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Article 46

On-line Supervision and Face-to-Face Supervision in the Counseling Internship: An Exploratory Study of Similarities and Differences

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At the 2009 Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Conference, on-line teaching, counseling, and supervising were topics of interest in the educational sessions. Forty-six educational sessions focused on various aspects of technology including the challenges and benefits of technology in the field of counselor education. Clearly our profession cannot ignore the influence of web-based technology and how to best use this influence to enhance the education of new counseling professionals and learn pitfalls to avoid in on-line instruction and supervision. The rationale for our study stemmed from our students' needs to complete their internships in locations distant from the university. Our goal was to provide innovation without giving up quality. Although many universities in counselor education are experimenting with new technologies in distance learning, we found the literature to be scant relevant to the effectiveness of on-line counseling supervision.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In the 2009 Standards, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) offers requirements for supervision of students in the counseling internship. Specifically, in Section III Professional Practice item G, the internship requirements include: 600 total clock hours of which 240 clock hours are direct counseling services, one hour per week of individual or triadic supervision throughout the internship, an average of 1½ hours weekly of group supervision provided by a program faculty member, the opportunity for students to experience a variety of

professional activities, the opportunity for students to develop audio/video recordings of their interaction with clients, and evaluation of the student's counseling performance by program faculty member in consultation with the site supervisor. In the Introduction of the CACREP 2009 Standards the following is stated: "The CACREP Standards are not intended to discourage program innovation" (CACREP, p.1). Some counselor education programs integrate distance learning and technology into their programs as an innovative way to deliver instruction and supervision. In one study surveying 127 coordinators of counselor education programs, Wantz, Tromski, Mortsof, Yoxtheimer, and Cole (2004) found that just less than half (42%) of those surveyed have either totally or partially integrated distance learning into their programs. Distance learning delivery format involves the use of technology to enhance or replace traditional face-to-face classroom instruction. Current professional literature has focused on the use of technology as a resource to enhance the delivery of traditional classroom instruction such as the World Wide Web, You Tube, e-mail, and virtual learning environment systems (WebCT, Blackboard, and E-Learning). While there is a plethora of research on distance learning in general and distance learning across various disciplines (Bullen, 1999; Ellis, Ginns, & Piggott, 2009), there is minimal research on the use of distance learning specific to counselor education programs and even less on the use of distance learning for counseling courses requiring supervision of student's clinical work (Trolley & Sillicker, 2005).

Clinical Supervision

In the book, *Fundamentals of Clinical Supervision*, Bernard and Goodyear (2009) offer the following definition for supervision.

Supervision is an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member or members of the same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to clients. . . . serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession. (p. 8)

Historically, clinical supervision began with live in-session meetings and has progressed methodically through one-way mirror, audiotape, and videotape observation as media of choice (Chapman, 2008). More recently, computer-based technologies have been used to aid in the delivery of clinical supervision eliminating the need for direct in-person contact. According to Chapman, "The two methods of electronically mediated supervision are – live or real time (synchronous); such as communication by web-camera or streaming video and chat rooms, and delayed time (asynchronous); such as communications via e-mail, listservs, and threaded discussions" (p. 2). Whether supervision is provided by face-to-face, synchronous, or asynchronous methods, the definition of supervision offered by Bernard and Goodyear (2009) applies in all modalities.

Technology Assisted Supervision

In the early eighties, Santo and Finkel (1982) wrote about the utilization of technology in the mental health professions and implied the inclusion of technology would only increase. Over the past twenty-seven years, the use of technology in counselor education programs has increased from a computer assisted course to an entire master's degree delivered over the Internet. Layne and Hohenshill (2005) and Vaccaro and Lambie (2007) claimed that inclusion of technology in counseling is here to stay and recommended that supervisors need to learn to use computer-assisted supervision effectively. Among counselor educators, however, there has been considerable discussion about the compromise to quality of instruction and more specifically, compromise to the quality of supervision without face-to-face contact with students.

