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The Lived Experience of Doctoral Students as Mentors
in Informal Mentoring Relationships

By
Tiffany Nielson

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Counseling
Idaho State University
Spring 2015

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RE: Your application dated 11/3/2014 regarding study number 4182: The Lived Experience of Doctoral Students as Mentors in Informal Mentoring Relationships

Dear Ms. Nielson:

I agree that this study qualifies as exempt from review under the following guideline: 2. Anonymous surveys or interviews. This letter is your approval, please, keep this document in a safe place.

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Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Tom Bailey (208-282-2179; fax 208-282-4723; email: humsubj@isu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP
Human Subjects Chair

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to the One who gives me breath and life: my God. I dedicate this in gratitude for the gift of knowledge, love, and compassion God has given me and allowed me to witness.

Acknowledgment

I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to engage in this research and for all who supported me along the way. I am very grateful for my committee, and their time and dedication to work with me on this project. I am changed through this experience, both the dissertation and my doctoral program. I have grown in confidence, connection, and commitment to my friends, family, and the field of counseling.

To Steve. What an unlikely beginning we had; from unknown to closeness. Thank you for taking me in! I am grateful for your honesty and commitment. I cherish the times you would pull up a jazz song, pull out the atlas, or, of course, share your chocolate. It is difficult to express all that you have meant to me. I know that my journey was enriched because you were part of it.

To my mentors, thank you. To Jared, you have a unique way of challenging and supporting at the same time. Your challenge brought me to apply for the doctoral program, and here I am. Thank you.

To all of the ISU counseling department faculty, I have valued this experience tremendously. Much of the counselor educator I am today I owe to you all. I valued my opportunities to teach and learn alongside so many of you. To David, thank you for sharing your love for marriage and family counseling, pedagogy, and qualitative research. Your passion is contagious and allowed me to work and grow in these areas. To Jane, I am so grateful for the countless opportunities I have had to work with you from our beginnings at Counseling and Testing. I learned much about how to be a counselor and counselor educator from your mentorship. To Chad, thank you for being flexible and supportive of my ideas in the research course.

To my cohort, what a unique journey these last three years have been. I am so honored to have been on this rocky journey with each of you. From that first conference at RMACES to graduation – we have changed SO much. Among differences, I valued the walk we had together. I learned more about the world, who I am, and who I want to be because I know each one of you.

To my family, near and far, I know you were with me through it all. Particularly to my Mom and Dad. While I missed you while you were in the Marshall Islands for the last two years of my doctoral program, I know you were near me, praying for me. I felt your strength, your love, and your encouragement. I received my love of learning from you Dad, and hope to be the kind of teacher and educator you were for so many years. I remember when you warned me from becoming a school teacher, which allowed me to find the best path that made it possible for me to become an educator. And from you Mom, I attribute my compassion for others and love for culture. Both of you share an unwavering commitment to God and others with a willingness to serve. And in honoring Grandma Folsom, “Have a safe ‘jenny!’”

Finally to my best friend and eternal companion, Nicholas. You have been my constant through all of this, as I have fumbled, cried, and triumphed. You are my bright moment through it all. You have seen me at my worst and now get to celebrate my best. I love our laughs and the spontaneous fun that we have together. I am forever grateful that you encouraged me to follow my dream, even when I wanted to give up. You have a knack for making my dreams come true. I look forward to continuing to live our dreams together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
ABSTRACT.....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	1
Prevalence	2
Research Question	3
Conceptual Framework.....	4
Personal Interest.....	4
Existing Literature	5
Definitions of Mentoring	6
Mentoring in Counselor Education	7
Purpose of this Study and Research Question	25
Methodology	26
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY	27
Qualitative Methods.....	29
Hermeneutic Phenomenology.....	29
The Phenomenon of Study.....	33
The Role of the Researcher.....	34
Research Procedures	35
Selection of Participants	36
Criteria	37
Data Collection	37
Interview Questions	40
Analysis of Data.....	41
Qualitative Validity – Trustworthiness	43
Summary	46
CHAPTER THREE: ROUND ONE INTERVIEWS	47
Round 1 Interview with Participant One	48
John’s Summary.....	55
Round 1 Interview with Participant Two.....	56
Ann’s Summary	62

Round 1 Interview with Participant Three.....	63
LaToya’s Summary.....	70
Round 1 Interview with Participant Four.....	71
Elizabeth’s Summary	81
CHAPTER FOUR: THEMATIC ANALYSIS ROUND ONE.....	82
Being in Multiple Roles.....	87
Opportunity	87
Fear	89
Being Intentional.....	92
Establishing Boundaries.....	92
Providing Mentee Needs.....	97
Being Invested	100
To Mentee	100
To the Profession	102
Being Connected.....	103
Organic Fit	104
Being Grateful.....	106
Being Changed.....	110
Personally.....	111
Professionally.....	112
Summary of Thematic Analysis.....	115
Implications for Round One Interpretive Dialogue	116
CHAPTER FIVE: ROUND ONE INTERPRETIVE DIALOGUE	120
Changes to Codes.....	120
Clarifications.....	123
Being In Multiple Roles.....	123
Being Intentional.....	125
Being Invested	128
Being Connected.....	129
Being Changed.....	132
Isomorph: Added Layer of Analysis.....	137

Participant Reactions	138
Implications for Round Two Interviews	143
CHAPTER SIX: ROUND TWO INTERVIEWS	144
Round 2 Interview with Participant One	145
Being in Multiple Roles	145
Being Intentional.....	147
Being Invested	148
Being Connected.....	149
Being Changed.....	150
Round 2 Interview with Participant Two.....	152
Being in Multiple Roles	153
Being Intentional.....	154
Being Invested	155
Being Connected.....	156
Being Changed.....	159
Round 2 Interview with Participant Three.....	160
Being in Multiple Roles	160
Being Intentional.....	162
Being Invested	164
Being Connected.....	166
Being Changed.....	167
Round 2 Interview with Participant Four.....	168
Being in Multiple Roles	169
Being Intentional.....	170
Being Invested	171
Being Connected.....	171
Being Changed.....	173
Summary	176
CHAPTER SEVEN: ROUND TWO THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	177
Being in Multiple Roles	181
Opportunity	181

Challenge	182
Being Intentional.....	184
Establishing Boundaries.....	184
Providing Mentee Needs.....	185
Being Invested Long Term	187
Mentee.....	188
Profession.....	190
Being Connected.....	191
Organic Fit	191
Feeling Grateful	192
Evolution of the Relationship	193
Being Changed.....	195
Personally.....	196
Professionally.....	196
Being Mentored	198
Summary of Thematic Analysis.....	199
Implications for Round 2 Interpretive Dialogue	200
CHAPTER EIGHT: ROUND TWO INTERPRETIVE DIALOGUE	202
Confirmed Thematic Analysis	202
Being Invested Long Term	205
Evolution of the Relationship	206
Being/Not Being Mentored.....	209
Agreement with themes	214
Summary	215
CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.....	218
Reflections	219
Limitations	228
Trustworthiness.....	231
Implications.....	232
Doctoral Students.....	232
Counselor Educators	233

Future Research	235
Conclusion	237
References.....	238
APPENDICES	245
Appendix A: Interpretive Dialogue One Interview Document.....	246
Appendix B: Round Two Interview Document.....	249
Appendix C: Interpretive Dialogue Round Two Interview Document.....	252

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Outline of research procedures.....	39
Figure 2: Preliminary themes of the lived experience of informal mentoring.....	86
Figure 3: Round One Interpretive Dialogue Thematic Analysis.....	142
Figure 4: Round 2 preliminary themes of the lived experience of informal mentoring.....	180
Figure 5: Round 2 themes of the lived experience of informal mentoring	204

ABSTRACT

The Lived Experience of Doctoral Students as Mentors in Informal Mentoring

Relationships

Dissertation Abstract – Idaho State University (2015)

This study used qualitative methods using van Manen's (1990) phenomenological approach to gain an understanding of these doctoral student's experience as informal mentors to master's students. Four doctoral students in counselor education engaged in two rounds of interviews, each being followed by an interpretive dialogue to discuss the thematic analysis. The data analysis was consistent with van Manen's phenomenology regarding coding procedures. The participants were an active component of the analysis and participated as co-researchers. Five essential themes were found to describe the meaning of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student. These themes included **being in multiple roles**, **being intentional**, **being invested**, **being connected**, and **being changed**. The theme of **being in multiple roles** included the subthemes of **opportunity** and **challenge**. **Being intentional** subthemes incorporated the experience of **establishing boundaries** and **providing mentee needs**. The participants described the experience of being a mentor as **being invested to the mentee** and **to the profession**. The three subthemes describing **being connected** were **organic fit**, **feeling grateful**, and **evolution of the relationship**. The final theme of **being changed** was experienced both **professionally** and **personally**. An incidental theme describing their experience of **being/not being mentored** was additionally found to describe some participants experience of being an informal mentor to master's students. A rich description of each theme grounded in the participant dialogue allows others to gain perspective and

understanding of this phenomenon as experienced by these four participants.

Trustworthiness was addressed through the use of memo writing, member checks through interpretive dialogues, and grounding the analysis in participant dialogue.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Mentoring is gaining increased attention in counselor education (Black, Suarez, & Medina, 2004). Counselor education utilizes the mentoring role to facilitate professional development of students, counselors, and faculty (Black et al., 2004; Casto, Caldwell, & Salazar, 2005; Murdock, Stipanovic, & Lucas, 2013). In addition to mentee benefits, the reciprocal nature of mentoring brings benefits to both the mentor and protégé (Bowman, Bowman, & Delucia, 1990; Collins, 1994; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gerstein, 1985; Murdock et al., 2013; Robinson, 1994; Tentoni, 1995). For example, mentors in counselor education may experience personal growth (Murdock et al., 2013), professional advancement (Gerstein, 1985; Robinson, 1994) and personal fulfillment (Bowman et al., 1990; Gerstein, 1985) through such mentoring opportunities. Current literature often focuses on faculty-student (e.g. Haskins et al., 2012) or faculty-faculty (e.g. Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008) mentoring relationships, yet doctoral student-master's student mentoring may also occur. Little is known regarding the doctoral-master's student mentoring relationships in addition to the experience of the doctoral students in these relationships (Murdock et al., 2013).

The proposed Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs 2016 standards (CACREP, 2014) denote specific knowledge constructs in mentoring for doctoral student training, promoting the increased focus on mentoring within the field of counselor education (Black et al., 2004) in addition to the value of doctoral training and experience in mentoring. Due to a dearth of knowledge, the intention and rationale for adding this component to doctoral training is unknown. Within CACREP programs, doctoral students receive training and experience in the areas

of teaching, supervision, leadership, and research. There are potential program variations regarding the amount of student contact, yet many doctoral programs are created with the intention of doctoral students working closely with master's level counselors-in-training, which may create potential dual relationships (Scarborough, Bernard, and Morse, 2006). This may further create opportunities for mentoring between master's students and doctoral students. Further research may build understanding regarding the relationship between master's students and doctoral students in addition to the mentoring relationships that may exist (Murdock et al., 2013).

Prevalence

Mentoring in counselor education is becoming more prevalent in the literature for master's students, doctoral students, and faculty, typically with the mentor being cited as a faculty member, supervisor, or advisor (e.g. Casto et al., 2005; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Robinson, 1994; Tentoni, 1995; Borders et al., 2011; Briggs & Pehrsson, 2005). Briggs and Pehrsson (2008) found that the majority of pre-tenured faculty identified having a research mentor to promote their professional development. Not all students or faculty report having a mentor (Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield, Owens, & Witherspoon, 2011; Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013), particularly regarding informal mentoring, which takes the initiative of the mentee to seek and build (Black et al., 2004; Borders et al., 2011; Casto et al., 2005). Minority faculty and students describe a lack of mentoring relationships (Casto et al., 2005; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2011; Henfield et al., 2013) and increased mentoring is promoted for students and faculty of color. Casto et al. (2005) utilized personal experience and previous literature to highlight the challenges

for women in academia and the role women ought to play to increase mentoring relationships among women.

Little is known regarding the occurrence of mentoring relationships between doctoral students and master's students in counselor education. One study to date explored a formal relationship dyad between doctoral and master's students (Murdock, et al., 2013). Murdock et al. utilized phenomenology to identify salient themes in the doctoral and master's student perspective regarding their experience. Aside from this research study, none have been published to date regarding the informal mentoring relationships that may occur in counselor education between doctoral and master's students. Further research is needed to understand the doctoral experience of this phenomenon.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the informal mentoring experience of doctoral student's as mentors to master's students in counselor education. The primary research question was "What is the lived experience of doctoral students as mentors in an informal mentoring relationship with master's students?" To date, minimal empirical research has been conducted regarding mentoring relationships within counselor education (Black et al., 2004; Murdock et al., 2013) and even less regarding the relationship between doctoral students and master's students (Murdock et al., 2013; Scarborough et al., 2006). Informal mentoring relationships may naturally evolve in the training expectations of doctoral students including those of instructor and supervisor. Capturing the informal mentoring relationships may more fully represent the experience of mentoring that presently occurs. Implications provide rationale for encouraging

opportunities and education which focus on building healthy informal mentoring relationships in doctoral student training. Understanding both the challenges and benefits of the doctoral student experience in the informal mentoring role may provide increased intentionality for doctoral students engaging in informal mentoring relationships. As future counselor educators, providing opportunities for mentoring may promote professional development through the role as mentor (Murdock et al., 2013). Due to the limited research, this research highlighted implications which were previously hypothetical.

Conceptual Framework

Personal Interest

I am closely connected to this topic, both as a mentee and developing mentor. As a master's student I was in frequent contact with the doctoral students as instructors and supervisors. I experienced many of them as supportive and approachable. I looked up to them yet also connected with the similarities we bore in the student role. One of my experiences with a doctoral supervisor started a meaningful relationship that continues today. In this mentoring relationship I feel cared for, trusted, and supported in my professional goals. This care also translates into challenges to grow and become more. During our supervisory relationship I was encouraged to pursue my dream of becoming a counselor educator, which, for me, was a terrifying and exciting pursuit. Having my mentor see my potential allowed me to see it in myself. Candid conversations regarding the presence or desired absence of power in our relationship helped ease my fears and resistance. This gives me insight to challenges that may arise through informal mentoring relationships. As doctoral peers, I continued to receive support and safety

from my mentor, on my own terms and in a way that met my needs. I value and cherish that mentoring relationship that I hold with my mentor which will continue to develop.

My identity as a counselor educator is continually evolving. As I have become more comfortable in my role, I have found myself reaching out to master's students. The past two years have provided me with ample opportunities to interact with students as I am co-teaching in a number of their courses and providing supervision. My relationships with the master's students are meaningful and enhance my doctoral experience. I feel more connected to the master's students than I anticipated since coming into contact with this role of informal mentor that continues to develop.

All of these relationships have been informal and naturally develop out of the various roles that I encountered as a master's student and currently as a doctoral student. I also recognize the time it takes to develop a deep informal mentoring relationship, the uniqueness of each relationship, and the potential value they carry. In discussions with peers I have also seen this role of mentor emerge informally as they connect with other students. My humanistic core centers on relationship with others through providing an environment of support and care. The mentoring role naturally fits into that core and is an impetus for continuing this research. My personal experience further propels me to investigate the experiences of other doctoral students in this mentoring role.

Existing Literature

A brief overview of literature within higher education and counselor education highlights the broad scope of mentoring in academic settings. Of the empirical studies found in the literature in higher education academic journals, one-third included graduate students, and they primarily report positive outcomes from mentoring relationships with

many of the studies being non-experimental quantitative designs (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Of the qualitative studies, Crisp and Cruz note the lack of rigor, triangulation, unclear methods, and limited data to support conclusions. Quality qualitative research is needed to fill this gap, and this research utilized trustworthy measures to meet these demands.

Crisp and Cruz (2009) also noted that the literature shows mentoring is not only provided by faculty, and quantitative and qualitative research include awareness of peer mentoring relationships. They proposed further research to explore the various individuals that may play the role of mentor for students, beyond the typical faculty-student relationships. The doctoral – master’s student relationships may help add to that literature in identifying others that may play the role of mentor.

Definitions of Mentoring

The root of the term mentor is often cited from Homer’s *Odyssey* in which there is a character named Mentor, “who served as the wise tutor and overseer” (Warren, 2005, p.49; see also Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gerstein, 1985). The name of mentor has developed into modern applications in fields such as education (e.g. Norman & Ganser, 2004), business, and medicine (Collins, 1994; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gerstein, 1985). Mentoring can take multiple forms and purposes with numerous definitions in the literature. Crisp and Cruz (2009) completed an extensive literature review of mentoring in higher education and found that in contrast to a long history and existence of mentoring in higher education, there continues to be little consensus in definition. They explored areas of mentoring in business, psychology, and education and additionally found little consensus within the disciplines. Commonalities among the literature include three

factors of mentoring: the growth of protégé through “assistance,” support for career and professional goals, and planned activities (p. 528).

Mentoring in Counselor Education

Conceptual models for mentoring have recently been developed specific to counselor education. Historically, Tentoni (1995) combined consistent constructs among definitions of mentoring to create the Mentoring Model to clarify the roles and functions of mentoring in application to counselor education. These constructs define mentoring as a reciprocal helping relationship with components of support and role modeling in which the mentor is more experienced in some aspect in comparison to the protégé. Tentoni (1995) further applied a modified version of a mentoring model for education by Anderson and Shannon (1988) in which the mentors’ functions include teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending. Black et al. (2004) similarly combined Tentoni’s definition with Black’s work from her dissertation (as cited in Black et al. 2004) to create a working definition of mentoring as

a nurturing, complex, long-term, developmental process in which a more skilled and experienced person serves as a role model, teacher, sponsor, and coach who encourages, counsels, befriends, a less skilled person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development. (p. 46)

Other models and definitions of mentoring in counselor education include Walker’s (2009) relational mentoring model, proposed for cross cultural mentoring relationships. Norman and Ganser (2004) described the value of utilizing a humanistic mentoring model taken from the field of counseling and applied to mentorship for teachers. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) developed a framework

for research mentorship which includes components of instrumental and relational tasks (Borders et al., 2012). These guidelines are not specific to whether the relationship is formal or informal. Clearly, as demonstrated by the variability within counselor education literature, the mentoring relationship can be ambiguous yet also flexible to the unique type of mentoring relationship that may be encountered in multiple environments. The definitions, types, and purposes of mentoring will be further expanded in this chapter. Definitions within counselor education and other disciplines are explored to create a holistic understanding of this phenomenon. Implications of the mentoring relationship between doctoral students and master's students provide rationale to conduct research to gain further understanding of the doctoral student experience as mentors.

Much of the research and literature on mentoring has been outside of counselor education and supervision, yet the literature in counseling education related to this topic has increased. (Black et al., 2004). As of 2004, Black et al. identified seven articles each from the *Journal of Counseling and Development* and *Counselor Education and Supervision* with topics on mentoring. While there has been a recent increase in publications and professional discourse regarding this topic in the last two decades, Black et al. call for further research within this topic area specific to counseling and counselor education. Current literature in counseling and counselor education will be explored to provide further rationale and support for researching the doctoral-master's student mentoring relationship in counselor education.

Among the literature regarding mentoring, research mentorship is frequently cited in counselor education literature. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) developed a framework for research mentorship which includes

components of instrumental and relational tasks (Borders et al., 2012). Instrumental tasks are activities focused on the knowledge and production of research, including instruction and feedback. Relational tasks may include being open and available, modeling, and encouragement. The guidelines serve to create definitions and expectations of both the mentor and mentee. The creation of these guidelines is a reaction to the noted value of research mentorship, ambiguity and lack of clarity in defining mentorship, and to promote research production in the field. It is hoped through appropriate implementation of the research mentorship guidelines, that the scholarship in counselor education may be further supported. The authors briefly touched on cultural implications that may impede research mentorship if “racial or gender bias or a culture of competition” are present in the department (p.167). Due to the potential power differential, it is the responsibility of the mentor to ensure that cultural factors are adhered to in the relationship. Transparency and honesty are encouraged as one method in approaching cultural differences (Borders et al., 2012).

In addition to research mentorship, mentoring is utilized to promote professional identity and development at the master’s, doctoral, and faculty levels. Mentoring serves to benefit the mentor and protégé. In noting the professional and personal benefits to mentoring, Collins (1994) encouraged those that need a mentor to become a mentor themselves. The definition of mentoring, previously discussed, by Black et al. (2004) describes roles of mentoring which includes teaching, befriending, and supporting the protégé to promote “professional and/or personal development” (p. 46). Black et al. (2004) specified that these relationships are often informal and enduring. The benefits of professional and personal growth are reciprocal in nature and it would be anticipated that

as doctoral students are participating in mentoring relationships with protégé's, they may encounter these benefits personally and professionally. This was seen previously in the qualitative study by Murdock et al. (2013) and this dissertation research clarified and enhanced these findings as applied to informal relationships for doctoral students.

Literature in the counseling profession highlights cultural implications evident in mentoring. Providing cultural mentoring may serve as another purpose of mentoring to additionally support the development of diverse students and faculty in counselor education. As previously noted, Casto et al. (2005) described the value and need of female mentors. Walker (2006) promotes the use of the relational model to promote mentoring between faculty and students of color and female students. Henfield et al. (2011) utilized a phenomenological methodology to investigate the experience of eleven African American doctoral students navigating challenges. Both positive and negative experiences of participants support the need for mentoring for students of color as they navigate challenges. Henfield et al. (2013) found similar results in their exploration of African American doctoral students including a lack of peer relationships between White and African American students and challenges with doctoral student-faculty relationships in which disrespect and marginalization were evident in "poor mentoring relationships" (p.132). The authors call counselor education faculty to action to mentor African American students, which may increase recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty. Haskins et al. (2013) described a similar lack of mentoring relationships for master's students of color. Culturally competent mentors are important to ensure that minority students (Clark, Ponjuan, Orrock, Wilson, and Flores, 2013; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2011; Henfield et al., 2013; Walker, 2006) and faculty are properly

supported (Borders et al., 2011; Casto et al., 2005; Henfield et al., 2013). Ensuring that social and cultural competence is met by the mentor in the mentoring relationship can provide openness and safety in the relationship (Borders et al., 2012). The culturally competent mentor may provide cultural encounters which may serve to further the cultural competence of the mentee (Murdock et al., 2013). Though there are calls for increased attention concerning mentoring for racial minorities in counseling literature, other groups such as LGBT students have garnered no research into mentoring needs.

Formal vs. informal. The development of mentoring relationships can also vary between formal and informal mentoring. Formal mentoring relationships may be the result of a specific program being implemented, such as Murdock et al. (2013) in which they assigned specific pairs of master's students with doctoral students, who had no previous relationships. Bowman et al. (1990) described a peer mentoring program for master's level counseling students. Pre-tenured faculty in counselor education may also be assigned a mentor to assist in the tenure process and adjustment to the professoriate (Borders et al., 2011). Formal mentoring has been suggested to ensure that minority populations are provided adequate opportunities for mentoring (Borders et al., 2011; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2011; Henfield et al., 2013; Walker, 2006). While formal mentoring provides benefits, literature describes increased relational benefits from informal mentoring as described by the protégé (Casto et al., 2005; Curry & Bickmore, 2012; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Tentoni, 1995).

In contrast to formal mentoring, informal mentoring is described as a relationship which naturally emerges and continues for years (Casto et al., 2005). The value of informal mentorship is asserted by Casto et al., (2005) who stated that "formal

mentorships should not be viewed as a substitute for informal mentorships” (p. 333). In their research, Ragins and Cotton (1999) analyzed the benefits of informal versus formal mentoring relationships and found that in comparison to formal mentoring, informal protégé’s reported increased satisfaction, higher salaries, and promotion in their career. Curry and Bickmore (2012) found that informal peer mentoring was a significant influence on the developing school counselor in their on-site experience. The definition provided by Black et al. (2004) underscores the assumption that much mentoring is informal in nature.

Desimone et al. (2005) researched the complexities between formal and informal mentoring in first year math teachers. Their research promotes the value of both forms of mentoring, and also the complementary ways in which they can work in harmony. While formal mentoring can assure that some support is in place, Desimone et al. found that non-evaluative mentors were sought informally for feedback and personal support. Informal mentors were found to be useful for immediate needs whereas formal mentors provided support at set times. It may be anticipated that doctoral students may have opportunities to serve as non-evaluative mentors, yet implications of this literature is currently hypothetical, due to the lack of research. Further research of the doctoral-master’s student informal mentoring relationship is needed in order to understand the way in which it may or may not fit the current literature.

Dual relationships. Challenges in mentoring relationships center on the duality of relationships, boundary considerations, and ethical violations (Warren, 2005). Due to the nature of mentoring, there is likely to be a power differential between mentor and protégé (Black et al., 2004; Bowman, Hatley, & Bowman, 1995). Awareness and

sensitivity to the power differential is essential. Bowman et al. (1995) researched the perceived ethical considerations in dual roles in counselor education between student and faculty. Analysts explored differences between faculty and student responses, and male and females. They found minimal consensus among faculty and students on what is defined as ethical within these dual roles. They did find that the female participants tended to rate potential dual relationships as more unethical compared to the male participants. Overall, many of the participants rated dual relationships as unethical. Bowman et al. (1995) concluded that limited knowledge and consensus of boundary considerations may lead to either avoiding or crossing boundaries, while there may be profound benefits of engaging in ethical and healthy mentoring relationships.

A description of guidelines to minimize ethical violations in mentoring are described by Warren (2005), such as not becoming too emotionally involved and following the ACA guidelines. Warren stated that new counselor educators, “may engage in mentoring without understanding the potential pitfalls of multiple relationships with students or the role of confidentiality in student-teacher communication” (p. 144). Warren noted that mentoring is not included as a training or evaluative component for new faculty, and there is little regulation of the development of appropriate mentoring skills (Warren, 2005). Similarly, Tentoni (1995) noted the lack of training for supervisors in the role mentor. In addition to the benefits of mentoring, some form of training for new faculty may be appropriately introduced in doctoral training as an essential time period to promote awareness, skill, and knowledge regarding ethical mentoring relationships. This may ensure that mentoring relationships maintain a high ethical standard within counselor education both for new faculty and developing

counselor educators at the doctoral level. Understanding the doctoral student experience as mentors may highlight these dual relationships and provide areas of focus for further training in mentoring.

Forms of mentoring. Describing the various forms of mentoring highlight the potential unique experience that doctoral students may encounter as mentors. Most forms of mentoring include a more senior faculty or professional as the mentor with a student, trainee, or pre-tenured faculty as the protégé (Casto et al., 2005; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Robinson, 1994; Tentoni, 1995; Borders et al., 2011; Briggs & Pehrsson, 2005). Descriptions of each of these forms of mentoring will be explored within the literature. Implications for doctoral-master's student relationships, and the value of gaining an understanding of the doctoral student experience through research, will be identified.

Faculty-faculty mentoring. Research mentorship has become a frequent practice within academia for faculty, and within counselor education, with most frequent discussions of this form of mentoring within the past 15 years (Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008). Briggs and Pehrsson (2008) explored the frequency of research mentorship among pre-tenured counselor educators and found that among their participants ($n = 139$), most reported that they receive research focused mentorship ($n = 107$). This form of mentorship was typically described by the participants as cooperative and open, with the primary focus on vocational goals.

Borders et al. (2011) described mentoring relationship for faculty seeking promotion and tenure, in addition to implications from past literature regarding minority and female faculty. The authors described their application of Sorcinelli (as cited in Borders et al., 2011) in their specific department for five promotion/tenure seeking

faculty. This application included components of both informal, formal, and peer mentoring. They described best practices in faculty mentoring to include components of clear expectations, feedback, flexibility, and opportunities for mentoring from senior faculty. The authors described the good practice of flexible timelines for promotion and tenure which they found to promote sensitivity towards a few of the female faculty in their department. For example, they were able to support the personal and professional needs of female faculty when having children (Borders et al., 2011). Overall they note the value of having multiple mentors or key players including department chairs and peers, for faculty seeking promotion and tenure.

Haizlip (2012) noted the misrepresentation of African-American faculty in counseling and psychology programs which may potentially impact African-American students. Some studies show adequate representation of students of color in doctoral programs and master's programs, yet there continues to be a misrepresentation among faculty. As there may be more frequency of doctoral African-American students, there may be potential value in doctoral African-American students in mentoring African-American master's level students. Haizlip further described a number of mentoring networks and programs for African-America faculty, yet there are no programs to date specifically within counselor education.

Faculty-student mentoring. Casto et al. (2005) discussed potential guidelines between female faculty and students. These graduate students relationships with faculty could include master's students or doctoral students with faculty. Schwartz and Holloway (2012) noted the lack of research on master's student-faculty mentoring, and further add their research to the value of faculty-student positive relationships. A survey

of psychology doctoral students identified that the majority of the participants (two-thirds) had a mentor (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000) and those with a mentor had increased satisfaction within their doctoral training (Clark et al., 2000).

Taylor and Neimeyer (2009) quantitatively researched the benefits of mentoring relationships for psychology graduate students. They found some variability among psychology programs, and overall found that some of the benefits described included increased research production, increased satisfaction, and socio-emotional support. This study further supports the value of providing mentoring for graduate students. Schwartz and Holloway (2012) acknowledged the limited studies of master's student-faculty relationships. They utilized grounded theory to research positive master's student-faculty relationships and the impact of this had on learning. Their results support the value of mentoring relationships between teacher and student for master's student learning. Schwartz and Holloway further concluded that the arguments against obtaining meaningful close relationships with adult students, such as ethical boundaries and dual relationships were not upheld when the relationships were reported as positive. My research of the master's student relationships with doctoral students added to this discourse of master's student relationships with educators in that many doctoral students may similarly share the role of teacher, as the faculty did in this research.

Sangganjanavanich and Magnuson (2009) described the role of faculty advising for doctoral students, and potential confusions that may arise. They acknowledged the confusion between advising and mentoring that often arises in conversation and literature. Sangganjanavanich and Magnuson (2009) described advising as a formal relationship with a set time-frame which may or may not create a mentoring relationship. They

differentiated mentoring as an “enduring and personal” relationship which may include more than instrumental or vocational tasks, in contrast to advising which often centers on research or vocational tasks. Sangganjanavanich and Magnuson described the use of an advisor disclosure statement to assist in differentiating the roles of advisor and mentor and prevent further confusion in these relationships.

Haskins et al. (2013) described the experience of black master’s level counseling students in a primarily white university through a phenomenology lens. The themes accentuate the isolation experienced by these students and their needs for equal support compared to their white peers. Two of the themes included isolation and tokenism as a black student within their program. The students described this as feeling “forgotten” or that their perspective as minority counselors was “overlooked” (Haskins et al., 2013, p.170). This was also present in supervision with faculty. Another theme described the differences in support received from faculty. The participants described proactive support from faculty of color who reached out to the student. In contrast, the participants experienced reactive support from white faculty, who reached out to the student after the student expressed concerns. The peer support was valuable from both students of color and white peers. The participants did not describe differences in support among their peers regarding color. In relation to my dissertation, it was helpful to understand the experiences of doctoral students as mentors, and whether it was perceived as a form of peer support for master’s students. Haskins et al. (2013) described the need for faculty to increase in cultural knowledge and awareness and formal mentoring to better meet the needs of students of color. It was hoped that understanding the perspectives of students of colors may promote change within counselor education (Haskins et al., 2013). As

previously described, Henfield et al. (2011) and Henfield et al. (2013) noted the value and need for doctoral students of color to receive mentoring during their education experience.

Lazovsky and Shimoni (2007) studied the perceptions of the on-site mentors of school counselors in training while in their internship experiences in Israel. The unique mentoring relationship that they explored was not a faculty-student relationship, yet describes more of a professional to trainee relationship within the site. In addition to acknowledging the frequent confusion and similarities between supervision models and mentoring they chose to conceptualize mentoring through combining the conceptual framework of Bernard's Discrimination Model for supervision and Tentoni's Mentoring Model. They specifically researched four factors which they pulled from the Discrimination Model and Mentoring Model, namely teacher, counselor, consultant, and sponsor. While they noted that the on-site mentors in their study were recommended by the division of psychological and counseling services as fit mentors, it was not distinguished what manner of mentoring relationship they encountered with interns. For example, it was unknown whether the mentors were also designated as supervisors, formal mentors, or informal mentors. This information was not gathered from the mentee perspective as well. They obtained the perspectives of the mentor and mentee regarding the ideal and actual role performance. Overall they found that the ideal mentor included high levels of professional and personal traits as rated by both mentor and mentee perspectives. Other important mentor traits included the mentoring relationships and a teaching role. The most differences occurred on the perceived actual mentoring that was occurring. Particularly, mentors and mentee differed in actual performance regarding

items on teaching the planning of counseling, instruction on interventions, and promoting self-understanding. Lazovsky and Shimoni (2007) proposed further clarification on the expectations and guidelines for on-site mentors which may occur through training, which is currently limited in practice and research for the on-site mentor.

In acknowledging the differences and overlap between advising, supervising, and mentoring, it is possible that many doctoral students have opportunities to engage in unique mentoring relationships with master's students. A relationship which does not fit within supervision or advising, yet is a personal relationship, in that, it promotes the personal and professional development of the mentee. The unique role of the doctoral student will be explored in later sections.

Student-student mentoring. Curry and Bickmore (2012) did an exploration of the novice school counselor experiences that promoted the feeling of mattering in their beginning experiences as school counselors. Their grounded theory found four themes, one of which included the "relationships with other stakeholders." A subtheme of this described the value of informal mentorship provided by fellow school counselors for support, knowledge, and guidance. While none of the participants were assigned a mentor, the informal peer mentoring proved to be an important piece of their experience to promote feeling like they mattered as school counselors.

Purdue University similarly implemented a peer mentoring program for new students in their counseling related programs (Bowman et al., 1990). This program included a formal assignment of a more experienced student with a new student within similar programs or with similar characteristics. Bowman et al. (1990) explored the elements and effectiveness of this mentor program both quantitatively (chi-square and

descriptive statistics) and qualitatively (questionnaire responses). They found that the mentor provided both instrumental and emotional support for the mentee throughout their mentoring relationship. Some of the relationships were short-lived while some endured. Factors influencing the duration of the relationship included mentor competence and trust while time constraints of the mentor and lack of interest of the mentee hindered the relationship. All of the students that met with their mentor more than three times reported a positive impact on their training experience, higher satisfaction with their program, and more involvement in program activities and leadership positions. It is noted that this research may be outdated for current application in counselor education. While doctoral students are in all actuality students, it is unknown how their mentoring role with master's students may be similar or different from student-student mentoring as explained in the current literature. Doctoral students have a different set of expectations compared to master's students; therefore, additional study of the unique role of doctoral students in mentoring is warranted.

Doctoral student mentoring. Murdock et al. (2013) explored the experience of doctoral students co-mentoring master's students in counselor education. They utilized co-mentoring relationship as one in which power differentials are minimized, in congruence with a feminist perspective. Qualitative methods were utilized to explore the doctoral mentor and master's student mentee experience in a formalized mentoring relationship. They were careful to prevent dual relationships and potential ethical violations in the co-mentoring pairs that were created. The co-mentoring program specified the minimum number of visits, frequency of emails/written responses, and what topics could be explored. Qualitative coding was utilized, yet the specific methodology

was not specified. The themes which emerged for the doctoral students in their mentoring role include enhanced professional development, connections of mentoring and the counseling process, giving back to the profession, and the development of collegial relationships and friendships with their mentees.

The master's students described benefits to their professional identity in addition to personal growth and encounters with culture. Murdock et al. (2013) attributed these cultural encounters partially to the number of participants with culturally diverse backgrounds, including international students. They discussed these cultural encounters as unique opportunities for culture to arise in the mentoring topics. One dyad in the mentoring relationship were both international students, in which the mentee described the mentoring relationship as a safe and secure environment to express challenges in being an international student, and knowing that she was understood. The opposite happened in another relationship where the mentee was American, and the mentor was an international doctoral student, resulting in the mentee not feeling understood. Culture was infused in all forms of communication between mentor and mentee, with doctoral and master's students expressing the impact of culture, yet specific guidelines regarding how or what cultural components were included were not mandated or specified to the participants. Further research is needed to capture the experience of doctoral students mentoring experiences in relation to cultural encounters and competence. Research may also highlight the development of mentees and mentors in relation to areas of competence through mentoring relationships.

The themes identified by Murdock et al. (2013) clarify the benefits that doctoral students and master's students experienced. Due to the formalized nature of the study, it

was unknown how the experience may be similar or different from doctoral students in informal mentoring relationships with master's students. Murdock et al. acknowledged that the themes that they identified may have been influenced by topics that mentors were instructed that they could discuss in their mentoring, such as professional development and culture. The trustworthiness of the research is limited due to the lack of clarity in qualitative methodology. Further research is needed to further capture the experience of doctoral students as mentors. Utilizing a phenomenological lens with methodological rigor in this dissertation research filled this gap in addition to expanding the discourse on this topic.

The varied roles of the doctoral student can also lead to ambiguity in potential dual relationships with master's students. Scarborough et al. (2006) discussed ethical considerations between doctoral students and master's students. They stated that no research had been done regarding these dual relationships which "leave the doctoral student in a nebulous position" (p. 56). Lack of training and clarifications of dual roles may lead to misuse of multiple relationships between master's students and doctoral students, yet it may inhibit opportunities for potential professional relationships with others that may be beneficial, including mentoring (Scarborough et al., 2006). Further research focused on the mentoring relationship between doctoral students and master's students may contribute to the discourse. Further research highlighted potential advantages and disadvantages of the dual roles that may be encountered in mentoring between doctoral students and master's students.

Doctoral student training and development. Understanding the current training practices and development of doctoral students in counselor education will further

highlight the need for research in the proposed area. While the current doctoral standards by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009) do not include mentoring, the current draft of the CACREP 2016 standards (2014), proposed the inclusion of mentoring in doctoral training. With this anticipated addition to the training, this research is timely to assist in providing understanding and directionality to what may be experienced and needed in doctoral mentoring relationships.

The unique differences and similarities in master's student training may further highlight the unique relationship that may exist between these two groups. Master's student training in counselor education is focused on training clinicians, and is necessary to obtain prior to beginning doctoral training (CACREP, 2009). Doctoral students in counselor education typically have the qualifications upon entering their doctoral training to be licensed counselors, as the master's degree is the "terminal" clinical degree (Bernard, 2006, p.78). While doctoral students may serve as peers through sharing the role of student, they may similarly serve as supervisors and teachers towards their mentees. For example, Murdock et al. (2013) were careful to prevent doctoral supervisors from also serving as mentors towards master's students in their co-mentoring program. In addition to peer student dynamics, the differences in professional level may serve to complicate the power dynamics between master's students and doctoral students. This under-research relationship deserves further attention (Scarborough et al., 2006).

The unique areas in doctoral training in comparison to master's training include teaching, supervision, and leadership and advocacy parallel faculty roles and responsibilities in service and leadership, teaching, and research (Davis, Levitt,

McGlothlin, & Hill, 2006; Rogers et al., 1998). Doctoral training may potentially prepare doctoral graduates for careers as supervisors and/or faculty, among a number of other viable options. Dollarhide, Gibson, and Moss (2013) found that the majority of doctoral students in counselor education intend to receive academic appointments upon graduation therefore promoting a focus for doctoral training to prepare future faculty in counselor education. Yet even within clinical settings and other professional settings, doctoral graduates may find the role of mentor a part of their work, (e.g. Clark et al., 2013; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007). The training features of doctoral education may provide rich grounds for mentoring to occur between doctoral students and master's students; as peers, professionals, teachers, and supervisors.

