Effective Remediation in Master's-Level Counseling Students

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Abstract

Despite evidence that remediation is effective, little is known about counselor educators' experience with remediation. In this consensual qualitative study, authors interviewed counselor educators (N=11) to better understand remedial practices and identify effective strategies. Findings have implications for the remediation of master's-level students in counselor education.

Keywords

Author's Notes

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Counselor educators have an ethical responsibility to gatekeep, which involves assessing students for Problems of Professional Competence (PPC) and engaging in appropriate remedial actions when necessary in order to protect client welfare and the integrity of the profession (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014; Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2015). A PPC is a deficit in counselor knowledge, skill, or disposition that could affect their ability to provide effective and ethical counseling services (Elman & Forrest, 2007), such as inappropriate boundaries, insufficient counseling skills, or inability to integrate feedback (Henderson & Dufrene, 2013). Encountering a student with problematic behavior is likely, as approximately 91-92% of counselor educators (including program coordinators and department chairs) reported observing a student with PPC in their program (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Crawford & Gilroy, 2012). The consequences of gatekeeping avoidance or negligence can lead to worsening or increased PPC in the student, potential client harm, and/or institutional liability (Glance et al., 2012; Homrich & Henderson, 2018).

Remediation varies from program to program; counselor education has no standardized remediation procedures (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Crawford & Gilroy, 2012). The 2016 CACREP Standards (2015) and ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014) provide little guidance on how remediation should be executed. The 2016 CACREP Standards (2015) require that counselor education programs document and follow remediation policies and procedures that are consistent with due process; however, consistent with the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014), specific mechanisms for implementing gatekeeping or remedial practices is not clearly delineated. This delineation may not be forthcoming; at the time of publication, the second draft of the 2024 CACREP Standards (2021) also does not include specific guidance in this area. There is

evidence that remediation works, with participants in one study reporting that 71% of students who engaged in remediation were successful; however, inconsistent implementation of gatekeeping procedures makes it difficult to gauge what components of remediation are effective (Crawford & Gilroy, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Previous researchers have focused on overarching theories of gatekeeping (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010), counselor educators' internal experiences with gatekeeping (e.g., emotional reaction to gatekeeping; Chang & Rubel, 2019; DeCino et al., 2020), components of remediation plans (Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Rust et al., 2013), and interventions for remediation (Crawford & Gilroy, 2012; Henderson & Dufrene, 2017). Currently, there are no studies that explore counselor educators' experiences with remediation, including the specific mechanisms of the remediation process and what constitutes an effective remediation. However, greater consensus on the common elements for effective remediations may increase consistency of processes and clarify expectations in counselor education. The research questions are: (a) What are the specific mechanisms of remediation processes? and (b) What makes remediation processes effective?

Method

Consensual qualitative research (CQR) is an inductive qualitative approach to develop theory directly from participants' experiences (Hill, 2012). Given the dearth of literature regarding effective mechanisms in remediation, we utilized CQR to allow an in-depth exploration of individual experience of related concepts in the shared context of counselor education (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hill 2012). CQR includes the use of a research team that allows for multiple perspectives in data analysis and ensures a rigorous consensus process through

shared power among and between the research team (Hill, 2012).

Participants

Participants in CQR are selected based on their knowledge of the phenomenon being studied and their ability to describe it in great detail (Hays & Singh, 2012; Hill, 2012). To ensure recency and salience of that data (Hill, 2012), participants in the present study were 11 counselor educators who engaged in at least one remediation process of a master's counseling student within the last two years.

Participants ranged in age from 30 to 72 years of age ($M = 43$; $SD = 11$). Seven participants identified as cisgender female (63.6%), three participants identified as cisgender male (27.3%), and one participant identified as transgender male (9%). Eight participants identified as White (72.8%), two participants identified as multiracial (18.2%), and one participant identified as Latina (9%). Ten participants earned their doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (91%), and one participant earned their doctoral-level degree in Pastoral Counseling and Counseling Education and Supervision (9%). All of the participants earned their PhD from and currently worked for CACREP-accredited programs ($n = 11$; 100%). Participants represented various academic ranks: four Assistant professors (36.4%), four Associate professors (36.4%), and three Full professors (27.3%). Their years of experience as counselor educators ranged from 2 to 28 ($M = 11.45$; $SD = 9.19$). Their participation in remediations ranged from 2 to 70 ($M = 21$; $SD = 21.70$). At the time of data collection, five participants were currently involved in a remediation process (45.5%), three participants indicated a remediation process in the past year (27.3%), two indicated remediation in the past semester (18.2%), and one person reported a remediation process three weeks ago (9%).

