A Qualitative Study of Doctoral Student Supervisory Development

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Doctoral students in a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited program are required to have training in clinical supervision. Frequently doctoral counseling programs have a supervision practicum course designed to facilitate student development into a supervisor. This qualitative research utilized a collective case study approach to gather descriptions of the experiences doctoral students found most useful about their supervision training. Doctoral students enrolled in a supervision practicum course were asked to describe their experiences as supervisors in training through a semi-structured interview approach. Three broad themes emerged from the data: Facilitation of Development, Formation of Supervisory Style, and Supervisory Roles. Descriptions of the themes and specific experiences doctoral students identified as contributing to their development are explored.

Suggested reference:


Keywords: Counselor Supervision • Supervisory Roles • Practicum Supervision

Mental health practitioners acknowledge that clinical supervision is a vital and important part of preparing clinicians. Publications about clinical supervision have increased dramatically since 1980 (Bernard, 2005), yet little attention has been given in the literature to the training and preparation of clinical supervisors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Milne & James, 2002; Scott, Ingram, Vitanza, & Smith, 2000).

There is evidence that supervision is gaining recognition as an integral piece of training counseling practitioners. For example, many credentialing bodies and licensing boards monitor the practice of supervision. Several accrediting bodies, including CACREP now require training in clinical supervision as part of the curriculum (Bernard &

Goodyear, 2009; CACREP, 2010). This is evidence that helping professionals understand the value of well trained clinical supervisors. While we do have some idea about who is being trained in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Bernard, 2005; Scott, et al., 2000), we don’t know a lot about the specific nature of that training or what pieces of that training are useful in helping new supervisors feel prepared to take on the role of supervisor. The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of how supervisees transition to supervisors and what was helpful in preparing them for the transition.

**Literature Review**

According to CACREP, the doctoral curriculum requires training in supervision theory and practice. In addition, the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) codes of ethics emphasize that counselors should receive training for services they provide including supervision. Although the importance of the supervisory process is widely accepted, there has been little invested into the research of doctoral students’ development into supervisors (Baker, Exum, & Tyler, 2002; Nelson, Oliver, & Capps, 2006). Generating a greater literature body to investigate the transition of a doctoral student into a supervisor would enhance the research base and underscore the importance of supervisor training.

Nelson et al. (2006) conducted a qualitative research project exploring the experience of becoming a supervisor. Participants included 13 doctoral counseling students who participated in individual and group interviews. After analyzing the data, six themes emerged: Learning, supervisee growth, individual uniqueness, reflection, connections, and putting it all together. The participants found that academic learning helped them in knowing theories and models to utilize as a supervisor, while experiential learning helped them hone their skills and aided in their development of personal and professional identity. Acquisition of an identity led them to better understand that supervision focuses on the supervisee and facilitates both parties personal and professional growth through a working relationship. Being able to watch either themselves on a recorded video or others followed by a discussion group was a useful learning tool in the program as well. Likewise, reflection was seen as an important component to the doctoral students’ training, for deliberating on the experience leads to a more thorough understanding and critique so that in the future the same experience may be improved upon. Their reflections resulted in realizations about themselves and made them intentionally and actively aware of what is involved in becoming supervisor. Nelson et al. (2006) found that doctoral supervisors eventually felt comfortable in the supervisory role, which is marked by less structure, a decreased reliance on external resources, and decreased anxiety about supervision.
In a similar study, Baker, Exum, and Tyler (2002) wanted to assess the development of doctoral supervisors in a supervision training program. All 19 of the participants were enrolled in a counselor Ph.D. program, where 12 of the students were members of a supervision practicum, and 7 of the participants were not. Baker, et al. (2002) extended the work of Watkins on supervisor development (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995). Watkins (1993) identified supervisor development through the supervisor complexity model (SCM), which is composed of four stages, “(a) role shock, (b) role recovery and transition, (c) role consolidation, and (d) role mastery” (as cited in Baker, et al. (2002), p. 16). As supervisors-in-training deal with the demands and responsibilities of their new role they progress through each stage accordingly. In order to empirically test the SCM, Watkins et al. (1995) developed the Psychotherapy Supervisor Development Scale (PSDS) as a means to measure and track one’s progress through the four stages of the SCM (as cited in Baker, et al. (2002), pp. 16-17). Accordingly, Baker, et al. (2002) implemented the PSDS as a quantitative measure of supervisor development and then also incorporated interview questions as a qualitative measure. Their PSDS results were congruent with Watkins’ (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995) in that students have a greater confidence in their supervisory interactions over time, which comes from their extensive and intensive training in supervision. In addition, when comparing the scores on the PSDS of the doctoral supervisors to that of the control group (7 doctoral students not enrolled in supervision practicum), the results suggested that maturation of supervisory skills is accelerated and enhanced through the training program. Lastly, the qualitative interview questions revealed the supervisors-in-training experienced the most growth in their cognitive understanding of the supervisory role and in their skill set.

