no new domains emerged in the coding of the final three transcripts (Hill, 2012; Patton, 2014). Third, numerous general and typical frequency labels emerged during the cross-analysis indicating possible transferability (Hill, 2012). The variety of recommendations for the field based on our findings also demonstrated transferability (Patton, 2014). Fourth, to use investigator triangulation, we utilized multiple researchers to code the data independently, then reached consensus at each stage of the data analysis process (Hill, 2012; Hays & Singh, 2012). Finally, we had an ongoing reflexive conversation about our biases and expectations throughout the data analysis process (Hill, 2012).

FINDINGS

We describe the domains of growth and challenges and their categories in the following sections. (See Table 1 for an overview of the category structure.)

Growth

The general ($N = 13$) growth domain represents ways that participants grew in their teaching since they started working as counselor educators. We describe all six categories below.

Engaging students

The majority of participants ($n = 10$) discussed growth in using student-centered teaching methods that engage students, including in terms of creativity, experiential learning, service learning, and flipped classroom approaches. Some participants discussed engagement in terms of avoiding overutilizing

TABLE 1 Beginning counselor educators teaching development

Domain	Category
Growth	1. Engaging students (typical) 2. Increased confidence and resiliency (typical) 3. Adapting to student needs (typical) 4. Purposeful course design (typical) 5. Self-Reflection as a tool for growth (typical) 6. Relationship building (variant)
Challenges	1. balancing faculty roles (typical) 2. boundaries and connections with students (variant) 3. challenges in aligning andragogy with student needs (variant) 4. grading student work & providing feedback (variant)

lecture. For example, participant 12 shifted his focus from lecture to creating a learning environment for students:

When I first started out, I probably much more felt like the onus was on me as the instructor to structure and direct. I probably lectured a lot more in the beginning and what I've seen open up over the past four years is really thinking about how the classroom environment provides the context or a learning lab for students to engage in more of an application.

Participant 5 described integrating new teaching strategies to engage students:

I do a service-learning component ... [and] a flipped classroom simulation-based model, where it was a pretty traditional model of teaching ... now I'm changing it that my students will watch a short lecture, do a reading before they come to class and then in class we'll do role playing and a simulation of different topics.

Increased confidence and resiliency

Ten participants mentioned ways that their confidence and resiliency in teaching had increased over time. For participant 4, seeing her connection with and impact on students increased her confidence after students came "back after they've been in the profession and they [felt] like they've been impacted by the coursework that they've taken, that I've taught." Participant 8 overcame imposter syndrome by trusting the process of teaching:

When I first started, there was that imposter syndrome and also this worry about the students discovering that the emperor has no clothes on ... it's just sort of being reassured that learning along the way is okay.

For participant 2, building confidence and resiliency meant letting go of wanting to be perfect:

I don't put any pressure on myself to be this award-winning professor. All I want to do is genuinely connect with my students and have my students genuinely connect with me and for us to connect with the information that I'm sharing.

Adapting to student needs

Eight participants mentioned that they had grown in adapting their teaching to the needs of students. Some participants discussed how they now have more awareness of the common needs of their students as developing counselors. For example, participant 7 discussed how he centers curriculum around patterns he noticed in students: “I try to spend some time looking ... at patterns of what are the deficits, what are the things that students were consistently not doing well with, and how can I address that more intentionally in the course.” Other participants talked about how their perspectives on teaching had shifted from self-focused to student-focused. Participant 4 stated, “I don’t worry about myself as much and I don’t worry about my evaluations as much. My focus is solely on what they’re going to learn and how they’re going to improve.” Similarly, participant 11 shifted her focus from planning out every minute of a class to allow students to shape the class’s direction:

It was more like trusting with me my own levels of anxiety that it’s okay to have a tentative classroom agenda and just trust that the time will get filled... [by] allowing [students] to dictate some of the classroom flow.

