QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AS A CREATIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUE:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Phenomenological inquiry was utilized to explore masters level counseling students'
experiences completing a qualitative research project as part of a Shame and Shame Resiliency
course. Five of seven counseling students who participated in the Shame and Shame Resiliency
course and completed the qualitative research project participated in an about their experience
completing the assignment and the impact it had on their learning and growth. The qualitative
research assignments were also analyzed by the researcher. The researcher identified themes and
numerous subthemes using Moustakas (1994) method for data analysis. Four main themes were
identified (Process of the Qualitative Research Project; Impact of the Qualitative Research
Project; Learning Outcomes of the Qualitative Research Project and the Context of the
Qualitative Research Project). Creative pedagogy was used as a framework for understanding
student learning. Implications for counselor education and research are discussed.

Keywords: counselor education, pedagogy, creativity, shame, qualitative

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Counselor education is a field in which counselor educators are often required to teach abstract and complex topics while also pressing students to engage in self-reflection and personal growth (Ivey, Ivey & Zalaquett, 2018). This creates many challenges for both counselor educators and students (Borders & Brown, 2005). One of the most complex issues that counselor educators attempt to teach is case conceptualization. Case conceptualization is a summary of information gathered about the client's history, affect, and behaviors that is organized to provide an explanation of the client's behavior and tell his or her story from a clinical perspective (Hinkle & Dean, 2017).

As a doctoral student, learning to teach and develop masters level counseling students, I learned and experienced these struggles. Concurrently, I was exposed to qualitative research for the first time in my doctoral level qualitative research course. I immediately noticed the similarities between counseling-related skills such as case conceptualization and qualitative research. Both require an individual to make a coherent story out of a massive amount of information. Both focus on building a story and telling the story of another. My wondering was if teaching students qualitative research would help students learn the concept of case conceptualization. Could students apply the qualitative cognitive process when meeting with a client?

As an initial test to this theory, I required students in a Shame and Shame Resiliency course to conduct a qualitative research assignment about their experiences of learning about shame through the class. None of the students had completed practicum or worked with clients in a professional capacity. This meant that their knowledge about counseling, including case conceptualization, was limited to academic learning from content-based courses. They also had

not had the opportunity to develop counseling-related skills in a practical setting such as practicum. The goal of the assignment was for the students to use skills that they had perhaps not developed or applied before the onset of the course.

At the beginning of the course, I taught the students the basics of qualitative research including what its goals are, the concept of grounded theory, which was their tradition for the assignment, how to collect data and what to attend to when collecting data. I also explained my reason for including the assignment: that it may help them to develop and practice the skills they will need with clients as well as help them pay attention to the class content and process, and expose them to research methods.

For the assignment, the students were asked to answer the research question "What are the experience of counseling students as they learn about shame". Following every class, the students completed field notes on the class' process including the emotional reactions of themselves and their peers, the mood of the class, and general themes of content. At the midway point, I taught the students how to analyze their notes to produce themes and subsequently a narrative. On the final day of the course, students presented their themes and narratives both verbally and in written format. The students displayed an unexpected level of sophistication in their analysis of the class content and process. They produced narratives that were insightful and showed a deep level of understanding. Furthermore, the students stated that they enjoyed the process of conducting the qualitative research.

At the conclusion of the course, the written narratives were collected and no further exploration of this topic was done. The following semester, the class was the topic of a presentation given by myself and the co-instructor at a national conference for counselor educators and supervisors. During the presentation, I discussed the qualitative research

assignment and it was met with enthusiastic curiosity. Counselor educators were interested in the idea of using qualitative research in a creative application as a tool to teach students case conceptualization and other counseling-related skills. The interest in this creative use of qualitative research in the classroom was the impetus for this research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of the students in the Shame and Shame Resilience course who completed the qualitative research assignment. The researcher tried to gain an understanding of the process of completing the project, the ways it affected the students' knowledge and understanding of the course topics, and finally any interpersonal development that students had as a result of completing the assignment.

Background

Creativity and Counseling

Although the use of qualitative research in the classroom is not a novel or creative idea, the application used in this study was creative. Research is commonly used in the classroom to either teach students how to conduct research or it is provided to students in its completed form as a source of information to enhance their learning. The researcher used the task of conducting research as an intervention or learning tool, which was a creative application of research in the classroom.

Counseling is a complex task that requires individuals to understand multifaceted concepts and engage in continuous self-reflection and self-awareness (Carson & Becker, 2004; Lawrence et al, 2015; McAuliffe & Erickson, 2002). Counseling students are often challenged to expand their cognitive schema and adapt to new ways of conceptualizing themselves and the world. Creativity may be something that can increase students' ability to grasp these complex topics and engage in professional and personal learning (Carson & Becker, 2004).

Gladding (2008) defined creativity as the ability to produce work that is novel and appropriate. Other researchers have developed a more nuanced definition of creativity. Bierly et al. (2009) labeled creativity as a cognitive restructuring precipitated by a block in problem-solving process. It is a complex cognitive process that involves the recombining of relationships among objects and ideas leading to adaptive solutions and insights (Runco & Chad, 1995). These cognitive processes are still being studied and explored to understand more deeply (Yun Dai & Shen, 2008).

Creativity has been studied for years by researchers in higher education (Lawrence et al, 2015). It has been studied in teacher education, K-12 education, and counselor education (Carson & Becker, 2004; Lawrence et al.,2015). Despite researchers' interest in studying creativity, higher education itself may be deleterious for creative thinking (Carson & Becker, 2004). The goals and methods for goal attainment within higher education are seemingly at odds with teaching and training students to engage in creativity. Students are given specific instructions on how to complete assignments and limited means of expressing content mastery.

Creativity also has an uncertain role within counselor education. It has been acknowledged by many that counseling is by its nature a creative task (Frey, 1975; Gladding, 2008; Lawrence, Foster, & Tieso, 2015; Smith, 2011). Counselors are continually adapting to the needs of the client, the agency, and their own needs. The goal of counseling, according to Gladding (2008), is to enable clients to generate their own solutions to problems. Clients need creativity to apply the skills they have learned in counseling to new situations and problems that happen outside of counseling. Counselors, therefore, need to be able to do the same and teach it to clients. The debate within the counseling field is about the role that counseling should play in

education: is creativity a technique to be taught or an approach to be infused throughout the curriculum?

Creativity has numerous benefits when used in the classroom (Duffey, Haberstroh & Trepal, 2009; Henderson & Malone, 2012; Lawrence et al., 2015; Shepard & Brew, 2013). Henderson and Malone (2012) identified a multitude of benefits including changing relationships between objects, intensifying experiential understanding of topics, and more deeply accessing emotions. Shepard and Brew (2013) found that creative techniques increased students' self-awareness and enjoyment of the material. Arguably one of the most important benefits of the use of creativity in counselor education is its ability to increase students' understanding of complex topics (Bell, 2017). Creativity may facilitate student learning of multifaceted topics such as shame.

Shame

One complex topic that creativity may assist students in understanding more deeply and gaining a personal awareness of is shame. Shame is an intensely painful belief in one's imperfection and unworthiness as a human being (Brown, 2012; Gilbert, 1998; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). It is universally experienced by humans and is accompanied by a predictable set of thoughts and behaviors (Brown, 2012; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989).

Shame is problematic and has been called the preeminent cause of emotional distress (Scheff, 2003). It has been linked to a variety of negative outcomes including depression, delinquency, risky behavior and substance use (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Shame can also be detrimental in counseling. It leads to a feeling of disconnection which can damage the client-counselor relationship and begin an impossible cycle

for the client and counselor to disengage from. It is inextricably linked to the process of counseling itself, which focuses on the most feared, problematic aspects of oneself. (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Counselors must learn how to be cope with their own shame and being present in the shame of others in order to be effective counselors (Dayal, Weaver, & Domene, 2015). A creative intervention may be a way to facilitate this development and lessen the mental and emotional strain of learning the topic.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research in the classroom is not a unique idea, but the use of qualitative research in the classroom to teach counseling-related concepts is a unique and creative application of qualitative research. Qualitative research is the study of a topic in its context (Hays & Singh, 2011). It focuses on the exploration of new topics or novel viewpoints. The result of this inquiry is a narrative that tells the story of the research subject, the research process and the researcher. The efficacy of qualitative research has been debated by the scientific community for decades. Numerous professions use qualitative research as means of inquiry including criminal justice, marriage and family therapy, geology, and counselor education (Franklin, 1997; Hays & Singh, 2011; Lowe, 1992; Stallings, 1995).

There are studies on how to teach qualitative research in higher education and why it should be included in research method courses (Austin, 2014; Morris & Marquart, 2010; Stallings, 1995). Qualitative research may increase students' toolbox of methodologies, reduce "research anxiety" and put research into context (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2001). Educators agree that students need to practice to be able to learn qualitative research (Franklin, 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010; Morris & Marquart, 2010; Stallings, 1995). However, none of the research has explored the benefits of teaching qualitative research outside of research courses.

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Statement of the Problem

Learning to be an effective and competent counselor is a difficult task that requires understanding complex concepts and continually engaging in self-reflection and practicing self-awareness. Counselors must be able to have difficult conversations, engage problems in a novel manner, and communicate their message effectively (Ivey, Ivey & Zalaquett, 2018).

Creativity may be an effective method of meeting the cognitive and emotional demands of becoming and maintaining status as a competent counselor (Upton & Bernstein, 2011). Creative teaching methods may assist counseling students in increasing their understanding of complex topics, such as case conceptualization or shame (Orlich, et al., 2009; Upton & Bernstein, 2011). Instructors utilizing a creative approach can help counseling students learn how to approach a difficult topic or conversation with reduced anxiety and a focus on the relationship (Duffey, Haberstroh & Trepal, 2009).

The current research focuses on the use of creativity in specific counselor education courses, such as multiculturalism, and with specific topics, such as case conceptualization (Duffey, Haberstroh & Trepal, 2009; Henderson & Malone, 2012; Lawrence et al., 2015; Shepard & Brew, 2013;). However, this research is limited to specific techniques and is focused on specific learning outcomes. For example, Bell (2017) used role-playing to teach empathy to counseling students. Swank and Nash (2015) used music to decrease students' discomfort with sexuality. The literature has not focused on the holistic learning that may occur as a result of participation in a creative teaching intervention.

A qualitative research project is a creative intervention that has not been introduced in the literature. It is a unique way of including research into the classroom that is not its traditional purpose. There is a gap in the creative and qualtiative literature about the exploration of

qualitative research as an effective teaching method in counselor education. It is hoped that a qualitative research project is a creative teaching technique that can simultaneously make learning easier, less threatening, and increase skills. It may also have the side benefit of increasing students' ability to conduct and publish research for the field.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the experiences of students who participated in a qualitative research project as a creative teaching technique. As part of this study, students' experiences completing a qualitative research project as part of a Shame and Shame Resiliency course were explored. This included its impact on their perceptions and knowledge of qualitative research, shame and shame resiliency, as well as impact on professional and personal growth. Knowledge of research methodologies as well as shame and shame resiliency are crucial to being an effective consumer of practice-related research (Scheff, 2003). Counselors need an understanding of research methodologies and the qualities of a robust study in order to critically evaluate research and decide what research to incorporate it into their practice as counselors.