It was believed that experience as a counselor and as a supervisee was sufficient enough for becoming a supervisor. It was also assumed that counseling skills could be transferred to a supervisor role and supervisees could model their supervisors. Accreditation bodies do not think that experiencing the supervisory role second-hand is enough to qualify someone to be a supervisor; rather they want specialized training for students to prepare them for the role (Baker, et al., 2002; CACREP, 2010). Supervisors are a tool that helps to create effective counselors. Providing doctoral students the necessary training to become competent and proficient counseling supervisors is a part of their professional development and gaining their professional identity (Baker, et al., 2002; Nelson, et al., 2006).

Ultimately, the counseling community’s primary interest is doing what is right for the client, and a supervisor’s job is to help create effective counselors. Thus, it is essential that research is conducted to aid in the understanding of the process of becoming a supervisor. Doctoral level counselor training programs can then begin to incorporate intentional training strategies that will aid student development into supervisors.
Objectives of the Study

There were two objectives of the study. The first objective was to gain a broader understanding of how doctoral students develop into a supervisor. With this understanding, supervision training efforts can focus on discussing the needs of students as they learn the new role of supervisor. The second objective was to better understand the specific experiences doctoral students attributed to contributing to their development as supervisors.

With a greater understanding of which experiences were most useful, counselor educators can be more intentional in the use of these specific techniques when training new counselor supervisors. This information can serve as a guide for counselor educators as they work to facilitate the developmental process in their supervision courses.

Research Question

Following is the primary research question for this qualitative study: How do doctoral students describe their transition from supervisee to supervisor? In addition to the primary research question, a subset of questions was utilized to promote further exploration from the participants regarding their transition. Part of the data for the larger study was reported in a previous publication about students’ development into the supervisor role (Rapisarda, Desmond, & Nelson, 2011). The data presented here answered questions about the particular experiences in their training doctoral students found helpful to their development. Participants were asked to reflect on how they experienced the supervision of their supervision. Participants were also encouraged to reflect on the particular practices they found most helpful and influential in their development into a supervisor.

Method

A qualitative collective case study design was conducted. The primary research question was: How do doctoral students describe their transition from supervisee to supervisor? Doctoral students enrolled in a supervision practicum course were interviewed twice over the course of a semester and descriptive data were gathered. An understanding was gained of the doctoral students’ supervisory development through examination of the research question.

Design

A collective case study design was utilized in this qualitative study. Darke, Shanks, and Broadbent (1998) explained that the collective case study approach enables the researcher to investigate a phenomenon within the context of a participant’s life when the boundaries between context and the phenomenon are not clear. The collective case study approach “draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single

case” (Stake, 1998, p. 86). The collective case study approach allowed the researchers to analyze the specific experiences of individual research participants as well as conducting an analysis of the phenomenon across all participants. Each participant in this research project was analyzed individually, and then each case was analyzed in relation to the other, thus providing an understanding about the participants’ experiences of becoming supervisors, both within cases and across cases. The participants’ stories were compared for similarities and differences relative to their experiences and the outcomes of these comparisons are discussed in the results of this study.