Research has found that the professional identity development of doctoral students was promoted through opportunities to mentor in addition to the faculty relationships (Dollarhide et al., 2013). Carlson, Portman, and Bartlett (2006) discussed the value and importance of doctoral students gaining experience and learning in the areas of teaching and supervising in addition to other academic areas to enhance their professional identity. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (2009) identified professional identity as a foundational component in doctoral training. This identity includes knowledge and experience in professional leadership roles. As future counselor educators, one of those leadership roles may include mentoring.

First semester doctoral students have a range of experiences, one of which being an integration into the doctoral student role (Hughes & Kleist, 2005). Hughes and Kleist stated that as the first semester students' "act[ed] and behav[ed] as doctoral students"

(p.104) they gained an increased confidence and affirmation in their abilities. Taking on the role of mentor for students may be a component of embodying the doctoral student role. Further research is needed to understand the implications of doctoral mentoring in doctoral student development and training.

Purpose of this Study and Research Question

As mentoring continues to become increasingly important in counselor education as a method for promoting the profession in addition to the professional development of its members, mentoring, and in particular doctoral-master's student mentoring continues to be a minimally researched phenomenon. One study to date has utilized qualitative methodology to explore a formal mentoring relationship between doctoral and master's students (Murdock et al., 2013). While some programs may implement formal mentoring programs, there is also the potential for informal mentoring relationships to arise out of doctoral-master's student interactions. This research focused on the informal mentoring phenomenon of doctoral students as mentors.

This research served to better understand informal mentoring within the doctoral student experience, from the perspective of these participants. Doctoral training was proposed to include potential knowledge components on mentoring (CACREP, 2014) to potentially promote the role as mentor that exists for future faculty. Doctoral students may already be engaging in informal mentoring relationships, yet little is known of their experience. The purpose of this study was to explore these doctoral student's experience connected to informal mentoring relationships with master's students. The themes described in the analysis connect to their experience to capture the essence of this phenomenon from their perspective. This study highlights potential strengths and

challenges encountered for these doctoral students. It may allow others to gain a greater understanding of this phenomenon and its place in counselor education. Gaining greater insight into these doctoral student's perspective may add clarity for counselor educators to support and train doctoral students in the role of mentor.

Methodology

Utilizing van Manen's (1990) phenomenological qualitative methods allowed me to explore the in-depth experiences of the participants regarding this phenomenon. van Manen described his approach as an exploration of rich descriptions of "everyday experiences" (p. 9). van Manen further described the intent of phenomenological research to bring us into "direct contact with the world" (p. 9). Gadamer stated that language is the "medium for understanding and a means of sharing the complexities of human experience" (Regan, 2012, p. 286).

Hermeneutics is focused on the interpretation of the lived experiences (Schwandt, 2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology is situated within the social constructivist approach which allowed me and the participants to construct together the experience of the phenomena as well as the meaning and interpretation of those lived experiences. The hermeneutical phenomenology of van Manen (1990) was utilized to allow for this construction and freedom for the "dynamic interplay" of the elements of phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013, p.79). These elements included the interview process, rich descriptions of lived experience, and the interpretation (Creswell, 2013). This methodology allowed me to come in contact with the lived experience of mentoring as described and experienced by the doctoral participants in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Current literature continues to highlight the role that mentoring plays in counselor education (Black et al., 2004; Casto, Caldwell, & Salazar, 2005; Murdock, Stipanovic, & Lucas, 2013). Mentoring for faculty and graduate students in counselor education has shown the value and benefits for the mentee or protégé (e.g. Black et al., 2004; Casto, Caldwell, & Salazar, 2005; Murdock et al., 2013). In addition to mentee benefits, there are potential benefits that may be found for the mentor (Bowman, Bowman, & Delucia, 1990; Collins, 1994; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gerstein, 1985; Murdock et al., 2013; Robinson, 1994; Tentoni, 1995), and Collins (1994) proposed that those who are in need of a mentor become a mentor themselves.

Counselor education doctoral students engaging in their training may have opportunities to work with master's students in counselor education in which potential informal mentoring relationships may arise. The focus areas of each doctoral program may vary (Goodrich, Shin, & Smith, 2011), yet CACREP doctoral standards (2009) describe learning and competence in areas of research, teaching, supervision, and leadership. This may minimally include opportunities for doctoral students to engage in teaching and supervising master's level counselors-in-training. The proposed CACREP 2016 (2014) changes include a component of mentoring, which may lead to an increase or need for doctoral students work with master's students, particularly connected to mentoring. Doctoral student development highlights the potential value that taking on the role of mentoring may play. For example, Dollarhide, Gibson, and Moss (2013) identified that as doctoral students engaged in professional endeavors and roles including mentoring, the participants in their study gained more confidence in their role as

emerging counselor educators. It may be beneficial to explore how informal mentoring is experienced to fit this realm of helpful professional experiences for doctoral student development.

Crisp and Cruz (2009) note the need for further research on other forms of mentoring beyond faculty-student relationships. Little is currently known regarding the experience of doctoral students in counselor education as they engage as informal mentors with master's students. Murdock et al. (2013) describe the benefits of mentoring in formal pairs of doctoral-master's students. This is the only published research study to date regarding doctoral students as mentors in counselor education, and was focused on formal mentoring in contrast to informal mentoring. While Murdock et al. (2013) utilized a qualitative methodology, there were limits regarding the clarity of methodology in which there was not specific methodology described beyond a general use of qualitative means. van Manen (1990) is careful to distinguish how hermeneutical phenomenology is different from general qualitative research including ethnography, content analysis, and grounded theory. The lack of specification of methodology in Murdock et al. (2013) research and the lack of current literature on the informal mentoring experiences of doctoral students supports the need for further research.

Through utilizing a hermeneutical phenomenological methodology in this dissertation research, further depth and understanding was added to the experience of doctoral students as they engage in informal mentoring relationships. This methodology was similarly used for nursing mentors for degree seeking students (Wareing, 2011). Wareing identified themes to describe the experience of the mentors and found that the mentors found benefit from engaging in mentoring relationships which were different

from the typical hierarchical mentoring relationships in previous nursing literature. It would be helpful to understand if this is similarly experienced in the doctoral student mentoring experience in the counseling profession. This research of counselor education doctoral student informal mentoring experiences adds to this discourse specific to counselor education doctoral experiences.

Qualitative Methods

As illustrated by the literature previously articulated, value may be found in further understanding the experience of doctoral students as they encounter the role of mentor with master's students in counselor education. This understanding may best be explored through utilizing qualitative methods, particularly hermeneutical phenomenology. Qualitative methods allowed for a rich and deep understanding of what was being researched. Phenomenological methodology allowed the researcher to enter into the life world of the participants regarding the specified experience and hermeneutical methods bring to light, often through writing, an interpretative component of the research to allow the researcher and others to fully encounter the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). van Manen's phenomenological human science methodology was utilized to create a holistic understanding of the informal mentoring phenomenon as experienced by current doctoral students in counselor education.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Utilizing phenomenological qualitative methods allowed the researcher to explore the in-depth experience of their participants regarding a specific phenomenon. This included aspects of making meaning, connecting, and understanding. Phenomenology has roots in philosophers including Gadamer (Regan, 2012), Heidegger (Dowling, 2007;

Regan, 2012), and Husserl (Dowling, 2007). Husserl is often credited as one of the founders of phenomenological philosophy in which experience is the focus of research in order to gain an understanding of reality (Dowling, 2007). He emphasized that reality exists pre-reflectively and developed phenomenological reduction in which an unbiased position and a lack of interpretation were needed to understand reality (Dowling, 2007). Heidegger was one of his successors and supported the philosophical base of exploring experiences, yet separated himself from some of the philosophical views of Husserl through asserting the place for understanding and interpretation of experiences, a hermeneutical approach (Dowling, 2007). Heidegger introduced a harmony between existential and phenomenological philosophies to incorporate meaning making and interpretation in the understanding of experience. Gadamer similarly stated that “understanding was interpretation” and that language is the “medium for understanding and a means of sharing the complexities of human experience” (Regan, 2012, p. 286) which is a consistent view of hermeneutical phenomenology. Understanding these historical developments of phenomenology allows an understanding of the unique fusion of approaches which van Manen (1990) created in his hermeneutical phenomenological or human science approach (Dowling, 2007).

Hermeneutics is focused on the interpretation of the lived experiences (Schwandt, 2003). Dowling (2007) described van Manen’s methodology as following the Dutch school through incorporating both Husserl’s descriptive phenomenology and Heidegger’s interpretive phenomenology in addition to existential components. van Manen (1990) seeks a rich description of the phenomenon or experience as it is lived, pre-reflectively and further utilizes existential meaning making and writing to incorporate hermeneutical

interpretations. van Manen (1990; 2002; 2006) described the interpretative components in the emphasis placed on writing within phenomenological research. He stated, “Writing is not just reporting the research findings. Writing is the very act of reflective inquiry and of discovery” (van Manen, 2002, p.27). The research process and analysis continue through the written components of the phenomenon at hand. Heavy emphasis was placed on accurate representation of the data through thoughtful and intentional writing.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is likewise situated within the social constructivist approach that allow the researcher and the participants to construct together the experiences of the phenomena, as well as the meaning and interpretation of those lived experiences. The hermeneutical phenomenology of van Manen was utilized to allow for this construction and freedom for the “dynamic interplay” of the elements of phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013, p.79). These elements included the interview process, rich descriptions of lived experiences, and the interpretation (Creswell, 2013). van Manen’s (1990) approach additionally allowed for the inclusion of unique experiences, which was vital due to the complexity and difference among participants.

van Manen (1990) is careful to distinguish natural science from human science, in which natural science often seeks to explain behavior or things, while human science seeks understanding and meaning of human phenomena. van Manen (1990) described researching beyond the factual to something of meaning. For example, if one explored the meaning of being a mother or father, one would not simply describe the facts of having children, but instead would explore and describe the meanings of that experience. For example van Manen described potential meanings for parenthood such as giving

oneself to a child, being in relation to a child, and a feeling of togetherness. Likewise in exploring the informal mentoring experience of doctoral students, this research looked beyond shallow descriptions of fact, to include the meaning to the human experience of this phenomenon. This created an understanding and grasp of what this phenomenon means. My own stance on research connects to this focus on meaning when striving to understand another's lived experience. This research described the phenomenon with the focus on themes related to *being* an informal mentor. I value meaning making and exploration of lived experience through stories and lived experience with the freedom to work closely and personally with the participants and the data. This methodology fits the intents and purposes of research in addition to my own stance as a researcher.

van Manen's unique approach is appropriately titled a "human science" situated within pedagogical applications (1990). The human component of this methodology speaks to the focus of the research on meaningful human experiences; studying the experience of doctoral student mentors is one such human experience. The pedagogical application described by van Manen (1990) connect to both the topic and my identity as a researcher. The researchers that may lean towards utilizing this methodology may include those who have an educational role with children or adults. This seems fitting for the counselor education realm in which pedagogical implications support developments for doctoral training. In harmony with my humanistic and constructivist pedagogy, this research included components of connecting to human experience and constructing the meanings of said experience. van Manen (1990) articulated that as pedagogy with adults and children require a use of interpretive components and living in concrete experience, the human science pedagogy similarly utilizes hermeneutical interpretation in real lived

experience; again symbolizing the parallel between educator and researcher. Similar to how I may approach a classroom, I approached this research. As counselor educators work to better serve doctoral students, understanding the perspective found through this human science research may promote understanding and ways to adapt pedagogy in counselor education doctoral programs.

The Phenomenon of Study

The specific research question of, “what is the lived experience of doctoral students as mentors in an informal mentoring relationship with master’s students?” was explored through hermeneutical phenomenological means. Mentoring was defined using the definition of Black et al. (2004) of

a nurturing, complex, long-term, developmental process in which a more skilled and experienced person serves as a role model, teacher, sponsor, and coach who encourages, counsels, befriends, a less skilled person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development. (p. 46)

Likewise the phenomenon of study was of informal mentoring relationships, which are those which organically emerge, in contrast to set or organized pairings (Casto et al., 2005). Throughout the manuscript, when referring to the phenomenon of mentoring within this dissertation research, it will be implied that this is regarding informal mentoring. Doctoral students were the mentors in these relationships with master’s level counselors-in-training as the mentee. The participant of study for this research are doctoral students with the intention to fully coming into contact with what their experience is as a mentor. The inductive nature of phenomenology and freedom of

methods allowed for the creation of a rich description and meaning of the phenomenon based in the participant experience.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher was an inherent and important component of the research and cannot be bracketed for fear that “if we simply try to forget or ignore what we already “know,” we may find that the presuppositions persistently creep back into our reflections” (van Manen, 1990, p.47). The interpretation and hermeneutical process was not separate from the researcher (Schwandt, 2003). The role of the researcher was not to get rid of or bracket all of their prejudgments or bias, but rather to engage fully as a researcher with an acute sense of reflexivity (Dowling, 2007; van Manen, 1990). This reflexivity included an awareness of my own experience with or around the phenomenon of study, literature and/or knowledge, and my own bias towards this topic (van Manen, 1990). Memo-ing or journals was utilized to monitor and explore these areas. This allowed the experience of the participants to speak in the descriptions, while finding that unique harmony of bringing myself as the researcher into the study.

Hyde (2005) described the process of the researcher using van Manen’s phenomenology as, “an attempt to produce something of meaning as the result of a fusion of the author’s own horizon with that projected by the text, as well as to test the author’s own prior understandings” (p.37). To create that beautiful “fusion” as Hyde described, is an art form, and takes considerable effort on the part of the researcher (van Manen, 1990). Intentionality and engagement with the research and data were necessary parts in the work of the researcher. One cannot passively engage. To create true meanings took investment with the topic and a willingness to be human (van Manen, 1990). van Manen

likewise described the participants as taking a vital role which required them to be “co-investigators” with me (1990, p.98). This methodology allowed for a unique co-creation of researcher and participant.

This methodology connects with my core of humanistic and constructivist philosophy. The core components of meaning making, connection, and making contact are important to my work as a counselor, counselor educator, and as a researcher. This methodology allowed me and likewise challenges me to bring in parts of my life world as I engaged in this research to encounter the participants lived worlds. As a researcher, this methodology required me to be fully human, with a willingness to take risks and encounter myself, as I encounter others (van Manen, 1990). By this I mean an ability to be touched, impacted, and connected. This further required me to be deeply reflexive and aware of myself throughout this process. An ability to engage mindfulness of my own biases, thoughts, and full range of emotions which arose allowed me to differentiate my life world from that of the participants.

Research Procedures

A description of the use of van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenology will be described with specific applications to the research procedure. The use of the terms phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and human science will all be utilized throughout this section to describe van Manen’s methodological approach. These methods specify the means through which the phenomenon of doctoral student’s informal mentoring experiences with master’s students emerged. The human science methods lay a foundation for the way in which participants were selected, interviewed, and data was

analyzed. These methods were utilized in an ethical and consistent manner to create an opportunity for others to encounter this phenomenon.

Selection of Participants

Purposeful sampling was utilized to select four participants. Purposeful sampling is a way of selecting particular participants that allow the research question to be answered through gaining an appropriate representation or “typicality” (Maxwell, 2013, p.98). In fact when utilizing a small sample size, random sampling is not recommended (Maxwell, 2013). This method of participant selection is common within qualitative research and was utilized to ensure that participants met the criteria of engagement and experience in a mentoring relationship with a master’s student(s). Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to assess for the reflexivity of potential participants to engage in a qualitative inquiry regarding their experience. Qualitative methods, and specifically hermeneutical phenomenology, often ask more of the participants, and can be a deeply personal experience (van Manen, 1990). In addition to the time commitment for interviews, it additionally took high reflexivity and awareness from participants to engage in this form of research and a willingness to reflect and engage in exploring their experience as co-researchers (van Manen, 1990).

Upon approval from the Idaho State University Human Subjects Committee, a request was posted on the listserv for the American Counseling Association graduate students (COUNSGRAD) and the Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors (CESNET). These were utilized to reach doctoral students within counselor education programs. Adequate response was received through this means to obtain the participants for this research.

Criteria

Participants were counselor education doctoral students who are currently engaged in full time doctoral level coursework in a minimum of their second year in their program and displayed high levels of reflexivity as measured by the depth of response to the initial request. For example, this included their willingness to share personal components of their experience, the length of response, and openness to share more as requested. Participant criteria additionally included experience with the phenomenon of study. Doctoral students interested in participating were asked to briefly share their experience(s) with mentoring master's students. An informal mentoring relationship was defined as previously discussed from Black et al. (2004). Participants were asked to identify how their mentor relationship fit the identified definition of mentoring, while noting the informal mentoring origins of their experience. The informal mentoring relationships are those mentoring relationships which are naturally occurring, chosen, and not assigned through a formalized mentoring program. This included relationships which go beyond that of teaching and supervising which may develop between doctoral students and master's students. While the specific definition of mentoring was utilized, I was mindful to provide space to the participants to allow for meaning making and interpretation of how this fits for them. Participants may have been selected from CACREP or non-CACREP accredited counselor education and supervision programs with each participant in this research being from a CACREP accredited program.

Data Collection

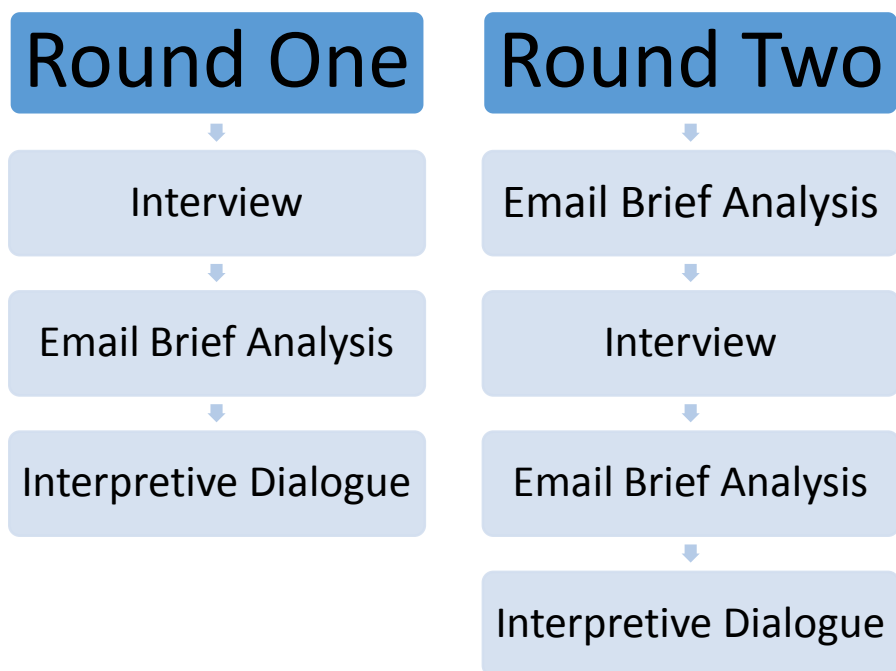
van Manen (1990) described the interview process as an open process that remains focused on exploring the meaning of the phenomenon. As discussed earlier

regarding the role of the researcher, sincere investment was often found in the interview process (van Manen, 1990). The interview process is referred to as, “talking together like friends” (p. 98). This denotes the intimate relationship which was created in the interview process. The researcher and participant worked together to co-create the meaning of the participant lived experience. A collaborative and respectful environment created safety for the participants to share “deeper meanings” and previous conversations were explored in subsequent interviews to allow for insight and interpretation (van Manen, 1990, p.99). Bringing in transcripts or themes is suggested as potential areas for further questions and reflection in interviews, and was utilized throughout the research process.

Participants engaged in two rounds of interviews (see figure 1) utilizing electronic video chat via Skype. Prior to beginning the interview the participants were asked to pick a pseudonym which was used throughout all interviews, transcripts, and writings when referring to each participant. After each thematic analysis was concluded, prior to meeting, each participant received an outline of the current thematic analysis (see Appendix A, B, C). At times this included quotes specific to that participant, to help in assisting the description regarding the analysis. Guiding questions were additionally added to this document. The participants were asked to review the respective documents prior to round one interpretive dialogue, round two interview, and round two interpretive dialogue in which updated documents were created to assist in the dialogue/interview.

Following each round of interviews I engaged in an interpretive dialogue (Coe Smith, 2006) with the participants individually, in which current themes and coding were discussed with participants for further feedback and follow-up.

Figure 1. Outline of research procedures



The purpose of the interpretive dialogue was to ensure that I am interpreting the experiences accurately. The interviews provided opportunities for the researcher to gain in-depth understandings with the participants regarding their lived experiences. This was consistent with the human science pedagogy in which identified themes may be brought into interviews, co-created with the participants, and a sounding board for further and deeper reflection (van Manen, 1990). Throughout the process I utilized memos or journaling to write their experience in addition to my own thoughts and reactions regarding the research. This increased reflexivity and the interpretation process. Maxwell (2013) described the use of memos as an essential component of qualitative research to assist in deepening the analysis through reflection and organization of ideas, thoughts, and impressions.

Reaching a full, rich description was desired in this research. In human science pedagogy this was experienced as feeling fulfilled, in which there may be more frequent

silence in the interviews (van Manen, 1990); an acknowledgement and expression of gratitude by both researcher and participant regarding what had been said, written, or described as embodying the phenomenon of study. The dialogue of the participants became more brief and repetitive within the current analysis. This occurred after two rounds of interviews and two interpretive dialogues with four participants.

Data and identifiable participant information was stored electronically and password protected, in an encrypted data base. Participants had a code name that was utilized on all documents, transcripts, and coding. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Participants provided consent to participation, and were be allowed to leave the study at any time, with no consequences. The consent included acknowledgement that the interviews would take place through video chat which may not be guaranteed as secure.

Interview Questions

The following are questions that were utilized throughout the interview process. It was a dynamic process that allowed for adaptation as needed to allow me to gain a rich understanding of the participant experiences to answer the research question. The initial interview questions included:

- What is your experience of being in an informal mentoring relationship with (a) master's level counseling student(s)?
- What meaning do you make of your experience as a mentor?
- What specific instances highlight your experience?
- What challenges/benefits have you experienced as a mentor?

The interview process was another art form of hermeneutic phenomenology, which relied on the use of questions to allow the meaning of the phenomenon to emerge (van Manen, 1990).

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data included the creation of a meaningful text through which one can come into “contact” with the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). Keeping the ultimate goal of the human science to allow the researcher and others to come into contact with the phenomenon allowed the analysis of data to unfold in an organic and creative process. The “thematic analysis” was an uncovering process of what is the essence or consistent components fitting of the phenomenon of study with each of them likewise only making up one component of the whole (van Manen, 1990, p.78).

While there was a decided definition of mentoring in seeking participant fit and articulating what phenomenon was studied, there was a certain freedom that the researcher utilized, as fitting with this methodology. This allowed for the use of descriptive phenomenology to unfold the phenomenon based in participant lived experience rather than attempting to fit their experience within preconceived notions, expectations, or literature (van Manen 1990; 2006). While the literature validated the need for further understandings of this phenomenon, van Manen (1990) emphasized setting this knowledge “at bay” (p.47) to allow for the data to speak for itself, to allow the experience to emerge. Allowing the descriptions and experience of the participant to speak for themselves and then engaging in an interpretive process with the participants to construct meanings created a unique harmony of descriptive and interpretive phenomenology as described in van Manen’s methods (1990).

van Manen (1990) outlined coding procedures which allow the researcher to gain contact with the potential themes connected to the phenomenon. Three types of coding procedures utilized included a “wholistic” or sentence approach, “selective”, and “detailed or line-by-line approach” (p.94). In the “wholistic” approach the data set was looked at as a whole and summarized in a phrase written by the researcher. The selective approach looked for phrases within the data which emphasize or articulate the essence of the phenomenon. van Manen encouraged the use of the question, “what statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described?” (p.93) The last form of coding that was used is a detailed approach in which each sentence or phrase was analyzed in terms of what it may “reveal” about the phenomenon (p.93). The researcher went through the transcripts and added notes or meaning throughout the stories, sentences, and phrases consistent with the detailed approach. Utilizing all three methods of coding allowed for a thorough analysis in addition to checks and balances of the whole and sum of parts, ensuring that each is congruent with the actual phenomenon and data which were present.

It is also important to note the difference between essential and incidental themes. The essential themes describe those pieces which ultimately make up the phenomenon, which van Manen (1990) further described as those things which, if omitted would change the essence of the phenomenon. Specific to this research, it would be those themes which fully described the experience of these doctoral students in informal mentoring relationships with master’s students. Incidental themes were those which may have *incidentally* have occurred, and are not essential to the experience of the phenomenon at hand. The same test was done for incidental themes through using van

Manen's approach of "free imaginative variation" to imagine the phenomenon without said theme (1990, p.107). If it is possible for the phenomenon to remain, then the theme may be incidental to the core experience of the phenomenon.

While there was a layer of structure in the coding process, there was a unique freedom and interplay of the researcher throughout this process. As previously described, the researcher allowed themselves to be impacted by the research, to be human, and make contact with the phenomenon. I see this dynamic as one of the artistic elements of hermeneutical phenomenological research; it took all parts of myself to engage with the phenomenon, wrestle with it, and allow the data to speak, through interpretive writing, to then allow others this same engaged experience as they read the analysis.

The use of writing, such as note taking throughout the analysis, and then the way in which the thematic analysis is ultimately portrayed, is consistent with the hermeneutical phenomenological approach (van Manen 1990; 2002; 2006). At the end of each coding process I wrote a summary which synthesizes each theme to incorporate components identified through the coding process. This was done in hopes to accurately portray the components of the phenomenon of these doctoral students engaging in mentoring, grounded in their lived experience.

Qualitative Validity – Trustworthiness

Schwandt (2003) described the importance of a moral foundation of care at the core of all research. This moral foundation guided the use of trustworthy methods to ensure that information was represented and gathered in a manner that is clear and also enhances the lives of those affected by this research. In utilizing the philosophical hermeneutics, the researcher was a tool in the interpretive process and the interpretation

and hermeneutical process was not separate from the researcher (Schwandt, 2003). This can impact the trustworthiness of the research in that the researcher's bias, history, and prejudice are part of the research process. To increase trustworthiness, a reflective process was utilized including the use of memo writing/journaling, to explore my own experience throughout the research process, and as previously discussed, to set these "at bay" when engaging as researcher (van Manen, 1990, p.47). Reflexivity was a method utilized by the researcher to increase trustworthiness (Gergen & Gergen, 2000) which provided clarity to the researcher and the reader where the researcher is situated.

Allowing the researcher to understand their stance allowed the data to speak for itself pre-reflectively, consistent with descriptive phenomenology (van Manen, 2006). For the reader, this gave context to the perspective of the intentionality and role of the researcher throughout the study. Additionally the memo was used as a memory throughout the research, to track my impressions and ideas, to create fluidity and meaning making throughout the analysis (Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell warned that not using such practices is the "equivalent of having Alzheimer's disease" (p.20).

Triangulation of data was utilized and is consistent with qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013) and the human science approach. Hermeneutic phenomenology, as described by van Manen (1990; 2002; 2006) is grounded and based in the real lived experience of participants. The use of three coding procedures allowed for a minimal level of checks and balances for accuracy of thematic analysis (van Manen, 1990).

Assumptions or bias are acknowledged and present, yet ultimately all themes are checked for accuracy within the data. Specific phrases or quotes were included to support the described themes, and each participant served to additionally investigate this accuracy

through the use of the interpretive dialogue (Coe Smith, 2006). Utilizing the participants throughout the research process was another way to ensure that information was gathered with clarity, including the best representation and interpretation. This was described by Gergen and Gergen (2000) as multiple voicing. The use of the interpretive dialogue (Coe Smith, 2006) before the interpretation process was finalized allowed the participants voice to affirm, elaborate, or adapt what the researcher presented. This triangle of interview/data, theme creation/coding, and interpretive dialogue created further trustworthiness within this study. Clarity in describing this process in the written analysis allows the reader to walk through and understand how the results were found. The reader may further refer to van Manen's (1990) works to understand the methods used throughout this research.

Challenges included what the participants were willing to share. Due to the depth of qualitative research, participants may be hesitant to share challenges particularly if it involves others. To navigate that, it was important to ensure participants were given the power to choose how their experiences were represented in the research. For example, ensuring that identifying information or quotes that may lead to revealing their identity are not shared in the published research. It was important to create an environment of safety and trust, to allow participants to share their experiences. Additionally the participants were given the option to read the written analysis of their experience, with an option for providing feedback.

Representation of the experiences of the participants are the real lived experience for those individuals, and the writings honor that vulnerability. The limitations of this research acknowledge that others experiences may be different or similar. The intent of

this research was to “touch us, guide us, [and] stir us” as we come into a richer understanding of these doctoral student’s experience with informal mentoring (van Manen, 2006, p.713).

Summary

The intent of the phenomenological research was not to find overarching truths that apply to all individuals, but rather shed light on the human experiences of a few individuals. The intent of this research is to share the lived experiences of a few doctoral students regarding their experiences as a mentor, and is not intended to be generalized to all doctoral students. This literary styling can maintain trustworthiness through adequate representation of the purposes and use of the research (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). Having experienced positive mentoring relationships, my own bias may lead me to focus on those benefits. The nature of the research question may have lent itself to successful mentoring relationships. Maintaining reflexivity throughout the research through exploring challenges in addition to benefits assisted in gathering a fuller picture of their experience.

CHAPTER THREE: ROUND ONE INTERVIEWS

In alignment with the outlined methodology as previously described, each participant engaged in a verbal dialogue regarding their experience as a mentor while in their doctoral training. Once each interview was complete, transcripts were created and coded. I completed each transcript and added to my memo regarding impressions I had when transcribing and again when reviewing the transcripts. Each of van Manen's (1990, p.94) coding procedures were used for each transcript, namely, line by line, "wholistic" or sentence approach, and selective coding. I highlighted potent and salient words or phrases from the participant's words and used much of their language in the coding process. A document with each participant's words/phrases and my impressions was created for each participant. These were synthesized into essential themes that were present throughout each participant's description of their mentoring experience. A description of the interview process for each participant are described followed by a synthesis of the initial Round 1 codes in the following chapter. I relied heavily on using the participant words to describe their experiences, to allow the reader to become in touch with their experience. It is hoped that these writings displayed the hermeneutic interpretive nature of van Manen's phenomenology.

Each participant was verbally encouraged to be open and honest throughout the interview. I informed them of my view of them working with me as co-researchers and the collaborative nature of that relationship. Consent was signed and returned through email prior to beginning the interview. The consent was briefly reviewed and outlined at the beginning of each interview. Each participant name was changed to conceal the identity of the participants. Each interview was conducted through Skype and was audio

recorded. Both the researcher and participant were in individual private rooms during the interview process to protect confidentiality. Each interview lasted for thirty to sixty minutes.

Round 1 Interview with Participant One

Participant one, known as John, was a middle aged male in his fourth year of doctoral training. In his response to the initial research request, he described two primary students who he has mentored for the past two years. He additionally stated that one of his mentees had sent him the call to participate, encouraging him to be a part of this study. He appeared open and willing to share his mentoring experience as evidenced by his description in his email. This openness continued throughout the interview in which he was talkative and needed few prompts to describe his experience. There were a few initial questions which were asked, and then follow up questions and comments were given to encourage further detail or clarification of the description of the participants. A description of John's interview will be given to allow the reader to connect with his experience and gain a greater understanding of mentoring from John's rich description.

The interview began with the broad question to have John describe his experience of being in an informal mentoring relationship with the master's students he briefly described in his original email. He began his description by saying "it's been a positive experience" and often refers to the benefits he has experienced. He then went on to describe the development of his mentoring relationships. He stated that there were two primary students that he mentored while noting there were other "hit and miss mentoring relationships" he has had in his time as a doctoral student. He described the origins of these two mentoring relationships:

I was co-teaching with a professor that I was working with on a research grant and his research topic is actually mentoring with youth and they ended up also working with him on a different grant on a different subject so we were frequently around each other

John stated that they were each working with the same professor on different projects and he additionally had contact with students through his involvement in Chi Sigma Iota. As he got to know these two students he noted that he “liked these two students” and appreciated that they were “engaged and eager.”

John continued to describe how these relationships “evolved” over time. He described that his intent of “wanting to be helpful” which was balanced with the students being “curious.” He stated he was initially cautious which he described as being “generic” and “in the beginning I was much more careful or avoided sharing anything negative about the profession about training about anything.” He gave examples of his internal dialogue in which he was very aware of “the power differential” and ensuring he was being helpful to his mentees. He would ask himself “is this helpful advice that they would find useful or is this me venting.” He describes this as a “balancing” between what he shared while noting the power he had and the impact what he shared may have on the students he mentored. He often referred back to this type of internal dialogue which speaks to his intentionality and awareness of the power differential and the student needs.

John referred to feeling where he became, “a little more comfortable talking to them about...not just positive things.” He included that this came with also knowing these two students more and having “enough shared experiences.” He describes this

transition as going from an “information provider” to “still keeping that but also including a piece of collaboration as they moved along.” When speaking to the student’s transition into the doctoral program and the increased collaboration.

So I guess that’s just the overall general process. was um I think it transitioned to being somewhat more of an information provider and trying to think through what’s the best information to moving into I think still keeping that but also including a piece of collaboration as they moved along and um I even enjoyed it. I think for me one thing I’ve gotten out of it is having some other students who are have similar interests.

To add context as to why this idea of “similar interests” with his mentees was important he described his doctoral peers as having an interest in qualitative research with John being unique in his interest in quantitative research. This interest in quantitative research was shared with his mentees and again resurface towards the end of the interview. While John is talking about his enjoyment and “being gratified”, he acknowledged the power differential in that in ensuring that he is aware of his power in the relationship, and not taking advantage of the mentees. He connected this awareness with “moving to more of a collaboration” he previously described.

When asked to speak more to how he experienced the power differential he referred to the internal dialogue he would engage in when the students would come to him with “point blank questions.” He would first “stop and think” before responding to the students to “filter out [his] biases.” He noticed that he became “more vocal about sharing my opinion” as the students developed, yet would still give a “caveat” by encouraging them to seek out others views. His description noted his awareness of the

student development and his power in the relationship to influence, particularly early on in their counselor training. As they have developed, he noticed his own comfort with them increasing and it appeared that he has become more honest in his interactions with them. He further described “phases” of what was discussed in their mentoring. He noticed that it was initially related to coursework and evolved “towards more clinical stuff...and a lot more of research.”

John’s final example of the power differential shifting was noting the differences now that these two mentees are peers as doctoral students. John stated that “I may seek out their advice on something or get their opinions.” He also described an experience of recently going to a conference together and his mentee telling him his fears of being on the same level as John. He stated this was an “interesting conversation because I had told them...I’m kind of having that same experience about my mentor.” John described that this type of open discussion about their mentoring relationship as “commonly having conversation about that mentor relationships and how it’s evolved.” This experience speaks to John’s closeness, genuineness, and willingness to share parts of himself with his mentees. It additionally hinted at the openness present in these two mentoring relationships that he has developed.

I followed up his description with asking him to speak more to what his mentoring experience has been like within the context of being a doctoral student. He was immediately drawn to describe the benefits, without being prompted. John described the value mentoring has been professionally including “practice for working with students when I am a professor.” He appreciated the opportunity to

watch the process of when a master's student is coming in from the beginning of the program to the end...kind of a behind the scenes look of like what are the things they are thinking about, what are the questions they are wondering that they're not bringing to a professor, that they're not bringing to class...for whatever reason they're coming to me about them as opposed to a professor.

He noted the value of the awareness of student needs that may not be brought to him once he is a faculty. This description hints at the idea that master's students may approach doctoral students and faculty in a different way, or with different information. Further benefits described by John include the opportunity to take a break from his work, the idea that mentoring is enjoyable and gives him a break from his challenging doctoral work. He followed this up with the enjoyment of witnessing their growth and development. He stated "that part has been fun for me and I think I've gotten some personal rewards out of seeing that happen and kind of being a part of that." The final benefit he described is the validation he has experienced. He stated that there are times that he may lack confidence or "question my abilities, my intelligence, my skills and so then to have someone seeking out...my assistance with something can be validating at a time when I'm needing." The mentoring seemed to allow John to see his own strength and capabilities in a time when it may be difficult to trust his abilities.

The next part of the interview was focusing on the challenges he has experienced as a mentor. I followed this question with the potential that the power differential may be a challenge. He did not initially connect with this idea and instead focuses on the challenge of time. He described the need to set "boundaries around my time" which included not always being available to his mentees and being honest with them about his

other commitments and time constraints. He stated that this was received well by his mentees and he felt like his time was respected with a “mutual understanding.”

The other challenge John described was the context of his department, primarily “department politics” that he encountered. This challenge had an element of fear and risk that he experienced. It included being careful and cautious of what he might say that might “come back in some way” and being concerned of how it may influence how he is viewed within the department. He connected this to his context of “being as a doc student I’ve been very aware of always answering to somebody.” He described this fear or “anxiety” as the “voice in the back of my head” that led him to be cautious. He couched this challenge with stating that nothing negative ever occurred connected to something he said or did within his mentoring that was connected to the department politics, yet the challenge was more connected to the anxiety and fear he experienced with the awareness of “answering to somebody.”

With John being readily willing to share so many experiences and benefits, I backed up to my second original interview question that I had not asked yet and asked if there were any other specific instances that highlight his experience as mentor. He answered this with describing his opportunity to support these two mentees as they prepared and went to a regional conference. He described working with them as they prepared for presentations, including giving feedback and resources. He additionally went to the conference in which he experienced excitement, feeling “a bit more like we were going as peers”, and “comradery.” This comradery and peer piece is connected to acknowledging that they are now at similar professional levels as doctoral students. This

change seemed to allow John more freedom and openness in his relationships with these two students while maintaining his role as mentor.

My final question was what meaning he is making out of his experience as a mentor. His first statement is that “I think there should be more of it.” He described his own professional journey and desire and need for more mentoring himself earlier on in his professional development. He stated that this experience has led him to have the initiative and desire to support and help students, “to make the effort to be available to students and offer some guidance.” He has received feedback from his mentees on how helpful this has been for them, and John emphasized the importance of mentoring on research. He described his passion for research mentorship and his professional stance regarding this “problem in our field.” His mentees described the value to John of having him as a mentor, who was not his professor and did not carry the “risk of being evaluated.” The value of having a mentor that does not carry the “potential for penalties or...at least perceived potential for penalties” seemed valuable for these two mentees as described by John. John’s professional stance and personal work is congruent with his work with these two students. Even though he is gratified by all of this, he stated the one thing “I wish could be taken and replicated, you know, or just become this sort of a standard staple for counselor education, I think it would be around that piece...I feel strongly about...more of an emphasis on research.” John’s experience of mentoring these two students has shown him how research mentorship can help students through reducing fear and increasing an interest in pursuing research.