Research Questions

The research question for the study was: what are the experiences of counseling students in a shame and shame resiliency course who complete a qualitative research project about their experiences?

Sub-questions included: (1) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on their knowledge and understanding of shame and shame resiliency?, (2) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project

on their knowledge and understanding qualitative research?, and (3) how do students describe the

impact of completing a qualitative research project on their personal and professional growth?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I construct a conceptual framework for the use of qualitative research as a creative teaching method in a Shame and Shame Resiliency course. This framework is grounded in literature on shame, creativity and qualitative research. I will provide a brief overview of the literature on these topics including the areas that are not represented in the literature and how the proposed research will provide knowledge that is missing from the current literature on creative teaching in counselor education.

Qualitative research could be used as a creative teaching method to teach about shame and shame resilience. Literature exists on shame, creative teaching methods, and teaching qualitative research, but no researchers have put the three concepts together in order to teach about shame using qualitative research. This research began to close this gap in the literature by increasing our understanding of students' experiences in these learning environments.

Shame

Shame has been defined and refined by numerous researchers (Izard, 2007; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Researchers characterized shame as an intensely painful belief in one's imperfection as a human being (Brown, 2012; Gilbert, 1998; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 1989). This belief in one's imperfection goes beyond normal feelings ensuing from a mistake or the feelings that precipitate efforts of self-growth. It is a belief that one is worthless, powerless, and defective. A person who is experiencing shame believes he or she is unworthy of love because he or she is a failure as a human being (Brown, 2012; Gilbert, 1998; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The experience of shame is universal and can be recognized by individuals across numerous cultures

(Gilbert, 1998; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984). It is experienced in waves, but it can lead to a spiral of negative emotion and actions (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989).

Shame causes what Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron (1989) called a spiritual crisis because it deprives the individual of their feeling of humanity and disconnects the individual from others through its insistence that the person is failure and thereby unworthy of love and connection. The person experiencing shame becomes convinced that he or she is not like others, she or he is less than human, and that she or he is beyond repair (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). Thoughts when experiencing shame become focused on either avoiding the topic that is provoking the emotion of shame or ruminating on one's failures and shortcomings (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989).

The experience of shame is often accompanied by a predictable set of actions and responses (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). Individuals experiencing shame often feel a sense of getting smaller and the world getting larger and more dangerous. They also experience physical symptoms of stress-related arousal including nausea, stiffness, and blushing (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron 1989). Immediate responses to shame can range from withdrawal, anger, paralysis, perfectionism, and denial (Brown, 2012; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Shame researcher, Brené Brown (2012), called the predictable responses to shame "shame shields." When experiencing shame, individuals typically respond in three ways: move toward, move against, and move away. Individuals using the strategy of moving toward will engage in people-pleasing to ameliorate their feelings of shame. For example, an individual who was criticized publicly by their boss may react by praising the boss. This individual would be engaging in moving toward. Individuals who employ the move against strategy respond with

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anger and denial when experiencing shame. For instance, if an individual who is employing this strategy is confronted about their drinking by a concerned family member, the individual may get angry and lash out at the family member. Finally, an individual who is utilizing the strategy of moving away will withdraw from connection. This person may check out of the conversation mentally, remove her or himself from the conversation or avoid the conversation or situation entirely (Brown, 2012).

Shame has been labeled a self-conscious emotion because it requires the individual to make a self-evaluation of themselves and their worthiness (Tangeny & Dearing, 2002). For this reason, the emotion of shame is not believed to develop until age two when a child begins to have the ability to separate themselves from others and see themselves as a unique being (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). Prior to an experience of shame, individuals make an evaluation of the self in comparison to values and standards they seek to meet. When the individual perceives that they have failed to meet these, shame is triggered (Turner, Husman, Schaller, 2002).

The standards and values that an individual is measuring her or himself against are often influenced or created by societal standards. Modern society has been found to intentionally and unintentionally perpetuate and cause shame through its simultaneous focus on individual differences and conformity (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). Individuals are faced with impossible standards to fit in, but stand out. The inevitable failure to meet these impossible standards results in individuals feeling like failures and that they are defective in some way (Sorotzkin, 1985). Society pressures individuals into striving for impossible standards. The goal is no longer to be one's best, it is to be the best (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). If an individual does not meet these ever-changing criteria and standards, messages are given that an individual is not enough in all aspects of their lives (Brown, 2012).

Another confusing message about shame that is perpetuated by society and some of the literature is that shame is a positive influence and should be a part of society (Lindstrom, Hamberg, & Johansson, 2011; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Turner, Husman, & Schallert, 2002). Some researchers believe that shame can be valuable as a tool for morality. It is a signal, these researchers believe, to tell individuals that something is wrong with their relationships with others and/or the world (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). The negative physical and cognitive reaction that is triggered by shame serves as an indicator that a closer look is needed at how the individual is acting in the world. This may prevent an individual from committing a crime or other transgressions. Shame can also be positive, according to these researchers, because it is an indicator that an individual is aware of boundaries in the world and can understand the concepts of privacy and modesty (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). If an individual does not feel shame, it means that she or he is not able to evaluate her or himself in the context of others. Shame is a self-conscious emotion meaning that one needs to be able to evaluate one's behavior in relation to others. It requires the ability to recognize how others perceive one's behavior and how it is affecting them. A person devoid of this would be able to act without regard for other's perceptions or reactions. A further argument for shame as a positive influence is Turner, Husman and Schallert (2002) who found that shamed was followed by an increased effort and persistence in pursuit of goals. Individuals who experience shame regarding a goal are more likely to increase their efforts in pursuit of the goal in the future according to these researchers. Shame, therefore, is a motivator for goal-seeking.

In contrast, other researchers argue that shame is never positive and that the researchers who believe so are confusing the concepts of shame and guilt (Brown, 2012; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Shame and guilt are often confused even among experts. They are used

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interchangeably in literature, the media, and everyday conversations. However, it is critical to distinguish between the two because they have opposite effects on many psychological outcomes (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The primary difference between shame and guilt according to Tangney & Dearing (2002) is the way in which individuals interpret negative events. When experiencing guilt, the individual focuses on the transgression and the wrongness of her or his actions. The individual experiences guilt primarily as a mental experience that involves negative self-evaluations in relation to her or his actions and the subsequent punishment. This individual believes "I did something bad". When experiencing shame, the individual focuses on her or his being and own shortcomings. It is experienced throughout the body and brain. This individual believes "I am bad" (Brown, 2012; Brown, 2004; Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 2002; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). According to this distinction, then moral shame as it is described by researchers, is in actuality guilt. It is an evaluation of the wrongness of one's actions and a fear of punishment. Shame is not categorized as bad shame or good shame, it is distinguished as shame or guilt.

These definitions and concepts were taught to students in the Shame and Shame Resilience course. They were asked to examine their experiences of shame and guilt and their responses to shame in a variety of ways throughout the course including letter writing, in class discussion, and private journals.

Shame and Shame Resiliency Course

The Shame and Shame Resiliency Course was designed by a faculty member at the researcher's institution. She designed the course to teach students about shame and shame's effects on people's lives. During the course, students learned ways of being shame resilient and

practiced means for becoming more self-aware. Students also learned how to help clients using their knowledge of shame and shame resiliency. Course objectives are listed below.

- Students will learn the difference between shame, guilt, humiliation and embarrassment.

- Students will learn multiple therapeutic perspectives about shame.

- Students will be able to describe the effects of shame on people's lives.

- Students will learn how to assess shame.

- Students will understand the importance of recognizing their shame and shame triggers, as well as begin to recognize these in others.

- Students will unpack societal stereotypes and their role in maintaining shame.

- Students will learn practices for shame resilience.

- Students will engage in practices for shame resilience and self-care.

Etiology of Shame

The roots of shame have been theorized to originate in the communications received during childhood (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). A person may hear shame such as "you are a bad boy" rather than guilt messages such as "you did a bad thing". This becomes internalized as self-talk and influences the way in which a person reacts to negative outcomes, failures and adversity. By middle school, individuals have developed a well-defined style of reacting: guilt or shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). This has been labeled as "shame prone" or "guilt prone". A shame-prone person has a dispositional tendency to interpret negative outcomes as a personal failure caused by their own inadequacy. A guilt-prone person interprets the same situation as a temporary, intermittent event caused by factors that are outside of themselves (Turner, Husman & Schallert, 2002). Tangney et al. (1992) studied these attributional styles and linked shame-proneness with depression, blaming, anger and inability to empathize. Stuewig et

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al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study of children from middle school through high school and found that shame-proneness is a risk factor for later deviant behavior. Children who were shame-prone were more likely to be engaged in delinquency, risky sexual behavior, crime, and substance use. All children experience failures. Stuewig et al (2015) theorized that guilt-prone children see this as an opportunity to take in new information and use that to learn how to avoid failure in the next attempt. Shame-prone children focus on their shortcomings and do not take in new information. This leads to further failures and further feelings of shame and an endless cycle. Children feel shame and use bad behavior to cope, which in turn, causes more shame. Another reason that shame-proneness may be correlated with a multitude of negative outcomes is the negative effects it has on interpersonal relationships. Children experiencing shame may withdrawal, lash out, or externalize. This may make it difficult to maintain any relationships, which in turn, confirms the shame messages of unworthiness and being unlovable. The cycle continues.

Shame and Counseling

Shame is a problematic emotion. Scheff (2003) called shame the preeminent cause of emotional distress. It has been linked to a range of negative outcomes including depression, delinquency, risky behavior, and substance use (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The link between shame and depression has been one of the most robustly researched aspects of shame (Harder Lewis, 1987; Kaufman, 1996; Kohut, 1971; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992). The correlation of shame and increased reactions of anger has also been studied by numerous researchers (Hejdenberg & Andrews, 2011; Lewis, 1971).

Shame is not only problematic in daily life, can also be detrimental in counseling. Shame is inextricably integrated into the core of what leads clients into counseling. Shame motivates a

multitude of problematic behaviors including addiction, codependency, sexual difficulties, anxiety, depression, people-pleasing, and anger (Potter-Efron & Potter-Efron, 1989). Client may arrive at counseling to remedy these behaviors but it may be unrealistic to do so until shame is processed and the client is able to break free from the cycle of shame described by Stuewig et al (2015). Counselor should be able to listen to clients' stories and complaints with a third ear for shame based experiences and reactions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Shame is also integrated into the process of counseling itself. Counseling focuses on the most feared, problematic aspects of the client; directly in contrast to all shame avoidance strategies (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The intensity of this exposure can trigger and expose shame and a subsequent shame-based reaction. Clients can withdraw or resist counseling and the efforts of the counselor. Clients may be combative, not comply with treatment, or withdraw from treatment entirely when shame is triggered (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Shame interferes with one's ability to feel safe which is a critical component of effective counseling (Kaufman, 1996). Until a client and counselor are able to move out of shame, there will not be a sense of safety in the therapy room. Building a relationship between the client and counselor is another key factor in the success of counseling. Shame interferes with the ability to connect and communicate with others (Tangney, 1991; Tangney, 1995; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tompkins, 1963). An individual who is avoiding, withdrawing or resisting is not able to effectively communicate or empathize with others. A client or counselor experiencing shame needs these skills to be able to make therapy successful. Therefore, it is critical that shame be a familiar concept to both client and counselor.