**Participants**

Nine second-year, doctoral counseling students enrolled in a supervision practicum course were invited to participate in the study and seven elected to do so. Participant ages ranged from 28-47 years old with a mean age of 37.7 years. The race and ethnicity of the participants included African American, Caucasian, and Native American. Participation in this research was not a course requirement. The course was 15 weeks in duration, and data was collected at two points during the semester. The instructor of the course was neither a researcher nor was he made aware of which students elected to participate in the study. Participants could elect to stop their involvement at any time during this study and every effort was made to protect their confidentiality.

There were five female and two male participants. Age, race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation were not used as variables to limit or include participation in the study. Participants had no previous formal training in supervision. All participants had at least two years of professional counseling experience and were enrolled in a CACREP accredited counselor education and supervision doctoral program.

**Researchers**

The three researchers received their Ph.D. degrees in counselor education and supervision from a CACREP accredited program. The researchers received formal supervision training during their doctoral programs and have experience as supervisors and counselors. The main impetus for this research developed from their own journey as counselor supervisors.

**Procedure**

The study was approved by all relevant Institutional Review Boards for Research with Human Subjects. The researchers gained permission from the course instructor of the supervision practicum to invite participation in the study. Informed consent was obtained and the participants completed a
demographic form that was used for background data purposes only. Interviews were scheduled for the first of two interviews which lasted approximately 45 minutes. This first interview occurred halfway through the semester. The second and final interview occurred at the end of the semester and also lasted approximately 45 minutes. The first interview was semi-structured and the second interview was used to clarify information and any questions participants may have had. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Participants had the option of reading all transcribed data from their individual interviews.

Data Analysis

The researchers transcribed the data from all of the interviews. Each researcher then independently read and analyzed the data. The researchers met to share their individual analyses and final themes and coding categories were agreed upon by all three researchers. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2001) in which the data from each case is analyzed for themes and compared to each of the other cases. The constant comparative method allows for researchers to ascertain themes within and across participants. Tentative themes were identified by each researcher. Once consensus was achieved about what the themes were and how each theme should be described, the data were coded by the researchers for these themes. The researchers each utilized the qualitative research software QSR N6 (Richards, 2002) to help organize and code the data.

Results

The overarching research question of this study was: How do doctoral students describe their transition from supervisee to supervisor? The secondary question addressed in this study was: What experiences in their supervision training do doctoral student supervisors find particularly useful? Participants in this study were involved in two interviews as a way to gather descriptions of their supervisory experience. In this section, results from the data analysis are presented.

The research question was explored through individual interviews conducted with the doctoral student supervisors. The interviews were read by the researchers and potential themes were noted by the three researchers individually. The potential themes were then discussed between the researchers until agreement and consensus was reached about the data themes. The qualitative computer software NUD*IST version (N6) was used to organize the data. From the potential themes more specific themes were developed and entered into the N6 software. The transcripts were loaded into the software and the researchers coded the data for the specific themes that were identified. Three broad themes and several sub-themes from the data are discussed below.

Facilitation of Development

The participants identified three main ways their supervisory development was facilitated: Group Supervision with Peers, Counseling Faculty Supervision, and Ability to Reflect on the Supervisor Development Process. Each of these sub-themes is described in further detail here.

Group Supervision with Peers

During the interviews, participants described the importance of group supervision with their peers. The participants of this study were all enrolled in a doctoral level supervision course that met weekly. During the course meeting students were given an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of being in the role of supervisor for master’s level students in counseling. The following statement exemplifies the meaning of this theme: “I think the peer supervision that we get in class is helpful because a lot of times we are having similar experiences or similar enough that just kind of normalizes some of your experiences that you might be having…” Another participant explained, “I think the [supervision] coursework has been helpful and being able to have partners who are going through it with me…there are nine of us and being able to share our experiences and being able to learn from each other, I think that is so important.” Participant interviews indicated the importance of having others to relate to regarding the supervisor development process. Participants also described that having faculty oversee their supervision contributed to their development as a supervisor.