John’s final thoughts acknowledged that there was a unique fit between him and his mentees, which may not be present with all other students he may work with in the

future. This fit was something that connected them, and he felt like “they’re right there with me” in terms of views on research. He was aware that other student needs may be different, yet it seemed appropriate to hear him reflect on the connection and “really good match” that he encountered with these two students.

John’s Summary

John told most of his experiences with few prompts from me as the researcher. He shared his experience with two students with which he had a clearly defined mentoring relationship with, which has further developed into a long-term and close relationship. These relationships organically occurred as they had frequent contact with each other, in addition to shared interests. His description showed the initiative that it took from both the mentee and mentor for this relationship to develop. This was evident in the mentees coming to him with questions and John responding with openness and willingness to help. John was quick to describe the personal benefit that he has experienced over time with these two students. He additionally described the connection with them and the excitement he has in sharing more collegiality, collaboration, and comradery as his mentees have transitioned into doctoral students this current academic year. Professionally he has benefited from feeling validated and the opportunity to witness student growth. He has a passion for research mentorship and appears to advocate for this within the profession. John allowed me a window into his internal dialogue with navigating power differentials and department politics. John’s experience with mentoring is ongoing and has continued as professional roles have shifted for his mentees. It is important to note that there were a few instances in which the Skype call disconnected or became unclear. At those instances, I would paraphrase the last

comment I had heard from John and he would continue to describe his experience and anything that was missed. He was gracious and willing to work through the connection challenges.

Round 1 Interview with Participant Two

The second participant is known as Ann, and is a middle aged woman with a specialty in rehabilitative counseling. Ann was currently in her fourth and final year as a doctoral student in counselor education. When asked to describe her experience of being an informal mentor with master's level counseling students Ann stated:

My experience is kind of a wide range and maybe a little different uh I started off at the beginning of my doctoral program um getting to know people and working with people in my program we work with master's students all the time and so yeah that was an opening experience.

Ann frequently referred back to that description of being open and opening as part of being a mentor. She told her story of mentoring primarily beginning at the end of her first year. At this time she was approached by the rehab student, who she states, "reached out to me and point blank asked me to be like a mentor to her and was really interesting for me because that, that was like a first experience." Her own specialty in rehabilitation counseling brought this student to approach her. A second student that she mentored from a different specialty area also took initiative in the relationship through approaching Ann with questions and talking to her. Ann said that she "started noticing that she would constantly ask for my opinion and kind of some guidance on some different things" which cued her in that this relationship may not be typical.

Conversations with these two mentees ranged from counseling site concerns, presentations, and professional organizations. Ann acknowledged her strong professional identity through asserting that she is “very active in professional organizations and so that was a common other are that we would talk about.” When asked what the status of these mentoring relationships currently are she stated that they are ongoing, with one student pursuing admissions for a doctoral program and a recent meeting at a professional conference with the other mentee. As Ann was talking about her recent meeting with her mentee at the conference she stated that this mentee “was very excited to find me and talk to me.” This excitement is again described when asked to give further examples or details of a specific experiences Ann has had, which she feels highlights her overall experience with mentoring. With this same student, that excitement was shown when “she just came running up to me to show me her engagement ring and she had gotten engaged over the weekend.” Showing the professional aspect in addition to the personal piece of their relationship, Ann said, “I remember she like stopped and looked at me and she goes, but I need to look at my career.” She completed this story by stating “there’s more than just counseling. There’s life.” Ann connected this experience with the personal connection that she had with this mentee. She placed a lot of emphasis on building a personal connection with these two students in particular.

I asked her what that felt like to experience that personal connection and the excitement of that mentee. Ann said it felt “humbling and I was very honored.” She described how this kind of experience was not common among her doctoral peers, which added to feeling humbled and honored that she was able to experience this type of “positive experience” through mentoring.

When asked if there were other experiences that are coming to mind for her, Ann describes an experience with the other mentee. She casually noted how they were talking one day about various aspects of this mentee's life and professional path and

Just sitting down and realizing that for, that she literally followed what I did. And I had never thought before that I could have that kind of influence on somebody where they would follow right behind in my footsteps. So it was, a, that was another significant experience.

When asked if this experience was similar to that humbling feeling she verbally agreed with that description.

I then asked Ann to describe what challenges she has experienced as a mentor. The first thing out of her mouth is emphatically, "uh time." She emphasized the time it takes "to give worthwhile like meaningful conversations." This to me connected back to the deep personal connection she previously described, and the time she has put into these relationships, yet noting that can be a challenge to manage.

Having enough time to uh to be able to give like worthwhile like meaningful conversations or anything um time is probably the biggest thing and then just remembering that these are students and they are still learning and figuring out their way.

When asked how she managed this challenge, Ann stated, "so time I would hah I would work really hard." This statement emphasized the reality of this challenge. She described intentionality of knowing when they had their classes, scheduling specific times to meet, and "being mindful about it."

The second challenge Ann described was “remembering that these are students and they are still learning and figuring out their way.” When asked to give more detail about what that meant, Ann described how the students are still in their coursework, may not have their path figured out, and are “still learning and exploring.” I was curious and asked Ann how this notion of remembering they are students factored in to how she mentored or supported them. She said she would stop herself from “jumping really far ahead” or giving too much detail on something and instead relied more on being encouraging. She then described how this also allowed her to be more understanding of where they were at in their development. Ann connected with my metaphor of “not being ten steps ahead of them.”

I followed up this discussion with asking Ann about the benefits that she has experienced as a mentor. She first stated the “enjoyment of seeing them grow” and “realizing that I’ve helped somebody else.” She went on to describe how this is “gratifying” in a similar way as her role as a counselor; helping others and being able to witness their growth. She also stated that she benefited from the relationship with these mentees. As a doctoral student she acknowledged the benefit to her own student development. Her words describe it well when she stated that, “having more of a, an experiential learning or understanding, a hands on understanding of what it means to work with master’s students beyond just that going in practice teaching or teaching practicums or um supervision practicum.” I asked her to give more detail to this development that she experienced as a doctoral student. She described how she had been doing clinical work for “several years” prior to her coming back for her Ph.D. Coming into the doctoral program was a shift, where previously her clients were the focus, she

experienced a change in her “mindset.” She “developed awareness that there’s more than just the clients, that the students, that I had to be able to figure out a way to teach and lead students.” She attributed her mentoring experience as promoting that shift of “switching from counselor to doctoral student: future counselor educator.”

Ann described networking opportunities through sharing a specific experience she recently had with a mentee. While at a professional conference this mentee introduced her to other professionals she had not previously known. This was something Ann states she “didn’t expect” to occur. She again revisits the challenge of time, stating “that time is probably the biggest challenge.”

When asked to speak to her experience of mentoring within the context of being a doctoral student, Ann responded that she’s “still doing it.” She reiterated that it helped her focus on her doctoral studies. She again revisited the idea that “not everybody did mentoring.” It seemed as though for Ann, it was a unique or less common experience for doctoral students to experience this role of mentoring. Within the context of her role as mentor I inquired if there were any boundary challenges that she experienced. She connected with this notion “a little bit” and revisited the example of her mentee sharing her engagement with her. She balanced the boundaries with first acknowledging to her mentee that she felt “very honored you know by her sharing her experience and her happiness and joy with me.” Ann described how she asserted the boundaries in “trying to help her realize that the relationships weren’t necessarily like a friend-friend relationship which was ok, it worked out great.” Ann stated that she was fearful that having this encounter might create awkwardness, and seemed relieved that it did not. She stated that she did want to maintain privacy, even though there was no formal contract. “I wanted to

make sure that I was minding like her privacy and different things like that even though it's not like a formal like privacy confidentiality type deal."

Ann did note that there are times that she set boundaries with the faculty. She described that there were instances in which faculty knew that she was mentoring these students which resulted in faculty coming to her for information on the students at times. "And then boundaries sometimes with faculty who would be like so I understand you're helping so and so have they told you about anything or have they said this to you." She felt like their intentions were more to support the work in the department.

The final question I asked Ann to describe what meaning she was making of her experience as a mentor. Her first statement was that she gets "a lot of enjoyment out of it." This then led her to add that "it's something that the profession really needs, that master's students need it...that doctoral students would benefit from." She finally added that the "importance comes I think in the connection: that ability to connect with not just clients but other professionals for that collaboration piece and um building our profession in a positive manner." This description gave emphasis to mentoring being more than just something between two people, but something to additionally move the profession.

Ann's emphasis on the connection with others is further emphasized as she described her own experience with being genuine. When asked how she has built that connection with these two students, she felt like her "genuine care and concern um or desire to help them grow" was at the core for her connection with them. She emphasized the importance of meeting their needs and "being honest" in her relationships with them: a humanistic core of honesty, genuineness, and care for these students. As if talking to her two mentees she stated, "I want you to be able to grow; I want you to be whatever

you want to be successful in your areas. I want you to be able to mentor somebody else in the future.” I could feel her care in that statement.

Her final thought when I opened it up for any other thoughts or feelings that were emerging were that mentoring is important. She emphasized the commitment of mentoring by giving an example of a peer who wasn’t truly committed to mentoring, which “went really bad.” She said “I think it’s important that if you choose to mentor that it’s something that you really want to do.” A great ending statement of her experience with mentoring: commitment to her mentees.

Ann’s Summary

In meeting with Ann I was touched by her genuine care for her two mentees. Descriptive words she used such as honesty, connection, and being humbled and honored allowed me to see the value that she sees in her mentees. I could sense that she honors her relationship with them. While Ann was often brief in her responses, she gave a number of experiences which displayed the closeness of her relationship with these students. When the two students came to her in different ways, she was open to receiving them and had a genuine interest in helping them.

Ann identified benefits personally particularly related to the close relationship she developed. She additionally experienced growth with her professional development. As a doctoral student she experienced the challenge of managing time and also ensuring that she was walking with these students and not ahead of them. Her strong professional identity came through as she talked about her commitment to professional organizations and later the value that mentoring can have within the counseling profession.

Round 1 Interview with Participant Three

The third participant was referred to as LaToya, currently a third year doctoral student in her final year of study. Prior to her entering the doctoral program she taught adjunct courses and worked in private practice. When I first asked about LaToya to share her experience of being a mentor to master's students as a doctoral student LaToya asked for clarification regarding what experiences could be included in this research study. She then thought for a moment, and allowed herself to open up stating, "I'm gonna do free flowing connections here. Is that ok? Because the first thing that comes up to my mind is fear of inappropriate boundaries." She freely spoke of her experience both as an adjunct faculty and doctoral student connected to this fear. She contrasted these two roles, adjunct and doctoral student, and the difference in how she experienced them. She described the boundaries as an adjunct as, "very clear and so that to me I feel more free in the ability to kind of mentor students because my role is clear." In contrast to the doctoral student where her "initial reaction to mentoring them is, what's appropriate and what's not appropriate", resulting in fear. After describing this feeling, LaToya checked to make sure it is ok for her to bring in her adjunct mentoring experiences. I responded by stating that it seemed to add clarity to her experience as a doctoral mentor to be able to compare and contrast those two roles.

LaToya continued to add details to this comparison describing how the label of professor "creates distance" and "feels safe." For LaToya this clear role of professor "feels very natural" and experiences "comfort in the knowledge and security in the roles." She "know[s] it's ok" to reach out to the students, to contact them regarding their interests, and provide mentoring and support when she is in the role of professor. In

contrast when she became a doctoral student she initially felt the “fuzzy boundaries” and decided telling herself “I want to be you know as far away from any edges as possible so my internal thing was I’m not going to do it.”

In light of her decision to not engage in mentoring relationships, “one month into the doctoral program” was asked by a fellow doctoral student to cover their supervision when out of town. She described this as being “thrown into this um one hour supervision with this resistant supervisee.” LaToya was verbally descriptive of why she is sharing this particular experience. Her description of it allowed me to gain a greater understanding of how she experienced this mentoring relationship. She described that,

That one person is who I think of when you talk about mentoring someone because it started as I was thrown in as this substitute supervisor and it’s first name basis. I don’t know this person and this person was definitely resistant and of course a new person, you know, that wasn’t going to go over very well and so then I worked really hard at trying to establish a relationship and actually took over being that person’s supervisor. And it forced me to take a look at what the boundaries are. It forced me to not be afraid. To be clear. To not say to myself just because it’s fuzzy I’m not going to do it. What it helped me to do is define it for myself.

LaToya described the effort that she put into develop skills, maintain boundaries, and create this relationship “feels like a success that has been very rewarding.”

LaToya followed this experience up with the notion that “mentoring is hard work.” She stated:

And it takes a lot of energy. If I, you know, to me it's not, because friendship takes effort and energy and it's different umm teaching takes effort and energy but it's different, supervising, like they all take a lot of energy but I think that mentoring in particular because there's no definition of roles umm and there's no like formal like I think she has called me a mentor but I don't know when it moved from, not that and that's the other piece like when did it move from

From her experience with this student, it was not clear when their relationship became a mentoring relationship due to the other roles such as supervisor and instructor that she had with this student. She also noted the effort it took from the mentee to build this relationship. As this relationship evolved, this student graduated and LaToya has maintained contact with this mentee, yet it remains within the responsibility of this mentee to contact her and "voluntarily" call her.

Another element which LaToya reflected upon was the fact that she notices herself "holding back" in these relationships. Perhaps connected to the power differential, she stated "to me it isn't collegial. We aren't doing it as colleagues yet." She gave the example that she would not turn to her mentee for support or seeking ethical advice.

I reflected back on LaToya's brief noting that it was unclear when her relationship became defined as mentoring and encourage further dialogue on this idea. LaToya described this idea as "organic." Again this lack of clarity and ambiguity seemed to bring out fear in LaToya and she reflected how she "feels responsible" to know all things as a mentor. This responsibility led her to be intentional in how she interacts with this mentee and others.

LaToya went on to share another experience with mentoring an entire cohort of students, which connected back to the “organic” description of mentoring. She stated that “whatever this dynamic is, I don’t think it’ll ever happen again.” These particular students were also participants in a research study that LaToya did, allowing her to get to know them well, including a “multitude of confusing roles.” LaToya experienced the responsibility of maintaining ethical boundaries in all of these relationships with the students, mentees, and research participants. Explaining the depth of her relationship with these students, LaToya noted how her particular research was on spirituality, which allowed her to feel connected to each of these students. One of the students in particular would come to LaToya for support beyond their other relationships. This student began her first of the doctoral program this past year and now “sees this whole other side” of LaToya. This breach in boundaries, of having a mentee enter into the same peer group as doctoral students, led LaToya to feel “like a violation” and “extremely awkward” leading her to “became distant at first.”

LaToya told of another example of a different student she mentored who shared a leadership role within a professional organization. LaToya shared her intentionality and transparency with this mentee regarding the reality of their dual roles, as she was striving to be a role model. This mentee shared with her how valuable that was to have her be open with him and include him in that dialogue. One final example that LaToya shared regarding shifting roles is a mentee in the role of evaluating conference proposals which included LaToya’s conference proposal. She was open with this mentee regarding this shift in power. LaToya described these experiences as feeling like she “tip toing” which keeps her “sharp.” She then responded that she gets “tired” and “there’s too many”

mentees, and has “pulled back from the current ones cause it’s just too much.” Meaning; pulling back from the new master’s students, and not pursuing new mentoring relationships.

I explored further depth of how LaToya experiences the relationship with the master’s student. She reflected on how it allowed her to stay current on ethical issues and concerns.

Well I think that for me how I view it is that it really helps me keep current. I gain as much as they do because whatever they’re bringing to me is something I may or may not have experienced. And so I learn it’s like ok I don’t know what to do let’s figure it out.

Her approach was to learn with the students as they approach ethical challenges. I asked LaToya to reflect on other benefits that she has experienced from her role as mentor. She stated that she feels respected having others come to her for guidance or support. LaToya laughed noting that she “doesn’t have a clue” at times, which can feel like a detriment. She described more benefits including the connection, and a spiritual connection. She commented that, “maybe it’s more that they feel comfortable that we can journey with this together, not that I know.” She gave an example of a student which commented that LaToya is not a “caretaker”, which she took as a compliment.

I opened the dialogue to any further comments on benefits or challenges of mentoring. LaToya did not have anything further to add, and so I ask her what she may add specific to her experience within the context of being a doctoral student. LaToya quickly smiles saying, “don’t do research with master’s students” due to “the added energy” it takes. She noted that this statement may be coming from her current context

of feeling tired, which she clarified “isn’t related to mentoring or to them or any of that” but rather that “it’s related to me and my journey and my program.” She reframed her first statement with a smile, saying that, “if ever there’s an opportunity to bring on or want to mentor students do a spirituality study with them because...there’s a connection that then will evolve into mentoring right there.” She gave the caveat they must be “hyper-vigilant about boundaries.”

LaToya freely spoke further of the connection she experienced with these mentees. She described it as “And it’s very rewarding I mean the connection with people is rewarding. Umm knowing them. Seeing a window into their soul.” LaToya seemed reminiscent as she described a connection with another mentee from her work as an adjunct faculty. She noted that as her mentoring relationships have developed they have become more reciprocal and collegial in nature.

My final question was regarding the meaning that she is making of her experience as a mentor as a doctoral student. LaToya stated that “I’d never thought of myself as a mentor.” In fact, she thought of this role only after my original request for participants. LaToya described her own supports including peers and faculty which created for her a “community.” She described the isolation that she experienced in her role as adjunct faculty and in private practice in contrast the sense of community that she created through her doctoral training. For LaToya her “community” has allowed her to not be a “burden” on her mentees through having access for her own support. She closed this with saying “mentoring can’t exist in isolation that’s for sure.” She noted how the whole idea of mentoring is creating a larger community within the profession.

LaToya smiled and stated how she is also benefiting from this research. She described the value of being able to process her experience, allowing her to conceptualize her experience. She described it as a parallel process or isomorphic thing. She noted how this is not a topic discussed in her training. She again returned to her fear, saying, “Just the idea of mentoring is scary. Yeah the word scares me.” LaToya stated that “there’s not a lot of training” on mentoring, leading it to be confusing. The lack of contract; voluntary nature on both parts, and “random phone calls and emails” is part of what she calls mentoring and adds to the confusion.

She returned to the final question of her meaning of her experience by “just free floating what pops up for me.” And, then she paused. She came to the conclusion that she has gained confidence and development in her professional identity as a counselor educator. The mentoring served as a “supplement” to her program experience. When LaToya came into the doctoral program, she would question her abilities, asking questions such as, “Can I do it? Am I capable of doing it?” The experience of mentoring in conjunction with her other doctoral experiences allowed her to gain confidence and better define herself as a counselor educator.

LaToya discussed an experience in which mentoring did not go well. She described this as a “failure.” She had a previous mentoring relationship in which the roles changed and her previous mentee chose not to engage with her. After LaToya’s attempts to be transparent, she was not received and communication was closed. LaToya stated that she needs to let this go, recognizing that not each mentoring relationship may go well. She contrasted this “failure” with her other successes, particular one that was a

similar transition to this other “failure.” Her final statement is the importance of “meet[ing] them where they are” and respecting that.

LaToya’s Summary

LaToya was open and willing to be open about her successes, failures, fears, and rewards of mentoring. She would often allow herself to freely talk without restriction. This allowed me to feel her experience of “tip toing” and becoming distant. I experienced LaToya as cautious and needing structure with clear boundaries to feel secure. Due to the ambiguous nature of mentoring that she described, her experience of fear seemed natural. The lack of clear boundaries and clarity in roles in addition to the hard work of mentoring were challenges that she experienced. I am curious how her tiredness which she later describes impacted the frequency to which she brought up her fears and challenges.

LaToya valued the deep connection and relationship that she has developed with a variety of mentees. While she described one “failure” in mentoring, having a success with other mentees allowed her to make meaning of this experience and “let it go.” Her other professional endeavors allowed her to build these deep connections with her mentees, often beginning from other roles such as supervisor, instructor, or researcher. She experienced these relationships as a “privilege” which built her confidence in her abilities as a counselor educator. She described a rather postmodern approach in which she was not a “caretaker” and would allow her mentees to “journey” with her to find the answers. I sensed within her description of the mentees a feeling of gratitude that she was able to have this experience with them. LaToya is still in process stating that “I’m not ready for that” when asked about her development as a doctoral student. She further

described how the interview allowed her to process her experience and look at the “big picture.”

Round 1 Interview with Participant Four

The fourth and final participant was also in her final year in her doctoral training, which is her third year. Elizabeth is a school counselor and has a strong professional identity in this specialty. Elizabeth was quick to respond to the participant request with enthusiasm regarding the topic of mentoring and a willingness to share her experience. She was curious about the research study and prior to beginning the questions for the interview she asks about the methodology and number of participants. I shared with her the use of van Manen’s phenomenology and that there are four participants in the study. She was positive in her response.

The initial question to have her describe her experience as an informal doctoral student mentor for master’s students while a doctoral student led her to share her experience with one specialty cohort of master’s students. Elizabeth began this description with stating she was “fortunate to start with a great cohort of counseling master’s students”, which started the same semester that she began her doctoral studies. She described it as an “opportunity” to “grow close with that cohort in particular and mentor them over their two years.” When she referred to this cohort, she is particularly referring to the students in the school counseling specialty. She noted that she has also had the opportunity to mentor the next cohort as well.

Her role as mentor emerged as she had other professional roles with these students, primarily teaching courses where she “started building relationships.” She connected her frequency of contact with the school counseling students to allow

mentoring relationships to additionally develop. She described this as a comfort, in which the students “became more comfortable with me.” In particular Elizabeth highlighted her unique role as a doctoral students as

Kind of, in this nice in between role, so while a faculty member might seem intimidating but still have knowledge and experience, I was not as intimidating but I still had that knowledge and experience so they, several of the students, would come to me.

She described the students reaching out to her after class or through email. While she noticed some of her relationships with them were formal, such as teaching and supervision, other relationships “came about more organically.” While the first cohort she mentored graduated, she has had the opportunity to continue to build relationships with the next cohort, and is still working with these students.

Elizabeth shared an example of her care for the students she mentored, when the department experienced some changes in faculty, she stated that she “really felt for them and I worried about how they were experiencing um the changes.” Elizabeth gave space for the students, anticipating that it may be more of a faculty role to offer support. When she heard from the students that they did not receive needed support, she then reached out to them through email.

I emailed them all and I just said you know look I’m a student too but I want to let you know that I’m looking out for you and I’ve talked to faculty members and I’m helping them and um I really just wanted them to know that someone higher up was looking out for them.

She reported a positive benefit of this reaching out in which “many of them expressed to me afterward that that really helped them to feel supported.” She has seen this continue onto this academic school year where these students continue to reach out to her.

Elizabeth hinted at the benefit she has experienced, while adding more description to her ambiguous role as a doctoral student. She stated:

It’s been you know, a very beneficial experience for myself, but I also hope that I’m able to give them the guidance they’re looking for while still managing this doc student role and in some cases this teacher role, where I don’t want to overstep boundaries but I do want to help them.

Her experience with various roles while currently being a doctoral student led her to experience caution at times as she defined what those boundaries are for herself. I reflected further on this experience she is describing regarding this unique role of being a doctoral student and ask her to share more of how she experienced that. She clarified more beyond this idea of caution, that she also felt like it gave her freedom and alleviated some awkwardness, through having less power over them. She shared that “it made it easier for me to mentor them because I wasn’t the one giving them grades...so it just took that awkwardness piece out of the equation and I could just mentor.” She experienced this as being “open and comfortable.”

I then asked Elizabeth what specific experiences she has had which she feels may highlight her experience as a mentor. Elizabeth thought for a moment then described one experience she recently had with two students. She noted that at the time of this experience she was involved with teaching a number of their courses and had frequent

contact with them. These two students emailed her and asked to speak with her after class. When they met they disclosed personal and private concerns regarding a peer.

They felt like they needed to tell someone but it did strike me it was interesting they didn't go directly to a faculty member I think they knew that I would say you know we really need to make the faculty aware of this but it was almost just safer for them to come to me first and then have me do that um so we talked through it they were petrified they were like shaking

She was clear with these students regarding her ethical obligation and role with sharing this information with faculty, yet also maintained the student's confidentiality as requested. This concern continued for a time, and the students came to her for support at another time on this issue. At times Elizabeth experienced this as being the "middle man", sharing information between the two parties. She described this as being "a nerve wracking place to be." While she wanted to make sure she was not merely a "messenger" she also felt like these students needed "a safe person to speak with first" due to their fears and concerns. She recognized that she could be that safe person for them.

Elizabeth shared further experiences which showed her relationship with these students. She again expressed feeling surprised that students would come to her amidst all of the other supervision and support that they were receiving.

I would say I guess in some of the practicum and internship I was just surprised my point is given all those layers at times it would still surprise me when they would come to me and I would think like well you have so many other

supervisors assigned to help you with this but I think those supervisors also were in an evaluative role

One student approached her regarding an issue which they knew Elizabeth was passionate. Elizabeth described this student as needing “validation.” This role of mentor was experienced as a balance between supervision and mentoring, with the role of “support and encouragement kind of more of a mentoring relationship” for Elizabeth.

Elizabeth reiterated this uniqueness of her doctoral role in addition to the role of mentoring when commenting further on this surprise that she experienced. She noted that it is “flattering that they come to me” and decided that “apparently these students need someone who’s not just a supervisor but someone that can give them some more guidance in a more comfortable way.” Again that idea of comfort, guidance, and support is evident in her experience as a doctoral mentor.

I encouraged Elizabeth to share more details of the emotions that she experiences in this role as mentor. She described “flattery” and validation in addition to a “sense of obligation.” This “sense of obligation” is experienced as being careful in the guidance she gives, and wanting to “get it right” not only for her mentees but also for her department and the broader field of counseling. She experienced as mentoring more than just between her and these students.

The interview then turned to explore the challenges that Elizabeth has experienced as a doctoral mentor. Elizabeth first described the challenge of the dual roles that she engages including the “hierarchy between, ah, Ph.D. students and master’s students.” To complicate the power differential and dual relationships, Elizabeth noted that “we don’t talk about it in my program.” She expressed that she isn’t seeking to

assert or gain power in her role although wanting to “establish boundaries” with the master’s students. She was aware of the closeness of her age to these master’s students, and works to establish boundaries for herself through setting limits on the types of activities she would engage in with master’s students present. This is a continuing experience, as she “got closer and closer to these students” she seemed to show more of herself to them, through joking or sarcasm. She would then, “have to check myself” recognizing that these are not and cannot be friendship relationships, even though she could see herself being friends with them. To distinguish this difference she would be intentional regarding the social engagements she had with them and what she shared of herself in relation with these students/mentees. She experienced this as “separating [her]self as a Ph.D. student.”

Elizabeth contextualized her experience of establishing boundaries, and stated that “none of my peers were having parallel experiences.” She noted that a few did have mentoring experiences later in their program, but not at the same time. This left Elizabeth to feel “very fortunate to build the relationships I did” while also the “expectation...just to figure it out.”

The final challenge that Elizabeth described was concern about how her mentoring relationships with these students may be perceived in the department. She described worry that the faculty may think she was “too buddy-buddy” when reaching out to students. Elizabeth at times “erred on the side of caution and not getting involved and then realizing I should have.” She described this as needing to be a balance.

We next engaged in further exploration of the benefits that Elizabeth has experienced and continues to experience. She first noted her hopes for her professional

role as a future faculty, which she anticipates to continue her role as mentor. She felt that she has experienced learning and growth from her mentoring to allow her to continue this role. Elizabeth experienced satisfaction in the “strong relationships” she was able to build. She felt “personal pride” as she sees her mentees succeed. She stated “it really meant something to me to see these students that I had seen grow and change. All of a sudden now they’re out in the field.” She spoke fondly of these students, expressing her gratitude that they remain in contact with her and have included her in their cohort emails. She described witnessing their growth as a “privilege to be a part of that...I felt privileged that they let me in.”

I asked Elizabeth to describe further how she experienced the connection with the students. She stated that “it felt like investment, it felt like ownership.” She again described how they would include her in their cohort emails, referring to her as the “adopted doc student.” She gave the example of Adler’s social interest and the importance of feeling a sense of belonging. Elizabeth stated that she experienced that with these mentees that “they gave me a place to belong truly.” She gave the context of the lack of connection she was experiencing in her community due to moving to a new area when beginning her doctoral training. Her deep connection with them was evident when she stated that “without that, my relationships with the cohort, um, I think a piece of my experience would have been missing in my Ph.D. program.”

Elizabeth became aware in the interview of the magnitude of the benefit that she experienced from her mentoring relationships and expresses that she does not intend to be selfish. She expressed her hope that her intent in these relationships was not motivated selfishly by her own needs, but rather for the students. She reflected on how these

relationships “kind of happened organically” due to her intentional work to teach the school counseling courses. She described her professional desire to be involved in the school counseling courses, to help create a stronger program, and “get [her] hands into that.” She also wanted to get to know the students, “learn about their experiences”, and “I wanted to help.” Elizabeth began laughing, stating “this sounds terrible, I wanted to give them my doctoral.” She was passionate about her professional identity, social justice, and specialty area and wanted to share this information with these students. She laughed and again feared she is being selfish. Elizabeth continued making meaning of her experience expressing:

Perhaps I just needed to be a part of their experience I don’t know that is making me rather selfish. But I hope perhaps a better light to paint it in is I felt like I had some knowledge that was important for them to learn that I learned from my own mentors in my master’s program and that I thought would help them. It wasn’t necessarily about pushing my agenda but that it would assist them and better helping the students that they would one day counsel and so um it was important to me to you know to talk to them about social justice and make sure that they were gonna be strong leaders and advocates in their schools and so I wanted to be a part of their experience

While she had her own professional goals and doctoral training to experience, she was also passionate about helping and guiding these students and the profession. Her passion for social justice is evident in her desire for the students she mentored to be “strong leaders and advocates” in their clinical work. Her context in which the school program was not considered as strong as the other programs also fed her passion to “strengthen it.”

Elizabeth's strong professional identity, intentional co-teaching experiences, and passion appear to be a part of her experience as a mentor.

I was curious how she would describe herself as a mentor and explored this with Elizabeth. She stated that "despite the fact that I was very conscious of boundaries I was rather, I was open to being open." She gave evidence to this statement including placing emphasis on teaching evaluations and student feedback, reaching out to students, getting to know them at a personal level. She would talk to students and check in with them prior to classes, be open to talking afterwards, and "joke around with them." She noted that her intentionality to check in with students seemed to allow the mentees to feel "more comfortable with me."

When I asked Elizabeth to speak to her experience of a mentor specifically within the context of being a doctoral student she described it as a "unique experience", meaning her peers may not have experienced mentoring as she had. Mentoring was not a topic discussed in her training or advising with faculty. She stated "in my doc program it just hasn't been discussed." I wondered if there was a piece of development as a doctoral student that she experienced within her role as mentor. She said that it "forced me to navigate those roles and navigate boundaries." She gained the understanding of the need for master's students to have a mentor and hopes that she may be able to continue to provide that as faculty. She then returned the idea of the difference of faculty and doctoral students, in hopes that she may also foster doctoral student – master's student mentoring "because if there's a need there and I can't necessarily fill it as a faculty member you know um maybe I can um yeah facilitate someone else filling that need."

The concluding topic regarding the meaning Elizabeth is making of her experience led her to immediately respond on the how “fortunate” she felt. She stated this is her “primary thought.” Elizabeth responded, “I just feel very fortunate, I do feel like I got lucky.” She reflected on the organic nature of these relationships which cannot be recreated or forced. This idea that she was “lucky”, that the students allowed her in, and she was open to being a support to them. She connected this feeling to her clinical work in hearing client life stories, and how she experiences “a similar privilege to have been, you know, opened up to my student’s life stories.” She went on to be very complimentary of the students as she describes them as great students, and supportive of her in her role as teacher. Elizabeth felt as though her role as mentor assisted her in her role as teacher through already having developed a close and trusting relationship with the students. She described the mentees as open to her, respectful, and trusting. She stated “they felt like I was on their side and I could be a resource.” The reciprocal nature of choosing the mentoring relationship is evident in Elizabeth’s description of her experience. Elizabeth’s humility is evident in her final thoughts, noting that the context of the master’s students. She stated that due to extenuating circumstances, the students may not have received the support they needed from faculty, and it allowed her to be there in that role.

As we ended the interview Elizabeth was gracious in expressing her gratitude for me listening to her experience as a mentor. She stated “you’ve asked really great questions and I’m glad you’re doing this study.” Her gratitude for her experience as a mentor seemed to radiate in her words as we closed.

Elizabeth's Summary

I experienced Elizabeth as a passionate, gentle, and kind woman striving to support and help the master's students she worked with. Elizabeth often referred to the benefit and value she experienced as a mentor. She spoke highly of the two cohorts that she worked with, and described it as an honor to be a part of their experience. She was grateful for these students allowing her to have the role of mentor with them, and saw the relationship as reciprocal in terms of choosing to be open. She gives a number of specific experiences in which she offered support and guidance for the students, different from her other roles as teacher and supervisor. Elizabeth was also reflective on the unique nature of her role as doctoral student, in addition to the uniqueness of her experience of mentor as a doctoral student.

Elizabeth was open to being genuine about her challenges with navigating boundaries and fears of being selfish. While she feared being selfish, she was able to make meaning of her experience, her passion for school counseling and social justice, and the importance she places on supporting the students in these areas. Her kindness and gratitude for her experience overshadow any selfishness that may be present, as her ultimate take away is a feeling of being "lucky."

CHAPTER FOUR: THEMATIC ANALYSIS ROUND ONE

In accordance with the specified methodology as outlined in Chapter 2, four participants were interviewed to gain a greater understanding of the experience of mentoring. Once gathered, the data were analyzed to gain a greater understanding and meaning of the participants' experience. The use of van Manen's human science method was followed closely to allow focus and clarity in the intent of the thematic analysis. A description of this process will clarify this meaning.

The search for themes creates a sense of "order and control to our research and writing" while it is important to keep in perspective that "grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of "seeing" meaning" (van Manen, 1990, p.79). A theme is more than mere "categories" as it is difficult to reduce human experience to a theme (van Manen, p.79). The purpose and intent of van Manen's phenomenological methodology is to gain "meaning" or as van Manen (1990) describes "to desire meaning" (p.79). To assist in gaining an understanding of this expanded notion of a theme in van Manen's (1990) human science research, he outlines a number of points which articulate various purposes and descriptions of a theme. A few of these points which guided my thematic analysis include definitions of theme as "the experience of focus, of meaning of point" (p.87), "the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand" (p.87), "at best a simplification" (p.87), "gives shape to the shapeless" (p.88), "always a reduction of a notion" (p.88), "sense we are able to make of something" (p.88), "the openness to something", "the process of insightful invention, discovery, disclosure" (p.88). This required of me as the researcher to grasp for meaning, for understanding, while acknowledging the limits of a theme. The emotions and

connection I had with the participants, their experience, and the analysis bring to my awareness the difficulty I feel in adequately expressing this material; as if I can fully express the meaning of the experience of the research participants. Recognizing the limitations of reducing human experience (van Manen, 1990), it is hoped that the themes described still allow the reader to grasp the meaning of these doctoral student's experience of being an informal mentor.

Once themes were identified, consistent and essential themes (van Manen, 1990), in addition to the unique themes were distinguished. An essential theme is described by van Manen as essential to the phenomenon of study, while an incidental theme may not be necessary to experience the phenomenon. He proposes the use of "imaginative variation" in which the researcher asks the question, "is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon? Does the phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning?" (van Manen, 1990, p.107). In asking these questions throughout the analysis, it allowed focus and clarity in what were the essential components of the experience of being an informal mentor.

The coding process was meaningful for me, as I came in touch with each word and phrase whether spoken or unspoken that were part of the participants' descriptions of their experience. A document was created which included the three forms of coding, including "wholistic", "selective", and "detailed" coding (van Manen, 1990, p.94). A narrative of this process is described followed by a detailed description of each of the essential and incidental themes. The "wholistic" coding summary was done after reviewing each transcript, in which the "overall meaning" (van Manen, 1990, p.94) was noted for each participant. This required a "judgment call" (van Manen, 1990, p.94) to

decide what the meaning of the text may be, and is supported with the use of other coding techniques.

The “wholistic” coding for each participant is summarized as follows:

JOHN: A mentor may offer support on specific topics, in this case, research, over time. As a mentoring relationship matures, the mentor experiences increased genuineness and collegiality.

ANN: A mentor is committed to her students, honors their experience, and places emphasis in honesty and genuineness.

ELIZABETH: Informal mentoring as a doctoral student is a unique relationship from others, such as faculty, in which comfort, openness, and trust can be experienced in a meaningful way.

LATOYA: The ambiguity in defining the role of mentor and the dual roles experienced as a doctoral student is scary. Mentoring is “hard work.”

Through this method it was noted that each participant may have emphasized different components of mentoring, and the other coding procedures created a sort of checks and balances of what may be essential or incidental to the experience of informal mentorship for doctoral students.