Counselors are not immune to experiences of shame within counseling. Shame can be triggered by countertransference, therapeutic failure, and clients' questions or blaming

statements (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Counseling students need to be educated about shame in order to be able to be resilient to these experiences and provide effective counseling. The goal of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course was to teach students the foundations of shame and begin the process of reckoning with shame in their own lives in order for the students to be able to recognize and process shame with a client. The present study is important because it presents an intervention that can be used to effectively teach about shame in the counselor education classroom.

Shame and Counselor Education

For counselor education and supervision to be effective, they both, at times, must focus on a student's areas for growth. This can be shaming for student if it is interpreted by the student as an internal, stable characteristic that is indicative of his or her unworthiness as a professional and a person. In this way shame is inherent in the counselor education and supervision process (Yourman, 2003). Students are struggling with academic and personal growth and failures as counselors both in the classroom and in supervision. Emotion is infused with the processes of goal attainment and self -regulation, both crucial elements as students navigate classroom assignments, practical learning and personal development (Turner, Husman, & Schallert, 2002). This makes students particularly vulnerable to experiences of shame.

Within the classroom, shame may create a barrier to learning, particularly in classes such as multiculturalism, which emphasizes self-reflection and highly emotional topics such as race and gender equality. Halevy (2007) found that shame reactions are often triggered by emotionally taxing classes such as multiculturalism, and this results in a variety of student reactions including anger toward the professor and disengagement with the course material. Counselor educators are responsible for creating competent, ethical counselors and this cannot be

accomplished if students are stuck in shame and unable to fully engage in the learning process (Halevy, 2007).

Studies have shown that students with higher shame are less likely to disclose to their supervisors and are more likely to withdraw into secrecy (Bowden, 2005; Dayal et al, 2015; Yourman, 2003). This is problematic behavior for both the development of the supervisee and the efficacy of the treatment. Supervisees may not disclose critical information that may be legally and ethically affecting their counseling. They will also miss out on critical learning opportunities that result from failures and mistakes.

Many counseling students may also struggle with perfectionism. The link between shame and perfectionism has been established by several researchers (Ashby, Rice, Martin, 2006; Brown, 2012; Lutwak & Ferrari, 1996; Hewitt, Flett, 1991; Sorotzkin, 1985). Ashby et al (2006) linked perfectionism to a variety of negative outcomes including physiological symptoms, shame and thoughts of inadequacy. Lutwak and Ferrari (1996) studied the link between perfectionism and shame among women. This affects counselor education because students who arrive in graduate education with a strong disposition toward perfectionism are more likely to experience shame, which in turn negatively affects their ability to learn and grow.

Shame Resiliency

To be resilient to shame is to know and speak shame. Brown (2006) created "Shame Resilience Theory," and outlined four elements of shame resilience. These are recognizing shame and one's triggers, practice critically evaluating messages that produce shame, tell others about one's shame stories, and finally, speak about shame (Brown, 2006; Brown, 2007). Other research on shame resilience is in accordance with Brown's guidelines. Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron (1987) divide shame resiliency into two phases: an understanding phase and an action

phase. During the understanding phase, one is patient in gaining an understanding of what shame is, one's defenses against it, the sources of shame, and accepting it as a part of human existence. In the action phase, one begins to ask for help from others, challenge shame's messages, and set positive goals for the future.

Counselor educators can guide students through the shame resilience process by educating students about shame and encouraging self-reflection about triggers and responses. Halevy (2007) recommends talking with students about shame at the commencement of any emotionally-laden course such as multiculturalism. Students must be aware of shame and have the language to speak about it and understand their reactions to the course content. This will enable them to stay present and engaged in the content. Counselor educators can also assist students in building a repertoire of self-regulatory processes that will allow them to make adjustments and changes throughout their education.

There is currently a paucity of literature related to teaching the concepts of shame and shame resiliency in the counselor educator classroom. However, it is critical for counseling students to learn about shame and shame resilience in order to first recognize shame in themselves and work toward becoming shame resilient and then turn those skills outward for clients. One of the ways that shame and shame resiliency can be taught in the counselor education classroom is through the use of creative teaching methods and assignments.

Creativity

Much like the myriad of activities and approaches that are defined by the term creativity, there is a multitude of nuanced definitions of creativity in the mental health field. Gladding (2008) provided the most basic definition when he labeled creativity as the ability to produce work that is both novel and appropriate. Creativity, according to this definition, includes all ideas

or inventions. The earliest examples of creativity include the invention of the wheel and the

cultivation of fire. These were critical because they aided survival and evolved society by

allowing early humans to do things that had never been done before. In this way, creativity is

critical to solving our everyday problems and to the evolution of society (Gladding, 2008).

Other studies have maintained that creativity is more nuanced than Gladding's simplistic

definition (Bierly et al, 2009; Dai & Shen, 2008; Runco & Chand, 1995). Bierly et al. (2009)

emphasized the important role that problem-solving plays in the process of creativity. They

defined creativity as cognitive restructuring precipitated by a block in the problem-solving

process (Bierly et al., 2009). The wheel and fire both solved problems experienced by people of

this period (e.g., difficulty moving from place to place and frigid temperatures) and allowed

them to engage in novel activities that solved these problems. A problem is identified and

creativity is engaged to solve this problem.

In addition, Runco and Chand (1995) accentuated the cognitive processes involved in

creativity. They stated that these adaptive, novel ideas, solutions and insights are the result of

combining and recombining ideas. Creativity is seeing new relationships among ideas, which can

lead to original and adaptive notions, solutions, or insights (Runco & Chand, 1995). Individuals

are engaged in a complex process that requires imaginative and inventive thinking. Dai and

Shen (2008) expanded on the cognitive processes of creativity by describing creativity as a goal-

directed process that requires one to recognize one's subjective experience, examine one's

current ways of thinking, imagine alternatives and decide on an action. This can be seen with any

invention. A problem was identified when someone reflected on the self and realized she or he

had an unmet need, reflected on how it was currently being met, how it could be met and then

acted upon it. This is true of all ideas from the wheel, to the lightbulb, to medical advances, to

lifestyle changes. In the present study, qualitative research was used as an intervention for teaching counseling-related skills and course content rather than for its traditional use which is typically to teach qualitative research. This novel approach to the inclusion of qualitative research in the counselor education classroom can be labeled creative because it is an inventive solution to the problem of teaching complex topics such as shame to counseling students.

Creativity has been studied for years in the field of higher education. Much of the research has focused on its application in K-12, college, and teacher education (Lawrence, 2015). Many of these studies have identified that higher education itself may be deleterious to creativity (Carson & Becker, 2004; Lawrence et al., 2015). Carson and Becker (2004) pointed out that the criteria for success in higher education is often at odds with the conditions needed for fostering and developing creativity. Students are forced to constrain their ideas and expression of those ideas in order to meet strict requirements of higher education institutes. Students are trained by higher education to suppress their ability to uniquely solve problems potentially leaving them ill-prepared for the challenges of graduate study, the workforce, and/or the counseling relationship.

Creativity and Counseling

A dominant paradigm in the fields of counseling and counselor education is that counseling is a creative process (Frey, 1975; Gladding, 2008; Lawrence, Foster, & Tieso, 2015; Smith, 2011). Counseling requires that the counselor is continually improvising and adapting his or her approach and interventions as the client's needs change within sessions and throughout treatment. Furthermore, the goal of counseling is ultimately to help the client develop the creativity to problem-solve on her or his own. Therefore, the importance of creativity in counseling has long been acknowledged. In 1961, Carl Rogers stated that counselors have the responsibility to establish a safe, accepting relationship with clients that foster constructive

creativity within clients. Clients need creativity in order to apply the skills learned in counseling to novel problems and situations encountered outside of counseling.

Counseling is a moment-by-moment experience that requires the client and counselor to co-create knowledge, solutions, and ideas. Counseling must be a fertile ground for creativity because creativity is born of stuckness, frustration, and the need for a solution. It does not happen automatically; it requires training to tap into and apply (Hecker & Kottler, 2002).

Creativity has evolved the field of counseling through the introduction of novel ideas and innovative techniques. However, many argue that is it overlooked in the counselor education classroom (Carson & Becker, 2004; Hecker & Kottler, 2002; Smith, 2011). There is a debate within the counseling field about the importance to allot creativity in counselor education. One dominant paradigm explains creativity as an intervention or protocol that can be taught in addition to counseling curriculum while another dominant paradigm constructs creativity as a perspective or way of being that should be taught and infused throughout counseling curriculum (Carson & Becker, 2004; Hecker & Kottler, 2002; Lawrence et al., 2015; Smith, 2011).

Creativity and Counselor Education

There is a growing body of literature that advocates for the inclusion of creativity in counselor education (Hecker & Kottler, 2002; Smith, 2011). A vocal advocate for creativity in counseling, Gladding (2008), implored counselors and counselor educators that "creativity in counseling should be celebrated, cultivated, and encouraged" (p. 2). Hecker and Kottler (2002) stated that counselor education overlooks the role of creative thinking in counseling and does not provide adequate training to counseling students. Carson and Becker (2004) echoed this statement and argued that creativity should be seen as fundamental to counselor education, not simply an add-on to current curriculum. Nine years later, in a review of the literature on

creativity in counselor education, Smith (2011) acknowledged that the state of creativity in counselor education has made little change as only a few programs have added workshops and elective courses on creativity, but few programs have incorporated creativity into their curriculum.

Creativity has been shown by many studies to have many positive effects on counselors and counselors-in-training (Duffey, Haberstroh & Trepal, 2009; Henderson & Malone, 2012; Lawrence et al., 2015; Shepard & Brew, 2013). Henderson and Malone (2012) described the rationale to use creativity in the classroom as identical to the rationale to use with clients including change perspective, changing relationships between objects, stimulating independent conceptualization skills, intensifying experiential understanding and more deeply accessing emotions. Shepard and Brew (2013) used creative interventions to provide group supervision for masters level practicum students. They found that creative techniques increased the students' self-awareness and overall enjoyment. Shepard and Brew reviewed current literature on the link between creative techniques and self-reflection and concluded that their results correlate with numerous studies that have been conducted.

Carson & Becker (2004) concluded that the use of creativity strengthens divergent and complex thinking. Creativity aids and augments adaptability and problem-solving in a world that is increasingly complex. The world and the needs of clients are constantly evolving. Creativity allows the methods of teaching and the subsequent services rendered to keep pace with societal change (Lawrence et al., 2015).