Coker, Jones, Staples, and Harbach (2002) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of using an Internet-based chat format for clinical supervision during a practicum course. Practicum students participated in two on-line supervisory sessions; each session was conducted under different conditions. Supervision session one involved the use of text-chat and for the second session, video was added to the text-chat format. The researchers interviewed students' about their perception of the effectiveness of using technology in clinical supervision. The results of the study revealed that "overall ratings of the on-line supervisory sessions were quite positive," (Coker, Jones, Staples, & Harbach, 2002, p. 36).

In a second study conducted by Coker, Jones, Staples, and Harbach (2002), practicum students participated in 10 clinical supervision sessions: five on-line sessions and five face-to-face sessions. Using a 7 point Likert scale to rate overall quality of supervision, the mean score assigned by participants was 6.8. The mean score for quality of on-line supervision was 6.6 and 6.9 for face-to-face supervision. The difference between on-line and face-to-face supervision was negligible.

Advantages and Disadvantages of On-line Supervision

Some researchers (Coker, Jones, Staples, & Harbach, 2002; Schimmel, Orr, & Murphy, 2003) have suggested that students may rate an on-line supervision experience favorably because the on-line modality is more convenient. In addition to convenience, Schimmel, Orr, and Murphy (2003) identified flexibility as another factor that influences students to view on-line supervision positively, thereby, promoting the increased usage of this modality. Watson (2003) proposed that the flexibility offered with on-line supervision extends to faculty/supervisors as well as student/supervisees. Specifically, supervisors have the capability to meet, albeit electronically, with their supervisees at any time deemed to be mutually beneficial. Watson continued discussing the advantages of on-line supervision and reported that with the proper equipment, group peer supervision can be supported with supervisees at various locations using real time video and audio capabilities.

Olson, Russell, and White (2001) supported the use of technology assisted supervision to meet the needs of students selecting to do the practicum in rural and outlying areas. In addition, these researchers claimed that on-line delivery of supervision reduces time and money spent on travel for supervisors who make onsite visits and have limited time and travel budgets. Removing the travel and distance barrier required for face-to-face supervision opens the door for students to select from a more diverse group

of practicum sites and locations that may provide a more beneficial learning experience (Watson, 2003).

The advantages of on-line supervision may be offset in some situations by the disadvantages that pose a risk to the successful delivery of this supervision modality. According to Alterkruse and Brew (2000) and Watson (2003), technological failures and lack of experience with computer-based technology are two potential disadvantages threatening cyber-supervision. In addition, Alterkruse and Brew (2000) listed lack of human contact (Alterkruse & Brew, 2000), limited opportunity to view non-verbal communication, and limited bonding between supervisor and student (Hara, Bonk, & Angeli, 2000; Olson et al., 2001) among the disadvantages of on-line supervision. Finally, Watson (2003) and Vaccaro and Lambie (2007) pointed out the increased risk to confidentiality posed by computer-based supervision.

Ethical Considerations for On-line Supervision

Ethical practices are professional standards fundamental to all clinical supervision regardless of supervision delivery modality. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) *ACA Code of Ethics* offers clear guidelines for ethical practices of supervision in Standard F.1.a. and in Standard A.12. addressing technology applications to web-based counseling in general. In addition, the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC, 2005) provides principles for guiding the practice of Internet counseling. While ACA and NBCC have not identified technology applications directly related to supervision, it is important that supervisors providing on-line supervision are familiar with ACA Standards F.1.a. and A.12 to better inform ethical practices for technology assisted supervision. Ethical considerations related to web-based counseling are consistently identified by research as the same considerations for computer-based supervision. These considerations include (a) confidentiality and security, (b) informed consent, and (c) emergency contact and crisis management (Layne & Hohenshil, 2005; Shaw & Shaw, 2006; Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007; Watson, 2003). Panos, Panos, Cox, Roby, and Matheson, (2002) add to the list of ethical considerations the responsibility to ensure the equivalence of computer-based supervision when compared to face-to-face supervision.

Methods

Design

The design of our study was mixed methods research in which the researcher or research team combines fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purposes of richer data and a deeper understanding of the results (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). The rationale for using this particular design was based on the framework of a rationale and purpose (RAP) model (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006) in which four rationales for designing mixed research studies were identified: participant enrichment, instrument fidelity, treatment integrity, and significance enhancement. The rationale for using mixed methods in our study was significance enhancement. We hoped to reveal richer meanings and implications as a result of combining quantitative and qualitative methods.

