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Inside Out: Mask-Making and the Counseling Student Identity

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Counselor Education & Supervision

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Jilian M. Hus

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Inside Out: Mask-Making and the Counseling Student Identity

by

Jilian M. Hus

MA, Purdue University Northwest, 2013

BS, Purdue University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education & Supervision

Walden University

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Abstract

At the field experience level, current research is limited on reflective expressive arts exercises as a modality to facilitate professional identity development in counseling students, with no mention of the effectiveness of mask-making. The purpose of this art-based hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the perceptions of master's students' counselor identity at the field experience level using research questions to explore participants' lived experiences as they engaged in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at the enhancement of their self-awareness, insight, and reflection into their professional identity development. A qualitative design was utilized, and 5 students participated in this study that was conducted and recorded using the Zoom platform. Emergent themes regarding perceptions of professional identity development and the mask-making experience were derived from data observation, pre and post interviews, and memo writing using descriptive coding and thematic analysis. The results of this study indicated that field experience students experience uncertainty, self-doubt, and transition. However, results from the mask-making exercise indicated it fostered growth, integration, reflection, and self-care as a catalyst towards their developing professional identities. This study will create an opportunity for social change for the counseling profession by expanding knowledge regarding counselor identity development through a new lens; for counselors in training by highlighting the challenges faced in their professional development for additional exploration, emphasis, and support; and for counselor educators by offering additional modalities to address professional development training needs.

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my beautiful wife Hillary for her unwavering love, support, and encouragement throughout this journey; my daughter Gracen for her eternal love, affection, and compassion through the late nights and early mornings; my mom for always believing in me and cheering me on; and all those who think they can't do something big, yes you can!

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I want to express my deepest appreciation for the participants who took time out of their lives and schedules to participate in this study. They gave their time, attention, and energy into this study and approached it with a willingness to open themselves up to a new experience.

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Chapter 1: Inside Out: Mask-Making and the Counseling Student Identity

Introduction

According to the data provided by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), there are 797 CACREP accredited school counseling, clinical mental health counseling, rehabilitation counseling, and marriage and family therapy programs within the United States (CACREP, 2019). Of that number, 380 institutions have accredited clinical mental health counseling programs, 37 of which are accredited online programs, whereas 263 are accredited in school counseling and 32 are in the process of seeking accreditation (CACREP, 2019). Following the 2016 CACREP standards, field experience and internship courses require a 10:1 ratio of students to faculty; therefore, there are on average more than 7,000 students that enter field experience each academic year (CACREP, 2019). Being a graduate student at the field experience phase can bring waves of excitement, self-doubt, anxiety, exploration, and integration (Cureton, Davis, & Giegrich, 2019). Many of those students will become licensed counseling professionals and an integral part of the counseling profession. In order for the integration into the counseling profession to take place, it requires self-awareness and continuous reflection into one's evolving professional identity. Previous research aimed at professional identity development has focused on utilizing reflective exercises such as journaling, mindfulness, and expressive art interventions that include photography, clay, sand tray, and painting to assist those in field experience; however, there is a lack of published research that exists examining mask-making with master's level field experience students in CACREP accredited counseling training programs. By understanding the experiences of field

experience students participating in a mask-making exercise towards fostering their professional identity, counselors-in-training and counselor educators can learn the significance of such intervention and implement more creative ways of assisting field experience students with their identity evolvment. Furthermore, stakeholders will benefit from having these individuals perform in a continuous ethical and reflective manner as practitioners.

In this chapter, essential background information will be provided to highlight the gap in the literature regarding mask-making with counseling field experience students at the master's level. In addition, the problem statement and purpose of this study will be presented as well as the research questions that the study will address. Finally, the conceptual framework and nature of the study will lay out the foundation and then move into discussing the definitions of important concepts, assumptions, limitations, the scope, and delimitations of the study. The gap in knowledge remains that as of today, no study has utilized mask-making with field experience students in a CACREP master's counseling program, as a catalyst toward facilitating the development of one's professional identity. The importance of this study was to identify the need of using mask making as a means to explore and facilitate the professional identity development with counseling students when they enter field experience

Background

Germinal to the study, Markos, Coker, and Jones (2006) utilized a sand-tray approach in their supervision group of field experience students. Participants were students enrolled in a CACREP master's marriage and family counseling program. During a 4-week period, students were asked to rate their experience with sand tray approaches as well as participate in individual sand tray supervision sessions (Markos et al., 2006). The findings indicated that while there needs to be more research conducted, students noted their experiences and themes of growth and

self-awareness in relation to their conceptualization and work with future clients (Markos et al., 2006).

A phenomenological study by Dupree and Perryman (2013) utilized counselors-in-training who participated in expressive art activities that included photography, knitting, sand play, painting, and music. Specifically, six female students in their second year of graduate school participated in a 13-week group where the above expressive art activities were introduced (Dupree & Perryman, 2013). During the group, the students recorded their experiences in weekly reflective journals (Dupree & Perryman, 2013). The results indicated that although the students reported discovering personal awareness of values and beliefs, self-exploration, and self-acceptance, themes of group stage progression were discovered as well as the overall benefits of expressive art therapies that were used, however mask-making was not a tool used in the study (Dupree & Perryman, 2013).

Joseph et al. (2017) studied medical students who engaged in a mask-making activity which investigated how professional identity is formed with third-year medical students. In 2014 and 2015, students were given 90 minutes to complete their masks and additional 15 minutes to complete their written narratives (Joseph et al., 2017). Through the identification of themes from the masks, the authors analyzed what contributed to identity dissonance and professional identity development (Joseph et al., 2017). The findings indicated that students were given a voice with the ability to project externalized feelings onto the mask (Joseph et al., 2017). The masks were able to capture, in-the-moment emotions, related to transitional periods in the student's lives both personally and professionally (Joseph et al., 2017). The findings also indicated the individualized experiences that each student gained from participating in the exercise and the insights the students gained (Joseph et al., 2017).

Lashewicz, McGrath, and Smyth (2004), examined the outcomes of mask-making with undergraduate human-services students. The purpose was to utilize mask-making as a tool to determine student engagement, appreciation for diversity, and professional and personal development throughout the chosen university's three programs that included child and youth care, community rehabilitation and disability services, and social work (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The students completed the masks in-class during a four-hour time block while in different stages in their coursework within their respective programs (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The participants were tasked with completing the masks in three stages that included making, decorating, and sharing (Lashewicz et al., 2004). Once the participants completed their masks, they processed as a group, the impact of the activity (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The authors then utilized a survey method approach to gather data on whether the activity was helpful and provided insight for the students (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The results yielded significant themes related to feelings of supportiveness, inclusiveness, and de-emphasized instructor authority (Lashewicz et al., 2004).

Problem Statement

For those trainees in field experience, professional identity formation can be a stressful process, due in part to the adoption of the professional roles, knowledge, and behaviors that are expected of them as future counselors (Joseph et al., 2017; Woo, Lu, Harris, & Cauley, 2017). These thoughts and feelings of uncertainty surrounding these key developmental periods have a direct impact on the students' self-efficacy, personal integration of attributes, and overall professional identity development as they navigate field experience (Hazlett & Foster, 2017; Koltz & Feit, 2012; Purswell & Stulmaker, 2015; McCalip-Neswald, Sather, Strati, & Dineen, 2003). Furthermore, without a strong professional counselor identity, students risk incongruence,

fear of authenticity, and compartmentalizing parts of their identity; rendering them ineffective as professional counselors (Kern, 2014). If students lack the necessary professional identity formation, this can ultimately lead to role confusion by not being prepared as new professionals, causing the potentiality to function unethically, and thus becoming problematic for clients and the counseling profession (Gibson et al., 2012; Kern, 2014).

There are many ways to develop a professional counselor identity, with one specific way through creativity (Urdang, 2010; Woodridge & O'Beirne, 2017). Although creativity has been found to provide counseling field experience students with a transformative experience, particularly in the development of their professional identities, there is gap in the literature regarding the specific use of mask-making as a tangible expression to articulate the formation of their developing identities (Burkholder, 2012; Shepard & Brew, 2013). A review of the literature has shown that various creative reflective exercises have been used and studied which include: sand tray, photography, painting, music, and journaling (Dupree & Perryman, 2013; Joseph et al., 2017; Markos et al., 2006). Despite the use of these creative interventions, students in counseling training programs still face challenges, specifically during their field experience field experience, that include self-doubt, anxiety, and fear in relation to their developing counseling skills and integration of their personal and professional identities, that other experiential interventions have not targeted (Auxier, Hughes, & Kline, 2003; Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010; Koltz & Feit, 2012; Mascari & Webber, 2012; Purswell & Stulmaker, 2015; Shepard & Brew, 2013). This is similar to the concept of imposter syndrome, where those in higher education programs have been found to struggle with becoming, belonging, and their changing identities as students, persons, and professionals (Chapman, 2017).

Mask-making is a tool that brings together experiential learning, reflection, and creativity (Lashewicz et al., 2004). Autry and Walker (2007) defined creativity as, “a vehicle that can lead to a deeper sense of self and a sense of self-reflection” (p. 43). It can be used with students to facilitate self-awareness with the purpose of advancing their professional identity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of field experience students’ professional identity development as facilitated through the use of the expressive art technique, mask-making. Masks have been used for thousands of years as forms of communication and external expression (Joseph et al., 2017). Masks also provide insight into the boundaries of identity, enabling individuals to explore feelings of meaning and belonging (Joseph et al., 2017). As students engage in this experience, their emotional, conceptual, and creative worlds are enhanced, allowing for a deeper and more authentic sense of self to emerge (Newsome et al., 2005; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). This is a crucial step in their development and incorporates the necessary integration and assimilation into becoming a counselor (Haight & Shaughnessy, 2006; Woodside, Oberman, Cole, & Carruth, 2007). By developing a strong professional counselor identity, students can be cultivated and nurtured by the counseling profession while contributing to the shaping of the profession (Lisle, 2017).

Without mask-making being effectively studied as a creative means to professional identity development, counselors in training will miss out on participating in this transformative and experiential experience towards facilitating reflection into their professional identities (Autry & Walker, 2007; Lisle, 2017; Shepard & Brew, 2013). Therefore, it was necessary that this hermeneutic phenomenological study be completed to explore the lived experiences of field

experience students', in a counseling training program, who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development.

Research Questions

My main research question is, "What are the lived experiences of field experience students in a counseling training program who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development?" The subquestions will include, "What does it mean to participate in this experiential exercise as a catalyst towards enhancing self-awareness?" and "in what ways will this lead to individual insight and reflection into ones' development as a professional counselor?"

Conceptual Framework

The nature of the research questions coupled with the lack of research on mask-making with counseling field experience students, suggested that a qualitative design, specifically hermeneutic phenomenology, was most fitting. The purpose of this approach was to understand the lived experiences of participants, specifically within the context of meaning that is discovered through mask-making (Beebe, 2004; Farina, 2014; Patton, 2015). Hermeneutics is a process and method of bringing to the surface what is normally kept hidden within human experience and what it means to be and interact with others and the world (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Simon, 2015). The concept of being or "Daesin," as Martin Heidegger developed, constitutes three principles (Patterson & Higgs, p.5, 2005). The principles include 1. Attuning to the past, 2. Presence within the present moment, 3. Possibilities for the future (Patterson & Higgs, 2005). Those who engage in hermeneutic research are concerned with interpretation, specifically interpretation of text, which can include things such as written or verbal

communication, visual arts, and music (Beebe, 2004; Lopez & Willis, 2004). In this case, the text will consist of the masks created by the participants and structural depictions of their experiences will be gathered in the form of semistructured interviews. The chosen expert for my approach is Martin Heidegger, who developed the ideas of hermeneutic phenomenology and was concerned with interpretation of one's world and the concepts of being-with and being-in-the-world (Bolea, 2006; Farina, 2014). Heidegger posited that hermeneutics is founded on how one interprets the world, understands the knowing, and being (Simon, 2015). This is accomplished through a search for meaning, beliefs, values, while looking at the whole and parts of the phenomenon in question (Simon, 2015). In this case, the foundation of hermeneutic phenomenology will be to seek out meaning of the participants' experiences of the mask-making activity as it relates to their beliefs and values about their own professional identities. These concepts also align directly with my research questions which are to discover the lived experiences of the participants throughout the mask-making activity, and in what ways did the activity serve as a catalyst towards their professional identity development and what insight and reflection was gained as a result of participation in the activity. An important concept to note about hermeneutics is one striving to achieve reflective thinking about the world and as individuals, the place that each of them have in the world (Daher, Jaramino, Olivares, & Tominic, 2017). This is also significantly tied to the premise of the participants considering who they are as individuals and who they are professional counselors, and how can those two

identities become integrated into their functioning in the world. In Chapter 2, a thorough description of the conceptual framework is provided.