Research Team

The research team consisted of four counseling faculty. The first author is an

assistant professor, has experience conducting research on remediation, and has participated in 5 remediations. The second author is an associate professor who has participated in over 20 remediations. The third author is an assistant professor and has participated in about 10 remediation processes. The fourth author is a visiting assistant professor at a private university and has been involved in over 6 remediations of graduate students.

Data Collection

We obtained approval from the institutional review board (IRB) at the first author's institution. Participants were recruited via the CESNET-L listserv and snowball sampling. Participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire regarding their gender, age, ethnocultural identity, education level, academic rank, years as a counselor educator, and number of remediation processes. Participants participated in two, semi-structured interviews. The first was 60 minutes and the follow-up interview ranged from 10 to 30 minutes. Hill (2012) purported multiple interviews increase trust for disclosure of emotionally evocative experiences, thereby clarifying the context and deepening the meaning (Hill, 2005). Questions for the first interview were developed by the first author to better address the gaps in the literature (i.e., counselor educator experiences with remediation, the specific mechanisms of remediation processes, and what makes remediation processes effective) identified by a review of the existing literature on remediation in counselor education (e.g., Crawford & Gilroy, 2012; Henderson & Dufrene, 2017; Homrich, 2009.). Research questions were reviewed and revised based on input from the second author who has experience with remediation and qualitative research. The first interview was 11 questions aimed to explore faculty experiences; questions were: (a) Tell me a little bit about your identity and experiences as a counselor educator (degrees, employment, etc.)?, (b) What are your thoughts about remediation in counselor education?, (c)

Does your program have any specific policies or procedures related to remediation processes?,

(d) Tell me about your experiences with remediation of masters-level counseling students in

counselor education over the last two years?, (e) What PPC did these students have?, (f) What

interventions did you use?,

(g) What do you think made this remediation experience successful or unsuccessful?, (h) What

has worked in your experience with remediation?, (i) What hasn't worked in your experience with

remediation?, (j) Is there anything you feel like I should know that I did not ask?, and (k) Do you

have anything else you'd like to add before we finish the interview? The second interview was

used to clarify information from the first interview and to offer the participant an opportunity to

add to their statements. Participants were asked about their

reactions to the transcript of their first interview and prompted to explore experiences and

thoughts that occurred since the first interview. Interviews were audio recorded and

transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Prior to beginning data analysis, the transcripts were reviewed for accuracy by

participants (i.e., member checked) and research team members recorded and bracketed their

biases and expectations through the use of memoing. The team recorded biases that included

their own experiences with remediation in counselor education and their assumption that

participants would express lack of consistency and clarity in the remediation process. Congruent

with the CQR tradition, consensus coding among a research team and an auditor, who was not

involved in data collection or consensus coding, reviewing data analysis processes control for

individual research bias were utilized (Hill, 2012). The research team followed the CQR data

analysis procedure of coding into domains, constructing core ideas, and conducting cross-

analysis (Hill, 2012). Coding into domains provides an overall structure for understanding or describing each participant's experiences, while constructing core ideas helps summarize the participant's experiences (Hill, 2012). Cross-analysis is a process which allows researchers to identify common themes across all participants (Hill, 2012). For the initial domain list, four transcripts were coded with two research team members per transcript. Authors met as a group to come to consensus on the domain list, obtained feedback and approval from the auditor, and then applied the domain list to the remaining nine cases (18 transcripts). In constructing core ideas, consistent with Hill (2012), the team coded one transcript together and the remaining 10 were coded by two authors each, for consensus purposes. After consensus among team members, core ideas were reviewed by the auditor. Upon approval of the core ideas, team members collectively completed cross analysis on core ideas and assigned frequencies per CQR procedure (general, typical, and variant).

