

**DISTANCE LEARNING PEDAGOGY IN REHABILITATION COUNSELING:
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CAUTIONS FROM THE FRONT LINE**

By

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to give voice to instructors on the front line of course design and delivery. To examine the process as well as their recommendations and cautions as the field of rehabilitation counseling continues integrating distance learning pedagogies. The number of master's programs in rehabilitation counseling offering distance learning as part of their pedagogy is on the rise. While educators continue in their commitment to reach more students and incorporate new approaches in their methods of instruction, the research is only beginning to address the needs of the educators as they begin to incorporate new and innovative technologies into their pedagogies.

This study focused on gaining the perspective and insight of educators who have experience in both face to face and distance learning. In analyzing the responses of 15 educators, a theme emerged in response to each research question. For research question one, pedagogy was identified as the theme. However, instead of participants identifying a favorite pedagogy, they depended on the synchronous and asynchronous approaches that allowed multiple pedagogies to be threaded together to achieve an educational goal. In research question two, what emerged was the need for a larger conversation that could allow the development of a strategic plan. The areas for discussion were identified by participants as necessary for the field to continue growing and evolving to remain current and competitive. For the third research question, perseverance in how participants worked through apprehensions and adapted to new pedagogies was the overarching

theme. From that recommendations were identified to assist instructors in integrating distance learning approaches into course design as well as strategies to consider when training new faculty.

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To my daughter Carlie, for her unending support and encouragement and for making me coffee
to get me through.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent history higher education has faced increased complications that have had a direct impact on student enrollment, retention, and operating costs. In addition to increased cuts to education at the federal and state levels, the recession of 2008 resulted in loss of jobs, increased need for post-secondary education and led to a reduction in middle class. The lowest and middle wage occupations saw the greatest decline of 3.4% from 2009 to 2013. As of 2015 there are 1.2 million fewer jobs in middle and higher wage positions. In addition, technological advancements have led to an increase in skill level required for entry level positions. The increase in technological knowledge has led to an increased need and access to postsecondary education (Breneman, 2002; Horrigan, 2016; US Department of Education, 2018; Wright et al., 2013). These economic and labor market changes have also created a predicament for many who struggle to support their families, forcing them to choose between maintaining an income or quitting their jobs and potentially relocating to pursue additional training or education (Dziekan & Main, 2012). As in past recessions, Americans turned to higher education to increase their employment options (Douglass, 2010). One-way colleges and universities have attempted to meet the increasing needs for postsecondary education is through integrating distance learning into their methods of instruction or pedagogy as illustrated in the Digest of Education Statistics (NCES, 2018).

Even more important in this time of pandemic, the use of distance learning pedagogies in postsecondary education has seen a sharp increase in usage. Postsecondary education in the United States has witnessed a growth rate for students enrolled in online courses and is increasing at a faster rate than for the overall enrollment in higher education. From 2003-04 to

2015-16 there was an increase in the number of graduate students enrolled in distance or online courses increased from 16.5% to 45.6%. Despite these increasing trends, the counseling field has been slow to embrace this development (Albrecht & Jones, 2001; Benshoff & Gibbons, 2011; Chester & Glass, 2006).

Integrating online pedagogies has been shown to have an increase in student engagement for those who are comfortable and skilled in writing, use of technology, are self-motivated, and self-disciplined enough to stay on task without the need for face-to-face interaction (Jones et al., 2011). Online learning can provide for more flexibility and open up new opportunities for many people who otherwise would not have access to higher education, or who have challenges such as disabling conditions or family responsibilities (Dziekan & Main, 2012; Glenn, 2001; Johnson et al., 2000; Kiener & Koch, 2012; Pertacchi, 2000; Rosenbaum, 2001). In addition, during times of pandemic distance learning can provide a means for post-secondary education to continue the semester without interruption in instruction.

Distance learning can provide new opportunities for students who seek advancement in their careers without the burden of quitting a job or relocation. Educators in rehabilitation counseling programs are increasingly integrating distance learning pedagogies into their method of delivery. Greenidge and Daire (2005) and Robinson and Casado (2005) reported that programs offering counseling or counselor education training have been hesitant to enter the distance learning realm. In a field that looks to best practices when implementing change, there has been some reluctance to incorporate distance learning pedagogies due to a lack of empirical data supporting this trend in counseling education, concerns regarding the reliability of technology, cultural barriers, instructor and student technology competence, and institutional technology support (Horvitz et al., 2015). The perceived most important factors leading to

instructor resistance were concerns regarding quality of education, identifying effective online pedagogies, a reduction in face-to-face interaction and concerns related to their perceived ability to teach online courses successfully or their self-efficacy (Granello, 2000; Horvitz et. al, 2015; Krieger & Stockton, 2004).

Teacher self-efficacy relates ones' belief in their ability to facilitate the development of student skills and knowledge. Bandura (1977) purported that people with high self-efficacy were more likely to make a stronger effort when faced with negative expectations. Conversely people with lower self-efficacy were more likely to feel overwhelmed and hopeless when faced with the same or similar circumstances (Bandura, 1977; Horvitz et al., 2015). An educator's self-efficacy in their ability to effectively use distance learning pedagogies can be a determinant in the level of effort they put into becoming proficient in this method of instruction. Horvitz et. al. stated that the earlier newer educators learn effective uses of distance learning methods, the more likely they are to see it through and continue to use it.

Horvitz et al. (2015) went on to say that there is a relationship between instructor self-efficacy and student outcomes and their own developing self-efficacy. Kim and Thayne (2015) posited that the relationship a student builds with their instructor impacts their overall experience within the class. Students tend to have higher level of engagement and achievement when there is a positive relationship with his or her instructor. Three variables have a positive correlation with student – instructor relationships: seeing the instructor as a role model, approachability, and the respect educators show their students (Kim & Thayne, 2015)

While the counseling field in general has shown some resistance, there has been some gradual shifting towards distance learning (Watson, 2012). The rehabilitation counseling master's programs are also making progress in the integration of online pedagogies. The Council for

Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) identify a set of required areas of content knowledge and skill sets for students to master. The content is designed to teach the skill sets required to build a therapeutic alliance, trust, and confidence with the client. The concern often voiced is whether *skills-based* or *techniques* courses could be in an online format (Wantz et al., 2003). The ability to integrate the knowledge of counseling theories and techniques as well as applying symptoms of disabilities in relation to employment, and affect is necessary to build the kind of relationship needed for success (Colling & Davis, 2005). A student's effectiveness in developing a foundation in these basic skills and techniques and their future potential is largely influenced by their self-efficacy (Meyer, 2015). There has been an increase in the integration of online pedagogies into rehabilitation counselor master's programs, however, the quality of these courses is largely unknown.

Another potential influence into the integration of distance learning pedagogies is the self-efficacy of instructors. Their belief in their ability to learn new technology that promotes student engagement, and the successful attainment of educational goals can directly impact how much effort that is used to master this new approach (Bandura, 2012, Betz, 2007). Self-efficacy can impact the how much effort is used in attempting to master a new skill and can further impact student achievement. Student outcomes in distance learning courses have been linked to their ability to foster a positive relationship with their instructor. Similarly, both student engagement and achievement can increase and impact the overall experience with the class (Horvitz et al. (2015), Kim & Thayne (2015).

Statement of Problem

Master's level counseling programs have been hesitant to enter the distance learning realm. Due to minimal empirical data on effective ways of incorporating distance learning,

concerns for technological reliability as well as instructor and student competence and institutional technology support, the counseling field has had some reluctance to implementing these pedagogies (Greenidge & Daire, 2005; Horvitz et al., 2015; Robinson & Casado, 2005). Instructor resistance centers on quality of education, effectiveness of online pedagogies, reduced face to face interaction and their belief in their ability to teach online successfully (Granello, 2000; Horvitz et al., 2015; Krieger & Stockton, 2004).

In the 2003-2004 academic year, 16.4% of graduate students enrolled in at least one distance education course. Over the last 14 years, the number of people opting for a graduate program that offers at least some distance education courses has been steadily increasing. In the 2017-2018 academic year that number jumped to 39.8% (NCES, 2017). In sharp contrast, master's programs in rehabilitation counseling, student enrollment has been on the decline. In the 2012-2013 academic year there were 1,100 degrees conferred. In years 2016, 2017, and 2018 there were 827, 806, and 904 degrees conferred respectively (NCES, 2017). It appears that while the number of students enrolling in graduate programs that offer distance education courses are increasing, the number of students enrolled in graduate rehabilitation counseling programs are seeing the opposite trend. Coupling that with the changes in workforce demands, economic pressures for potential students, needed flexibility in access to higher education and a decrease in federal funding for education, graduate programs in higher education are increasingly incorporating distance learning pedagogies into their programs. It begs the question, what stands to happen if the field of rehabilitation counseling does not begin to take distance learning pedagogies more seriously? To inform the field of rehabilitation counseling, instructors who have experience with both online and face to face formats provide a front-line perspective on

integrating distance learning into graduate level programs. They offer their insights on what has worked and recommendations on what is necessary.

Purpose of the Study

Research reveals a consensus that further research is necessary. Kiener and Koch (2012) recommended that rehabilitation educators need to play an active role in how to integrate distance learning into the rehabilitation counseling programs. While there is little disagreement among the benefits of integrating distance learning into methods of instruction, caution is necessary into examining the outcomes of training and support as it relates to the self-efficacy of online educators. Of note is that offering training and support earlier in the career of an instructor, the more likely they are to stick with it and not give up prior to gaining self-efficacy (Horvitz et al., 2015). Horvitz et al. (2015) continued advocating that focus is necessary on the training and support of educators, particularly in their first attempts. Dziekan and Main (2012) reported that a challenge for the field of rehabilitation education is in identifying modalities that will uphold the integrity of the field as well as the interpersonal priorities. Because there is a relationship between self-efficacy and student/teacher relationships, the recommendation was that future research clarify strategies of distance education pedagogies that strengthen these relationships, address issues of consent, and evidence-based practices (Kim & Thayne, 2015; Lund & Schultz, 2015). Similarly, Liaw et al. (2007) found when surveying instructor and learner attitudes towards distance learning, that successfully using distance learning pedagogies depends on the attitude of both the instructor and the student. They recommended that understanding the attitudes about technology allows for more effective learning and can increase its appeal.

The number of master's programs in rehabilitation counseling offering distance learning as part of their pedagogy is on the rise. While educators continue in their commitment to reach more students and incorporate new approaches in their methods of instruction, the research is only beginning to address the needs of the educators as they begin to incorporate new and innovative technologies into their pedagogies. The focus of this study looked to gain the perspective and insight of educators who have experience in both face to face and distance learning. By analyzing the process of several educators, themes may emerge that will inform the field on how to successfully integrate distance learning pedagogies into rehabilitation counseling programs.

Research Questions

The research questions framing this study are:

RQ1: Which distance learning pedagogies have shown to be most effective?

RQ2: As rehabilitation counseling master's programs continue to integrate distance learning pedagogies, what topics of discussion or concerns would you like to see the field address?

RQ3: When initially integrating distance learning as a pedagogy, were you confident in your ability to instruct students in learning counseling techniques through the internet?

Methodological Framework

This study used grounded theory as the methodology. Grounded theory is a unique form of qualitative research that relies upon inductive inquiry to gather data which leads to the development of a theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967), the originators of grounded theory, believed that instead of trying to fit studied phenomenon into existing frameworks and thus deductively proving or disproving existing theory, they posited that inductive inquiry could be used in a way

that generates new theory. Typically, research begins by reviewing all relevant literature, which informs the direction of the research question and identifies a framework used to guide the research to prove or disprove the research question(s). For grounded theorists, this creates an undesirable influence that can create a conscious or unconscious bias towards the data. The feeling was that doing so is contrary to the purpose of developing a theoretical narrative from the data. The fear is that the motivation of disproving or proving an existing framework can force the data to fit into existing framework as opposed to allowing the voice of the participant to speak through concepts and themes that emerge from the data. Instead, the focus is on the conceptualization of a theory that unfolds within the pattern of interactions between social units. In contrast to determining how the data fits with existing theories, grounded theory is interested in the discovering process (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin, 2017; Elliott & Higgins, 2012; Fassinger, 2005; Glaser, 2016; Mills et al., 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Instead, grounded theorists use theoretical sensitivity. Strauss and Corbin (1994) described theoretical sensitivity as “disciplinary or professional knowledge, as well as both research and personal experiences, that the researcher brings to his or her inquiry” (p. 280). Sensitivity is the professional knowledge that informs the overall research. It provides a foundational knowledge that offers a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied. While knowledge of conceptual frameworks is often a part of sensitivity, the information is useful in contemplation for understanding versus trying to force a framework on the data (Bowen, 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Elliott & Higgins, 2012; Mills et al., 2006; Mitchell, 2014).

Using professional or theoretical sensitivity, allows the researcher to more clearly see the subtle nuance imbedded in the data. The process of theorizing involves questioning, identifying possibilities, understanding, and developing connections. The researcher uses foundational

knowledge and abstractions to enrich the creative process (Charmaz, 2014; Elliott & Higgins, 2012). For these reasons a conceptual framework was not used in this study. Instead, this researcher depended on theoretical sensitivity stemming from professional and educational experience.

The professional and educational experience for this researcher expands 15 years in the field of rehabilitation counseling and 17 years as an adjunct instructor in the field of psychology. Professional experience in rehabilitation counseling began with a state vocational rehabilitation program as a rehabilitation counselor. Having worked in this position for 10 years, it highlighted the complex set of skills counselors need to connect with their clients, understand the labor market and to understand the complexity of aptitudes and capabilities. After being promoted to manager, this researcher supervised four offices totaling 14 counselors and staff. After managing the offices for two and half years was again promoted to managing the staff development unit in charge of onboarding new staff and the professional development of 555 bureau staff. Having worked in three distinctly different positions within a public vocational rehabilitation program, allowed this research to gain insight from many perspectives, all of which highlighted the need for formally trained rehabilitation counselors.

This researcher also taught psychology and counseling classes at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Having experience teaching both face to face and online, gave first-hand knowledge in the use of each pedagogical approach. This allowed for an understanding of the impact face to face interaction has and the apprehensions in transitioning to a new format. Having to learn a new format as an adjunct helped to understand the training needs for those instructors who are not on campus or as involved in the daily campus faculty activities.

Another source of professional knowledge is in the area of self-efficacy. Having undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of psychology and counseling, this researcher is familiar with this theory and utilized the concepts to understand the process and develop connections. Research on self-efficacy states that an increased self-efficacy positively impacts effectual self-regulation and motivation, persistence, and performance. It was further stated that self-efficacy can be a strong predictor for success (Bandura, 2012). Using this foundational knowledge, this study seeks to understand how self-efficacy may have influenced the decisions of instructors when integrating distance learning pedagogies and their perception of student performance and motivation.

Summary

Incorporating new pedagogies typically includes trepidation. Empirical data that measures effectiveness, reliability, and student achievement, takes precedent when determining, which pedagogies to select. Distance learning is no exception. While the field of rehabilitation counseling continues moving forward, albeit slowly, it stands that more insight is necessary to determine the best approach to integration. Identifying modalities that ensure the integrity of the field is of high importance. Instructors who have used both distance learning and face to face pedagogies can give current feedback regarding their approaches, insights, and experiences. By analyzing this front-line perspective, emerging recommendations or categories could inform the field on insightful ways to begin integrating technology into existing pedagogy.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review. Included within the literature review are a history of rehabilitation counseling followed by history of distance learning, enrollment in distance learning, integration in rehabilitation counseling programs, student communication, self-efficacy, and student engagement.

History of Rehabilitation Counseling

Over the course of American history, attempts have been made to assist veterans returning home adapt to civilian life and find meaningful employment. In 1808, the first legislative effort to ensure veterans welfare, educational services, and benefits occurred. These programs were only for those in military service and not civilians. It would not be until the Smith-Fess act of 1920 or Public Law (PL) 236 that vocational rehabilitation would begin to serve civilians (Maki & Tarvydas, 2012; Wright, 1980). For the next 20 years, states would develop vocational rehabilitation services that had a limited scope and financial support. Though this was a great improvement, there was growing support to expand the scope of services. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1943 or PL 113, identified three areas of change, include service to persons with a physical disability, emotionally disturbed, or cognitively challenged; increased services to include physical restoration and increased financial support to states to cover the increased costs. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1943 also established the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). In 1953 Mary Switzer became the director of OVR. She began to stress the need for additional research and training for those providing services to persons with disabilities. The executive director of the National Rehabilitation Association, E. B. Whitten agreed with Switzer, testifying before the Subcommittee emphasizing the need for

increased funding for research, experimentation, demonstration and training (Maki & Tarvydas, 2012; Wright, 1980).

Over the next two decades, a person-centered focus, allowing for more input and partnership with the person receiving services became the focus. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990 guaranteeing rights to employment, transportation, public services, and public accommodations. The amendments in 1992 emphasized self-determination and empowerment through informed choice and qualified services. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 would bring significant changes to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. WIA required states to begin coordinating all the federally funded workforce development and training services including vocational rehabilitation into a *One-Stop* system. These programs include, Veterans Employment and Training Services, adult literacy programs, HUD-administered employment and training, and Department of Labor employment training for migrant workers, Native American Youth, and dislocated workers (Bruyere & Reiter, 2012; Sales, 2012).

On July 22, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (2014) (WIOA) was enacted marking the most recent amendments to the vocational rehabilitation act. The focus is on increasing access to employment, education, training and support services to obtain employment in the labor market. For vocational rehabilitation it redefined the performance indicators as follows: (a) Employment rate - 2nd quarter after exit, (b) Employment rate - 4th quarter after exit, (c) Median earnings, (d) Credential Attainment, (e) Measurable Skill Gains, and (f) Effectiveness in Serving Employers. WIOA emphasized services to youth transitioning from high school to employment, increase in quality of jobs obtained through vocational training and credential attainment, assist persons with disabilities seeking

advancement, and increase services to business (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014, 2014).