Nature of the Study

Prior research has explored the use of clay, photography, mindfulness, and narrative approach in counseling training programs (Dupree & Perryman, 2013; Joseph et al., 2017; Markos et al., 2006). Despite an exhaustive review of the literature, I did not uncover previous literature on mask-making with master's level field experience students in counseling training programs. The goal is to highlight the experiences of the participants during the mask-making process, as it relates to their professional identity development. In order to achieve this, I chose to use a hermeneutic phenomenology approach. The questions were constructed to bridge the gap in the existing literature and the current study. Qualitative research, specifically, a phenomenological approach is best suited for researching creativity because it represents a "significant and unique human experience" that searches for essences outside of ordinary observations (Juli & Scherm, 2015). Phenomenology is a process of inquiry that draws data from the context in which events occur and describes these occurrences as a means of determining the process by which the events occur and the perspective of the participants (Jamali, 2018, pg.1). Qualitative was chosen for this study as it is intended to examine the specific event of mask-making and describe the experiences of the participants who will engage in that activity. Furthermore, a phenomenological framework was chosen to recognize that each individual participant will have a different experience as it relates to the creation of their masks as a catalyst towards their own professional identity development. Phenomenology seeks to recognize that meanings are given in perception of a particular phenomena, in this case, mask-making (Donalek, 2004). As a phenomenological researcher, I am seeking to understand the participants'

experiences and understanding of what it means to develop their professional identity through the expressive arts lens of mask-making.

In hermeneutic research, there is a strong focus on the uniqueness of the individual situations and that each situation is unique to that individual (Patterson & Williams, 2004). I plan to follow the ideas proposed by Martin Heidegger, and focus on the experiences, interpretation, and meaning of the students' engagement in mask-making as it relates to their unique experience in that given moment of seeing themselves unfold on the mask. My purpose was to explore how the experience of mask-making provides meaning for the field experience students as they develop their professional identities and integrate both personal and professional identities along the way. Because professional identity development are deep and unique experiences, each participant will have a personal and internal experience during the mask-making process, and the meanings of that experience will be interpreted and described differently (Joseph et al., 2017; Lopez & Willis, 2004). Hermeneutic creativity is defined as wanting to know where the meaningfulness of situations shines through and becomes alive (Juli & Scherm, 2015). My intent was that participants will encounter a unique experience of looking at the development of their professional identity and the authenticity in those experiences will be considered and revealed (Patterson & Williams, 2004; Regan, 2012).

Definitions

Important concepts to define for this study include *identity*, *professional identity*, *liminality*, *field experience students*, *expressive arts*, *creativity*, and *reflection*. The concept of identity can be linked to how one sees themselves, their abilities, and how they define what identity means to them. There are many definitions of identity and how people answer the question of who they are and what identity encompasses is fluid across cultures and communities

(Beaumont, 2019). Identity in this case is defined as the internal, self-constructed, organized set of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history (Beaumont, 2019). Linking that to one's professional identity, is defined as having a sense of belonging within one's identified profession (Gibson, Dooley, Kelchner, Moss, & Vacchio, 2018). Within the counseling profession, this means identity integration, affiliation with professional organizations, professional memberships, and certification/licensure (Gibson et al., 2018). For field experience students, all the roles and responsibilities as a counselor-in-training and moving towards becoming licensed professionals, can be daunting to navigate. This can be described as a holding space for liminality (Beaumont, 2018). Liminality refers to the in between space that one experiences between roles and identities in which it is not one thing or the other (Beaumont, 2018). Field experience students can be defined as being in an in between state trying to navigate the role as a graduate student, counselor-in-training, and personal roles. As a field experience student, it is their first hands-on experience with clients, in which they will complete 100 hours, defined by the CACREP standards (CACREP, 2019; Ikonomopoulos, Cavazos, Smith, & Aquila, 2016). Implementing experiential exercises with counselors-in-training is a requirement of CACREP counseling programs. As such, this can include activities such as painting, clay, photography, mindfulness, and journaling. This study will be utilizing mask-making as an expressive arts activity and is defined as using a plethora of interventions and activities to bring together, foster growth, provide healing and insight (Akthar & Lovell, 2018). Creativity, which ties together with expressive arts, is defined as creating a work of art that is original and effective (Colin, 2017). Each participant will create their own unique mask. Finally, as a professional counselor, reflection is an important component that is pervasive throughout one's career (Woodbridge & O'Beirne, 2017). Shön (1983) defined reflection as embarking on a critical assessment of issues

that are ever-changing and that have no clear end or solution (Woodbridge & O'Beirne, 2017). As humans, we are always evolving, personally and professionally, therefore reflection will be necessary especially for field experience students to engage in on a continuous basis, as they continue their training, and enter the workforce (Bentley, 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions in research refer to the phenomena in question, appears to the individual at a specific time to be true and in existence (Julmi & Scherm, 2015). Assumptions of the study include that the participants will each experience meaning making from participation in the study, specifically the creation of their masks. Secondly, the answers to the research questions are that each participant not only gained insight into their professional identity development but understood their development through the lens of the mask-making expressive arts activity. In addition, artistic creativity results in products that are clear expressions of the creators' inner states, needs, perceptions, and motivations (Julmi & Scherm, 2015). Their own truth was produced from their individual perspective as the creator. Duffy, Saltis, Thompson, Kassirer (2017) discussed the importance of metaphors and the idea that metaphors allow reflection to occur and provide insight to growth, challenges, and professional development.

Scope and Delimitations

The main scope of this study was to provide field experience students in a CACREP accredited counseling training program, with the experiential activity of mask-making to serve as a catalyst for professional identity development and reflection. This study was conducted from a hermeneutical phenomenological framework in order to give voice to the participants and the experience of participating in the mask-making activity. One delimitation of this study is that I only selected participants from a CACREP accredited counseling training program due to the set

of standards set forth by CACREP that provides rigorous and quality education to CACREP, 2019, p. 1). A program that is CACREP accredited provides “enhancement through self-assessment” and recognizes that the institution as a whole is meeting the standards (CACPREP, 2019). During the study, face-to-face interviews and observations were conducted versus a survey methods approach, which is aligned with qualitative and phenomenological research. Participants only included field experience students who were from school and clinical mental health counseling program tracks, and those who are in human services, certificate programs, or non-degree seeking courses were not included. Furthermore, any individuals who were being supervised at the field experience sites by the researcher were excluded as this represents a conflict of interest and power differential within the research relationship.

Transferability is a key factor in qualitative research and is presented via thick description of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This was achieved through various forms that include triangulation and member checking (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Triangulation occurred with data gathering of the pre and post interviews and observation of the mask making process. The important piece was not just the observation of the mask-making process and experience itself, but within the context of being a counselor in training, and what does it mean to build a professional identity. Credibility was established through the vulnerability of the interview questions and the researchers’ ability to establish rapport with the participants and getting to know the data through the data collection steps (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Member checking occurred with the participants being provided copies of the transcripts to review for accuracy. Through this study, the hope was that this mask-making activity would be become meaningful to other counselor training programs, counselor educators and supervisors.

Limitations

An important limitation to consider was that I only used one university to sample participants from because of the geographical location, access to participants, and CACREP accreditation of the counseling program. Furthermore, only students from a CACREP program were utilized, therefore the results will not yield transferability across all counseling training programs that may be non-CACREP accredited or with counseling tracks such as marriage and family programs or social work. There was potential for biases to occur due to possible previous faculty-student relationship between the participants as I had previously been employed as a visiting instructor at the university that participants are being selected from; however, there is no current existing relationships between faculty-student capacity occurring. Furthermore, I am an alumni of the university chosen for participant selection and had previously engaged in mask-making myself during my time as a graduate student in the counseling training program. This presents a limitation based on potential biases towards the use of mask-making with field experience students. While biases exist in any research design and as a researcher, I am tasked with minimizing that bias (Smith & Noble, 2014). Handling biases as the ones noted above, requires evaluation and transparency that these exist as well as rationalization for site and participant selection (Smith & Noble, 2014). Another potential limitation considered was differences in the ratio of male to female students who are enrolled in field experience during the semester of the study being conducted and any differences in themes that arose due to differences in gender.

Another limitation posed was that participants in the study could have had previous mask-making experience in expressive arts courses offered through the counseling program at the site from which participants are being selected. Participants were not excluded if they have

had previous mask-making experience, as the foundation of the experiential intervention is not based on artistic talent, previous knowledge, or skills regarding mask-making. However, the limitation posed is that these particular participants could have felt comfortable being creative during the mask-making process and display a greater sense of confidence surrounding the ambiguity and vulnerability of the experiential mask-making piece. Finally, professional identity development differs across the lifespan, cultures, and communities, therefore it is interpreted differently also reducing the transferability of results.

Significance

Professional identity is important as its advancement enhances students' self-awareness and integrates past, present, and future selves (Bell, Linberg, Jacobson, & Super, 2014). A key catalyst for increasing self-awareness is advancing one's developing professional identity through self-reflection (Bell et al., 2014). Self-reflection can be achieved through participation in creative experiences that include anything that is art or play-based (Bell et al., 2014; Smith, 2011). These experiential expressive art modalities are used to facilitate self-exploration, awareness, and growth (Newsome, Henderson, & Veach, 2005). Furthermore, CACREP standards require that counseling training programs utilize and include experiential activities to foster students' understanding of self (Bell et al., 2014). The self then serves as a catalyst for discovering, creating, and applying knowledge (Lashewicz et al., 2004).

A primary task of counselor training programs is to engage counseling students towards a facilitation of a professional counselor identity (Lisle, 2017). Exploring the lived experiences of counseling field experience students and the impact of mask-making as a means to professional identity development will contribute knowledge to the field of counseling and counselor education. Counselors-in-training will have the opportunity to explore their growth and

awareness as it relates to the development of their professional identity (Autry & Walker, 2007; Shepard & Brew, 2013). They will also have the opportunity to explore their identity formation through engagement with expressive arts, specifically mask-making. Linking the idea of liminality to the stage in which field experience students are in, allows for transformation to occur in the awkward space that students may find themselves in while trying to form their professional identities (Beaumont, 2019). A transformative experience through mask-making will provide the students with deeper growth beyond skills and practice (Shepard & Brew, 2013). In turn, they will be able to engage in continuous reflection of themselves as individuals and counselors; a critical component of one's professional identity as a counselor (Beaumont, 2019). Furthermore, reflection can take place two ways, first postulated by Shön (1983). Reflection on action requires an individual to look back and reflect, while reflection in action, requires reflection in the here and now (Beaumont, 2019). With this study, participants will have the opportunity to engage in both forms through the interview questions and the mask-making activity. With participation in this study, participants will be able to add this intervention to their repertoire for use with future clients. For purposes of counselor education, educators have the responsibility and difficulty in assisting their students with feelings of anxiety while ensuring application of theory into practice (Shepard & Brew, 2013). An approach such as this will provide counselor educators and supervisors the opportunity to utilize these various modalities during their teaching and supervision in order to promote and foster the growth of those counselors-in-training. My intent for this study was that it will have lasting effects within the field and promote the need for future and continued research in the areas of professional identity and the continued use of expressive arts modalities, more notably mask-making.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the important need of completing this study based on the gap in the literature regarding mask-making and counseling field experience students. It detailed the foundation of the study with the problem, significance, research questions and conceptual framework. It also highlighted the assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations. In Chapter 2, the extensive literature review will be provided and following that, Chapter 3 will outline the research method.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There are many ways to develop a professional counselor identity, with one specific way through creativity with reflection (Urdang, 2010; Woodridge & O'Beirne, 2017). Although creativity has been found to provide counseling field experience students with a transformative experience, particularly in the development of their professional identities, data is lacking on the use of mask-making as a tangible expression to articulate the formation of counseling identities by counselors in training who are currently in their field experience (Brew, 2013; Burkholder, 2012; Shepard & Brew, 2013). The purpose of this art-infused hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of field experience students' professional identity development as facilitated through the use of the expressive art technique known as mask-making.