Trustworthiness

One way trustworthiness in CQR is ensured is through the use of an auditor at each step of the data coding process (Hill, 2012). The auditor (fifth author) for the present study was selected based on her knowledge of CQR methodology and experience as a counselor educator. She reviewed the domain list, core ideas, and cross analysis codebooks and provided feedback. The research team reviewed and integrated feedback prior to moving to the next stage of coding. Trustworthiness was also addressed with the following criteria: credibility, transferability, confirmability, authenticity, substantive validation, and sampling adequacy (Hays & Singh, 2012). These criteria were supported by the following strategies of trustworthiness: (a) triangulation of investigators involving the use of a research team to reach consensus; (b) member checking, whereby the participant reviewed the transcripts for accuracy; (c) thick

description, or providing ample detail and explanation for replication and interpretation of meaning, of the data collection and analysis procedures, categories, and the use of the participants' quotations; (d) an audit trail including memos, demographic sheets, and complete transcripts; and (e) the use of memoing throughout the data collection process in order to bracket researcher biases.

Findings

Domains, categories, and frequency designations are listed in Table 1. Categories with the most frequency (i.e., general, or all participants, and typical, or most participants) are described below, with description of less frequent categories (i.e., variant) where space allowed. Domains included Remediation Training, Assessment, PPC, Remediation Polices & Procedures, Purpose of Remediation, When Remediation Occurs, Roles within Remediation, Approach to Remediation, Remediation Interventions, Remediation Outcomes, and Remediation Challenges.

Table 1

Domains and Categories

Domains and Categories	Frequency
Remediation training	
Lack of knowledge/training	Typical
Experiential training	Variant
Assessment	
Collaborative assessment	Typical
Ongoing assessment	Typical
Formal assessment	Typical
Informal assessment	Variant
Contextual assessment	Variant
Early assessment	Variant
Problems of professional competency	
Professional issues related to PPC	General
Personal issues related to PPC	Typical
Multiple PPCs	Typical
Remediation policies and procedures	
Due process	General
Continuous evaluation	Variant
Purpose of remediation	
Developmental need	Variant
Ethical mandate	Variant
When remediation occurs	
Clinical placement	Typical
Academic performance	Variant
Roles within remediation	
Administrative role	Typical
Advisor	Variant
Approach to remediation	
Developmentally appropriate	General
Clear and concrete	Typical
Collaborative	Typical
Remediation interventions	
Coursework	Typical
Personal counseling	Typical
Multiple interventions	Typical
Conversation	Typical
Supervision	Typical
Remediation outcomes	
Personal growth	Typical
Self-selection out	Typical
Dismissal	Typical
Gateslipping	Typical
Remediation challenges	
Inattentive faculty and supervisors	Typical
Administrative and faculty resistance	Variant
Personal emotional reaction	Variant
Individual identity factors	Variant
Student lack of insight	Variant
Legal consequences	Variant

Note. General = 10-11 participants; Typical = 6-9 participants; Variant = 2-5 participants

Remediation Training

A majority of the participants (typical) indicated the *Lack of Training and Knowledge* counselor educators receive in remediation. Participants described how many counselor educators were not effectively trained in remediation, leading to an overall lack of knowledge and confidence in the process. One participant stated, "I think that people don't know what to do. They don't know how to address these issues and they don't really feel confident or empowered around addressing them." Two participants described remediation as a "skill" that must be trained and mentored and many participants expressed concern that not only are counselor educators not trained or knowledgeable in remediation, but this in turn effects doctoral students' training in remediation. A few participants called for more trainings to be offered that focus on remediation as a skill set and for a particular focus on how doctoral students can be mentored in remediation. In lieu of programmatic or professional training, a few participants (variant) described *Experiential Training* experiences in which they 'learned on the job' or intentionally involved doctoral students in remedial processes to increase competency.