Counseling Faculty Supervision

Participants also explained that the supervision faculty provided was especially important as they began to develop as a supervisor. One participant stated, “Having the feedback...from my direct supervisor in the class...and other faculty who pulled me aside and say 'hey...you wanna hear some feedback' and then I could go back out right away and do it...the quick turn-around I think was helpful.” Another explained, “I would always listen to supervision of supervision that will always be an important component, because I need to have that check, I need to have that mirror.” In addition, one of the participants shared, “Group supervision...gives me an opportunity to get feedback about myself which you don’t always get in the outside world so that’s been helpful too.” Another said, “I get supervision now in the sense of I am getting supervised as a supervisor in training...and it’s still about my skill set...I can see where I am really strengthening my skills.” The supervision of the student-supervisors provided by counseling faculty emerged as a significant contributing factor in supervisor development.
Ability to Reflect on the Supervisor Development Process

Participants explained that part of their developmental process was thinking about the supervisory process. One participant explained, “I do spend time thinking about the sessions I have with people...and that’s been very useful.” Another shared, “And even this [the interview], I mean being able to articulate what its [supervisor development] been like, because I think, I live in my head a lot, and I spend a lot of time thinking about things...is useful.” Participants seemed to credit having time to think about the supervision as facilitating their development into a supervisor.

Formation of Supervisory Style

The formation of supervisory style included ways the participants gained knowledge about the type of supervisor they wanted to become with supervisees. More specifically, participants cited Supervision Models, Supervisee Feedback, and Research about Supervision as contributing factors to their supervisory style. Again, each of these themes served as a first level child node for participant transcripts in the N6 software.

Supervision Models

Several models of supervision were cited as being helpful in supervisor development. One participant stated, “The Developmental Model(s) have allowed me to take this information and to adopt some ideas...that is helpful in conceptualizing where I need to be in my supervision relationship with supervisees.” Another explained, “I use probably the Integrative Developmental Model...I think it is helpful because it is a fluid enough model. It allows for individual differences within...the same level.” In addition, one of the participants shared, “I’m adherent to the Discrimination Model, in fact, at each of our sessions we have...each of the supervisees gets a copy of the notes that I take about their tape.” The use of supervision models was a theme that emerged within the context of forming a supervisory style.

Supervisee Feedback

The participants seemed to view the supervisory process as collaborative. One participant commented, “asking them [supervisees] what they needed from me and being able to incorporate that...into something that works for both of us” was an important aspect of the formation of their supervisory style. Another statement indicative of this theme was given to a supervisee by a student supervisor: “This is your bag, this is what your professional life is and, again, I don’t want you to be a mini-me, I want you to be whoever you are, and if I can help develop that aspect of you, then great.” The student supervisors incorporated supervisee feedback into the structure of the supervision sessions, which in turn seemed to become integrated into their supervisory style.
Research about Supervision

The incorporation of studying scholarly resources about supervision was also part of the formation of the supervisor identity. More specifically, one participant shared, “I actually go out and have access to the library on the Internet ‘cause I’m a student, and I have read quite a bit about supervision.” Another explained, “I’ve already read a lot about supervision from a systemic point of view...all of that extra stuff that I tend to do outside of what is required of me, has been very beneficial in understanding and getting a leg-up.” Participants acquired knowledge and information outside the classroom to aid them in the supervision process. One participant explained a particular supervision book was used as a resource to develop a “contract that goes along with the supervisee’s bill of rights.” The acquisition of knowledge through scholarly sources also informed how students began to understand the role of the supervisor.