A review of the literature has shown that reflective exercises, such as expressive arts, have been used and studied which include: sand tray, photography, painting, and music (Dupree & Perryman, 2013; Joseph et al., 2017; Markos et al., 2006). Although, these previous creative interventions have been useful, students in counseling training programs still face challenges, specifically during their field experience, that include self-doubt, anxiety, and fear in relation to their developing counseling skills and integration of their personal and professional identities (Auxier, Hughes, & Kline, 2003; Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010; Koltz & Feit, 2012; Mascari & Webber, 2012; Purswell & Stulmaker, 2015; Shepard & Brew, 2013). For those trainees in field experience, professional identity formation can be a stressful process, due in part to the adoption of the professional roles, knowledge, and behaviors that are expected of them as future counselors (Joseph et al., 2017; Woo, Lu, Harris, & Cauley, 2017). Without mask-making

being effectively studied, counselor educators, who are required to provide meaningful and self-reflective activities within master's level training programs, will not be fully equipped to provide this transformative and experiential exercise to their students (Autry & Walker, 2007; Lisle, 2017; Shepard & Brew, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary a hermeneutic phenomenological study be completed to provide a valuable contribution by exploring the lived experiences of field experience students', in a counseling training program, who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development. Using mask-making will inevitably help facilitate meaning, personal reflection, and identity integration among the participants. This chapter includes the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework used to identify, define, and explore the phenomenon, and the limited amount of literature from studies about the use of mask-making to explore counselor professional identity development, before ending with a summary and conclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

To locate scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, I utilized the following online databases and search engines: EBSCOhost Online Research Database, ProQuest Central, PsycINFO, Science Direct, Thoreau, and Google Scholar. The key search terms, phrases, and combinations of search terms that I used in these databases included: *professional identity, counselor development, field experience students, counselors in training, master's students, experiential and reflective exercises, counselor education and supervision, expressive arts, reflective activities, and mask-making*. I also used combinations of terms, such as *field experience student's identity development, field experience students and mask-making, field experience students and*

expressive arts interventions, counselor education exercises, counselors in training and mask-making, counselors in training and self-reflection, and critical incidents among trainees.

Most of the literature included in the literature review was published between 2010 and 2018. However, seminal works that are germinal to the study were used to establish and define constructs of professional identity development, reflection, and the use of expressive arts activities with master's students. I also used older articles to define the Heideggerian hermeneutic approach to phenomenological qualitative research. However, literature on the experiences of field experience students and their professional identity development through the use of mask-making does not exist. To expand the literature review, I included articles that identified previous studies that were done with mask-making and other populations of students as to provide a rational and foundation for the current study.

Conceptual Framework

My chosen approach includes hermeneutic phenomenology with an infusion of art. The purpose of this approach was to understand the lived experiences of participants, specifically within the context of meaning during mask-making (Beebe, 2004; Farina, 2014; Patton, 2015). Chang (2011) shares that, "Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek origin, included Hermes knows as the "trickster", who carried messages from the Gods to humankind, inviting human interpretation, and opening space for multiple meanings and creativity" (Chang, p. 4, 2011). Hermeneutics is a process and method of bringing to the surface what is normally kept hidden within human experience and relies on how language constructs understanding of a human endeavor (Chang, 2011; Lopez & Willis, 2004). Those who engage in hermeneutic research are concerned with interpretation; specifically interpretation of text, which can include things such as written or verbal communication, visual arts, and music (Beebe, 2004; Lopez & Willis, 2004).

In this case, the text will consist of the masks created by the participants and structural depictions of their experiences will be gathered in the form of interviews. The chosen expert for my approach is Martin Heidegger who was concerned with interpretation of one's world and the concepts of being-with and being-in-the-world (Bolea, 2006; Farina, 2014).

Heidegger is one of the primary influences who provided a foundation of existentialism, authenticity, and existential development (Craig, 2009). Heidegger postulated that the self operates as a dual function of being open to its own being but also shying away from itself, often in an attempt to understand or deny confusing and anxiety-provoking elements (Craig, 2009). Heidegger also formulated that central to ones' being is the capacity to accept and maintain aspects of authenticity and inauthenticity (Craig, 2009). Heidegger, who was heavily influenced by the work of Carl Jung, held beliefs that in order for individuals to retain their uniqueness and move towards the freedom to create their own paths, that one must not give into the social norms or become their persona (Bolea, 2007; Craig, 2009). Rather, one should attempt to integrate these two parts on a path towards individuation and not surrender one's personality or become submissive to roles and functions (Bolea, 2007). According to Heidegger, hermeneutics is "existence" and examines how individuals forge an understanding and existence across contexts, which in this case, the study represents existence as humans and counselors (Strong, Dyle, DeVries, Johnston, & Fosketti, 2008). Combining art and hermeneutics in the form of mask-making will provide a way for individuals to understand themselves (being-in), others (being-with), and how they related to the world with the integration of their personal and professional identities (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smelli, 2000).

Combining hermeneutics and art was evidenced by a study completed Chang (2011). In this study a hermeneutic approach was used to understand how counselors in training develop

during their training and how do they make sense of what they are doing. The study included eight participants who completed coursework and field experience between two different master's programs. The study had participants in a narrative to gain a better understand of what occurs during this time and what the process is like. At the end of the study, the narratives were presented and themes that were identified included a mix between feeling prepared but also ambiguity, fear, and anxiety. Additionally, narratives highlighted that field experience was particularly helpful as it was a vessel by which the counselors in training could learn hands on experiences, put a chosen theory to the test, and apply ethical principles (Chang, 2011). One thing that was important from the study is it highlighted that previous research that has been doing focused on specific theories regarding counselor development such as career development, lifespan models of development, and conceptual frameworks for counselor development (Chang, 2011). These have provided insight and best practices aimed at counselors in training; however, what the theories do not address is development from an authentic and expressive arts process, which is what this study intends to do. A second study in which as hermeneutic approach was used was by Bu and Pare (2018) who utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of four counselors who use mindfulness and acceptance in session with clients (Bu & Pare, 2018). The purpose was to capture the lived experiences of the participants in relation to the phenomena of practice acceptance (Bu & Pare, 2018). The results indicated support for the conceptual framework uses as the participants were able to describe their experiences in sessions with clients, how practicing acceptance looks for them, and how they achieved different states of acceptance and compassion (Bu & Pare, 2018). A key takeaway

is the idea of experience. Experience is defined within the parameters as anything that presents itself to awareness, which in this case, will present itself during the mask-making process.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

Field experience students

For students beginning field experience, it is the first real “hands-on” opportunity to work with actual clients (Echterling et al., 2002). While this is an exciting juncture in one’s professional development, it is also wrought with fear and anxiety about doing things “right” and of not making mistakes (Beaumont, 2019). Field experience also provides the bridge of connection between the knowledge and theory one has acquired and its application of skills (Echterling et. al., 2002). At this experiential stage, students are able to draw from their experiences, learn from those experiences and mistakes, and engage in a continuous process of application and re-application of their knowledge (Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017).

Kurtyilmaz (2015) provided supporting evidence of field experience being a fearful and stressful time for students using a qualitative study with focus groups of 13 trainees in their field experience course in order to better understand the predictions about their experiences during field experience and sources of feelings. The categories of interview questions included counselor trainees’ overall feelings, professional practice issues in the counseling process, evaluation anxiety, and supervision. The study’s research questions included, “what do trainees think about their forthcoming practice in the field experience course?” and “what are the sources of their feelings?” Over the 14-week course, 20-25 sessions were conducted between the field experience students and their clients. Under the categories, themes from the students emerged and included fears and anxieties regarding how to manage the therapy process, inadequacy of theoretical knowledge, possessing the appropriate personal characteristics, and managing

emotions and authenticity in session. This study is significant and provides support for the intended study as it highlights the feelings that field experience students face. It also highlights an ongoing concern the counseling field by considering how to assist them with these feelings entering their first experiential training with clients.

Howard, Inman, and Altman (2006) identified critical incidents that contributed to the development of field experience student's identity. Participants included nine first year field experience students and the research question included determining what particular experiences do novice trainees perceive as critical to their professional growth? Participants were selected from a Northeastern university and had completed their first semester of field experience. As part of the field experience course, students were required to keep weekly reflective journals, which were obtained by the authors for the discovery-oriented data analysis. First and second round coding was done to identify themes and categories. The findings indicated that professional identity accounted for 1/3 of the participants' reflections and were noted as a critical incident. Other critical incidents included role identification within the profession, newness, ambiguity of role and expectations, career choice, limitations, and overall a struggle to understand and define themselves and their role as a professional counselor.

Because of the level and intensity of anxiety and worry faced by field experience students, Thompson, Frick, and Trice-Black (2011) investigated counselors-in-training perceptions of self-care, burnout, and supervision all related to the promotion of resilience. The purpose of this study was to assist the students in recognizing these protective factors as the authors noted that field experience is a time filled with challenges related to trainees navigating multiple layers of their professional and personal lives simultaneously. For the study, 14 graduate students from both school and mental health counseling tracks at a Midwest university

were selected. Having used a criterion sampling method, the authors interviewed the students about the domains of faculty supervision, burnout, self-care, and improvements needed. Findings indicated that while supervision promoted resilience and self-care were important, students begin to experience burnout during their training and often times develop schemas towards their professional identities that can carry over into the field and affect job performance and overall satisfaction with the field of counseling.

Experiential Engagement

Waliski (2009) focused on the importance of trainees demonstrating theoretical application to practice using experiential and creative interventions. Using an advanced theory and techniques course, which was offered as an elective, the author conducted an exploratory study that involved participants enrolling in the didactic summer course and spent six hours twice per week, engaged in hands-on practice with experiential activities that involved play, art, and sand tray. During the sessions, participants had opportunities to become the observer, participant, and counselor. At the end of each session, participants were asked to journal about their experiences and findings indicated positive responses from participants who felt that they learned a great deal about the experiential activities, theoretical underpinnings, and uses in counseling sessions with their future clients.

Creative and experiential interventions have also found their way into supervision (Obrien (2007) who focused on the importance of adopting expressive techniques with supervisees during supervision to facilitate conceptualization of clients and professional self-awareness. Obrien (2007) conducted a thorough literature review and utilized a case study example with one identified trainee implementing an eco-mapping experiential activity with an identified client and noted that working with novice counselors experientially helps them to

develop a series of directions and questions to ask clients while they are engaged in the experiential activity. In doing so, the trainee is able to understand the cognitive purpose behind engaging in the experiential activity for themselves and future clients. Future implications were noted to be that the trainee is able to determine which experiential activity is appropriate for use with clients, the therapeutic benefit, and allow the trainee to align the expressive techniques with their theoretical orientations.

Markos et al., (2006) conducted a study utilizing a sand-tray approach in their supervision group of field experience students. Students who participated were in a CACREP master's marriage and family counseling program. During a four-week period, students were asked to rate their experience with sand tray approaches as well as participate in individual sand tray supervision sessions (Markos et al., 2006). The findings indicated that while there needs to be more research conducted, students noted their experiences and themes of growth and self-awareness in relation to their conceptualization and work with future clients (Markos et al., 2006).

Shepard and Brew (2013), utilized a creative arts assignment as part of the field experience class. Based on a relational-cultural framework, the authors wanted students to focus on their growth and see their clients as teachers as well as lessons on 'what it means to be human'. They asked the student's the question of, "if the universe sent you a particular client because there was something you needed to learn from that person, what did you learn?" The answers then had to be given in terms of the student's growth and not related to specific counseling skills and they had to depict their responses creatively using expressive art modalities. The themes and responses from students after the project focused on the student's

ability to focus on the client-counselor relationship from an increased relational perspective and expressed how the creative expressions aligned with their culture and values.

While these studies have shown that field experience is a time of ambiguity and worry for masters level students, it is also a key developmental period in their professional journeys. Field experience provides new and hands-on experiences for students learning how to become professional counselors. It is a significant time for reflection, one of which counselor educators need to ensure through experiential methods such as creativity and art-making. Self-reflection through this process and when combined with art and creativity, individuals have increased access to feelings, develop a deeper level of understanding, and be led toward integration and balance (Bolea, 2006; Ching & Ching, 2006, Jung, 1966, Nelson, 2007). With this study, the gap that exists with the use of mask-making as an experiential tool towards the facilitation of one's professional identity, specifically during field experience, will be filled.

Self-Reflection

There are various methods of reflection proposed for the field of counseling by many researchers concerning the education of competent and reflective practitioners (Parikh, Janson, & Singleton, 2012). In 1933, Dewey postulated that reflection included transforming experiences that are obscure and doubtful to experiences that are clearer and more coherent (Parikh et al., 2012). In 1983, Donald Shon, created the term "reflective practitioner" as "knowing-in-action" (Shon, 1983, p. 1). This idea is meant to serve as a cognitive, emotional, and organizational framework for professionals to ask themselves, "What do I do", "How do I do it", and "What does this mean for both myself as a professional and those whom I serve?" (Shon, 1983, p. 1). With this idea, counselor competence entails self-understanding and reflection which are both crucial for counselors-in-training and the professional role (Autry & Walker, 2011). In order to

answer the question above, counselor educators can involve meaningful, creative, and self-reflective practices into master's programs, particularly during field experience where they will have the most impact on the quality of counseling services that counselors-in-training will deliver to their clients (Autry & Walker, 2011).