The field of rehabilitation counseling has emerged out of a nation's effort to aid those who struggle with any number of physical and mental disabilities. Rehabilitation counseling, in its infancy, and as a maturing profession, has remained committed to its foundation built on rigorous study and review of its methods of training and service delivery. In 1972, research from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, laid the foundation for the first accrediting body dedicated to ensuring a standard of program evaluation. The need for an agency to create a set of standards for master's degree programs in rehabilitation counseling became essential. An agency became necessary to review and improve programs as needed. In 1972, the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) was that board of overseers, and by 1975 the National Commission on Accrediting, which became known as the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, recognized the council. This was the first accrediting body in the field of counseling (Leahy, 2002; Leahy & Szymanski, 1995; Leahy & Tansey, 2008).

In 2013, CORE and CACREP announced a formal affiliation agreement identifying CORE as a new affiliate of CACREP. In this new agreement, master's programs in rehabilitation counseling would now have a pathway to become accredited in both a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program and a Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. While the goal of this affiliation was to establish a partnering and alignment of counseling fields, it proved to be a more difficult process than anticipated. Thus in 2015 the announcement came that CORE and CACREP had signed an agreement for a 2017 merger. This merger would highlight the need for both entities to be more inclusive on issues of disability in all the counseling programs. A mutual

agreement that all counselors need stronger preparation to rise to the challenge of the needs of persons with disabilities (Shaw & Mascari, 2018).

History of Distance Learning

While distance learning is a new phenomenon in higher education, it has been around for decades. According to Burdeshaw et al. (2010), the first correspondence course began in 1852 with the Pitman Shorthand training program. Between 1918 and 1946, Radio was the preferred method of delivery followed by the television beginning in 1934. The FCC created Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS), which can still be of use today. However, with the onset of the internet and personal computer, distance learning flourished.

Enrollment in Distance Learning Programs

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018), in 2000 the 36.5% of 25- to 64-year-old individuals in the United States attained a postsecondary degree. From 2000 to 2017, that number has increased to 46.4%. The United States ranks in 5th place globally falling behind Canada (56.7%), Japan (51.4%), Israel (50.9%) and The Republic of Korea (47.7%). In fall 2017, there was a total of 3,005,267 students enrolled in postbaccalaureate education. Of the 3,005,267 students, 38% were enrolled in at least one distance education courses while 28.9 of those students enrolled in all distance education courses.

In 2017, the number of students exclusively enrolled in a distance education postsecondary institution in the same state was 377,096. Those enrolled in a different state were 438,220, outside of the United States were 44,520 and 8,872 were in an institution of unknown location (NCES, 2018).

Integration in Rehabilitation Counseling Programs

Today postsecondary institutions have integrated distance education pedagogies into their programs to become more accessible to a wider student population. Potential students now have options that previously would have required relocation, uprooting their families, and quitting their job to further their education (Burdeshaw et al., 2010). Dziekan and Main (2012) stated that an online platform gives an alternative for students with challenging personal situations or those uncomfortable in traditional classroom settings. The online platform of distance learning allows everyone to have an equally loud voice and speak without interruption. Discussions allow everyone to contribute including those less inclined to speak publicly (Rudestam, 2004).

In addition to having access to varied pedagogies that gives a greater sense of access to higher education, technological advances in business has also led to an increase demand for a more technically skilled workforce. Continuing education credits, vocational, and workplace training curriculums have expanded to an online delivery system increasing at an average rate of ten percent annually (Asunda, 2010). According to Jones et al. (2011) employer led demand in increasing and maintaining higher skill levels and commitment to lifelong learning, has increased the need for online options for employees. Again, making higher education more accessible to students without the burden of relocation, creates opportunities for advancement that might not have been available otherwise.

Student engagement increases in the online platform for students who are comfortable and skilled in writing, use of technology, are self-motivated, and self-disciplined enough to stay on task without the need for face-to-face interaction (Jones et al., 2011). It also provides more flexibility and opens up new opportunities for many people who would not have access to higher education, or who have challenges such as disabling conditions or family responsibilities

(Dziekan & Main, 2012; Glenn, 2001; Kiener & Koch, 2012; Johnson et al., 2000; Pertacchi, 2000; Rosenbaum, 2001).

The rehabilitation counseling master's programs are slow to make progress in the integration of online pedagogies. CACREP identifies content requirements students must complete. The design of the content for these courses are to teach a set of skills required to build a therapeutic alliance, trust, and confidence with the client. The concern often voiced is whether skills-based or techniques courses could be in an online format (Wantz et al., 2003). A counselor's affect, skill at building a working alliance, and their ability to integrate the knowledge of counseling theories and techniques while applying symptoms of disabilities in relation to employment is necessary to build the kind of relationship needed for success (Colling & Davis, 2005).

Another factor contributing to the hesitation of the rehabilitation counseling field to adopt distance learning is the pace of empirical data illustrating best practice in approach to distance education pedagogies. While some studies have shown no real difference in academic performance, others report that they suggest further research to determine best practice (Burdeshaw et al., 2010). Final exams are often useful as an appropriate measure for knowledge acquisition and an easy format to use in a distance learning format. However, when measuring student's ability to master counseling techniques and relationship building skills, in person observation and role-playing are used to measure the acquisition of skills. It begs the question, if the instructor is unable to observe first-hand, what alternative effective measures are available to determine if a student is accurately utilizing counseling techniques and skills?

According to Degriogio et al. (2011), attending, empathizing, opening or closing a session, self-disclosure, reframing, and questioning are elements of basic counseling responses.

Typically, practicing these skills occur in a classroom setting or via video recordings to demonstrate proficiency. Counselors analyze both verbal and non-verbal language used by their clients. Nuance related through non-verbal communication can be subtle. For example, identifying changes in tone or body movements are through observation and quality of eye contact. In a distance learning environment, both the instructor and the student's ability to interpret these subtle nuances may be a problem depending on the quality and type of technology used. Lund and Schultz (2015) stated that the overarching goal for master's programs in rehabilitation counseling is that clients have adequate and effective services. Thus, supervision during their formal training plays a critical role in their education.

Interestingly, Main and Dziekan (2012) reported that faculty in the Rehabilitation in their study opted to maintain the in-person course requirements in two skills-based rehabilitation counseling courses. The authors went on to say that "a challenge in adapting distance education to the field of rehabilitation education is to determine modalities that will not compromise the academic integrity and interpersonal priorities of the field" (Main & Dziekan, 2012, p. 300).

Lund and Schultz (2015), when discussing the use of distance education in providing clinical supervision report that most of the articles in the field of rehabilitation counseling are either opinion or theoretical. While these articles seem to support the notion that effective working alliances can be built via distance learning, they do not ask a "fundamental question of 'how does the use of distance supervision modalities impact the effectiveness of supervision on therapist competence and client outcomes'" (Lund, E. M., & Schultz, J. C., 2015, p. 91). Might the same question be asked of all skills-based classes?

The most widely discussed issues with distance education centers around technology. Access, internet bandwidth capabilities, quality of conference call audio and video, and a

reduction in a student's ability to interact during class time were some noted areas of difficulty (Burdeshaw et al., 2010). Degiorgio et al. (2011) reported that even with Zoom, students had difficulty reading nonverbal communication and body language. Audio was lost during role plays and often, during break time participants muted their microphones and students in the classroom could not interact with the students online. Thus, students who participated online missed some of the in-class discussions. The authors went on to suggest that it may be impossible for a course that requires the refinement of skills and ability to interpret the subtleties of communication and suggested that instructors should prepare for the inevitable failure of technology.

Rudestam (2004) noted that distance learning was birthed out of technological advancements in communication and not from innovative changes in pedagogy. The author felt that was important to be mindful of as traditionally speaking, when a system that has relied on authoritative expertise disseminating knowledge through lectures, papers and exams, adapts to these technological advancements, it finds a way of continuing the same approach to learning but through a different medium. Could it be that in some respects, higher education fails to take advantage of new ways to reach students? Instead of pushing the creative envelope to see how technology can enhance student's potential, it forces technology to adapt to an old standard? Rudestam (2004) found it ironic that higher education often regards student and instructor interaction as a defining attribute in pedagogy yet fail to recognize the lack of interaction that can characterize the classroom setting.

Some programs have opted for a hybrid approach utilizing both online and in-person format. The hybrid approach to pedagogy is the most common choice for distance education combining face to face time and access to online resources and digital submissions of

assignments (Burdeshaw et al., 2010). McGinnis (2010) reported on the Department of Education's 2009 meta-analysis of distance learning studies from 1996-2008. Of note in this article was that blended, or hybrid courses had an increased student learning outcome when compared to face-to-face courses or distance learning only courses. The author went on to conclude that using reflection, whether through self-explanation or self-monitoring in assignments as well as allowing for students to integrate ideas from learning materials into reflective writing assignments improved student outcomes.

Student Communication

The importance of communication between student and instructor is a vital component to both student success and student satisfaction (Burdeshaw et al., 2010). Furlonger and Gencic (2014) compared distance learning to on-campus students and found that the primary issue was the reduced contact with an academic community. They reported that 71% of students identified a lack of connection with classmates as a major source of frustration. They further identified student concerns as lack of participation in class discussions and interaction with lecturers. In their study they found that on-campus students had higher levels of satisfaction as compared to off-campus and off-shore students. They noted that the on-campus environment allowed for the quick resolution of questions and issues, a peer support network to be more easily established and an easier time building rapport with the lecturers. Powell (2007) also reported the lack of in-face interaction as the biggest frustration among students at American Military University. AMU is a 100% distance learning institution and serves students from across the globe. One student said of distance learning environments that it restricted their ability to recreate the characteristics of a traditional face to face environment.

Self-Efficacy

Bandura (2012) wrote that social cognitive theory is a structure that is influenced by an interplay of three co-determinants he described as intrapersonal influences, and individuals' actions or behaviors, and the environmental that influences them. Self-efficacy plays a role in this triadic dance that helps to shape events people experience. There are varied ways in how people think of themselves. These variations cross situations and domains allow for varied responses to tasks as opposed to a uniform approach. Bandura (2012) and Olson & Appunn (2017) stated that beliefs in one's own capabilities is cultivated through gaining mastery of experiences, social modeling, social persuasion, and their physical and emotional state.

Through mastery of experience, one builds resiliency when overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort and managing failure. When observing others deemed similar to oneself achieve success, it can increase motivation and influence someone into raising their own aspirations. When persuaded by others to believe in oneself, it can cause an increase in perseverance leading them to successful resolution. Bandura (2012) noted that "Efficacy beliefs are strengthened by reducing anxiety and depression, building physical strength and stamina, and correcting the misreading of physical and emotional states" (p.13). This in turn influences whether they are positive or negative when approaching a task. The goals people set for themselves are heavily influenced by their outcome expectations and how they assess attribution for their successes or failures which in turn influence their ability to self-regulate their emotional states. Bandura considered self-efficacy to be a focal determinant due to its influence on behavior and other determinants. Because of how one perceives the characteristics of their environment, if self-efficacy is low, they are likely convinced of the futility of effort when going up against an obstacle as opposed to resolving to find a way to overcome it (Bandura, 2012).

Research has been clear and consistent that an increased self-efficacy raises effectual self-regulation and increases motivation, persistence, and performance. Self-efficacy comes out as a stronger predictor of success. In addition, over time, it increases in productiveness (Bandura, 2012). Betz (2007) stated that there are three outcomes heavily influenced by self-efficacy: approach versus avoidance, level of performance, and persistence. The author continued that self-efficacy was significantly related to intent to participate [approach] (Betz, 2007). Students are more engaged in the learning process and figure out their own strategies to overcome barriers to course or degree completion. For students to be successful in a distance learning environment, motivation, learning strategies, self-efficacy and attribution for success and failure are necessary (Wang et al., 2008). There are several subclassifications of self-efficacy. Academic, social, teacher, and technology are these subclassifications.

Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy is the belief that one can successfully complete an academic goal. Academic goals take several components into consideration. Type of assignments, grades, difficulty of courses, and degree completion are all considerations when attempting an academic goal (Olson and Appunn, 2017).

Social Self-Efficacy

Social self-efficacy influences a person's sureness to create and maintain interpersonal relationships. Olson and Appunn (2017) stated that there are six identified domains of social self-efficacy: romantic, social confidence, community performance, making friends, and performance in a group.

Instructor Self-Efficacy

Instructors have been resistant to integrating distance learning pedagogies for many reasons. Most importantly is the lack of empirical data or evidence-based practice (EBP) to use as guidance when determining quality of education, effective online pedagogies, effects of reduced face to face interaction, and reliability of institutional technological support. Due in part to this wide hesitation of instructors in rehabilitation counseling programs have not had as much exposure or experience in integrating online pedagogies and remain behind. Given this slow upstart, instructor self-efficacy may just need time to assert itself as experience grows (Granello, 2000; Greenidge & Daire, 2005; Horvitz et al., 2015; Krieger & Stockton, 2004; Robinson & Casado, 2005).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

One's belief in their ability to facilitate the development of student skills and knowledge is teacher self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) and Horvitz et al., (2015) stated that those with increased self-efficacy were more likely to increase their effort when faced with negative expectations. Contrarily, those with lower self-efficacy were more likely to become overwhelmed and have feelings of hopelessness when faced with similar negative expectations. Horvitz, et al. (2015) went on to say that the level of effort an instructor utilizes in effectively incorporating and becoming proficient in distance learning pedagogies is directly related to their self-efficacy. However, the earlier an instructor receives training in distance learning methods, the more likely they are to continue to use it.

Technical Self-Efficacy

Describing technological self-efficacy has been intentionally vague. It speaks to a level of comfort when approaching new technologies. In an academic setting, incorporating technology

can have a detrimental effect on self-efficacy. Because self-efficacy uses social feedback, environments that use technology reduce the potential for interpersonal interaction, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and modeling thus self-efficacy can decrease. Olson & Appunn (2017) stated that when measuring influence on self-efficacy, a teacher's technology self-efficacy had a greater influence on the student's technology self-efficacy than their own confidence in their ability to use the computer. Wang et al. (2008) suggested that students who are better skilled at managing their own learning also typically have strong computer skills.

Student Engagement

Teacher self-efficacy according to Horvitz et al. (2015), has a relationship to student outcomes. Kim and Thayne (2015) posited that when there is a positive relationship with the instructor, students tend to have a higher level of engagement and achievement. The student-instructor relationship impacts their overall experience with the class. They identified three variables that have a positive correlation with student - instructor relationships: perceiving the instructor as a role model, approachability, and the respect instructors show their students.

Summary

Distance learning is a pedagogical approach used in graduate programs. It increases opportunities for advancement for individuals who might not otherwise have the means or ability to relocate families or leave employment to further their education. Current research has identified pros and cons to integrating distance learning pedagogies. Master's programs in rehabilitation counseling has been hesitant to incorporate this modality into their programs. The lack of empirical data and training for instructors has contributed to the hesitancy. Instructors feeling as though they are less effective at teaching online can lead to a decrease in student self-efficacy thus decreasing their retention and comprehension of class content. While research is

beginning to answer some questions regarding the effectiveness of distance learning pedagogies, the classes identified are knowledge based as opposed to skills based thus adding to the apprehension with integrating these pedagogies into a master's program in rehabilitation counseling. Further research is necessary to determine what distance learning pedagogies are effective in skills-based courses. Instructors experienced in both face to face and distance learning pedagogies offer recommendations and identify areas of concern for further discussion and consideration. The next chapter will discuss the research method.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter reviews the methodology for this study. Included within methodology are research design, procedures, data collection, instrumentation, participants, participant demographics, analysis, coding, themes and role of the researcher.

Research Design

Available data surrounding the implementation and effectiveness of distance learning pedagogy in graduate level rehabilitation counseling programs is growing, although limited. There has been even less opportunities for instructors to discuss their difficulties and accomplishments let alone their insights and observations. To better understand the pedagogical decisions and process the instructor experiences when implementing distance learning pedagogies, this researcher used grounded theory methodology.

In this approach, data generates a theory. The theory has its foundation grounded in the data thus the name grounded theory. It is a qualitative method that seeks to identify important conditions, understand how the participants respond to them and the consequences. Grounded theorists attempt to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of those living it. They seek to understand how participants define their realities and their interaction with the phenomenon (Corely, 2015; Fassigner, 2005; Elliott & Higgins, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The main methods for gathering data are through observation and interview but can also include other sources of information like government documents, letters, and books (Charmaz, 2014; Ivey, 2017; Strauss & Corbin, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss & Corbin (1998) purported that theory when emerging from data “are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action” (pg. 12). The authors

continued on to explain that in grounded theory there is a balance between critical and creative thinking and that analysis is like a tango between the researcher and the data, a constant back and forth comparing new data against the creative emergence of concepts. Art intersecting with science.

Grounded theory uses an inductive approach. Theory is an emergent process that grows through the constant conceptualizing and comparative analysis of the data. Data analysis happens all throughout the data collection process. After the first interview, the researcher begins reviewing responses and identifying concepts. With the completion of additional interviews, a comparison of these concepts occurs against the new data. This process of collection of data, coding, identifying concepts, and patterns that emerge, then comparing the concepts against new data continues until no new concepts emerge. When no new concepts emerge, then saturation has occurred and no new data is necessary (Bowen, 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Fassinger, 2005; Ivey, 2017).