Combining the use of the “selective” and “detailed” coding (van Manen, 1990, p.94) adds depth and clarity to the thematic analysis. A small example of the selective coding includes keywords and phrases such as:

JOHN: Connections of others students with some similar interests; gratified; managing and noticing the power differential; power difference; moving to more of a collaboration

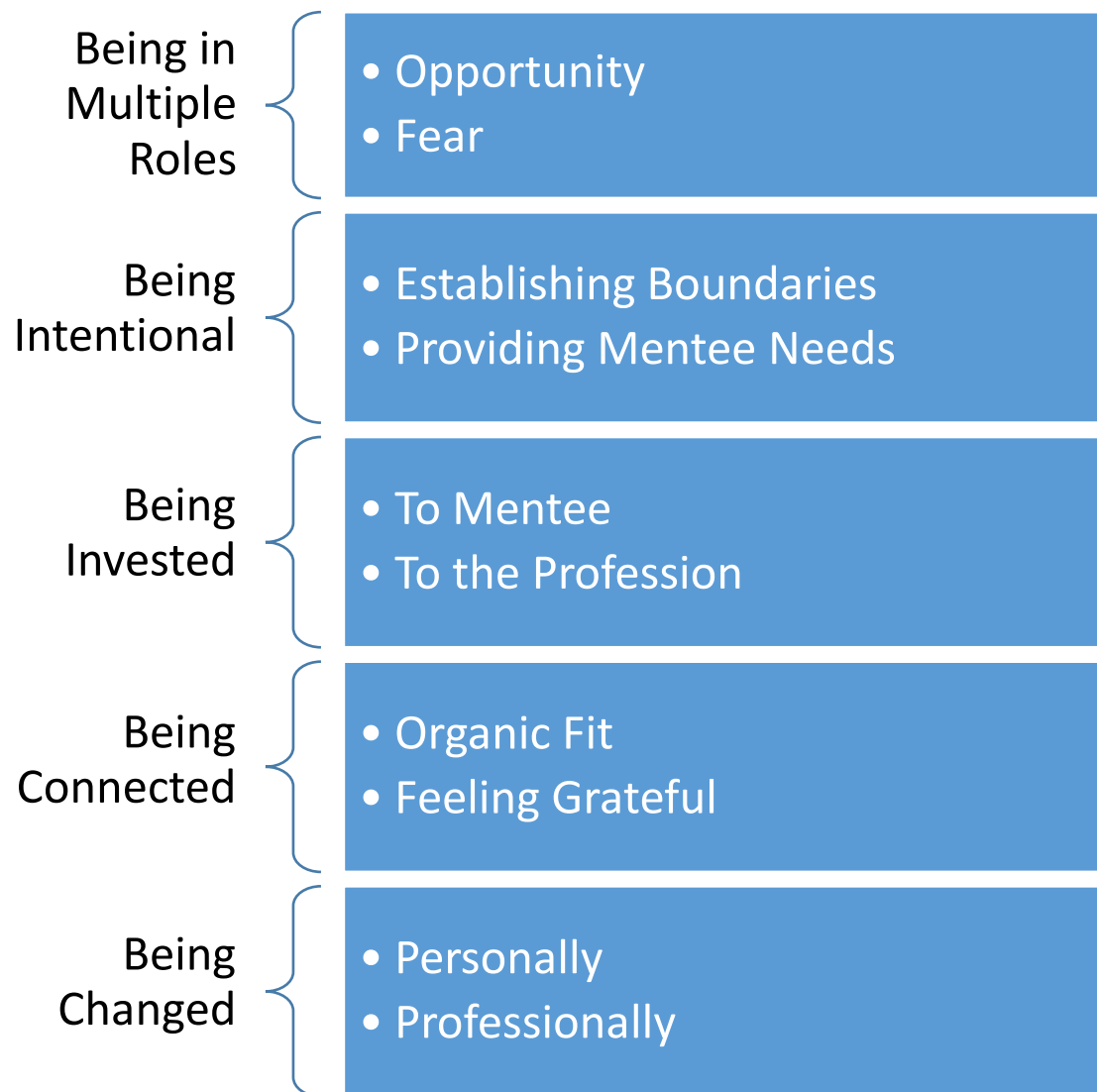
ANN: Building the connection; more aware of the need for mentoring; what their needs are as students; honored; very fearful

ELIZABETH: Seeing me often; frequency; became comfortable with me; I was not intimidating; students would come to me; I was fortunate; opportunity

LATOYA: Fuzzy boundaries; I was thrown in; Voluntary on both parts; It's helped give me confidence; sharpen my skills; solidify my identity as a counselor educator

Combining these words and phrases, longer quotes, and my own meaning making allowed the thematic analysis become clearer. I wrote memos of ideas of themes from analysis and combined similar or consistent ideas. I then grouped phrases and quotes within initial code ideas in a word document, to look for consistency and frequency among the participants description. I created the five primary themes through continually analyzing the data through the writing portion. I originally identified six themes, and through writing the analysis I found that two of the themes were similar and could be condensed into one, namely **being connected** and **being grateful**. The similarity of these two themes will be described later when discussing the theme of **being connected**. The five themes include: **being in multiple roles**, **being intentional**, **being invested**, **being connected**, and **being changed** (see Figure 2). Each of these themes has two subthemes which add richness and understanding to each theme (see Figure 2). A description of each of these will allow a fuller understanding of being a mentor as a doctoral student for these participants.

Figure 2. Preliminary themes of the lived experience of informal mentoring



Being in Multiple Roles

Doctoral student informal mentors experience a variety of roles and work to establish boundaries with their mentees. The duality of roles can mean the opportunity to create mentoring relationships, and was frequently described as the roots of a mentoring relationship. One of the multiple roles each of these mentors shared was being a doctoral student, which was described as both an opportunity and challenge. Being in multiple roles is also experienced as fear, with the ambiguity and confusion of boundaries. The experience of fear was unique to each participant in how it emerged.

Opportunity

For many the opportunity of multiples roles created a frequency of contact with master's students. Examples of these multiple roles included teacher, supervisor, researcher, and doctoral student. At times, these roles were encountered simultaneously. Each of the participants described being involved in teaching, supervision, or research early on in their doctoral training, which were important components for their mentoring relationships. Ann stated that "in my program we work with master's students all the time." For John, his two mentees were doing research with the same faculty that he was working with, when they began getting to know one another. This encounter created the opportunity to form mentoring relationships.

Often the mentees knew the participants from these other professional roles such as teaching or supervising. Elizabeth stated:

The mentoring began because I was uh, had some sort of role in their coursework so sometimes I'd be a co-teacher in some of the classes they took or teaching assistant ...so I started building relationships just in the teaching role.

She further described working with some of these students as a supervisor and the frequency of contact that she had with students. She saw this frequency creating safety in which the students would approach her with questions or concerns and stated “just the frequency with which I saw them, they became more comfortable with me.”

LaToya experienced multiple roles with her mentees, including a researcher-research participant relationship. An experience that she describes as a vital component to providing contact with these students was working with a cohort of students who were research participants in a research study she was conducting. She stated, “if there’s ever an opportunity to bring on or want to mentor students, do a spirituality study with them because there’s, and there’s a connection that then will evolve into mentoring right there.” This statement is closely followed up with the challenge or fear of multiple roles when she cautions, “I wouldn’t recommend it for anybody who isn’t up for being hyper-vigilant about boundaries.” For LaToya the opportunity and fear of being in multiple roles with her mentees were closely intertwined.

A few of the participants described the notion that their role as a doctoral student was unique from other figures in the master’s student’s life, particularly from faculty. This was described by Elizabeth as an **opportunity** which allowed the students to approach her. She described it as an “in between role” in that “while a faculty member might seem intimidating, um but still have knowledge and experience, I was not as intimidating but I still had that knowledge and experience so they, several of the students, would come to me.” John’s mentee’s described to him the benefit that they received in being able to have him as a mentor, particularly for research. In reflecting on the benefits he has seen from his mentees he stated, “I wish every student had, had someone um in

addition to faculty in addition to other places that could be that person to be doubtful with, to be questioning with, to be uncertain, to seek nonthreatening advice.” The unique role of being a doctoral student served as an opportunity for informal mentoring with master’s students for these doctoral student mentors.

Fear

The following dialogue with LaToya exemplifies the **fear** of multiple roles.

PARTICIPANT: And we don’t talk about mentoring and just the idea of mentoring is scary. Yeah the word scares me.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: [Laughter]

INTERVIEWER: It is scary and there’s not a lot of training or you know guidance regarding that.

PARTICIPANT: no, I mean I could be classifying what I’m doing as supervision

INTERVIEWER: right

PARTICIPANT: But it’s not, but to some degree. So then that’s confusing. So is it supervision or is it mentoring and I think because there’s no supervisory relationship, there’s no contract. It’s just kind of as needed random phone calls and emails. I do think it probably is mentoring, it isn’t; it’s voluntary on both parts.

LaToya’s statement of her fear of mentoring exemplifies the fear that may be experienced when being in multiple relationships as a mentor. This fear is described as a distancing or avoiding, caution, or internal dialogue. Prior to LaToya’s statement regarding her recommendation to have master’s students as research participants, she first stated, “don’t

do research with master's students. Not on your own. Like, I would not do that again. I would not engage in that spirituality research with master's students in the program that I'm a doctoral student." In describing her research participants whom she taught, supervised, and later mentored she stated "we always had these multitude of confusing roles." For LaToya, this duality of roles brought "added energy" which was experienced as being "hyper-vigilant" and "tip-toeing."

Additionally, for LaToya the specific role of being a doctoral student created **fear** in contrast to the **opportunity** that was previously described by John and Elizabeth. As described in her interview, LaToya had the experience of being an adjunct faculty prior to becoming a doctoral student, which allowed her to compare the differences of how she experienced these two roles. For LaToya, the role of doctoral student brings fear where it "felt to me like fuzzy boundaries and I don't um and I want to be you know as far away from any edges as possible, so my internal thing was I'm not gonna do it."

Elizabeth described an experience of **fear** in her role as doctoral student, with a concern of how she may be perceived by faculty. Elizabeth stated, "I don't want them to think like I'm too buddy-buddy with them and you know this is really a faculty members place like a faculty member needs to reach out." In this experience, the department was experiencing a transition and Elizabeth waited two months before reaching out to students, not seeing that as her role as doctoral student. She stated that:

two months later when I found out no one had reached out then I was like alright well I guess I do need to send an email and make them feel supported so in that case I kind of erred on the side of caution and not getting involved and then I realized I should have.

The ambiguity of what her role was as a doctoral student in contrast to faculty was experienced as fear and caution. Her role as mentor and her role as doctoral student create confusion when placed within the context of her department. She described another instance in which **fear** emerged as she was considering her role as doctoral student and mentor and how it may be perceived. She said, “I worried like I didn’t want faculty thinking well I was just getting involved in this case just to be involved, right? Like, just to be a part of what was going on. Um or I didn’t want to feel like the students were using me.” Elizabeth’s worry is descriptive of how **fear** may be experienced when encountering multiple roles as a mentor and doctoral student in counselor education.

The duality of the doctoral student role and mentoring role was also experienced as fear for John. He described it as “being aware of department politics” and “a worry in the back of my mind.” He further describes this worry as:

how am I gonna share this in a way that I think is useful but is not going to be seen as being undermining and, but I never tried to give ideas that would be undermining but I think as being as a doc student I think I’ve been very aware of um always answering to somebody. Sometimes feeling like it’s not really what I do but how it looks or how other people evaluate it.

While John was attending to his role as a mentor he was also experiencing an awareness of his role as a doctoral student. This worry is evident in what John describes as “that voice in the back of my head about like be careful about what you say um there’s always a potential risk of that being taken the wrong way or did they misunderstand what I said.” With **being in multiple roles** John, Elizabeth, and LaToya each encountered fear, worry, and caution in how they navigated their role as mentor and doctoral student.

At this time it is important to note that Ann's description of her experience does not speak specifically to this notion of **being in multiple roles**, particularly relating to the experience of **fear**. There are hints of her context of being a doctoral student, such as her frequency in which she worked with master's students. Further exploration may allow clarity in whether the theme of **being in multiple roles**, particularly **fear**, is an incidental occurrence in mentoring or an essential component of informal mentoring for doctoral student mentors in counselor education.

Being Intentional

The element of being intentional as a mentor contains two components which describe the experience of being intentional in **establishing boundaries** and **providing mentee needs**. Establishing boundaries was the intentional work of the mentor to create clarity in the relationship including expectations, roles, and purpose of the mentoring relationship. In **providing mentee needs**, participants described an understanding of their mentees and intentionally offering support, guidance, or validation depending upon the needs of the mentee. A description of **being intentional** within each of these areas will be given within the participant's experience.

Establishing Boundaries

The participants described **intentionality** in **establishing boundaries** which included an awareness of boundaries, understanding or noticing power differentials, and acknowledging potential dual relationships. Establishing boundaries also included the intentional decision of what to share with mentees, how much of themselves to disclose, and how to engage with mentees. This was done by each of the participants through purposeful dialogue with the participants on various occasions. John stated, "so I think

that's been another piece of our relationships, is um talking about, having frequent not frequent but commonly having conversation about that mentor relationships and how it's evolved." Often this intentionality was evident as mentoring relationships shifted over time or breached a new area. Each participant shared significant experiences in their mentoring relationships which included an element of establishing or maintaining a boundary with their mentees.

Ann's experience of having one of her mentees excitedly share their engagement with her displays her work to intentionally establish a boundary with her mentee. "I was very honored you know by her sharing her experience and her happiness and joy with me but at the same time it's a different, trying to help her realize that the relationships wasn't necessarily like a friend-friend relationship." Ann intentionally and outwardly had a dialogue to establish this boundary with her mentee. She described what it felt like to set this boundary, with fear that it might impact their relationship. She stated:

It didn't become awkward like I was very fearful it would because I wanted to make sure that I was minding like her privacy and different things like that even though it's not like a formal like privacy confidentiality type deal.

Establishing this boundary with her mentee took intentional dialogue and clarity on her part, was experienced as fear, and in the end Ann stated that it, "was ok, it worked out great."

Elizabeth described her intentionality as "balancing" in which she worked at "managing this doc student role and in some cases this teacher role where I don't want to overstep boundaries but I do want to help them." Her intentionality was also experienced as "sometimes hav[ing] to check myself." She was aware of "the hierarchy between a

Ph.D. students and master's students" which she noted was not discussed in her doctoral program. She intentionally decided what she felt were appropriate boundaries for herself as a mentor, doctoral student, teacher, and supervisor. She described her intentionality in this boundary and noted "I'm still their generation and so I didn't want to, I don't care about power, but did kind of want to establish boundaries." She gives an example of setting those boundaries:

So for instance I made sure of like I'm not gonna go to a school campus event if there's drinking going on and I'm going to be drinking with my students that's just, I mean other people do it and I don't think it's like a huge deal, but it's not something, a boundary I was going to cross for myself.

She experienced setting boundaries as "separating [herself] as a Ph.D. student from master's students." Elizabeth had an awareness of her closeness with these mentees, could see herself being friends with them, and yet knew what boundary she felt was appropriate for her considering all of the varying roles she encountered with these students.

LaToya worked hard at setting a boundary and put forth energy to identify what those boundaries will be for herself and the students that she worked with. While she wanted to avoid working too closely with students she was given the opportunity to work with students shortly after entering her program. She described this experience as:

Work[ing] really hard at trying to establish a relationship and actually took over being that person's supervisor. And it forced me to take a look at what the boundaries are. It forced me to not be afraid. To be clear. To not say to myself

just because it's fuzzy I'm not going to do it. What it helped me to do is define it for myself.

For LaToya, having clearly defined boundaries were important, and it took her own initiative and energy to create that. She stated that, "I challenged myself to develop my own criteria of what safety looks like so that I'm not dependent on titles and roles." For her, that intentionality included what she shared with students which she described as holding back. For her this established a boundary and defined the relationship. LaToya stated, "I hold back. Like I umm because it isn't, to me it isn't collegial. We aren't doing it as colleagues yet." The boundaries that LaToya set included the roles that she engaged in with supervisees, what she shared, and how she shared with her mentees. She referred to ethics to guide her decision making in how she established boundaries. For example, she would intentionally not communicate certain information through email to ensure that it would not be binding. She distinguished her role as supervisor from mentor, and was intentional in keeping that boundary.

John and Elizabeth similarly experienced intentionality in setting boundaries in choosing what to share and how much of themselves to share with their mentees. Elizabeth described her intentionality in getting to know students and then said, "Interestingly I intentionally didn't talk very much about my own life or didn't tell them until the last day of class that I had a partner." For her, this was establishing a boundary through her intentionality of what to share with the students and mentees. John described a similar experience of deciding what to share:

in the beginning I was much more careful or avoided sharing anything negative about the profession about training about anything...I probably wouldn't have

shared those things early on just because it was just kind of balances like well is this just my opinion is this just for me and um I think very aware of the power differential there about like um trying to balance out ok is this like helpful advice that they would find useful or is this me venting.

This displays both an intentionality to **establish boundaries** and **provide mentee needs**.

The final way in which these mentors described establishing boundaries was with their time. This is one the primary challenges described by Ann and John who intentionally worked at setting a boundary as one of the challenges that they encountered as a mentor around their time. In responding to the idea of it being a challenge, John stated:

The first thing that came to mind was setting boundaries around my time. Um I want to be available to help them yet there are times when you know I can't drop what I'm doing to answer a question for them.

The following quotes describe how they experienced establishing boundaries around their time.

ANN: So time I would, hah, I would work really hard. I knew pretty much when their schedules were like what the classes were they were taking just because we worked with master's students so much um but I also would schedule time to go maybe have lunch or dinner.

JOHN: Um just letting them know that there will be times that you're gonna ask for help and I just can't do it right then I'll get to it later but it's just gonna come up and here's why.

John described satisfaction in his ability to establish this boundary in which, “that conversation has gone well and I think we all have this sort of mutual understanding about it.” Ann also mentioned a final way in which she established boundaries, “And then boundaries sometimes with faculty who would be like so I understand you’re helping so and so have they told you about anything or have they said this to you.” Each of the participants descriptions give an understanding of what it was like for them to utilize their **intentionality** in **establishing boundaries** for themselves and with their mentees and others.

Providing Mentee Needs

This theme incorporates **being intentional** in understanding mentee needs and intentionally providing those needs. Each participant described different needs of their mentees and how they went about with meeting those needs. Their intentionality included being aware of student development and being clear in what they can provide students. Each of the participant’s descriptions will be given to give the reader insight to this theme.

John frequently refers to his internal dialogue to explain how he related to his mentees. He gives the example of evaluating what will be helpful for his mentees, and deciding what to share. As previously described he would ask himself, “is this like helpful advice that they would find useful or is this me venting.” This dialogue describes **being intentional** in **providing mentee needs** and was experienced by him as **establishing boundaries**. He describes his awareness of the power differential, and wanting to ensure that he was not swaying his mentees decision, meeting mentee need, while deciding how much of himself to disclose, which in essence establishes a

boundary. He noted that what he shared with his mentees changed as they developed as counselors. He stated:

Yeah and as at first I think it was very much sort of um kind of a relationships where I was wanting to be helpful to them they were curious wanting to know about different things um and I think my experience of it was early on was kind of being very aware of um any information I shared it just sort of being sort of like generic you know like here are things to try and as I got more comfortable with them and as I got to know them more it became more like 'here's a good idea but avoid doing this'. Um and I think it just became where I could be a little more comfortable talking to them about sharing experiences of um not just positive things but like maybe negative things.

Ann also described the importance of understanding where the mentees are at, and not jumping ahead of themselves. She stated the importance of:

Having the understanding that they may not have learned the theories or the ethics the licensure requirements um, or that they may not know exactly what population they want to work with and just remembering that they are still learning and exploring.

Other examples of providing mentee needs are described as follows:

ANN: Genuine caring and concern um or desire to help them grow or help them with what they need to or what they feel they need to become a counselor cause what they need and what they feel they need may be two completely different things and it's important to address what they feel they need from me.

Elizabeth: Students need someone who's not just a supervisor but someone that can give them some more guidance in a more comfortable way.

LaToya: Because I, I am not a caretaker and I don't want to be a caretaker and that's why I don't have the answers and I make it a point to not have the answers, because whatever my answer would be for me is clearly not what it's going to be for you, so I'm going to ask you what your answer is. But her saying you know kind of in that sarcastic off hand way she's no caretaker. 'It wasn't always easy' is what she says.

LaToya's quote describes an instance in which a mentee was telling their peers that LaToya was not a caretaker. For LaToya this was a compliment and displayed her intentionality to not just give the answers to her mentees, and would allow them work to find their own answers. This was the need she saw for her mentees.

The participants described a variety of areas in which they provided support and guidance. Ann described it as, "I was there to answer questions for them talking about different avenues they could go in counseling and just like all sorts of different things." For John, he worked intentionally with his students on research, and was an agreed upon area where he was providing them support. Elizabeth described an experience in which the students in the school counseling track lost one of their faculty members, and needed support. Once Elizabeth heard of their need for help she stated:

I emailed them all and I just said you know look I'm a student too but I want to let you know that I'm looking out for you and I've talked to faculty members and I'm helping them and um I really just wanted them to know that someone higher up was looking out for them but um and you know it's like benefit, many of them expressed to me afterward that that really helped them to feel supported.

Each of these participants were aware of their mentee needs and intentionally worked to provide their needs. Those needs varied from research guidance to support and just being with their mentees. While they were diverse in how they experienced their intentionality, they each displayed a willingness to be there for their mentee with a unique understanding of their needs.

Being Invested

The theme of **being invested** was evident from these participants both **to their mentees** and **to the profession**. They described commitment, energy, and work that they put into both areas: work for the mentee and work for the profession. Their experience of **being invested** is connected to the idea of an investment in that they put work into it with the hope or expectation for a return on their investment.

To Mentee

The participants described a willingness to put in the work which included an investment of themselves. This included a commitment to their mentees and mentoring, time, and bringing themselves into the mentoring. The following are descriptions which exemplify commitment and energy as an investment.

ANN: Um not really the only thing I can think of is I think it's important that if you choose to mentor that it's something that you really want to do. Um there was somebody in my cohort who he saw me and one of the other members of my cohort mentoring and he decided to try his hand at it and um it went really bad. He didn't since he didn't really want to do it in the first place he didn't make time and when he was there with the person he was working with you could tell he didn't want to be there.

LATOYA: And it takes a lot of energy. If I, you know to me it's not, because friendship takes effort and energy and it's different umm teaching takes effort and energy but it's different, supervising, like they all take a lot of energy but I think that mentoring in particular because there's no definition of roles.

JOHN: Um that I think there should be more of it. Um I uh I think I fumbled a lot just through my academic career of not having a lot of really struggling to find guidance from people ...and so I, I think because of that experience I've tried to make the effort to be available to students and offer some guidance.

ELIZABETH: So I guess kind of I feel like a sense of obligation um to I don't know to maybe the field, to my faculty members, to them of course, but to get it right.

In addition to a sense of responsibility and commitment to their mentees, the participants also described investing themselves through being open, genuine, and honest with their participants. Elizabeth further described her investment by saying, "I think it on one hand it felt like investment it felt like ownership. I kind of felt like that those are my fourteen students like that's my cohort." Ann described the importance of being invested through being honest and building trust with the mentees. She stated:

The honesty I think is very important because without that honesty it kind of takes away the trust and the connection and the genuine I care and I want you to be able to grow I want you to be able to be whatever you want to be successful in your areas. I want you to be able to mentor somebody else in the future.

The investment that each participant put into their work as a mentor may be described as personal efforts that they made to the relationship, with a genuine care towards promoting the growth of their mentee.

To the Profession

The notion of **being invested** to the **professional** became clear upon reviewing each of the participant transcripts. The idea that mentoring is bigger than just this relationship kept arising, meaning that mentoring meant more than just working one on one with a mentee. For these mentors, being a mentor meant also moving the profession forward, it meant having a strong professional identity, and being passionate about various professional endeavors.

LATOYA: I'm not doing this in isolation. And that's partly why when I've been an adjunct prior to the doctoral program when I've been an adjunct it's been like 1. Because I felt so isolated being in private practice and having no kind of like collegiality and I mean that's part of the reason why I came to the doctoral program is part of the isolation of being in private practice and not having the collegiality of a community and so what I'm making out of it is that this mentoring is creating community for them, and it also because I have been creating a community for me and little do all of them know that they're all connected in some ways.

JOHN: And so um when I see that um that's something that for me I think I think that's a problem in our field that we need to address is um there's a lot of things to look at and for me personally I think a research training in our field is um could improve.

JOHN: Of one thing I could say man I wish could be taken and replicated you know or just become this sort of a standard staple for counselor education I think it would be around that piece in you know I'll own that a lot of it is because that's kind of an issue that I see that I feel strongly about, about um would like to see um I guess more of an emphasis on research and in think that's just my experience that's what I've seen is a lot of students afraid of it. Um and I think at least from my two mentees them saying having that mentoring relationship where part of it was about research has made them less afraid and on top of that make them excited and want to pursue it more.

ANN: I'm very active in professional organizations and so that was a common other area that we would talk about.

ELIZABETH: I'm very passionate about school counseling and so to know that there were school counseling students coming into my building like I can't maybe it was selfish like but I wanted to get my hands into that. I wanted to learn about their experiences with practicum and internship I wanted to help.

Each participant has different areas in which they express their professional passion or investments. **Being invested** to the profession seems to come into play in their mentoring experience. Ann, John, and Elizabeth each describe their professional interests being a topic or important component of their mentoring relationships.

Being Connected

The experience of being connected was present for each participant, and was frequently referred to in varying terms. In striving to grasp the meaning of what it means to be connected for these participants in mentoring relationships, I am touched by the

emphasis and value they each place on their connection with their mentees. This is one theme where the idea that a “theme formulation is at best a simplification” (van Manen, 1990, p.87) rings true. I cannot help to feel that my description of the mentor-mentee relationship in this phenomenon “falls short” (van Manen, p.87) of the magnitude of its being.

For this theme, one could state that the experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student means **being connected**. Two subthemes which describe the meaning of being connected include an **organic fit** and **feeling grateful**. Each of these subthemes will be described to paint a fuller picture of what it is to be connected as mentors and mentees.

Organic Fit

The experience of connection as being an **organic fit** includes the experience of organic development, shared interests, and a natural fit between mentor and mentee. The description of being organic portrays the naturally evolving informal nature of these mentoring relationships. LaToya stated, “It feels very organic and it feels very natural.” The participants described the informal nature of their relationships as the following:

LATOYA: So part of the reason why I think that particular cohort there’s a lot of them and I don’t think that this whatever this dynamic is I don’t think it’ll ever happen again because they were also participants in a research study that I did on spirituality. And so I got to know they were.

ELIZABETH: You know and I don’t even know if I did have a doc student in the future and I said hey you should create this experience because it was awesome for me I don’t know if it could happen; some of it is just organic.

JOHN: Um I think of the validation piece is a big piece of it. Um I do think that something I've got to be aware of is this has been a really good match for these two students and for me, um I just, something about myself that I need to stay aware of um is that these are two people who ended up working on a project with me so we've got a lot of shared experiences I think when I get on my soapbox about you know research in counseling they're right there with me, but not, I think I'm gonna have to be aware that um that I'm gonna learn it one way or another um that that may not be what every student needs.

Each of these descriptions exemplifies how these relationships were not forced or matched and perhaps could not be recreated. These relationships were unique with circumstances and mentor-mentee characteristics creating an environment for the creation and evolution of the mentoring connection.

The **fit** portion of **organic fit** was also described by the participants including the experience of having shared interests and personally connected. John stated, "I think for me one thing I've gotten out of it is having some other students who are have similar interests." He described his interests in quantitative research, which was unique among his program, as being a connecting point with his mentees. The following quote from LaToya describes the spiritual connection that she had with her mentees.

LATOYA: Like part of this is that I laugh about it you know. I think that again I feel like it's a connection. A spiritual connection on some levels and then you know they're coming to me because they feel comfortable and maybe it's that more that they feel comfortable that we can journey with this together not that I

know. It's not necessarily that I know because I don't most of the time I don't know what to do but I will journey with them to try to figure it out.

When asked what meaning Ann is taking from her experience she stated:

I get a lot of enjoyment out of it. That it's something that the profession really needs that master's student's need it would benefit from that doctoral students would benefit from. Um and then the importance comes I think in the connection: that ability to connect with not just clients but other professionals for that collaboration piece and um building our profession in a positive manner.

Each of the participants had areas in which they **fit** with their mentees. Elizabeth had a shared interest with her mentees in school counseling and felt connected to them through her work with them in that specialty. The participants experience emphasized the essence of informal mentoring relationships as being spontaneous, unplanned, and naturally evolving. These participants experienced the spontaneity of their informal mentoring in addition to the natural match that they had with each of their mentees.

Being Grateful

As each of the participants spoke of their experience of **being connected**, the sense of gratitude that they had towards the opportunity to be a mentor and to know these students is captured in this subtheme. The experience of **being connected** as a mentor was frequently described as feeling lucky and honoring the relationship which represents their gratitude for the relationship, almost in a sacred manner. The description of the close relationship that the participants experienced with their mentees creates a context for honoring the relationship that is part of feeling grateful. Just as something sacred is set aside for reverence and respect, these mentors spoke of their mentoring relationships

much in this way. The experience of being part of someone's growth, witnessing that growth, and truly knowing someone was experienced as "gratifying" and "humbling" by Ann. She described:

The enjoyment out of seeing them grow; and that relationship; having that. The enjoyment from realizing that I've helped somebody else, uh kind of like getting into the counseling profession because I like helping people like helping others um that was very gratifying to me just to know that I helped.

This sense of humility is also evident in LaToya as she states, "I'd never thought of myself as a mentor...I thought of myself as wanting a mentor." Feeling lucky was experienced as both an awareness of how much was gained from their relationship in addition to recognizing that their experience was unique and cannot be recreated.

This idea of **feeling grateful** also includes the meaning of feeling as if they gained and benefited tremendously from **being connected** to their mentee. LaToya describes it as a "privilege" and John described this as feeling "gratified." The following quotes portray each participant's experience of feeling grateful.

ELIZABETH: Yeah so I guess that's how I'm making meaning go of it is wow I was really lucky to have this...But I used to always say as a school counselor I felt so privileged the students would come to you and open up and tell you their life stories and what a privileged position we are in as counselors to hear peoples life stories and in a sense I feel a similar privilege to have been you know opened up to my students life stories.

ANN: Um just sitting down and realizing that for that she literally followed what I did and I had never thought before that I could have that kind of influence on somebody where they would follow right behind in my footsteps.

JOHN: I've enjoyed watching them kind of grow and mature. Um that part has been fun for me and I think I've gotten some personal rewards out of seeing that happen and kind of um being a part of that. I've enjoyed that.

LATOYA: And it's very rewarding I mean the connection with people is rewarding. Umm knowing them. Seeing a window into their soul. Each one of them. And you know like there's such a gamut they aren't all one there's twelve individual unique beings there that umm it feels like a privilege. And so I know that I'm talking at this point less about mentoring and more about this spirituality study but for me right now they're intertwined.

John described his experience of **being connected** through sharing an experience in which his mentees were now doctoral students. This experience was described as both "exciting" and "meaningful" to have connection with these mentees.

JOHN: for me that was really exciting because um with them being doc students um going to this conference it was like more a little bit more like we were going as peers uh and that was exciting. I know for me personally that was that was meaningful cause I'd known them for two years as master's students now they were doc students were kind of we traveled there together we um the shared a hotel room. Um so that was rewarding for me to be able to have that sort of comradery piece of it that was more than just a mentor relationships um but then

also to be able to offer advice and give suggestions about, about navigating the conference.

The connection with the mentees was also experienced as excitement by Elizabeth as she witnessed their growth. She stated:

Um and I think it has really helped me build strong relationships with these students it's given me a lot of like personal pride when the cohort that I was closest with graduated I was excited but this summer when they all started getting jobs that's when I like it really meant something to me to see these students that I had seen grow and change all of the sudden now they're out in the field and they're getting you know school counseling jobs

Throughout the interview with Ann, she repeatedly placed emphasis on the connection that she had with her mentees. The following dialogue with Ann further illustrates her experience of **being connected** as part of **feeling grateful**.

PARTICIPANT: I hadn't seen her for like two or three weeks and I saw her out in the hall and she just came running up to me to show me her engagement ring and she had gotten engaged over the weekend and so it was that personal connection and she was super excited... it was one of those moments where I realize it was kind of a reminder that there's more than just counseling. There's life.

INTERVIEWER: We're really people

PARTICIPANT: Yeah real people I'm not just talking to a robot here. And so.

INTERVIEWER: Well it sounds like that really shows like you said that personal connection that you had with her that she was like so excited to see you and tell you and ran up to you.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What did that feel like for you to you know have her be so excited to tell you?

PARTICIPANT: Humbling and I was very, honored. Uh cause that's when I talk to some of the other students that were in my cohort or that are in my cohort they didn't have, one of them had that kind of an experience, but not everybody else had that where they were working with somebody and it was a positive experience for them.

Each participant experienced **being connected** to their mentees. It was described as organic and naturally fitting; something which could not be recreated or forced. For some of the participants, their experience of connection with their mentees was similar to the connection that they experience with clients. This connection was also experienced as **feeling grateful**, which was described as being humbled, feeling gratified, and lucky by the participants. The experienced of connection between mentor and mentee is difficult to describe, and it is helpful to gain understanding through encountering the participant descriptions.

Being Changed

The lived experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student in counselor education means, being changed. This change is experienced both **personally** and **professionally**. In attempting to describe this change, I am aware of the intangible essence of change, and what it means to change. Relying upon participant descriptions and experiences will express the meaning for change within this phenomenon.

Personally

Personal change included internal and social ways in which the participants experienced growth. This growth included confidence, validation, and social support. Elizabeth's experience of being let in, of having the social interest gave her some personal benefits or change. She stated:

So everyone wants a place to belong right that's what Adler talks about, social interest is a measure of mental health and so they um even yeah for my own mental health they gave me a place to belong truly.

John touched on the personal validation that he received, and LaToya experienced feeling respected and an increase in confidence. Their words describe their experience as follows:

JOHN: You know another thing too for me at times it is validating when I'm doing my work and I'm kind of at my threshold where I'm at my limit and I'm tackling some new concept or some new idea or some new challenge and it's a struggle um sometimes it can be there's just been times where that's been sort of very consuming so then it begins to make me question you know my abilities my intelligence my skills, and so then to have someone seeking out you know my assistance with something can be validating at a time when I'm needing because this other one area that's in reality just a part of what I'm going through is so big and looming that it can be hard to notice other positives. So sometimes having that those other people that are seeking out validating my thoughts my skills, or um can be useful.

LATOYA: I think a benefit is that I feel respected.

There remains further exploration on this as each of the participants noted that they experienced growth and learning, yet there are limited details regarding the meaning of this change personally. This particular component of change will be checked with the participants to ensure that it is vital to their experience of being a mentor or incidental.

Professionally

The professional change was experienced developmentally as a doctoral student and potential future faculty. Examples of ways that this was experienced for these doctoral students include gaining perspective, increased networks, and solidifying counselor educator identity. The words and experiences of each participant will be included to emphasize the reality of this change.

The following are descriptions from the participants which display professional changes or awareness which they gained through being a mentor.

ANN: Um I think benefits like uh increased my networking that would be something that really benefited me. Like when I saw my student, my student [ha] I saw the school counseling student who's now this professional who is presenting and everything she introduced me to people I had never met before this past um we're literally at this conference last week.

LATOYA: Well I think that for me how I view it is that it really helps me keep current. I gain as much as they do because whatever they're bringing to me is something I may or may not have experienced. And so I learn it's like ok I don't know what to do let's figure it out.

These quotes display professional learning and networking benefits that were experienced.

The participants additionally described professional change in terms of their counselor educator identity development. Latoya described how she was changed from first entering the program and through her training and mentoring relationships:

Can I do it? Am I capable of doing it? And I think that just it really has helped um having all of those other experiences to supplement the program but it's not just them or it's not just the program but you know having the both together that they are definitely supplemented the doctoral program and helped for me to um help define who I am as a counselor educator.

Elizabeth, Ann, and John both describe the perspective that they gained through working so closely with their master's student mentees. They describe perspective and awareness of the needs of master's students and what that means for them professionally.

JOHN: For me it's been nice um I think one thing it's done I think kind of I've seen it sort of as practice for working with students when I am a professor. I think that's been helpful and it's been beneficial for me to watch the process of when a master's student is coming in from the beginning of the program to the end um kind of having a behind the scenes look of like what are the things they are thinking about what are the question they are wondering that they they're not bringing to a professor that they're not bringing to class so I think it's benefited me to have that perspective of two students um who are asking me things that they're not for whatever reason for whatever reason they're coming to me about them as opposed to a professor

ANN: that connection really kind of made me more aware of the need for mentoring um of kind of what their needs are as students. It really showed me

what I need to focus on if I decide to continue to go and teach and other areas like that.

ELIZABETH: I think it's obviously been great experience because when I am a faculty member hopefully next year, even as a faculty member I think I'll be doing a great deal of mentoring . I'll be navigating supervision and teaching and mentoring but I think in terms of getting guidance on life direction or which counseling path to take or that sort of thing I'll still be mentoring. So it's given me just good experience to learn from and grow from.

While professional change is hard to differentiate from the other roles and training that these doctoral students encounter, a dialogue with one of the participants described her experience of change from being a counselor to a counselor educator. The following dialogue with Ann portrays her professional change.

PARTICIPANT: Um other benefits I would think it really helped me grow as a doctoral student and to having more of a an experiential learning or understanding a hands on understanding of what it means to work with master's students beyond just that going in practice teaching or teaching practicums or um supervision practicum so.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

PARTICIPANT: So that was that was a great benefit.

INTERVIEWER: Um yeah so could you describe a little bit more of what that I guess that helping you develop as a doctoral student what that meant and what that was like what yeah just a little bit more about that.

PARTICIPANT: So before I came and started my doctoral program I worked for several years um with juvenile delinquents in a group home and I've had like some interns that would come through but it had always been more the focus on my clients versus the students and so once I started working with them it was kind of like the change the mindset change and developing awareness that there's more than just the clients that the students that I had to be able to figure out a way to teach and lead students in um learning the skills that they needed to learn the theories they needed to learn um but also kind of just switching from counselor to doctoral student...

INTERVIEWER: Ah.

PARTICIPANT: Future counselor educator.

For each of the participants, both **professional** and **personal** change was encountered as part of being a mentor. This change included confidence and validation in addition to professional development. Professional benefits were experienced as networking and awareness or an inside understanding of master's student needs, which the participants will take into their roles as potential future faculty.

Summary of Thematic Analysis

There are five themes each with two subthemes that currently capture the experience of doctoral students as informal mentors for master's level students in counselor education. Each of the themes complete the phrase 'being an informal mentor as a doctoral student means': **being in multiple roles**, **being intentional**, **being invested**, **being connected**, and **being changed**. The doctoral participants encountered **multiple roles** in their work as a mentor and doctoral student. This created both **opportunity** and

fear as they engaged in their mentoring relationships. The participants expressed **intentionality** in **establishing boundaries** and in **providing mentee needs**. They were intentional in knowing and meeting the needs of their mentees, individually and as needed, while establishing boundaries on their time and relationship. These participants were **invested** both professionally and to their mentee. I was surprised to find that each of the participants has a strong professional identity in counselor education which was part of their experience as a mentor. They each expressed the work and energy that they personally put into their mentoring relationships as their commitment and investment to their mentees. The **connection** with their mentees was a frequent discussion point throughout each interview, and was described as an **organic fit** which was also experienced as **feeling grateful**. It was difficult to know which quotes to share from the participants, due to the variety and multitude of examples which they shared of their deep and personal connection with their mentees. Finally, the participants also expressed a **change** in themselves **personally** and **professionally**. This change included growth and learning such as feeling more confident in oneself, networking opportunities, and identity development. Reading the participants experience on each of these topics adds clarity and meaning to what it means for them to be a mentor while in their doctoral training. These themes are preliminary and will be clarified and expanded through further work with the participants.

Implications for Round One Interpretive Dialogue

The thematic analysis described in this chapter is the initial and tentative round one codes, which was finalized after the first round of interpretative dialogues (Coe Smith, 2006). It is important to work with the participants as “co-investigators” (van

Manen, 1990, p.98) throughout the interviews and analysis. The use of the participant language to support the analysis in addition to the interpretive dialogue builds trustworthiness. Prior to the interpretive dialogue with each participant, a tentative thematic analysis document was created specifically for each participant. This document included the essential themes, followed by quotes or descriptions specific to the participant (see Appendix A). This document was sent and each participant was encouraged to review it prior to the interpretive dialogue. The next chapter will outline this process in detail and give further clarity to the round one thematic analysis.

As I wrestled to grasp meaning and adequately portray such a personal lived experience I was comforted by the reality that the participants were involved in the formulation of themes. I could sense that there was more to be understood in this phenomenon and looked forward to further exploration. In the interpretive dialogue (Coe Smith, 2006) the participants were asked:

- Do the current themes accurately portray your experience as an informal mentor in counselor education?
- In reviewing your quotes and stories, do they fit within the themes/subthemes they have been connected with?
- What areas of your mentoring experience may be missing from this thematic description?