Assessment

A *Collaborative Assessment* approach (typical) was central to participants' remedial success. Corroborating information among multiple stakeholders (e.g., faculty, site-supervisors, adjuncts, doctoral students) and communicating concerns led to a more individualized, effective, and justified remedial process. Participants highlighted the importance of reviewing student concerns and making remedial decisions as a collective unit, with one participant reporting, "We always discuss student review initially with the faculty, with the entire counseling faculty because having that comprehensive picture of the issue is very important to developing the [remediation plan] and supporting the students."

Participants emphasized the importance of *Ongoing Assessment* (typical) of students on remediation plans. Participants reported success in student outcomes when intentional check-ins were conducted by faculty to gauge student progress with a remediation plan. Ongoing assessment strategies described by participants included more frequent meetings with stakeholders and assessing whether the student is completing their requirements and the effectiveness of the interventions. One participant described this process as "not just following up [and asking] 'well did you do this?' Actually having a discussion."

Formal Assessment (typical) described policies and procedures for assessment at multiple points in the program including prior to admission, after first semester, in skills courses, and in practicum/internship. Participants described how a systematic assessment process provided them objective data to monitor progress and identify potential students for remediation. They also elucidated to how these formal assessments are strategically placed throughout the program so that faculty can assess within context. For example, one participant reported, "We have a systematic student review where we review students at two strategic points in their curriculum. One is early, one is later, but they're placed specifically so that we've had an opportunity to observe their skills and their interaction with individuals."

PPC

Participants categorized PPCs into two main categories: *Professional Issues Related to PPC* and *Personal Issues Related to PPC*. All participants (general) described students with *Professional Issues Related to PPC* defined as behaviors, attitudes, or skills at a professional and academic level. These concerns included counseling skills deficiencies, inability to integrate feedback/resistance to feedback, defiance of authority figures (e.g., faculty, supervisors), class and site attendance issues, unprofessional interpersonal behaviors, unethical behaviors, and

academic issues (e.g., poor writing, failing/incomplete course requirements). *Personal Issues Related to PPC* (typical) are pre-existing or reactionary behaviors/dispositions to personal circumstance. These concerns included unmanageable anxiety/stress/distress, difficulty balancing multiple responsibilities, unmanaged interpersonal life stressors or medical issues, interpersonal conflict with peers, and mental health concerns that impact ability to function in the program.

Participants also elucidated instances in which *Multiple PCC*s (typical) are identified in a single student and remedial intervention may be needed as a result of the interaction of multiple PPCs. Participants described two common interactions: a) When an unmanaged PPC leads to the development of another PPC (e.g., unmanaged life stressor leads to the student failing a course); and b) when multiple PPCs occur concurrently (e.g., academic misconduct, skill deficits, and unprofessional behaviors). One participant described the impact of unmanaged substance use, "Within two months he flunked himself out. He couldn't stay sober, so he flunked himself out."

Remediation Policies & Procedures

All participants (general) spoke to the centrality of *Due Process* in remediation policies and procedures. Participants described a need for a systematic and standardized remediation

policy and procedure that is grounded in due process rights with clearly outlined steps. Essential components of participants' policies and procedures included: behaviorally-based description of PPC, expectations of student with timeline for completion, remedial interventions, clear and consistent documentation, student informed consent (i.e., right to not agree to plan and consequences of not completing the plan), student grievance/appeal policy, and communication

of policy and procedure to students (e.g., inclusion in student handbook, reviewed during orientation to the program).

The potential litigious nature of remediation requires intradepartmental and interdepartmental collaboration on the construction and implementation of remediation policies and procedures. Participants emphasized the importance of faculty working collaboratively on remediation plans and consulting with other relevant stakeholders regularly (e.g., university legal team, graduate college, etc.). One participant elaborated on the importance of interdepartmental collaboration with administrative leadership:

> We can have all these procedures put in place, but we really need our administration to understand our gatekeeping processes and why we may need to either do a disciplinary plan that's not typically normal of academia, but more normal for…counseling.

While participants indicated complete standardization of the remediation process would be ideal, one participant elaborated on the problem with standardization:

> The problem is that I wish it would be equal, but it's gotta be equitable. You know? Like, we can't just do the same thing for every person because the situations are so much different. Um, so, the equitable piece is like what's really got us…we want to make sure that we can explain why this student was allowed to finish field placement at semester, but this other student was asked to take the semester off. You know, things like that. So, that's like the one piece we've really kind of dug into is standardizing it, but then realizing that we're never going to reach equality because it's just, you know, a case-by-case basis.