Using a survey format for the quantitative component of the study as well as

phenomenological strategies for the qualitative component, we believed the data would yield increased awareness of how graduate students in an internship experienced distance and face-to-face supervision. Once the survey responses were analyzed, the researchers considered further analysis of the text of two focus groups, the on-line group and the face-to-face group, to yield more complete results. We believed the additional findings would not have been revealed without the mixed research approach; therefore, it was critical for the qualitative analyses to follow and build upon the findings of the quantitative analyses.

Sample and Participant Selection

The total sample for our study was a purposeful sample of six graduate students who were enrolled in the Field Practicum at a university in the southern United States during the spring semester in 2009. After Institutional Review Board approval to conduct the study was obtained, all individuals enrolled in that particular section of the Field Practicum were contacted by the professor by phone to solicit their participation. The sample included five females and one male ranging in age from 24 to 39 years (average age: 29 years). All of the participants were Caucasian. In terms of their programs of study, three of the participants had a community-counseling focus, and three had a school-counseling focus. Three of the students were preparing to graduate at the end of the semester, and three students would graduate the following semester. Three of the students met every other week for three hours on the university campus in a regular classroom. The three students in the on-line class met with the professor every other week for three hours on-line. Several times during the semester, the two groups met together both on-line and face-to-face in the professor's office. The supervisor (professor) also participated in the study and is a male of multiple-heritage background with 21 years of experience as a supervisor. The professor was interviewed at the end of the course, and his responses added to the understanding of the results of the student surveys and focus groups.

Technology for the On-line Supervision

The original plan for the on-line class setting was to use the Adobe Connect meeting format. All three researchers were trained to use the system before the beginning of the spring semester. The supervising professor attempted to use Adobe Connect; however, there were technological problems much of the time originating from the students' computer set-ups. The advantage to using Adobe Connect would have been the video capabilities in which the professor and the three students would have been able to see as well as hear each other. Additionally the ability to use a white board as well as a medium for PowerPoint might have enhanced the supervisory experience.

The technology used was voice-to-voice communication through Internet-based software called Skype (www.skype.com), the free Internet telephone communication system. The on-line students and the professor were able to meet on-line with audio capability so that the tapes of the counseling sessions as well as the discussion could be heard by the professor and the three on-line students. Several times during the semester, the on-line and face-to-face students met together and were able to listen to each other's session tapes and discuss the tapes as a group. Video capability was only available one-on-one; therefore, the video conferencing option was only used during the professor's

conferences with the individual site supervisors of the three students. During these conferences, the site supervisors were able to show the professor around the site using the computer's webcam as well as have the face-to-face conference.

Instruments

The *Group Supervision Scale* (Arcinue, 2002) was revised to fit the particular needs of the present study and was used to assess quantitatively the degree to which students felt positively about their supervision experience. A focus group format was used to understand the students' experiences of supervision in the Field Practicum. The focus group questions were open-ended allowing for the students to discuss their experiences as they perceived them and consisted of the following:

1. What have been your perceptions of your experience of group supervision during the spring 2009 semester in CNE 686?
2. How did the format of group supervision impact your experience?
3. What was the most helpful part of your group supervision experience?
4. What, if anything, would you want to change about your group supervision experience?

Data Collection

All of the participants ($n = 6$) signed an informed consent assuring them that their identities would remain anonymous, that all information from the surveys and focus groups would be reported in such a way that confidentiality would be maintained, that participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and that they could withdraw from participating at any time without penalty. The students were informed that the focus group sessions and interviews would be taped, that the tapes would be transcribed, and that both the tapes and transcriptions would be destroyed after the completion of the study (no more than one year from the date of the informed consent).

The surveys were emailed to the distance learning students ($n = 3$) and emailed back to the researcher when they were completed. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher asked a student worker to print the completed surveys from the on-line students, to write *on-line* on each survey, and then to delete the emails. The students ($n = 3$) in the face-to-face class completed the survey right before the focus group was conducted, and the researcher collected them without reading them. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher put the surveys aside, then gave them to the other researcher who wrote *face-to-face* on each survey without knowing which survey belonged to which student.