While field experience is a time where most students are fearful, worried, and begin questioning their ability to be a successful counselor, it is also a time that signifies the beginning of lifelong reflective practices (Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017). The importance of reflection during this time is documented by Cooper and Wieckowski (2017), in which the authors studied 22 doctoral students in their clinical science field experience and sought to identify the importance of reflective practices. The study utilized a survey methods approach with the participants from a Southeastern university and provided them with didactics, readings, practices, and worksheet reviews about what interpersonal interactions they were worried or concerned about with their clients (Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017). The survey results showed that 100% of the participants believed in the value of reflection while 90%, all but one participant, found the reflective exercises to be meaningful, acceptable, and worthwhile. In the end, the authors noted that the results augmented the feasibility and usefulness of reflective practices and highlighted the need for continued observable, teachable, and experiential exercises as a part of field experience courses (Cooper & Wieckowski, 2017).

In a similar study, Storlie, Baltrinic, Mostade, and Darvy (2017), conducted a study utilizing a qualitative content analysis in which they utilized a reflective journals project with master's level internship students. This study sought to investigate a deeper understanding of each student's understanding of their counselor development related to professional functioning. The research questions they set out to answer included. "how do counseling interns reflect upon

professional functioning during internship and how do counseling interns perceive preparedness for internship?" A purposeful sampling approach was used which included 49 internship students across five internship classes at two separate master's programs. Themes from the project included students identifying feeling like they were counseling without training wheels, the relationship with their client, changing populations of clients, and ethical challenges. The students felt that after completing their field experiences at mental health agencies and/or college training centers, their skills increased, they gained more experience, and more support through supervision was needed.

The field experience stage also offers counselor educators opportunities to infuse expressive arts activities and self-reflective practices into the curriculum (Autry & Walker, 2011). Autry and Walker (2011) provided evidence that creativity and self-reflection are synonymous and be used in conjunction with one another to enhance student growth. In their study, participants included 14 students from a master's program within the Southwestern United States and utilized an arts-based project during their introductory counseling course. Using a case study approach, the authors asked participants to describe their experiences and self-reflect both during and after completion of their project and how their self-reflection changed between the creation of the project and the end of the semester (Autry & Walker, 2011). Their results indicated that the creative project led to an influence on the student's self-reflection where students thought more about self-reflection in general.

Creativity and self-reflection were also evidenced by Dupree and Perryman (2013) who conducted a phenomenological study with counselors-in-training who participated in expressive art activities that included photography, knitting, sand play, painting, and music. Specifically, six female students in their second year of graduate school participated in a 13-week group where

the above expressive art activities were introduced (Dupree & Perryman, 2013). During the group, the students recorded their experiences in weekly reflective journals (Dupree & Perryman, 2013). The results indicated that while the students reported discovering personal awareness of values and beliefs, self-exploration, and self-acceptance, themes of group stage progression were discovered as well as the overall benefits of expressive art therapies (Dupree & Perryman, 2013).

In 2015, a similar study was conducted by Shuler and Keller-Dupree who conducted a mixed-methods study that explored transformational learning experiences of counselors-in-training (CIT) who participated in experiential activities aimed at facilitating expression of feelings and meanings from participation in the noted activities. Seventeen graduate students from a midwestern university were selected to participate. Eight of the participants were from clinical mental health counseling, eight from addictions, and one from school counseling. A two-day seminar was held in which the CIT participated in discussions on experiential topics with corresponding activities, reflective journaling, and the Professional Performance Review Policy Standard (PPRPS) survey to conclude their experience. At the end of the study, participants noted greater self-awareness and reflection related to understanding of the topics and direct experience with specific experiential activities.

In 2012, Parikh, Janson, and Singleton examined the impact of self-reflection through video journaling and its impact on internship students. Using a phenomenological framework with school counselors, seven students consented to participation in the study over the course of 15-weeks during their introductory internship course. They were asked open-ended questions with prompts and asked to video record their thoughts, feelings, and reactions. The outcome of the study indicated that reflection is a developmental, authentic, and parallel process that fosters growth, learning, and development for students at this stage.

Finally, in 2014, an exploratory study was conducted by Stefano, Overington, and Bradley, the authors asked trainees in field experience to identify issues and events that arose in their work with clients for the first time. The authors sought to answer two questions: 1. What issues are salient and important to trainees within their work with clients, and 2. How do issues impact their learning and development. Over the course of their field experience, 12 students participated in the study documenting their experiences, issues, and events through reflective journaling. Themes from the study indicated that during field experience, students experienced a roller-coaster of emotions and learning, anxiety and self-doubt, and that client's actions did in fact impact them and their professional identity development. Participants also noted the value of theory technique, and supervision during their field experience, experience and preparation for working with clients, however the study did not provide ways in which these fears could be addressed for field experience students and did not highlight any creative arts interventions with the students.

Self-reflection can enter one's world in many forms, specifically in the more of creativity and art-making. Creativity and the creative process help individuals integrate inner and outer experiences, thereby promoting self-actualization (Manheim, 1998). This concept is particularly important when considering the struggles of field experience students in counseling training programs and the need for self-reflection.

Professional Identity Development

Life Long, Individual Process

There is substantial literature on professional identity development among various careers (Bentley, 2016). One's professional identity development as a mental health counselor however is dynamic and complex, involving a multi-layered process. According to Degges-White and

Stoltz (2015), identity development of a counselor is referred to as an individuation process which reflects the lifelong reflective of a mental health counselor. This represents the uniqueness of the counseling profession and the professional identity development process as occurring simultaneously through one's journey to becoming a competent counselor (Degges-White & Stoltz, 2015; Lawrence, 2012). The construct of professional identity can then be defined as an emerging self, encompassing who and what a person is and expression of the individual's uniqueness, personal relationships, social roles, and group memberships (Cheek & Cheek, 2018; Degges-White & Stoltz, 2015).

Increased Self-Awareness

Dong, Campbell, and Vance (2017) who conducted a phenomenological qualitative study of professional identity to focus on mindfulness as a way to enhance the transformational tasks within professional identity development. Sixteen master's level internship students, during their last semester in a CACREP accredited counseling program were selected to participate in the study. Intertwined with the internship, was mindfulness-based practices and reflections. The transformational tasks associated with professional identity development include burnout, rejuvenation, idealism, realism, separation, integration, internal and external validation. The participants identified that the mindfulness-based activities provided some with an increased state of being while others were able to implement specific activities such as yoga and meditation into their daily routines.

Lawrence and Coaston (2017) created exercises and adapted existing ones that focused on improvisation as a tool to strengthen novice counselors in their development and skills. These activities were implemented into the counseling techniques course as supplements to the course work. The article was written based on the needs of the students within the courses that the

authors taught. The themes noted, after the students engaged in the improvisation activities, were a development of appreciation for ambiguity, a strengthened collaboration, and increased active listening. Simultaneously, these activities worked to reduce the fear of failure and provided an encouragement for creativity to have a better preparedness in sessions related to conceptualization and responsiveness to clients.

A critical component to professional identity development is related to one's career choice in the field of counseling. Busacca and Wester (2006) conducted a quantitative study that examined career-related tasks between one's self and the role as a counselor. In the study, 152 counselors-in-training were selected from seven different master level CACREP programs in state universities in Ohio. The researchers aimed to answer the questions of what specific career tasks and stages are of concern to trainees and what personal characteristics or stages are related to overall career task concerns of counselors-in-training. Participants were given the counselor trainee questionnaire which is rated on a 5-point Likert scale in the areas of professional development, career adjustment, job-search, and academia. Using that data collection tool, participants were asked to provide attitudinal responses with importance placed on the set of career tasks in the identified categories. Findings indicated that participants placed great importance and concern with exploring information about themselves related to their career choice.

Focusing on the importance of understanding, developing, and maintain a strong professional identity, Wu, Lu, Harris, and Cauley (2017) examined differences between master's students, doctoral-level students, and counselor educators and identity development. Their two research questions involved asking, do developmental differences exist between master's students, doctoral-level students, and counselor educators? Secondly, what areas of counselor

professional identity do developmental differences exist. Three hundred and sixteen participants were selected using a Qualtrics survey and email invitation for participants from CACREP training programs and ListServes. Of the 316 participants, 116 identified as master-level students, 131 as doctoral-level students, and 69 counselor educators. The authors used the Professional Identity Scale in Counseling (PISC) which contains 62 items within subscales six subscales. The subscales included engagement behavior, knowledge of the profession, attitude, professional roles and expertise, philosophy of the profession, and professional values. The results indicated that master's students scored the lowest on the subscales, confirming the authors' hypothesis that development differences do exist between master's-level, doctoral-level, and counselor educators regarding professional identity development. The final results also confirmed that while professional identity development begins during master-level training programs, it is a continual process that occurs one's life-span.

Conclusions of this information has proven that numerous studies and theoretical papers have examined the professional identity of field experience students. However, this research has been in a variety of educational contexts more notably at the medical and doctoral level. Professional identity is an ongoing process and one that is unique to each individual. One way to ensure this ongoing process is to incorporate self-reflection into experiential training.

Creativity & Art

Creativity and art come in many different forms. One example of a definition of creativity is "the ability to think in novel and unusual ways and come up with unique solutions to problems" (Molina, Monteino-Leitner, Garnett, & Gladding, 2005, p. 3). Additionally, Gladding (2011) noted that creativity often involves "little-c creativity", which he defined as everyday problem-solving and one's ability to adapt to change" and "big-C creativity" (Gladding, p. 3,

2005) which he defined as a person solving a problem or creating an object that has major impact on how individuals think, feel, and live their lives. Meanwhile, art is often used interchangeably with creative arts or expressive arts and can be in the form of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or written form expressed through drama, music, dance, painting, poetry, mask-making, wreath creating, rituals, and others (Gladding, 2011; Malchiodi, 2005; Molina et al., 2005). For example, visual art (masks) offer access to levels of new awareness and heightened understanding that can often be difficult to verbalize (Bentley, 2016). Regardless of the form, creativity and creative art forms are central to the human experience and provide a unifying element of meaning and connection (Molina et al., 2005).

Rapid growth among researchers examining the human experience in relation to the creative processes and artistic expression has flourished (Bentley, 2016; Gilroy, 2006; McNiff, 2008). The results that have been provided have shown evidence-based practices related to art specific strategies and interventions with clients (Molina et al., 2005). A catalyst for this growth dates to the 20th century when the field of counseling began to acknowledge the use expressive arts. This was due to the works of Sigmund Freud with his exploration of the unconscious through dream work, and Carl Jung who theorized that expressive arts represented an important avenue to the inner world of individuals feelings and images (Gladding, 2011; Molina et al., 2005).

Malchiodi (2005) denoted that expressive therapies encompass four themes that include: (a) self-expression, (b) active participation, (c) imagination, (d) mind-body connection. All of these themes, particularly self-expression, through various modalities are vital to its use in therapy (Malchiodi, 2005). In counseling for example, creativity and art combined results in the production of tangible products that give clients insight and offers the clinician a new way of

conducting the session, both effectuating change (Gladding, 2011). For clients, artwork can be viewed as a “different form of language that allows individuals to express deep thoughts, feelings, and emotions, and understand tangibly, by creating an image” (Spouse, 2000, p. 255). Gilroy offered this definition that art makes an interior monologue visible by creating potential for dialogue between self and others (Gilroy, 2000, p. 40). Because art knows no bounds, it is most effectively defined as an inquiry, a way of asking questions, seeking information, provoking thought, communicating, and offering something about the world as perceived by humans (Bentley, 2016; Gladding, 2011). Art takes on many forms and is often displayed in a variety of ways including visually, musically, and physically. One specific way includes mask-making, which can be used in a variety of therapeutic and educational settings. Important conclusions to note include art and creativity being unique to each individual. There is no set of instructions on what constitutes art or being creative. There are various forms of self-expression and an individual being an active participant in the creative process and using one’s imagination to foster creativity is crucial.

Mask-Making

Bari Rolfe (1977), author of *Behind the Mask*, wrote that “a mask is a role; a mask effaces who we are, to show who we want to be; a mask hides, and reveals that which it hides; a mask is oneself, the realization of the inner spirit and a mask is the other” (Johnson, 1993, p.1). All of these roles that masks take on assist individuals in negotiating their life through various contexts (Johnson, 1993). A mask’s three primary purposes are to conceal, reveal, and transform (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). Masks represent both an ancient and new construct (Trepal-Wollenzier & Wester, 2002). The “mask” has been described as “the earliest man-created phenomenon and man’s most accomplished visual realization of our two-fold existence” (Sorell,

1973, p. 11 as cited by Janzing, 1998). Masks have been a part of human life and traditions dating back to the paleolithic times and its history, and uses are embedded in rituals, theatre, and psychotherapy (Janzing, 1998; Johnson, 1993).