Purpose of Remediation

Both categories in this domain are variant. Counselor educators in this study identified two purposes of remediation: to address a *Developmental Need* in students and to adhere to the *Ethical Mandate*. Participants used many words and phrases to encapsulate the essence of remediation including, "opportunities to grow," "a learning process," and "to help students succeed." These sentiments solidified participants' perception that remediation is a restorative and preventative developmental process aimed to facilitate student success. Participants

explicated on their role as gatekeepers for the profession and to protect clients, while also prioritizing students' individual needs:

> I feel like we try, I feel like that's the whole point of the retention plan, is that we're giving more opportunities to show us what they can do or to develop because, you know, students develop differently.

Participants emphasized that while it is important to prioritize the needs of students and provide opportunities for growth and restoration, counselor educators must not do so at the expense of the integrity of the profession. The responsibility to remediate problematic and potentially harmful behavior is, first and foremost, an *Ethical Mandate* and must be treated as a significant responsibility. Clarity among faculty and students that the purpose of remediation is to address students' developmental needs and provide opportunity for success while also expressing the seriousness of this duty is vital. One participant spoke to the balance of these two purposes, "as gatekeepers for the profession… we do as much as we can to help people. But at some point, if they're detrimental, then we have to do something about not promoting them forward".

When Remediation Occurs

Participants indicated that the remedial process for some students is prompted by performance in their *Clinical Placement* (typical) or due to *Academic Performance* (variant). One participant stated, "most of the issues come up on field placements" which was echoed by other participants. Due to the intensive experience students have in their practicum and internship experiences, participants indicated that this is a time where concerns can emerge or become exacerbated. Participants reported that students may have performed well academically but struggled with the practical application of knowledge and skills in an environment where they are also balancing caseloads and navigating administrative duties. One participant elaborated:

I feel like [in field placements] that rubber really meets the road experience is where you see things get challenging for students because most of our students are in graduate school, they've done well in undergrad, they know how to comport themselves in the classroom environment and study and prepare themselves. But it's the practical component that can be very challenging

Remediation can also occur as a result of a student's poor *Academic Performance*, including failed or missed assignments. At times, remediation could be due to requirements set outside of the counselor education programs, such as academic probation requisites set by the graduate school/college.

Roles Within Remediation

Participants reported faculty in an *Administrative Role* (typical) such as program director, department chair, or clinical coordinator handled a disproportionate amount of the remediation. Due to the emergence or exacerbation of student PPC during clinical placement, clinical coordinators often execute or are at least involved in a majority of remediation plans. One participant explained why clinical coordinators may be best equipped to manage this responsibility:

I am a really active internship field placement coordinator. I am very protective of that program, and I take it very seriously. I only keep the best sites. I only keep the best supervisors. I am very protective of it, and I know [the site supervisors], I have known them for 20 years and most of them now are my former students. So, it kind of makes sense for me to be the one interfacing with them because a lot of our junior faculty don't even know a lot of them…right? So, it kind of makes sense for the field placement coordinator to play a big role in that.

A similar explanation is provided for program directors/department chairs, as their approval is often needed in order for a formal remediation process to begin. One participant reported, "As

a result [of taking on administrative roles] I've been pulled into a lot of remediation processes just cause like my administration positions or whatever it may be, just kind of falls on my lap."

Approach to Remediation

When speaking to their approach to remediation, all participants (general) emphasized the importance a *Developmentally Appropriate* approach. Participants explored how remediation should be individualized and presented in a positive, strengths-based approach that considers the student experience within and outside of the program. Primarily, participants believed remediation processes should meet students "where they are" and garner interventions for each student to be successful. Remedial processes should also be *Clear and Concrete* (typical), according to participants. Clarity in remedial processes, as defined by participants, includes being direct and unambiguous within documentation, communication, and expectations of the student in order to limit chances of contestation. Relatedly, concrete remediation is specific, factual, and is executed through systematic and structured processes. Finally, participants emphasized the importance of taking a *Collaborative* (typical) approach to remediation whenever possible. Collaboration between stakeholders (e.g., amongst all faculty members) as well as buy-in from the student were described as crucial factors of an effective remediation. One participant stated:

> But at the same time, it takes support from your colleagues to really make sure that a successful remediation plan is seen all the way through…. the outcome of a successful remediation plan is when you have collective, collective support from your colleagues and when you all are on the same page.