The focus groups were conducted by the two researchers who were not the instructors for the internship. The focus group with the on-line supervision experience was conducted on-line using Skype. The interviews began with a description of the nature and purpose of the research, as well as the other elements of informed consent. Emphasis was placed on establishing and maintaining a high level of rapport with each participant, in part because this is necessary for collecting credible data (Patton, 2002). The remainder of each interview was audio-recorded for later transcription. The focus groups ranged in length from 35 to 45 minutes.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data or the results of the participants' responses to the survey items were analyzed with descriptive statistics using SPSS, Inc. (2007). Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were calculated. The histogram pertaining to the study group supervision scale scores was examined. A paired samples T-Test was performed to compare group one to group two with respect to group supervision scale scores. Means were also compared for each of the 10 questions on the group supervision scale.

The qualitative methods followed. In phenomenological studies, the researcher seeks to learn more about participants' values regarding certain phenomena and the meaning they give to those (Moustakas, 1994). The qualitative part of our research design was driven by the precept that knowledge is socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1966). We used open-ended questions in our focus group sessions to encourage participants to express their views in their own words. As we collected and analyzed data in the various phases of our study, we agreed to "bracket" our own experiences to better understand those of the participants (Nieswiadomy, 1993). The focus group discussions were audio-taped by the researchers leading the groups, were transcribed by a research assistant, and were analyzed qualitatively.

The responses were analyzed using the method of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The research assistant prepared the data for analysis by transcribing the responses and making a copy for both of the researchers who conducted the focus groups. Next, each of these researchers read and reread the responses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) highlighting key words and phrases and separating them into units of meaning. This process generated a number of noteworthy statements and gave each researcher a general sense of the participants' ideas and overall meanings. Both research team members then began a detailed analysis by collapsing the material into categories and eliminating similar or same statements or phrases. As new noteworthy statements emerged, they were compared to previous statements so that like expressions were grouped together, and categories were identified.

After each team member categorized all of the responses, we met to compare individual results. Together, we discussed how the categories would be represented in the qualitative narrative. Through discussion and further reading of the literature, we identified areas of commonality and differences in our individual analyses. Categories were collapsed and sub-themes and patterns emerged during these meetings; consensus was reached as to how to define the categories. We then constructed a Microsoft Office Excel file using color-coding to denote each category and assigned the participants' responses to the appropriate categories. Some responses fell into more than one category. The initial inter-rater approach to data analysis, coupled with revisiting raw data, may have increased the overall trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The last phases of our investigation included an interview with the supervisor (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2008). We found that the interview with the supervisor further strengthened the data collected in the survey results, and we were able to glean more specific examples of the supervisory experiences for our study. Member checks were also conducted with participants from both groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Participants were e-mailed a final draft of the discussion of the findings and asked to evaluate its completeness and accuracy in representing his or her experiences with on-line or face-to-face supervision. The participants provided us with

feedback that indicated that they were satisfied with our representation of their experiences (i.e., no recommendations were offered for changes to the discussion of findings).

Results

Quantitative Results

An examination of the histogram pertaining to the study group supervision scale scores indicated no serious departure from normality. The paired samples T-Test that was performed to compare group one to group two with respect to group supervision scale scores failed to reveal a statistically significant difference in supervision scale scores among the two groups ($r = .971$, $p > .05$). Table 1 presents descriptive statistics pertaining to the group supervision scale scores as a function of one semester of supervision. It can be seen from this table that the means are similar, illustrating why no statistically significant difference was found among the groups. Means were also compared for each of the 10 questions on the group supervision scale. There were no significant differences except on question nine. The mean difference was 1.0; however, due to the small number of scores no definitive statement can be made about this difference.