Creative methods assist students in constructing meaning and an emotional connection with their instructional experiences (McAuliffe & Erickson, 2002). Multiple methods of interaction with complex material (e.g., lecture and role play) have been shown to be effective

when teaching difficult new concepts (Orlich, et al., 2009; Upton & Bernstein, 2011). Bell (2017) further argued that using creative approaches to teach a topic not only models creativity but also renders the construct more approachable to students.

Creativity has been documented to have positive effects on the relational aspect of counseling. Duffey, Haberstroh and Trepal (2009) found the creativity depends connections, increases intimacy, and fosters new ways of thinking. They concluded through their study that creative thinking correlates with relational competencies.

Another benefit of creativity in the counselor education classroom is the increased range of expressive modalities it allows. Western cultures tend to value language as the primary means of communication. Creative modalities allow students from non-dominant cultures to express their ideas and experiences without the need for words (Ziff & Beamish, 2004).

Creativity should be introduced early into counselor education curriculum as a foundational element (Carson & Becker, 2004). Counselor educators should provide a climate that is safe for students to explore their creative nature, assists in the recognition and elimination of barriers to creative thinking along with encouraging and nurturing imaginative activities and problem-solving (Bull, Montgomery & Baloche, 1995). Instructors should teach and model innovative ways of thinking and encourage the incorporation of creativity into educational pursuits (Brinkman, 2010).

Creativity has the ability to enhance student learning of complex topics and increase student interpersonal development (Duffey, Haberstroh & Trepal, 2009). Shame is a topic that is necessary to teach in the counselor education classroom because it is present in a multitude of facets and has the potential to have devastating effects on individuals and the counseling relationship. A creative teaching method could be used to facilitate students' learning of this

abstract, challenging topic. The unique use of qualitative research as an intervention to teach content and counseling-related skills could be serve as a creative intervention to facilitate student learning.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is the study of a topic in its context. Its name indicates that it is concerned with the quality of things; often phenomena, processes, and experiences that are impossible to understand and measure in terms of quantity, intensity or frequency. Its goal is to provide a depth of understanding of the phenomenon including its processes, meaning and framework. Qualitative research also allows for the influence and humanness of the researcher to be a part of the research (Hays & Singh, 2011). Researchers have their own ideas, perceptions, and biases that are inextricably infused into the research. The end result is a narrative that tells the story of the research subject, the research process and the researcher.

The scientific community has debated the efficacy of qualitative research for decades. As research philosophies and research topic interests changed, qualitative research gained popularity (Franklin, 1997). It has since become a part of numerous professions from geology to criminal justice to marriage and family therapy to teacher education (Franklin, 1997; Hays & Singh, 2011; Lowe, 1992; Stallings, 1995).

Incorporating qualitative research into the classroom has become one of the next focuses of qualitative publications in higher education. There are many challenges that have been encountered. Many educators were only taught quantitative research methods during their graduate school so the introduction of qualitative research methods requires a complete refocusing of their research orientation. Educators in higher education lament the lack of

resources to teach qualitative research methods compared to quantitative research methods (Franklin, 1997).

Numerous studies and articles have been published about the use of a qualitative research assignment as a means of teaching qualitative research methods. Stallings (1995) had students analyze movies and books. Austin (2014) made her own review for students to analyze. Morris and Marquart (2010) had criminal justice students conduct field observations of high-crime areas for their qualitative research assignments. These assignments have been enacted with varying success based on instructional methods and students' understanding of qualitative research paradigms. All these educators agree, however, that despite any shortcomings, students require practice to be able to learn qualitative research. (Franklin, 1997; Morris & Marquart, 2010; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010; Stallings, 1995).

Other benefit of including qualitative research into the classroom is that it increases students toolbox of research methodologies, reduces anxiety and helps students put the research process into context (Franklin, 1997; Morris & Marquart, 2010; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010; Stallings, 1995). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010) argued that quantitative research should be taught side by side with qualitative research in order to help students understand how different methods can arrive at similar, but unique data sets. The researchers also concluded that students' statistics-related anxiety was reduced by having qualitative methods taught in the same course.

There is a lack of literature on specific methods of teaching qualitative research in non-research related courses. The literature that exists is aimed at assisting educators in teaching a research method course (Franklin, 1997; Morris & Marquart, 2010; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010; Stallings, 1995). It does not suggest how to incorporate it within core or seminar courses. The

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literature also is not specific to counselor education and how qualitative research can be taught and benefit future counselors.

Qualitative research could be used as a creative teaching method to teach about shame and shame resilience. Literature exists on shame, creative teaching methods, and teaching qualitative research, but the no one has put the three concepts together in order to teach about shame using qualitative research. This research will begin to close this gap in the literature by increasing our understanding of students' experiences in these learning environments.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Research Tradition

Qualitative research methods were used to study the experiences of counseling students in a shame and shame resiliency course who completed a qualitative research project. Qualitative research is the study of a topic or phenomenon in the context in which it occurs (Hays & Singh, 2011). Because qualitative research emphasizes inductive and abductive inquiry, it is often used to study exploratory topics or phenomenon that have not been studied robustly (Hays & Singh, 2011). There are several research traditions within qualitative inquiry including grounded theory, phenomenology, heuristic inquiry and consensual qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2011). This research used phenomenology to understand the experiences of the students who completed the assignment.

In its most simplistic definition, phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). However, phenomenology may be more nuanced than this definition allows for. Phenomenology is both a philosophical movement and an approach to research (Kafle, 2011). Phenomenology has its roots in the ideas of philosopher, Edmund Husserl who proposed that a researcher can more closely understand a phenomenon by allowing the participants to express their experience free from the researcher's own beliefs and biases (Kafle, 2011; Phillips-Pula et al. 2011). He believed that researchers should be fully present in a situation, aware of their perceptions and meaning they attach to them, and constantly working to establish inter-subjectivity with participants in order to be a more accurate voice for the participants' experiences (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011).

Moustakas (1994) is one of the most notable voices in modern phenomenology (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011). He attempted to bring balance between the subjective and objective

approaches to the acquisition of knowledge. He advocated for researchers to question: what are the individuals' experiences and in what context did they experience them? Moustakas focused on the entirety of the experience and its essence (Moustakas, 1994).

The goal of phenomenology is understanding (Hays & Singh, 2011). A researcher is seeking to gain an understanding of how a person experiences a phenomenon of interest. Researcher and phenomenologist Paul Colaizzi stated that his role as a phenomenological researcher's goal is "to accurately describe phenomena as seen through the eyes of study participants" (as cited in Phillips-Pula et al., 2011). Researchers use this information to tell the participant's story, not to build a theory or speculations. It is powerful and valuable to the scientific community and society simply share an experience (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Phenomenology has been used to study the experiences of specific groups and individuals by numerous fields including counseling, counselor education, nursing, and teacher education (Dibley, Norton & Whitehead, 2017; Hays et al., 2016; Lamprecht, 2015; Malott et al. 2014; Sackett & Lawson, 2016; Wall, Glenn, & Poole, 2011). Lamprecht (2015) used phenomenology to examine clients' experiences of receiving a therapeutic letter between counseling sessions. Malott et al. (2014) explored white counseling supervisees' experiences working with Latino youth using a phenomenological study.

Phenomenology was used to describe the experiences of participants when they participated in a qualitative research project in a shame and shame resiliency course. The goal of the research was not to build a theory; it was to share the experiences of the learners in this learning environment. Phenomenology is the research tradition that most closely fit this goal.

There are three types of phenomenology that have developed: transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic. Phenomenological research that is using an existential phenomenological

approach is focused on the nature of the reality that contains the phenomenon. A research question using existential phenomenological research would be, "How do counseling students who are transgender understand and perceive their realities?" In contrast, hermeneutic phenomenological research will explore the experiences of individuals along with how they interpret these experiences. For example, a research question following this approach would be, "What does it mean to interpret experience through reading blogs about individuals who are transgender?" Finally, transcendental phenomenological research is focused on the meanings of the experience. For example, a research question using transcendental phenomenological research would be, "What is the essence of the experience of being a counseling student who is transgender?" Transcendental phenomenological researchers set aside any preconceived notions and judgments, a process known as "epoche" in Greek (Moustakas, 1994). The process is called transcendental because the researcher is experiencing the phenomenon for the first time because they have set aside all that they knew previously (Moustakas, 1994).

The transcendental approach was used in this study because of its focus on the essential meaning of an experience. The aim of the current study was to examine the essential meaning of the experiences of counseling students who participated in a qualitative research project in a shame and shame resiliency course. The transcendental approach was also in line with the researcher's own beliefs on knowledge acquisition and creation.

Participants

Participants were students who participated in a Shame and Shame Resiliency seminar course offered in a previous semester. Participants needed to have completed the qualitative research project assignment, which was a required assignment in the course. Seven students attended the seminar course and completed the qualitative research project and five agreed to

participate in an interview. Five is within the guidelines established by Polkinghorne (1989) for recommended participants in phenomenological inquiries.

Criterion sampling was used to select participants for this research. Criterion sampling is a form of purposeful or purposive sampling which requires researchers to develop specific standards for the participants prior to beginning the study (Hays & Singh, 2011). These standards may be a way of identifying people who are especially knowledgeable or who have experienced a phenomenon. The purpose of this is to obtain richest source of information regarding the phenomenon of interest who are able to articulate these experiences (Bernard, 2002; Patton, 2002). In criterion sampling, participants are selected because they meet a specific set of predetermined requirements for inclusion. The purpose is then to review all cases that meet the criteria (Hays & Singh, 2011). In this study, the criteria to select participants required that the individual is a counseling student, participated in the Shame and Shame Resiliency course, and completed the qualitative research project.

Participant 1, Brenda, is a 25-year-old student who is pursuing her degree in school counseling and clinical mental health counseling. Brenda was the only participant who had completed practicum at the time of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. She recently experienced a setback in her educational career and credits the skills she learned from Shame and Shame Resiliency class for her ability to move forward authentically and continue to be vulnerable. In her qualitative research assignment, she wrote about the class' focus on embracing imperfections and inviting vulnerability into their daily lives.

Participant 2, Madison, is a 24-year-old student pursuing her degree in clinical mental health counseling. Perfectionism and self-compassion have impacted Madison most since finishing the class. She has begun to incorporate messy things into her life to challenge her

perfectionism and recently bought her first set of colored markers as an adult. In her qualitative research assignment, she wrote about perfectionism leaving no room for ambiguity in the class members' lives.

Participant 3, Susan, is a 25-year-old student pursuing her degree in clinical mental health counseling. She is considering continuing her education in the counselor education and supervision doctoral program. She said that she used Brené Brown's phrase "step into the arena" to motivate her to stay authentic and vulnerable during her practicum experience last semester. She continued to stay connected to the material from Shame and Shame Resiliency class by reading other books by Brené Brown, whose research is focused on shame and shame resiliency. In her qualitative research project assignment, Susan wrote that learning about shame ultimately results in feelings of connection and inspiration for personal growth and shame resilience.