Purposeful course design

Seven participants mentioned ways that they had become more intentional in designing their courses. Participant 8 grew in organizing courses:

When I first started ... I organized the semester by chapters in the textbook and I learned that sometimes that just doesn’t work well. So thinking about where students are at the beginning of the semester, where are they at each week as the semester progresses, and then thinking about what’s the best assignment for that point in the semester or what’s the best reading that the students could do.

Similarly, participant 13 discussed the evolution of her course design and her increasing flexibility when teaching a course repeatedly:

[The first time I teach a course], I know my style ... but I’m not as familiar with the content yet. So the balance between being more concrete versus active and engaged is very different and the flexibility is very different the first time I teach a class. I can’t be as flexible if it’s a content area I’m super familiar with ... [where teaching a course a second time] I know I can be flexible because I know what’s coming the next week and I know it’s part of the general process of this particular course.

Self-reflection as a tool for growth

Most participants ($n = 7$) reported using self-reflection as a method of improving their teaching. For participant 3, this entailed using student feedback to reflect on the effectiveness of her teaching by “trying to think about what works best for students and what I’ve done that worked well for them ... and then maybe what I’ll need to change as well.” Participant 9 took notes after class to inform his self-reflection:

After every class I try and set aside a small window ... where I can sit down and take 5-10 minutes then write down what I thought went well and what I thought didn’t go well

and then as I go back to teach the same or a similar course again, the first thing I do is I go through my notes about the material.

Relationship building

Numerous participants ($n = 5$) discussed building relationships with students as important to them. Participant 7 talked about relationship building in terms of her style of authenticity and transparency:

I value [authenticity] deeply and I think students respond well to me in that way because they feel that I'm not hiding things from them and ... that they will know what I'm thinking, they will know where they're at with me, that they will know how their doing, that they can trust me, like I feel that they can feel that authenticity and it brings a safety. So I think that being authentic, ... people listen to you when they feel like you show up, and I really do ... one of my other values is really knowing people well ... So for me, I value knowing people and I value making people feel seen and heard before trying to convince them of something. And so to me that's a strength and an internal value ... that I think shows up ... in the classroom ... in a way that feels helpful. Participant 2 discussed important parallels between therapeutic presence as a counselor and relationship building as an educator:

[In teaching] you have to be aware of yourself, be aware of your students, be aware of the relationship that's happening between yourself and the students, the students and each other, and the students and the information. And being able to kind of mold and shape and allow all of those things to happen organically for the students to get what they need.

Challenges

The typical ($n = 12$) challenges domain represented struggles that participants reported facing in their teaching. We describe all four categories below.

Balancing faculty roles

Many participants ($n = 9$) felt challenged in balance their energy and time in their faculty roles. Some participants had difficulty balancing time and energy among different work responsibilities. For example, participant 13 described pressure to figure out how to teach comprehensively while balancing other responsibilities:

wanting to do a good job and a comprehensive job and knowing the latest information is really time consuming to really be able to put together the lectures or the activities that I want to do and just having space to do that with all the other demands of our position.

Some participants also felt challenged in navigating work life balance facing issue ranging from figuring out how to set boundaries within toxic institutional cultures, managing a significant and challenging health issue, and the impact of state budget cuts on workloads. Participant 5 struggled with balancing her role as a mother with her work:

Our graduate courses are at night and so having two young kids and being away two nights a week is really challenging in terms of my teaching. And so like if I teach until 9:30 and then my kids have a bad night sleep and then trying to come in the next morning, it can be exhausting.

Boundaries and connections with students

Participants cited navigating boundaries and connections with students most frequently ($n = 6$). Participant 12 felt challenged in balancing being boundaried and being authentic:

Will they respect me? Will they think that I have enough expertise? ... So because of that insecurity, I think I did choose to be a little more professional and more closed off personally than some of my colleagues... I think I can open up a little bit more, clearly students respect me, just try and figure out where do I draw that line, when do I tell them that I'm getting married or do I not tell them that, that sort of thing.