Table 1
Overall Group Supervision Scale Scores

Group	Subject	Score	Group M Score	Group SD
1			37.33	1.7
	1	38		
	2	35		
	3	39		
2			37.67	3.30
	4	40		
	5	33		
	6	40		

Qualitative Results

The most notable finding in the qualitative analysis was that the statements describing the students' perceptions of the group supervision experience were similar for both groups, but in many cases, the frequency of the statements was different for the two groups which might indicate a higher level of intensity. Figure 1 details the significant statements as well as the number of times each statement was mentioned in each group. The analyses of the focus group transcriptions yielded the following seven significant statements: (a) the course provided valuable feedback; (b) technology problems were experienced; (c) trust building was critical; (d) the internship was a positive experience;

(e) varied internship sites provided a variety of cultural perspectives; (f) the course delivery method was convenient and comfortable; and (g) listening to the tapes was *problem free* and easy to hear and understand.

The course provided valuable feedback. Both the on-line group and the face-to-face group reported that the internship provided valuable feedback from both peers and the professor. On-line students made comments about valuable feedback 10 times, and face-to-face students made similar statements 18 times.

On-line students described that there were “no distractions,” that there was “more discussion than in other classes,” and the students were “confident” enough to give each other feedback. One student said that “it was helpful to hear how they [other students] were using different skills and techniques with their clients to give me more ideas on what I could do with mine.” Another on-line student said that “this is the first time that we’ve really had a chance to get good feedback from other students.”

Figure 1: Qualitative Data Analysis

EMERGENT STATEMENTS	FACE TO FACE Number of Responses	DISTANCE Number of Responses
the course provided valuable feedback	18	10
there were technology challenges	4	12
preferred meeting in the small group	2	3
meeting all together was beneficial	5	2
trust building was critical	5	7
this was a positive internship experience	6	4
varied internship sites provided varied cultural experiences and perspectives	6	4
the course delivery method was convenient and comfortable	0	3
listening to the tapes was “problem free” and easy to hear and understand	0	3

Similarly, the face-to-face students stated that communication was “enhanced,” they felt “free to talk,” and they felt “open” and “comfortable.” One face-to-face student said that “what has been most helpful to me is getting different perspectives on my

challenges that I have gone through.” And another face-to-face student said that “we did have that sounding board if I came in with a client and I was not sure. Gosh, I don’t know what to do with this one.”

There were technology challenges. Students in the on-line class noted in 12 different statements that technology was a challenge in their virtual classroom, and the students in the face-to-face made 4 statements about technology challenges. One on-line student said, “I know that I went out and bought a 60 dollar a month wireless Internet card just for this class because I didn’t get DSL at my house, and it wouldn’t support web conference calling. It just wasn’t like DSL.” And another student noted, “I probably had the most difficulty just because I have a different [computer]. I have a Mac computer, so my recorder wasn’t compatible so I had to do it on a different computer and then it was a few more steps, but overall it wasn’t too bad.” Although the face-to-face group did not have technology problems themselves, they did mention that when the on-line group joined them for class, occasionally there were problems. One face-to-face student reported that “it was a little bit frustrating,” and another said that it would have been nice to have video as well as audio.

Preferred meeting in the small group. Comments regarding the preference to meet in the small group rather than the entire group were made 3 times by the on-line students and 2 times by the face-to-face students. One on-line student reported feeling more comfortable with just the three on-line students, and another student said it would be best to keep the small group separate rather than put the two groups together. The face-to-face comments included having “less airtime” when the two groups met together so it was nice that their group met separately sometimes as they received more attention.

Meeting together was beneficial. The on-line group made 2 statements relevant to the benefits of the two groups meeting together, and the face-to-face group made 5 statements regarding the benefits of the combined meetings. One on-line student’s comment was that the combined meetings “expanded their horizons.” A face-to-face student remarked that “with three extra people, even though they are distant, that gave three different perspectives also.” Another stated that “it was nice that we were connected with people who were in other places going through some of the same things.”