Supervisory Roles

The participants described the many roles they undertook as they learned to become supervisors. More specifically, participants explained their roles as Student, Supervisor, and Colleague. These three themes were also first level child nodes in the N6 software.

Student Role

Participants in this study were aware of their role as learner in a doctoral level supervision class. One participant explained, “With the getting the theory and understanding the background of supervision and having the group supervision experience and having the one on one individual experience it has been an overall good way to try different things and see different ways of doing things.” Another shared, “I enjoy teaching and so it [supervision] is aligned with that. I enjoy counseling too and it is aligned with that. So it is kind of a nice blend of the two for me. I have enjoyed learning about something I was not familiar with before.” The role of student learner emerged from the interviews as students disclosed how their identity shifted into that of supervisor.

Supervisor Role

Another theme was participant awareness about their role of supervisor to the supervisee. More specifically, participants were aware of their responsibility to help their supervisees grow as counselors. One commented, “Then what was especially rewarding to me was that they did what I asked them to do and that was good; it worked.” Another participant elaborated further. “Because I knew I’d be dealing with practicum level students...I knew that structure was important to reduce anxiety...and I can remember back to when I first started too.” One of the participants also
commented, “Watching a supervisee grow and develop [in] knowing and understanding...when I see things in a supervisee...and it clicks with me with a theory and I know ways I can respond, it’s just really interesting and it’s fascinating.” Participants seemed to understand the significance of clinical supervision in the counselor training process.

Colleague Role

Participants in this study identified the role of colleague to their peers in the supervision course. For example, one participant explained, “A lot comes from my group supervision where I hear other people’s ideas about what they’re trying with their supervisees...I feel like it’s a safe environment to do that...” The role of colleague was also described by another participant who stated, “One aspect that was particularly helpful to me was my group supervision with fellow supervisors sharing our experiences...I picked up on some ideas from them and they affirmed what I was doing was on track too. So I think the combination of feedback from my peers was very helpful.” Meeting with fellow students enrolled in the supervision course emerged as a significant role in the development of doctoral students into supervisors.

In conclusion, themes emerged from the participant interviews regarding Facilitation of Development, Formation of Supervisory Style, and Supervisory Roles. Participants clearly identified aspects of their training that facilitated their development as supervisors. They also described ways they were able to formulate their own style of supervision. Finally, the participants of this study explored the various roles they held as they engaged in the process of becoming a supervisor. The significance of the thematic content of the interviews in relation to current literature on clinical supervision will be examined in the subsequent section.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the transition of doctoral students from supervisee to supervisor to gain an understanding of what specifically supervisors in training find particularly helpful. Participants were involved in two rounds of interviews to shed light on their developmental process as supervisors. Three main themes emerged from the data: Facilitation of Development, Formation of Supervisory Style, and Supervisory Roles.

Facilitation of Development

Participants identified several factors that contributed to their overall development as supervisors including: Group Supervision with Peers, Counseling Faculty Supervision, and Ability to Reflect on the Supervisor Development Process. In relation to counseling faculty supervision, one
participant shared, “The one-on-one supervision that I’ve received from my instructor; he reviewed a tape of mine and so provided me with feedback and that was very helpful.” Nelson, et al. (2006) conducted a qualitative study of 13 doctoral student supervisors during three semesters of coursework. Their study explored the experience of becoming a supervisor through interviews and focus groups. They too found that connection to professors and faculty supervisors was a theme that emerged from the data: “Connection with professors and supervisors was viewed as a critical component of becoming a supervisor” (p. 27).

When reflecting on the supervisor development process, one of the participants explained,

I guess one thing that I have kind of realized and I didn’t realize it until the end although I knew that this was going to be the case, we talk about it in theory, that you are going to meet them [supervisees] where they’re at.