Participant 4, Jessica, is a 23-year old student pursuing a degree in clinical mental health counseling. Jessica had previously assisted with a qualitative research study on body images as an undergraduate research assistant. She was the only participate to have any previous experience with qualitative research. Jessica stated that creativity is the concept she most needed when she took the Shame and Shame Resilience class and is the concept she has most implemented in her life since then. In her qualitative research project assignment, she wrote about students exploring their authentic selves through creation.

Participant 5, Casandra, is a 24-year old student pursuing a degree in clinical mental health counseling. Casandra had never studied or conducted qualitative research prior to the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. Although she enjoyed the assignment and saw it as a reminder that everyone experiences things differently, she stated that she has no intention of conducting any type of research in the future

Procedures

Participants had previously participated in the Shame and Shame Resiliency course and completed a qualitative research project. Their experiences related to this assignment were explored through interview and analysis of the written project. The procedures for the qualitative research project and data collection are described. Procedures for data analysis are included in a later section.

Procedures for the Qualitative Research Assignment

At the onset of the Shame & Shame Resiliency course, the qualitative research project was introduced. Qualitative research was explained by the researcher/co-instructor including the goals of qualitative research, the characteristics of qualitative research, and procedures for conducting qualitative research. The students were asked to answer the research question: what is the experience of counseling students as they learn about shame? Students were instructed to complete field notes following each class session. Students received blank copies of field notes and instructions were given on how to take qualitative field notes (See Appendices A and B).

At the halfway point of the course, qualitative research data analysis was taught to the students. The students and instructors discussed their notes so far as a means of increasing students' comprehension of the qualitative research process. Feedback was given to students on the content of their notes and students' questions were answered.

For the final day of the course, students were instructed to prepare a list of themes identified from their notes along with a narrative based on their themes which answered the research question: what is the experience of counseling students as they learn about shame. Students verbally shared their identified themes and narratives with the class. The written narratives and themes were collected.

Procedures for Data Collection

Selected participants were contacted via email by the researcher. The participants were invited to participate in a one-time interview about their experience completing the assignment and any impact it may have had in their learning or understanding of the course topics or topics in their future learning.

Participants were invited to choose a location for the individual interview which was most convenient to them and allowed for privacy. All of the participants chose to have the interview in a counseling room at the university. The researcher conducted all interviews in person. Interviews ranged from 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded for later transcription.

Instruments

The primary data collection tool in this study was interviews. The qualitative research assignments were also used as data. The students' assignments were analyzed as a means of triangulation in order to increase the trustworthiness of the interview data. These written assignments were previously collected in partial fulfillment of the course, and students gave permission for them to be used for analysis in the future.

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed. Each interview included a standard set of questions and the interviewer used additional questions to clarify information or encourage participants to expand their answers. The interview was informally divided into two sections. The first section of the interview is designed to focus on the participants' experience of the class and the qualitative research assignment. The second section of the interview was designed to focus on any impact the assignment had on specific aspects of the participants' learning.

1. What was it like to take the Shame and Shame Resiliency course?

2. What have you taken with you from the class?

3. What was it like to do the qualitative research assignment

4. What was your knowledge or experience with qualitative research before this assignment?

5. What was your knowledge or experience with shame before this assignment?

6. How did the assignment help or hinder your understanding and learning shame?

7. How did the assignment influence your opinion of qualitative research?

8. How confident do you feel about doing qualitative research after doing the assignment?

9. Do you notice any similarities between the qualitative research assignment and the skills you use with counseling or the things you learn in class?

10. How has the qualitative research assignment influenced you in other ways?

11. Is there anything I am missing? Anything you would like to add?

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of an analysis of the interviews and analysis of the content of the qualitative research project assignments.

Analysis of Interviews

The interviews were transcribed verbatim for each participant including minimal encouragers and non-verbal gestures. During the transcription process, the researcher removed or gave pseudonyms to all names, locations or other personally identifying information of the participant. Each participant was assigned a code name to protect participant confidentiality.

The data analysis followed Moustakas' (1994) recommendations of phenomenological data analysis. The first step was to describe one's own experiences with the phenomenon of

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interest, also called an *epoche*. This will allow for the researcher to bracket off any preconceived assumptions and ideas and increase the researcher's ability to grasp the true essence of the students' experiences.

The next step was to divide the significant statements in the data into large categories; this process is also called horizontalization (Moustakes, 1994). After this, the researcher created meaning units or themes based on these clusters of statements; this is often referred to as textual descriptions.

Finally, the researcher constructed a description of the meanings and the essence of the experience (Morer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

Analysis of Assignments

The assignments were analyzed for the purpose of triangulation of the data (Carter et al., 2014). The assignments from each student included the list of codes and themes they developed after analyzing their field notes from class. They each also wrote a summarizing paragraph of their individual data analysis. The content of these assignments was analyzed for evidence of higher order thinking which would indicate a congruence between participants' reported growth and development and their written work.

Researcher Epoche

The primary researcher was a twenty-eight-year-old White female who is working toward a doctorate in counselor education. The researcher has a professional and personal orientation that is relational and constructivist and relies heavily on creativity as a means of knowledge creation. She believes that knowledge is created through original means such as writing, reflection, and art.

She also has a focus on shame and shame resiliency in the classroom, practice and research. The majority of research the primary researcher has conducted has used qualitative methodology. It has been the experience of the researcher that qualitative methodologies are the best fit for many shame related topics and many research topics in the counselor education field.

The primary researcher was the co-instructor for the Shame & Shame Resiliency course that the students participated in. The qualitative research project was introduced into the course as the behest of the primary researcher. It is the belief of the primary researcher that the act of conducting observing, writing field notes, analyzing the field notes for themes and writing a narrative will be skills that are transferable to other aspects of counseling (e.g. case conceptualization, case notes).

When the assignment was introduced and completed, it was a concern of the researcher that students would reject the assignment because its usefulness may not have been immediately apparent to the students. Students may have also rejected the inclusion of research in a content based course or because it originated from a doctoral student co-instructor rather than the faculty co-instructor. However, students produced notes and narratives that were accurate, thoughtful and representative of the experience of the class. Students appeared to put effort into recording daily fields notes and analyzing them to construct a narrative to explain the experience of counseling students learning about shame. The student narratives were closely aligned with each other along with the primary researcher and the faculty co-instructors' experiences of the course. This indicates a degree of accuracy in the interpretations of the students. It is the belief of the primary researcher that the training and practice this experience provided will enable students to construct narratives about their clients and transfer this into a case conceptualization.

The introduction and completion of the assignment was rewarding for the primary

researcher who is beginning her career as a counselor educator; a novel idea was introduced to

students and received with respect and success. Students in the course appeared to embrace the

assignment, exceeding the expectations of the course instructors. This enthusiasm partly inspired

this research project.

Strategies for Trustworthiness

In order to enhance trustworthiness, the researcher kept a reflexive journal throughout the

design, data collection, and analysis process. In the journal, the researcher reflected on thoughts,

reactions, observations and biases related to the research process. The researcher also made field

notes and contact summaries following each interview. The purpose of these notes was to

describe and analyze the findings as they emerge during the research process.

The qualitative research project assignments were included as a means of data source

triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). The inclusion of multiple sources of data develops a

comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and serves as a validation of the data (Patton,

1999).

Finally, the researcher used a research team to discuss research design, data collection

and data analysis. The research team consisted of a faculty member in counselor education who

has conducted numerous qualitative research studies. This is a strategy for trustworthiness

known as triangulation of investigators (Hays & Singh, 2011). This strengthened the study

design and introduced multiple perspectives into the analysis of the data.

In summary, the research used a phenomenological approach to study the experiences of

counseling students in a Shame and Shame Resiliency course who completed a qualitative

research project. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of students who

participate in a qualitative research project as a creative teaching technique. The research question for the question was: what are the experiences of counseling students in a shame and shame resiliency course who complete a qualitative research project about their experiences? Sub-questions included: (1) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on shame and shame resiliency?, (2) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on qualitative research?, and (3) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on personal and professional growth?

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This study was guided by the research question: what are the experiences of counseling students in a shame and shame resiliency course who complete a qualitative research project about their experiences? Sub-questions included: (1) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on shame and shame resiliency? (2) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on qualitative research?, and (3) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on personal and professional growth?

Data was collected through individual interviews with participants and an analysis of their written assignments. Interview data was transcribed into Microsoft Word using ExpressScribe and subsequently analyzed. Analysis used Moustakas' (1994) guidelines for analysis of phenomenological studies. The researcher identified meaning units, or significant statements, and integrated these into core themes. The three main themes and numerous subthemes are discussed in detail below.

The Process of Completing the Qualitative Research Project

The first theme relates to the process of completing the qualitative research project. The participants all identified that the process to understand and complete the qualitative research project assignment was, at times, challenging. It was the first time conducting a qualitative research project for all but one of the participants. They struggled to put into words what was happening in the classroom. The process of collecting data by completing field notes was a perfunctory task for the first half of the class. The majority of the participants were more concerned with completing the assignment correctly and earning a high grade than they were about observing themselves and the class. Participants reported feeling lost at first, but

experienced a shift when they began to experience clarity and confidence with the assignment. The subthemes of this theme were labeled using the words of the participants: (1) "abstract" "out of reach", (2) "a lack of words", (3) "doing it right", and (4) "the turning point". These subthemes are discussed in detail.

"Abstract" and "Out of Reach"

Several participants stated that the assignment was abstract when it was first introduced by the instructors. Jessica remarked that the qualitative research project "was a hard part of the class". However, Jessica clarified: "the goal was pretty clear…the narrative part of it, but trying to piece it all together was tough". Madison stated that "it was abstract…it definitely took more brain power". She goes on to describe her confusion as "it feels like if your head would have grown a little fishbowl and then all the ideas would be floating over it, and I was trying to grab the ideas". Susan echoed this feeling and said "it was kind of like an abstract thing for me at first. I couldn't really wrap my head around it at first". Jessica stated "I remember as I was going along doing the field notes everyday it seemed like I couldn't really see the connection of why I was doing it…there was nothing too reflective about it at the time." She described the process by saying, "just seemed like you didn't really know what you were doing, but it all turned out okay".

"A Lack of Words"

The participants were struggling with the language to use to record all of the class content and process. The content and the process of the class was deeply impacting the participants, but they were unable to put such complex feelings and processes into one succinct document each day. Madison said "I feel like sometimes it was hard to write down, to put into words the emotions [of the class]". She described that a part of her struggles with "a lack of words". Susan

also stated "I struggled with the type of language to use, or if we could put things that were subjective or objective…what was the names of things". "It was kind of hard to describe what was happening in the classroom that day" said Jessica. "I just didn't know how to word it", Casandra explained about her struggle in the course "it is kind of confusing".

Examples were suggested by the participants as a way of ameliorating the struggle for language. Susan suggested "maybe if there were other examples of this type of study, but a completely different topic so you couldn't just copy it. Maybe something like that because at first I struggled with the type of language to use, or, if we could put things that were subjective or objective. So if there were case studies or other examples of this type of qualitative study that might help too being able to relate that to the experience in the shame class".