Trust building was critical. Seven statements were made among the on-line students relevant to trust being critical to the success of the group supervision experience, and 5 similar statements were made by the face-to-face students. One on-line student summed it up by saying that “it seemed like a really safe and almost like an intimate environment that we were able to talk freely and trust each other.” Another student noted that “it’s really important to build that trust because you are kind of critiquing each other, giving each other suggestions, taking feedback from each other, and that requires a feeling of connection.” One other important statement was made by an on-line student who said that the sharing with the two groups together probably wasn’t as “deep or significant” as when the groups were separate. The face-to-face comments also indicated that trust was critical to the supervision process. One student noted that everyone was willing to “participate and be open,” and another student added that even the on-line students felt safe enough to do the same when the two groups met together.

This was a positive internship experience. Six statements were made by face-to-face students regarding the positive nature of the internship experience. Some of the descriptors of the course were “encouraging and supportive” and “beneficial to do

supervision this way.” One student stated, “I specifically liked that we were meeting in person . . . there is something to me about being in the environment, having everything else set aside.” The on-line students described the experience as “positive,” “helpful,” “encouraging,” and “supportive.”

Varied internship sites provided varied cultural experiences and perceptions.

Both the on-line and face-to-face groups talked about how the various internship sites provided a variety of cultural experiences and perceptions to the students. The face-to-face group mentioned this 6 times, and the on-line group made 4 statements relevant to cultural perspectives and the internship sites. One face-to-face student noted, “My experience was also enhanced because of just learning from their situations and cross cultural issues.” And another face-to-face student added, “Yeah, where if it was just the three of us, we wouldn’t have gotten that.” An on-line student noted that “it was just really interesting to be able to hear different cultural perspectives.” And another on-line student said, “I would say that we are all working with different environments, with different cultural backgrounds. It was nice to be able to hear all these things and learn from each other.” This student went on to say that the three on-line students being in three different states allowed the students to vicariously appreciate different cultures which they would not have been able to do staying in the university town and completing the internship there.

The course delivery method was convenient and comfortable.

No comments from the face-to-face students described the course delivery method as convenient and comfortable while three statements from the on-line group described the delivery of the course as convenient and comfortable. The on-line students mentioned the “huge convenience factor.” One statement highlighted the fact that all three students had a common situation being in new locations, new jobs, new surroundings, and this gave them a type of unity; but it also made them very determined to have the on-line class work for them recognizing that they could not have finished their degree off-site without this on-line opportunity.

Listening to session audiotapes was “problem-free” and easy to hear and understand.

The face-to-face students did not have any statements relevant to how easy or difficult it was to hear and understand the audiotapes. The on-line students discussed the ease of hearing the sessions over the Internet three different times. One on-line student noted that, “the on-line listening to tapes went very smoothly.” Another stated that, “you just plug in the digital recorder and it’s ready.” And one other on-line student reported that “they [the tapes] were easy to hear” and “could be stopped for discussion.”

Discussion

Implications

The results of this study appear to indicate that when students can choose a particular modality (either face-to-face or distance learning) for their counseling internship, they are satisfied with the group supervisory experience. Additionally, there was no significant difference between the on-line and face-to-face perceptions of the satisfaction of the supervisory experience. Our results were consistent with those of Coker, Jones, Staples, and Harbach (2002) who found that there was almost no difference in students’ perception of the quality of supervision in on-line and face-to-face formats.

In our study, the students who wanted to take the course on-line were grateful for the opportunity. Therefore, as Schimmel, Orr, and Murphy (2003) and Coker, Jones, Staples, and Harbach (2002) noted in their studies, the on-line students in our study found this particular modality to be most convenient for their needs. Their ratings of the supervisory experience may have been enhanced due to this convenience factor.

However, these students found that the use of the Internet for their group supervision experience provided them with the feedback from each other and from their professor that they needed. They were able to establish a safe and trusting environment on-line, and they seemed to take the challenges of the technology problems in stride. One consideration that was important to these students was the fact that they knew the professor and each other before taking the class, and they were very comfortable with the quality and expectations of the program at this particular university. The professor indicated that he wanted to assist the university in keeping its commitment to helping the students finish the program; that the on-line course was a duplication as much as possible of the face-to-face course; and that the on-line group liked meeting with the face-to-face group, but really valued the safe environment that was developed in the on-line format. Participants' discussion of technological difficulties as one of the challenges was consistent with the findings of Altekruze and Brew (2000) and Watson (2003). In spite of these difficulties, students still rated their experiences about the same as the face-to-face group.