In addition to a general check-in of the overall themes, subthemes, and accuracy of their quotes within each of those, there were a few areas within the current thematic analysis which needed further clarity. Areas in which I gained further clarification from the participants included the following line of inquiry:

- Was your experience of being different from faculty as a doctoral student an essential component of your experience as a mentor?
- Do you connect with the idea of fear being experienced in multiple roles as a doctoral student mentor?
- Do you connect with the subtheme of **being changed personally**, and if so could you add clarity to this subtheme?
- I see some similarities between **providing mentee needs** and **being invested to their mentees**, could you add your thoughts on that similarity or difference that you see between those two?

These four questions included components in which descriptions were fewer or more difficult to clarify. For example, Ann only hinted at the idea of fear as connected to her multiple roles in her mentoring relationship. It was unknown whether this was essential to their experience as a mentor, or is an incidental occurrence. Both John and Elizabeth stated that their role as a doctoral student was unique and different from that of a faculty, which created an opportunity for them to engage in their mentoring relationships. It seemed like an important area to gain further understanding from the other participants. The participants also described growth and learning, yet there were very few examples given of this growth and change that they encountered. I explored if this is essential to being an informal mentor, or if my understanding of what their growth and learning meant for them was accurate. In finding quotes and stories to share for **providing mentee needs** and **being invested to their mentees** I noticed some overlap, and appreciated further dialogue with the participant's specific to those two themes.

It was exciting to move forward with this thematic analysis through gathering more information from the participants through the format of the interpretive dialogue. The second round of interviews will add additional time to discuss each theme in detail. As we (the participants and I) moved forward with exploration and investigation of what it means to be a mentor, greater understanding and clarity was gained on this topic.

CHAPTER FIVE: ROUND ONE INTERPRETIVE DIALOGUE

The intention of the interpretive dialogue is to work collaboratively with the participants to finalize, change, or correct the round one thematic coding (Coe Smith, 2006). The participants engaged in these short interviews ranging from 10-35 minutes in duration. Prior to meeting they received a document describing the thematic codes (see Appendix A). A second document included quotes, specific to the participant receiving the document, to exemplify how the particular themes and subthemes fit within their descriptions from round one interviews. They were asked to review the document prior to meeting. The interview started broad, encouraging them to discuss overall impressions or reactions to the current thematic analysis. Throughout the dialogue, the interview moved to more specifics regarding modifications to the analysis. The participants were able to add clarity to the themes, and one area regarding the terminology of one theme was identified as an area of needed change. The subtheme of *fear* was changed to *challenge* after meeting with the participants. A description of the participant interview responses will be described within the structure of the codes.

Changes to Codes

In preparing for the interpretive dialogue I noted that the subtheme of **fear** as part of **being in multiple roles** was not specifically described by Ann. I wanted to check in with her and each of the participants to ensure that this was an essential component of the mentoring experience. The following questions was part of the interpretive dialogue questions: Do you connect with the idea of fear being experienced in multiple roles as a doctoral student mentor? The responses from some of the participants are as follows:

JOHN: I think I wouldn't probably use the term fear to describe that part of the experience I think probably something more like anxiety or unknown risk mostly just because I think um what I think of fear it's sort of like I know what I'm afraid of its this specific thing and it was more and I guess to a degree it still is with the mentees a sense of um thinking there's a potential for a problem but not knowing what it is

ANN: Um well and there I guess there is that unknown risk or that unknown of you know the boundaries and the roles are very different when you're the mentor and the mentee versus being a counselor or even a counselor educator um and it is different I think I think last time I told you about like I had just come back from one of my conferences and I had come across one of the people and it was very different for me that was very different and now kind of I will admit now I do kind of hesitate a little bit when I talk to people and I think ok so this is going to be possibly a long term like are we connected with this person for long term and what will that look like in the future

I had first met with John who added the description of risk or unknown risk in place of fear. Ann connected with this idea and so did Latoya from the following discussion:

INTERVIEWER: Right now I think the only change would be potentially changing fear to risk.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah I feel like that change, I support that it feels like a better fit.

When discussing this potential change with Elizabeth, she added another perspective for rewording the theme. She stated:

ELIZABETH: Yeah I could see that. Risk seems a little strong for me. I think maybe it would just be more like challenges of being in multiple roles but um there is that component too of where I think I gave you some examples of how I was you know I didn't want faculty members to think I was trying to take too much but I was still trying to advocate for the students so yeah definitely challenges.

Each of the participants confirmed the presence of this theme, and it appeared that the language shift from **fear** to **challenge** may better represent the participants' experience. In the second round of interviews I reviewed this change with the participants for further clarity on the thematic analysis.

A brief interaction with Lynn adds further depth to the subtheme of **challenge** and how she experienced it. She asked to pause the dialogue for a moment while she retrieved a book and came back excitedly. She then shared:

PARTICIPANT: Ok so when I saw that and this is just coming up for me and I just really want to, it's just kind of becoming imperative to share [laughter] share this thing. Um ok this made me – the Chinese symbol so, the, in Chinese the Chinese characters for CRISIS are a combination of danger and opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: That's right.

PARTICIPANT: Those two and that's what came up for me in that very first um theme of being in multiple roles and opportunity and fear I mean it's it just felt so much like that.

For LaToya **being in multiple roles** was similar to the idea of crisis, in which she describes having the tools to navigate them, yet feeling the danger and opportunity of her

experience. While not each of the participants connected with the **risk** described by John, for LaToya, her experience of being in multiple roles had the balance of both danger and opportunity.

Clarifications

This section describes added descriptions that became a part of the interpretive dialogue to add further clarity and depth to the current thematic analysis. There were a few questions which prompted clarity specifically:

- Was your experience of being different from faculty as a doctoral student an essential component of your experience as a mentor?
- Do you connect with the subtheme of **being changed personally**, and if so could you add clarity to this subtheme?
- I see some similarities between **providing mentee needs** and **being invested to their mentees**, could you add your thoughts on that similarity or difference that you see between those two?

These questions guided discussions regarding these themes. The other areas of clarity were guided by the participants, as they described their experience or felt compelled to add more. These descriptions allow the reader to gain further understanding of the experience of being a mentor from the eyes of these participants.

Being In Multiple Roles

To gain greater understanding of **being in multiple roles** the question was asked specifically regarding the role of doctoral student, which was described by Elizabeth and John previously as being an important component of their mentoring relationships. I checked in with both LaToya and Ann regarding their connection with this idea of their

doctoral role being different from faculty. The following are their responses to this notion:

ANN: Yeah and I can see that. Definitely because I'm not the person that's grading them necessarily or judging them or evaluating them um and so I think it is very different, that the relationship would be very different than from being like a counselor educator versus the mentor. But I also think you know it comes with challenges in itself because then sometimes you'll have faculty that you know will try to ask questions, like what's going on with so and so, and I value that you know. And I know it's not an official like confidentiality but it's like a sense of privacy and trust that I don't want to you know violate. So there is that and then there's the whole being a doctoral student and how busy we can be.

LATOYA: Sometimes it felt like being an interpreter um to like put them with like a faculty point of view. Um and help maybe bridge any distances you know. I don't, I didn't um I think it facilitated a students you know talking to me versus a faculty. You know, I mean people, students would say I don't feel comfortable discussing things with faculty because of the, because of the evaluation role. And so then I mean, I remember a particular discussion well but I am in that evaluation role as well um and we discussed that yes I am in that evaluation role and it felt different to the students because I was still a student. Um and still knowing that I had that evaluative role they continued on and felt like it somehow that was ok anyway um but then we did talk about how it you know that what are the what are the perceptions of faculty because this could have been a faculty you know knowing the particular student that we have that they're all open to you know

being or having engagement with the students um you know that we have a great faculty team and just to try to help the students also expand maybe the possibilities for themselves in the future or also adding in a faculty member um and then the other piece about that is um it came to my mind while I was speaking and it was just kind of the other end of you knowing connecting the students and being approachable.

From their descriptions, both LaToya and Ann touch on the recognition of their role as being unique from that of faculty, which provided both opportunities and challenges in engaging in their mentoring relationships. This appears to be an important piece of their experience of **being in multiple roles**.

Being Intentional

In the dialogue with John he added clarification on how he is intentional in **establishing boundaries**. He gave richer detail to how he sees a distinction between setting boundaries on himself compared to his mentee. He stated:

More about me setting boundaries on myself about, um, what I would include of myself as a person into my role as a mentor or even what I would include of myself as a professional into the role of mentor. So there was, it was a clear limit on myself on what I was going to share. Whereas the second one seemed to be more of a limit I was going to set on the mentee about when I would be available and how I would be available. And that resonated with me when I read through those and I saw a distinction of like those two quotes I think were tapping two different things and they were both related to boundaries but I don't think on, on the same dimensions.

In working with John on the coding, he agreed that both of these dimensions of **establishing boundaries** would still fit within this subtheme. He described how he wanted to clarify how he saw those two aspects of **establishing boundaries** in his experience, to add further clarity and richness to this theme.

In the initial coding analysis a potential overlap between two subthemes arose between **being invested to the mentee** and **being intentional in providing mentee needs**. In the interpretive dialogues, each participant was asked to share their thoughts on the similarities or differences of these two subthemes. I explored with them on whether they needed to be combined or remain separate. The participants' explanations allowed the nuanced differences between these themes to become more apparent. John described his experience of being invested, which reaches beyond meeting the needs of his mentees. He stated:

Yeah I see how they can be similar. I think for me though there is a distinction between the two because in terms of providing for the mentees needs, I was invested in seeing them personally grow yet at the same time I was also very invested in the idea of mentoring in general. So you know this idea of like I knew I was invested in like helping [Andrew] and [Andrea] really get what they were needing, to get right then but then I would also tell myself on another level, no it's important to be available to them. Just this whole concept of being a mentor is important and it was separate from you know their specific needs and their need could have changed, that wouldn't have impacted how important I thought it was.

For John, the experience of **being invested in his mentees** tapped into the importance he places on mentoring. Note that the names were changed of his mentees to protect their confidentiality.

Ann described how she saw the **investment** as, “it’s that time, the finding resources, um helping them figure out what it is they want for their future.” Elizabeth’s description of these two subthemes coincides with Ann’s description, where **being invested in your mentee** she described as, “for me I was invested in my students meaning like I really cared about them and I became connected to them and I wanted to advocate for them and be there for them if they needed anything...almost more of like...a friendly motherly type of caring about them.” Commitment and care seem to be part of their experience of **being invested in their mentees**.

To distinguish this theme from **providing mentee needs** Elizabeth stated, “whereas caring about their needs is I think a little more like professional, you know like at times they may need to stand up for themselves and not need me to advocate for them and so in my mind those are two, yeah, separate things.” Ann described a similar notion, of **meeting needs** beyond what the mentee may be aware of. She stated, “Whereas you know if you’re more meeting their needs, their needs may not be necessarily something they know they need or they realize, you know, kind of like somebody from the outside looking in.” Ann agreed that she could see how they could be combined amidst her also seeing those distinct constructs.

For LaToya the theme of **being intentional in providing mentee needs** “is about awareness to me.” Her experience of intentionality she described as “just really different from that other piece about the investment. So yeah I feel like they should not be

combined.” Currently, the interpretive dialogue allows the analysis to confirm the distinction between **being intentional** and **being invested** in the mentees. Further interviews provided the opportunity to add greater depth to these subthemes to continue to clarify the distinction between **being intentional** and **being invested**.

Being Invested

When I asked Ann what her initial reactions were she first expressed her connection with the codes, and then stated she wanted to add more clarity to her experience of **being invested**. She described the idea of paying it forward, which was an important piece of her experience as a mentor. The following is a short exchange from the interpretive dialogue with Ann:

PARTICIPANT: Um I read through them and just reread through them just a few minutes ago and they seem pretty on target. Um I didn't, one thing that kind of came to my mind is more of a paying it forward type thing that that's almost like what I thought of as I was reading through.

INTERVIEWER: So describe more of what that paying it forward is like for you

PARTICIPANT: Um well I think it's nice to help contribute to the profession it's more than just to the profession it's to that individual to that person um helping them out and in a way that I can you know or in different styles maybe um or for what they are looking for what they need and then helping them eventually they'd be able to do that for somebody in the future as well.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right so really um really wanting to help that person whatever their needs might be and support them. Do you see that as being um similar in a way to, I guess being invested in your mentee or would that be

different because I do see that that could be different that idea of paying it forward

PARTICIPANT: Yeah I think it is very similar to being invested.

This was a short exchange with Ann and the next round of interviews provided the opportunity to obtain specific examples and further descriptions of how this experience of paying it forward is part of her experience of **being invested**.

Being Connected

In conversations with the participants, each of them added further descriptions to their experience of **being connected** without being prompted in the interview. This speaks to the importance of the connection in these mentoring relationships for these four participants. Descriptions of both the **organic fit** and **feeling grateful** will be expanded with the participant's dialogue.

For John, the idea of **organic fit** was expanded to include the organic nature of his interactions with his mentees. This included what was discussed and shared in his mentoring relationship. He stated:

making those decisions was very organic so it kind of felt like it fit their, cause it's not like I had a lesson plan or they had an agenda just you know in our discussions it be like, 'hey next time we meet I'd like to ask you about xyz' and then we would talk about it and it usually came out of something they were doing or um I was working on something.

As John described, the experience of **organic fit** carried into his dialogue with his participants.

LaToya notes the “overall positive” feel that she has from the initial codes, which for her emphasized the importance that “it’s not just a forced thing.” She connects this to the importance of the **organic fit** in which “the coding helps demonstrate that if it doesn’t work you don’t continue, it’s mutually reciprocal and if it’s not mutually reciprocal on any one of the parties it’s ok to say somebody else might be a better fit.” In relation to the codes, she noted that “if there are any experiences that don’t fit with this they’re outliers and they don’t last.” The following dialogue with LaToya will illustrate her experience of the **organic fit** and the metaphorical language she used to describe it.

PARTICIPANT: So your organic fit it seems like you can’t have it if it’s forced or um paired up like it wouldn’t be an organic fit I guess would look a lot different so I feel like that is really the pivotal kind of cog in the whole thing like if that were different then this whole thing would be different...or if people had to have mentoring relationships like even the fact that people some people and some people don’t even that choice to engage or not engage adds the organic fit and that freedom of choice and um you know like in chemical like in chemistry or in physics you know if there’s two elements that repel each other they just go to something that fits. It’s not biggy.

INTERVIEWER: Right yeah

PARTICIPANT: They just don’t connect, and, it’s ok they just have different ah different um compounds they are different compounds organically so then you just then it naturally gravitates to where it fits.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah I like that

PARTICIPANT: Like magnetic fields even you know like you can't even get together.

This exchange created greater understanding of the importance of the **organic fit** in informal mentoring relationships as experienced by LaToya. Through this it was also evident that LaToya was making meaning of those mentoring relationships that may not have endured or *fit*, and the differences with those that had the **organic fit**. The metaphorical language of magnets helps add understanding to the experience of fitting and connecting to another in that manner.

For Ann, the theme of **being connected**, in particular **feeling grateful** was important to her. In the interpretive dialogue she quickly noted:

When I read through the part of the section, the feeling grateful stood out to me because I really I think it is such an honor you know to have that opportunity and even for somebody to be willing to let me be the mentor like for them to sit down and be willing to hear what I have to say or let me help them in some way because that's a big deal.

In the interview I informed Ann that I noted in our first interview how much emphasis she placed on her relationship with her mentees, with that being a majority of her descriptions from the first interview. She agreed with the emphasis she placed on **being connected** and **feeling grateful**. Elizabeth also reflects on the importance of the relationship and her gratitude. She described recent experiences of meeting other doctoral students who had not had the mentoring experience that she has had. This led her to state, "I can't really fathom going through this without having built mentoring relationships with master's students and it makes me feel very grateful that that's how my

experience turned out.” Each of the participants continued to give emphasis on **being connected** as central to their experience as mentors.

Being Changed

The final theme of **being changed** was explored through the question of whether they connected with the theme of **being changed personally**. Each of the participants stated that it was a part of their experience, with each one describing that change differently. The following quotes describe this personal change for the participants:

JOHN: I think you definitely caught on to you know aspects of being changed personally. I think the only caveat I would give to that is when I’m thinking about that mentoring relationship it’s with it being throughout my doctoral program I think there’s definitely, I have changed, global changes um that I, I guess I would attribute some of it to the mentoring relationship. But what stands out for me for changes would be more sort of small temporary changes and I think in my quote um I think that’s what I was getting at. It might be that you know I was stressed and then hearing something would validate me but I wouldn’t say it was like a grand personality change you know not like a developmental level change but was definitely a change in sort of my state at that time if that makes sense.

ANN: I think it definitely, it did cause some change. I definitely grew and had more of a, instead of being like the supervisor, being that more mentor role because it is different. But it changed me and more of my outlook on being aware more of clients, being aware more of this person as an individual; like so instead of things focused on what they could be doing with a client it’s more like what are

they doing for themselves, like what are their goals, what are their wants. Um but also kind of just looking at maybe in the future if I thought that I wanted another mentor for something like what would I start looking for in a mentor because now that I've had this experience and I know how time consuming it is.

ELIZABETH: No I think that that would be very accurate. I mean I think building the mentoring relationships I've built has been a profound experience and a profoundly important experience as a part of my PhD program. Ongoing on some of these recent interviews I've gotten to meet some of the doctoral students at some of the programs I'm interviewing for and some of them I've noticed don't really have relationships with the master's students just because that's how the programs set up. And to me that feels so empty, you know like oh they're just doing their thing as doc students and then maybe they supervise master's students one semester and that's it, and here I've had an experience on the other end of the spectrum where really the master's students were just I don't know probably about 50% of the importance of my experience was working with the master's students. So I think that it was a really meaningful personal experience and I still like one of my former students texted me last night and she lives up in DC near me and she was like but the way before I forget we need to get together soon you know and so those relationship kind of continue to impact me... So I think in that way too it was an important part of my experience for the past two and a half years but I think the fact that it will continue to impact me really speaks to just how meaningful it was. So I don't think you're overstepping at all I think that that's one of the neatest finding of your study. Because your just putting words to

like an experience that I've had over the past two years that some of even my classmates haven't had as doc students. But I felt like this was such a cool experience like you know, I didn't think to study, but the fact that you are studying it you're kind of sharing that message that for this group of doc students this was really meaningful.

For these participants, **personal change** was described as being meaningful, a change of focus, or feeling validated. An exchange with LaToya will describe her way of making meaning of the change that she experienced as a mentor. This dialogue with LaToya was also not prompted by the interview, and guided by the participant.

PARTICIPANT: I think that what after looking at it I wanted to add or I wanted to, because of your clarity I, I feel like I was able and I've been thinking about it since I really feel like that being changed that there's way more to that than, um than just the little quote that I had about it in our discussion.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

PARTICIPANT: That's kind of what the, yeah that's as a result of connecting with another person in mentoring relationships I am changed.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah absolutely well and I think too for me that and to give you context of where I was at with that theme especially with the being changed personally that one and it wasn't just you it was with a lot of the participants, it was like this thing I could feel that I didn't always have like a really good quote to go with it or there wasn't like this the words or the language but it was like a feeling I felt and so I wanted to check in with you to make sure that that fit with

your experienced and I wasn't just pulling it out of thin air because there wasn't a strong quote to support that.

PARTICIPANT: Yes no, no it definitely it's that it's that, um it's something I missed in our, in our discussion...and I wanted to think of what this the scientific words are because it feels like a catalyst like how two compounds come together and chemistry and two separate compounds come together and both are you know the DNA is changed as a result of the two being together so that neither one of the two, but I can only speak for my part, are permanently changed as a result of the connection.

INTERVIEWER: Mmhmm yeah. Yeah I think that's a really neat metaphor of you know just that coming together and that you know you're not the same after that connection

PARTICIPANT: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: And it seems like even you know thinking about you know atomic type thing like that's like pretty like internal like that seems pretty deep that change.

PARTICIPANT: Yes not just a first layer change or just a 'oh I learned something new and now I'm going to incorporate that'. It doesn't feel like that it feels like DNA, it feels like second order permanent change that's not, you can't go back, it's not it's something that is different and will always be different as a result.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. Wow

PARTICIPANT: Yeah. So and I think that too is what really makes it all worthwhile. It's not being you know yeah it's a personal growth it's a personal

growth that happens. Because I don't know when I just was looking at the quote that you know I think a benefit is that I feel respected. That feels so empty to me. That's not really it for me at all. [Laughter] ...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah and well it seems like even as your talking there's a lot of emotional that comes with that change.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah Mmhmm. Yup. Yeah because I learned so much from, from the sharing of experiences with someone who who's honoring me with allowing me to participate in or witness just even witness sometimes I feel like I don't do anything I'm just a witness to their growth and change and a validation that I can see it happening. And so it just feels um very yeah very um personal very significant very, very honoring in that way you know just to honor and be witness to someone else's change or just their growth or experience. Different from counseling. Yeah it's definitely not like counseling and it's not like education. You know with students because both of those I think have uh have those boundaries and differences that the mentoring has some less, less boundaries and a little bit closer

LaToya later clarified that, "the term I was searching for is a catalyst that makes a molecular change, DNA is too strong but I could not come up with the word at that moment." This unprompted exchange with LaToya created the metaphor of a molecular change, a deep meaningful and personal change that this participant experienced. While this deep change was not described by each of the participants, it appears to be a significant component of **being changed personally** for LaToya. This theme, though

experienced and described differently among the participants, is agreed as a significant piece of being an informal mentor with master's students.

Isomorph: Added Layer of Analysis

In dialogue with LaToya she described her experience of being a participant in this research as being connected to her mentoring experience. She related herself to the role of a mentee, in receiving mentoring from me as the researcher, in assisting her in understanding her mentoring experience.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah I feel like you captured it in a way that you know I guess to some degree is a metaphor for what we're talking about. Because what you did in capturing the themes I feel like I'm the mentee in the relationship that you have mentored to me by helping clarify these themes

INTERVIEWER: Mm that's interesting

PARTICIPANT: Yeah so it and it's like in some ways you doing that after our discussion is like me being the mentee to help clarify what's going on or help categories the themes and patterns. and then that, you know it's the isomorph, the isomorphic thing that is happening so no I just I feel like I have learned and gained from your putting the themes and coding the way that you did.

INTERVIEWER: Well thank you for that. And for me it was a very, like it was challenging and it was emotional to really be able to synthesize such a personal and human experience into words. You know there were times especially for me like the, the theme of being connected, like I just felt like I how can I adequately express what it feels like for you to really feel connected to these participants you know I've got these quotes but it just like there's more to it you know there's

more than just what's on paper that is part of that. Mmhmm. And so as I was doing that you know, I definitely felt connected to you as I was doing that and really like getting to know your experience in a richer and deeper way.

PARTICIPANT: Yes

INTERVIEWER: So I definitely connect with that isomorph experience.

It seemed appropriate to include this dialogue, which displays this concept of isomorph, and the connection that exists between participant and researcher. Being authentic as the researcher is vital to building connection with the participants. And as the researcher, while my experience in some way mirrors that of the participants mentoring experience, it feels pretentious to compare my experience with these participants with that of their mentoring experiences with master's students. I say that in not wanting to de-emphasize the connection I experience with the participants, and rather hope to emphasize the magnitude of the participants experience as mentors.

Participant Reactions

Overall, the participants described that they agreed with the thematic analysis. The areas of clarification previously described were minimal, including the change to the subtheme of **fear** and clarifications of details throughout the current themes. The following quotes from the participants display the participant reactions to the thematic analysis:

JOHN: Not really I thought everything else was pretty um accurate for what I've experienced as a mentor I wouldn't change anything else to describe my experience no

ANN: No they seemed to fit pretty close um I don't think there could have been anything different. I'm not sure what you're asking not sure if I have anything else. You know the only that came to my mind was that paying it forward.

ELIZABETH: I don't think so because um I don't like my mentoring experience has been a really important part of being a PhD student but you know if you hadn't done this study I would've just thought like it was a pretty simple experience although when I talked to you, you got me to reveal all of these complexities. So I think all of the complexities you found just captured everything because in my mind it is still somewhat of a simple experience and so you really went in depth and found everything there was I think.

LATOYA: And I feel like that you know, I don't feel like there's anything missing, other than you know what I felt kind of compelled to talk about right away. But that's not, to me that's me um missing a piece not you missing a piece. I don't feel like you missed a piece or that there's something else that I thought about later that you know should be in there.

In the beginning of the interview with Elizabeth, her initial reaction displayed her connection with the themes, and was emphasized in her asking whether the thematic analysis was only for her or across participants. This dialogue describes her reaction:

PARTICIPANT: I think overall I was just really impressed with how on point each of the themes seemed to be... when I was reading through all of yours they all seemed to really apply.

INTERVIEWER: Awesome, awesome that's good to that' really important to me to make sure that it fits with you. I am happy to tweak anything or things like that too.

PARTICIPANT: Ok were the themes you sent just like within my own transcript or was that across all the participants.

INTERVIEWER: So they were across all the participants

PARTICIPANT: Ok yeah then you made it really fit well because that's what it made me wonder was oh well maybe this was just me and that's why they sound accurate.

LaToya had a similar question, of whether the codes were just for her or for all of the participants. She stated:

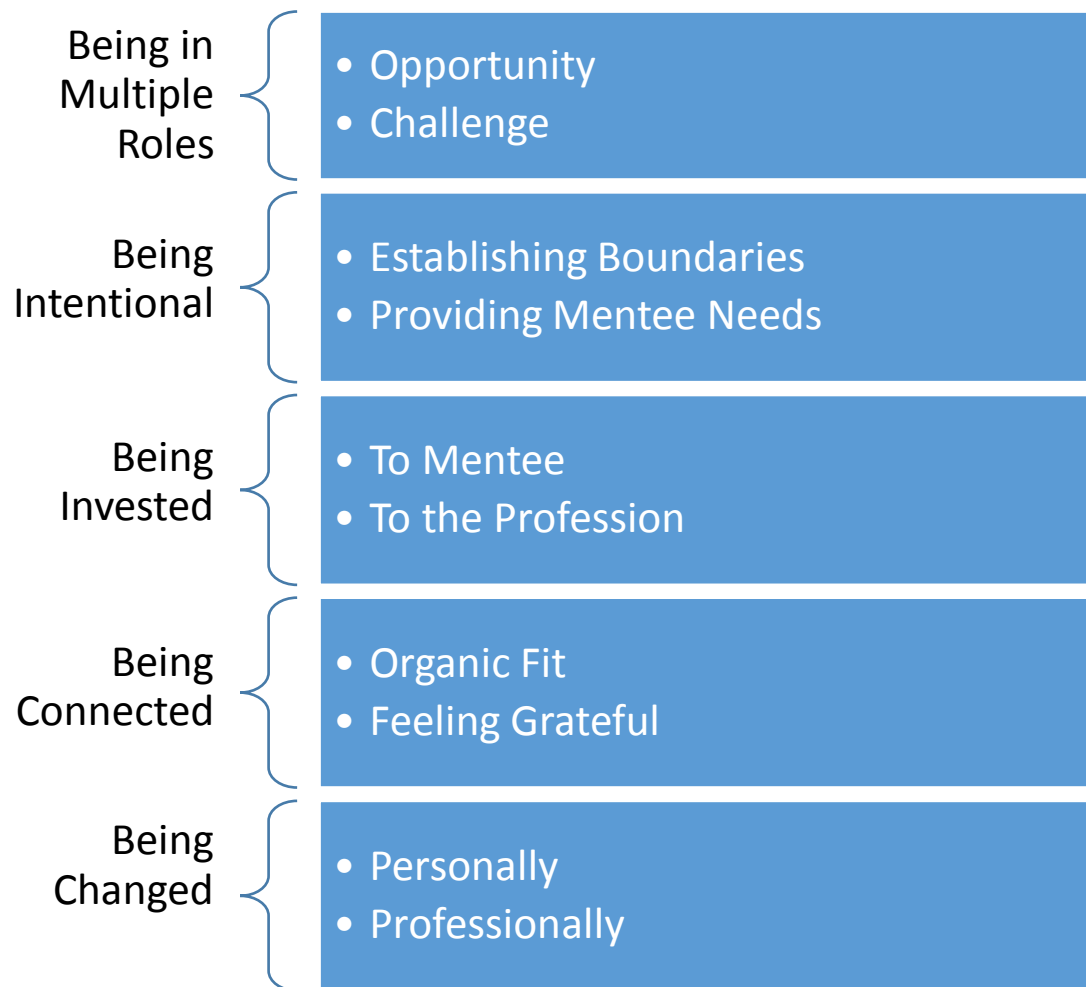
Yes you know that thematically and I was appreciating your ability to synthesize our conversation and organize and that. I appreciate how it's been just one word or a couple of words it's not a sentence. So I wanted, so that was my first reaction was appreciation for your ability to apply Occam's razor and just like get to a word. Then, so then I thought well ok that's not feeling emotionally connected to it that's appreciating it from a cognitive level. And so then I thought well I need to see if it fits, you know I need to see if you know if it feels like it's accurate you know for me. Accurate from my experience. Then I think my next question was that this is just based on one interview with me is that right? I just wanted to be clear...

Receiving feedback from the participants regarding the thematic analysis allowed for clarity on the themes from the initial analysis. The following figure (see Figure 3)

displays the change to the themes, with the change being that of **fear** to **challenge**.

Having the connection with the participants to create an environment of safety and collaboration was vital to ensuring the participants do connect with the thematic analysis.

Figure 3. Round One Interpretive Dialogue Thematic Analysis



Implications for Round Two Interviews

The collaborative nature of the phenomenological inquiry allowed the participants to describe areas which the analysis did and did not fit regarding their experience as mentors. As a researcher I continued to check in with the participants and solicit feedback regarding the analysis. I continued into round two interviews with an emphasis on deepening the descriptions within the current thematic analysis. The following question guided the inquiry as applied to each theme and subtheme:

- Describe your experience of [insert theme/subtheme] in relation to your experience of being an informal mentor?
- What experiences or metaphors may give further depth to this theme?

In moving to round two interviews, the participants were asked to give deeper reflections and stories focused on the themes. There was a potential for new themes to emerge within these interviews. The dynamic process of the interviews allowed the interviewer to follow the participant's dialogue to capture greater meaning of the experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student.

CHAPTER SIX: ROUND TWO INTERVIEWS

In continuing with the outlined methodology, the participants engaged in a second round of interviews to deepen the understanding of their mentoring experience. The interviews were structured within the current thematic analysis to allow for richer descriptions of each of the themes. The current themes and subthemes previously described were developed using the participants round one interview, interpretive dialogues, and my own reflexive journaling. Themes were expanded and clarified based on participant feedback from the interpretive dialogue. The intention of the second round of interviews is to allow the participants to confirm the thematic analysis, provide clarity and clarification on current themes and subthemes, and discuss new areas which may more accurately encompass their lived experience as informal mentors. This dialogue was also open to allow for new themes or subthemes to emerge. Prior to the interview, the participants were given the updated thematic analysis for them to review (see Appendix B). The participants were encouraged to share further experiences, metaphors, and descriptions of their lived experience as mentors through the use of the following questions:

- Describe your experience of [insert theme/subtheme] in relation to your experience of being an informal mentor?
- What experiences or metaphors may give further depth to this theme?

Additionally the participants were asked to clarify or add other areas of their mentoring experience that may be missing or incomplete in relation to the current thematic analysis. A description of each interview will be given to exemplify the interview procedure. This will allow the reader to gain insight to the participants lived world.

Round 2 Interview with Participant One

In the interview, John displayed reflexivity on the current thematic analysis. He would often pause to review and reflect on whether the thematic analysis was accurate for his experience. He confirmed accuracy of the current themes and additionally added new components for further analysis regarding the **evolution of the relationship** and **being invested long term**. The interview followed the structure of the thematic analysis and allowed space for John to add further depth or clarity to his experience as an informal mentor with master's students.

Being in Multiple Roles

The beginning of the interview began with encouraging John to reflect on his experience as a mentor focused within the themes in addition to adding what may be missing for him. The first theme discussed was **being in multiple roles** as both an **opportunity** and **challenge**. After encouraging him to reflect on this John paused for a moment, then stated:

It was its hard to tease them apart from kind of everything else that followed. I'm trying to just think of how to describe that without I feel like the, like the feeling grateful under being connected you know like that was an opportunity and the being changed was an opportunity and I feel like that's already captured.

His description emphasizes the interwoven nature of the themes, in that they are each connected and parts of the whole mentoring experience. I reflected back on how he had previously described the **opportunity** of **being in multiple roles** regarding working on similar research projects with his mentees which was a foundation for the roots of their mentoring relationship. John continued his reflection by describing how those

opportunities have continued beyond the beginnings of his relationship into current projects with his mentees. He stated:

What came to mind when you mentioned that was thinking about [Andrew]. He's very interested in mindfulness and that's what my research is around, so in terms of opportunities, I think there will be opportunities for us to collaborate in the future either on research projects or writing papers. We've done some of that in terms of a conference presentations and doing workshops together that probably would not have come up had we not had that mentor relationship.

This description added further understanding to how **being in multiple roles** is an opportunity throughout the mentoring relationship. He then noted that his mentoring role benefited his student and professional roles in which he stated he has, "had faculty members writing letters of recommendation for me for faculty positions and what I'm noticing is they all mention that as like a positive strength about being in that role and establishing relationships."

When transitioning to a discussion on the **challenges** of being **in multiple roles**, John first stated, "I think challenge is well stated. I think you can capture that really well with it being ambiguous and the confusion of boundaries. I wouldn't need to change anything about that description to make it reflect my experience." I asked if he had any other experiences he shared a recent experience in which one of his mentees came to John with a challenge in Chi Sigma Iota that he was encountering with faculty. John expressed the challenge of navigating his mentor role and student role. In describing this internal conflict he said, "I'm almost out of here, I don't want to get, I don't want to be involved with especially if it's sort of a conflict between a student and a faculty

member.” He found himself being less directive and “empathizing” with his mentee. He further described this challenge of having the student and mentor role in this encounter:

It was this limit of like I know you’re looking to me for some sort of guidance about what to do and I’m trying to split and decide. Ok like what to do I do here as a mentor and what do I just do here as a student trying to graduate and not create waves.

This example additionally described a close relationship which exists between the **challenge** of **being in multiple roles** and **being intentional in establishing boundaries**.

Being Intentional

Next we discussed his experience further regarding **being intentional**. John said, “I think that you’re description really guided that distinction between establishing boundaries with the mentee and then establishing boundaries with myself as the mentor about what to provide so I really like that.” John referred back to the story he had just shared:

I’m thinking about this same situation with my mentee and chi sigma iota that there was a degree of that, of establishing boundaries around that about myself and you know how I was going to be available and what I would do for myself and how I would engage.

He further described his intentionality as an internal dialogue in which he would, “pause and think through how am I going to approach this situation.”

John then transitioned his dialogue to discussing intentionality in **meeting mentee needs**. While he noted that he, “assumed that they had a specific need based on what I was hearing from them” and would strive to be “aware” of their needs, he reflected that

he “would be curious to know how, like this piece about describing and understanding the needs of the mentee, I think for me I can’t really recall how I came to that conclusion.” He continued to express curiosity in, “wondering kind of well, I wonder how other mentors do that.” He engaged in reflexive dialogue on this concept of deciding what the mentees needs are, concluding that he is still unsure of how he decides his mentees needs. He identified that “again all of these are probably a lot more situations where I assumed, like yeah probably I do know a little bit more about what you need right now that guided meeting those needs” commenting that “I am relying more on myself and being knowledgeable which I think is why mentees seek out mentors.” John went on to share an experience in which he “didn’t catch” a problem that his mentee brought to him regarding subtle sexual harassment that she had encountered. He noted “it was one of those things that I think just as a male I’m not gonna, I think I just wasn’t that present or was picking up well what just happened.” In further discussion with his mentee he realized that he had missed the need of his mentee and “apologized, I said you know I kind of felt bad that you brought that up when we were talking and I didn’t even catch that that was a problem for you and I’m sorry.” This experience with his mentee further fueled his curiosity regarding how other mentors may identify the needs of their mentees. The dialogue concluded with the recognition that still is not fully aware of how he identifies the needs of his mentees.

Being Invested

The third theme explored was being invested to both the mentee and profession. He initially said “that one really resonated with me” and described another way in which he displays his investment in his mentees. He shared an instance in which his mentee

told him, “but let me figure this piece out” which led him to realize that **being invested** in his **mentee** “my investment of having to not just give but to give space” which he described as “the way I’m sticking with you.” This added a new dimension to what it means to be invested to the mentee.

Regarding his investment to the **profession** he said he connects with “having a strong professional identity.” He went on to describe how:

Part of me being a mentor was, you know, kind of advocating for the things that I thought were important with my mentees, you know, that definitely driven by who I was, who I am as a counselor and counselor educator.

His professional investment also included the concept of paying it forward since, “being a mentor meant also moving the profession forward... for me personally being a mentor was part of my professional identity or developing a professional identity in the mentee was important.” Expanding the notion of investment to not just his own professional investment but to promote the investment of his mentees was evident in this dialogue.

Being Connected

The fourth theme explored was **being connected** as both an **organic fit** and **feeling grateful**. In reflecting on the story in which his mentee asked for space, John stated:

I think these are good descriptions um you know that even within that same example of [Andrea] of you know here saying ‘I need space to figure this out’. That’s to me a very natural developmental thing and so I think organic makes sense even to describe that.

In further describing the developmental nature of the **organic fit**, he reflected on an area which may reflect a new theme within **being connected**. This new area describes the **evolution of the relationship**. He described this evolution as “developmental” within the metaphor of a parent child relationship. He said:

to me it's in a way I think, similar to almost like a parent child relationship of at a certain point, you know, give them space to let them figure it, out to be that safe base trying to be that safe base to come back to when they have questions, but changing expectations about their level of independence.

His metaphor adds meaning and depth to what the **evolution of the relationship** means. Further exploration of this theme will be described in the thematic analysis.

John expressed his consensus with the subtheme and said that was a, “pretty accurate description” for his experience of **feeling grateful**. In describing his experience of **feeling grateful** he continued to reflect on his experience of giving space to his mentee. He experienced this as feeling “pride” in the relationship and the honesty present, in which his mentee could approach him and ask for space. He said:

I think grateful explains that you know I was grateful to have a relationship with someone that we can do that and to be valued enough by her for her to kind of set that limit in a way that you know set the limit that protects the relationship.

John noted that, “being connected is more important than being right”, and expressed the value of having a strong relationship with his mentees.

Being Changed

When I asked John to reflect on his experience of **being changed** he took a moment to read through the current description of the theme. In reflecting on his

personal change, he then stated, “I think that validation piece is a lot of it. And the social support.” He went on to describe how he knew very few people when moving to his doctoral program, and building these relationships allowed him to build a “support system.” He noted that as the relationships evolved the boundaries evolved, in which he describes his relationship with his mentees as more of a “friendship.” These personally benefits did not all come at once, and he described how he would interact differently with his mentees at the beginning of their relationship in contrast to their current relationships.

Professional change was again described as the “chance to get that perspective of a student.” He noted that this was already consistent with the current thematic description. He then went on to reflect that, “it’s solidified the counselor education identity, even as a counselor identity. I think what it was is that, you know, that just experience of, you know, teaching something helps you learn it better.” John went on to give the example of when his mentees would come to him with questions, it would challenge him to grow and learn. He said it “really forced me then to think about the next time about the next topic whereas I had to be able to really understand in my head how all these different components of being a counselor come together.” He experienced growth as he challenged himself to learn so that he could provide knowledge to his mentees.