"Doing it Right"

The participants were also struggling with the qualitative research project assignment at the beginning of the course because they were preoccupied with a desire to complete the assignment correctly. Madison stated "at first don't think it was super helpful…because I was very self-conscious that I was doing it right. Because I think I have more the, you know, make sure you're doing this right. Don't think about other things. I guess I could have seen the connection, but I didn't see the connection the first week". She further explained "I just wanted to make sure I was doing it okay".

Jessica described the difficulty in accepting that each participant's field notes and assignment may look different. "I feel like usually I'd be too hyperaware of like "oh I forgot to put that down" or "I didn't notice that theme when other people did". She explained that her anxiety at the beginning was high because "I was nervous because I didn't know if I was doing it

right". Casandra also described wrestling with feelings of anxiety and questioning "oh did I do it wrong" when she heard other participants' field notes and themes.

"The Turning Point"

The participants felt a sense of confusion and uncertainty for the beginning of the course, but reported a shift as the course continued. Their anxiety about their performance decreased as their understanding of the course topics and qualitative research process and their sense of safety in the classroom increased. At the same time as this assignment was being completed, the class was learning about shame and engaging in self-reflective activities. The group built trust with one another through these exercises. A critical incident identified by several participants was the last day of the first week of class when childhood shame messages were discussed. It was an emotional experience for all of the participants and many noted that it was a critical moment in their experience of the class.

Jessica reported "the second week when I understood it a little more and it made more sense and I understood it a little more". Her process began with a struggle to decide the details to include in her field notes and what was the correct way to complete the assignment. "I was nervous because I didn't know if I was doing it right" Jessica stated. For her it was important to the process when she recognized "that it's okay I noticed or I put thing down that other people didn't". It was the reassurance of the instructors that each person sees the world differently and will write different themes that allowed Jessica to make this shift. "She was validating what I just said…I remember that really stuck with me. I was like okay that makes sense why I'm putting things that other people didn't".

Madison described her process in the class as starting off highly anxious and nervous to perform well on the assignment. However, she noticed a shift in the second week when the class

started to discuss emotionally vulnerable topics and build trust with one another. "It took a couple days and then I was like 'yeah I get the gist of it' and then we got all emotional and then, it was like, okay, 'I'm not sure what I'm doing but I'm doing it'" stated Madison. "I didn't see the connection that first week and then by the second week, it kind of made sense why we were doing it". She also described the impact that a week of knowledge had on her ability to write the field notes. Madison clarified, "I knew more about shame so it was easier to write about that now". She summarized her experience: "I remember you guys said that at the end we will be able to notice the themes and it wouldn't be that hard. I remember thinking that this is going to be so hard…but going back through every single field not, it did make sense. So now that I went through it, its not as scary because I know at the end it makes complete sense, but at first it was everything everywhere".

Susan began the qualitative research project nervous because qualitative research was not something she was familiar with and she explained, "I couldn't really wrap my head around it at first". It began to become less abstract at the end of the first week when the class shared their field notes with one another. "Sharing and hearing what other people were noticing too, it became easier…once we shared and were able to bounce ideas off each other it got easier" Susan explained.

Following this turning point, the participants described less difficulty in writing field notes and finding the process less stressful. The confusion experienced at the beginning of the course was not interpreted negatively by participants. Brenda remarked on how valuable the experience was and said, "I think that it kind of ties into things we learned in class: we don't try thing because we don't know, we kind of just such things down without giving ourselves an opportunity". Madison stated that "even though I was like really, really scared that I didn't know

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what it was, I do appreciate that I was just completely lost because, I guess, it was more valuable than if you guys had just told us what to do…it made me feel better because I did something and it does make sense".

Although the participants were at times confused, anxious and unsure, it appears that several benefits and positive experiences came from the qualitative research project and it also changed their experience in the Shame and Shame Resiliency course.

<center>**The Impact of the Qualitative Research Project**</center>

The participants all report that completing the qualitative research project changed their experience in the course. Participants noted that it changed the way they paid attention in the class, their opinion of qualitative research and how reflective they were throughout the class. The participants were also grateful to be exposed to a new concept in a novel way. Finally, the participants all discussed an increased feeling of connection facilitated by the qualitative research project assignment. These subthemes are again labeled using the words of the participants. These subthemes are: (1) "more observant", (2) "qualitative is more human", (3) "this is actually possible for me" and (4) "I'm not the only person". The subthemes are discussed in more detail below.

"More Observant"

The participants all remarked on the influence the qualitative research project assignment had on the way they paid attention during the two weeks of class. Susan described it as an attention on what is happening in the present "I'm probably more invested in the here and now and what's happening in the present moment…I'm like 'I need to remember this so I can write it down later' or 'this is important to note at the end of class'". She focused on the meaning behind

what was happening and asked herself 'did I really catch on to what they were actually saying or was I more concerned with the observation piece of it'"?

Brenda reported that this was one of her biggest struggles in the class. "I feel like I get so caught up in the moment. I get tunnel vision in the moment and I miss out on what's going on with other things…I'm so engaged in learning and thinking about thing with my life…at the end of the class I would be like 'what were other people doing?'" As the class continued, she made an effort to pay attention to the people around her in addition to her own process. "I needed to make sure I'm also trying to learn what other people are getting from it or what they're doing or how they're processing it".

Casandra also described that the research project assignment changed the way she paid attention in the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. She stated "it helped me be more observant in a way because I knew then after every class we'd do our observation". "I was observing others and maybe how others are reacting to different shame triggers," Casandra explained of her experience. The assignment "made me more observant".

The participants described an increase in their reflection as a result of the assignment. Brenda stated, "it was a nice way to take some time and reflect on what was going". She elaborated, "if we didn't do this, I wouldn't have been as reflective or tried to be a reflective". It encouraged her to reflect on her own process, her classmate's process and the content of the class. "I think it allowed us to just notice and think about what's going on rather than just going through the class" Brenda stated.

Not only were the participants encouraged to pay attention to the process and content of the class, they also paid closer attention to each other. This is supported by the content of the qualitative research project assignments. Many of the themes identified by the participants are

about their classmates and the class' process. One narrative included: "there were days where you could tell it took an emotional tool on the classmates, I think, it reinforces how hard everyone worked to be open and impacted because even on these days no one stopped sharing". Several participants recorded codes that described the emotional ups and downs of their classmates and themselves. These observations and narratives illustrated that the participants were being observant of each other.

"Qualitative is More Human"

All of the participants spoke about their opinion of qualitative research and how it was influenced by the assignment. The majority prefer qualitative for several different reasons including its humanness, congruence with the approach of counseling, and lack of emphasis on statistics.

Brenda stated "I prefer qualitative because you actually get to hear the people's experiences". She elaborated, "when you put a number to something you don't really know what it's like, but when you put things into themes of how people tend to see thing as or tend to feel it just you more to work with". Brenda intends to conduct her own qualitative research projects in the future and stated that this project was helpful because "it gave me a better idea of what is qualitative research and how it can be very impactful if you really start going out there and interviewing people and getting their sense of experiences, you share, what you found and help other people become aware of things they don't usually hear about". She wants to conduct research on people of her ethnicity and tell their stories in the future.

Madison also would like to conduct qualitative research in the future. She said "I definitely like qualitative more than quantitative. Because I'm not a big number person. And just seeing it at the end, it's not that terrible to look for themes. It makes, it makes it less scary". She

also noted the impact that qualitative research can have: "you can make a story of the whole thing that happened in that classroom for two weeks. That's pretty cool". Qualitative research in Madison's opinion "makes more sense" and also "it's more human". She's excited to conduct research in the future because "I would like to know people's stories and how they got to where they are".

Casandra and Susan would also prefer to conduct a qualitative research project rather than a quantitative research project. "I would lean qualitative. For one, my brain just isn't set up in the math way like that. And I just don't have a liking for it. I think this is definitely more up my alley: talking with people and getting their experiences". Susan summarized her thoughts on research and stated, "I always leaned toward something less number-y". Qualitative research makes sense with how she viewed the world.

The participants had a range of enthusiasm for research, but all of the participants expressed that they enjoyed the qualitative research process and it felt congruent with how they think. Several expressed an appreciation for how qualitative research can influence the researcher and the participants.

"This is Actually Possible for Me"

Many of the participants expressed that they have intentions of conducting qualitative research in the future and expressed gratitude or appreciation that they were exposed to qualitative research in the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. All of the participants expressed a feeling of confidence about conducting qualitative research in the future.

Brenda intended to conduct qualitative research in the future with people of a minority group she is a member of. When asked if she would feel confident to do qualitative research she replied, "I do see it now as a possibility of me being able to do it whereas before it was like 'no

this is not something I could ever do It is not in my scope'…but now it is actually possible for me".

When asked if she would feel confident enough to conduct her own qualitative study in the future, Madison responded with a succinct, "yes, definitely". Madison expressed a feeling of anger and frustration prior to the feeling of confidence. "I would change it [the assignment]. At first I hated it. It was just so all over the place, but then it came back. I definitely agree with the assignment. It was so very helpful". She explained the overall sense of confidence that the assignment gave her following her struggle, "it made me feel better because I did something and it does make sense. And I wasn't that lost". Madison stated that she does intend to conduct qualitative research in the future.

Susan echoed these statements. "I think having this experience definitely helps the feeling of 'okay I've done it and I know I can do it'", she explained. If she were to conduct research in the future she said, "I feel confident I could do it and do it well". Jessica said, "I think I would be comfortable doing it, yes. It's actually something I've been looking into". Jessica explained that she is contemplating continuing her education in a doctoral program, which entails conducting research. "It's been floating around in my head" she said. Casandra also expressed a feeling of confidence in qualitative research. When asked if she felt comfortable conducting a qualitative research project, she replied, "I think so. I would definitely need some guidance, but I think I could". Casandra, however, did not express any interest in conducting research in the future.

"I'm Not the Only Person"

The participants not only felt more confident in their skills, they also felt more connected to each other by completing the assignment and hearing each other's experiences. Jessica

described her experience and the importance of hearing others stories. "For me, just to see, that I'm not the only person who is feeling that way. At times, it was just crazy how others people felt the same way and I was like "I never thought that this person would feel like this too". So that, it was nice."

When asked to describe the biggest benefit she gained from the qualitative research assignment, Jessica responded quickly, "more connection between my classmates for sure. Seeing of course, 'oh yeah I saw that too', that's kind of what I was getting out of it, but also just like seeing their own individuality and it just seemed like once we all had shared there was this greater feeling of connection. I don't think I mentioned this but it seems like I've really grown closer with the people that were in the class since that class ended. That's been nice".

Casandra also discussed an increased feeling of connection after hearing others' stories through both the assignment and the class. "[I] definitely feel connected. It's still something that we occasionally talk about when I'm with others that were in that class. I think it definitely built some friendships as well. Even if I'm not super connected with everybody, but definitely connected me closer with some people," Casandra explained.