The next step in the coding process is axial coding. Axial coding entails grouping similar concepts into broader categories. The focus is now on reconstructing the concepts into larger components that help explain the connection between concepts (Fassinger, 2005; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Charmaz (2014) on the other hand, described this phase of coding as focused. For Charmaz, the coding centers on identifying the most significant or frequent codes. Approaching coding in this manner allows the researcher to process larger amounts of data in a more organized and focused way. Charmaz's focused coding approach offers flexibility with guidelines and has a higher tolerance for ambiguity (Charmaz, 2014).

As with the second phase of coding, there are two different approaches to the final phase of coding. For Strauss and Corbin (1998) the final coding process is selective coding. Simply, it

is the processes of refinement where categories connect under a theoretical pattern. The beginning of the integration of categories, is to identify a central category. The central category is a term that encompasses the whole of the analytic categories. Identifying the primary theoretical scheme allows the researcher to then review and refine the theory. Fessinger (2005) likened the creation of a core category to creating a core story. It creates a concise account of the most significant facets of the data and how they all relate back to the core. To ensure that the developing theory is indeed grounded in the data, there is constant comparison of the emerging theory back to the data (Fessinger, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Charmaz (2014) identified this phase as theoretical coding. According to Charmaz, theoretical coding is a process to help in theorizing the categories. When integrating the categories, a clear story emerges that helps to illustrate how the categories are related. The difference between Charmaz approaches grounded theory from the perspective of a constructivist. Instead of assuming the existence of an external reality, Charmaz purported that the creation of theory stems out of the interaction between researcher and the data. The resulting theory is not a discovered reality but an interpretation of that reality through the researcher's lens. Meaning, the researcher is the co-constructed author who must convey a conceptual analysis of participant's stories while at the same time creating space for their presence in the final document (Mills et al., 2006).

The research questions for this study are as follows:

RQ1: Which distance learning pedagogies have shown to be most effective?

RQ2: As rehabilitation counseling master's programs continue to integrate distance learning pedagogies, what topics of discussion or concerns would you like to see the field address?

RQ3: When initially integrating distance learning as a pedagogy, were you confident in your ability to instruct students in learning counseling techniques through the internet?

Procedures

The top twenty master's program in rehabilitation counseling as listed in US World and News Report as reported by Morse, R., Castonguay, A. & Vega-Rodriguez, J. (2018) was used to create a list of potential programs to request participation. Upon review of each program's website, a list of all instructors and their email addresses was created from those who reported teaching in the rehabilitation counseling program in their biographical descriptions. A total of 104 emails were sent requesting participation in this study. Attached to the email was the consent form for research participation and a demographic information form. Of the 104 emails, 5 came back unable to deliver, leaving 99 requests for participation. Out of 99 requests for an interview, 22 responded. Two did not qualify as they did not teach in the master's program and five initially agreed and then did not follow up with setting an appointment for the interview. Upon reaching 15 interviews, this researcher felt that saturation had been met as no new information from the responses was garnered. This meant no more participants were necessary. The email, informed consent and interview guide is provided in appendices A, B and C.

Data Collection

The interview was conducted via Zoom or phone interview. Interviews were also recorded on a cell phone and digital recorder as a backup. The interview consisted of 25 semi

structured open ended questions. The interview was recorded and then transcribed for coding and analysis. Each participant was assigned an identification number to assure anonymity.

Instrumentation

This is a qualitative study using a grounded theory approach. Corbin (2017), Corley (2015), Glaser (2016), Ivey (2017), and Smith (2015) discussed the nature of grounded theory as being able to examine a phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it. Through analysis of responses, concepts appear, develop, and integrate to build a theory as opposed to testing one. The theory begins to evolve through the data gleaned from the participants. In this study, the responses of educators integrating distance learning pedagogies into their teaching methods were analyzed for common themes to be developed and integrated into a potential theory on integrating distance learning methods of instruction. Grounded theory is appropriate for this study as this approach of exploring the perceptions, insights and experiences of rehabilitation counselor educators remains unexplored fully. This researcher used an interview method administered via Zoom. The survey consisted of 25 questions divided into 6 categories.

The questions in the interview guide were designed to explore the different aspects to course design. The categories included in the interview guide were course load, pedagogy, self-efficacy, technological support, student engagement, and program support. Each question was designed to gain the insight of the instructor on each area of choosing, implementing, and evaluating distance learning pedagogies. Questions concerning course load attempted to elicit on how distance learning pedagogies have impacted course preparation. Questions covered topics like time management, flexibility, and instructor effectiveness. The pedagogy questions centered on effectiveness, student evaluation methods, course appropriateness, and if they support continued use. Self-efficacy questions targeted how instructors felt about their own confidence at

using distance pedagogies, lessons learned and advice for incoming faculty. Technological support centered on reliability, colleague use and support, and satisfaction with communication tools. Student engagement questions were asked to gain instructor perspective on student response to changing pedagogies. Questions centered on student interaction and motivation. The final section, program support focused on department and university technical support for integrating distance learning pedagogies.

Participants

The definition of distance learning as outlined in chapter one is “Institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors” (Simonson, M & Seepersaud, D.J., 2018, p. 1). For the purposes of this study, the same definition was used in reference to distance learning.

The targeted population was educators who are currently teaching in a CACREP accredited master’s level rehabilitation counseling program who have taught a minimum of three courses in both face to face and online format for a minimum of two years.

Participants were identified from a list of rehabilitation counseling master's programs obtained via the ranking of the top schools in US News and World Report.

Participant Demographics

The number of years instructors reported teaching varied from four to over 40 years. Each reported teaching a number of different classes that covered both didactic and skill-based courses alike. Courses mentioned were counseling techniques, multiculturalism, practicum, internship, group counseling, group dynamics, case management in rehabilitation, medical and psychological aspects of disability, psychopharmacology, International Disability Policy,

Rehabilitation Counselling Portfolio, Transdisciplinary Research to Practice, Principles of Vocational, Psychological, and Educational Assessment, Substance Abuse, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Disability and Society, Introduction to Rehabilitation, Employment Strategies, Counseling Theories, Private Practice in Rehabilitation Counseling, Career Development, Cognitive Disabilities, Occupational Aspects of Disability, Diagnosis in Counseling, Psychopathology for Counselors, Psychology and Aging, Introduction to Gerontology, Introduction to Community Inclusion, Ethics and Legal Aspects in Clinical, and Addictions, and Rehabilitation Counseling. Participants represented geographical regions across the United States. Participants represented universities in 12 different states. Some reported being able to work remotely from other states.

While pedagogical approach varied across all 15, each reported that their programs offered at least some online classes. As noted in TABLE 1, fourteen out of 15 instructors stated that they continue to teach face to face. Thirteen out of 15 reported teaching at least one online class while only eight reported teaching a blended class.

Table 1: *Learning Environments*

Environment	N
Blended	8
Online	13
Face to Face	14

Analysis

Upon scheduling the interview, the participants were sent a copy of the interview guide for their review and a Zoom invitation. Participants were able to either log in on their computers with a microphone and camera for video and audio recording or call in on their phone for an audio recording. Two participants opted for a phone call instead of Zoom. The researcher recorded all interviews on both a cell phone voice recorder as well as a general digital recorder

as back up. The interviews lasted between 25 to 70 minutes in length. The researcher transcribed each interview and sent them to a third party for review of accuracy.

Coding

Upon completion of transcription, an excel spreadsheet was used for coding and to track how many instructors mentioned the same content in their responses. Open coding organized the data into smaller components for analysis and to identify similarities and differences. The researcher identified concepts and then compared them to one each another, grouping similar concepts together into categories. With every new interview, content analysis occurred with a comparison against the existing categories and concepts. During this process, the researcher made modifications and adjustments to the categories to ensure the best fit under each research question. In addition to identifying emerging concepts within each interview, similar responses were tracked to show how many times different participants mentioned the same concept. This allowed for the cumulation of responses in relation to each concept to determine the rate of use or support of each concept.

Themes

During the selective coding phase, three different themes began to emerge. This phase of coding is a process of refinement where categories connect under a theoretical pattern that identifies a central category for each research question. The theme for research question one is pedagogies. The concepts that made up this theme are types of assignments, communication, and supplemental. Research question two is strategic plan, which contains concepts, planning, evaluation, and course design. The final theme for research question three is persistence. The concepts making up this theme are increased efficacy, class design, and personal efficacy.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the credibility of the research depends on the researcher's skills, knowledge, competence, and life circumstances. For qualitative studies, the instrument is the researcher who analyzes and identifies themes to report (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). This researcher recorded and transcribed verbatim all interviews for accuracy, reduce researcher bias, and increase reliability.

In grounded theory, the researcher reports on personal bias and experience that could have influenced the outcomes. This researcher acknowledges that when approaching this topic, did not recognize distance learning pedagogies for a skills-based program such as counseling, as a good idea. As gatekeepers of the field and charged with instructing others on how to create and maintain therapeutic relationships with those we serve, a computer screen seemed impersonal and incapable of nurturing the human component. As such, the awareness of this bias was discussed, and a conscious effort was made to listen with an open mind.

In addition to managing preconceived ideas on distance learning, this researcher is currently employed with a public Vocational Rehabilitation Service as the consultant manager of the staff development unit. It is the job of the staff development unit to train all new personnel and adhere to the Code of Federal Regulations 361.18 also known as the comprehensive system of personnel development, as well as assist our staff of 555 fulltime employees in maintaining and honing their clinical skills and plan for succession. Of the 555 fulltime employees, there are 275 counselors. As such this researcher has first-hand knowledge and experience of working with counselors who lack adequate counseling skills to effectively serve persons with disabilities. While employed in a public rehabilitation services bureau, this researcher has served as a counselor for ten years, a site manager for two and half years and in my current position for

two and half years. I have sat on several hiring committees and have been responsible for hiring and onboarding several counselors as a site manager.

In addition to the responsibilities as the manager of the staff development unit, on March 16 in response to COVID-19, all of state employees were mandated to telework from home. Instantly all 555 employees had to provide service to clients during a shelter in place order. It was the responsibility of the staff development unit to help our bureau in the adjustment to telework.

Prior to starting the doctoral program at Michigan State University, this researcher was also an adjunct instructor from 2003 to 2011 having taught introduction to psychology and human development. This researcher has experience teaching face to face and also taught several online classes for Michigan State during doctoral studies.

Due to experience in a public rehabilitation bureau and as an adjunct instructor, it was difficult to keep from engaging in conversations and sharing in the dialogue. After the first interview, this researcher became very aware of my interest in engaging with the participants and made every attempt to stick to the questions and only asking follow-up questions when clarification was needed.

Despite these potential influences, it was felt that an interview would capture a richer more in-depth response than a survey or questionnaire. This researcher met with my advisor during the interview process to review the progress, report on my reactions and thoughts and gained ongoing guidance and direction throughout the interview process. This study focused on the voice of the instructor. A qualitative study was designed to capture the often-silent perspective of those charged with carrying out the direction of the decision makers. Because rehabilitation counseling comprises of both didactic and skills-based courses, it is prudent to

allow the voice of instructors to create a dialogue. It is important that all components, administration, departments, instructors, and students have a voice in the direction, design and effectiveness of said programs.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter examines the results of the study. The participants' responses were reviewed in relation to each of the research questions. Responses were grouped into categories. Upon review of the categories, themes were identified for each research question. This chapter reviews each research question, its theme and corresponding categories.

RQ1: Which distance learning pedagogies have shown to be most effective?

When choosing a pedagogical approach for a class, considerations are made in relation to the educational goals, communication, engagement with the material and assessment. Adding the element of distance learning compounds those decisions. When transitioning to an online format engagement was a topic that every participant worried about, brought up for discussion, and focused the most on when thinking about their pedagogical approaches. There were three categories that began emerging under this research question. Types of assignment, communication and supplemental were the three categories that comprised the theme Pedagogies. While the kinds of assignments or methods of communication did not alter a great deal from methods used in a face-to-face setting, their value was in how they were used in connection together and threaded between synchronous and asynchronous approaches.

Types of assignment was one of the three emerging categories. The definition used in this study was methods of conveying information and assessment of learning, that consisted of weekly assignments, quizzes, case study, paper, midterm and final, group work, recorded lectures and video or assignment submission. While each of these concepts could potentially stand on their own, what was important was how they were useful in conjunction with one another to obtain an intended goal for the student. Participants when asked which pedagogy was

more effective, answered by listing several, each for different reasons. Some continued to struggle with finding the right combination of modalities, some continued to find ways to integrate their pedagogies to an online format, while others found new ways of creatively encouraging engagement.

Communication was the second category. While each category was equally important in course design, communication was an area that seemed to be weighted a little heavier than the others. The concern in this category was in creating an environment and using methods that would resemble the same level of engagement as a face-to-face setting. Participants were concerned about being able to see and connect with their students and in communicating with them in a way that was engaging and added value to the course. Discussion boards and video class session were the two concepts that were used more frequently.

Finally, the use of supplemental information defined as materials used to broaden information on class content and comprised of the category external videos and resources. Participants noted many different types of external videos or resources. What was key to their usage was whether they used, articles, videos, or legislation, they were all an equally important part of enhancing, deepening, and widening student comprehension. Being able to apply what they are learning to real life events and circumstances, is an effective means of bringing a point home. The remainder of this section reviews the theme pedagogy and each of the categories, types of assignment, communication and supplemental.

Pedagogies

In response to the first research question, participants identified eleven different pedagogies. What was interesting in their responses was that while they mentioned specific pedagogies, it was about using a blending of pedagogies to promote student learning and

engagement. What concerned the participants more, was maintaining their focus on the content objectives and then identify which format would engage the student in learning that objective. Every participant mentioned a minimum of two pedagogies used in a class. Pedagogies mentioned were video class discussions, discussion boards, external resources, weekly assignments, quizzes, case studies, paper, midterm and final, group work, recorded lectures and video or assignment submissions. As noted in TABLE 2, out of 89 total references in relation to pedagogies, the discussion of both video class sessions and video or assignment submissions occurred 14 times each. Discussion Boards had 13 mentions, external resources 11, midterm and final nine times, group work seven times, recorded lectures six, both quizzes and paper five times, case studies four times and weekly assignments twice.

Table 2: *Pedagogies*

Themes	Categories	N
Communication	video class discussions	14
	discussion boards	13
Use of External Resources	external resources	11
Assignments	video or assignment submissions	14
	midterm and final exam	8
	group work	7
	recorded lectures	11
	paper	5
	quizzes	5
	case studies	4
	weekly assignments	2

While each comment spoke to types of pedagogies, there were three different types of pedagogies that had different functions, communication, types of assignments and supplemental. Communication defined as a type of interaction with students used throughout the semester, included video class sessions and discussion boards. These two pedagogical approaches took on a structural base or backbone of pedagogical approaches. These two categories were the essence of student engagement. While assignments are equally important and valuable in learning and

synthesizing information, talking and giving immediate feedback were crucial components that without, learning seemed more task oriented as opposed to facilitated or engaging in processing.

The final component is entitled supplemental. While this category could be supportive information, there were different types of information and ways that supplemental information was of use. For the purposes of this research, the definition of the concept supplemental was as materials used to broaden information on class content.

Types of Assignments

What was informative about this category was not necessarily the individual pedagogies, but in how they threaded them together and utilized both synchronous and asynchronous methods to build community, grow engagement and create a more impactful way of processing course information. For example, many participants recorded their lectures and posted them for students to watch at their convenience or would have students upload a video assignment. An asynchronous assignment. Shortly after that was completed, there would be a live video session for the class to discuss the assignment, receive instructor and/or group feedback and process the information. This allowed the instructors enough time for thoughtful and intentional feedback that, as they explained, they did not always have when face to face.

A significant difference between face-to-face instruction versus DL noted by many participants was that when face-to-face, they are usually put on the spot and have to give immediate feedback. When in the distance learning environment, they felt as though they were not rushed and could review and assess student questions and performance in a more meaningful way.

Video or assignment submission

Video or assignment submission was a pedagogy that had a high occurrence rate. This pedagogical approach was most commonly associated with clinical supervision. Instructors using this method, felt it was as effective as in person supervision, if not more. One reason was that it allowed for more thoughtful and intentional feedback. When face to face an instructor is required to review the tapes and give immediate feedback whereas when submitting videos online, instructors and students can review them prior to class time, review them as needed and then compose their responses. This is the experience of one of the participants:

I felt like I better understood where they were coming from. They had to be kind of thoughtful, so they had time to prepare their comments and I did too as oppose to in a class where everything is faster paced.

Another participant spoke to the reality of supervision and time management. In face-to-face instruction, the instructor most likely does not have the time to review the entire video before responding, in contrast, with videos submitted online, they are able to review them prior to class suggesting that technology makes them more effective in their supervision. It improved their ability to give intentional feedback on specific types of skill sets or theoretical approaches. The instructor can provide feedback that helps the students link their clinical interactions back to key constructs in a more thought-out way than when being put on the spot when processing face to face. Some instructors provide rubrics for both the instructor and students to fill out while reviewing video submissions, then review them together during class. This allows for a more structured review of key concepts and theoretical approaches used or not used during the taped session. Another method used when doctoral students provide supervision to master's students was to ask the doctoral students to journal about their sessions with the master's students. This

allowed the instructor to gain additional insights into the supervision as well as the process and dynamics happening with the doctoral student and in their interaction with the master's level student.

In addition to thoughtful and intentional interaction, seeing the students via video, gave instructors the ability to see how they interact with their clients. They were able to see non-verbal cues that are so vitally important in developing a clinical relationship. One participant highlighted a positive influence of receiving recorded sessions prior to the supervision session. It illustrates the use of integrating an asynchronous assignment and reviewing it in a synchronous video session with a student.

The reality is that we're in a human services profession so the more we can see how the person is going to react to the person on the other side, and actually have a way to come back to the student and have that recording in place to be able to say look here's what I'm seeing let me walk you through what I'm seeing on the video. It goes beyond just the content it's the presentation which is particularly important in thinking about that counseling relationship.