It was only after spending time thinking about the supervisory relationship that participants began to understand their own supervisor development process. Assessing supervisee strengths and areas needing further growth were part of meeting supervisees at their skill level and in turn informed the content of supervision. Allowing time for reflection enabled the doctoral student supervisors to create meaningful supervision sessions. In their qualitative study of supervisor development Nelson, et al. (2006) also found reflection to be integral to the process of becoming a supervisor. Reflection was defined as “the process of thinking about one’s experience in order to arrive at an understanding of that experience” (p. 25). The participants in their study gained awareness about self as a supervisor and clarification of personal and professional identity.

**Formation of Supervisory Style**

The formation of supervisory style was a continuous process throughout the clinical supervision course. Supervision Models, Supervisee Feedback, and Research about Supervision all emerged as factors contributing to supervisory style. In regard to a specific model of supervision one participant stated,

Because I surf and play so much tennis I keep using those as analogies...I feel like with the Discrimination Model I’m sort of learning my ground strokes or learning how to time the wave, but no one is ever going to mistake me for someone that’s about to go on the pro tour any time soon.

Leddick (2001) echoed this sentiment explaining,

Underlying developmental models of supervision is the notion that we each are continuously growing, in fits and starts, in growth spurts and patterns. In combining our experience and hereditary predispositions we develop strengths and growth
areas. The object is to maximize and identify growth needed for the future. Thus, it is typical to be continuously identifying new areas of growth in a life-long learning process (p. 2).

The participants of this study voiced an understanding that supervision is a fluid process that changes as knowledge is gained by the supervisee and supervisor.

One factor contributing to gaining knowledge is the sharing of feedback. Another participant shared an example of how feedback from the supervisee helped inform supervisory style: “Taking it [different approaches] into the supervision sessions and seeing the response of my supervisee if it seems to be a positive thing...so it’s a little bit of experimenting trial and error but I feel like it's a safe environment to do that now you know as I’m learning to be a supervisor.” Pickvance (1997) similarly suggested,

When supervisors demonstrate what they know and tell supervisees what they should do or should have done, rather than helping supervisees to explore what they do not know and find out for themselves what they need to know, they deprive the supervisees of an important learning experience (p. 131).

The participants in the current study acknowledged the importance of feedback from the supervisee when assessing skill level and development to facilitate growth.

Supervisory Roles

The participants were also aware of the many roles they had as doctoral student supervisors. They identified the roles of student, supervisor, and colleague. One participant explained, “The supervisees with whom I’m working now know that I’m a supervision student and I’m still working through it as they’re working through their process too and so I’m not as afraid to make a mistake or stumble.” Similarly, Nelson, et al. (2006) cited “academic learning as vital to evaluating and honing both supervisory and clinical skills” (p. 22). Moore (2008) also explained that doctoral student supervisors are frequently in the position of supervising master's level counselors in training who are only one year behind them in their training or with whom they shared a class in their master's training. These experiences add to the complexity of the multiple roles of a doctoral student.

Implications

Several implications for the profession of counseling emerged from this line of research. First, providing students with ample time to process the transition from supervisee to supervisor with each other was found to be helpful. Starling and Baker (2000) also suggested that peer groups help to create a supportive reassuring environment that others are having similar feelings and concerns. Having experienced supervisors or faculty members to

A qualitative study of doctoral student supervisory development. It is suggested that experienced supervisors may have greater technical skills related to assessment and interventions (Pickvance, 1997).

A second implication is assisting students with gaining the awareness that becoming a supervisor is a process that occurs over time. More specifically, enrolling in a doctoral level clinical supervision course does not make one a supervisor. The identity of becoming a supervisor is one that evolves as students become more confident and knowledgeable in the role. Identifying potential stumbling blocks ahead of time can also provide an opportunity for dialogue regarding ways to meet the challenges of supervision. Pearson (2000) suggested, “The ultimate task for supervisors is to provide a balance of support and challenge so that counselors feels safe enough to risk disclosing their biggest challenges” (p. 293).