The participants were all impacted by both the challenging content of the course and the assignments in the course. The qualitative research project assignment changed the way the participants paid attention in the class. They paid attention to each other and themselves in a more reflective way. Their opinion of qualitative research was also altered by the assignment and all of the participants left with an increased feeling of confidence about their skills. Most important to the participants was the increased feeling of connection to each other facilitated by the qualitative research project assignment.

Learning Outcomes of the Qualitative Research Assignment

The participants detailed a variety of learning outcomes that resulted from the qualitative research project assignment. Participants described increased understanding of empathy and the course topic: shame. The subthemes are: (1) "we all have different perspectives", (2) "ties things together", and (3) "almost identical". The subthemes are discussed in more detail below.

"We All Have Different Perspectives"

The participants described the impact of attending to each other's experiences and the experience of the class as a whole through the qualitative research project assignment as increasing their awareness of others' perspectives.

Brenda admitted that she often gets focused on her own experience and does not pay attention to the experiences of others, but the assignment forced her to pay attention to her environment more than she would have without the assignment. She described this by saying, "I think it allowed us to just notice what's going on rather than just going through the class".

Jessica said, "the one thing I took away, once we had all shared our stories and themes and stuff, was that we all took away different things and that we all have different perceptions and perspectives". Without naming it, Jessica is describing empathy. She expressed an appreciation for these differences, "it kind of the beauty in it too because you could take any individual and put them in a shame class and they're going to get similar codes and themes but then different ones too because that's what they needed for the class." Her explanation shows an understanding and appreciation for empathy.

Casandra also described how the assignment helped her attend to individual differences in perceptions in the class. She said, "Hearing someone else and they have a totally different thing but then remembering that's not important and just to learn how other people view shame

and how they have different shame triggers and experience class differently. I think that was an important reminder that not everybody was going to be the same, but there were still similar themes that played out in their story, but it still wasn't the same".

"Ties Things Together"

Brenda noticed that the qualitative research project assignment helped her understand shame. "I think doing the qualitative project did help me understand more about shame in that sense" which referred to how it increased how reflective she was and the perspectives that we introduced by hearing her classmates. "It think that it kind of ties things together" she said. Casandra made an almost identical statement about the qualitative research project assignment, "it just kind of helps put it all together", said Casandra.

"At the end when everything came together, it was easier to know the whole concept of shame. I remember writing stories and thing that we all said and then at the end it would all come down onto that one big concept and it all made sense" said Madison when asked to describe if the qualitative research project assignment impacted her understanding of the course content.

The qualitative research project assignment was presented on the last day of the class and involved each student making a summary of their interpretation of the class' experience. The participants described this process as useful for their learning because it was a review of critical incidents and topics of the course.

"Almost Extremely Identical"

Several of the participants identified that the qualitative research project assignment used skills that closely mirrored their subsequent experiences in the classroom and practicum. "I don't think I connected that until now…but I definitely see it's almost extremely identical to the type of skills that you have to be able to do" said Susan as she explained how the process of

conducting the qualitative research project was similar to practicum and working with clients. "I think it definitely relates to being in a counseling room with a client…I think just being able to…approach it with this observer mindset of 'okay, after this session I need to note this in my case notes or progress notes'". So there definitely is some parallels in the midst of it. Trying to have that skill of being able to step back and summarize everything that happened," said Susan.

Madison also brought up the similarities between the qualitative research project assignment and practicum. "When I was in practicum, I found myself trying to bring back content of what my client would say last week and I would try to bring it back with more objectivity and less emotion so I would try to help him realize that there was a theme going on," said Madison. She described using the skill of "pulling out themes" as something she used often in practicum.

Casandra noticed this similarity as well. When asked if the qualitative research project assignment was similar to any other skills or topics she has learned she responded, "I think of just sitting in a room and you tend to pull, like, themes from what they're saying". She elaborated, "It's important to kind of track people in a sense."

Jessica identified that the advanced assessment course she was currently taking is similar to the qualitative research assignment. In the advanced assessment course, she is required to complete a battery of psychometric tests on an individual and write a brief summary of that person. "I could see in advanced assessment with the narrative piece trying to kind of put together a person's life in a story. Trying to help the reader conceptualize and figure out what that person is like just by reading a paragraph". Jessica and the other participants showed an understanding of the goal of qualitative research in these descriptions and an understanding of many of the major topics of counseling.

Completing the qualitative research project assignment had an impact on several areas of the participants' learning. It increased their ability to empathize with each other and understand empathy as a construct. The participants also described how the assignment served as a means of tying the class together and teaching skills for their future as counselors. The assignments were analyzed separately by the researcher as a means of triangulating of the data gathered in the interviews. These skills can be seen in the qualitative research project assignment. One participant wrote: "students gain bravery through being vulnerable with one another". Another participant wrote, "students are grateful for their new expanded visions of themselves. They learn to embrace their imperfections and invite vulnerability into their daily lives.". Both of these statements show evidence of higher-order thinking. The participants did not simply report on the observable actions of the class, they provided a thoughtful interpretation of them in the context of the class. This indicated that the participants did in fact have an understanding of the goal of qualitative research and client conceptualization.

The Context of the Qualitative Research Project Assignment

Finally, it is necessary to understand the environment in which the assignment was completed in order to understand the participants' experience of completing the qualitative research project assignment. The participants described the environment as both safe and unique. The subthemes identified are: (1) "so different than our other class and (2) "it was a safe place" which was both phrases used by the participants. They are discussed in detail below.

"So Different Than Other Classes"

When asked what it was like to take the Shame and Shame Resiliency course, Casandra replied, "it was a different experience than any other class that I've ever been in so far". The class did not follow a traditional lecture format or have traditional assignments, she elaborated.

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"I thought shame was guilt so that was like a revolutionary thing for me. I just feel like everybody had like the same, not the same, but similar, didn't know a whole lot about shame and then I feel like we really all did come together. So that was different too," said Casandra. The topic, although known to Casandra when she registered, was still uncomfortable and different than any other course topic she had previously taken.

Other participants echoed this experience. "Shame class was so different than our other classes," said Madison. She continued, "First of all, you guys taught us about qualitative study and obviously we don't talk about that anywhere. And it was, I felt, more, like, I don't know. More free, less tense. Because you guys just let us do what…it was like "okay go do it" and I was like "oh okay, I'll do it". And you guys would provide like all of these things. I guess it was the creative part. I never really thought I would do that in a grad class. Having music and all of that. I just never thought, I thought it was the coolest thing ever…because…you never think you're going to do that in grad school".

The participants also shared about the emotional strain of being in the class as a unique element of the class. Susan said, "there were days when I kind of struggled, I just don't know if I had the emotional energy to go. But I always left feeling more rejuvenated than I was while in the middle of class. I always left feeling good about the work that we had done". Jessica said her primary emotion was nervous when she began the class. "I remember going in and after I that first day going, 'this is a lot emotionally'. Just having to be vulnerable. Of course in grad school, you do that a lot, but it was on a different level I feel like," Jessica stated. Madison succinctly described the experience as "intense" when asked how her experience in the class was.

The participants were in a unique, vulnerable and emotionally taxing situation as they completed the qualitative research project assignment. They were discussing topics that were

unfamiliar and interpreted by some as threatening or triggering. They were also in a class that was in a completely new format compared to other classes in the counselor education program at their university. The qualitative research project assignment was only one of many new tasks that were being asked of them. In it, one of the participants illustrated the discomfort class felt as a result of this takes and its unique nature when she said, "students felt a level of discomfort, or vulnerability throughout their experience of learning about shame". Many of the assignments echoed this statement and spoke of the discomfort the students were in.

"It Was a Safe Place"

"It was a safe place," said Madison when she described the unique nature of the Shame and Shame Resilience course. The class was a place for trying new things because she could expect support from her classmates and instructors. "It was a lot of trust. Trust that it was going to be okay," she said of her approach to the class and being vulnerable enough to try new things, such as a qualitative research project.

Susan described the unique environment and the impact it had on her experience. "I think that the environment was really important. Our cohort had kind of struggled a little bit with cohesiveness and I didn't know you at all before that experience and I knew [co-instructor's name] minimally before that. I think that by the end of the first week, I think that by day two or three everyone had already cried and reached that place of vulnerability. I think the environment was very important. It was safe and there was a level of understanding among everyone that, I think we probably said it too, but everything that happened was our experience, this was our shared experience." Susan continued by saying, "I think having that environment and how you and [co-instructor's name] made it the way it was just really helpful and defective for us to get as

much out of the class as we could". Although the environment was taxing, the participants seemed to be supported by their classmates and the instructors.

Jessica had a critical learning moment when she was able to embrace self-compassion and shift her focus off of being "hyperaware" of if she was "doing it right" when presenting her qualitative research project assignment. When asked what helped her make this shift she replied without hesitation, "it was for sure [instructor name]". She continued, "I was nervous because I didn't know if I was doing it right. Of course. But then I remember once we read it all and then [co-instructor's name] said something validating what I just said…and I remember that really stuck with me". The support of the co-instructors enabled her to feel safety in an environment that was primed to push participants into areas of discomfort.

The qualitative research project assignments showed evidence of the participants' feelings of comfort, support, and connection. "Students gain bravery through being vulnerable with one another", wrote one. "There were connections and relationships built", wrote another. Not only was connection something the participants spoke about in their interviews, they also wrote about it in their field notes, included it in their themes and wove narratives of connection.

In conclusion, themes emerged from the interviews regarding the process of completing the Qualiatative research project assignment, the impact of it on participants, the learning participants gained from it, and the environment in which the qualitative research project assignment took place. The participants described a process marked by struggle and confusion which shifted to understanding and a deep understanding of the assignment, the course and each other. Their learning was marked with a shared sense of vulnerability and connection.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of students who participated in a qualitative research project assignment in a Shame and Shame Resiliency course. The experiences of these students that were explored included their experience completing the project, its impact on their perceptions and knowledge of qualitative research and shame, and finally, its impact on the students' professional and personal growth.

The research question for the study was: what are the experiences of counseling students in a shame and shame resiliency course who complete a qualitative research project about their experience in the class? Sub-questions included: (1) how do student describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on their knowledge and understanding of shame? (2) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on their knowledge and understanding of qualitative research?, and (3) how do students describe the impact of completing a qualitative research project on their personal and professional growth?

Individual interviews were conducted with all participants. Following analysis of the content of the interviews and the qualitative research assignments that were completed by the participants, the researcher identified several themes and subthemes. The participants' descriptions of their experiences completing the qualitative research project indicated that it was a complex process that impacted their classroom experience and their learning and can only be understood in the context of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the course content, confidence in their skills as a researcher, and connection with each other through completing the requirements of the qualitative research project. -

The participants' experiences emerged as four themes: (1) the process of completing the qualitative research project, (2) the impact of completing the qualitative research project, (3) the learning outcomes of the qualitative research project and (4) the context of the qualitative research project.