Another use for video submissions was at the beginning of class. Instructors asked students to make a video introducing themselves that would be uploaded into a video thread for everyone to watch. Communication via video was one of the ways instructors created ice breakers and a means for students to get to know the instructor and their fellow students. One aspect of supervision that each participant identified as important, was the ability to observe non-verbal reactions and interactions of their students. Video submission is a pedagogical approach that solves for this dilemma.

Video submissions in conjunction with assignments is another way that distance learning pedagogies were used. For example, one participant uses different approaches including a 3-minute video explaining an ethics topic to a client. Another utilizes video submissions when giving case studies to students asking them to record how they would respond to a client in that given situation. One participant described a combined approach of giving the student both a written and oral component to an assignment that allowed the instructor to observe how the student would approach the given topic. This instructor liked how combined approaches allow for students to move away from traditional response such as multiple choice. Utilizing a mixed approach that includes a video submission presents opportunities for multiple forms of student performance that gives a wider view of how that student will interpret, synthesize information, and convey their understanding. It also allows for students to utilize different response styles that can illustrate their understanding. If a student is stronger in oral explanations as opposed to an exam or paper, it levels the performance playing field.

Midterms and finals

Participants referenced midterms and finals as one component of several used during a semester. There was acknowledgement that midterms and final exams have traditionally been used all along and so they will continue in the online environment. Having exams proctored was a struggle to figure out for some. They used both on campus and online applications to resolve that problem. Some reported using programs that used the student's camera to proctor the exam increased student anxiety making them uncomfortable. Some participants gave up on attempting to proctor exams and began trusting the students or opting for other ways to measure learning.

I will usually couple some type of objective format testing with multiple choice pieces just to see if students have some basic knowledge. Have they at least gone through the

book? Not a sense of mastery, but that foundational knowledge that without I think they're not going to be able to practice in an appropriate manner. But that's where it goes back to finding a good balance of those types of that activities. I generally say there shouldn't be more than 10-15% of the overall course grade, the other 90-85% really should be focused on that application that synthesis of information that analysis of information.

Others felt utilizing exams is a way to help students prepare for the national exam for certified rehabilitation counselors (CRC), but also recognized that for skill acquisition and demonstration, other means are a better form of demonstration.

I think when using the exam and quiz pieces they are useful from the standpoint of preparing students to sit for the CRC exam or comparable exam to really gage a level of knowledge and application those generally don't work as well.

Overall midterm and final exams continue to appear to be the default when measuring retention of didactic courses. However, there are instances where creativity in assignments is emerging as alternative methods of measurement.

Group work

Another way to promote student engagement and the learning process was through group work. Group assignments were creative and encouraged student to think critically and consider solutions that are outside the box. "We get them to work in groups and get them to invent some kind of assistive technology and then they have to present that to the class and sometimes they'll have a little model or whatever." One participant valued having the students engage in their communities or with resources outside of the classroom helps to widen their perspectives and increases learning opportunities.

I think the more we rely on distance education where we require students to go out and seek out knowledge to synthesize and process information, that are actually getting them to explore certain ideas whether it be individual context or in a collaborative context.

Regardless of the approach to group work, there was a consensus on how it promotes engagement. “Group assignments has been helpful to create that high level of engagement in the classroom they have to talk together they go off on their own and have to work together they create more of that level of connection.”

Recorded lectures

Recorded lectures were another pedagogy that supports learning in several different ways. The first was that participants of the study approached the recording of lectures as another way of supporting retention by offering the ability to go back and listen again for content they missed. By utilizing an asynchronous approach for recorded lectures, one participant noted, “Online lectures, putting lectures online has been good. Students can pause and rewind and go back. I find that students appreciate that ability for online lectures.” Another participant offered this perspective:

I think that increases both the instructor’s efficacy as well as the student because if we are talking about a complex topic and they want to go back and listen or watch it again before they write the paper or take the exam everything is archived so they can go in and re-watch that lecture and follow up with questions to the faculty. You mention this here, and they would say you never answered the question what do you think on this? I think there is a lot more protections and back stops for learning in an online environment particularly where in face to face if a student doesn’t want to raise their hand cause they don’t want to be up in front of the room and doesn’t remember to follow up with an email

after class, you might see that loss of learning or where that information was never discussion or followed through on or developed in the class for greater discussion, where I can see I get follow ups when I post something online, students going on and they say I noticed you said this.

Recording lectures and posting them online also offers students a flexibility to listen and learn at their own pace and in their own way.

What I hear from students is that their instructors are able to make these videos and these students will listen to them while they're driving, they put them on or listen to them when they're at the gym. They do listen to them maybe not every student but many do, and they say that it helps them.

For students who find it difficult to sit still for three hours straight or are doodlers or like to be moving while they are listening, recorded lectures allows them the freedom to learn on their own terms. They can chunk it down into sections, listen while doing other things, or be able to make time in their hectic schedules that allows them to focus and pay closer attention without interruptions.

One example that provides students with those freedoms and promotes engagement at the same time, is the use of Easter Eggs.

I used to put Easter eggs in posted videos. We go through it and then I'd say, I'm going to post the archive of it but I'm going to drop Easter eggs on it and there will be a question on the exam that is related to it. It's hidden in the video and will break apart at some point or it's going to be in the captioning underneath and so you encourage students from the standpoint that there will be 10 postings where they can get 10 out of 50 questions if they just re-watch all the videos. So, there are things we can do by having

reliable technology interface that can support our efforts with distance learning. They hated it because they said, “I had to watch all your classes a second time.” BUT they watched all the classes a second time.

Paper

Writing a paper is a tried-and-true assignment that asks the students to research or consider copious amounts of information, synthesize it, and then report on it in a way that conveys an understanding worthy of a graduate level student. While this method has been around for decades, it also appears to be going through a sort of rejuvenation. Approaches to research papers are taking new approaches in attempt to increase students’ skills in synthesizing and conceptualizing constructs and abstract client situations.

I use discussion boards I don't use chats I use traditional exams, response papers, response to videos, or other kinds of things to have the student engage with the material and then produce a cognitive shift in what they're learning and what they're thinking about.

When asking students to write papers, the assignment tends to have a focus on thinking through responses and positions or topics.

I use a combination of approaches, research papers, position papers, one-page paper to make them crystallize what they know, record 3-minute video on an ethics topic explaining it to a client. You got different ways of measuring how someone understands it.

Quizzes

The approach in using quizzes remains much the same today as it has been in the past. Quizzes are a quick way to get immediate feedback on where the student is at in retention of knowledge. One participant described:

A behavioral method that involves frequent small assessments of performance as with most behavioral teaching methods and I utilize it both online and in-person as well as blended courses so to assess students again I actually have a quiz after every class.

Quizzes are a staple in the measurement of learning for both online and face to face methods.

Case study

Discussion of case studies were typically in relation to another type of pedagogy such as video blogging, discussion boards or writing a response paper. For some participants, case study was a way to inject application of knowledge into the more didactic courses.

We still try to do it the same way with watching videos that's the skill thing that's a little more challenging, but I think we can do that pretty well some of the others you know what are content oriented we may have case study scenarios you know so it's to me it's very much the same way I would do in this face-to-face class.

Case studies remain an effective way of having students conceptualize a case and contemplate real life scenarios they will face upon graduation.

It's a critical thinking class and I use actual cases where the students are before the end of the semester, assigned a case and they're supposed to develop a treatment plan in case conceptualize treatment plan.

Weekly assignments

Weekly assignments are another category mentioned in conjunction with another approach. Weekly assignments can take on different formats and are a means to engage students.

Discussion forums are important weekly assignments, so they have to maintain a regular schedule throughout the program. I think having these strategies if the student isn't logging in at the same time, there are ways they can maintain the same schedule throughout.

Another participant uses weekly assignments to check in with students:

Students submit what's called a record sheet it's like a feedback sheet that students submit after every class that gives me an idea because there's questions on the feedback sheet that ask students questions about what topics were difficult or challenging or that they have questions about and so in addition to the quiz, they can complete this record sheet which is a short questionnaire and that gives me an indication of some of that as well and those are required on a weekly ongoing basis after each class session.

Weekly assignments can be creative ways that keep students continuously processing and conceptualizing information while also maintaining ongoing communication among students and with the instructor.

Communication

Communication was a category that most participants spent a great deal of time considering. The concern was with student engagement and that methods used were effective and timely. Being able to visually connect with students was very important. Again, as with types of assignments, the way that they integrated both synchronous and asynchronous approaches, helped in the successful outcome in the pedagogical choices. Synchronous video class sessions

combined with asynchronous discussion boards that targeted topics that deepen the discussion of lecture materials or current events, or as a place for students to get answers to questions, seemed to enrich the education experience. Timing of feedback and other communications played a key role in the successful application of these pedagogical approaches.

Video class session

Establishing visual connection with students was an element that was important to every participant. One way of engaging visually with students was by using a synchronous video platform such as Zoom or adobe to hold classes. This allowed for instructors to engage with students, gain important non-verbal feedback and observations, and for students to engage and connect with one another. One participant stated:

I found that it was also because I could actually see the students and their faces and get a sense of them and they were able to interact with each other and were able to see me other than the one time at the beginning of the semester when we were all on campus.

Using a video platform for class promoted engagement and helped to establish a connection among the students and with the instructor. Another participant when discussing engaging students via video reported:

Practicum and internship are small groups with six or seven students in each group and everyone has on their camera and every student is using their audio and we're right there feeling much more like a virtual classroom and I feel like I can engage the same way that I would face to face.

Video platforms also allowed instructors to maintain assignments they had used prior to incorporating distance learning pedagogies like assigning topics for students to present during class. For example, one participant stated:

Another thing that we're using is student lead discussions and presentations. As we're talking about a specific topic, we'll start out at the beginning of the semester review and counseling approaches and theoretical approaches. Students will be responsible for discussing a specific theoretical approach and not just presenting the information but sharing information and then facilitating a discussion. Same thing with our group as we incorporate information on group counseling skills that students will be assigned various group leadership skills a group counseling skill that they are responsible to review and come prepared. Sometimes students will upload slides or just talking points and then they are responsible for just facilitating that discussion. So that affords me the opportunity to assess where their knowledge base is where they're learning is and also their ability to facilitate the discussion.

Discussion board

A discussion board is an approach that had many different applications. The level of engagement or information for discussion impacted the use of the discussion boards. In relation to instructors getting multiple emails asking the same questions, they would use the discussion board as a sort of bulletin board or frequently asked question forum. This allowed all students to have access to the same information.

I set up a discussion board at the beginning of the course called Ask the Instructor. I found that to be really helpful. Because a lot of times, if you have students that are all over the place, if they're not interacting with each other like they would be sitting in a classroom, this one has a question, and you find out that 10 other people have the same question. So, if you put this discussion board thing up there, then you can post questions that you would normally ask in a classroom setting about the assignments or whatever.

Post it here and I'll answer it for everybody to see. If it's a personal question regarding your personal situation then you should do that separately through an email.

Another use for a discussion board is to encourage students to engage with content and one another. Some instructors would note how often students were logging in online, they would adjust their classes to have weekly assignments centered around a discussion thread topic that would keep them interacting with their fellow students as well as synthesizing information or even creating posts surrounding given topics or social media finds relating to class topics. One example:

I post controversial TED Talks and controversial questions online. So, I asked the students to consider those and that makes up their discussions. So, what I do is I take the lecture, which is didactic and then the second half of their commitment to the class is to open up the section I refer to as Concepts and Actions. I take what has been reviewed in the didactic portion and then I either emphasize it with a video or I ask a question that may have to deal with it.

Another way of engaging with students is to capitalize on pop culture and current events. Encouraging them to find relatable content in their social media feeds or current events that helps them to link course content to real life examples and situations.

I'm a fan of individuals using social media such as utilizing twitter to get students to engage in the content on a regular basis to share ideas or share information that they're finding and really do those explorations. I think effective discussions boards again is about getting the students to engage on a topic as long as they are well structured and defined rubrics so that it's not regurgitation of information the last three students have said. That they are coming in with a new component of it. If your approaching discussion

boards where you give everyone a part of the information versus everyone having it all gets each one of them to share that information and try to drive the cases a little bit further.

A common issue brought up by the participants centered on another aspect of student engagement. Several participants mentioned that in a face-to-face classroom, there are always the students who participate, are eager or at least willing to answer questions or ask questions, those that participate intermittently, and those who typically remain silent. In that respect, distance learning pedagogies had a positive appeal as all students must respond and engage in the discussion. While some students are uncomfortable or hesitate to speak in a public forum such as a classroom, they do engage online. This can level the playing field, giving every student the opportunity to show case their ability to synthesize information, bring up issues, or perspectives that would otherwise go unheard.

The level or the amount of interaction, yes, I think so because there are students who would come to class and sit in the back of the class and they don't say anything. In the distance learning environment, you can't really have that. They can't be silent because I required participation in the discussion boards and things like that, so you have to participate more due to the way we grade. You can't just sit in the back and not participate.

While speaking on student engagement via discussion boards, another issue mentioned was instructor engagement. Instructor engagement is a topic for later in this chapter. However, in relation to discussion boards, one participant found ways to not only maintain a high level of engagement with students, but in so doing encourages more thoughtful and intentional interactions.

I think it comes down to the support and monitoring of those. If you let them run on their own, they tend to get the two people who really take hold of the discussion and then the other four that says, “yea I was thinking the same thing.” I think it’s better the more you give immediate feedback as possible. We’re not following up at the end of the week. So, as students are posting things, they are getting feedback on the post and they’re getting cultivated just like they would in a class if we’re having a discussion. Someone doesn’t say a word and we wait an hour before we respond back. And so, for the discussions, I tend to talk about shrinking down the timeframe where we want students on those discussions’ boards. Rather than over a three-day period I want them to respond in a three-hour period and then you can arrange the supports around it whether it be a chat room or a threaded discussion where they are getting real time interaction with you the instructor or the teaching assistant and so you are supporting those pieces where you’re supporting learning vs. it being just an area for students to post something and you hope they’re getting something out of it.

When taking the approach of synchronous real time immediate feedback, students know their instructor is there engaging with them and with that comes an unspoken logic that encourages participation at a higher level.

Supplemental

The supplemental category comprised of only one concept. However, the use of the supplemental resources was felt to have made a significant impact on student achievement. Participants were able to expose students to additional resources and materials they would not have done in prior face to face settings. Since the implementation of online learning systems, participants have been able to upload additional links, articles, videos, etc. that enhance the

educational goals for each class. Depending on how the participants opted to utilize the additional resources, they too could be used both a synchronous and asynchronous manner. They could be topics for discussion boards, student video responses to readings to upload and then discuss in class etc. Participants typically felt supplemental information made a significant impact on the course.

External resources

External resources like videos, legislation, APA writing guide, articles, and other materials are a staple in higher education. There are a few advantages that the online environment has when compared to a face-to-face classroom. The online learning system serves as a library of resources that can supplement the text, lecture, discussions, and assignments. As discussed previously, they can serve as topics for a discussion thread or for video blogging their responses, regardless of the method used to explore them, they are in fact, explored. In a face-to-face setting, there isn't the luxury of time to review and discuss all supplemental material and though it might be highly suggested for students to read or watch what is posted, without the online engagement, there is no real way of knowing if the student read or watched the online content.

While these different pedagogical approaches certainly foster creativity, allows for flexibility and provides another means for repetition in learning, it is also an area that can be difficult to adapt to. One aspect of teaching that most instructors enjoy, is in personalizing the lectures. Anecdotal experiences in working with clients, overcoming moments when falling short was a lesson learned, or examples of overcoming great odds or maybe just funny stories of moments of vulnerability or attempts at getting something right that are fun to share and humanizes instructors can be difficult to recreate. Conveying genuineness when looking into a

camera as opposed to faces is difficult at best. Rehabilitation counseling is a field that attracts individuals that find value and meaning in connecting with others. Having to do so in a digital domain can be daunting and awkward. As one participant put it, schools hired us to be instructors, not talk show hosts.

Despite some misgivings surrounding how we adapt to an online arena; the overall opinion was that it does indeed have more pros than cons, but it has improved effectiveness from several standpoints.

Yes, it enhances my job I'm happy to be in both programs. I feel like overall I feel like I'm more effective in reaching all kinds of learners. I feel like it gives you more tools to reach different kinds of learners. The overall idea about universal teaching, I feel like distance learning gives you more tools to do that kind of teaching. I'm happier about my work to have that involvement with distance learning.

It fosters a more focused eye when critiquing content and organizing the course to ensure clarity and understandable objectives.

Making sure we have to have weekly learning objectives when we do an online pedagogy, so it's forced me you know, if I've got this assignment maybe I've done it for 5 or 10 years and I liked it, it's a great assignment, but when I'm looking at that being subjective is it really relevant? So, I feel it's making me a better teacher and then the students you know when we first started putting in weekly learning objectives you know we always had course objectives but when you do a *Quality Matters* online course, they require that you have weekly objectives. So, for me the first time I started doing this I was like oh man it really causes me to sit down and think about every assignment, every reading, did it really hit the particular learning objectives of that week?

One participant took it a step further:

It's been nice from the standpoint of having a running repository. Here's the information I have provided students in past years. It lets me go in and look at what were the outcomes of student learning and going back to what was provided and what I might have done online. It's a better archive and better point to be able to evaluate some of those activities in the past. But it also lets me contrast what I might have done one or two years ago with the current state of knowledge and try to make those changes a little quicker.

On communicating with students, one participant felt it improved their way of interacting with students. "It definitely changed how I communicated but made it stronger and made it more intentional, so I wasn't sending the same email a hundred times."