Remediation Interventions

The interventions participants implemented for various remediation processes fall into four main categories (*Coursework, Personal Counseling, Conversation,* and *Supervision*), with a fifth category focused on the utilization of *Multiple Interventions* for a single student (all five

typical). *Coursework* encompassed interventions such as withdrawing from a class, restrictions in enrollment, or additional assignments. *Personal Counseling* was described as being used for fitness to practice/mental health evaluations or to focus on a particular issue (e.g., issues with interpersonal communication, unmanaged life stressors or mental health concerns). Participants used *Conversations* between the student and various stakeholders, who may or may not be responsible for implementing aspects of remediation (e.g., advisor, faculty, supervisors) for numerous purposes, including education on a specific topic, advising on fit to the profession, or increased interaction with the student. Various *Supervision* interventions were mentioned, including increasing the amount of supervision (either with a site supervisor or program supervisor) and additional supervision assignments (e.g., more audio/video recordings). Participants also described unique circumstances where *Multiple Interventions* were utilized for a student, with combinations from the aforementioned categories intentionally implemented to target PPC.

Remediation Outcomes

Participants' responses revealed four outcomes of remediation: *Personal Growth*, *Self-Selection Out*, *Dismissal*, and *Gateslipping* (all typical). Participants described a parallel between personal and programmatic functioning, stating that external or "personal stressors" often lead to decreased functioning and when explicitly addressed in remediation, *Personal Growth* can occur leading to students "flourishing" in the field. One participant elaborated, "often is, we find not a lack of ability, but more a matter of personal issues, outside factors, you know, rather than poor training or inability to, uh, to really apply the theories and so on." *Self-Selection Out* of the program was reported by participants as an outcome of remediation, oftentimes due to a student declining to participate in remediation or deciding that they are not

a good fit for the profession. One participant explained how conversations about goodness-of-fit for the profession can lead to a successful outcome:

> Sometimes I think it's successful if they don't get through the program, because it's just, it's not appropriate for them. It's not a good fit for them. So, I think even if a student doesn't finish the degree here, I feel like we have been successful as far as a department with our students about helping them make decisions about their future.

Participants described the "difficult" process of *Dismissal* in situations where students could or would not be remediated. Three causes for dismissal emerged from the data: egregious behavior that required immediate removal from the program, refusal to participate in the remedial process, or failure to meet remediation expectations. *Dismissal* was described as a success for some participants, as they reported that the purpose of the process is to protect clients from harm, and that by dismissing a student the remediation process "does what it's designed [to do]."

Gateslipping included participant experiences in which the remediation process failed to adequately address the PPC and instances in which operationalizing the problematic behavior was not possible (e.g., intuitive concerns about a student's ability to be successful without concrete supporting evidence) . Participants described times in which the remediation plan did not adequately target PPC or contained procedural errors leading to the student completing the requirements without remediation of the problem. One participant reflected on their experience stating, "A number of students that we've had concerns about have gone on to be, I guess trouble with the licensure board. Isn't that interesting." Participants reported a feeling of helplessness in situations where they felt procedurally or personally limited. One participant described:

> So, but it is really, it's super interesting where I think some people just, they let them slide and graduate when they probably shouldn't or there's some serious concerns and there's almost no way to document that in a remediation plan. Like, you know how you feel it with some students… it's hard to document or it's hard to create action items when you know that maybe they just don't have the skillset or maybe they are nice people, but you know, they can't, they can't really practice empathy somehow.