The students who completed their internship in the face-to-face class liked the direct contact with each other and with their professor. They were happy to have the choice to take the class face-to-face. All of the face-to-face students believed that they would not have wanted to take this particular class through an on-line format and that, for them, the experience of the traditional classroom format was the best way to learn and make progress. They did not mind meeting several times with the other group, yet they enjoyed the total attention of the professor when they met with just their group. Therefore, it seems that the ability to have a choice in the way the class was presented was important to both of these groups. The professor noted that when the two groups met together, the on-line group seemed less engaged. The face-to-face group then compensated by being more active and more engaged in making an effort to include the on-line group in the discussion.

One of the salient points emerging from the focus groups was that both groups enjoyed the students' diverse settings and clientele and felt that they gained a broader and richer perspective as a result of this diversity. As Watson (2003) pointed out, removing the travel and distance barrier required for face-to-face supervision opens the door for students to select from a more diverse group of practicum sites and locations that may provide a more beneficial learning experience. Both groups mentioned that their experience of this deeper diversity was due to having students in different parts of the country. They definitely saw this as an advantage.

Interestingly, none of the students discussed the ethical considerations found in the literature relevant to web-based supervision. It appears that these issues were handled as a normal expectation of the supervisory experience on the part of both the supervisor and the on-line students. The supervisory sessions were not recorded, nor were the audio-taped client sessions copied onto the Internet, but rather were shared on-line in real time, then erased just like the face-to-face students shared and erased their tapes.

Distance students signed informed consent for the study which explained the on-line nature of the course, and the supervisor was available by phone to the on-line students the same as the face-to-face students in case of an emergency. The professor stated that he treated both groups exactly the same in order to provide a superior supervisory experience. He believed that maintaining the same expectations for both groups was critical to being consistent with CACREP standards in both formats.

Recommendations

Some recommendations emerged during the course of this study that the professor and the students definitely would put in place for future on-line supervision courses: (a) students should have a choice between taking an on-line course, hybrid, and traditional face-to-face- course; (b) it is essential that the professor have a back up plan when technology problems occur; (c) students and professor believed that having a relationship with each other before the on-line class begins is ideal; the professor indicated that he would want to interview the students to assess their technological ability; (d) having the two groups meet together provided more connection for the students; (e) the expectations for the requirements of the students must be consistent whether teaching on-line or face-to-face; and (f) students should have a statement of the technology required to enroll in an on-line supervision course prior to the beginning of the course.

Limitations of the Present Study

Interpretation of the present findings should take into account the study's limitations. The main limitation is the self-report nature of the study. When a self-report assessment is used for data collection, several confounding factors may influence participants' responses. Some participants may fear that their identities will be disclosed and, therefore, hesitate to be completely honest. Others may believe that the researchers have an idea of socially desirable responses to the items and may select responses based on this belief. To compensate for the limitation that surveys may not elicit rich enough data, we also conducted focus groups with the participants. Another limitation may be the small sample size. The sample was chosen for convenience as this particular internship class by chance had three face-to-face students and three distance learners.

Conclusions and Future Prospects

The purpose of this study was to compare the experience of face-to-face counseling internship supervision to supervision conducted on-line. The results of this study suggested that there is no significant difference between the two types of supervision but the actual experience of the two types of supervision may be dissimilar. With the continued focus on creating on-line learning environments, understanding how students experience on-line instruction becomes more and more important. This study provides a glimpse into that experience and points counselor educators to the future of counselor education instruction. Students provided insight into how they benefit from the two types of supervision but also helped us to become aware of the possible strengths and weaknesses of each approach as well. One clear result is that on-line instruction is not for

everyone and should not totally replace face-to-face instruction.

As counselor education moves further into the 21st century, importance needs to be placed on learning how students are impacted by on-line instruction and how they will benefit. We also need to understand how the infusion of technology into the counseling process will affect counselor training. The clear implication from this study is that technology does have a positive place in counselor education programs. It is up to counselor educators to continue to conduct research and identify the best practices for its use in counselor education training programs.

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