While it is true that distance learning modalities forces one to step outside comfort zones and reimagine their potential, the commitment of educators to overcome was apparent. The commitment to students and the field of rehabilitation counseling and to persons seeking accommodations to capitalize on their abilities, was the underlying motivation in choice of pedagogical approach. Pedagogy choice was so that it would allow the most effective means of conveying information that had some ability to incorporate personality, provide the space for synthesizing and conceptualizing of information, and create a means for students to relay their understanding in ways that allowed for individualized expression.

All three of these pedagogical components worked in conjunction, equally influencing and reinforcing one another. Without one, the others were less effective. The mixing of modalities in unique synchronous or asynchronous ways that afforded both the instructor and the student flexibility, individualization, and freedom to express themselves in ways they could do their best work. Participants capitalized on ways to recreate face to face classroom experiences

via video conferencing and blogging that allowed for nonverbal communication that reinforced the academic relationships and abilities to network and participate in rich conversations that are the valued hallmarks of higher education.

RQ2: As rehabilitation counseling master's programs continue to integrate distance learning pedagogies, what topics of discussion or concerns would you like to see the field address?

This question evoked a lot of concern from participants. Not necessarily around distance learning pedagogies in and of themselves, but a wider concern for the field itself. There was concern and contemplation around the direction of the field, professional identity and the lack of evidence-based methods to new pedagogical approaches. Participants reported feeling a lack of cohesion within the field that left them wondering where the field is headed and that a larger conversation should be had to establish a collaborative agreement on these different areas comprises the categories of this theme. The theme that seemed to capture the overarching issues discussed was strategic planning. The categories that comprise strategic planning are evaluation, planning and course design.

Evaluation is a category, defined as considerations in evaluating student success, course effectiveness and instructor evaluations. The codes in this category are quality of instruction, assessment, evaluation of outcomes, and instructor evaluation. How do we define it and then measure it? Evidenced- based practices are typically the focus for service delivery in the field but what does the literature say in relation to education and pedagogy? That appeared to be less of a focus but also recognized as needed data to inform our decisions.

Planning was defined as methods used to determine direction of department/program that would inform course design and content. The concepts comprising this category were future and focus on positive. These concepts centered around the understanding that distance learning is the

new expectation and is the wave of the future. As such, rehabilitation counseling should accept that and work together to figure out the best approaches to ensure adherence to professional standards and ethical considerations in the implementation of new pedagogy.

In addition to looking to the future, being mindful of how we approach new pedagogical technologies is important to remember. To see this as an opportunity to be creative and discover new ways of engaging students and disseminating information versus an unwanted disruption to the tried-and-true approaches to education. Instead keeping the focus on professional development as instructors and pushing the boundaries of what defines pedagogy.

The third and final category is course design defined as elements of course design to ensure all aspects are fair, equitable and effective. The concepts comprising course design was pedagogy and accessibility. Again, commitment to quality in how to approach learning objectives and then commitment to ensuring that all students would have access to course content. As higher education becomes more accessible to a wider population and geography, it impacts the accountability to accessibility. Students who may have been less inclined due to anxiety or other types of barriers that might have led them to dismiss higher education, may now take advantage of new opportunities. Is higher education, particularly graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling ready to provide accommodations in ways unanticipated before? What was clear, was that there is an overarching desire to have a larger conversation that produces a strong unified direction.

Strategic Planning

The second research question prompted a variety of responses. In TABLE 3 it is noted that of 48 total responses to this question, 15 mentioned issues related to the future of

rehabilitation counseling, 11 on pedagogy, six for accessibility, five on quality of instruction, four for evaluation of outcomes, three on focus on positive and two on assessment.

Table 3: *Topic of conversation*

Themes	Categories	N
Planning	future of rehabilitation counseling	15
	focus on positive	3
Evaluation	quality of instruction	5
	evaluation of outcomes	4
	Instructor evaluation	3
Course Design	pedagogy	11
	accessibility	6
	assessment	2

For the purposes of this study, the definition of strategic plan was as elements for discussion and consideration. The categories of concepts that make up this theme are planning, evaluation and course design. The responses for this research question focused heavily on the need for more guidance and collaboration. There was concern for the field and for the effectiveness of pedagogies used to gain mastery of skill. The participants felt it would be beneficial to create a space where colleagues could discuss, brainstorm, and compare their ideas and approaches to help inform research on pedagogical research for best practices. There was concern regarding the lack of research and direction in relation to pedagogy and instruction. The categories that make up this theme speak to the components of rehabilitation counseling programs that participants felt could use collaborative guidance.

The definition of planning was as methods used to determine direction of department or program that would inform course design and content. This category included two concepts, focus on positive and future. Participants were very mindful about the current state of rehabilitation counseling and were concerned regarding the future and maintaining professional identity as programs are merging with other counseling programs in their respective departments.

Future technology, labor, and legislative trends were another category that participants were thinking about. The expectations of students who typically adapt quickly to new technologies and have expectations that educational institutions would be incorporating them into pedagogical approaches were another topic of discussion as well as the changing landscape of employment. Ensuring that course content remains current on these trends as well as the preparation of the students for the changing needs of the field they will become employed in were also areas that participants discussed.

Evaluations are considerations in evaluating student success, course effectiveness, and instructor evaluations. This category was another area of concern. The concepts making up this theme are instructional effort, evaluation outcomes, and instructor evaluations. Participants were cognizant about the amount of effort that distance learning demands and how it challenges instructor's creativity and commitment to fair and equitable evaluation. In addition to assignment and student evaluation was the topic of instructor evaluation in a distance course and the challenges that brings. There seemed to be some consensus that ongoing evaluation of effectiveness needs to happen but to do that, there could be some standards or agreement on the target goals of the field.

The final category is course design defined as elements of course design to ensure all aspects are fair, equitable, and effective. The concepts making up this category are assessment, pedagogy, and accessibility. Within this category, participants focused on course effectiveness and ensuring student assessment is fair and equitable. There was a discussion on potential research on evidence-based practice for instruction. Effectiveness of instruction was a topic of concern for most participants. Under discussion was how to determine mastery of skill in a distance learning format that is fair and allows for practice and immediate feedback. Some

instructors felt they had figured out a system of assessment that worked for them while others were still struggling to figure that out.

Accessibility was the final concept in this category. The ability to reach more students and making secondary education more accessible also brings greater responsibility to ensure that the delivery is inclusive for all students of varying abilities. Ensuring that programs have the capabilities, technologies and support for captioning, interpreters, and formatting, increases costs and the time to set up the courses and manage technology throughout the semester. The following is a discussion of the categories that make up the theme strategic planning.

Planning

The focus of this category was another area that was given a lot of thought and consideration. The responses centered around how the use of distance pedagogies were not just about course design but also aligning course delivery with external standards for certification and licensure. The recommendations included reaching out to national certifications and state licensure bodies for additional guidance. There appeared to be an overarching agreement that distance learning pedagogies were here to stay, and the expectation is that technology will continue to evolve offering new opportunities for course delivery. The recommendation was that the field embrace the evolution of education and instead of resisting, ask how can we use this to discover new ways of reaching students, engage with them, and plan for the future of the field?

Future

The future of rehabilitation counseling was a common area of concern for most participants. Responses varied and covered both concerns and vision.

I don't see us going away from it. I see us using more and more technology in our classes.

We have apps that we might use like Remind to contact students. There's so many really

cool apps and programs that we can incorporate in our education I think this is just where things are heading.

Yet another stated:

We've been struggling with how to teach the skills online. I've been an advocate for putting the practicum and internship classes online. Cause that's the reality they are going to be doing that kind of counseling and we need to have different approaches to teaching and evaluating counseling skills. That is the wave of the future and that's where we're going to have to be.

Others discussed it to reach more students and how to do that in a way that creates sustainability and to be cognizant of resources available to students according to where they live.

Yeah, I mean some of the reasons we do it is to recruit more students and cast a wider net but not necessarily for purely pedagogical reasons but instead to help grow our program and to help make a sustainable program we can target students that are not just in one specific area, then we need to do that.

One observation made by a participant who has extensive experience in reviewing other programs stated that there was higher enrollment in programs that offer a distance learning option.

Diversity of faculty and location of where the student is. What I mean by that is where are they going to be doing their practicum and internship hours. I've worked in programs where there are three sites in the whole city for the students to go to. Versus bigger cities where there are 250+ agencies and places to go and then there are all the suburbs so when there their experiences and a lot of variety it just helps with the online education. Those are the factors that rehab counseling needs to look at. I think everything can be done

online it's just looking at the training experiences. We talk about multicultural, but are they getting exposed to multicultural sites.

Another area for discussion in relation to future considerations was surrounding accreditation compliance and licensure.

I have 42 master's students in test and measure class, I can't read 42 papers. You have to look at CACREP guidelines. You can't have more than 10 people in a skills class so in order for us to maintain the cap you have to have more classes. That can be problematic because what you want counselors to do, is have good critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and you don't get those by listening to lectures and taking a final exam you have to explain yourself and do that kind of learning that comes from having to arrive on a specific topic. So, you have to look at class size and what you want them to learn.

Licensure is another area to consider when evaluating program design. There was concern reported around absorption into clinical counseling and being able to maintain specialization within the counseling field.

There are probably other things, but things are so complicated right now and we're competing with counselor education. A lot of programs in order to be CACREP eligible they're dropping rehab because students are signing up the counseling classes because rehab isn't really falling into that framework very well so it's kind of a mess right now.

Ensuring our students can qualify for a variety of different certifications and licensures is proving to be complicated as well. As more distance learning opportunities arise, certification and licensing bodies struggle to keep up in determining what would be acceptable course content and delivery methods.

The certifying body said they would not accept online classes for credit towards certification. So, one of the things we need to talk about in terms of rehabilitation counseling is how is the transition to an online format going to overlap with certification and licensing concerns about the quality of online learning meeting the requirements they have to issue a certificate or till the issue and license.

Another participant when asked about what the field should be discussing stated:

Focus on the benefits. I think that as a field, and I think this is true with any sort of revolution, like we're in a technological Revolution. We can get caught up in the concerns and don't remember reading about the digital revolution. New York was described as this really dangerous place where you can walk around and get hit by cars and too many signs and you're distracted there's too much going on it's overwhelming. and if you look at how they talk about the internet and kids they're talking about the same thing they're saying this is a distraction we're losing these old values. I would push us to say how do we translate them where we don't lose any of our values we don't have to lose our standards or any of those things we have to focus on the benefits on how we translate them as a field.

Focus on Positive

This final coding category under strategic planning, was the notion of focusing on the positive. There were overall concerns about automatic responses to dismiss technological advancements simply because it forces us to step outside our comfort zone. Learning new technology can be cumbersome and overwhelming. That can lead one to hold fast to tried and true methods used for many, many decades. There was the suggestion to not look at advancements in technology as an enemy of engagement, but as an opportunity to grow and

conceptualize new ways of engaging and connecting. If it is the wave of the future, as most believe, then embracing the opportunity to be creative, should be a conversation worth having.

I would like to see more focus on the benefits and the affordances of what it could do because I think that will lead us forward versus if we focus just on translating what we do face-to-face to a digital world, that doesn't make any sense. So, you probably shouldn't do that. So, I think we need to have more conversations about the benefits.

While coding responses for this research question, three categories began to emerge. The first is planning, which entailed methods used to determine direction of department or program that would inform course design. The codes in this category were future and focus on positive. What set these two codes apart from the others was the intentional considerations of several factors. The direction of higher education in relation to course delivery and recruitment was a question several participants considered. What is the motivation behind it, providing quality education vs. tuition dollars? Another component when thinking about the future was the future of rehabilitation counseling as a field. Is the field in danger of absorption into clinical programs, how does rehabilitation counseling remain relevant as a specialization? Then finally, what is the direction of individual programs? Should there be some standardized approaches to pedagogical choices when teaching skills-based courses? What are decisions that should occur as a group vs. individual programs?

Evaluation

Another consideration that a change in course delivery brings is how to determine its effectiveness. Creating and adjusting to a new form of evaluation means change not just in how we evaluate student learning outcomes and instructors but the course itself as well. When utilizing discussion boards or online submissions that other students can see, means that students

will be observing the level of effort in their classmate's responses and noticing if plagiarism is caught and dealt with. The work of the instructor is in some ways on display in ways it wasn't before. That can encourage or discourage student engagement. Student evaluation it seems is evolving into more than an end of the semester survey.

Evaluation was a topic that the participants were eager to engage with other programs on. There seemed to be three levels of evaluation that involved quality of instruction or instructor engagement, evaluation of outcomes, and instructor evaluation. Measuring course outcomes becomes critical in establishing new pedagogies. Participants reported being very intentional in measuring the impact when altering a method of instruction. Comparing prior years and monitoring student feedback were important pieces of information considered when evaluating change. Participants reported being curious on what other programs were discovering when integrating new pedagogies.

An online environment also impacts instructor evaluation. In a digital learning environment, the ability to observe faculty in the classroom is no longer available. Newer methods must be created and tested to ensure objective evaluations of instructor performance. Performance objectives take on new meaning when addressing communication, feedback and engagement when applying to an online environment. What kinds and rates of instructor engagement enhances the quality of education and how is that observed and measured? Participants supported the idea of a bigger conversation within the field to discuss these concerns and adaptations. Could there be a standardized approach to forms of evaluation?

Quality of Instruction

Quality of instruction is a topic that almost goes along with pedagogy and accessibility. Just like with pedagogies, if we establish a standardized approach to methodology, would not the delivery method and instructor engagement also be a critical component?

I think that you really have to think through what you're having people do. I think because you don't have the same interaction with students directly, I do think you have to figure out ways to have contact with them, so they get to know you I think it's critical that professors do that.

Several participants had taken a course online before and was able to notice when instructors were not engaging with them and even ignored blatant plagiarism in student's posts. The message they received indirectly from the instructor was that it did not matter what they wrote or how much effort they made the grade would be the same.

So, having the online classes are a great way of reaching these students to be able to complete their work. It's just that we have got to take the time in order to be able to provide quality service. I just know it's so easy just to do the bare minimum online. You know you don't really even have to know the material which is really sad. I think there are too many people that teach some of the classes who don't know the material because they really don't have to, and they don't have to get out there and lecture they don't have to explain it live so all they have to do is post some power points and post some assignments and post the exams and grade it.

Evaluation of outcomes

As mentioned above, measuring course outcomes is critical when determining what if any changes need to take place. "It comes back to we really do need to spend more time

evaluating the outcomes. Is it the most appropriate tool to use in every circumstance and if there are best practices in distance learning, we certainly need to promote those.”

Instructor evaluation

What goes along with course evaluations are the evaluations of instructors. Methods of evaluation for instructors often involves observation of their ability to connect with students and deliver content in a face-to-face setting. That becomes problematic in an online environment.

What I think they should do more of is how are you supposed to evaluate an online professor's performance? That to me is the issue. It's so easy for an administrator to just look into my classroom and see what I'm doing but what kind of oversight do we give for online instruction?

Some participants would like objective feedback on their performance and pedagogical choices. Student feedback is one important piece, but observations by colleagues is another valued voice. “Another concern is about the quality of instruction. I feel like I could be a better more effective instructor online and I know that I'm not the worst either.”

Course Design

Participants recognized that new pedagogical approaches impact larger arenas than just their specific classroom. The deeper the participants went into providing distance learning courses, the more they realized that not everyone is progressing at the same rate. Associations offering certifications and state licensure requirements are all evolving at their own pace and making decisions that could negatively impact student qualifications based on the design of the qualifying course. Participants again saw this as another contributing factor in their interest in a wider conversation.

In addition, participants discussed the need for greater research on evidence-based practices in relation to instruction. It was noted that there is a great deal of focus externally on counselor performance out in the field, but not as much internally on methods of instruction. Participants reported being interested in adding to our foundational knowledge in that area.

Another aspect of pedagogical growth centered around accessibility. It was noted that while expanding the reach of post-secondary education to potential students that would not be able to attend a brick-and-mortar facility, would also mean being adaptive in accessibility. New technology can remove many barriers but, in some cases, can also create new ones. Some participants were cognizant about what these adaptations might mean and wondered what the ramifications and opportunities to post-secondary institutions might be?

Assessment of students was an area that brought some frustration. Determining mastery of skill in skills-based courses vs. foundational knowledge or didactic courses was an area that many participants struggled in while others reported to have found methods that worked for them. Nonetheless, it was an aspect of course design that many would like to compare notes on.

Pedagogy

The notion of pedagogy was another topic in the forefront of many participant's thinking. Evidence-based practices on instructional practices is of high interest. One participant mentioned that

We tend to talk a lot about evidenced base practice, we tend not to do a lot of it in evidence-based practice on instruction. I would anticipate that there are certain classes where there is no difference. I would also anticipate that there are classes that if we haven't put together a very refined or complex distance learning model, then we're

probably not doing it due justice to those students and ultimately to persons with disabilities who we serve.

Going back to the issue of certifying bodies, do we need to have a unified approach that would ensure certification and licensure qualifications?

I think we also need to have more discussions about pedagogy and if we're going to argue for online classes to be accepted by certifying bodies then should they have a specific format? I mean you can have an online class and just say yeah read all this stuff and talk about this I know instructors where they don't record their lectures, they just put up a PowerPoint. and I'm not judging, but to me if I were a student, I would be like I could do this for a lot less money through some other avenue. So maybe the discussion among rehabilitation counselor programs should be what would be a suggested format that people should maintain to assure that these courses meet the quality level that we want for all our students to have.

Another participant suggested that we start our own internal means of program evaluation.

I would say start small and evaluate. I think there is a continuum of classes that lend themselves very well to online learning and those that its capable or possible to do but you have to be a lot more thoughtful about. I would start with med aspects, but I think it's one I can say here is a host of information you need to have to understand at least the functional aspects of what this person's experience is. Do some evaluation just like when you set up any kind of program evaluation or research component: do we have a central barometer or metric where we can evaluate students before we go online and our current effort?