Within the first theme, the participants' descriptions of the process of completing the qualitative research project emerged into four subthemes. These were labeled using words of the participants. The first was: "abstract and out of reach" referring to the participant's initial inability to fully grasp the process and goals of both qualitative research and the assignment. The second subtheme was: "a lack of words". The participants were primarily struggling with the inability to put into words the complex, emotion-laden class process. The participants were also struggling with the desire to complete the assignment correctly. This was subtheme three: "doing it right". The participants described feelings of wanting to complete the assignment correctly in order to earn a high grade. This led to comparison with their peers and overall feelings of anxiety surrounding the assignment. However, the participants all described a turning point when they were able to change their approach or mindset toward the assignment and were able to fully engage in the learning. The fourth subtheme was labeled: "the turning point".

The second theme was divided into four subthemes that described the areas of impact of the qualitative research assignment. The first subtheme, "more observant", described the participants' overall change in observation and participation as a result of the assignment. Participants described paying attention to themselves and the classroom process in a way that was unique from other classes. The second subtheme was "qualitative is more human". The participants' opinions of qualitative research were shaped by the assignment. The majority of the participants expressed a deeper understanding and appreciation for the power of qualitative

research. The participants also described an increased confidence in their abilities as a researcher and their ability to conduct qualitative research. This change in confidence is subtheme three: "this is actually possible for me". Finally, the participants described being impacted by the assignment by feeling a sense of connection with each other. One participant described it as "I'm not the only person" which became the label of subtheme four. The participant felt connected to each other hearing each other's experiences of the class through the qualitative research project.

The qualitative research project resulted in several learning outcomes which were arranged into three subthemes. The first subtheme, "we all have different perspectives" referred to the increase in empathy the participants described. The assignment shifted their focus from their own individual experience toward the experience of the group and the individuals in it. The participants stated that this helped them appreciate each other's differences and similarities. The second subtheme, "ties things together", described the summarization of learning that the participants gained from the assignment. Part of the assignment was to share about the class' process on the last day, which the participants found helpful to their learning because it summarized and reflected on the content and process of the class. Finally, the fourth subtheme was "almost extremely identical". The participant noticed that the process of the completing the qualitative research project was congruent with many other skills in counseling including conceptualizing clients.

The final theme described the context of the class. This theme was divided into two subthemes: (1) "so different than other classes" and (2) "it was a safe place". The participants emphasized the unique nature of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. It presented assignments and content that were novel and unexpected. It was also a safe place for exploring

the content and their own experiences. The participants labeled the environment as "unique" and "safe" which may be crucial to understanding the their experience and resulting outcomes.

Participants found the qualitative research project challenging for several reasons, but ultimately experienced a turning point after which their confidence grew and they were able to engage more deeply in the qualitative research project. Participants became more observant of themselves and each other as a result of completing the assignment. They also gained an appreciation for their areas of similarity and difference with their fellow classmates which ultimately resulted in all of the participants expressing feelings of connection.

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Relationship to Existing Research

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The participants experienced the Shame and Shame Resiliency course as an emotionally and mentally challenging course. The qualitative research project gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on and summarize their learning which the participants described as helpful to their overall understanding of the course content. This way a novel use of qualitative research in the counselor education classroom.

Self-Reflection

The participants explained that the qualitative research project made them pay attention differently in the class. As both participants and researchers in the qualitative research assignment, the participants had to pay attention to both their own experience and the experience of their peers. They were also able to engage in reflection on the class each day and on the class overall at the conclusion of the course. Shepard and Brew (2013) found that students who participated in creative classroom interventions showed increased self-awareness as a result of the creative intervention. This appears to be consistent with the participants' experiences of the

qualitative research assignment. They were aware of themselves in the context of the classroom and how their experiences and viewpoints were both unique and similar to their peers.

Understanding Complex Topics

Through the qualitative research assignment, it is evident that the participants have a solid understanding and knowledge of both qualitative research and the course topic: shame. Carson and Becker (2004) found that creative techniques in the classroom aid students in grasping complex topics and assist them in engaging deeply in the learning. The qualitative research assignment resulted in the participants having a deeper understanding of shame which is consistent with Carson and Becker's findings.

Research Anxiety

The participants all identified that the qualitative research project changed their viewpoint of research and increased their confidence in their own abilities as a researcher. Several participants noted the positives of qualitative research and drew comparisons to its congruency with counseling. Onwuegbuzie, et al. (2001) found that exposure to qualitative research reduced students' anxiety regarding research and helped the students conceptualize research in context. This appears to be congruent with the experiences of the participants in the study. The participants described anxious feelings about research that gradually shifted toward a feeling of confidence as a researcher. Several have plans to conduct their own research in the future.

Learning Empathy

Finally, Bell (2017) used several creative techniques to facilitate learning of empathy among her students. Participants in the present study described that they could pay attention to each other's experiences and relate to each other on a deep level as a result of the qualitative

research project. Without labeling it as such, the participants described empathy. This was an unexpected outcome of the present study that is congruent with Bell's research that identified creativity as a tool to teach empathy.

Contributions of Research

This research contributes significantly to the field of counselor education. It introduces a creative assignment that can be used in the counselor education classroom to teach both content and counseling-related skills. It can be used as a best practice for teaching about shame to counseling students. Additionally, it presents a way to incorporate qualitative research in the counselor education classroom.

Teaching Shame

Shame can create barriers in the counselor education classroom, supervision, and counseling (Bowden, 2005; Dayal et al, 2015; Halevy, 2007; Yourman, 2003). Counseling students must be able to effectively process their own shame and feel comfortable to process the shame of others in order to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for the counseling relationship and their own learning the in classroom. There is a scarcity of literature regarding how to teach about shame to counseling students. This research provides an example of an assignment that can be utilized when teaching about shame. Furthermore, this technique could be used in any counselor education course as a way to increase student reflection, build connection, and increase understanding of the course content which were the outcomes identified by the participants.

Teaching qualitative research.

Qualitative research is not a required course in most counselor education masters programs (Hecker & Kottler, 2002; Smith, 2011). However, many counselor educators and

researchers argued that it should be included in the counselor education curriculum as it reduces research anxiety, increases student's knowledge of research methodologies, and helps students put research into context (Franklin, 1997; Morris & Marquart, 2010; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010; Stallings, 1995). This research provides a model for the inclusion of qualitative research in a content-based course. It also adds to the literature on effective ways to teach qualitative research in higher education.

Creating Environments for Risk-Taking

Finally, the participants all spoke about the uniquely safe environment in the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. They attributed some of their ability to engage in a new task, such as the qualitative research project, to the safety they felt. This can be used by counselor educators when asking students to complete new skills that may make students feel vulnerable. Counselor educators can focus on building a sense of safety through their responses to the students and the inclusion of safety-building activities. This may assist with highly stressful, vulnerable courses such as practicum, counseling techniques or other courses when students are asked to role-play or share with their classmates.

<div align="center">

Limitations of the Study

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Limitations of the research include that the data collected was all from participants who were in the same session of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. The trustworthiness and credibility of the research would be strengthened if the research were extended to include data collected from participants in multiple session of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course. Triangulation was utilized to enhance the validity of the study (Merriam, 2009).

In addition, although the researcher in bracketing as outlined by Moustakas (1994), it is not possible to completely remove all biases that are held by the researcher. The researcher's bias

may have influenced the themes. Qualitative research does conceptualize the researcher as an instrument of the study and therefore researcher bias is a common limitation of all qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Finally, the researcher was a doctoral student with limited experience conducting qualitative research. The researcher's inexperience may have influenced both the data collection and data analysis processes. Reflexive journals, field notes, and collaboration with a research team was used to reduce these limitations.

Future Directions

A primary contribution the research makes is that it an impetus for conducting future research on a myriad of related topics. Future research can explore numerous aspects of the qualitative research assignment in counselor education.

The qualitative research assignment can be implemented in future semesters of the Shame and Shame Resiliency course in order to explore if the composition of students in the classroom has an effect on the outcomes of the qualitative research project. It could also be conducted in other courses to determine if the course content or the type of course has an impact on the outcomes of the qualitative research assignment.

Creative inclusions of qualitative research in other counselor education classroom could be explored in the future. This will build to the literature on the benefits of including qualitative research in the classroom.

Conclusion

The qualitative research project assignment was an assignment created to foster counseling skills among master level counseling students. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of students who had complete the qualitative research

project assignment as part of a Shame and Shame Resiliency course. What emerged was a story of struggle and connection. Despite initial struggles, students gained confidence in themselves, understanding of the class content and the research process and connection with each other.

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APPENDIX A: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH HANDOUT

Definition of Qualiatative Research
- The study of a phenomenon or research topic in context
- The goal of qualitative research is to provide a depth of understanding of a phenomenon or research question.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research
- *Importance of Context*: qualitative research emphasizes the importance of how participants create and give meaning to social experience. It also emphasizes the importance of the research context itself
- *Humanness of Research*: The researcher is an instrument of the study. Qualitative researchers have direct contact with people and research settings and therefore impact the study directly.
- *Flexible Research Design*: the research design interacts with the research environment and both mutually influence each other.
- *Thick Description*: Qualitative researchers provide ample detail about the research process, context and the participants. The goal of thick description is to provide enough depth and detail that any reader can generalize findings to a narrowed context or can replicate the study in another setting.
- *Purposive Sampling*: Qualitative researchers select participants for the amount of detail they can provide about a phenomenon, and not simply selecting participants to meet a certain sample size.

Qualitative Research Process
1. Select a topic
2. Define goals, conceptual framework, purpose statement and research questions
3. Choose a sample
4. Identify & enter research site
5. Gather & analyze data
6. Exit research site
7. Analyze data
8. Write up data

Qualitative Data Analysis
1. **Reduce Data**: Narrow the focus of analysis to a manageable phenomenon or question. This is done when defining goals, a purpose statement and research questions.
2. **Collect Data**: This can include interviews, focus groups, observations, documents and visual data.
3. **Memo & Summarize Data**: Researchers write field notes or memos immediately following data collection.
4. **Organize Text:** Data is transcribed and organized into a data management system (e.g. Microsoft Word)
5. **Code**: A code is a label or tag that "chunks" various amounts of data based on the defined case or unit of analysis. These can be labeled by the participants themselves (emic codes) or by the researcher(s) (etic codes).

6. **Identify Themes & Patterns**: Identifying patterns involves examining codes and brainstorming ways in which the codes relate to each other.
7. **Create a Codebook**: A codebook is a list of all the identified codes, subcodes and patterns along with their definitions or descriptions.
8. **Develop a Main Narrative or Theory**: The final step is to bring all of the patterns and themes together to create one story that relates back to the research question.

Adapted from: Hays, D.G. & Singh, A.A. (2012). Qualitative inquiry in clinical and educational settings. New York, NY: Guildford Press.

Date:
Time of Observation:
Location:
Observer:

Research Question: What is the experience of counseling students as they learn about shame?

Facts & Details in the Field Site
Verifiable sensory information in chronological order (e.g. missing participants, interruptions)

Observer Comments
Reflections and subjective responses to the facts and details of the setting (e.g. group process comments)

Reflective Summary
The overall impressions of the observation as well as additional questions you have for future data collections