Masks were first introduced into theatre by the Greeks and manifested throughout the Roman empire, development of Christianity, and birth of abstract art (Janzing, 1998). In theatre, masks were seen as powerful; gaining strength and depth from the actor, thus becoming symbols for self-discovery throughout performances (Janzing, 1998). During the 1950's, the use of masks in psychotherapy were first identified (Janzing, 1998). Although, initially very little research was conducted, the few studies paved the way for Laura Sheleen (1979, 1983), who focused her mask-making work on personal development (Janzing, 1998). One example of using mask-making was done by Fryear and Stephens (1988) who combined mask-making with video journaling (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). In their study, over the course of 6-weeks, participants created masks, then while wearing them, read questions while recording their responses. The authors then theorized that the masks represented tangible symbols of the participants selves and assisted them in integrating and accepting parts of themselves (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). In Germany, Katharina Sommer (1992) went a step further and integrated mask creation with psychodrama (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000; Janzing, 1998; Johnson, 1993). During the 1970's in Paris, Bruno de Panafieu utilized mask-making with patients on an inpatient psychiatric unit where he had the patients engage in "mask-play" depicting several individuals and scenarios from their lives (Janzing, 1998). In the United States, several expressive art therapists including proposed mask-making with clients to represent their parents, siblings, and themselves (Janzing, 1998).

The mask as a universal phenomenon not only has a historical background but cultural implications as well (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). Every culture has personas or masks (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). For example, masks hold deep ties to religious and spiritual beliefs within African culture (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). Additionally, Native American traditions use masks to connect to nature and have become a large part of holiday traditions around the world (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). Regardless of the historical or cultural contexts, masks have long held their symbolism as a way to gain entry to an inaccessible world where the masks act as a mediator to transcend the strength of the wearer/creator and serves to establish a relationship between nature and culture, man and his origin, and the conscious and unconscious (Janzing, 1998).

In psychotherapy, the first links of the conscious and unconscious were evidenced by Carl Jung and his theory on persona and shadow self (Bolea, 2007; Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smelli, 2000). Mask-making therefore draws up Jung and his theory and the importance of individuation and integrating one's archetypal mask and persona as to bring together the inner and outer worlds (Bolea, 2007). We have these worlds come together in counseling where masks hold many transformational properties (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000; Janzing, 1998; Johnson, 1993). These properties aide during key developmental periods, life transitions, and represent a better state of growth (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000). Molina, Monteiro-Leitner, Garrett, and Gladding (2005) studied the benefits of creativity and the importance of expressive arts as it pertains to depicting and portraying human experiences. Included in their study was a focus on mask-making, dance, music, rituals and others. The authors examined specific instances in which each of these expressive therapies could take place with clients. They specifically noted that mask-making has been adopted by various cultures in which individuals would create masks to

depict and symbolize connection to humankind, self, others, and the supernatural. Masks, in this case, can be displayed with many faces and symbols used to bring awareness of one's roles, meaning, and purpose. Masks can be constructed using a variety of mediums that include clay, papier-Mache, or pre-existing ones.

Masks also provide distance for reflection and as a projective technique to separate one part of the self in order to “represent an of image of the self” (Trepal-Wollenzier & Wester, 2002, p.4). Joseph et al. (2017) examined this idea with medical students who engaged in a mask-making activity which investigated how professional identity is formed with third-year medical students. In 2014 and 2015, students were given 90 minutes to complete their masks and additional 15 minutes to complete their written narratives (Joseph et al., 2017). Through the identification of themes from the masks, the authors analyzed what contributed to identity dissonance and professional identity development (Joseph et al., 2017). The findings indicated that students were given a voice with the ability to project externalized feelings onto the mask (Joseph et al., 2017). The masks were able to capture, in-the moment emotions, related to transitional periods in the student's lives both personally and professionally (Joseph et al., 2017). The findings also indicated the individualized experiences that each student gained from participating in the exercise and the insights the students gained (Joseph et al., 2017).

Lashewicz et al. (2004) examined similar outcomes of mask-making with undergraduate human-services students. The purpose was to utilize mask-making as a tool to determine student engagement, appreciation for diversity, and professional and personal development throughout the chosen university's three programs that included child and youth care, community rehabilitation and disability services, and social work. The students completed the masks in-class during a four-hour time block while in different stages in their coursework within their respective

programs (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The participants were tasked with completing the masks in three stages that included making, decorating, and sharing (Lashewicz et al., 2004). Once the participants completed their masks, they processed as a group, the impact of the activity (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The authors then utilized a survey method approach to gather data on whether or not the activity was helpful and provided insight for the students (Lashewicz et al., 2004). The results yielded significant themes related to feelings of supportiveness, inclusiveness, and de-emphasized instructor authority (Lashewicz et al., 2004).

Finally, Louise Bentley contributed to this research in 2016 with her doctoral dissertation where she examined the use of mask-making in conjunction with a guided imagery exercise with doctoral psychology students nearing graduation. Seven participants were a part of her study and all seven participated in in-depth pre and post interviews and guided imagery to aid them in the creation of their masks. Interview questions included asking participants to describe their emotions and thoughts during this experience, discuss their animal/creature/being, how did they feel about the animals/creature/being, and what characteristics of the animal/creature/being did they identify with? Did they see any similarities and/or differences between themselves and their animal/creature/being? Are there any aspects of these similarities and/or differences that they thought would be relevant to their transition from student to practicing clinical psychologist? And final did they experience any new learning about themselves, about their experiences, or about future hopes and dreams through this process? (Bentley, 2016). The guided imagery exercise was a meditation that was utilized to relax the participants and serve as a catalyst towards creativity and their mask-making.

Three domains were discussed during the interviews: (a) the participants' doctoral level experiences and sense of current self-identity as they near graduation, (b) their experiences

during the guided visualization/mask-making and interview, and (c) what was discovered about their future selves and who they hope to become as practicing psychologists (Bentley, 2016). The results indicated that participants expressed, with metaphors and various mediums chosen, high levels of stress and exhaustion related to being doctoral students. The masks also displayed feelings of being unbalanced, overwhelmed, and experiences related to professional identity development from internship, supervision, and scholarship. The participants shared appreciation for reflection and for some, inclusion of personal identities and histories, while others did not feel those aspects were important. Overall, the participants shared that the meditation was helpful towards facilitating creativity and they were all surprised in some manner about their own levels of creativity depicted. Limitations that were discussed included the need for continued research in this area and others using creativity and art-making to foster professional identity.

Masks have existed in various form for centuries. They are not only a fascination but have become a meaningful symbol across the world. Masks have many uses and benefits in psychotherapy, education, and supervision. Most notably, the ability to provide space and reflection for the wearer/creator. While these studies have been notable and contributory to the field of counseling and counselor education, they have only provided a foundation for the inclusion of mask-making as a professional identity tool. There is more research to be done exploring more in depth, the use of mask-making with various populations of and how masks can bring together personal and professional identities as well as evolve over time, just as one's professional identity does.

Summary and Conclusions

For those trainees in field experience, professional identity formation can be a stressful process, due in part to the adoption of the professional roles, knowledge, and behaviors that are

expected of them as future counselors (Joseph et al., 2017; Woo, Lu, Harris, & Cauley, 2017). Without a strong professional counselor identity, students risk incongruence, fear of authenticity, and compartmentalizing parts of their identity, rendering them ineffective as professional counselors (Kern, 2014). One way to ensure a reflective practitioner is to infuse creativity and art-making as experiential activities aimed at their professional development. Another important concept when considering the challenges and needs faced by field experience students is the ongoing internal and unconscious dialogue. This concept, theorized by Carl Jung, known as the “archetypes” are one’s natural language between imagery and symbols based upon an individual’s internal and external world (Bolea, 2006; Ching & Ching, 2006; Jung, 1966). During this dialogue, and with the use of creativity and art, specifically mask-making, will the allow the individual to give a visible form and meaning to their unconscious that can be integrated into their life. The gap in the literature was the lack of research studies about the experiences of master’s level field experience students and their professional identity development, specifically their experiences of using mask-making to aid in professional identity development. This study addressed that gap in the literature by exploring the experiences of mental health master’s level field experience students, who engage in mask-making as a means of facilitating their professional identity development. Using reflection, mask-making can provide students with the distance and space needed to reflection on who they are and who they are becoming as professional counselors. In the next chapter, I present the methodological strategy for this research study and descriptions of research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness. I also discuss more details regarding recruitment of participants, data collection, and the data analysis plan before closing with a summary.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the research methodology for this art-based hermeneutic phenomenological study, which is to explore the lived experiences of field experience students' professional identity development as facilitated through the use of the expressive art technique, mask-making. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of the student's experiences of mask-making, as it related to their professional identity development. The applicability of hermeneutics and a phenomenological framework are discussed in-depth in this chapter. The research plan, including methodology, study participants, data collection procedures, analysis method, and ethical concerns are the primary components of this chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

This study sought to answer the following research question: "What are the lived experiences of field experience students in a counseling training program who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development?" The sub-questions were, "what does it mean to participate in this experiential exercise as a catalyst towards enhancing self-awareness?" and "in what ways will this exploration lead to reflection and into ones' development as a professional counselor?"

The mask-making project allowed me, the researcher, to discover the meanings of the student's experiences through this approach of mask-making (Creswell, 2014). An important concept in this design is the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is referred to as a means of communicating multiple meanings within a context (Patterson & Williams, 2004; Regan, 2012; Cypress, 2017). This concept is aligned with the constructivist idea that each person

creates his/her own reality and there is no objective reality (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Therefore, this study was best conducted qualitatively versus quantitatively, as measuring the meaning of each participant's unique experiences can be most effectively presented through exploring, discovering, and interpreting than statistical analysis (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Specifically, hermeneutical research is motivated by a concern and through interpretation, uncovers the answers to the concern (Patterson & Williams, 2004). This study was motivated by a concern for counselor identity development in field experience students and the need for focus on using mask making to facilitate that development. Therefore, through description of text (interviews and masks), I was able to uncover themes and connections that provided insight into this phenomenon. Additionally, this study was concerned with the need for more creative and arts-based activities, specifically mask-making in counselor education. In hermeneutic research, there is a strong focus on the uniqueness of the individual situations and that each new situation (mask-making) is unique to that individual (Patterson & Williams, 2004). My intent was that each participant encountered a unique experience of looking at the development of their counselor identity and authenticity in those experiences will be considered and revealed (Patterson & Williams, 2004; Regan, 2012). Hermeneutics also does not have an end point (Patterson & Williams, 2004). The process of hermeneutics and analysis is a circular process with hopes of continuing to keep the inquiry about the phenomenon alive (Patterson & Williams, 2004). This concept is supported from George Hans Gadamer who posited that the hermeneutic circle is never fully closed (Patterson & Higgs, 2015). This was aligned with the intent of my study in which professional identity development is always evolving and there is no endpoint of one's growth.

Hermeneutics is also effectively combined with art and creativity as hermeneutics gives voice and meaning to the human experience as does creativity. By combining hermeneutics, art, and mask-making, it allows the participants to convey the ways they make sense of themselves in their minds by providing an exploration into their world (Growther et al., 2017). This sense of continuity and unity that can be achieved through this approach is one that emulates into their personal and professional lives as field experience students and their work with future clients. Participants can think of themselves as the ways in which they as human beings and counselors interact with themselves, others, and the world and how those interactions influence their identities (Patterson & Higgs, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher plays a unique role. First, the researcher is responsible for bringing individuals' authentic experiences into the data collection process by attempting to understand those lived experiences, therefore rendering the researcher as the instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this case, each participant's unique experience of mask-making and its effect on his or her professional identity development was encompassed throughout the data collection process. Secondly, the researcher also plays the role of observer, participant, and observer-participant (Patton, 2015). For purposes of this study, I observed the participants during their mask creations and participating in the data collection through the semi-structured interviews. These interviews and observations allowed me to become an observer into the participant's world of mask-making, towards the facilitation of their professional identities. This is also aligned with Heidegger's belief that as a hermeneutical researcher and observer, one cannot be fully removed from the meaning and identification of the essence, but rather

needs to be aware that he or she is interacting or existing with the phenomena in question (Sloan & Bowe, 2013).