I think we should do that with every class we offer, face to face initially and then as we move to online and see a change in performance and student learning outcomes. And that doesn't mean we shouldn't continue online; it may just mean that we need to take some additional thought and revision to the approach that has been taken in the online format. But I think it's just with any evaluation or research activity. It ultimately falls back to what are the questions you want to ask but then even more so what does a successful outcome look like and what's an acceptable outcome beyond that? Would it be a student who took the med aspects class or passing the CRC? That would be one metric that somebody could use. It tends to be more of a lagging indicator rather than primary, but again, having some approach that comes back and evaluates, does whatever approach were using, does it work in the short term and more of a longer-term indication.

Several participants mentioned the need for outcome research. Many participants stated that they would feel better about continuing to integrate distance learning pedagogies if there was hard data that would inform the direction to go in.

I think we need to be very intentional about the classes we do take online, and we need to do so very carefully and try to in the best way we can, look for the most effective pedagogical practices and to deliver that content. So, we got to stay up to date with what research and education is telling us about what is useful and what isn't useful. And we have to be willing to spend the time up front building that out. I think it has to be complimentary and not a centerpiece of the program.

In addition to course effectiveness, there are the considerations regarding student performance. As gate keepers and stewards of the field, it is our responsibility to ensure we train students who have the capacity and abilities to become competent counselors.

If we're going to utilize a certain approach apart from those didactic learning courses of information dissemination, are we training students that have not just the basic information but have the capacity to truly serve others. That's where we see a lot of the literature say that that's not where we tend to spend a lot of our time analyzing.

How does a program determine if someone has the capacity to engage and develop a clinical relationship with their clients? "Are students demonstrating the level of interaction that we would anticipate from the best traditional program?"

Practicum and internship are two courses where students must practice mastery of skill through direct contact with clients, they receive feedback from supervisors that instructors may have never met. How can programs ensure students receive a high standard of feedback and training from sites across the state or country?

I'd like more discussion on how you deal with things like internship or practicum. Those classes where you're having to interact in some way. I have concerns in some ways if they interact with themselves or a friend, they don't get that immediacy of feedback things like that. I think on the other hand, they can take a look at themselves. By looking at themselves online they get feedback. You don't always know it as you're doing something. You have to see it and I think that's important and I think we need to have discussions about those things. I don't see a lot of discussions particularly about that.

Accessibility

Accessibility was another topic of concern among participants. There is concern not just in the design and delivery of the course, but also whether students live in an area with adequate internet capabilities to handle the bandwidth required.

My major challenge with the distance is making sure that it's meeting the needs with people with different disabilities and a lot of the technology doesn't work well with the student who has a visual disability who's trying to use the system on their own computer.

Another participant added:

The other part is that when we design distance learning how do we make sure it is accessible to all individuals not just from a bandwidth standpoint but for individuals with sensory limitations or sensory disabilities. Individuals with other kinds of limitations as far as their ability to attend to a computer screen. Those are all things that I think of. If we really want to see this approach continue to grow and flourish, which I think it has over the last 15 years, we have to think about is this successful? Are we reaching our demographics of people who are passionate about working with persons with disabilities and are we making the programs accessible for them?

The argument was that if there is the ability to send text messages confirming appointments and booking appointments online and even telemedicine and tele- counseling, to insist on continuing to use a fax machine or overhead projector seems unethical. Is there a responsibility to the field and to students to ensure training in the most state-of-the-art technologies to engage with their clients? If master's programs in rehabilitation counseling are seeking to hire instructors with distance learning experience yet do not allow for them to have the experience during their formal training, is that training doing a disservice to its students? Could this also be true of master's level students who lack the preparation to engage with their clients via internet-based channels?

Assessment

Assessment of students was another area that participants felt needed additional attention. Designing assessments that are fair and equitable, that truly measure mastery of topic or skill was

something that weighed heavy for some. This particular participant captured the essence of what many expressed.

Having a fair assessment is something I am concerned about. We need to discuss how are we going to assess them especially with information beyond concepts.

Participants expressed some frustration with knowing if what they were doing is effective. There was an acknowledgment by those that were frustrated, that there might be better measures than exams, but they admitted that they were not able to figure that out.

What the strategic plan theme speaks to, is an approach for the field of rehabilitation counseling. A plan that evaluates where the field is heading, current trends in education and technological advances that would inform departments and programs where the needs are, identify gaps, establish a common set of goals that adhere to the values and mission of the field and then create strategies on how to accomplish these goals. Strategies could vary from program to program if the identified goals are met. Nationwide evaluations of programs would stem from a common foundation that encompasses not only CACREP standards, but effectiveness of pedagogical practices.

RQ3: When initially integrating distance learning as a pedagogy, were you confident in your ability to instruct students in learning counseling techniques through the internet?

When taking on a new task, self-doubt can be a natural reaction. For instructors taking on the new task of learning emerging technologies, understanding how to apply them to course design and implementing them, can lead to a great deal of apprehension. For some, the idea of applying creativity in learning a new skill was exciting and motivating. Participants in this study were no different with responses ranging from excitement to resistance. What appeared to ring true for everyone regardless of how they felt was a commitment to learning it. A recognition that this is the direction the department and society at large is headed, and they might as well get on

board. Each one in their own way persisted in their commitment and were able to conquer these new pedagogical trends.

Persistence was the theme that continued to present itself within their answers. This theme explored not just how they felt about themselves and their belief in their abilities, but how they were able to work through their apprehensions and figure out the best method of conquering this new technology. This theme encompasses their own process and other apprehensions that this change brings. Persistence encompassed three categories: increased efficacy, class design, and personal efficacy.

Increased efficacy is comprised of concepts that were utilized to help build their confidence in the pedagogical change's participants were making. They invested their time in exploring many forms of feedback and monitored student responses for indications of positive or negative impacts. Most importantly, there was a general consensus that throughout all of the trial and error, that some attempts would work while others wouldn't, and that was ok. Participants seemed to realize that being patient with themselves and the process was needed for a positive outcome.

The category course design centered on apprehensions. Participants acknowledged fears grounded in their desire to create a space for students who felt engaged and connected to them as their instructor. There was a great deal of trepidation as to whether or not DL pedagogies could accomplish that goal. Could they maintain visual connection with their students? Would these new pedagogical methods be effective and enhance the quality of instruction?

In addition to concerns regarding quality of instruction was the fear that master's programs in rehabilitation counseling would slowly disappear into the larger counseling programs, losing its specialization. Another concern centered around becoming obsolete. While

instructors will always be needed to teach the courses, it gave some pause for consideration to think about the future of college professors.

The third category in the theme of persistence was inadequate effort. While this theme has only one concept, it was a concern for some participants. In a setting such as a digital environment, reading the room becomes more difficult. Not having immediate visual cues that inform instructors on student engagement means that instructors must find alternative avenues to determine if they are involved, engaging, and responding in a manner that is meaningful. For some participants, they were unsure if they were doing enough. While they realized that it was most likely an overreaction, they were concerned about managing student expectations and creating courses that students would benefit from.

Persistence

Participants were very forthcoming in discussing their process and experiences. Ten participants out of 15 indicated they were not confident when they began. In answering this question, they also shared what they doubted and what helped them to work through their doubt. The coding categories are as follows: Inadequate Effort, Visual Contact, Ineffective Pedagogy, Fears, Trial and Error, Student Feedback, Instructor Evaluation of Effectiveness, and Patience with Self. In TABLE 4 it is noted that there were 35 total responses for these categories. Trial and error had a total of eight responses, student feedback had six, both patience with self and ineffective pedagogy had five, inadequate effort was four, fears was three, visual contact was two and false confidence was one.

Table 4: *Persistence*

Themes	Categories	N
Increased Efficacy	Trial and Error	8
	Student Feedback	6
	Patience with Self	5
	Instructor Evaluation of Effectiveness	2
Class Design	Ineffective Pedagogy	5
	Fears	3
	Visual Contact	2
Personal Efficacy	Inadequate Effort	4

Persistence is elements that affected efficacy. Again, while discussing their thoughts around efficacy, the focus was not on whether they doubted themselves, but in how they acknowledged it and devised strategies on how to get through it. For some it was easier than others, but the commitment was to students and to persons with varied abilities that they will serve, far outweighed the frustration of adaptation. In coding the responses, increased efficacy, class design and personal efficacy were the three emerging categories.

Increased Efficacy

The definition of increased efficacy was practices that assisted in increasing instructor efficacy. The concepts included in that category was trial and error, student feedback, instructor evaluation of effectiveness and patience with self. Achieving increased efficacy was through actions taken by the instructor that helped to build confidence in the pedagogies used.

Instructors channel the persistence needed to rise to the challenge of changing course delivery methods into pedagogical choices, intentional evaluation of effectiveness and making changes the next time until finding the right combination. Having the patience and compassion towards self in knowing that some choices will be better than others, that there will be moments of technological failure and sometimes missing the mark is ok. The focus is on learning how to manage frustration and move through it.

Trial and Error

In answering the question regarding confidence, participants spoke of not just about their feelings of confidence, but what they were apprehensive about and what helped them work through their doubts. Trial and error is a characteristic many expressed having to resort to.

It goes back to training and exploration. Trying different things with one class if it works well you might try it again and if not, at least you tried it and know it's not something that's going to work. We can go back to the concept of the 10,000- hour rule, the more times you do something the more comfortable or confident you get. At least you get a sense of knowing what you're going to do, how you're going to do it and when you're going to do it and that certainly comes from experience.

Asking questions, attending university offered training and keeping at it seemed to be the name of the game.

So, I just went completely online and studied it and did some research and learned a lot on how to teach that way. Went to the office of faculty excellence for training and talked to others who were doing it and over time developed my confidence.

As with most of the responses, it was difficult to narrow in on one specific thing. Usually, the best approaches were a combined effort. "Doing it, learning from my mistakes, and listening to students' feedback." Another participant had a different approach "I just kept doing it since 1999. Going to workshops and staying abreast with what the tech is. Staying on top of it and the content." Whatever the method of trying something, evaluating the effectiveness, and then trying again, eventually a combination of growing self-efficacy, increased skill in the use of technology, useful feedback, and pedagogical approach began to create a richer atmosphere of learning.

Student Feedback

A strong component of this growing online atmosphere of learning was student feedback:

Really, I think getting positive feedback from students and seeing them go on and be successful both in the remainder of the program and as they go into the professional field and having the understanding and a kind of confidence that they are getting what they need based on those experiences.

An important factor in student feedback was understanding what it was telling you. Sometimes negative feedback can mean you are on the right track.

Now just because a student hated it doesn't mean it's not a valuable activity. So, the first thing is learning that a negative review by a student or student at group isn't necessarily a bad thing. It might mean you're really on to something if they felt they were being pushed to do more, but the results will show for themselves that the learning was better.

Patience with Self

As with learning any new skill, patience with self is an important factor. Frustrations can build, doubts increase and the desire to quit grow significantly. While the participants all experienced variations of those feelings and doubts, they also had compassion towards themselves and now this was not something they just needed to keep attempting.

I think for me just getting comfortable with not having to be the expert in everything. I think it just comes with a little more maturity because I didn't have to know it all and if I make a mistake, I say that were in this journey together. I even say if I make a mistake please tell me because it's not about me or my ego and I got more comfortable with teaching.”

Another participant had to adapt more than just a pedagogy.

So honestly pushing through it has been more my personal level. So, when I think of confidence, I think of it in a more personal way, and as a teacher I've tried to think of it as using it as a space to explore. So, I've never been a teacher that like to be so planned out, but there's no room to change things. I always felt the best when I was a bit more spontaneous.

In trying new things, there is always the element of anticipating something going wrong. Using new technologies is certainly no exception. When using new technologies while teaching a class, glitches are obstacles that you cannot always plan for but know are coming.

I think the confidence is more about how I'm going to make this work and be confident with the content. If my video camera is gone, they can't see any power points I can speak it and describe anything that I need to.

Eventually, through patience and perseverance, successes mount and triumphs over technological use prevail. The old adage of if at first you don't succeed, try, try again becomes the mantra.

I think it's easier to teach with technology. You know I think trying new things is hard, so I just think it comes down to commitment of gaining confidence and realizing it's not one shot we have multiple opportunities.

Instructor Evaluation of Effectiveness

One of the ways this helped to build efficacy was through instructors' evaluation of the effectiveness of the course.

I think it's just trial and error. Trying some things and looking at comparable metrics from year to year looking at what was the arc of student learning. If I did have a quiz, what was the average quiz score from year to year. Is it a byproduct of me getting better as an instructor? generally I'd say that that is constant, that I don't improve. It's the

students who do a better job, but trying to figure it out, having comparative metrics from year to year. Not that everything is going to be the same, but then I can go back to a couple of old metrics to find out did learning change. In what ways did it change? Am I seeing a different depth on more essay responses? Are their papers changing? In trying to figure that out, in the context of student population changes, but at least having the idea that there is a greater likelihood that this is better or a greater likelihood that this wasn't as good. As you learn to do those things your confidence grows because you have a better sense that the things you're trying are actually working out.

Class Design

Course design are the elements of designing a course that participants were not confident in. The concepts that created this category was visual contact, ineffective pedagogy, and fears. Apprehension at the start of a new endeavor is not uncommon and adjusting to emerging distance learning technologies is no different. The dedication of careers to the caretaking of others is a great responsibility. The shoulders of those responsible for the training of those committed to providing this service carry the weight of a field that has a direct impact on those we serve. The concerns discussed in this study echo the seriousness of that responsibility, specifically in the apprehensions felt when looking at using new unproven methods. It is a daunting task ensuring successful student learning outcomes using untried approaches. It was that same conviction that looked at these apprehensions with a solution focused approach with creativity and ingenuity winning in the end.

Ineffective Pedagogies

During this time of adjustment and development, when apprehensions are at their highest, the fear of ineffective pedagogies was very real. It became important to listen to our

apprehensions, be clear about our goals and define what a successful outcome means. When evaluating the effectiveness of new pedagogies, being clear on what the learning outcomes are, is crucial. “I had very low confidence in my ability. I felt like my understanding of technology as far as using it in a distance learning setting and then teaching was minimal.” Rehabilitation counseling, like most counseling fields, relies on face-to-face interaction that gives far more information that exceeds verbal messaging. When faced with removing the face-to-face component, there was considerable doubt that the level of interaction and non-verbal communication would be lost.

I was worried it wouldn't feel like teaching, that it would feel more like administration and more advising because that's typically how I use email. I was afraid it wasn't going to have the give and take like an interesting conversation or allow me to learn from students more like I was just imparting information.

Fears

The participants mention other fears.

I also think there's fear of being replaced you think of the classic image of a college professor or something, which are fairly ridiculous. It's kind of like this expectation of education should look a certain way and if it doesn't look like that therefore we shouldn't do it.

Even while admitting that it is a ridiculous fear, there are apprehensions about where this is headed. While highly unlikely it would get to the point of being obsolete, there are real fears about absorption into the clinical counseling field, reducing available programs that specialize in rehabilitation counseling. Which is indeed, happening to some rehabilitation counseling programs.

Visual Contact

One of the ways to determine comprehension of content, is through nonverbal communication. Instructors scan faces for feedback. Are they confused? Do they seem to be understanding the constructs? In an online environment, that can be tricky to do.

I feel like I don't ever really do enough. I think it's because I don't get that interaction with their faces. I can't see their faces, so I have a hard time knowing how they're doing unless they tell me or unless I see that they're not turning in stuff or that they're struggling with stuff. I noticed that the quality of their work starts to decline, and I can reach out to them.

Another participant echoed the evolving sentiment in how instructors began to overcome that dilemma.

I definitely had doubts. I was very concerned like I said before, there are certain courses like those that involve group or counseling techniques that were probably our hardest ones. We went through several different modes of delivery. We revised how we presented it several different ways. We continue to do it, but I think we've come up with the Zoom interaction that works a lot better.

While virtual classrooms via Zoom or other environments, is not the same as sitting face to face in a classroom, it has made significant improvements and as noted in above sections. When used creatively either synchronously or asynchronously, can be quite useful and effective.

Personal Efficacy

The final category of personal efficacy speaks to overcoming the self-doubt that can plague even the most confident. The definition of personal efficacy was identified areas of self-doubt. There was one concept in this category. While this category has only a single concept, the

decision was that it can have a large impact on other the concepts. Resolving apprehensions in can simply be done by using it, educating yourself about it, and finding a way that works.

Having confidence in oneself to be able to use that approach in a meaningful way is another. Higher education in many ways has not changed. Institutions hire instructors to teach. Teaching involves lectures, assignments, and assessment. Now, in a period of technological advancements, there is a shift in the responsibilities of the instructor and participation in higher education. New responsibilities are emerging that require a different skill set of instructors. Engagement now takes on new characteristics and instructors must meet the challenge. A daunting task indeed.

Inadequate Effort

Another aspect of self-efficacy was in relation to feeling as though one puts in enough effort. In a group of people whose commitment in life is to be of service to others, the question of am I doing enough is often haunting. In an online environment setting boundaries on when to return emails, virtual office hours and availability to students brings on new meaning. In a time when people can contact their instructor day or night, the pull to respond despite the hour can be strong. In an online environment, communication is a crucial component and anxieties can raise in both instructor and student. Having to navigate all of that while learning new technologies, figuring out which pedagogies would support the greatest learning potential and finding the time to remain connected to students is daunting at best.

Summary

When combining all these components, the instructors who participated in this study could navigate through the obstacles thrown at them both technologically and psychologically and achieve optimal outcomes with their students. The way in which these pedagogies threaded

together through engagement, combining methods of communication and assignments when designing the course created the recipe for success and belief in one's ability that this is achievable. The one common theme needed in each of these components is persistence.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspective of instructors currently implementing distance learning pedagogies into master's in rehabilitation counseling programs. Included in this chapter is a discussion of findings as related to literature on distance learning and what implications may be of use for master's programs in rehabilitation counseling and their instructors. That chapter concludes with limitations of the study and recommendations for further research and a summary.