Participant 11 struggled with being firm with students:

It's hard to be firm with them because I remember what it's like to be a student, ... it's a moment of being an educator that you have power and that is not always comfortable to exert that, "no you've got to turn that in or 10% every day."

Challenges in aligning andragogy with student needs

Numerous participants ($n = 5$) mentioned struggling to meet the needs of students as future professionals with their teaching. Participant 8 tried to navigate integrating his teaching to fit with the content other instructors in his program were covering:

It's ... trying to hit a moving target. I'm constantly updating and being aware ... because some of our students take courses part time, so it's a big challenge just making sure that the content meets the needs of the student.

Participant 13 struggled with knowing when to be flexible with accepting late assignments:

Definitely the balance between ... being flexible but also not being perceived as a pushover but also honoring when life happens and that's really hard, because you want to give everybody the benefit of the doubt but people can take advantage of that ... like all of that has been the most challenging, just because it's important to hold students to high standards and have them be accountable for their own growth and development.

Grading student work and providing feedback

Numerous participants ($n = 4$) mentioned feeling challenged in the assessment process in their teaching. Some struggled with not grading too easy, grading too hard, or worrying about students' reactions to lower grades. For example, participant 14 felt challenged by providing students important feedback "even though I know it's going to be difficult for them to hear."

DISCUSSION

In this CQR investigation of beginning counselor educators' experiences of growth and challenges in their teaching development, participants described ways they grew in their student engagement, adaptation to student needs, confidence and resiliency, and purposeful course design. They also described challenges in their teaching development including balancing faculty roles and maintaining boundaries with students. Overall, participants reported shifting from didactic, content-focused perspectives on teaching to student-centered perspectives that included focusing on their students' learning and structuring class around engaging activities (Hoidn, 2017). This shift aligns with developmental models of college teaching in the United States (Robertson, 1999; Simmons, 2011) where beginning faculty move from anxiety and teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness and higher self-esteem. It also aligns with the CACREP doctoral standards (2015) call for foundational knowledge in models of adult development and learning (5B.3c) and instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods (5B.3d) as well as the ACES best practices in teaching (2016). Often, these shifts represented participants using constructivist approaches to teaching where there was an increased focus on student initiative and control in the classroom (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010; Hodin, 2017).

Many beginning counselor educators in this study seemed to develop student-centered teaching approaches through trial and error, which is consistent with the findings from other studies (Magnuson, 2002; Magnuson et al., 2004; Simmons, 2011). This trial and error process may challenge beginning counselor educators in balancing their faculty roles. Given the gaps in teaching specific skills in doctoral teaching preparation (Waalkes et al., 2018), more consistent and structured preparation in developing student-centered teaching methods in doctoral programs in ways that align with CACREP standards (2015) seem warranted. This preparation might involve more opportunities to practice and reflect on best practices in teaching (ACES, 2016) which may help beginning counselor educators spend less time focusing on discovering these strategies and more time honing them (Baltrinic & Suddeath, 2020). Observations of teaching and feedback from mentors also may help beginning faculty reflect on their current approaches and discover student-centered techniques (Baltrinic, et al., 2016; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018, 2021).

Based on participants' experiences, self-efficacy seems important to beginning counselor educators' growth as teachers (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Magnuson, 2002; Simmons, 2011). Therefore, teaching development supports should be approached from a holistic perspective with attention to educators' emotional and social needs. This may include offering beginning counselor educators encouragement and affirmations as well as structured and consistent supervision on teaching (Baltrinic & Suddeath, 2020; Gibson et al., 2015; Magnuson, 2002; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018).