Remediation Challenges

      Participants described six types of challenges faced when engaging in remediation responsibilities: *Inattentive Faculty and Supervisors, Administrative and Faculty Resistance, Personal Emotional Reaction, Individual Identity Factors, Student Lack of Insight,* and *Legal Consequences*. In the typical category, *Inattentive Faculty and Supervisors*, participants described how apathetic and inattentive faculty and supervisors led to oversights in the assessment and remediation process. Problematic student behavior is not always communicated in a timely manner, if communicated at all, and not all stakeholders are engaged in the remediation process. One participant shared how inattention can lead to belated intervention, "There were probably signs and signals… I think we missed it. But if a couple of us had been more attentive I think we would have been able to deal with that much sooner". Participants reported that this lack of communication was a particular concern when non-core faculty have limited engagement with core-faculty. Another faculty member shared their experiences with inattentive supervisors:

> Sometimes it just seems like the supervisors have… mainly they're feeling overwhelmed, or they just don't want to go through the remediation [process]. They don't want to put the energy into a remediation. If there is any problem, they just want to let them go, but that's not the point of training, you know?

Discussion

      The findings of this study offer an empirical perspective on a mostly theoretical process and identifies specific ways in which remediation can be executed. Eleven participants shared their experiences and perceptions on what makes remediation effective or ineffective resulting in considerations for how counselor educators approach and standardize remediation.

      Findings indicate agreement (i.e., *general* designation) among counselor educators in

the study on the centrality of due process and the importance of a developmentally appropriate approach in effective remediation. Due process is an integral part of remediation (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015), but no guidelines exist on how to implement due process within remediation in a standardized way. Although Salpietro et al (2021) identified due process-aligned interventions as important, the present study offers components of due process that should be included in remediation processes such as: (a) description of PPC; (b) expectations of student and timeline; (c) remedial interventions; (d) documentation; (e) student informed consent; (f) student grievance/appeal policy; and (g) communication of policy and procedure to students. This finding corroborates previous conceptualizations that counselor education programs should ensure their policies and procedures explicitly delineate due process, using information from conceptual (e.g., Homrich, 2009; McAdams & Foster, 2007). This study also empirically validates the presence and importance of a developmentally appropriate approach to remediation, similar to one of the approaches identified in Salpietro et al (2021). Aligned with the conceptualizations of Dufrene and Henderson (2009), participants emphasized that remediation should occur not only when typical programmatic developmental processes fail, but a developmental perspective should be implemented throughout the process. While the conceptual literature agrees that remediation should be developmentally appropriate, individualized, and strengths-based, (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Homrich, 2009; Kress & Protivnak, 2009), this is the first study to confirm that counselor educators are utilizing this approach and perceive it as effective.

Among the categories designated as *typical*, a theme of collaboration was identified among the processes that made remediation effective or ineffective. Collaboration among the stakeholders in development, assessment and execution of remediation, and collaboration

between stakeholders and the student were identified as pivotal contributors to the success of a remediation. Encouraging collaboration in gatekeeping is not a new concept (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Homrich, 2009; McAdams & Foster, 2007); however, it's centrality in determining the success of remediation may be underestimated. Participants reported significant barriers to the remedial process when student concerns were not communicated in a timely manner and remedial policies and procedures were executed inconsistently. Effectiveness was reported when faculty consistently communicated and corroborated student concerns, met frequently to evaluate students, collectively designed and executed remediation plans, shared a unified approach to the remediation process, and facilitated student buy-in and participation in the remediation process. A collaborative approach can also serve to justify remedial processes in litigious situations, with McAdams and Foster (2007) reporting that their collaboration with multiple stakeholders was cited as favorable evidence during a remediation appeal process.

A few categories were designated as *variant*, indicating fewer participants were engaging in processes related to experiential training and assessment and that there is disagreement on the purpose of remediation. It was typical (i.e., most of the participants) for participants to indicate that they have a lack of knowledge and training regarding remediation, yet only a few participants indicated that their competency and comfortability with remediation increased the more they engaged in the process. It could be argued that to collaborate effectively, faculty should have consensus on the purpose of remediation, especially in situations where the ethical mandate to protect clients surpasses developmental need. Discussion among faculty individual and collective views of the purpose of remediation could support more collaborative and effective intervention. These participants also advocated for mentorship experiences for doctoral

students, as there is a dearth of literature on the preparation of doctoral students as gatekeepers (Rapp et al., 2018).