This chapter includes discussion and future research opportunities to continue the dialogue for the following research questions:

RQ1: Which distance learning pedagogies have shown to be most effective?

RQ2: As rehabilitation counseling master's programs continue to integrate distance learning pedagogies, what topics of discussion or concerns would you like to see the field address?

RQ3: When initially integrating distance learning as a pedagogy, were you confident in your ability to instruct students in learning counseling techniques through the internet?

The field of rehabilitation counseling emerged out of a nation's effort to aid those who struggle with any number of physical and mental disabilities. Rehabilitation counseling, in its infancy, and as a maturing profession, has remained committed to its foundation built on rigorous study and review of its methods of training and service delivery. This study was an effort to honor those who continue to train the next generation of rehabilitation counselors by listening. The voice of the instructor is one that rarely speaks in an open forum regarding their job and what it takes to do it. The research they conduct and the classes they teach typically

focus on service post-graduation. During this time of educational transition and adjustment, it is a perfect time to listen to those charged with the transitioning and adjusting.

This study focused on gaining the perspective and insight of educators who have experience in both face to face and distance learning. In analyzing the responses of 15 educators, a theme emerged in response to each research question. For research question one, pedagogy was identified as the theme. However, instead of participants identifying a favorite pedagogy, they depended on the synchronous and asynchronous approaches that allowed multiple pedagogies to be threaded together to achieve an educational goal. In research question two, what emerged was the need for a larger conversation that could allow the development of a strategic plan. The areas for discussion were identified by participants as necessary for the field to continue growing and evolving to remain current and competitive. For the third research question, perseverance in how participants worked through apprehensions and adapted to new pedagogies was the overarching theme. From that recommendations were identified to assist instructors in integrating distance learning approaches into course design as well as strategies to consider when training new faculty.

This researcher examined the responses to the questions from this study to identify common codes throughout the responses. From those codes, categories began to take shape and led to the three themes. All three themes stem from a commitment to not only academic rigor, but also from the challenge of instructing students in becoming competent well-rounded counselors, who will be responsible for serving some of our most vulnerable citizens. The task of teaching a skills-based program online, is not without challenges. Distance learning pedagogies forces instructors to step outside their comfort zone and expand their schemas or definitions of what it means to be an instructor. Rehabilitation counseling programs are slowly, thoughtfully,

and intentionally rising to meet the challenge. Every participant regardless of where they were at with implementation, acknowledged this is the future of education and experimented with different distance pedagogies to find the right fit. They indicated they would like to see the field take a more active role in identifying appropriate evidence-based approaches and a unified direction.

Interpretation of Findings

This section discusses the findings in relation to the themes as outlined in chapter four. Each theme discusses participant responses in relation to the literature and the impact on the field. The following is an exploration of how pedagogy, strategic plan and persistence have the potential to impact both post-secondary education as well as the field.

Pedagogy

This research question asked participants to identify a pedagogy they felt was effective. In alignment with Kiener and Koch (2012), consideration of rehabilitation educators should play an active role in how distance learning pedagogies integrate into rehabilitation counseling programs. Giving a voice to those on the front line implementing through trial and error, research, and training, are unlocking key pieces of needed insight into the realm of distance learning. What arose out of the discussion on choosing an effective pedagogy, was the consideration of three components. communication, assignment type, and supplemental resources threaded together to create the environment most conducive to achieving the learning outcomes.

When asked about a specific pedagogy, rather than answer with a single choice, each participant listed several pedagogies used in collaboration. Responses indicated that it wasn't the pedagogy per say, but in how it was combined with another and in whether it was used in a

synchronous or asynchronous way. The answers depended on either the educational goal or the learned skill and the ongoing engagement of the student. The focus landed more on “what am I trying to do” rather than “this is my favorite pedagogy.” Often what came from their responses was the awareness of how the successful acquisition of foundational knowledge and mastery of counseling skills would directly impact those who rehabilitation counselors serve. This added responsibility impacted decisions and thoroughness of course evaluations when determining how effective each pedagogical choice was. What appeared to be most useful was to allow the student to synthesize and learn the knowledge of the topic in an asynchronous format and then come together in a synchronous environment to discuss and process what they were learning. Whether it was a discussion board that had tight response times to allow for the instructor to immediately respond in a conversation like manner or a video class session, the goal was to come together to discuss what they were learning in different ways. For example, the discussion of the case study broken down in a discussion thread or video submissions of their responses typically would follow up with some sort of group discussion via a video session.

It was also an area of struggle for some who felt the weight of the responsibility to figure this out but was unsure as to the right combination of pedagogies to capture the outcome they were looking for. Some continue to use tried and true pedagogies like midterms, finals, and papers for the more didactic content but also admitted they were not sure it was still the best approach. The way the participants worked through the weight of this responsibility and the challenges faced to uphold academic integrity and interpersonal priorities of the field supports the ideas of Main and Dziekan (2012).

Degiorgio et al. (2011) reported that even with video conferencing on platforms like Zoom, students had difficulty reading nonverbal communication and body language. In this

study, while visual observation of nonverbal language was a barrier to overcome, many participants were able to combine pedagogies to mitigate the problem. They observed that the use of video sessions, video submissions and recorded lectures, were highly successful when paired with synchronous discussion boards or video class sessions. The ability to observe the recordings repeatedly, on their own time to develop thorough and thoughtful guidance was seen as an advantage over face-to-face environments where there isn't much time to process what you are seeing for effective feedback. In addition, it was stated that engaging in immediate feedback on the discussion threads while the students were online, sent the message that the instructor is there to talk with you and interested in what you have to say. Again, the use of integrating synchronous and asynchronous pedagogies appeared to be the underlying component that contributed to a successful pedagogical choice. Utilizing these different approaches, allowed instructors to identify areas where non-verbal actions were vague or ambiguous and then following up with students to discuss what was going on and why. It is possible that due to the multiple opportunities the students are asked to communicate and connect with one another, they were able to get to know each other and could better read the non-verbal language of one another thus reducing the problem to some degree. What was consistent was that engaging and interacting visually with students was of high concern and as a result, creative ways mitigated the barrier of distance.

Another question in the interview asked what courses they felt were most appropriate for distance learning. Participants answered not by course name but content type. They identified courses as either didactic, skills based or practicum and internship. Eight out of fifteen responses specifically identified didactic courses as most appropriate. The participants mentioned a hybrid course for skills-based courses 4 times as opposed to a complete hybrid program that was

mentioned 4 times. One participant did not feel any of the courses were appropriate for distance learning and two participants felt the entire program could be online.

While there was some who thought it was possible, some were hesitant in the mechanics involved. There was concern centered around this question: Can we effectively educate and mentor our students into becoming competent and confident counselors? For rehabilitation counseling specific courses on job development, and medical aspects and career counseling, are students able to master the skills necessary to be effective? Some were confident they could, others hesitant but believed they could do it, while others felt it could be done using a hybrid approach and one participant did not think it was possible.

Strategic Plan

When exploring the research question two, this researcher was attempting to ascertain the recommendations and cautions from those on the front line. What are their perceptions of this new direction and more importantly, having direct experience with it, what do they recommend? Their responses were full of both suggestions and cautions. It was clear throughout the responses that the participants wanted to join in a larger dialogue with colleagues that could lead to the creation of a stronger unified vision. The field of rehabilitation counseling is a field that shifts in unison with changing job markets, advancements in treatments and congressional oversight. Not only do rehabilitation counselors have to keep up with the changing times, but the master's programs that train them must also stay on top of these changing trends. For the participants, what would be helpful, was a mutually agreed upon vision or strategic plan that identified gaps, researched instructional best practices, and aligned with licensure and certification standards.

The categories that made up strategic planning were course design, planning, and evaluation. These three components were important for the field to discover best practices,

identify gaps in programming related to issues like changing trends and what qualifies for licensure and certification. There was a desire to identify a unified direction as well as strategies that would allow for an autonomous approach to achieve the relevant training objectives for rehabilitation counseling.

Concerning the integration of master's programs in rehabilitation counseling with clinical counseling programs, the struggle for professional identity grows even stronger. In this changing environment and the continued adaptation that the field of rehabilitation counseling continues to make, a unified plan reaffirming the commitment to the stewardship of the profession of rehabilitation counseling seems fitting. During an unprecedented time of pedagogical adjustment and online adaptation, might rehabilitation counseling programs take the lead in creating an approach to course design that holds up the professional and clinical standards of a skills-based counseling program?

The participants all echoed in their responses the dissonance felt when contrasting Degiorgio et al. (2011) and Rudestam (2004). The desire to embrace change while holding on to what is familiar and known was a challenge all participants seemed to speak to in different ways. It was clear that they recognized a need to adapt but also struggled to assimilate new pedagogies into existing schemas of post-secondary education. While some found that easier than others, the question of using new technologies as a new medium to establish relationships was difficult to figure out. For Rudestam (2004), he found it ironic that instructors hold on tight to the importance of instructor/student interaction that happens in the classroom as a defining attribute in pedagogy yet fail to recognize the lack of interaction that comes from lecturing and note taking. The responses that asked the field to begin the conversation on the potential of distance learning pedagogies and shift our perspective from apprehension to a more positive consideration

of possibilities seems to both align and deviate to some degree with this thinking. Participants in this study, while they may have aligned with that thinking originally have been able to work through it to embrace this change with creativity and perseverance.

Persistence

Research question three focused on participant self-report on self-efficacy. How did participants perceive their abilities to be effective utilizing new pedagogies and did they notice a difference in student motivation or participation? The participants spoke of varied degrees of confidence. However, instead of remaining in a place of doubt or allowing feelings of being overwhelmed to dismiss the need to move forward, they all channeled their energy on the old adage of if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. The most common approach was to utilize available training on campus and advice from colleagues, and then dive right in and try.

For many of the participants, trial and error was the most common approach used in improving their confidence in using new approaches. For these participants, evaluating student feedback and assessment scores were not just for student and instructor performance, but for effectiveness of pedagogies as well. Participants gained valuable insight on pedagogy effectiveness when comparing feedback from face-to-face courses vs. distance courses when using the same assignment but administering it differently or attempting the same learning objective through different means.

Increased expectations of new faculty having experience in distance learning and to begin utilizing these methods upon hiring, it is important to discuss how programs can support new faculty in this process. Horvitz et al. (2015) advocated for the needed support training and guiding of educators during their careers. The author stated that the more support and guidance offered, the more likely they are to stick with it and persist through the challenges.

Some participants expressed a fear that distance learning pedagogies would not be adequate to teach counseling techniques. This appears to be in support of the concern spoken by Wantz et al. (2003) on whether skills-based or techniques courses could be in an online format. Doubting whether a student can learn to develop a counselor's affect and working alliance while synthesizing the symptoms of disabilities in relation to employment necessary to build the kind of relationship needed for success as discussed in Colling and Davis (2005) seemed to align. However, while participants shared this concern, it was not a deterrent in finding a solution.

What was interesting in the persistence finding was that it helped to clarify self-efficacy theory that informed the methodological framework. The theory of self-efficacy was a component of theoretical sensitivity that this researcher leaned on to help understand what was being shared. According to Bandura (2012), when self-efficacy is low one is less likely to find a way through the obstacle they face. They become convinced of the futility of the effort and decide not to follow through. Both Bandura (2012) and Olson and Appunn (2017) purported that cultivating one's capabilities comes with mastery of experience, social modeling, social persuasion, and their physical and emotional state. Participants, though not feeling confident regarding the use of technology into their pedagogical approaches, were high in self-efficacy. They resorted to trial and error, seeking out colleagues, and understanding that social norms in relation to the use of technology was shifting. In turn participants resolved to keep at it regardless of their initial apprehensions and continued until they found the right combination that would meet the educational goals of the class.

The conclusion drawn is that while one might not feel confident, it does not necessarily mean that they lack self-efficacy. One can be apprehensive yet still believe in their ability to master the task at hand. The larger influence was student and university expectations coupled

with the participants commitment to figure it out. This aligns with Bandura (1977) and Horvitz et al. (2015) who purported that those with increased self-efficacy were more likely to increase their effort when faced with negative expectations. Horvitz, et. al. (2015) further stated that the level of effort an instructor applies in effectively incorporating and becoming proficient in distance learning pedagogies is directly related to their self-efficacy. However, the earlier an instructor receives training in distance learning methods, the more likely they are to continue to use it. The participants persistence and support of training new faculty supports the conclusions drawn by Horvitz et al. (2015).

According to participant perception, their apprehensions or changing of course methodologies did not impact student performance or motivation. When asked, participants noted that student engagement and performance seemed unaffected regardless of environment. One participant did state that the online environment appeared to alert them to minimal engagement at a faster rate than face to face. Being able to monitor when students are online and for how long allowed participants to engage with underperforming students earlier than prior semesters. In this way, distance learning pedagogies allowed for participants to help resolve student performance and engagement issues before they became problematic.

Implications for Master's Programs in Rehabilitation Counseling

The increasing number of programs offering distance learning options is increasing. Distance learning pedagogies represent not only technological advancements, but also a shifting in how administrations, the public, and potential students conceptualize higher education. When advancements occur in other sectors of society, an expectation arises that higher education should be at the forefront or at least on par with these developments. If it is the wave of the

future, then it is reasonable to assume that a graduate degree should inform the student on how these advances influence and alter the field.

The implications for the field of rehabilitation counseling are three-fold; recruitment, professional identity, and meeting the needs of the field. When any entity anticipates a change in direction, a strategic plan is often used to ensure the adherence to their mission, values, and goals. The findings of this study reinforce this notion. The theme of strategic plan implies a necessity to address the need for planning and unification. When members of a group recognize the need for discussion and direction, the question should be, what happens if they do not? Transition is an opportunity to go through file cabinets, hard drives and now clouds to purge that which is no longer useful or relevant to make room for what is coming. Higher education is tasked with being in the forefront of advancing knowledge ensuring students have the latest ideas and merging trends in the field. Enrollment in distance learning programs is increasing. If potential students perceive rehabilitation counseling as resistant to changing trends, they may opt for a different specialization. Why attend a school using first-generation methods of teaching when the rest of the world is using generation 10? Higher education is about academics and learning, but it is also like a product that a potential student is opting to buy. With that in mind, might there be a shift in how the field thinks about recruitment?

Most programs agreed that they have the resources and support necessary at this time. However, by incorporating a component for future developments into the strategic plan and developing a system that anticipates advancements and sets aside the means to purchase them when available will fortify the ability to remain so. Annual or bi-annual conversations with information technology departments perceptions on upcoming trends and the direction the university is heading would help to anticipate future demands.

Another aspect of recruitment is in the area of accessibility and accommodations. Distance learning pedagogies helps to remove many barriers for potential students. It also can create barriers that did not exist before. Dziekan and Main (2012), Glenn (2001), Kiener and Koch (2012), Johnson et al. (2000), Pertacchi (2000), and Rosenbaum (2001) all spoke to how distance learning provides for more flexibility and opens up new opportunities for many people who otherwise would not have access to higher education or who have various challenges. Jones et al. (2011) indicated that student engagement increases in the online platform for those who are comfortable and skilled in writing, use of technology, are self-motivated, and self-disciplined enough to stay on task without the need for face-to-face interaction. While that is an improvement for those conditions, one could also argue that it creates barriers for those who are not. Potential students come from a variety of backgrounds and geographical areas. For example, they can be older, have more experience in the field and are currently employed. Older students, however, are less likely to be familiar with the latest technological advancements, familiar with online learning systems and tend to have a larger learning curve when attempting to use technology. In addition, there is potential for new accommodations to address visual or attention related barriers when attending to a computers screen. Are departments ready to address these barriers? Do they have on campus supports or partnerships with vocational rehabilitation bureaus to assist in addressing barriers?

Professional identity is an issue the field of rehabilitation counseling has struggled with for decades. It now seems, according to participants, with the adoption into CACREP, the threat of absorption by clinical counseling programs is now a reality for some programs. The need to differentiate from other programs and highlight the specialization of rehabilitation is more important than ever. An area rehabilitation counseling programs could rise above is in partnering

with certification and licensure boards to help inform the decisions on requirements and accepted forms of training. This would help position the field as a contributor in creating and adhering to industry standards. This could be of use as a recruitment tool for potential students.

Rehabilitation counseling was once at the forefront of establishing industry standards. This period of transition could be an opportunity to rise to the top. Through creative innovation, embracing change, and establishing evidence for new practices, the field could re-invent rehabilitation counseling as a state-of-the-art system of support and change for persons with disabilities. In making these adaptations to assist students, the benefit is not just in using distance learning environments but also inspires students to creatively applying virtual technologies in providing direct service to clients. A necessary new trend in light of the current pandemic is in developing virtual services to individuals with disabilities that assists in their adapting to new methods of work environments.

Forums with public and private vocational rehabilitation programs could be used to discuss current barriers in providing service. Forums not just with directors and leadership, but with those providing the direct service. This could inform graduate programs to changing needs of the counselors who are having to adapt their skills to meet the evolving demands of the field. Creating a true partnership with academia and the field through ongoing annual dialogue through regional forums with representation from all aspects of the vocational rehabilitation field would be unprecedented. While surveys are often the tool utilized, they can have poor return rates and responses designed to get them through the survey instead of thoughtful consideration.

Beginning a dialogue with chosen representatives tasked with gaining the thoughts and ideas of their colleagues to bring to a national conversation would create an atmosphere of collaboration ensuring the hearing of all voices. The opportunity to participate would be a great

responsibility and honor bestowed upon those invested in the future of rehabilitation and succession. With the ability of video conferencing and organizing it regionally and having regional delegates participate in a national conversation, there would be little to no overhead costs involved outside of time.