A third implication includes awareness that the student supervisors experience a learning curve similar to the counselors-in-training being supervised. More specifically, as their supervisees were learning to be counselors they were learning to be supervisors. Becoming a supervisor includes a shift in identity similar to the one students experience as they enter the professional world of the counselor. The shift in perception of role and self is not a single event, but a process that unfolds with supervisor experience (Moore, 2008). Assisting supervisors with reflecting on their own transitions and sharing their experiences with their supervisees can be beneficial for both students. Paying attention to the parallel process occurring as the supervisor is developing their supervision skills and the counselor is developing their counseling skills can be an important factor in the supervisory relationship.

**Limitations**

As with any line of inquiry there were limitations with this study. One of the limitations was a lack of triangulation of the data by the faculty member instructing the class. The researcher did not interview the faculty member who was familiar with the supervisory relationships of the participants. This information could have added to the descriptions provided about the supervisory development of the students and added to the depth of understanding the experience.

A second limitation was the lack of diversity within the participant pool. Due to the nature of the enrollment in the clinical supervision course, the majority of participants were female and Caucasian. Adding to the diversity of the sample by way of race, gender, and ethnicity could add to the discourse on supervisory development.

A final limitation was that the interviews about supervisory development were not intensive or extensive enough to yield the kind of detail that would lead to greater amplification of the development of the student supervisor. Two interviews were conducted with each participant to
gain rich descriptions about their role as student supervisor. Naturally, the researcher and participant were limited by their palette of language that can identify and describe the supervisor developmental process. Future conversations could add to the understanding of the transition from supervisee to supervisor.

**Future Research**

There are several recommendations for future research including the use of a more diverse participant group, analysis within supervisor and supervisee pairings, and examining supervisory relationships outside the context of the doctoral level clinical supervision course. Each recommendation for future research is intended to expand on the body of knowledge in counseling supervision by inviting multiple voices and perspectives to be part of the discourse. With a greater understanding of the supervisor development process, student needs can be met more effectively and efficiently.

**Diverse Participant Group**

The first recommendation is to interview more diverse participants in regard to race, ethnicity, and gender with the intention of providing additional perspectives on the transition from supervisee to supervisor. The themes generated in the current study could be expanded based on the addition of multiple voices. Diversity considerations could have an impact on supervisory development and this line of inquiry was not fully explored in the current study.

**Analysis within Supervisor and Supervisee Pairings**

Doctoral level student supervisors were the participants in this study. The researchers acknowledged that interviewing the supervisees could also be valuable to gaining an understanding of supervisor development. More specifically, future research could focus on gathering and analysis of data within supervision pairings. This is an area that warrants future consideration and gathering of data. It is evident that themes could emerge from the supervisor and supervisee pairings. Nelson, et al. (2006) suggested, “The voices of trainees have been essential to understanding the process of becoming a supervisor” (p. 18).

**Supervisory Relationships outside the Clinical Supervision Course**

The researchers are aware that clinical supervision occurs in a variety of settings outside the confines of a doctoral level supervision course. Future research could examine supervisor development in school and clinical mental health settings. This may add yet another perspective to the concept of transitioning from supervisee to supervisor that would add to the body of knowledge available in supervisor development.

Conclusion

This research explored the experiences of doctoral students learning to become supervisors. There is limited research available about how students transition from supervisee to supervisor and the research that is available seems less inclusive of the context of the student supervisor (Baker, et al., 2002). The goal of this study was to gain a broader understanding of how doctoral students experience transitioning from a supervisee to a supervisor. The participants shared aspects that were particularly helpful during this transition. All of the participants agreed that they grew as supervisors as the semester progressed. The findings of this study contributed detailed information to the body of research available regarding how counseling doctoral students experience the transition from supervisee to supervisor. Three major themes emerged from the data: Facilitation of Development, Formation of Supervisory Style, and Supervisory Roles. Under each of these major themes sub-themes were also identified. It is hoped that through continued research on this topic counselor educators will be better equipped to facilitate supervisor education and training.

References


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