Qualitative research also focuses on the importance of neutrality and reflexivity. Neutrality is the commitment of the researcher to explore a given phenomenon (Patton, 2015). In this study, I committed to exploring the lived experiences of field experience students using mask-making as an expressive arts catalyst towards their professional identity development. Taking a neutral position allowed me to maintain boundaries with the participants, the phenomena being studied, and reflect on any pre-dispositions that may be present (Patton, 2015). This is important because as the researcher, while I am neutral to maintain boundaries, my experience, knowledge, and interests in the given phenomena are inseparable when conducting qualitative research (Julmi & Scherm, 2015). This also takes the position of “being-in” another’s world by being present, attentive, listening and observing these experiences, as posited by the underpinnings of hermeneutics (Patton, 2015, p. 70; Simon, 2015). Reflexivity in qualitative research, refers to interpretation of interpretation (Patton, 2015). In this case, I will be aware of biases, assumptions, and any cultural, political, social, and linguistic origins of myself and the participants that impact the results (Patton, 2015). The importance of such awareness allows the researcher to examine how the biases and potential power differentials impact the overall results (Galdas, 2017). There were no current identified ethical issues regarding the current study, however one power differential included holding the power as the researcher during each phase of the study from recruitment to analysis (Karneili-Miller et al., 2009). This was managed by attention to my motivations regarding the recruitment process, interview questions, data collection, and analysis procedures (Galdas, 2017). A second potential power differential was my previous employment within the chosen university for the study. I was previously employed as a

visiting instructor within the master's counseling program; therefore, it may be likely that a few participants were previous students. However, it is important to note that hierarchical relationships within qualitative research differ from quantitative research in that the roles allow for the researcher to interact with the data through the hermeneutic circle (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009). I maintained appropriate ethical boundaries and was aware that while there is no "right" relationship within qualitative research, the relationship between myself and the participants was still affected as the study and research process evolves (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). Motivations of the participants and myself as the researcher were managed by each participant receiving the same information regarding the study during the recruitment process and the appropriate consents which will also allowed them to discontinue their participation at any time during the study.

More specifically, as a hermeneutical researcher, my position is to give voice and illuminate the essential dimensions of human experience while provoking further thinking (Growther et al., 2017). While taking a stance of distance, I pondered the unfolding thoughts and questions that emerged in the data and the transformations that the phenomena brings to individuals (Growther et al., 2017).

Methodology

For this study, participants included field experience students who were selected from their current field experience course, at a local Midwest university, within a CACREP accredited counseling training program. Participants were recruited using a developed study invitation (Appendix A) that was distributed via faculty at the chosen site through email to the students asking those are interested to contact me directly. Participants were asked to contact the researcher via phone, email, or in person regarding their interest in participating. Utilizing a

purposeful, homogeneous sampling approach, participants were selected based on meeting the criteria of enrollment in a CACREP counseling training program and being enrolled in field experience. This sampling approach is favored within qualitative research as it adds to the credibility of the study by maintaining smaller sample sizes, reducing researcher biases, and producing thick description in the data (Patton, 2015). The maximum number of participants sought after was 6 students as Laverly (2003) recommends that smaller sample sizes of 3-6 participants will provide the necessary data and saturation. This relationship between a study's saturation and sample size is important. With smaller sample sizes, saturation can be easily reached by allowing me to select information rich cases and during analysis ensure that no new codes or themes emerge from the data (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Thick description from information rich cases also allows for the research questions to be answered and assumptions to be true (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Furthermore, in the case of discrepant cases, those were not included because I did not get any discrepant cases (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Furthermore, the end product facilitated through saturation and thick description was reflected in each participant's "truths" being revealed as opposed to anything generalized (Bu & Pare, 2018).

Instrumentation

Data collection included the researcher's observations of mask-making, interview transcripts for coding, memo writing and journaling to ensure trustworthiness. The observation of the mask-making process was done face-to-face and virtually through Zoom with memo writing, observation sheet, and reflective journaling of the process. Artifacts collected were the masks produced by participants which were numbered and labeled with the appropriate pseudonym to protect each participants privacy. The questions created for the pre and post

interview as well as the mask-making prompt were originally created by the researcher to align with the research questions of what are the lived experiences of field experience students in a counseling training program who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development?”, “what does it mean to participate in this experiential exercise as a catalyst towards enhancing self-awareness?” and “in what ways will this exploration lead to reflection and into ones' development as a professional counselor?” These interview questions and prompt are aligned as they are aimed at facilitating the awareness and reflection into participants mask making experience and how that will be a catalyst towards their self-reflection and insight into the professional identities.

Participants were given the following pre-interview questions and 1.0 hour was allotted for this section (Appendix A):

1. What thoughts and feelings have you experienced since beginning field experience?
2. Define professional identity in your words?
3. How would you describe your own professional identity evolvement at this point?
4. What does it mean for you to be a counselor?
5. What does the term reflective practitioner mean to you?
6. What thoughts and feelings do you have about becoming a counselor?

Prior to completing their masks, participants were given this prompt in order to assist them in their mask creations. The prompt included the following (Appendix B):

1. How do you see yourself as a person?
2. How do you see yourself as a counselor?

The following questions were included in the post-interview (Appendix C):

1. Describe your thoughts and feelings during this experience.

2. Describe your masks, chosen mediums, and reasons for items chosen.
3. Describe the metaphorical/symbolic content of your mask that speaks to your personal and professional identities.
4. How does this activity give you hope for the future as a professional counselor?
5. How does this activity provide reflection and insight into your developing professional identity?
6. Describe what you need to attend to as your professional identity evolves.

Procedures and Recruitment

Participants were recruited from a local Midwest university, in which a designated contact person at the university emailed out the study invitation (Appendix A) to potential participants. Participants were instructed to contact the researcher at the email listed in the invitation. At which time, they were provided the demographic survey (Appendix B) and the informed consent (Appendix C). Once they met the inclusion criteria and acknowledged their willingness to participate, they responded with the words “I consent” via email. Once the participants had been confirmed, the researcher provided detailed information of the location, date, day, and time in which the mask-making activity will be completed. A public library with an available private room was planned for usage for review of the informed consent and activity description, pre (Appendix D) and post (Appendix E) interview questions of the participants, and the mask making activity with instructions (Appendix F). Participants were then given their masks and the necessary art items including paint, brushes, and other various mediums which will be located in a centralized spot where participants will have access in order to complete their individual masks. Participants all had access to the exact same materials.

The participants were given 1.5 hours for their mask completion. I assured each of the participants that there was no right or wrong way to complete their masks, they could make mistakes, and no prior artistic or creative foundation was needed. Each participant was given a paperboard mask of a basic face mold. Additionally, participants were also given a variety of materials that include various colors of paint and paintbrushes, colored markers, colored pencils, crayons, oil and chalk pastels, feathers, craft fur, and construction and tissue paper. During construction of their masks, participants were observed, and memo writing was done to document the participant's choices in mediums, objects, colors, and process of completing their masks. Upon finishing their masks and using a semi-structured interview approach, participants were then be asked to describe their creations, their experiences and process making the image, and discoveries they had made through. Participants were given the following post-interview questions and 1.5 hours were allotted for this section (Appendix E):

1. Describe your thoughts and feelings during this experience.
2. Describe your masks, chosen mediums, and reasons for items chosen.
3. Describe the metaphorical/symbolic content of your mask that speaks to your personal and professional identities.
4. How does this activity give you hope for the future as a professional counselor?
5. How does this activity provide reflection and insight into your developing professional identity?
6. Describe what you need to attend to as your professional identity evolves.

This semistructured interview approach is recommended and a best practice within hermeneutic and phenomenological research (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Interviews are very specific within a hermeneutic framework, as researchers seek to explore and gather narratives

from the participants and develop a conversational relationship (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Semi-structured interviews are recommended because they provide the depth and richness with the freedom of choice for responses and to use probing questions (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Semi-structured interviews also use open-ended questions which provides for individualized responses and the ability to ask further questions thereby promoting data-rich content (Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). From the interviews, analysis involves ongoing interpretation of the text which also includes rigorous reading, writing, and reflecting (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Kafle, 2013). At the conclusion of the interviews, participants were debriefed for a period of one hour which was done individually with myself, as the researcher. Debriefing of the participants allowed for me, as the researcher to uncover and account for any underlying biases and assumptions made during the observations and interviewing phase as well as provide the participants with a final thank-you for their participation in the study (Patton, 2015). Any necessary follow-up procedures included member-checking procedures to allow participants to verify accuracy of transcripts from interviews.

Interviews were recorded using a high-quality digital recorder and the mask each participant made, inside and out, was photographed with each participant's permission. In order to ensure confidentiality, participants' names and other identifying information were removed from the audio recordings and each participant was assigned a pseudonym in order to protect their identity. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim using the transcription software ATLAS.ti. Once the raw data was transcribed, I also reviewed the narrative data of the audio recordings, in order to substantiate the accuracy of the transcriptions as well as pinpoint any nuances in the speech patterns and the language flow of each participant. The original audio recordings, the transcribed data, the pictures of the masks, and all data

analysis work was kept securely stored in a double-locked file cabinet in a secure location. My computer is password protected and does not allow access to anyone unauthorized. After completion and publication of the study, the raw data will be kept for a minimum of one year and maximum of five years, however the transcribed data and all of its contents will be destroyed.

Data Analysis Plan

A key aspect of data analysis in hermeneutic phenomenological research is the hermeneutic circle described by Edmund Husserl. The hermeneutic circle is interpretation about interpretation (Laverty, 2003; Patton, 2015). It is the researcher's understanding of his/her experience and the ability to bridge that experience and the context about the given phenomena being studied and observed (Patton, 2015; Growther et al., 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The idea of the hermeneutic circle is key in phenomenological data analysis as the researcher, being the instrument, is always working with the data (Growther et al., 2017). Working with the data entails ensuring alignment with the phenomena throughout the data collection and analysis process, while revealing what lies between and beyond the words, to augment the meaningful experiences of the participants (Growther et al., 2017). Through the hermeneutic circle, the unfamiliar becomes exposed (Plunkett, Leipert, & Kay, 2012). Data analysis in qualitative research is central to producing research that is credible (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, I will engage in identifying themes and patterns within the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This method of analysis works well with hermeneutic phenomenology as it is not tied specifically to any epistemological or theoretical perspective (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis is also flexible and has advantages when conducting research in learning and teaching environments (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Two key points within thematic analysis includes identifying semantic and latent content which

will be done with both interview transcripts and the masks. Semantic content refers to the surface level data whereas latent is the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations about the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). There are six steps within Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, and they include 1. Becoming familiar with the data, 2. Generating initial sets of codes, 3. Searching for themes, 4. Reviewing themes, 5. Defining themes, and 6. Writing-up the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Following these steps, I repeatedly returned to the text in order to confirm emerging themes and meanings by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and organizing the data meaningfully and systematically. After transcribing the raw data, I completed the analysis of the transcribed interviews, using the Atlasti software, once becoming familiar with all artifacts of data. After my initial reading, I moved onto generating an initial set of codes and once completed, I reviewed the data for themes, validated and defined the themes. After completion of these steps with the first transcript, I moved onto the second one and followed the same steps. The themes identified in the first transcript allowed me to form the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the remainder of the transcripts by continuing to identify semantic and latent content in order to formulate patterns and themes. For each of the remaining transcripts, I went through the same in-depth analysis. Using Atlasti, I color coded the themes, identified connections and frequency of those themes, and merged them to avoid duplication. During the next step, I created a table of the themes with coordinating samples in the transcripts where the key words of each could be found. During this process, descriptive coding was also used to capture and summarize the pre and post interview questions. This type of coding is recommended by Saldana (2013) to summarize the primary topics of data collected. There were no discrepant cases, therefore no second round coding was necessary. Descriptive analysis of the artwork (masks) was also performed, which allowed for each participant to create his or her

meaning in the colors, metaphorical content, and materials used during the mask creation. This process is aligned with Bruce Moon's (2007) idea that when interacting with one's art-work, an individual must approach it with awe and wonder and be open to the many possibilities of meanings held, rather than applying a label or reducing it to interpretation (Moon, 2007).

Both the pre and post interview questions (Appendix D & E) and mask prompt (Appendix F) were given to participants and read aloud to limit any confusion or discrepancies in the directions. Next, the interview transcripts were sent to the participants as part of the member checking process. This is supported in the literature by Patton (2015), that suggest member-checking take place as part of qualitative research.

Issues of Trustworthiness

A strength of a qualitative study involves the first-hand information collected from the researcher which can aid in increasing trustworthiness (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Specifically, hermeneutics does not have an end point (Patterson & Williams, 2004). The process of hermeneutics and analysis is a circular process with hopes of continuing to keep the inquiry about the phenomenon alive (Patterson & Williams, 2004). This is aligned with the intent of my study in which professional identity development is always evolving and there is no end-point of one's growth. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is also concerned with the data that is reported being both truthful and replicated (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Issues with trustworthiness can arise with transcription of the raw data that is collected from interviews and observations (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The purpose of transcribing raw data is to present themes within the interviews and observations so that others can understand and potentially replicate those themes in other studies (Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Credibility and transferability are focused on accurate causal references being

delivered from the researcher's observations and collected data as well as thick description from the data is collected and analyzed (Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The above issues were accounted for by recording the interviews, engaging in memo writing during the direct observation of the mask-making process, photographing the completed artifacts, and reflective journaling by myself (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Member checking and a small sample size also worked to provide trustworthiness and a thick description of the data (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). In qualitative research, member checking is used to provide the participants with an opportunity to correct errors or challenge what they believed to be incorrect interpretations on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 1998). It also provides an opportunity to summarize the preliminary findings and assess the adequacy of the data and preliminary results. Visual methods, in this case, the masks provided a thick description in addition to the gathered interview data (Boden, Larkin, & Iyer, 2019). This, in the moment data, provides a tangible and stable data connection, necessary for analysis (Boden, Larkin, & Iyer, 2019). Additionally, the verbal interviews and visual data were synthesized in order to provide information rich data specific to the phenomenon of mask-making and the development of professional identity (Plunkett, Leipert, & Kay, 2012).