Implications for Instructors

The implications center on implementation and determining effective methods of evaluation of pedagogy. Instructors in rehabilitation counseling have the task of applying the above ideals while also considering service delivery applications in the field. While dialogue is necessary to inform the vision and direction of the field, it is the instructor's job to put the plan into action and measure effectiveness. Creating a class that contributes to the fulfillment of a program must adhere to professional and academic standards and integrity. The methods of delivery, synchronous vs. asynchronous environments, types of assessment and assignment all must work together to ensure the highest standard of learning and retention. While that is not new, it is challenging. Instructors today have the task of expanding their determining the best pedagogical approach and developing a method of measurement.

Participants reported improved engagement when utilizing video sessions, video submissions, and synchronous discussion board dialogue. Creative assignments and recorded lectures that allowed for students to review information and work collaboratively kept students engaged and participating in the class structure. Main and Dziekan (2012) found that students who participated in hybrid courses outperformed other students on exams, had more meaningful contributions in class discussions, wrote higher quality papers and projects. Being open and flexible to try new approaches and keep at it was the secret to the participants success with distance learning. While they admitted they feel as though they are still learning and figuring it

out, it would seem they are clear in the direction of incorporating distance learning pedagogies into their programs.

What was also clear is the lack of research in the evaluation of methodologies. Instructors have an opportunity to make considerable contributions to literature in rehabilitation counseling that addresses instructional best practices. When implementing pedagogical changes to course design, instructors should consider the impact of what they are learning individually to the larger community.

Implications for Future Research

Research is also needed in instructional evidence-based practice. Research on pedagogy typically is on didactic courses, types of learners or learning theories. Outcomes that compare face to face instruction to distance learning formats show no significant differences in learning outcomes. Students are pre- and post- tested and asked about their experiences. (Main & Dziekan, 2012, Holmes & Reid, 2019, Nerlich et al., 2012) The responses from participants seem to indicate the same. While this study relied on the perspective of the instructor, they did not see a difference in student performance.

There was a consistent acknowledgement that while there is a lot of focus that centers on best practices for counselors to use when working with clients, using literature on pedagogical design was lacking. When researching the literature, most forms of evaluation of effectiveness relied on student feedback upon course completion (Main & Dziekan, 2012, Holmes & Reid, 2019, Nerlich et al., 2012). A draw back to this approach is that it relies on student feedback who have no other experiences to compare it to. Students take a course one time. A course like counseling techniques is different face to face than other more traditional didactic courses. So, to

compare a skills-based distance course to a didactic face to face experience leads one to question if that is the best form of pedagogical evaluation.

Participants in this study developed their own approaches when evaluating a change in pedagogical approach. It appears that methodologies of evaluation are being established that could inform a larger study on instructional best practice. This is another area of expertise that rehabilitation counseling could rise to the challenge of and lead the counseling field in establishing effective course design for skills-based classes. As models begin to emerge from all fields, specific adaptations may need to be made for vocational rehabilitation courses and service delivery. Researchers in vocational rehabilitation programs have a unique perspective that would enrich and enhance emerging trends.

Implications for Clinical Practices

Practitioners of rehabilitation counseling as with most counseling professions are in a period of transition from face-to-face service delivery to virtual. Rehabilitation counselors are faced with not only providing vocational counseling in a virtual format but also working with partners to implement virtual services like job readiness, vocational training and job placement. The complexities faced by clients of rehabilitation counselors potentially add additional barriers that must be mitigated. Understanding new approaches to accommodations, assistive technologies and other supports is critical in their effectiveness in supporting individuals navigating barriers to employment.

Rehabilitation counseling students attending graduate school in a virtual format can be given assignments to create new ways of providing service online as well as face to face. Being given assignments that challenge them to create virtual service models can empower new

counselors to think about their vocation in new and exciting ways. It can open up creative approaches that will move the field forward.

In addition, vocational rehabilitation programs provide clinical supervision to their counselors and interns. Rehabilitation counselors with experience in utilizing distance learning pedagogies are better equipped to help inform the field on effective methods for virtual supervision. Again, in this current moment in the pandemic, the field is having to adapt immediately to a virtual environment. Having management teams informed on effective virtual supervision strategies improves the quality of services being provided and allows for the continued professional development of rehabilitation counselors.

As new distance learning pedagogies are tried and adjusted to meet educational goals, the capturing of ongoing data could occur that continues to evaluate the effectiveness across programs. Lund and Schultz (2015) discussed how most literature in the field of rehabilitation counseling on clinical supervision are either opinion or theoretical. With the creative approaches currently implemented there is a real opportunity for the creation of foundational evidence that the field can build on.

Recommendations

A grounded theory qualitative study does not produce findings that prove causation or relationships. It allows for voices to be heard from those tasked with implementing and evaluating new pedagogies and to discover commonalities among identified practices. Taking this approach adds to the conversation in a very specific way that opens the door for further research. As the field moves forward, expanding foundational knowledge in key areas of educational and field pursuits is necessary.

In previous chapters, this researcher identified areas of theoretical sensitivity and personal experiences that had the potential to impact the outcome of this research. Throughout this process, steps were taken to reduce the impact of personal bias and prior knowledge. Notes were taken during interviews, consultation with academic advisors and colleagues also assisted in remaining objective. While this study contributed to the overall knowledge of the field, additional research utilizing quantitative research methods are needed to provide empirical support for successful implementation of distance learning pedagogies.

Further research is warranted in three areas, instructional best practices, virtual service delivery, and strategies for clinical supervision. The first is to establish instructional best-practices. Methods of evaluation for course effectiveness, mastery of skill, and instructor performance are needed to ensure compliance to educational and professional standards. Second, is in virtual service delivery approaches that capitalizes on the latest trends in accommodations and assistive technology. One approach could be utilizing students in rehabilitation counseling programs who could be given assignments or research projects focused on developing and maximizing the virtual environment to support client success. Thirdly, strategies that rehabilitation counseling programs use to provide clinical supervision to their students, could be adapted and implemented in the field. This would give post-secondary institutions another vehicle to partner with vocational rehabilitation service providers to provide professional development training in clinical supervision.

Another recommendation is to allow doctoral students opportunities to develop, research and implement above mentioned strategies. This would assist in their own professional development of utilizing distance learning pedagogies and environments. Thus, giving the

doctoral student an advantage when applying for faculty positions as well as an advantage for the institutions hiring them.

The pandemic and uncertainty of the future with regard to face-to-face instruction, is unprecedented. The field of rehabilitation counseling could be positioned to lead the nation on redesigning pedagogies as well as service delivery models for instruction and for the field. Never before have counselors had to transition overnight to providing vocational counseling via the internet. Graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling are in an ideal position to advocate and give guidance to the field and help shape the future of vocational rehabilitation. A national conversation that listens to all voices at all levels, instructors, students, administrations, state directors, managers, counselors, support staff in public and private settings, technical centers and the Rehabilitation Services Administration all should be heard. Nine eleven data should be used to lead discussions and to ask hard questions. Identify gaps of knowledge for field counselors stemming from changes in the labor markets and federal production goals and strategies for referral development to meet economic and societal restrictions as well as the changing needs of labor.

The need for guidance in vocational rehabilitation is high. Collaboration with higher education could be a means to pull down additional federal dollars, training grants and other funding streams to assist in forming a strategic plan and look at systemic change. For vocational rehabilitation to remain relevant in this climate of change, where other employer driven agencies are beginning to serve persons with disabilities, leadership is needed.

Understanding the decision-making process, the considerations that are made when designing a course, and having the persistence needed to continue adapting, editing and trying

new things is needed. Creativity and an open mind will be crucial during these trying times. The field of vocational rehabilitation is in a very good place to move this effort forward.

Limitations

This study interviewed 15 instructors from graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling across the country. While this is a small sample, it was noted that saturation had been met. It should also be noted that the interviews were conducted in the weeks prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States. It was days after the last interview when most colleges and universities switched to an online format in what seemed, overnight. The impact of current events may have had an impact on participation. While distance learning pedagogies prior to COVID-19 was a choice, the pandemic instantly turned it into a demand.

The research questions were designed to illicit the perspective of instructors faced with implementing new distance learning pedagogies. However, the wording of the research questions lacked refinement and direction. While the categories regarding pedagogy, recommendations and concerns, and understanding how self-efficacy played a role would remain as the targeted areas to explore, the wording of the research questions would be more open ended and succinct.

Conclusion

Choosing a distance learning pedagogy for a master's skills-based course can be a complicated and difficult decision. Multiple considerations are necessary such as learning objectives, engagement, assessment for mastery of knowledge and application. It is not enough for a student to know a theory. An instructor must also assess their ability to create a working alliance and use theoretical interventions effectively when working with clients. What is the best way of assessing their growing level of expertise? How can one explore opportunities to practice in an online environment? As technology advances and offers more sophisticated avenues to

reach students, pedagogical choice takes on new meaning. Evaluation of new approaches must occur for their effectiveness and decisions made on best practices.

Other considerations come into play as departments are integrating, redesigning, and streamlining what kinds of counseling degrees to offer. This poses an added level of consideration for rehabilitation counseling. The specialization of rehabilitation counseling must find a way to remain relevant and visible in the sea of specialties. Potential counseling students today have many options when deciding on an area of specialization. While they may not be familiar yet with the word pedagogy, it is one of the criteria in their deciding factors. Does the program they are interested in have the kind of flexibility they need? What they are really asking is, has the program I am interested in adapted their pedagogies to the changing times? In answering this question, is there enough empirical support to back up the pedagogical decisions? If not, what is necessary? Are there gaps in best practice research that would help inform decisions?

This study discovered three different important pieces of information that when threaded together, creates an approach to curriculum development that provides innovative methods of disseminating knowledge and demonstration of mastery of skill. This study explored how pedagogical choices are necessary and how instructors have pushed through their apprehensions to create unique ways of engaging students. In addition to that this study revealed that there is a strong interest in a unified vision and approach on the integration of distance learning pedagogies and the direction of the field of rehabilitation counseling.

Professional identity is an area that the field of rehabilitation counseling has struggled with. This is a moment in time that offers a unique opportunity to reinvent our approach to learning, student engagement, and program content as it relates to the changing needs of

supporting the workforce environment. Throughout this study, the one underlying theme that was evident and moving, was the level of dedication to the students, the field and individuals with disabilities. The field of rehabilitation counseling has many components, federal and state legislation, private providers of vocational rehabilitation, public vocational rehabilitation programs, community rehabilitation organizations, technical guidance centers, centers for independent living, and academia. In finding a way to come together to prioritize emerging factors, changes in labor market trends, and forecasting the future of employment, the field of rehabilitation counseling could showcase itself as a cutting-edge specialization attracting potential students interested in empowering individuals of various abilities towards gainful employment.

For post-secondary education, changes in the demands of the workforce, socio-economic pressures, and family obligations of potential students are a few of the additional pressures that influence the changing direction departments and universities must take. Potential students have a great deal to consider when contemplating graduate school as well as the direction they want to take their careers. Counseling for one, has many different areas of specialization to choose from. As times are shifting, so must higher education. The time is now to rise to the challenge of change. Increasing capabilities of technology and student expectations are leading the way to creative and innovative ways to impart wisdom, empower knowledge, and mentor the up and coming. Coming together to identify, design, and implement is an approach that could lead this field into the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Michigan State University

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Study Title: Distance learning pedagogy in Rehabilitation Counseling: Recommendations and Cautions from the front line.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Michael Leahy

Student Researcher: Tammi Williams

IRB Study Number:

I am a student at Michigan State University, in the Department of Rehabilitation Counselor Education. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what I will ask you to do if you decide to be in this study, and the way I would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

Why are you doing this study?

You are being asked to participate in a research study about distance learning and its impact on graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling.

The purpose of the study is to gain the insight from professors who have taught both online and face to face. Through this study, we will explore in greater detail how we integrate technology into our classrooms while maintaining ethical and professional commitments to society and our students as they practice and hone these skills, while maintaining CACREP standards in the process.

What will I do if I choose to be in this study?

You will be asked to complete an interview composed of 25 semi structured questions. Twenty Professors from the top twenty rehabilitation counselor master's programs will be chosen from the US News and World Report. Preferably, professors will have taught both face to face and online, have both taught clinical courses and have clinical experience.

Study time: Study participation will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Study location: All study procedures will take place via Zoom.

I may quote your remarks in presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym will be used to protect your identity, unless you specifically request that you be identified by your true name.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality of the information we collect from you could be breached – we will take steps to minimize this risk, as discussed in more detail below in this form.

What are the possible benefits for me or others?

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things that will help others.

How will you protect the information you collect about me, and how will that information be shared?

Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, all participants will be given an ID number. No other identifying information will be obtained.

We may share the data we collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers – if we share the data that we collect about you, we will remove any information that could identify you before we share it.

If we think that you intend to harm yourself or others, we will notify the appropriate people with this information.

Financial Information

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

What are my rights as a research participant?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free not to. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about this research study?

If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researchers at:

Tammi Williams

Dr. Michael Leahy

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following office at Michigan State University:

Institutional Review Board and Compliance Offices
Michigan State University
4000 Collins Rd. STE 136
Lansing, MI 48910
Phone: (517) 355-2180
Email: irb@ora.msu.edu

Consent

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.

Consent for use of contact information to be contacted about participation in other studies

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to allow the researchers to use my contact information collected during this study to contact me about participating in future research studies.

_____ (initial) I do not agree to allow the researchers to use my contact information collected during this study to contact me about participating in future research studies.

Participant's Name (printed)

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: EMAIL INVITATION

Dear Professor,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I'm conducting for my dissertation at Michigan State University under the supervision of Dr. Leahy. My goal is to interview approx. 20 faculty for this study. Dr. Leahy and I have carefully identified the potential sample for this study. The purpose for this study is to explore the recommendations and cautions of educators who have integrated distance learning pedagogies. Your participation will provide critical information useful in our understanding of how to thoughtfully integrate distance learning pedagogies into graduate level programs in rehabilitation counseling.

Interviews will be no longer than one hour in length and will take place via zoom. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. Please respond to the attached questionnaire and consent forms. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and return the consent for participation and demographic questions to this email.

Your identity will be kept confidential. The researcher will assign you a number at the beginning of the interview and keep that number with your responses. Your participation is completely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question as well as stop participating at any time. If at any point you wish to discontinue, the information collected will not be used in the analysis and results of this project.

Thank you for your consideration! Please contact this researcher with any questions or if you are willing to participate. You can contact this researcher via email at or by phone at. Again, your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Tammi Williams
PhD Candidate
Michigan State University

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ Participant: _____

Course Load:

1. What is the makeup of your course load?
2. Are resources used differently in an DL format than face to face?
3. Have courses that utilize DL pedagogies impacted your flexibility?
4. Has your workload changed since integrating distance learning pedagogies?
 1. How is preparing for an online class different than face to face?
 2. How has utilizing DL pedagogies impacted your work?
5. Have you found DL to be as effective as teaching in the classroom?

Pedagogy:

6. Are there certain classes that DL pedagogies are better suited for?
7. Which DL pedagogies have shown to be most effective?
8. How do you evaluate the mastery of topic or skill when utilizing DL pedagogy?
9. How can master's programs in rehabilitation counseling most effectively utilize distance learning?
10. If given the choice, would you continue to utilize distance learning for classes you feel it is appropriate?
11. As rehabilitation counseling master's programs continue to integrate distance learning pedagogies, what topics of discussion or concerns would you like to see the field embark in?

Self-Efficacy:

12. When initially integrating distance learning as a pedagogy, how confident were you in your ability to instruct students in learning counseling techniques via the internet?

1. What helped build your confidence in this new pedagogical approach?
2. What lessons learned have helped hone your skills in distance learning pedagogies?
3. What advice do you have to faculty when integrating distance learning into their pedagogical approach?

13. Does DL pedagogies impact how satisfied you are with your job?

14. How does DL pedagogies impact your ability to get to know your students as compared to face to face instruction?

Technological Support:

15. How many colleagues utilize distance learning pedagogy?

16. Is there a support system among colleagues utilizing distance learning?

17. How has technological reliability i.e., support and stability impacted your ability to be effective with DL?

18. I am satisfied with the use of communication tools in the online environment (e.g., chat rooms, threaded discussions, etc.)?

Student Engagement:

19. Has DL increased your level of interactions with students versus face-to-face environments?

20. Has DL impacted student motivation?

Program Support:

21. What can administrators in distance education programs do to improve distance learning program quality and success?
22. Has the implementation of DL pedagogies improved service to students?
23. Has the department been supportive of faculty who use DL?
24. Has the department provided the assistance needed to use DL effectively?
25. Does the institution have the resources that it needs to use DL effectively?

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer each of the following questions.

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. Does your program offer any courses online?
3. What courses do you teach?
4. How many classes have been:
 - a. Face to face:
 - b. Online
 - c. Blended

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

- Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs or CACREP
accredits master's and doctoral degree programs in counseling and related fields ensuring they meet established standards in the counseling profession (CACREP, 2020).
- Distance Learning
“Institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors” (Simonson, M & Seepersaud, D.J., 2018, p. 1).
- E'learning
Private sector reference to distance learning, also referred to as e'training (Simonson, M & Seepersaud, D.J., 2018).
- Evidence Based Practice
“The integration of best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences” (APA Presidential Task Force on EBP, 2006, p. 272).
- Online Learning/Online Education
Reference to distance learning primarily used in Higher education (Simonson, M & Seepersaud, D.J., 2018).
- Self-Efficacy
One's belief in one's capacity to succeed in learning new behaviors to successfully perform or complete a task (Bandura, A. 1977).

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