A unique finding in our study was how some participants felt challenged in navigating boundaries with students. Counselor educators may be unaware of their boundary crossing because they are in positions of power and students may not feel confident in their abilities to identify and negotiate boundary crossing (Burns, 2020). Therefore, some beginning counselor educators may benefit from more support and accountability around setting boundaries with students, especially since their relationships with students might remain unseen by other faculty until an issue arises. Since beginning counselors educators might struggle to recognize their power (Burns, 2020), establishing feedback processes early in a counselor educator's career might help them proactively understand how others are perceiving their interactions with students and lead to discussions about how they navigate boundaries with students.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for counselor educators in terms of doctoral teaching preparation and supporting beginning counselor educators. Since strengthening participants'

identities as confident student-centered educators took trial and error practice for participants (Magnuson, 2002; Magnuson et al., 2004; Simmons, 2011), doctoral counselor education programs may consider providing teaching experiences targeting the development of student-centered learning skills and teaching best practices (ACES, 2016) early on in their program sequences. Having brief and low-stakes opportunities to teach early in a program may provide students more time to develop their abilities to adapt to student needs and build their self-efficacy. Doctoral students could complete an internship requiring guest teaching in master's level courses each semester starting in their first semester and continuing for multiple semesters afterward. This iterative series of teaching requirements across semesters would offer students continued opportunities to reflect on their teaching and help to meet the CACREP doctoral standards (2015) related to teaching. As many participants believed reflection was important to their teaching development, ongoing reflection on teaching in doctoral programs might help beginning counselors educators develop a stronger foundation in pedagogy and teaching methods, models of adult development and learning, and instructional and curriculum design and delivery in ways that integrates theory and practice (CACREP, 2015; 5b.3b-3d).

The findings from this study offer specific discussion topics to frame mentoring conversations around challenges beginning counselor educators face (e.g., balancing faculty roles, boundaries with students, confidence). As participants expressed a variety of unique needs related to balancing their roles as counselor educators, mentors might start clear and ongoing conversations about their mentee's specific developmental needs with an empathic and collaborative rather than didactic approach (Waalkes et al., 2021). Additionally, mentors might offer to observe the mentee's teaching and provide specific feedback (Borders et al., 2011). Observation may provide opportunities for the mentee to reflect on their growth and challenges, as well as offering more specific and concrete topics to discuss. Finally, using counseling skills to facilitate discussion of the possible emotions and doubts experienced by mentees may help build their confidence and define their identities (Gibson et al., 2015; Waalkes et al., 2021).

Counseling programs could integrate discussions of student-centered learning into faculty meetings to promote normalization of challenges and self-reflection (e.g., each faculty member talking about one student-centered teaching risk they took over the past month at the beginning of each faculty meeting). Additionally, protecting beginning faculty from teaching different courses every semester and from extensive service responsibilities early on in their careers may provide them with more time to balance their faculty roles and develop student-centered teaching strategies. Higher education institutions might offer in-house teaching training and support beginning faculty in attending teaching-focused conferences. Similarly, ACES or regional ACES could offer targeted networking opportunities, intentional mentorship programs, and professional development (e.g., conference sessions, trainings).

Limitations

We have identified three limitations in the present study. First, the majority of participants were White (77%) and our findings may not reflect the teaching development of counselor educators of Color. Faculty of Color may face different challenges and grow in their teaching in different ways related to their unique intersectional identities. Second, all of the members of the coding team and the external auditor were White beginning counselor educators who graduated from the same doctoral institution. This uniformity in our identities may have limited our abilities to see the data from different perspectives (Hill, 2012). Third, our contact with participants involved one individual interview, which may limit the depth of our data.

Directions for future research

Our findings left us with a number of areas that future researchers might investigate. First, researching how beginning counselor educators manage their time among responsibilities and navigate work life balance may illuminate ways to reduce their stress and burnout and provide recommendations for support structures. Second, understanding how counselor educators relate to their students and how their relational styles impact the ways they set boundaries with students may uncover common challenges and provide models for intentional development of teaching styles that are both relational and appropriately boundaried. Third, since the majority of participants identified as White, future researchers could examine the teaching experiences of beginning counselor educators who hold different intersecting identities.

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