In concluding I asked John to reflect on areas that may be missing or incomplete regarding his experience as an informal mentor. At first he said he did not have anything to add, and after reflection he expressed, “Yeah you know now that I’ll take that back I do think there’s one other piece that is on my mind about this, it’s kind of been in the back of my mind for a while.” He went on to say how his impending graduation has led him to reflect on his relationship with his two mentees. He said

So these mentoring relationships are probably coming to an end, at least in terms of what they look like now where we see each other, you know, four or five times a week and work in the same office. I'm not sure what that's gonna look like.

In reflecting on this, John noted his emotions and completed his thoughts:

I'm a little anxious about it um so that's on my mind. There's also a piece of, kind of excitement about like seeing [Andrew] and [Andrea] at conferences later you know those kind of things. I'm just now kind of starting to process some of that but I don't have my head around it.

As he was reflecting on this the commitment he maintained and hopes to maintain with his mentees was evident. This adds further depth to the **evolution of the relationship**.

The potential rewording of the theme **being invested** specifically as **being invested long term** may emphasize John's anticipated continuation of his role as mentor. Further depth regarding the potentiality of these thematic changes will be described in the thematic analysis. Overall, John's interview displayed his connection with the current concepts of being a mentor and clarified area such as being knowledgeable as part of meeting mentee needs, the evolution of the relationship, and being committed over time.

Round 2 Interview with Participant Two

In the second interview with Ann she provided further experiences within each theme area. She additionally stated her agreement with the current thematic analysis while also touching on new components of the **evolution of the relationship** and her long-term commitment which may speak to **being invested long term**. A description of her interview, grounded in her dialogue, will allow the reader to understand her descriptions and worldview.

Being in Multiple Roles

When Ann was asked to reflect on this theme including the subthemes of opportunity and challenge, she agreed with this theme and stated that:

You definitely have multiple roles when you're a doctoral student and a mentor and, you know, you could be seeing you're mentee in class where you're guest lecturing or teaching or maybe even grading. That's you know that's definitely happened to me on multiple occasions.

While she noted these different roles are a challenge she immediately reflected on the opportunity both for her and her mentees. She stated that it was an,

opportunity to practice appropriate boundaries and to even have that discussion with them that... as a counselor you should have a supervisor later on, you know, when you're out working and in practice and then sometimes there gonna be more like a mentor to you but they'll still have to evaluate you.

These multiple roles provided a learning opportunity, for her to teach her mentees how to navigate multiple roles in their other professional relationships.

Ann reflected further on her experience of having the evaluative role and mentor role. She noted her excitement when she saw her mentee succeeding and her response was that, "it made me want to mentor more of them." Ann described the desire to see other students succeed and receive the support that her mentee had received. She said "it was hard not to go up to my mentee and say 'hey you know you're doing so great compared to the others' But of course I just don't say it.." While she noted the initial challenge of the evaluative role with her mentoring, she said that she has "gotten used to

it” where it is less of a concern for her. She described it as, “it wasn’t bad but it wasn’t always easy” to navigate the multiple roles that she encountered.

Another **challenge** that she described regarding her multiple roles was engaging in professional organizations with her mentees. This also connects closely with her experience of **being intentional in meeting mentee needs**. In describing her experience with getting her “mentee involved” in professional organizations she said she:

Questioned myself whenever I got her involved because I was like am I doing this just to help me out, is it because it’s a convenient way to get her involved. So that was another like kind of boundary multiple role.

She expressed relief that it worked itself out, and her mentee started off in similar committees and eventually found her own path with involvement in professional organizations.

Being Intentional

As we continued the dialogue, I asked Ann to reflect on her experience of **being intentional**. She continued to reflect on her experience with getting her mentee involved in professional organizations and how it related to her intentionality in **meeting mentee needs**. She said:

That’s kind of like with that professional organization, like what did she actually need, what were her goals. And that’s like what I can think of there like there were the boundaries in there but it was more being intentional because why am I getting her involved?

She continued to describe her experience of **meeting mentee needs** as “just being aware of what their actual needs are, and understanding that they may want something that they may not need and then, but that doesn’t make it any less important to them.”

When I asked Ann to reflect on her experience of **establishing boundaries** with her mentees she stated, “I think I’ve pretty much given I felt like some of the examples that I can think of.” She particularly noted her experience of navigating her multiple roles through which she had previously described as “not easy.” The **challenges** she encountered with her multiple roles seem to be closely connected with how she **intentionally** chose to **establish boundaries** for herself, regarding what she shared with her mentees, and how she engaged with them.

Being Invested

In exploring further her experience of **being invested** Ann first reflected on her investment to the **profession**. For Ann, her investment in the profession carries into her hopes for the profession and her investment to the **mentee**. Her words describe her passion for the counseling profession when she said:

Well the future of counseling are the students I guess especially the master’s level students and those are typically ones that I would be a mentor to, and so I want our profession to succeed. I want it to grow, and that includes helping students along and helping them figure out where their place is in the counseling field.

Part of her **investment** to the counseling field is helping build strong counselors through her mentoring, encouraging those she works with to continue to be involved and be a part of strengthening the profession. She stated that she encourages her mentees to be invested in the **profession** through advocacy or involvement in what they may be passionate

about. She said her “typical response” when students notice things that could change is to say, “What are you going to do about it, you know, you know or what can we do about it, let’s come up with some ideas.” She is involved in the profession and said that “I like to see the profession move forward.”

She additionally described her investment and commitment to her mentees. Ann described her care and loyalty to her mentees when she responded:

So it’s a human being it’s a person. That has personal wants and goals and their dreams and people that hopefully care about them, love them. The biggest thing is that they’re a person, and remembering that they’re not just a number and this is their future. This is how they could be providing for their family one day or providing for themselves. This could be, you know, their life goals to help others and so I want to help them get to where they can be or feel like they’re confident enough to help others. But help them or just be there for them. Being in the moment.

While noting the magnitude of helping her mentees she also reflected on what she called the “trickledown effect” which is also one of her own research interests. There is a bigger picture, in recognizing that her mentees “could be helping in the future or mentoring in the future” which solidifies her investment.

Being Connected

Our conversation next turned to discuss her experience of being an informal mentor related to **being connected** as both an **organic fit** and **feeling grateful**. She first described the importance of the **organic fit** in her experience as a mentor. She described it as “super important” and noted that

if the mentee and mentor don't have that, the ability to lead and learn and grow and like essentially help each other, I could see it becoming toxic, maybe or maybe turning somebody off from being a mentor in the future or even being a counselor or advocate for the profession in general.

Ann went on to describe the benefits she sees of having an organic connection. She described it as follows:

I also think that the organic fit is so important because it would enrich that experience that much more, for both the mentee and the mentor. And I think it's really important for the mentee to have that organic fit to feel comfortable or confident that this is a good thing for them.

I encouraged Ann to share examples of how she had experienced this subtheme in her mentoring relationships. She reflected on one specific mentee which she had previously shared an experience in which she excited came up to Ann to share her news of her engagement. Ann stated that this shows "trust" and went on to say "she and I just really, we could, we spoke really easily with each other. It was never strained or anything like that. And she just immediately took right away to being invested herself and being interested." Ann went on to share how **organic fit** is vital for enduring relationships and how her relationships are long lasting. She stated:

She and I still keep in touch. I still talk to anybody, those that I have mentored I am still in touch with them um you know years later. And I think that's important for that organic fit because it can, this can be a long lasting relationship that went beyond the mentoring mentee...I think that fits important because who would

want to go back to somebody that they didn't fit with before. Who would want to keep in contact with them?

This touched on her experience of having long lasting mentoring relationships with her mentees, which relates to **being invested long term**.

She immediately transitioned to describing her experience of **feeling grateful**.

She went on to describe her gratitude:

I feel very grateful because well, you know, sometimes I think well why somebody would want to listen to what I have to say or let me be the mentor. [Laughter]...So I feel very humbled about that but also grateful for that opportunity of that experience because you know I feel like I learn from my mentees as well. And that can help future people I work with, people I work with in the future or even currently.

This dialogue describes her experience of feeling “humbled” in addition to the recognition of the benefits that she receives from her mentoring relationships. She went on to describe her gratitude in the connection that she shares with her mentees, particularly as it evolves. This touches on a potential new subtheme regarding the **evolution of the relationship**. Regarding her gratitude of the evolution of the relationship, Ann said:

I'm grateful for the relationships, like once they've kind of evolved past that initial mentor mentee, you know, going to a professional conference and seeing one of them and having the chance to sit down and maybe I don't know snack or something or coffee you know in between sessions or something like that. Or even just sitting in a session together and that ability or that opportunity, you

know, it's very, I feel very grateful to have that opportunity to have that relationship still, let it have grown or evolved or matured or probably evolved is probably the best word.

As I reflected on what Ann was describing I mentioned that it felt as though it appeared to become more of a friendship over time. Ann connected with that and stated, "I think friendship could be a word, and it could be a description because it does definitely feels like the longer the time period has gone the more it's definitely there; our relationships continues to evolve in that sense." This **evolution of the relationship** for Ann brought a friendship component to her relationship.

Being Changed

The final theme explored was Ann's experience of **being changed** both **personally** and **professionally**. She gave her agreement with this theme in stating that, "I think any contact you have with other humans or human beings, people, that it has the potential to change you and when you have a relationship where you are mentoring that potential to really change you." She described the potential change in which "seeing them grow typically and that can be inspiring for you to grow or go learn." For her this included learning a "new technique or attend new workshop or to even just push yourself that much further." She said "that's what it's been like for me both personally and professionally."

I encouraged Ann to give an example of her experience of learning and growing in the way she had been describing. She shared an experience in which she learned more about a specific topic as guided by her mentee which led to **professional** growth. She said:

I was never big into MI before and one of my mentees became really interested in it and so I went with her to a workshop and it changed me and I definitely learned and kind of modified, you know, how I work with clients some and even that even modified probably a little bit of how I worked with some of my mentees.

For Ann, it is important for a mentor to be open and willing to learn as a way of “modeling for the mentee.” She stated that “the possibilities are open you know they’re endless because a mentee their interests could be completely different from mine but that doesn’t mean that I can’t go and learn.” This continual growth and learning is experienced both **personally** and **professionally**. Overall, in the second interview with Ann she gave her consensus regarding the current thematic analysis in addition to placing emphasis on the mentors willingness to learn and grow and information regarding the **long term investment** that she experiences in mentoring. These areas will be further explored in the thematic analysis for round two.

Round 2 Interview with Participant Three

In the interview with LaToya, she continued to display reflexivity and openness in sharing her experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student. She was immediately excited to share her experience in developing a new mentoring relationship and shared a number of examples which fit within the current thematic analysis. The interview was structured within the thematic analysis beginning with the first theme.

Being in Multiple Roles

In the interview I encourage LaToya to reflect on her experience of **being in multiple roles** as both an **opportunity** and **challenge**. She excited shared:

I think that opportunity really speaks to the new mentoring relationship that I have because I think that placement and location is more of a factor. So opportunities for connection is the big factor that um kind of created that that opportunity for the mentoring relationship.

She went on to describe how there were other students in that group located in a distant location, yet this mentoring relationship emerged due to having frequent interactions out of proximity. She went on to share the “mutual” nature of their relationship in which they both “choose” to engage together in a mentoring-mentee relationship.

She went on to describe a dialogue in which her mentee stated “I know that you want me to be an equal like I know that you want me to, you’re empowering me to you know make these choices and do these things.” LaToya went on to describe the **challenge** for her mentee of being an “equal” in which her mentee “expressed that it’s awkward for her because she sees me as a mentor so when she sees me as a mentor then she wants my guidance.” The role of being a mentor is different than being equals for this mentor-mentee relationship.

LaToya went on to share an experience which exemplified how **being in multiple roles** can be a **challenge**. She had a mentee invite her to lunch regarding their leadership roles in the state professional organization. She noted that she “brought more of myself than into it” which was in contrast to how she previously engaged with this mentee in their previous supervision relationship. LaToya felt “obligated” to open up the dialogue and discuss the change in their relationship by saying “I just want to check in with you to see how this is for you because this is a change and she thought that was a weird question.” LaToya said that this experience displays how being the one in power leads to

her “responsibility to ask”, to open up the dialogue when multiple roles are encountered. She said “the challenge I guess aspect is me getting comfortable with asking a question that is awkward or could be awkward” since this type of open dialogue is not a “social norm.”

Being Intentional

After LaToya shared her experience of being in multiple roles we moved on to discuss her experience of being intentional in establishing boundaries and providing mentee needs. LaToya shared how the challenge of being in multiple roles “is to me somewhat mitigated or doesn’t feel quite as challenging with other discussions” and “awareness.” Having intentional discussions like her previous example, are ways that she intentionally establishes boundaries with her mentees. LaToya reflected on the changing boundaries over time that she has experienced. She stated:

I think as a counselor educator this is also an aspect of our profession that we have students that are, we’re going to be then transitioning to professional with so us; me as a counselor educator then becoming comfortable with that...There doesn’t seem like there’s a lot of literature about that, the aspect of you know everybody that we teach as a counselor educator and or everybody that we mentor because of the developmental nature eventually becomes a colleague and a peer.

And how to navigate that because that is a normal part of this process.

She went on to share an experience in which a seasoned professional who received an award at her state counseling conference shared what it was like to be among so many of his students. She commented on how he maintained the teacher-student relationships which was unique to her. This led her to reflect that “there’s some choice in this, like that

establishing boundaries and providing mentee needs under the being intentional, it's that there's a lot of choice in what that looks like.” Recognizing the lack of literature and differences among how professionals approach this scenario, she recognized her own need to make choices on how she is **intentional** with her mentees.

LaToya shared a recent example in which a meeting with her mentee conflicted with family schedules which led her to evaluate how she was going to approach the situation. She debated on having the mentee come with her or cancelling. While she acknowledged having her mentee come with her would allow for “time for talking and opportunity” she had to evaluate whether to “move it into another layer closer up.” She described her **intentionality** and she stated:

I had to really think about it and I think that you know that being intentional to always be not just ‘oh yeah everybody does it, it’s ok’ or being more intentional and just kind of saying ‘I can’t go’. What would be better is to not do that in this situation it doesn’t feel at this point that’s not what I want to do.

For her this decision was guided by both the **mentee needs** and a way of **establishing boundaries**.

In exploring more the way that LaToya experiences **meeting her mentees needs** she shared a story with her new mentee. She described that they were working on a project together and LaToya called a meeting to clarify what ways the duties would be negotiated. In this meeting LaToya’s intention was to gain a better understanding of her mentees needs. She said “again it’s focusing on what her needs may be and what they are, to figure that out and then articulate it, and then me navigating and adopting or adapting to what she needs.” She said that once they had the dialogue and it became

clear what her mentee needed. She concluded “and so then I’m happy. Then I’m good because then I know I’m meeting her needs.”

Being Invested

In exploring her experience of being invested LaToya connected to the importance of commitment to her mentees. She expressed that, “I feel like as the mentor aspect it’s my responsibility to keep the commitment. They can choose to get rid of it but I feel to some degree like I do have this responsibility to keep the commitment.” She went on to distinguish her experience of organic fit with her investment to her mentees. She said that, “I feel organic fit is initial but then I kind of go right into who I am and that’s commitment. Thick or thin good or bad it’s about the commitment.” For her this connects to her belief about relationships and gives her example of marriage, in which it may be “organic fit initially and then it moves into commitment.” LaToya went on to emphasize that there is still choice and, “it doesn’t have any obligation attached to it but it’s really a free choice, free will, next steps are always mutual” when acknowledging that there can be an end to relationships as well.

As LaToya discussed this concept of commitment she began to reflect on one of her mentors that had an impact on her. She said that her mentor told her “this is forever and not that there’s an obligation forever, but you know that you can count on me for a letter of recommendation forever. And that has meant a lot to me.” LaToya stated that she has not “said that to anybody else myself”, yet she has a desire to display that kind of investment to her mentees. For her it is the message that, “it’s not like I’m gonna forget who you are” that represents her experience of being invested. This connects to the

potential new area of **being invested long term** which emphasizes the enduring nature of mentoring relationships.

The discussion transitioned to her **professional investment**. For LaToya, her investment in her **mentees** is an example of her investment in the **profession**. For LaToya it is a means of giving back, continuing to “keep it alive.” In describing how mentoring is an investment she stated:

It is an investment in the profession and in the things that I feel in some ways part of this is a helping somebody, even if that person isn't an experiential learner you know maybe some things that I've learned or that I've gathered I can impart to someone.

She went on to describe it as “pass[ing] the baton”, but “the baton that's loaded with more tools so that maybe that person can go further can do more because they're not starting off at the same place their starting off with a little bit of a something more.” For LaToya this baton is moving the profession, her mentoring is moving the profession.

A new area which LaToya touched on is her experience of **being mentored** which plays a role in her experience as a mentor. She described:

I find myself saying things that a mentor of mine said to me. Which then I laugh about so this is isn't really me, I am, also there's an obligation to do for others what has been done for me as well. And to honor those that have helped me by continuing on those nuggets of advice or just you know perspectives and insights.

This experience of seeing her own experience of **being mentored** come into play as a mentor herself seemed significant in this interview. There are other instances in which she continues to reflect on her experiences of **being mentored** and the ways in which her

mentors interacted with her. For example, she shared an experience in which appointment times and intentions of the mentor were clarified for LaToya as the mentee, in which there were some cultural factors discussed. Further analysis of this area of **being mentored** will be explored in the thematic analysis.

Being Connected

The dialogue next turned to explore more of LaToya's experience with **being connected**. While she had previously noted how she distinguished **being invested** from **organic fit**, she went on to emphasize the choice in the relationship. She stated, "It feels like it's mutually picked not, it's not one sided. Yeah so maybe continually instead of picking it may be continuing to engage." She told of how her new mentoring relationship developed in which her mentee "initiating and me not having the time last semester to, you know, to give back in a relationship." LaToya noted that once she was able to give and engage in the relationship, then the relationship began to develop. For LaToya the **fit** part of the relationship emphasizes the choice and "mutual" nature of the connection.

LaToya quickly gave her agreement with her experience of **feeling grateful** with the current analysis. She described her experience and stated:

I feel grateful I feel I do I feel because I gain and I learn as much from anybody that I'm engaged with like that. Probably more because you know I'm focusing on that aspect and sometimes there's focus on learning the content and I'm learning other things. So feeling grateful definitely and honored you know, grateful and honored and lucky and yeah it's sacred that it feels very personal and sacred.

LaToya expressed that she did not need to add anything further to her experience of **feeling grateful** to what was currently described in the analysis.

Being Changed

When we discussed LaToya's experience of **being changed** she combined both **personal** and **professional** change in her metaphorical example. She expressed the benefit that she gains from mentoring in that, "being changed is about I gain, as much as they, if they gain anything I hope that they do, but I know that I do personally and professional that I've changed as a result." She again reiterated her example of "two chemicals that come together and make up another chemical the molecular structure." She gave the example of the compounds that glue together PVC pipe in the following:

You know there's two compounds and alone they aren't sticky but you put the two together and stick PVC pipe together and it's sealed so that's kind of how I don't mean stuck together at all I just mean that catalytic change.

For her this is describing "energy and movement and something is created." Another component of change included creating things with her mentees. She referred to her new mentee in that they are working together to create something. For her, "the whole is greater than the sum so, you know, the two and, this is current one is a good example, where the two together are creating this something bigger than ourselves whereas each individually, you know, like the skills are complementary." The change that is possible includes projects, presentations, manuscripts, and ideas.

LaToya touched specifically on this idea of return on investment. She stated, "I get something out of it too. And that being invested is that yes there's an investment and I get a return." She described this return on investment to include potential manuscripts

or ideas that may be created. She went on to say these may be a form of “tangible return on investment.” She described both personal and professional returns:

The profession gets a return on the investment because something is maybe some new ideas are put out there. And then also personally, that the you know, I know that I get something out of seeing somebody else grow and for myself that I learn from that person, you know. I’m, I definitely learn about myself through these relationships and trying to be self-reflective and other areas where I need to improve. And so you know just engaging in relationships and is a just not an altruistic thing.

Another benefit for her that brings personal change is the opportunity for “building those, talking about relationship skills.” She expressed that she “need[s] more practice in that, so it helps” to have mentoring relationships in which she feels free to try out new ways of interacting, new social skills. For her these “returns on investment” display the change and benefit that she experiences as an informal mentor.

In this interview, LaToya was excited to share new insights from her new mentoring relationship that she had developed within the thematic analysis. She additionally added the ideas of return on investment to her experience of being changed and outwardly expressed the value of being mentored as she experiences being a mentor. Her experiences additionally display the enduring nature of her mentoring which may highlight the new area of being invested long term.

Round 2 Interview with Participant Four

In the interview with Elizabeth, she expressed her thoughts regarding moving forward into her anticipated role of counselor educator in the fall, which had implications

for how she experienced her role of mentor and what it means to her. Elizabeth agreed with the current thematic analysis and additionally added that she has recently become more aware of her mentors, and how that is influencing her experience as a mentor. The new theme of **being mentored** will be described by her and will have additional implications in round two, thematic analysis.

Being in Multiple Roles

I encouraged Elizabeth give further depth on her experience of **being in multiple roles** as it related to **opportunity** and **challenge**. She first reflected back on a story she had shared in round one interviews regarding two students who approached her for support regarding their peer who was struggling. She described this instance further in that it was a **challenge** in her role as mentor and student. She expressed that she was, “wanting to be there for them but not wanting to put the faculty members in an awkward position, like not wanting to just be an unnecessary messenger.”

Elizabeth described another example of the **challenge** where she was able to be the teacher of record for a course this school year. She described it as “just an additional new role that has conflicted. I would say I was little nervous about certain aspects of that role.” She described the grading component of that role which, “negatively made me nervous you know would they get mad at me or would they approach me or would that cause tension.” She told the following example:

there was one incident where a student approached me who I had who was in the school counseling group that I’d previously mentored and I did have to put on my teacher hat and explain you know you deserved this grade you got. This was a bad

tape you submitted, but then I guess I put on kind of my mentoring hat and I was like that doesn't mean you're a bad counselor.

Elizabeth went on to explain “some of these students I'm not teaching this semester and so I find myself back in that mentoring role like there isn't that hierarchy.” The concept of power seemed to come into the various roles that she encountered in different ways.

Elizabeth went on to reflect on her future role as a counselor educator and future **opportunities** that she may encounter. She described how she would tell her mentees who were interested in doctoral studies that, “in the future I really would love if they end up at the same institution as me or even if they don't.” She expressed excitement and stated, “I look forward to mentoring them in the future.” This description hints at the **investment** she has in her mentees **long term**.

Being Intentional

We moved the dialogue to discuss her experience of **being intentional**. Elizabeth stated that her **intentionality** in **establishing boundaries**, “occurred at the beginning of my mentoring relationships because that's when I wanted to set the boundaries or decide for myself what I was and was not going to disclose; and then I just carried that on through, throughout the program.” She gave the example of choosing not to share that about her partner or her job search process. For her this was an individual decision in which she chose what to share with her mentees.

Elizabeth moved on to discuss the way in which she intentionally **meets her mentees needs**. She reiterated her previous example from round one interviews, of reaching out to students, in recognizing that the faculty may not be meeting their needs. She shared an experience in which a faculty candidate came to her university. She found

herself advocating for her student's needs, "caring that these students get what they need" in a faculty member.

Being Invested

Elizabeth gave her consent regarding the current description of **being invested** in reiterating her experience of being involved in teaching her students that she mentored.

She stated:

I felt invested in this one cohort I'd been with for two years and so I signed up to TA a class with them just because it was like, I couldn't see them going through their last semester when they're applying for jobs and everything's really coming to fruition, and not being a part of that.

For her, she was committed to continue working with them through their final coursework which she said "I think that is just an example of how I was invested in them."

Elizabeth gave another way in which she displays her **investment** to the **profession**. She described how she encouraged a few of her mentees to move on to their doctoral program after they expressed interest. She described a dialogue she had with her mentee "you need to be a counselor educator, like yes go get experience in the field it's important that you do that first, but school counseling needs you." Her way of **being invested** in the profession included promoting others to contribute to the **profession**.

Being Connected

Elizabeth briefly touched on her experience of **being connected** as it relates to **organic fit**. She described the various roles that she was engaged in as a doctoral student which for her created the organic fit with her mentees. She said "it came about

organically those opportunities to mentor.” She agreed with the current description of the theme and did not need to add more.

She went on to describe her experience of **feeling grateful**. She said the following:

I just am very grateful for having had that sense of meaning and belonging...I think that professional meaning making experience helped me not feel as lonely or not feel as regretful you know for why did I move here what am I doing.

Instead it made me feel like ok I do have a purpose here and I can ignore it if I feel lonely on the weekends because when I get to class my students are excited to see me.

She expressed her gratitude for these relationships for giving her purpose and meaning in her doctoral experience. These connections with her mentees were close, she said, “it kind of symbolized like they were giving me a place to belong even if it was in a mentoring capacity and I was careful not to make it a friend capacity.” While they were close, she expressed caution in ensuring it did not cross the boundaries that she felt were appropriate.

Elizabeth touched on the **evolution of her mentoring relationships**. She noted that while she “was careful not to make it a friend capacity” the relationships change over time. She said, “I’m thinking of one in particular who graduated last year now we kind of are more friends and we will like meet up to hang out and I introduced her to my partner.” This evolution of the relationship shows the change in dynamics and closeness that develops, particularly after mentee’s graduate.

Being Changed

Elizabeth described various benefits and changes that she experienced both **personally** and **professionally**. She briefly touched on her personal change in that “for me the mentoring of these master’s students really just helped me feel plugged in and helped me feel purposeful.” She noted that this was particularly important in the beginning of her doctoral program. She had a difficult time in her program in which she lacked advising and had to find her own way through much of her program. Deciding to place emphasis in teaching created a place of purpose and meaning for her through developing meaningful relationships with her students.

In regards to her **professional change** Elizabeth again reiterated from previous discussions that, “I really can’t imagine what my experience would have been like had I not had that.” She boldly said, “I think I’m a better counselor educator” and noted that her mentoring gave her opportunities for learning and growth as a professional. She described how mentoring is intertwined in her role as a counselor educator. “I think there is a mentoring aspect to being a counselor educator and sometimes it happens in advising or it happens in supervision, but sometimes it happens by itself and now I have practice doing that.” She expressed feeling more “comfortable” now as she approaches her career as a counselor educator due to the experience she had with these students. She stated:

in a lot of ways the students gave me free practice for advising, supervising, and mentoring and so now as I begin my career as counselor educator I feel really comfortable doing that. And I wouldn’t have had that practice otherwise, you know, I’d be entering the field still having to get that practice in the first few

years, but I feel much more competent because I had the opportunity to do so as a doc student.

Elizabeth went on to explain how her mentoring influenced her overall doctoral experience:

having had such a positive experience mentoring these students, it really has colored my overall opinion of my experience in the program, because as I've suggested it started off pretty rocky, and I don't feel I had a place to belong. And then this whole mentoring thing happened and now I'm looking back...I've had a great experience.

She further explained that her situation in her doctoral program of not having an advisor and choosing to teach the school counseling cohorts, "both professionally and personally made me more independent." She gave more detail to her experience of growth and how it related to her experience as a mentor. In reflecting on her growth she stated:

I'm just even embrace being independent and taking it on my own. And that mentoring piece has been a part of that experience, and so it's made me more independent and more capable and yeah I think it's given me some qualities that will help me down the road as a counselor educator as I navigate the politics of academia.

For Elizabeth her doctoral experience is intertwined with her mentoring experience, as she created multiple opportunities to work with the master's students in a mentoring role. Her growth and change from these experiences are evident in our dialogue.

After completing the interview focused on the current thematic analysis I asked Elizabeth to reflect on any new areas or incomplete areas regarding her experience as an

informal mentor. She responded that there was one she had been thinking which she stated, “I still haven’t really come to terms with what that means” as she was reflecting on graduating and moving into her professorial role. Her description adds depth to her experience of **being invested long term** in that her role of mentor will continue in her new role.

Before I just was intentional about mentoring the students while they were at [my university] and not getting what they needed, and now I’m kind of thinking in terms of ‘oh well, how, can I be intentional about mentoring future counselor educators in the field.’

The conversation then transitioned to her experience of **being mentored** and how this was influential for her. She described that, “that aspect of well, I want to be a good mentor because I’ve had good mentors, really hasn’t happened for me until the past month or so as I’ve gone through this job search process.” She noted that her influential mentors were from her master’s program and has recently been in contact with them as she has sought out support. She expressed her curiosity in that she was, “curious if your other participants had that.” Further exploration of the possibility of this theme will be explored in the thematic analysis.

Elizabeth’s interview continued to confirm the current thematic analysis. Her description added potential clarity to the newer concepts of **being invested long term**, the **evolution of the relationship**, and **being mentored**. Further analysis of her experience will be given in the following chapter.

Summary

The participants each gave the confirmation regarding the current thematic analysis and were free to add further descriptions to each theme. The interview process allowed the participants to additionally add new components which may have previously been missing or incomplete to fully represent their experience as mentors. The participants touched on potential new themes/subthemes including **being invested long term**, the **evolution of the relationship**, and **being mentored**. An exploration of these new areas will highlight their fit within the current analysis. Each of these components were additionally reviewed with the participants in the interpretive dialogue to complete the analysis.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ROUND TWO THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The round two, thematic analysis was a preliminary analysis which incorporated the second round of interviews with the participants. The coding and analysis procedures mirror that, used in the first round analysis. This included the use of “selective”, “wholistic”, and “detailed” coding (van Manen, 1990, p.94) and memos in the analysis. The participant dialogue was evaluated in terms of fit within the current thematic analysis. This was done to clarify and ensure that the current analysis remained consistent with the participants experience in addition to identifying new descriptions of their experience which did not fit the current themes and subthemes. The dialogue which appeared to explain new areas of the participant experience as it related to their mentoring were then further analyzed. A description of depth and clarity within the thematic analysis will be described. Additionally potential new areas will be discussed in this analysis, which will be further clarified in collaboration with the participants in the interpretive dialogue to follow.

The “wholistic” coding procedures of the participants, highlighted both the consensus of the previous analysis and new areas which are highlighted in this second round analysis. The following are the summaries identified for each participant interview:

JOHN: John connected with the current concepts of being mentored and clarified area such as being knowledgeable as part of meeting mentee needs, the evolution of the relationship, and being committed over time.

ANN: Ann described an interrelated dynamic of her investment to both the mentee and the profession. Having a willingness to learn is vital to being changed

as a mentor, and her mentoring relationships evolve over time which she described as a friendship.

LATOYA: LaToya described enthusiasm regarding a new mentoring relationships which enriched her descriptions of the current themes. She included components of her previous mentors which were influential, and described her commitment to her mentees as long term.

ELIZABETH: Elizabeth's transition into her anticipated role as counselor educator gave her new insights and perspectives on her mentoring experience, including the value and influence of her own mentors, the evolution of her mentoring relationships, and her hopes to continue mentoring.

The "wholistic" codes touch briefly on the new concepts and descriptions which were added to the analysis. Specific words and quotes were highlighted throughout the transcripts to add richer descriptions. Examples of words and quotes are included within each theme and subtheme description to allow the reader to grasp the meaning of the participant lived experience as informal mentors.

The analysis of the participants found consensus between their lived experiences as mentors in connection with the current thematic analysis. For example, LaToya stated:

I love how this is put together I love how it's organized. I like the categories and then the two sub categories, like it has this, it has a balance and a flow and a comprehensiveness that it's just, it's really, I like it a lot and it feels it's comprehensive and encompasses the experience.

Each participant gave agreement with the current themes and added further experience, metaphor, and description as they felt compelled. These descriptions enriched the data

analysis. In addition three potential changes or additions were found through the analysis and were tentatively added to the current thematic analysis (see Figure 4). The areas of **being invested long term**, **being connected** through the **evolution of the relationship**, and **being mentored**. The addition of **long term** to the theme **being invested** was proposed to incorporate the enduring nature of these relationships. The theme of **being connected: evolution of the relationship** was incorporated as a subtheme within the previous themes identified. **Being mentored** was currently an incidental theme as it was unclear whether it was essential (van Manen, 1990) to the lived experience as mentors. It is important to note that these descriptions were preliminary and it was anticipated that the interpretive dialogues would add further clarity to the fit of these themes within the current analysis. Further discussion on these changes are given throughout the analysis.

Figure 4. Round 2 preliminary themes of the lived experience of informal mentoring



Being in Multiple Roles

The participants continued to express that they experienced **being in multiple roles** as part of their mentoring experience. Quotes and phrases from the participants continue to exemplify how this is a vital component of their experience as mentors.

Ann's initial statement regarding this theme was that:

You definitely have multiple roles when you're a doctoral student and a mentor and, you know, you could be seeing you're mentee in class where you're guest lecturing or teaching or maybe even grading. That's, you know, that's definitely happened to me on multiple occasions.

Further examples specific to the subthemes of **opportunity** and **challenge** as it related to their mentoring were explored.

Opportunity

Opportunities to develop mentoring relationships as part of **being in multiple roles**, was again described by some of the participants. LaToya described a new mentoring relationship that has developed. She said the following regarding this new mentee as it relates to this subtheme:

I think that opportunity really speaks to the new mentoring relationship that I have because I think that placement and location is more of a factor. So opportunities for connection is the big factor that um kind of created that that opportunity for the mentoring relationship.

The current understanding of the experience of opportunity was expanded to also include current and future opportunities in the various roles they encounter. John described opportunities in his role as researcher through mentoring. He said:

I think there will be opportunities for us to collaborate in the future either on research projects or writing papers. We've done some of that in terms of a conference presentations and doing workshops together that probably would not have come up had we not had that mentor relationship.

For Ann, **opportunity** also included the opportunity for her own growth and that of her mentees, in having “practice” navigating multiple roles. Her words describe how this is an opportunity for her:

opportunity to practice appropriate boundaries and to even have that discussion with them that...as a counselor you should have a supervisor later on, you know, when you're out working and in practice and then sometimes they're going to be more like a mentor to you but they'll still have to evaluate you.

Elizabeth briefly touched on her experience of **opportunity** in this interview. She focused on future opportunities in anticipating her future role as counselor educator and how she may encounter opportunities as a faculty member. Of this she said, “I really would love if they end up at the same institution as me”, when speaking of her mentees who may continue on to doctoral studies. The experience of **opportunities in multiple roles** expanded to include opportunities in other roles such as researcher and future counselor educator.

Challenge

The experience of **challenge** stayed consistent with the previous analysis, and included phrases and words such as “ambiguous”, “nervous”, “conflicted”, “hard”, and “confusion.” John gave consensus on the current description of this theme and expressed:

I think challenge is well stated. I think you can capture that really well with it being ambiguous and the confusion of boundaries. I wouldn't need to change anything about that description to make it reflect my experience

Each of the participants gave further examples of how they have experienced **challenge** in their mentoring relationships with master's students.

Both Ann and Elizabeth shared experiences of grading their mentees and students, in how it was a challenge to have an evaluative role and mentor role. For Elizabeth, this was a matter of maintaining confidentiality and said, "it was hard not to go up to my mentee and say 'hey you know you're doing so great compared to the others' But of course I just don't say it." For Elizabeth being the faculty of record became a "hierarchical" role which was challenging. Of this experience she said:

I would say I was little nervous about certain aspects of that role and like I'm happy to provide feedback and supervise because that's also part of the mentoring, but grading I guess negatively made me nervous you know would they get mad at me or would they approach me or would that cause tension?

Examples from John and LaToya further display the experience of this role:

LATOYA: So you know it was awkward but at the same time I felt I felt that ok it's awkward and I still feel that because I have had the power previous in the previous relationships it was my responsibility to ask.

JOHN: What to do I do here as a mentor and what do I just do here as a student trying to graduate and not create waves?

The theme of **being in multiple roles**, appeared consistent with the participant experiences and allowed them to share further examples of how they encounter it as both an **opportunity** and **challenge**.

Being Intentional

The second round of analysis continued to exemplify the lived experience of being an informal mentor to include components of **intentionality**. They displayed two ways in which their intentionality was focused, including **establishing boundaries** and **providing mentee needs**. The following descriptions continue to enhance the understanding of this theme.

Establishing Boundaries

Again, the participants gave their consensus that this was an important component of their experience. Some of the phrases used to describe their experience establishing boundaries included “distinction”, “what”, “how”, “navigate”, “choice”, and “not easy.” The following quotes from the participants give further examples of this theme:

John: I’m thinking about this same situation with my mentee and chi sigma iota that there was a degree of that, of establishing boundaries around that about myself, and you know how I was going to be available, and what I would do for myself, and how I would engage.

LaToya: I think as a counselor educator this is also an aspect of our profession that we have students that are, we’re going to be then transitioning to professional with so us; me as a counselor educator then becoming comfortable with that...everybody that we teach as a counselor educator and or everybody that we

mentor, because of the developmental nature eventually becomes a colleague and a peer. And how to navigate that because that is a normal part of this process.

Elizabeth: a lot of that intentionality for me occurred at the beginning of my mentoring relationships because that's when I wanted to like set the boundaries or decide for myself what I was and was not going to disclose and then I just carried that on through um throughout the program. I know I mentioned the example before where I didn't tell them I had a partner I didn't tell them anything about my partner um and then even this year I've been going through the job search process

In asking Ann if she had any further examples to share regarding her experience of establishing boundaries she said, "I think I've pretty much given I felt like some of the examples that I can think of." While acknowledging the difficulties in establishing boundaries LaToya emphasized the "choice" in her experience of being intentional. She said that both, "establishing boundaries and providing mentee needs under the being intentional, it's that there's a lot of choice in what that looks like."

Providing Mentee Needs

This subtheme continued to be described as an awareness and understanding of the participant's mentees to provide their needs. Some of the words the participants used to describe this theme included "adapting", "hearing", "aware", "curious", "understanding needs", "being knowledgeable", "actual need", "caring", and "focusing." John took some time expressing his curiosity of how the needs of the mentee are decided. He reflected on an instance in which he "didn't catch" the need of a mentee. He reflected:

I would be curious to know how, like this piece about describing and understanding the needs of the mentee, I think for me I can't really recall how I came to that conclusion...wondering kind of, well, I wonder how other mentors do that.

He contrasted how he evaluates the needs of clients in comparison to mentees. He said of being a mentor, "I am relying more on myself and being knowledgeable which I think is why mentees seek out mentors." This component of being knowledgeable adds to the previous description of **providing mentee needs** in addition to the recognition that not all mentee needs may be provided or known by a mentor.

The participants described intentional dialogues and encounters to assist them in gaining awareness of their mentees needs. The following examples from the other participants further exemplify their experience of **providing mentee needs**.

LaToya: Again it's focusing on what her needs may be and what they are, to figure that out and then articulate it, and then me navigating and adopting or adapting to what she needs...and so then I'm happy. Then I'm good because then I know I'm meeting her needs.

Elizabeth: Just caring that these students get what they need and that we choose someone that's going to give students what they need years after I'm gone, years after these master's students are gone because they deserve it.