A limitation however, to a qualitative study involves the information being filtered from the point of view of the interviewee, which poses issues for credibility and transferability (Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Researcher bias is a central issue in qualitative studies as well and it is mindful for the researcher to engage in reflective activities such as journaling and memo writing to minimize bias (Patton, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). As noted above, while hermeneutics does not have an end point, this can present a limitation for providing a thick description of the data if that is never reached (Patton, 2015).

Ethical Procedures

Ethics are an important and necessary aspect of research that govern the overall process regardless of the type of research being conducted (Karagiozis, 2018; Patton, 2015). Ensuring ethical research compliance protects human subjects' anonymity and confidentiality (Karagiozis, 2018). This study was aligned with research compliance by obtaining IRB approval from the governing institution (Walden University) and a participation agreement from the university of the which the subjects were chosen. Qualitative research is centered on protecting participants by aligning the research with the core principle of do no harm (Patton, 2015; Patton, 2015). Prior to the start of the study, I provided participants with an informed consent that outlines the benefits and risk of the study. The informed consent also outlined the nature of the study, the participant's role, objective of the research, and how the results would be used and published (Patton, 2015). Throughout the study, I was respectful of participant's autonomy and ability to volunteer for the study and decide not to participate at any time. Data was kept confidential by assigning pseudonyms to the participants. The data was also kept on a password protected hard-drive as well as the artifacts kept in a secure locked file cabinet that only the researcher had access to. Data will be kept for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. Additionally, beneficence was be maintained by minimizing the risk to participants through the purposeful sampling procedures and informed consent procedures (Karagiozis, 2018). Justice was also maintained through chosen sampling procedures, participants meeting the selected criteria of being a field experience student enrolled in a CACREP counseling training program, and a group that will benefit from this research study focused on professional identity development (Karagiozis, 2018). No participant had a direct current relationship with the researcher that represented a conflict of interest or bias.

The potential ethical concerns related to recruitment and materials regarding the study being vague or not clearly understood by potential participants was not an issue at any time during the study. Also, the researcher adhered to the prohibition of social media being used and made sure that study invitation and description was accurately portrayed to potential participants. There were also no issues of participants withdrawing early from the study. Overall participant recruitment took three rounds and although the sample size was intended to obtain a minimum of six participants, only five were actually gained, however, saturation was still reached.

Finally, the relationship between myself and participants was maintained within strict boundaries with awareness of intrusiveness into the lives of the participants (Karagiozis, 2018; Patton, 2015). This was vital as to ensure a safe and trusting environment for the participants while providing the space to build rapport between all parties (Karagiozis, 2018; Patton, 2015). The researcher maintained awareness and sensitivity to the power differential held in the relationship between researcher and participants and its potential impact on data collection (Karagiozis, 2018). I also strived to maintain confidentiality by not sharing information among participants or disclosing any identifying information in this study.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to outline the research method used to answer the research questions. A discussion of the research design and rationale was given as well as discussion of the recruitment process, data collection, and data analysis. A hermeneutic phenomenological methodology was used to explore the lived experiences of field experience students' professional identity development as facilitated through the use of the expressive art technique, mask-making. The goal of Chapter IV is to provide the study results and demonstrate that the methodology described in Chapter III was followed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter includes a review of the recruitment timeline and process, the data collection process and analysis plan as it relates to my demographics. This chapter will also provide the final results of the completed study, review evidence of trustworthiness, and provide a summary of the findings. Finally, I address those findings as it relates to the original research questions which will lead into chapter 5's discussion and future research directions.

Setting

During completion of this study, the world was grappling with the COVID-19 global pandemic. COVID-19, caused by the novel coronavirus, was first discovered in Wuhan, China and quickly spread across the globe as a new virus not previously seen in humans (CDC, 2020). The respiratory virus is easily transmitted from person to person and can have a range of mild to severe symptoms (CDC, 2019). During this time, health and safety measures had been in place that included maintaining a distance of at least six feet apart from others, disinfect and sanitize hands and any objects, as well as wearing masks to prevent airborne spread of the disease (CDC, 2019). Due to these protocols, the initial proposed setting for data collection was changed to allow participants the option of completing their masks face-to-face in the public library setting if they felt comfortable or via Zoom to ensure their health and safety. "The platform Zoom is a collaborative, cloud-based videoconferencing service offering features including online meetings, group messaging services, and secure recording of sessions" (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey, & Lawless, 2019, p.2). A total of six participants consented to participation in the study, however only five individuals participated in this research study. The sixth participant, after consenting, did not feel comfortable meeting face-to-face and disclosed not having privacy to

complete her mask via Zoom. Of the five participants, four chose Zoom and one met with the researcher face-to-face at the selected public library, in a secluded room that was reserved for the researcher and that only the researcher and participant had access to. Confidentiality was upheld with participants who participated in the study via Zoom by assigning a separate meeting ID to each participant and requiring a password for each participant to enter the meeting room, which was also enabled to avoid any breaches in confidentiality with someone else accessing the meeting. Participants were notified of the meeting being recorded, and the video/audio file would be stored directly to the researcher's computer hard drive rather than on the Zoom cloud server. This will ensure ethical consistency as the other data artifacts were stored on the researcher's password-protected computer. Additionally, the researcher ensured that she was in a remote location with privacy, and no others were visible on-screen. This was also asked of the participants to ensure confidentiality and privacy on their end. The art supplies, which were purchased by the researcher with the grant monies awarded to her by the Association for Creativity in Counseling, were mailed to each participant after receiving consent to do so. Mailing of the supplies ensured that each participant not only received the same supplies but that the supplies were not used by anyone else. The art supply items arrived to participants pre-packaged and were not handled by the researcher or other participants. This was especially important during COVID-19 as to not promote the sharing of the art supplies by participants, thereby reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Demographics

Regarding the demographic results of the five participants, all are currently in their field experience (practicum/internship), with four females and one male. With regards to ethnicity, two participants identified as Caucasian; two identified as Black/African-American; and one

identified as Asian. Of the five participants, three identified as mental health counseling students, and two identified as school counseling students. The age range of three of the participants was 21-29, while one was between 30-39 and one was 40-49.

Data Collection

IRB approval for this study was obtained on June 3rd, 2020. The recruitment process began on June 4th, 2020. Due to COVID-19, challenges with recruitment arose that included the need to expand the data collection setting to Zoom and not just a public location. Additionally, the study initially proposed focusing on practicum students, however it was expanded to include field experience students as many of the students had a disruption in their practicum and/or internship settings due to COVID-19 and were unable to complete their required hours in their designated semesters. This change allowed the participant criteria to be expanded to those completing both practicum and internship hours. A change in procedure was submitted and approved by the IRB on July 2nd. Data collection began July 2nd and ended on July 15th, 2020. During each individual scheduled meeting with participants, both the pre and post interview questions (Appendix D & E) and mask prompt (Appendix F) were given to participants and read aloud to limit any confusion or discrepancies in the directions. Next, the interview transcripts were sent to the participants via the email provided in the consent as part of the member checking process. This is supported in the literature by Patton (2015), that suggests member-checking take place as part of qualitative research. The participants were instructed to create their masks with the prompt, “how do you see yourself as a person and how do you see yourself as a counselor” in mind. The average time of completion of the pre and post interviews and mask making exercise was 90 minutes.

Data Analysis

Following the steps of Braun & Clark's thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006), I repeatedly returned to the text in order to confirm emerging themes and meanings by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and organizing the data meaningfully and systematically. After transcribing the raw data, I completed the analysis of the transcribed interviews, using the Atlas.ti software, once becoming familiar with all artifacts of data. After my initial reading, I moved onto generating an initial set of codes, and once completed, I reviewed the data, validated, and defined the themes. After completion of these steps with the first transcript, I moved onto the second transcript and followed the same steps. The themes identified in the first transcript allowed me to form the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the remainder of the transcripts by continuing to identify semantic and latent content in order to formulate patterns and themes. For each of the remaining transcripts, I went through the same in-depth analysis. Using Atlas.ti, I color coded the themes, identified connections and frequency of those themes, and merged them to avoid duplication. During the next step, I created a table of the themes with coordinating samples in the transcripts where the key words of each could be found. During this process, descriptive coding was also used to capture and summarize the pre and post interview questions. This type of coding is recommended by Saldana (2013) to summarize the primary topics of data collected. There were no discrepant cases, therefore no second round coding was necessary. Descriptive analysis of the artwork (masks) was also performed, which allowed for each participant to create his or her meaning in the colors, metaphorical content, and materials used during the mask creation. This process is aligned with Bruce Moon's (2007) idea that when interacting with one's art-work, an individual must approach it with awe and wonder and be open to the many possibilities of meanings held, rather than applying a label or reducing it to

interpretation (Moon, 2007). Key domains were identified from the pre and post interviews which includes themes and sub-themes (*See domain 1 & 2*). Domain #1 is identified as the pre-interview and includes the themes of (a) professional identity (b) thoughts and feelings related to field experience (c) thoughts of becoming a counselor. Domain #2 is identified as the post-interview and includes the themes of (a) mask-making experience (b) integration of personal and professional identities.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

There are four key components of trustworthiness within qualitative research. They include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility, considered the most important aspect of trustworthiness, was established through transcription of the raw data, themes presented in the final results, and member checking to verify and enhance accuracy of the findings presented (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). According to Nowell (2017), the process of establishing credibility is the job of the researcher to present a “fit” between what participants have shared and the information the researcher is presenting. Dependability was established as the findings were consistent with the raw data. Additionally, I have captured the truth from the participants as accurately as possible with themes from descriptive coding and conclusions reached. The findings were also logical and clearly documented throughout the research process through the recording of the interviews, engaging in memo writing during the direct observation of the mask-making process, photographing the completed artifacts, and reflective journaling by myself (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Transferability was established through the thick description provided. Thick description was achieved through the themes generated from descriptive coding. Visual methods, in this case the masks, provided a thick description in addition to the gathered interview data (Boden, Larkin, & Iyer, 2019). This, in the

moment, data provided a tangible and stable data connection, necessary for analysis (Boden, Larkin, & Iyer, 2019). Finally, confirmability was established through the thematic analysis procedures. The analysis achieved sensitivity, precision, and consistency in the findings (Nowell et al., 2017). To remain in the role of an observer of this process, I kept checking in with myself to examine any biases or assumptions that arose, and I was also careful not to engage in interpretation of the masks as the goal was for participants to create and share their own individual experiences. Finally, I engaged in reflexivity throughout the data collection and analysis process, through keeping my own notes and continuously going back to interact with the data.

An additional important concept to achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research is Yardley's four principles of sensitivity to context, commitment to rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance (Yardley, 2008). An advantage of qualitative studies is that they allow for examination of contextual affects, therefore sensitivity to context was demonstrated by establishing rapport with participants, showing sensitivity to the raw data transcripts and engaging in member checking to verify its authenticity. Awareness of the participant's current personal and professional challenges as it related to their status as field experience students was taken into account, as was, the need to conduct the study via the video-conferencing platform Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the students. Additionally, care and concern was taken and valued throughout the data collection and analysis process to ensure participants understand each of the components to the study and that they were able to freely express themselves in a non-judgmental and supportive environment (Yardley, 2008).

The second principle of commitment to rigor was established throughout the transcription of the raw narrative data and my consistent engagement with the data through the data collection and analysis process, as noted in Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yardley, 2008). Rigor was also established in my study through thick description and confirmability in my generation of the final findings.

Transparency and coherence was achieved through my memo writing and journaling throughout the data collection and analysis process, recruitment procedures, and methodology. The data was also presented to provide alignment between the purpose of this study, the research questions, conceptual framework, and the findings, all of which was organized to provide a clear understanding of each step in the research process.

Finally, impact and importance, which refers to the study's ability to tell the reader something interesting, important, and useful (Bentley, 2016) was achieved and aligned with Walden's commitment to bring about social change through research. From the beginning and throughout the development of this study, I have maintained a passion and strong commitment to helping shed light on the challenges that field experience in counseling programs face as well as the inclusion of expressive arts in counseling training programs. This goal was achieved through the rigour of this study and the application to past, present, and future research studies.