Gatekeeping and remediation mentorship experiences for doctoral students and new faculty could help increase overall knowledge and competency of the remedial process. Programs may consider including doctoral students in remediation policy and procedure development, assessment processes, and execution of remediation plans as appropriate. Although around half the participants indicated that they implemented ongoing and formal assessment; early, informal, and contextual assessment were endorsed less often despite participants emphasizing their importance and effectiveness. These findings suggest that counselor educators consider implementing different types of strategies into their assessment practices in order to gain a more holistic conceptualization of students. Participants disagreed whether the purpose of remediation was to address a developmental need or fulfill an ethical mandate; alluding to a difference in how they approach the remedial process or difficulty balancing duty with restoration.

Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision

The findings of this study have implications for counselor education including the standardization of remediation processes at a professional and programmatic level and the importance of identifying a personal approach to remediation. For example, this study is the first to delineate specific mechanisms of remediation, a task that has not been taken on by professional governing bodies (i.e., ACA, CACREP), despite calls from professionals to create a uniform model (Homrich, 2009).

Professionally endorsed best practices or guidelines for counselor education programs would improve the integrity of the profession and provide educators with a uniform way of

remediating students. Standardization could also protect programs from legal scrutiny, as counselor educators would have a sanctioned set of processes that could support decision making. Additionally, such guidelines may be useful for counselor educators communicating the importance of gatekeeping with administrators. We also advocate for the development of dispositional competencies for counselor educators enacting the remediation process. Dispositions such as timely communication of student concerns, consistent application of practices/guidelines, and rigorous and frequent documentation hold counselor educators responsible for specific actions related to remediation and researchers identified such actions were crucial for defense against litigation (McAdams et al., 2007).

As a result of professional ambiguity on remedial processes, there is variability in gatekeeping and remediation practices across programs (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Crawford & Gilroy, 2012). Without standardized procedures, the remediation process becomes subjective and counselor educators must rely on programmatic or institutional polices, which at times are inconsistent or not present, as identified by participants in this study and others (i.e., Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Crawford & Gilroy, 2012). Counselor education programs should standardize remediation policies at a programmatic level using empirically supported processes. Clear delineation of the mechanisms of assessment of PPC, enforcement of policy, execution of policy and procedures, and evaluation of remedial practices should be included. We recommend policies and procedures be collaboratively developed, executed, and evaluated in order to increase faculty buy-in and adherence.

Findings from this study also indicate that there is variation among counselor educators in how they remediate, similar to the findings of Salpietro et al (2021), confirming the importance and influence of personal style. Certainly, personal style influences various

professional identities such as roles of counselor, educator, supervisor, and researcher. These personalized approaches influence counselor educators' conceptualization, execution, and evaluation of their actions within different contexts. A similar pattern emerges in remediation: how counselor educators approach remediation and gatekeeping may influence effectiveness. An indifferent approach, as identified by participants, can lead to oversights and gateslipping. This study identified effective remediation is developmentally appropriate, clear and concrete, and collaborative. Counselor educators should reflect on their personal approach to remediation and evaluate whether their approach is additive and congruent with programmatic policies and student success. Finally, how faculty collectively approach remediation can also impact effectiveness.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations including participant demographics, researcher demographics, and researcher as an instrument and data analysis tool. While the sample was balanced in faculty rank, the sample was not ethnoculturally or gender diverse, as the sample consisted mostly of White women. The research team also reflected little diversity, as majority of the researchers identified as white and/or cisgender female. While generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research, the sample size and lack of diversity in the sample and research team should be seriously considered when evaluating the transferability of the results. Researcher biases and expectations are an inevitable part of qualitative research (Hill, 2012). The use of a research team to reach consensus and an auditor are two ways in which we aimed to circumvent this issue. This study offers a starting point for more research into the how counselor educators approach remediation and the effectiveness of various remedial methods and interventions. To expand on the results of this study future researchers may consider creating formalized dispositions and standardized remediation procedures, as well as

exploring doctoral student training in remediation. Research could also focus on the experiences of students throughout the remediation process. Research on the remediation experiences of diverse faculty, diverse students, and remediation between faculty and students of varying identities is also needed.

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