Ann: What did she actually need, what were her goals? And that's like what I can think of there, like there were the boundaries in there, but it was more being intentional because why am I getting her involved?

In Ann's interview she continued to describe her experience of meeting mentee needs as "just being aware of what their actual needs are, and understanding that they may want something that they may not need and then, but that doesn't make it any less important to them." Each of the participants placed emphasis in ensuring that their mentees needs were being provided to the best of their abilities.

Being Invested Long Term

The thematic analysis after the second round of interviews gave further clarity on the theme of being invested. In the dialogues the participants each gave descriptions of the investment which included an enduring, long lasting essence. As I approached the writing of the analysis, I knew that long term investment was present, and originally debated the inclusion of this as a new subtheme. It seemed in review of the participant's descriptions that this was more a descriptor of their investment as a whole, therefore leading me to add this term to the theme title. While it may seem redundant, in that an investment may be intended to be long term it seemed appropriate to honor the duration of the investment that is placed in the mentoring relationships for these participants. Quotes from each of the participants are given to show how they described this component of their investment:

Ann: She and I still keep in touch. I still talk to anybody, those that I have mentored I am still in touch with them um you know years later.

John: There's also a piece of, kind of excitement about like seeing [Andrew] and [Andrea] at conferences later you know those kind of things. I'm just now kind of starting to process some of that but I don't have my head around it.

LaToya: Thick or thin good or bad it's about the commitment.

LaToya: It's not like I'm going forget who you are.

Elizabeth: Before I just was intentional about mentoring the students while they were at [my university] and not getting what they needed, and now I'm kind of thinking in terms of 'oh well how can I be intentional about mentoring future counselor educators in the field.'

This specific component of investment had not been previously touched on in the first round analysis, and it seemed appropriate to give further emphasis to the persevering nature of their investment through adding the term **long term** to the theme title.

Mentee

The participants continued to place emphasis in their investment to their **mentees**. Some of language used by the participants used to describe their investment included "care", "advocating", "giving space", "be there", "commitment" and "responsibility." An interesting component of investment towards their mentees was described by both John and Ann, which included the idea of being present with their mentees. John described this as "sticking with you", while for Ann this was "being in the moment"

John: In my mind to say, me backing off, me giving space is an investment in her; for her to develop this on her own as opposed to, you know, kind of going in and saying no you're wrong and arguing and trying to defend my ego or me be right.

John: To me it's in a way I think, similar to almost like a parent child relationship of at a certain point, you know, give them space to let them figure it, out to be that safe base trying to be that safe base to come back to when they have questions, but changing expectations about their level of independence.

Ann: This could be, you know, their life goals to help others and so I want to help them get to where they can be or feel like they're confident enough to help others.

But help them or just be there for them. Being in the moment.

There are a number of meaningful and powerful quotes from the participants, which speaks louder than a summary of their content. I will allow the readers to get in touch with what it means to be invested in your mentees as experiences by these mentors.

Ann: So it's a human being it's a person. That has personal wants and goals and their dreams and people that hopefully care about them, love them. The biggest thing is that they're a person, and remembering that they're not just a number and this is their future. This is how they could be providing for their family one day or providing for themselves.

LaToya: Yes and I feel like as the mentor aspect it's my responsibility to keep the commitment. They can choose to get rid of it but I feel to some degree like I do have this responsibility to keep the commitment

LaToya: Maybe some things that I've learned or that I've gathered I can impart to someone so that, you know, that if I knew things then when I was starting that I know now I could be further ahead. So in some ways it's like pass the baton but pass the baton that's loaded with more tools, so that maybe that person can go further, can do more because they're not starting off at the same place their starting off with a little bit of a something more.

Elizabeth: I felt invested in this one cohort I'd been with for two years and so I signed up to TA a class with them just because it was like, I couldn't see them

going through their last semester when they're applying for jobs and everything's really coming to fruition, and not being a part of that.

The participant's experiences exemplify what it means to "stick" with their mentees, care about them, and advocate for them. This investment is deep rooted in their feelings of responsibility, care, and commitment to their mentees and the profession.

Profession

The participants described their consent of the commitment to the profession. It became clearer in this analysis that their investment in the profession was also evident in their investment in their mentees. Ann described this close connection of her investment in the profession and her mentees:

Well the future of counseling are the students, I guess especially the master's level students and those are typically ones that I would be a mentor to, and so I want our profession to succeed. I want it to grow, and that includes helping students along and helping them figure out where their place is in the counseling field.

For her, and the other participants, the students that they mentor are the "future of counseling", which then helps move the profession. Their decision to be a mentor is an example of their commitment to "keep it alive" as described by LaToya. Ann said it has a "trickledown effect" in that mentoring is a way for "the profession [to] move forward]. With this added component of having an investment in the profession through mentoring, Elizabeth gives the example of hoping to mentor as she moves into her anticipated role as faculty in the following academic year. She said "I certainly see that coming up now with me taking on this new role as an employed counselor educator" and asking herself

“how can I be intentional about mentoring future counselor educators in the field.” Being invested in their mentees proves to be an investment in the profession of counseling.

Being Connected

The connection with their mentees continued to fit the participant experience of being a mentor. In the interviews the **evolution of the relationship** became more evident in relation to **being connected**. The addition of this subtheme is described in addition to descriptions of the current subthemes **organic fit** and **feeling grateful**.

Organic Fit

In the dialogue the participants gave their agreement towards the current description of **organic fit**. Ann stated she felt that it was “super important” and John said “these are good descriptions.” While the participants gave consensus, there were few examples and descriptions added to the current analysis. In speaking to her experience of **organic fit** Latoya stated, “It feels like it’s mutually picked not it’s not one sided. Yeah so maybe continually instead of picking it may be continuing to engage.” She frequently placed emphasis on the choice and mutual nature of the relationship, which for her speaks to the organic nature of informal mentoring. Elizabeth briefly touched on the “opportunities to mentor” as organic. Ann in particular gave further emphasis on this subtheme and her experience of **organic fit** is given. She stated:

if the mentee and mentor don’t have that, the ability to lead and learn and grow and like essentially help each other, I could see it becoming toxic, maybe or maybe turning somebody off from being a mentor in the future or even being a counselor or advocate for the profession in general.

She emphasized **organic fit** it as follows:

I also think that the organic fit is so important because it would enrich that experience that much more, for both the mentee and the mentor. And I think it's really important for the mentee to have that organic fit to feel comfortable or confident that this is a good thing for them.

The additional components of choice, creating comfort, and organic opportunities enrich the current description of **organic fit**.

Feeling Grateful

The description of **feeling grateful** stayed consistent throughout the analysis to include the experience of honoring, feeling humble, and lucky. The participants also highlighted a component of their gratitude included an awareness of their benefits. The following quotes describe their experience of **feeling grateful**.

John: I think grateful explains that you know I was grateful to have a relationship with someone that we can do that, and to be valued enough by her for her to kind of set that limit in a way that you know, set the limit that protects the relationship.

Ann: I feel very grateful because well, you know, sometimes I think well why would somebody want to listen to what I have to say or let me be the mentor.

[Laughter]...So I feel very humbled about that but also grateful for that opportunity of that experience because you know I feel like I learn from my mentees as well. And that can help future people I work with, people I work with in the future or even currently.

LaToya: I feel grateful I feel I do because I gain and I learn as much from anybody that I'm engaged with like that. Probably more because you know I'm focusing on that aspect and sometimes there's focus on learning the content and

I'm learning other things. So feeling grateful definitely and honored you know, grateful and honored and lucky and yeah it's sacred that it feels very personal and sacred.

Elizabeth: I just am very grateful for having had that sense of meaning and belonging...I think that professional meaning making experience helped me not feel as lonely or not feel as regretful you know for why did I move here, what am I doing? Instead it made me feel like ok I do have a purpose here and I can ignore it if I feel lonely on the weekends because when I get to class my students are excited to see me.

Being an informal mentoring continues to include components of gratitude for a myriad of pieces of the relationship, including the benefits that they personally receive.

Evolution of the Relationship

In the second round of interviews the analysis continued to unfold the **evolution of the relationship** as it related to their connection with the mentees. While the changes of relationships had been discussed in the first round of interviews, it became more evident through the second round of analysis. This theme describes the changes that are experienced throughout the mentoring relationship, and the connection that evolves over time. As the relationships develop, the connection deepens and becomes closer and more personal. Words such as “evolution”, “matured”, “changing expectation”, “transitioning”, and “developmental” are all descriptors of this theme as found from the participant interviews. For some of the participants, it became more evident in the stories they shared as they or their mentees are transitioning into new professional roles. John described his emotions and thoughts as he anticipates graduation this semester. He said:

So these mentoring relationships are probably coming to an end, at least in terms of what they look like now where we see each other, you know, four or five times a week and work in the same office. I'm not sure what that's gonna look like...I'm a little anxious about it um so that's on my mind. There's also a piece of, kind of excitement about like seeing [Andrew] and [Andrea] at conferences later you know, those kind of things. I'm just now kind of starting to process some of that but I don't have my head around it.

The changes in his relationship with his two mentees had previously been discussed in round one analysis, when his mentees became doctoral students. And now he is anticipating another transition as he becomes a counselor educator. John's previous example of the parent child relationship of mentoring can also be applied to the **evolution of the relationship** in which, as he had described, "changing expectations about their level of independence."

Both Ann and Elizabeth described their matured mentoring relationships as including components of friendship. They stated:

Ann: I think friendship could be a word, and it could be a description because it does definitely feels like the longer the time period has gone the more it's definitely there; our relationships continues to evolve in that sense.

Elizabeth: I'm thinking of one in particular who graduated last year now we kind of are more friends and we will like meet up to hang out and I introduced her to my partner.

As roles, hierarchy, and the connection evolve, a friendship emerged for these mentors. LaToya emphasized the reality of transitioning roles. This example was previously

discussed as an example of **being intentional in establishing boundaries**. She described that, “everybody that we teach as a counselor educator and or everybody that we mentor, because of the developmental nature eventually becomes a colleague and a peer.” The evolution of the mentoring relationship seems natural as roles change and connection deepens. This new subtheme was later discussed with the participants in the interpretive dialogue to explore the fit of this description with their lived experience as informal mentors.

Being Changed

The theme of **being changed** continued to include components of growth and learning both **professionally and personally**. The idea of “return on investment” was explored by LaToya in describing her change. Including the benefits, or “return on investment” that they experienced as mentors seems fitting as a component of **being changed**. LaToya said, “being changed is about I gain, as much as they, if they gain anything I hope that they do, but I know that I do personally and professional that I’ve changed as a result.” Ann shared similar ideas in that, “I think any contact you have with other humans or humans beings, people, that it has the potential to change you and when you have a relationship where you are mentoring that potential to really change you.” LaToya continued her metaphor regarding molecular change by giving the example of PVC pipe. She said:

You know there’s two compounds and alone they aren’t sticky but you put the two together and stick PVC pipe together and it’s sealed so that’s kind of how I don’t mean stuck together at all I just mean that catalytic change.

This metaphor describes the experience of **being changed** to include “energy and movement and something is created” as described by LaToya.

Personally

Personal change continued to include benefits such as support, a social system, and validation. Additional descriptions of personal change included “inspiring”, “friendship”, “and “self-reflective.” LaToya and Elizabeth gave further descriptions of their personal change:

LaToya: And then also personally, that the you know, I know that I get something out of seeing somebody else grow and for myself that I learn from that person, you know. I’m, I definitely learn about myself through these relationships and trying to be self-reflective and other areas where I need to improve. And so you know just engaging in relationships and is a just not an altruistic thing.

Elizabeth: for me the mentoring of these master’s students really just helped me feel plugged in and helped me feel purposeful

John added that he personally valued having a “support system” and the “friendships” that he has developed as his mentoring relationships develop. Ann expressed growth and learning as they related to both personal and professional change. It appears that **being changed** both **personally** and **professionally** are closely intertwined when described by these mentors.

Professionally

Professional change, as described in the second round analysis, verified the change that they experienced as doctoral students and developing counselor educator.

For John “it’s solidified the counselor education identity, even as a counselor identity. I

think what it was is that, you know, that just experience of, you know, teaching something helps you learn it better” This included descriptions of becoming better counselor educators, counselors, and having practice working with students. This included gaining more confidence and knowledge in their professional roles. Elizabeth speaks to this confidence in stating that, “students gave me free practice for advising, supervising, and mentoring and so now as I begin my career as counselor educator I feel really comfortable doing that.” She also described it as “feeling much more competent” since she has already encountered this role of mentor.

Another way in which they experience professional change included a willingness to learn, as described by Ann. She noted that this is vital to “model” for her mentees. She gave an example of learning more about motivational interviewing (MI) due to one of her mentees interest in this area. She said:

I was never big into MI before and one of my mentees became really interested in it and so I went with her to a workshop and it changed me and I definitely learned and kind of modified, you know, how I work with clients some and even that even modified probably a little bit of how I worked with some of my mentees.

Ann said that the “possibilities are open” and “endless” for learning and growing from mentoring, since the mentees interests and experiences can be so varied.

LaToya adds the component of “return on the investment” to **being changed professionally** as she described “new ideas that are put out there.” She gave an example of her new mentoring relationship in which they are working together to create ideas and add to the literature in the profession. Professional change appears to also include

components of ideas, presentations, and literature which can be produced through the mentoring relationship. As Ann had stated, the possibilities are “endless.”

Being Mentored

Two participants, LaToya and Elizabeth frequently discussed the importance of **being mentored** as a piece of their experience as mentors. In the interview with LaToya, this was interwoven in the dialogue as she gave multiple examples of her previous mentors. When discussing her experience of **being invested** LaToya brought in the example of the influence of her mentors. She said:

I find myself saying things that a mentor of mine said to me. Which then I laugh about so this is, isn't really me, I am, also there's an obligation to do for others what has been done for me as well. And to honor those that have helped me by continuing on those nuggets of advice or just you know perspectives and insights.

This experience of wanting to give others what had been given to them was also described by Elizabeth. When concluding the interview, I opened it up for her to add components of her lived experience of mentoring that had not previously been discussed. She said:

Yeah I don't know. I would guess that maybe this has come up for you with other participants but that aspect of well I want to be a good mentor because I've had good mentors really hasn't happened for me until the past month or so as I've gone through this job search process. I guess just because it's a new role taking experience like you said and before, I just wasn't thinking in terms of, like I had good mentors so I'm going to mentor, because I think my mentors were my teachers during my master's program and since then they've become mentors.

Elizabeth had recently reached out to past faculty that she had worked with for support as she navigated her job search. This led her to become more aware of the role of her mentors in her experience. The experience of **being mentored** as it related to being an informal mentor includes the idea of passing it on, continuing the tradition, and honoring past relationships. Since only two participants discussed this idea, and it seemed new in emerging, it is identified currently as an incidental theme, in that it is unsure of whether **being mentored** is essential to being a mentor for these participants. This was discussed specifically in the interpretive dialogues to gain clarity on the fit of this theme within the analysis.

Summary of Thematic Analysis

The previous analysis from round one remained consistent throughout the second round of analysis. The primary themes of **being in multiple roles, being intentional, being invested, being connected, and being changed** continue in addition to the subthemes within these themes. While nothing is omitted from the analysis, there are additions to the thematic analysis to incorporate new data from round two interviews. The theme of **being invested** has been changed to include the word **long term** to read as **being invested long term**. I felt compelled to give emphasis to the enduring nature of the investment as described by the participants. A new subtheme within **being connected** namely, **evolution of the relationship** is included. This speaks to the transition, development, and maturing connection that is experienced and described by the participants. The incidental theme of **being mentored** was included by two participants as they described their past and current mentoring relationships which influenced themselves as mentors. Each of these new areas, in addition to previous

themes, are currently tentative, and was later finalized through the use of the interpretive dialogue.

Implications for Round 2 Interpretive Dialogue

In moving forward, to complete the second round thematic analysis, the interpretive dialogue (Coe Smith, 2006) was vital to ensure that I was understanding and interpreting the participants experience accurately. The three changes to the thematic analysis were emphasized in this interpretive dialogue in addition to review of all themes/subthemes and gaps in the analysis. The following questions guided the interpretive dialogue to cover these areas (see Appendix C):

- Does the addition of the term **long term** to the theme of **being invested** seem accurate and necessary to represent your experience as a mentor?
- Do you connect with the subtheme **evolution of the relationship** within **being connected**
- Would you consider **being mentored** an important piece of your experience as a mentor, or would you consider it secondary?
- Does the thematic analysis accurately portray your lived experience as an informal mentor?
- What changes or additions might you make to the current thematic analysis?

The use of these questions guided my work with the participants as “co-researchers” (van Manen, 1990, p.98). It was important to check with John and Ann on whether they connect with the incidental theme of **being mentored** and additionally with each participant regarding whether it was incidental or essential to being a mentor. It was

anticipated that round two interpretive dialogues would complete the data gathering process of this research. If there had been areas which needed further clarification following the interpretive dialogues then I would have contacted the participants to gather further data. The participants were given the opportunity to review the writings of the research for accuracy and confidentiality purposes. In moving forward, a description of the round two interpretive dialogues confirm the finalized thematic analysis.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ROUND TWO INTERPRETIVE DIALOGUE

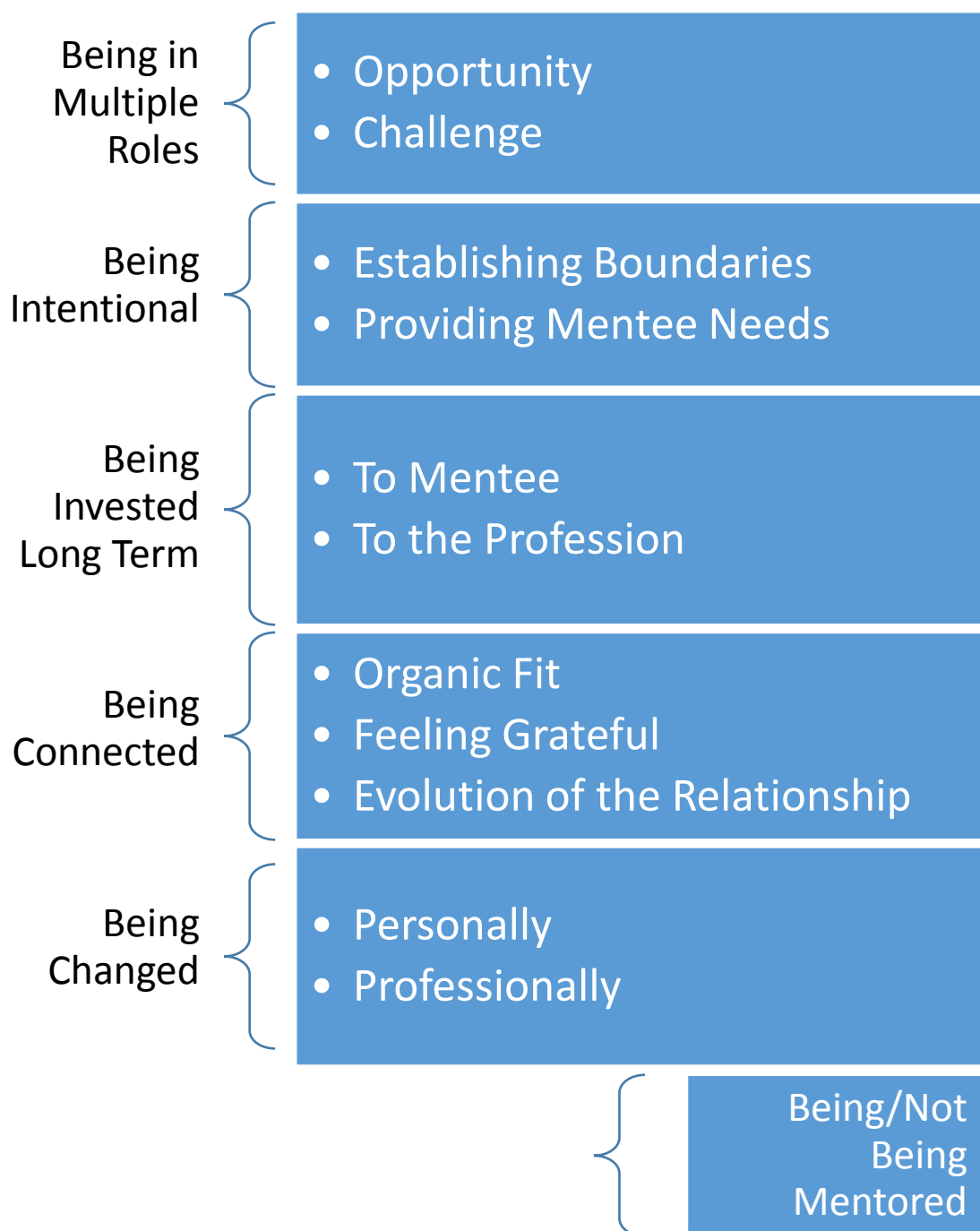
The second round of interpretive dialogues (Coe Smith, 2006) allowed for continued co-creation and confirmation of the round two thematic analyses. This co-creation was in alignment with the methodology in which the researcher and participant work closely together (van Manen, 1990). It was important to me that the participants were given power in the relationship to encourage their openness and honesty regarding the analysis. This was done through encouraging them to give their perspective on the coding and talking tentatively about the current analysis. Prior to meeting, the participants were emailed an outline of the thematic analysis, with changes italicized, and questions specifically focused on the added components to the analysis (see Appendix D). Due to researcher oversight one participant, John, did not receive this document until the time of the dialogue. Throughout the interview, time was given for him to review and read through the document to allow him to fully engage. The dialogues were set up individually with each participant across a four day period with each interview lasting between fifteen to thirty minutes. There were some minor complications with Skype, and in order to get accurate audio, LaToya and I used audio from a phone call while maintaining video connection with Skype. Each of the participants showed a willingness to engage as co-researchers throughout the dialogue.

Confirmed Thematic Analysis

The participants were encouraged to continue to focus their reflections on their experience as informal mentors as doctoral students with master's level students. The participants confirmed the current thematic analysis in addition to expressing their agreement with the added term of *long term* to **being invested** and the subtheme of the

evolution of the relationship. The incidental theme of **being mentored** was expanded to incorporate all of the participant descriptions to **being/not being mentored** to include the experience of not being mentored as an influential piece in being a mentor (see Figure 5). The dialogue regarding the confirmation of the themes and added descriptions to expand the current analysis is given, with a primary focus on these three components of the thematic analysis.

Figure 5. Round 2 themes of the lived experience of informal mentoring



Being Invested Long Term

The first area explored with the participants in the interpretive dialogue was regarding the addition of the words **long term** to the previous theme of **being invested**. I expressed my reasoning in adding this component, in that each participant had described an enduring component to their mentoring, and wanting to emphasize this commitment. John agreed with this addition and succinctly stated, “I think adding the term clarifies that piece about it being long term investment. I don’t think it detracts from my experience at all so I’d say it looks fine to me.” The other participants additionally agreed with this addition. The following quotes show their responses:

ANN: It does go for a long period. I don’t think that there’s any time where if any of those that I’ve mentored in the past if they were to contact me where I’d be like no I’m not going to do that for you, you know.

LATOYA: I think it has a dimension that I would agree with. I would agree with that. I think that it would be a factor; the long term-ness is a factor in the investment of a relationship. My mind was fragmented there because can I say that all mentoring relationships have a long term aspect to it and so then my first thought was no that’s hard to say. And then I thought no there is some aspect of long term-ness regardless of the type of relationship, the history that mentoring it’s still close and has a very long term feel and yet if the time comes where the mentee is flying on their own that long term-ness is still a factor of the mentor; that I can see that person flying or soaring and feel in some ways as if I contributed to that flight.

ELIZABETH: I do think it's a more appropriate term because it's not necessarily, like so I'm teaching a class right now to school psychology students and I care about them and I want them to be successful, but they're not school counselors and so I'm not necessarily invested in them, long term. But I feel like with the mentoring role, it's different and you are invested in them long term and so I think that's an appropriate change.

Elizabeth additionally added her perspective on how the addition fits with her investment to the profession as well. She said:

And I think what stood out to me when I looked at it too was the note about it to the profession. Because I think about that a lot and you know and talk to them and how I want them to be extraordinary school counselors so that when they're site supervisors for my future students, you know, my future students have role models they can look up to and that sort of thing. And so it is kind of this long term vision for how school counseling can move forward as profession.

The participant's descriptions add depth to their experience as a mentor **being invested long term** both to their mentees and to the profession.

Evolution of the Relationship

The subtheme of the **evolution of the relationship** within the theme of **being connected** was supported throughout the interpretive dialogue. LaToya gave her approval saying, "Yeah that definitely resonates with me. And as I hear you speak about it there was absolutely no doubt in my mind that my vote would be yes that needs to be added in the part of what you find." John described how it allowed him to include new

aspects of his relationships with his mentees within the mentoring umbrella with this developmental focus. His words describe his reaction:

I think it makes a lot of sense of adding that in there. And I think it makes sense because I know that I think a at least from what I'm recalling about last time I met when I would talk about the relationship changing it was I don't recall having a way of talking about that with it still being part of mentoring. It was like, yeah it's mentoring, but now all of these other things, you know, so I like this addition it makes sense about no it is a mentoring relationship it just transitions and develops.

Ann and Elizabeth also described the **evolution of the relationship** as part of their experience as mentors:

ANN: Well I definitely think that's the case um because there is an evolution of the relationship... Every time I see them I say 'how are things going', I catch up with them so and it does eventually it develops into a friendship eventually. Yes and I saw it most notable this past week at ACA, um reconnecting with a couple people that I've met in the past and just seeing them again and talking to them and it was much more like a friendship this time around than the last time I saw them.

ELIZABETH: Yeah I definitely would say that's been a part of my um mentorship experience and I think I um it's funny how I was so conscious of boundaries when I was mentoring the school counseling students but when they graduated I was so open to like turning that relationship into a friendship and still obviously mentoring them.

Elizabeth went on to share more specific examples of how the relationships evolve and mature over time. She told of having a past student and current mentee visit her, going to dinner, and drinks while in town. She contrasted this to mentees who are current students where a hierarchy still exists. Elizabeth said:

I wouldn't have ever offered that to a mentee you know so I think the relationships certainly evolve and that's a part of the process and it's a neat part of the process. The hierarchy is a little strange and so it's neat when that dissolves and you can still be a mentor but through more of a friendship than this like formal role as a doc student teaching or supervising master's student.

As relationships evolve beyond the hierarchical roles in the school setting, Elizabeth described it as "more comfortable and some of that freedom even probably facilitates the mentoring relationship because I can be more honest to them."

LaToya shared a contrasting experience in that for her the evolution is scary. Her words describe her emotional experience of this subtheme:

When you're speaking what came up for me is that I wonder if that evolution piece is why it's so scary. Because it is always changing and the person is always growing and you never know when you're going to be done and you never know how long it's going to take, and there's so much not knowing. Because it is always you know any said evolution I thought of some ways of a ball with the wheels turning with the evolution it's always changing it's always in a state of change and for me I see where that would be connected with the initial fear also of you know because as the mentor then I feel a bit of the responsibility for caring

for the relationship...and a model. All these things that the weight of it and being aware to say ...takes a lot of energy.

She went on and shared an experience related to the **evolution of the relationships** with a mentee that is currently a student. She described her new mentee that showed some growth, and how she experienced this change in their relationship. Latoya said:

I have been kind of talking about as a new mentee where I had a lot of the power and this person you know was asking me questions and deferring to me I felt that this person was deferring to me... so then this person said how about we do this thing with the project and so that it just took me to realize ok she is now finding her voice...my initial reaction was well that doesn't really fit into what we're doing the way that I see it, and at the same time wanting to support her. And this is the first time she's coming to me with something.

LaToya went on to describe the **evolution of the relationship** in this example as "transferring the power." While this subtheme can be experienced as freedom or scary, it appears that part of being a mentor as a doctoral student with master's student is encountering change, maturation, and development in the mentoring relationships.

Being/Not Being Mentored

Through the dialogue with the participants it was determined to continue to describe the theme of **being mentored** as an incidental theme in the analysis. In using the van Manen's (1990) method to distinguish between essential and incidental themes the question was explored, if this piece were removed, would the experience of being a doctoral student mentor remain. While LaToya experienced it as essential to her lived experience as a mentor, to encompass all of the participants experience it is described as

an incidental theme. From my perspective as the researcher and in dialogue with the participants, it appears that removing the experience of **being/not being mentored** does not take away from *most* of the participants individual experiences of being a mentor.

Elizabeth and Ann both expressed that they saw this theme as incidental:

ANN: I think it's more secondary. I don't think it was something that if it hadn't have happened that I still would have been a mentor that I think I wouldn't have needed to have had that, but it helped.

ELIZABETH: Well and I noticed you put it, did you put it as a secondary theme, is that what that represents?...I think that was very appropriate...I didn't go into my doc program and think I'm so glad I've had this mentorship, I'm going to give back now. It happened more naturally and it wasn't until the process was complete that I realized oh this really is a reason why I should continue to do this. So the secondary placement made sense to me.

For both Elizabeth and Ann this experience was not essential to their lived experience as mentors, yet it is still connected to their experience as mentors. For Elizabeth, her recent experience of **being mentored** has led her to want to continue being a mentor to students.

In contrast, LaToya expressed that **being mentored** was essential to her experience. The following dialogue describes her lived experience of **being mentored** as essential to her experience.

PARTICIPANT: I think my initial reaction to that is that it's surprising to me that it's an incidental theme. And so I guess I'm wondering or I am interested because it does fit for me and so I'm interested if with the other participants if you bring it up to them if there's anybody that says it doesn't represent it for them, that to me

is fascinating...And I'm really curious about somebody who would say that it doesn't resonate with them so that they were never mentored and it's not the passing the baton because nobody did it for them and yet they're engaging in it, how did that help them. How, that's my question.

INTERVIEWER: Right to make that choice to be a mentor without having been mentored previously.

PARTICIPANT: Yes

INTERVIEWER: And to even know how to engage in that type of a relationship. How to be: how to move.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: Yeah so it sounds like really for you it's an important piece of your experience as a mentor of it; really just kind of weaves into who you are as a mentor

PARTICIPANT: Yeah and I think that through this, your questions though I have really expanded my historical perspective of who actually has been a mentor to me. Prior to this research I had an intentional, I had a faculty you know, you have to pick a major advisor in the doctoral program and I picked a major advisor and that person talked about being a mentor that was the first time I'd actually thought of somebody being a mentor to me or someone using that word with me.

However and I still didn't get it or expand my thoughts on that word. When you said mentor I just thought about that one person, my faculty advisor that's all I ever thought of. Now after really reflecting on it and thinking about the definition and thinking about the aspect of mentoring, I've had a lot of mentors. I've had a

lot and I just didn't recognize them as that or call them that or realize that it's that. In my master's program with the faculty ...really kind of helped me understand about presenting and kind of took me under her wing and I didn't realize she was mentoring me. I didn't understand that it's just, yeah anyway, it's just this research has really expanded my ideas about it and then even in non-counseling relationships in business relationships for other things I have seen where people have mentored me, like regularly, I've been mentored and I just didn't realize it was there. And in some ways what this um, this thing that you're bringing up about passing the baton leads me to want to thank those people that I, that I want to acknowledge now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It seems like, it's pretty, there's a lot of gratitude

PARTICIPANT: Yes and a little bit of embarrassment or shame that I hadn't recognized it before now [laughter]. So I'm really thankful to you for this honor of participating in your research because I've gained so much from it and I really appreciate it.

As LaToya reflected on **being mentored** and her expanded understanding of who has mentored her over time, she began to tear up and paused frequently as she was talking. A lot of meaning for her: to be able to acknowledge and reflect on her mentors. She became full of emotion such as gratitude, shame, and honor from in her experience of **being mentored**. While LaToya's lived experience of being a mentor as a doctoral student incorporates her essential experience of **being mentored** herself, to incorporate all participant experiences, it is identified as an incidental.

In dialogue with John and Elizabeth it was also expanded to include the experience of **not being mentored** to include the dichotomous experiences from the participants. In meeting with John, it became clearer that **not being mentored** can also play a role in **being a mentor** by wanting to give others what they had wished to have received. While Elizabeth experienced **being mentored** as a master's student, she additionally experienced **not being mentored** as a doctoral student. The following quotes from John and Elizabeth add description to their experience of **not being mentored**:

JOHN: I think more of my efforts about being mentored about being a mentor came from trying to give what I wish I would have gotten but didn't in terms of someone else to give some feedback who was in it...So for me I would say not being mentored kind of played more into it. But on that past experiences with mentoring you know I do think plays into this if other people talk about how great their mentoring was and that was their experience with it, I would see mine as similar in the fact that just my experiences of past mentoring and that there weren't any played into how I see myself and the reason I see mentoring as important.

ELIZABETH: So on the one hand the presence of the mentorship from my [master's] professors has mattered but then the absence of not getting you know what I wished I could from my current professors I think has also impacted me... My lack of mentorship was in my doc student graduate studies not necessarily as a master's student, but I think still it's like a parallel process...I recognized that they weren't getting what they need and that's why I kind of jumped in and took

on more of a mentorship role. But there also was probably some transference of like I'm not getting what I need so let me channel this energy into trying to give them what they need... even though I was trying to just address their lack of support by providing support, it also gave me, not necessarily support, but it gave me meaning.

For both John and Elizabeth, experiencing a lack of support or mentoring heightened their awareness of the need for mentoring; drove them to want to support the students by knowing what it was like to not receive support. Both **being mentored** and **not being mentored** can be important pieces closely connected to the experience of being a mentor. As Ann described a mentor she said "what I've learned from him and his guidance and his wisdom has been an influence in how I work with others." While an incidental theme to the lived experience described in this research, it is an influential experience in the lives of these doctoral students.

Agreement with themes

The participants unanimously expressed confirmation that the current thematic analysis was representative of their experience. The participants were asked in the interpretive dialogue to reflect on areas of their mentoring experience which may be incomplete, missing, or variant from that which was currently described. John took some time to pause, reflect, and read through the analysis after which he answered "No? I don't think there's anything I would add or change." Ann said "when I read through it, it seemed really accurate and seemed really interesting so I don't know...It sounded like it was pretty on." The following quotes further describe the participants' confirmation of the thematic analysis:

LATOYA: No. Prior to, you know, when you sent out the last document to review and everything, my thought is how thorough it is and how deep it is and how coming to this meeting I thought I don't have anything more. It feels exhaustive not in that sense, it feels thorough like an exhaustive research, like that it's prolonged engagement and no more new information. Every stone has been unturned and every corner has been looked at and yeah it feels very thorough...there is full saturation.

ELIZABETH: No I read through them earlier for this morning and I as I said before feel like they capture what experience was, even some of the points I probably wouldn't have thought of off the top of my head. But I think you have just a really comprehensive list here. There isn't anything on here that hasn't been part of my experience as much and as far as I can tell there isn't anything missing either.

Ensuring that the analysis accurately represents their experience is important as a researcher. Having received the confirmation from the participants regarding the themes and subthemes is vital to completing the thematic analysis.

Summary

In concluding the researcher relationship with the participants I expressed my gratitude and appreciation for their openness, insight, willingness to engage, and be vulnerable in the research. Elizabeth stated, "Oh sure it's been a positive experience and you've done a lot of listening. And so I appreciate you doing that and so no but it's been a really positive experience." I gave each of the participants the opportunity to read my writings and expressed my openness to their feedback regarding how I represent them

and their words. Ann said, “I hope you end up publishing this someday I think it would be very interesting to see or at ACA or ACES” and stated her interest in this topic. John stated that due to time he would not be interested in reading or reviewing the writings. Elizabeth said, “I’d love to read...when you are done.” And LaToya similarly expressed her curiosity:

Well I definitely would love to review anything that you have written or anything you would like to share...Your perception of what I’ve shared is part of the research so my epistemological position is not looking to see if what you’ve said is right because I know what it is for me. I’m really interested in what is that perception and that co-creation. What data has been co-created because for me then there’s no correcting it it’s a beautiful thing...so I’m going to appreciate it as co-created data.

As LaToya stated, this is a “beautiful thing” which was “co-created” with each of the participants.

In concluding the analysis for this research, it appears that saturation has been reached. No new information is being discussed by the participants, and they expressed the analysis as “thorough”, “deep”, and “accurate” to their experience. The themes of **being in multiple roles**, **being intentional**, **being invested long term**, **being connected**, and **being changed** and the associated subthemes (see Figure 5) are rich descriptions for these participants experience of being an informal mentor to master’s students while in their doctoral training. Additionally the incidental theme of **being/not being mentored** emerged to varying degrees for each participant. The lived experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student appears to have rich meaning for these participants

and I was honored to work on the horizon with each of them to gain an understanding of what it means to be a mentor.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

This study was an exploration of the lived experience of doctoral students as informal mentors to master's students. van Manen's human science pedagogy (1990) was used to gain a rich understanding of this human experience through the use of interviews. The participants engaged in two rounds of interviews with each interview being followed by an interpretive dialogue. The intent of the interviews was to gain a deep description of what it meant for the participants to be informal mentors with master's students. This included a discussion regarding stories, emotions, and thoughts connected to this phenomenon. The interpretive dialogues (Coe Smith, 2006) were a method used to bring in the participants as co-researchers and engage in a discussion regarding the coding and analysis. The participants were asked to clarify, correct, or confirm the analysis so that it accurately represented their experience of being an informal mentor.

The participants displayed high reflexivity and engagement throughout the research process. They each responded to the email request sent through the professional listservs of counseling graduate students, and counselor education/supervision and were willing to share their experience of being a mentor. The interviews and interpretive dialogues took place between November 2014 and March 2015. Each of the participants were from different CACREP universities and were in the final year of their doctoral studies. Each of the participants was engaged in work on their dissertation as the research began. One participant defended their dissertation through the duration of the interviews, with the others coming close to an end, with the anticipated graduation the current academic school year. Three of the participants were from the Southern region as

identified by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision with one participant being from the Rocky Mountain region. Of the participants, one was male and the remainder female. One participant was in their twenties, two in their thirties, and one in their fifties. The lived experience of these participants related to the phenomenon of being an informal mentor provided deep meaning to what it means to be an informal mentor to master's student while in a doctoral program.

This concluding chapter details my reflections of utilizing the phenomenological lens throughout this dissertation research. I share this journey to highlight the research process as it relates to phenomenology and the phenomenon of study. As I moved through this research I moved through excitement and energy to exhaustion and confusion multiple times. And as the participants describe the change that they experienced from being a mentor, I similarly experienced change through coming into contact with their experience, and engaging as researcher in this study.

A more detailed account regarding the thematic analysis is given in previous chapters of the dissertation. This chapter focuses on my transparency as a researcher, to add further context to the reader regarding my experience and position as the researcher. Following my reflections, I share implications regarding the analysis and methods. I am careful not to draw conclusions, and merely provide reflections and information in the hopes that the reader may grasp the meaning of this phenomenon.

Reflections

In concluding this dissertation research, I am touched by the opportunity that I had to gain an understanding in a very personal way, what it was like for these participants to be informal mentors while in their doctoral training. The topic of this

dissertation research is something familiar and personal to my own experience as a master's and doctoral student. As a master's student, having a mentor in the doctoral program was a meaningful experience. As I continued into my doctoral program I have valued the relationships that I have developed with the master's students. I have had opportunities to work closely with a few master's student, yet I am hesitant to consider my experiences within the realm of mentoring due to most of my experiences residing within my roles as teacher or supervisor. I have had instances in which I have mentored and supported master's students and this research has enriched my meaning of those experiences. Other doctoral students may experience the role of mentor and I found my curiosity growing. I wanted to know more about what it was like for other doctoral students engaging in the naturally occurring, informal mentoring relationships while in their doctoral training. In reviewing the literature, I found a gap, with minimal research in this area. While some literature existed for the broader counseling field, I could not find anything that appeased my curiosities. This increased my desire to learn more and gain a greater understanding of what it means to be an informal mentor as a doctoral student, to meet my own curiosities in addition to filling the gap in the counseling literature.

When it came to identifying a method to understand this experience, my own worldview regarding research coupled with the research question at hand guided my decision to use van Manen's human science pedagogy (1990). The research question focused on gaining an understanding of a phenomenon led me to use a type of phenomenological method. I was first exposed to phenomenology and van Manen's method in a qualitative course in spring 2013. I was more deeply involved in his

writings, and particularly his book, “Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy” due to a cohort project using his methods in conjunction with auto ethnography. In the fall 2013, I read his book and found myself connecting to the existential focus throughout the research method. I valued the focus on meaning and connection with the intent of research to allow others to gain contact with a human experience. The researcher and participant were closely intertwined, and through reading and using this method in other projects, it requires vulnerability and honesty to bring all parts of the researcher into this type of study. My experience of this dissertation will further highlight how I experienced bringing myself into this research. I felt this method combined my view of counseling, pedagogy, and research into one. I was at first intimidated by the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology which led me to read and reread his writings throughout the dissertation process. I have come to conclude that one does not arrive at understanding what it means to engage in research using the human science pedagogy, it is a moving, growing process of change.

Utilizing van Manen’s human science pedagogy required me to bring in my whole self as a researcher, doctoral student, and person. I experienced this as both meaningful and exhausting. I was excited by the response of my participants, their engagement in the research, and the variety of experiences described. In moving through the research I had a process that included excitement and energy, pouring my heart into it, emotionally touched, and drained. While part of this may be incidental to all dissertation research, I found that this particular method within this specific topic to be especially meaningful for me.

As I received responses from a number of participants, I was anxious and excited to begin the research. After the first round of interviews the last comment that I wrote in my memo was, “I am excited to dive in and synthesize it all to see what comes of it.” I began with the transcripts, which took more effort than anticipated. I found that other life responsibilities began to encroach on this experience, including a job interview in another state and the holiday break. While it was difficult to manage my time, listening to the transcripts was helpful in getting to know the participants and becoming more familiar with the data. I found that I heard new pieces that I had not previously noticed as I listened and transcribed the interviews. I particularly remember transcribing Ann’s interview, and my memo writing described this experience:

In transcribing and reading through the transcript I get a sense that I was nervous during this interview, as evidenced by asking more questions that weren’t as focused as I would have liked. Didn’t feel as connected to Ann, but after reading and listening to the interview I feel like I got to know her better. I got a greater sense of her commitment to these students.

The benefits of gaining a better connection and understanding made the transcribing experience more meaningful. The coding experience was surprisingly difficult. I felt as if I was walking into a forest, where the first few hours I am captured by the beauty of the scenery, and then the sun sets and the clarity of the path is gone. The trees begin to blend into one another, the path is invisible, and I am starkly aware of my isolation. The number of pages of coding terms, summaries, words soon became a muddy mess. I felt drained, confused, and exhausted. While I embrace independence, the isolation of the coding experience was uncomfortable. I became aware of the value of other perspectives

and my own need to verbally process. Recognizing this, I would talk to myself throughout the coding, throughout the days it took for me to grasp the meaning of the data. I moved through the various ways to code described in the human science pedagogy (van Manen, 1990) with pages of words and phrases spread across my desk.

In reviewing other dissertation research using van Manen's methods, I connected with the emphasis placed on "being" in Koltz (2009) research. As I began to emphasize the nature of *being* an informal mentor, the coding emerged. I found that being an informal mentor as a doctoral student meant **being in multiple roles, being intentional, being invested, being connected, and being changed**. As quickly as the darkness of the 'coding forest' appeared, I found the path again. I experienced what van Manen described as "a free act of 'seeing' meaning" (1990, p.79). The excitement soon returned as I identified a way to make meaning of the data. As the coding began to emerge, I can recall sitting at my table reading the participants quotes and silently crying. I was touched by the commitment, the care, and the real human experience that was being described. I felt deeply connected to my participants. I felt the pain and fear and the joy and investment that they were describing, and it became real to me. It was more than merely words or quotes, it was their reality, and it was a piece of their world. I was honored to hear it, to see it. This connection with the participants moved me to have energy to complete the first round of the coding. The closeness that I experienced in the interviews, transcribing, and coding procedures allowed me to better understand their experience of being informal mentors.

While I felt clarity as the thematic analysis emerged, I was cautious in ensuring they were described as tentative themes. As noted in the thematic analysis chapters

previously, I was aware of the limitations of a theme, in that they are a simplification of a human experience (van Manen, 1990). I wanted to recreate what I had experienced in reading, hearing, and seeing the phenomenon emotionally and cognitively, and felt limited in word. I felt timid in presenting the thematic analysis to the participants, and wanted their feedback before finalizing both rounds of the analysis. I placed heavy emphasis in including participant dialogue, in hopes that the reader may encounter this experience as I had. In recognizing the value and richness of their mentoring experiences, I felt a weight on my shoulders to accurately portray this experience. It was important to share this weight with my participants and include them in the research process. The previous chapters describe the interpretive dialogues with each participant and how it contributed to the thematic analysis. It was helpful to receive their clarification, corrections, and confirmations for each theme and subtheme. I experienced the participants as being honest and genuine as they engaged as co-researcher with me. Their participation in the coding procedure increased my confidence in the thematic analysis and results.

There are components of my experience which vary from that described by the participants, while there are many similarities. I could relate to each of the primary themes as I reflected on my own experiences as a doctoral student. As the participants described being in multiple roles, intentional, invested, connected, and changed, there were times that I would connect to my own experience. There was an important balance to find as I brought in my own experience to the forefront of my mind, while distinguishing it from that which is described by the participants. I did not attempt to bracket or remove my own experience from the research, and would rather acknowledge

and become aware of its presence. An example of an assumption was written in my memo:

So perhaps my assumption that the mentoring relationships wouldn't be found as much in a first year doctoral students experience influenced the participants. Or perhaps it is true that it does take longer to evolve and that this is evidenced by those requesting participation in the research. This is not something that can be answered through this research study due to its scope and intent. My awareness of assumptions or experience would come during coding, writing, and meetings with the participants. In the final interpretive dialogue with LaToya she reflected on her experience as a participant in this research study. She stated:

I think that there's also another thought that's coming up for me is you know shining a light on past relationships in a positive way; shining that bright light on all of the gifts and the positive things that people contributed to. For some reason I think that in our culture or just in general and maybe it's being in the counseling field that you know one hears or hears from other people what they didn't get from a relationships so this is a really wonderful way to look at relationships. And in some ways I want to incorporate this into you know into a way of looking back on relationships for others like to help other people look back on the relationships and what others have done for them. Not what they forgot to do or didn't do

As LaToya reflected on the positive nature of the thematic analysis I began to reflect on my assumption that mentoring is an overall helpful and positive experience for both the mentor and mentee. Perhaps my assumption influenced the thematic analysis. I do not

identify this assumption or other assumptions or my own experience as good or bad, it just is; I acknowledge its existence.

Lastly, I feel it important to honor my connection with the participants. I had a unique relationship with each participant and experienced them as unique individuals. With John, I found a commonality in our interest in research on mentoring. He described having a similar interest which drew him to this research. I was also intrigued that it was originally one of his mentees who encouraged him to participate in the research. A brief description I wrote in my memo described some of how I experienced John.

I really get the sense that he values his relationship with these two mentees tremendously...and while originally I was struck or almost turned off by the dryness of his mentoring relationships focused on instructional type pieces, he really ensured that he did not mold his mentees to be like him and empowered them.

I was surprised when John emailed me part way through the research process and told me he had met someone interested in mentoring research. I was surprised to hear him tell how he was open to sharing how he was a participant in my study and wanted to share that with others. He gave me this individual's information to allow me to connect with other professionals with similar interests. From this I learned that the participants may be thinking about this research beyond our few meetings. I learned from John the value of networking and creating support from colleagues.

As previously noted, I was originally nervous in my interviews and interactions with Ann. Once I was able to slow down, and connect with her, I felt our relationship emerged. I learned that her way of interacting was direct and to the point. She

communicated without pretense. I came to value our relationship, her way of being, and her genuine way of interacting. We were later able to connect on our shared process of writing the dissertation and being in similar stages of our process. In my interactions with Ann I learned to move beyond my nervousness and insecurities, to engage in authentic interactions in my interviews.

I felt a natural connection emerged with Elizabeth, which may also be partially due to our similar age. I described Elizabeth in my memo as, “very optimistic and positive in her approach on mentoring.” Elizabeth shared that participating in the research was a “positive experience” and increased her awareness of mentoring. Elizabeth shared her context in the second round of interviews of having a number of job interviews, and finally deciding on a job around a similar time that I was experiencing the same thing. It was exciting to congratulate her on her job as I was engaging in a similar experience.

In my relationship with LaToya throughout this research, I felt like I got to see a glimpse of who she is beyond being a mentor. She shared honestly and without reserve. My interviews with LaToya felt natural and she needed few prompts to go deeper. At times she would challenge herself to self-evaluate or reflect on a component. In my final meeting with LaToya I expressed my gratitude to her:

LATOYA: ...So I'm really thankful to you for this honor of participating in your research because I've gained so much from it and I really appreciate it

INTERVIEWER: Well thank you. I've gained a lot too and, you know I feel like you've been so open and allowed yourself to expand and become aware and learn

and grow through this that, it's neat for me to see that, hear about I guess the influence and awareness that you've gained from being a part of it.

I was humbled by LaToya's willingness to share what she had gained from the research. I learned from her what it means to be fully engaged. I also felt changed. LaToya reminded of what an honor it was to touch and hold the sacred experiences of these participants.

Limitations

The use of van Manen's (1990) human science pedagogy provided insight to the meaning of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student to master's students. Through this research I became aware of the multiple possibilities of understanding and making meaning of this human experience. While there may be meaning gleaned from this dissertation research, there are limitations to this research. There were times in which the use of video conferencing via Skype presented challenges in the continuity of discussion, which may have influenced the connection with the participants. There were a number of instances with each participant in which the call would end or temporarily pause. In one interview with LaToya the audio did not work, which resulted in using the video of Skype and the audio from a phone call. One interview with Ann, the video did not work while the audio did work properly. The participants were most understanding in working through these technical challenges.

Another limitation may be that each of the participants were in the final year of their doctoral training. While the request for participant's specified participants be at minimum in their second year of doctoral training, it incidentally led to participants in their final year becoming participants in the research. Having doctoral students at similar

developmental levels may pose limitations regarding how these mentoring relationships may be experienced during other years of doctoral training. Having participants in differing developmental levels may have enriched the data. Having the participants in the final year of their training also posed as a strength in that they had prolonged exposure to the phenomenon of study. While the participants brought in current or recent examples to share, they also brought in past reflections from previous years of their doctoral training as it related to their mentoring. Additionally, having only one male voice among the participants may also pose as a limitation. One participant was half Native American, with the remainder of the participants Caucasian, which limits the perspective regarding cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

As mentioned previously, the use of the interpretive dialogue was intended to bring in the participants as co-researchers. While this provided credibility to the research there are potential limitations that may have existed. While I would intentionally provide space for the participants to give feedback on the analysis through the use of tentative language and intentional questions, I acknowledge my position of power as the researcher. It was intended to diffuse some of this power through the interpretive dialogue, and it is unknown how the participants experienced their role as co-researchers. It is important to note that the participants may have been fearful or unsure of their position to provide feedback on the thematic analysis, in addition to varying degrees of knowledge regarding phenomenological thematic analysis. While it is hoped that safety was provided for their honesty, I allow the reader to review the interpretive dialogues to evaluate the credibility of the results.

While each of the participants unanimously expressed in the concluding interpretive dialogue that the thematic analysis was full and accurately represented their experience, it is possible that further engagement in research may yield increased results. van Manen (1990) described this as being fulfilled and more frequent silence in the dialogue. This was true as the final interpretive dialogues were shorter in duration, and the participants more brief in their descriptions. I informed participants of the possibility of needing further engagement if new data emerged, and they were willing to engage. No new data appeared to emerge. While this was interpreted as a saturation of data, it is possible that more meaning may be gleaned from further dialogue with the participants. Limitations existed regarding practical constraints of continuing the research including time expectations of the participants, funding, and graduation dates. It is anticipated that further engagement with the participants may yield a richer meaning, more stories, and depth to the lived experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student. A balance was found regarding practical limitations and adequate engagement in the research to still gather a rich and deep result.

I engaged in reflexivity to promote trustworthiness of the results through the use of memo writing. There is no formula for the amount of writing required to achieve trustworthiness, and it is possible that increased writing may have promoted credibility. While I engaged in reflective writing, there are instances I shared my experience in dialogue with others which was not recorded for future evaluation. This may be a potential limitation in this research. While there may have been limitations to this research, there were methods used to manage these limits and promote trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

A description regarding the use of trustworthy methods to meet the demands of credibility are additionally described. These results are a description of these four participants human experience. To promote trustworthiness of the results I engaged in the use of memo writing, grounded the analysis in participant dialogue, and used the interpretive dialogue to bring in the participants as co-researcher. The participants were additionally given the opportunity to read the final analysis and other portions of the dissertation to provide clarity and correction as needed. While some philosophical perspectives promote a bracketing of the researcher, the use of van Manen's (1990) methods promote a deep engagement on the part of the researcher. Some may see this personal connection as bias which may pose as a limitation, yet this research demands the researcher to "attempt to produce something of meaning as the result of a fusion of the author's own horizon with that projected by the text, as well as to test the author's own prior understandings" (Hyde, 2005, p.37). My connection with the participants, and willingness to engage with them proved this fusion to be challenging and rewarding in order to "produce something of meaning" (p.37). Memo writing was used to engage in reflexivity and bring to awareness my stance and perspective as a researcher. These layers of reflexivity and participant engagement provided a sense of checks and balances to promote credibility of the results. Further descriptions of measures of trustworthiness are described in the methodology.

In review of the limitations and measures used to promote trustworthiness or credibility of this research, I propose that this research meets the demands of qualitative research in terms of trustworthiness. I actively used reflexivity as a researcher, engaged

the participants in co-creating the thematic analysis, and couched each theme within specific quotes from each participant. The resulting thematic analysis is a credible description of what it means for these four participants to be an informal mentor as a doctoral student to master's students.

Implications

The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of the meaning of being an informal mentor while a doctoral student specific to the participants of this study. This inquiry provides insight into the lived experience regarding this phenomenon of study. The results of this research may inform doctoral student development, training, and mentoring practices within counseling and counselor education. This research additionally provides areas which may highlight further areas of inquiry.

Doctoral Students

Doctoral students who are engaged in mentoring relationships with master's students may compare their experience with that of these doctoral students. This research may provide insight or allow them to deepen their awareness of their own experience as doctoral student mentors. The research of Murdock et al. (2013) on formalized mentoring between doctoral students and master's students found that the doctoral students experienced enhanced professional development, connected mentoring and the counseling process, giving back to the profession, and the development of collegial relationships and friendships with their mentees. Each of these themes were described in a similar fashion by the participants in this study and may be found within the themes, for example enhanced professional development as described as **being changed professionally** and development of collegial relationships and friendships as **being**

connected and the **evolution of the relationship**. This dissertation research adds further richness and description to what it means to be a mentor as a doctoral student in addition to expanding the understanding to informal mentoring relationships.

Through this research, doctoral students may gain insight to what they may encounter if they were to engage in informal mentoring with master's students. It is important for doctoral students to note that for these participants, the mentoring relationships were not forced or sought after. Rather these participants experienced having master's students reach out to them for support, and the **organic fit** between mentor and mentee was a piece of that relationship. As described by these participants, doctoral student mentors encounter both challenges and benefits to being an informal mentor. Their commitment to the profession and their mentees allow those considering becoming a mentor to have an awareness of the commitment which may be required to be a mentor. It may provide insight to doctoral students on how to **be intentional** in navigating multiple roles while in doctoral training. The results of this research contribute to the notion that mentoring is a professional area in doctoral training that may promote doctoral student development (Carlson et al., 2006; Dollarhide et al., 2013; Murdoch et al., 2013). Additional implications exist for doctoral student training which are discussed in regards to counselor educators.

Counselor Educators

The current CACREP standards (2009) do not include training on mentoring, while the proposed draft for new standards (CACREP, 2014) does briefly include a component of mentoring. The participants described the lack of training that they received in their doctoral training regarding mentoring. They experienced fear and

confusion as they moved through multiple roles, ultimately making decisions independently regarding **establishing boundaries** that they set for themselves in their mentoring relationships with master's students. Incorporating knowledge and awareness of mentoring in doctoral training may assist doctoral students in establishing ethical, healthy, and effective mentoring relationships with master's students.

As found in the thematic analysis, there is something unique about doctoral students as mentors for master's students. The participants described the opportunity of doctoral students being a mentor, which was described by their mentees as safe in contrast to faculty. Promoting this form of relationship may promote master's student growth for those who engage as mentees with doctoral students. It may additionally serve as a support to counselor education faculty, as doctoral students serve as a support to the master's students. It is not promoted that the faculty use the doctoral students as a way to spy on master's students, but rather be aware that for some master's students, having a doctoral student to approach may be more comfortable. This research continues to display how mentoring within counseling can move the profession forward, and promotes growth of the counseling field.

Finally, while it may be helpful to promote and encourage doctoral students to engage as mentors to master's students, the findings of this research also draw attention to the **organic** nature of informal mentoring. As Elizabeth reflected, "If I did have a doc student in the future and I said 'hey you should create this experience because it was awesome for me', I don't know if it could happen; some of it is just organic." The **organic fit** of the relationship was described as essential for these participants, in which both the mentor and mentee chose to be in those relationships. It is encouraged that

counselor educators do not force mentoring relationships, and rather encourage optimal environments for informal mentoring to emerge. The experiences of these participants described opportunities arising from their multiple roles such as teacher, supervisor, and researcher. Counselor educators may encourage those opportunities while also observing the characteristics of these doctoral mentors which were essential to these mentoring relationships. These characteristics are described throughout the thematic analysis such as **intentionality**, **investment to the mentee** and **profession**, a willingness to learn, and humility and **feeling grateful**. Fostering opportunity and characteristics consistent with these participants experience may enhance further mentoring opportunities for future doctoral students.

Future Research

This line of inquiry provided insight to what these four participants experienced as doctoral student mentors to master's students. Further research may examine various areas which were found within this research, in addition to expanding the literature on mentoring in counselor education. Research focused on each theme in the analysis may give clarity and depth to the analysis. It may be beneficial to explore how doctoral students experience **being in multiple roles** both in mentoring relationships and in other interactions with master's students. Limited research exists regarding the relationships between doctoral students and master's students, and this research is one of many future studies which may add to the contextual picture of doctoral-master's student relations in counselor education. The succeeding themes namely **being intentional**, **being invested**, **being connected**, **being changed**, and the incidental theme of **being/not being mentored** may be researched more specifically within counselor education. Exploring

each individual piece of being a mentor as found in this literature through the use of varying qualitative and quantitative methods will continue to expand the understanding of mentoring. Future research may focus on enhanced purposeful sampling through increasing the diversity of the participants such as gender and ethnicity. Additionally, research using phenomenology with other forms of mentoring such as mentoring for pre-tenured faculty and faculty to student mentoring may be helpful in expanding the mentoring literature in counselor education.

This research utilized phenomenology to understand the lived experience of these participants. Grounded theory methods may be applied to this topic to create a theory regarding how doctoral student to master's student mentoring is created and evolves over time. Additionally, the use of quantitative methods may provide generalizable results. It may be helpful to know the current status, frequency, and impact of doctoral student-master's student mentoring has from the perspectives of both doctoral students and master's students through the use of quantitative research methods. Each theme and subtheme may be created into a measure and used in future quantitative research.

Finally, it is proposed that this research study using van Manen's methods may be replicated through exploring the perspective of master's students who have a doctoral student mentor. While the participants in this research occasionally described what their master's students have said, or hinted at potential implications for master's students, this current study is limited to the doctoral student perspective. It may also be helpful to find master's student and doctoral student pairs, to gain perspectives of both pieces of the mentoring relationship through the use of qualitative or quantitative methods. Further research may examine formal mentoring practices and it may be additionally insightful to

compare and contrast formal and informal mentoring practices in counselor education.

Further research on mentoring practices and experiences in counselor education is hoped to enhance effective practices of the invaluable tool of mentoring.

Conclusion

This dissertation research attempted to capture the naturally existing experience of informal mentoring between doctoral students and master's students as experienced by doctoral students. The use of van Manen's (1990) phenomenology allowed a rich description of what this phenomenon means to materialize through the thematic analysis. My experience of engaging in this research was described in a transparent manner. Limitations of this study were described in addition to implications for doctoral students, counselor education, and the broader counseling field. Future research may continue to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of mentoring from multiple angles and perspectives. It is hoped that the reader heard and saw the experience of the participants as I have. It is my hope that others come in contact with the participants lived experience, to build awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of informal mentoring as experienced by doctoral students. And to my participants, who are the crux and whole of this research, I express my gratitude. I was honored to hold such a personal and deep experience through your eyes.

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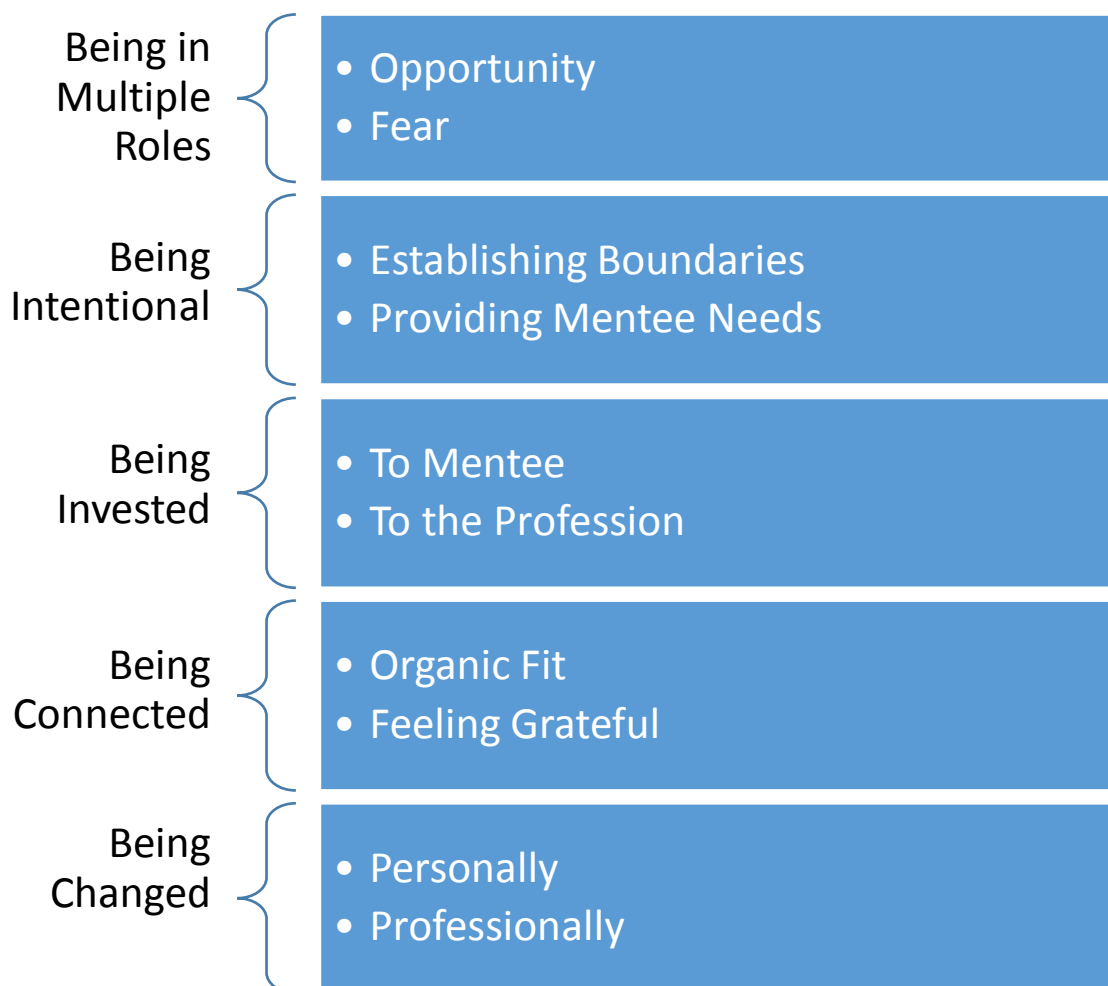
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interpretive Dialogue One Interview Document

Have these questions in mind as you review the preliminary codes:

- Do the current themes accurately portray your experience as an informal mentor in counselor education?
- In reviewing your quotes and stories, do they fit within the themes/subthemes they have been connected with?
- What areas of your mentoring experience may be missing from this thematic description?

The following themes and subthemes complete the phrase “Being an informal mentor as a doctoral student means:”



Being in Multiple Roles

Doctoral students experience multiple roles in their work with mentors which can be experienced as both an opportunity and fear.

Opportunity

The duality of roles can mean the opportunity to create mentoring relationships, and was frequently described as the roots of a mentoring relationship. One of the multiple roles each of these mentors shared was being a doctoral student, which was described as both an opportunity and challenge.

Fear

Being in multiple roles is also experienced as fear, with the ambiguity and confusion of boundaries.

Being Intentional

The element of being intentional as a mentor contains two components which describe the experience of being intentional in establishing boundaries and providing mentee needs.

Establishing Boundaries

Establishing boundaries was the intentional work of the mentor to create clarity in the relationship including expectations, roles, and purpose of the mentoring relationship. Establishing boundaries also included the intentional decision of what to share with mentees, how much of themselves to disclose, and how to engage with mentees.

Providing Mentee Needs

In providing mentee needs, participants described an understanding of their mentees and intentionally offering support, guidance, or validation depending upon the needs of the mentee.

Being Invested

The theme of being invested was evident from these participants, both to their mentees and to the profession. They described commitment, energy, and work that they put into both areas. Their experience of being invested is connected to the idea of an investment in that they put work into it with the hope or expectation for a return on their investment

To Mentee

The participants described a willingness to put in the work which included an investment of themselves. This included a commitment to their mentees and mentoring, time, and bringing themselves into the mentoring.

To the Profession

For these mentors, being a mentor meant also moving the profession forward, it meant having a strong professional identity, and being passionate about various professional endeavors.

Being Connected

The experience of being connected was present for each participant, and was frequently referred to in varying terms. In striving to grasp the meaning of what it means to be connected for these participants in mentoring relationships, I am touched by the emphasis and value they each place on their connection with their mentees.

Organic Fit

The experience of connection as being an **organic fit** includes the experience of organic development, shared interests, and a natural fit between mentor and mentee.

Feeling Grateful

As each of the participants spoke of their experience of **being connected**, the sense of gratitude that they had towards the opportunity to be a mentor and to know these students is captured in this subtheme. The experience of **being connected** as a mentor was frequently described as feeling lucky and honoring the relationship which represents their gratitude for the relationship, almost in a sacred manner.

Being Changed

The lived experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student in counselor education means being changed. This change is experienced both **personally** and **professionally**.

Personally

Personal change included internal and social ways in which the participants experienced growth. This growth included confidence, validation, and social support.

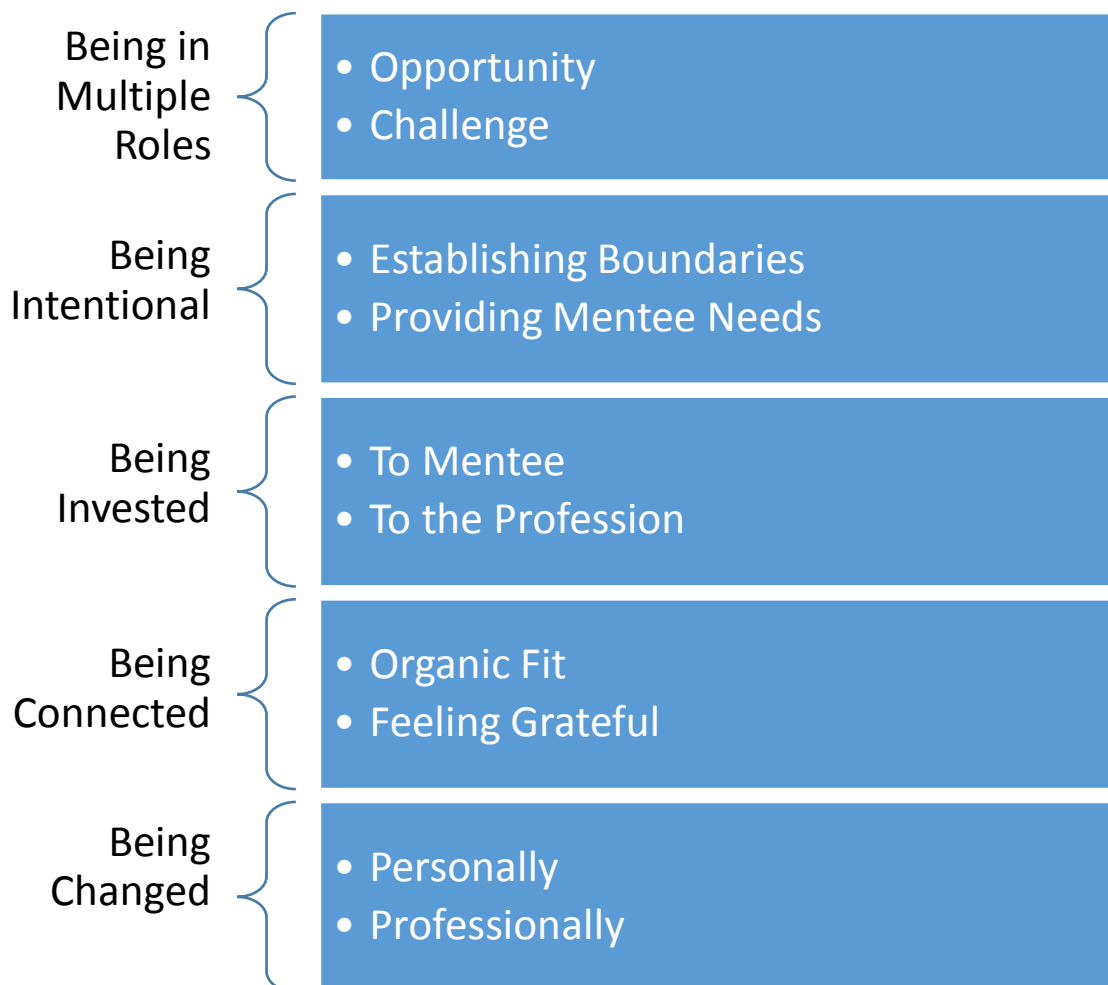
Professionally

The professional change was experienced developmentally as a doctoral student and potential future faculty. Examples of ways that this was experienced for these doctoral students include gaining perspective, increased networks, and solidifying counselor educator identity.

Appendix B: Round Two Interview Document

- Describe your experience of [insert theme/subtheme] in relation to your experience of being an informal mentor?
- What experiences or metaphors may give further depth to this theme?

The following themes and subthemes complete the phrase “Being an informal mentor as a doctoral student means:”



Being in Multiple Roles

Doctoral students experience multiple roles in their work with mentors which can be experienced as both an opportunity and challenge.

Opportunity

The duality of roles can mean the opportunity to create mentoring relationships, and was frequently described as the roots of a mentoring relationship. One of the multiple roles each of these mentors shared was being a doctoral student, which was described as both an opportunity and challenge.

Challenge

Being in multiple roles is also experienced as challenge, with the ambiguity and confusion of boundaries.

Being Intentional

The element of being intentional as a mentor contains two components which describe the experience of being intentional in establishing boundaries and providing mentee needs.

Establishing Boundaries

Establishing boundaries was the intentional work of the mentor to create clarity in the relationship including expectations, roles, and purpose of the mentoring relationship. Establishing boundaries also included the intentional decision of what to share with mentees, how much of themselves to disclose, and how to engage with mentees.

Providing Mentee Needs

In providing mentee needs, participants described an understanding of their mentees and intentionally offering support, guidance, or validation depending upon the needs of the mentee.

Being Invested

The theme of being invested was evident from these participants, both to their mentees and to the profession. They described commitment, energy, and work that they put into both areas. Their experience of being invested is connected to the idea of an investment in that they put work into it with the hope or expectation for a return on their investment. Included the idea of paying it forward.

To Mentee

The participants described a willingness to put in the work which included an investment of themselves. This included a commitment to their mentees and mentoring, time, and bringing themselves into the mentoring.

To the Profession

For these mentors, being a mentor meant also moving the profession forward, it meant having a strong professional identity, and being passionate about various professional endeavors.

Being Connected

The experience of being connected was present for each participant, and was frequently referred to in varying terms. In striving to grasp the meaning of what it means to be connected for these participants in mentoring relationships, I am touched by the emphasis and value they each place on their connection with their mentees.

Organic Fit

The experience of connection as being an **organic fit** includes the experience of organic development, shared interests, and a natural fit between mentor and mentee.

Feeling Grateful

As each of the participants spoke of their experience of **being connected**, the sense of gratitude that they had towards the opportunity to be a mentor and to know these students is captured in this subtheme. The experience of **being connected** as a mentor was frequently described as feeling lucky and honoring the relationship which represents their gratitude for the relationship, almost in a sacred manner.

Being Changed

The lived experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student in counselor education means being changed. This change is experienced both **personally** and **professionally**.

Personally

Personal change included internal and social ways in which the participants experienced growth. This growth included confidence, validation, and social support.

Professionally

The professional change was experienced developmentally as a doctoral student and potential future faculty. Examples of ways that this was experienced for these doctoral students include gaining perspective, increased networks, and solidifying counselor educator identity.

Appendix C: Interpretive Dialogue Round Two Interview Document

The following themes and subthemes complete the phrase “Being an informal mentor as a doctoral student means:” (Note the changes/ additions to themes in the following graph.)



Have these questions in mind as you review the preliminary round 2 codes:

- Does the addition of the term **long term** to the theme of **being invested** seem accurate and necessary to represent your experience as a mentor?
- Do you connect with the subtheme **evolution of the relationship** within **being connected**
- Would you consider **being mentored** an important piece of your experience as a mentor, or would you consider it secondary?
- Does the thematic analysis accurately portray your lived experience as an informal mentor?

- What changes or additions might you make to the current thematic analysis?

Being in Multiple Roles

(Note: Italicized sentences/phrases are new additions)

Doctoral students experience multiple roles in their work with mentors which can be experienced as both an **opportunity** and **challenge**.

Opportunity

The duality of roles can mean the **opportunity** to create mentoring relationships, and was frequently described as the roots of a mentoring relationship. One of the multiple roles each of these mentors shared was being a doctoral student, which was described as both an **opportunity** and challenge. *Opportunity also included opportunities in different roles such as researcher, opportunities for collaboration, and opportunities for growth.*

Challenge

Being in multiple roles is also experienced as **challenge**, with the ambiguity and confusion of boundaries.

Being Intentional

The element of being intentional as a mentor contains two components which describe the experience of being intentional in **establishing boundaries** and **providing mentee needs**.

Establishing Boundaries

Establishing boundaries was the intentional work of the mentor to create clarity in the relationship including expectations, roles, and purpose of the mentoring relationship. Establishing boundaries also included the intentional decision *and choices* of what to share with mentees, how much of themselves to disclose, and how to engage with mentees.

Providing Mentee Needs

In **providing mentee needs**, participants described an understanding of their mentees and intentionally offering support, guidance, or validation depending upon the needs of the mentee. *While mentors strive to be aware of their mentees needs, they may not provide all of their mentees needs, or be aware of all needs. Being knowledgeable is also a component of providing mentee needs.*

Being Invested Long Term

The theme of being invested was evident from these participants, both to their mentees and to the profession. They described commitment, energy, and work that they put into both areas. Their experience of being invested is connected to the idea of an investment in that they put work into it with the hope or expectation for a return on their investment. Included the idea of paying it forward. *The participants experience an enduring commitment which lasts beyond the original mentor-mentee relationship. Investment in the mentees and profession are interconnected.*

To Mentee

The participants described a willingness to put in the work which included an investment of themselves. This included a commitment to their mentees and mentoring, time, and bringing themselves into the mentoring. *The participants included components of advocating for their mentees and “giving space” to their mentees as evidence of their investment.*

To the Profession

For these mentors, being a mentor meant also moving the profession forward, it meant having a strong professional identity, and being passionate about various professional endeavors. *Their role as mentors is an example of their investment in the profession, as mentoring moves the profession.*

Being Connected

The experience of being connected was present for each participant, and was frequently referred to in varying terms. In striving to grasp the meaning of what it means to be connected for these participants in mentoring relationships, I am touched by the emphasis and value they each place on their connection with their mentees.

Organic Fit

The experience of connection as being an organic fit includes the experience of organic development, shared interests, and a natural fit between mentor and mentee. *Being connected is a mutual choice as part of the organic fit.*

Feeling Grateful

As each of the participants spoke of their experience of being connected, the sense of gratitude that they had towards the opportunity to be a mentor and to know these students is captured in this subtheme. The experience of being connected as a mentor was frequently described as feeling lucky and honoring the relationship which represents their gratitude for the relationship, almost in a sacred manner. Gratitude was also expressed regarding the recognition of the benefits they receive and value they place on their connection with their mentees.

Evolution of the Relationship

This theme describes the changes that are experienced throughout the mentoring relationship, and the connection that evolves over time. As the relationships develop, the connection deepens and becomes closer and more personal. Words such as “evolution”, “matured”, “changing expectation”, “transitioning”, and “developmental” are all descriptors of this theme as found from the participant interviews. Often, but not always, the relationship evolved as roles changed, for example, when either the mentor or mentee graduate.

Being Changed

The lived experience of being an informal mentor as a doctoral student in counselor education means being changed. This change is experienced both **personally** and **professionally**. *The changes included benefits, a willingness to learn, and a “return on the investment.”*

Personally

Personal change included internal and social ways in which the participants experienced growth. This growth included confidence, validation, and social support.

Professionally

The professional change was experienced developmentally as a doctoral student and potential future faculty. Examples of ways that this was experienced for these doctoral students include gaining perspective, increased networks, and solidifying counselor educator identity. *Change can also include new ideas, knowledge, and professional items (i.e. literature) produced with their mentees.*

Being Mentored

*This theme is currently incidental to the experience of mentoring, in that it is not essential to **be mentored** in order to be a doctoral mentor for master’s students. This theme describes the experience of wanting to give others what had been given to them. Giving to their mentees, passing on what they had received in mentoring.*