Results

Participant A

Participant A (see Figures 1 and 2), created her mask using "warm" and "vibrant" colors with her chosen medium of acrylic paint. She identified the choice in colors is how she feels about herself and the things she is passionate about. The inside of her mask, which she described as the "professional" identity, was done in a baby pink color which she aligned with the infancy

of her career and the ability to go anywhere once she completes her master's degree. She also chose the pink color to represent her femininity. Her choice for the use of the inside of the mask was to represent her openness and versatility, yet her professional side still being hidden as it is still emerging. The flowers are representative of people, mental health, beauty, growth, and her journey to the counseling profession. She chose to use eyeliner on the inside of eyes to represent boundaries and the importance of those boundaries with clients and maintaining self-care. Lastly, the stars under the eyes depict her "attitude". The outside portion of her mask represents her personal self and is depicted with the baby pink color on and around the eyes and a combination of red and yellow. Participant A shared that the pink color transitioned from the inside to the outside as a way to depict the "always good with people" attitude and feeling like sometimes she has blinders on. The heart in the center serves a dual purpose of representing her love of self and others as well as a third eye to serve as protection for herself. The red and yellow colors represent the fire/passion she embodies and the placement of those colors at the top of her head represents the anxiety of "who I am and what I want to do". She further described that the flowers were carried over as she feels that beauty and growth are a part of both her personal and professional identities and the merging of both identities. The tears represent a sadness in her personal life towards those things she needs to attend to before becoming a professional counselor. She also described her intentionality to leave blank spaces on the front as she feels she has so much left to learn about herself personally and professionally and professionally.



Figure 1. Participant A's mask-inside (professional).



Figure 2. Participant A's mask-outside (personal).

Participant B

Participant B (*see Figure 3 & 4*), created her mask using permanent markers, glitter glue, and some stickers. She described using various colors as it reflects her vibrant personality and pink is her favorite color. She also wanted to make the overall mask look as realistic as possible. She described that her initial plan was to make her mask all one face but chose to cut it in half and represent her personal identity one side and her professional identity on the other with using the glitter glue down the middle to create a blend of integration between the two. She shared that “who am I, if I can't be myself across both sides.” Her personal identity is depicted on the right side with stripes, her nose ring, and bright eyes with the blue color symbolizing happiness. The

professional side is depicted on the left with polka dots and has words, peace sign, and a heart to symbolize her values and a reminder to embody those.



Figure 3. Participant B's mask-front.



Figure 4. Participant B's mask-professional side.

Participant C

Participant C (*see figures 5-7*), created his mask using pastels and chose a mixture of colors to represent his professional side (*see figure 7*). He described this side of his mask as the malleable side where he flows (water symbol), adjusts, and blends in. On the personal side, he chose to depict a yin-yang, sun, and chakras as way to symbolize his colorfulness but also feeling and being in balance. His color choice is also representation of his identity as a black male. He described that he chose to depict a clear line between his two identities as a way to symbolize a boundary, however he feels that the healthy boundary still shows the integration of his two identities as the two “naturally come together.” His use of gold symbolizes divineness, while the other colors come together to represent his moods and emotions. The heart at the top of his head on the professional side is to represent his empathy for others and the lines under his eye show his tiredness as a field experience student.



Figure 5. Participant C's mask-front.



Figure 6. Participant C's mask-personal side.



Figure 7. Participant C's mask-professional side.

Participant D

Participant D, (*see figure 8*), created her mask with a combination of paint, permanent markers, pastels, feathers, and glittery pipe cleaners. The professional side is shown with the blue color which she used to symbolize that “the sky’s the limit” as a future professional counselor. The personal side color choice of bright yellow was used to symbolize her bright, bubbly, and happy personality. She also described that her flower isn’t completed as she still has much growth to endure and is still learning. The Chinese symbols on the personal side she chose to

incorporate to symbolize her continued personal growth. Participant B described that her choice to use the colors and cover the entire face of the mask and not use a defined boundary between her two identities shows “being one with herself” and the two coming together.



Figure 8. Participant D’s mask.

Participant E

Participant E’s mask (*see Figures 9-11*), was created using pastels and permanent markers. She identified that the colors were significant to how she currently feels and events going on in her life. She created the front of her mask to represent both her personal and professional identities and the current movement towards integration of both. However, she did identify that she made it feel more “clown” like due to feeling as though she does wear a mask during her attempts at identity integration, by only allowing certain people to see certain parts of herself. The clouds and thunderstorm represent the confusion, learning, and internalizing she feels she is currently experiencing. The sun is representative of the happiness she feels but she purposefully did not fill it in with color due to feeling like she is not entirely happy due to

exhaustion. The pink of her cheeks represents her stress reactions that typically occur when feeling overwhelmed. The raindrops scattered through the side of her face, she shared, symbolized the tears and crying due to feeling emotional. Participant E described that she chose to represent her passion for racial equality and social justice with brown lips. Finally, the rainbow at her chin symbolizes that at the end of each, she will be happy.



Figure 9. Participant E's mask.



Figure 10. Participant E's mask.



Figure 11. Participant E's mask.

After analysis of all the participant's narrative data there were six main themes and four sub-themes identified across two domains. The domains were created to reflect the distinction between the pre-interview questions and the mask making experience post-interview questions.

Table 1 Domain 1: Preinterview Questions with Professional Identity & Subthemes

Main themes	Subthemes
Uncertainty	Fear Anxiety
Self-Doubt	
Transition	

Table 2 Domain 2: Postinterview questions with mask-making experience and subthemes

Main Themes	Subthemes
Integration	Authenticity
Growth	

Reflection	Confidence
Self-care	

Under the domain 1 the main themes identified from the participants regarding their experiences as field experience students and feelings regarding becoming a professional counselor included uncertainty, self-doubt, and transition while the sub-themes identified were anxiety and fear.

Uncertainty

Four of the five participants mentioned the struggles experienced from being in their field experience that included nervousness, anxiety, and fear on what it would look and feel like the first time they would be sitting in the room with a client. For example, participant A described mixed feelings on what she envisioned the first session to be like with a client. *“I had expectations and ideas but that is not how it happened”*. Participant C’s description was, *“I had a lot of fear and anxiety at the start of field experience”*. Similarly, participant D described feeling excited at the anticipation of field experience starting but when it came time to begin working with clients she stated, *“I felt nervous and anxious, and that is still always there”*. Finally, participant D shared that it was difficult at times to juggle the multiple demands and roles of being in field experience and described it being *“overwhelming and challenging with anxiety.”*

Self-doubt

Three of the five participants indicated challenges and struggles with trusting themselves, trusting their training, and feeling unprepared when entering or during their field experience. For example, participant A initially described not knowing herself or trusting leading to feeling as though she was going to mess up. *“Oh, this is how I’m going to be. And this is what I’m gonna*

do. And this is the structure I'm gonna follow... Or am I gonna like myself? Or like what? If I do something wrong and it was like on those basis where now it's, like, more like Okay, you know, it's unknown and I don't know how my mind is going to be like and how they're gonna react with things and how I'm with you. Participant B described her anticipation for field experience and while she felt comfortable in her setting of choice at the school, she felt “unprepared” for seeing clients due to being worried she was going to “forget her skills and previous classwork”. “*The session was gonna start in like, 10 minutes, and I was like, I'm not ready. I can't do this and like, it's it's funny to me that, like in the school and like, oh, I got that is... Like when it came to like knowing that I had a “client”, I was like, Oh, no, I can't do this*”. In comparison, participant E shared that the process was overwhelming and more challenging she felt she needed to continue researching to expand her skills and knowledge.

Transition

Four of the five participants indicated that being in field experience and thinking about becoming professional counselors also brought them to a point of transition in their lives when they could start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. For example, Participant A talked of knowing what she wanted to be since she was a kid, and this was an opportunity that provided her with meaning and purpose. “*I like it...seems like comfortable transition... Yeah, I feel like especially like with internship. That I'm really like at home.*” Participant B described that this transition was exciting thinking about coming to the end and was looking forward to being in the field and working. Participant C described that he felt his development as a counselor in training has come a long way but finally was coming to fruition and felt field experience was a good place of transition for him. Participant E similarly described that this place of transition

provided an opportunity for her to reflect on the skills, situations, questions, and ethics of who she is becoming as a counselor.

Under domain 2, the main themes identified from the participants post-interview questions regarding their mask-making experiences include integration, growth, reflection, and self-care. The sub-themes include authenticity and confidence.

Growth

Three of the five participants discussed finding growth within themselves both as people and professionals during the mask-making exercise. For example, Participant A described her use of the flowers chosen for her mask to represent her growth and her journey into the field of counseling, yet still feeling like she has much learning and growing to continue doing.

Participant C described that the colors chosen represented his growth and his ability to feel validated and embrace his professional and personal identities. *“Some of evolution and see some of the growth it validates that, um the work that I’ve been in the program this far.”* Participant D described how the activity provided her more awareness of her growth both personally and professionally. *“I definitely can see my growth in counseling, and it has definitely helped my personal life and experiences with my own kids.”*

Integration

All five participants described and shared that through the mask-making exercise they were able to see integration of their personal and professional identities. Participant A described herself as “not just a counselor” and that while she is still learning, she is able to see that both her identities are integrating and coming together as depicted by the overlapping symbols used on her mask. *“So, like, one of the things that I started with was knowing that they are going to be*

overlaps of the color in my professional identity and my personal identity.” Participant B shared that while she is still figuring out who she is, she recognized that parts of her will be across both identities. *“It definitely...shows the possibility of the integration of both personal and professional identities”*. Participant C described the experience as allowing him to see his identities come together naturally and embrace himself as a person and as a counselor. *“Kind of came together like, Whoa! Even though my professional and personal identities are integrated.”* For participant D, she described the experience as helping her to feel more whole and felt that she was questioning herself but is now able to see the identity integration and feel more confident. Finally, participant E, described her experience as allowing her to see that she is moving towards a place of comfort and connectedness with her identities becoming integrated. *“Yeah...That will give me more of that sort of feeling of confidence or feeling of, like, you know, this is what I worked for, you know? So, yeah, integration.”*

Reflection

All five participants described that the activity of mask-making provided them with reflection in some capacity regarding their growth as students, counselors-in-training, people, and their personal and professional identities. For instance, participant A described that described that the activity allowed her to gain insight that she was on the right path and a glimpse into who she is becoming. She also described reflecting on her time in field experiencing and remembering that mistakes happen. *“I’m introspective. I’m reflecting. I’m, you know, kind of taking the time out to really think about who I am as a professional and a person...as I’m in the internship and practicum, it’s kind of coming across like it was OK I’m a person, like, you know, it’s just mistakes at the end of it.”* Participant B shared that while she unsure of the creative process with her mask, she realized that she naturally gravitated towards her favorite colors upon

processing the activity and that it allowed her to reflect on her past year but also reflect going forward. Participant C shared that this activity allowed him to be introspective and validate himself while also reflecting on his evolution over the course of his time in the counseling program and what is needed...*I'm gonna just feel like more time...which obviously have because I know I'm not done yet. And I can still see that there is still a way to go...Like this activity validates that this... I'm able to see that my professional identity for what it is and see how I'll be able to relate that back some of my personal identity and in-between the two.*" Participant D described the process of her mask creation as calming and allowed her to have a clear mind and reduce anxiety. This led to her being able to feel like the "sky's the limit" and recognize the reflection she has engaged in but also continuing to reflect on who she is going forward. *"How to be a reflective practitioner that you know, you see this involvement in this growth but there's you...you never want to stop, is what you said and being able to pay attention to all those different pieces are really important."* Participant E described that through this process, she was able to reflect on how she presents herself as a person and it was "cool to see the awareness". *"you know, have the front stage and the backstage and being and becoming more authentic within my counseling role... becoming more, you know, becoming more aware that that my counseling skills are growing and that, um yeah, like the rainbow on mission. There is the light at the end of the tunnel."*

Self-care

Four of the five participants shared that one of the things they recognized from the mask-making activity that they needed to attend to as they continue moving forward in their counseling programs and becoming professional counselors was engaging in some form of self-care. Participant A for example described that the boundaries depicted on her mask was also a

symbolic form of self-care. *“I feel that's one of the reasons, like why I feel the need to like, you know, like that heart was like half and like I need, that boundary.”* Participant B described that through her reflection of the activity she recognized the need for not only boundaries with clients or students to be in check but continue engaging in self-care as a form of maintaining boundaries. Participant D described the importance of self-care for herself and the need to continue engaging in those practices to reduce burnout. *“I guess, one of my models right now...Just make sure I tend to myself for self-care and making sure I'm being reflective.”* Finally, participant E shared that her reflection led to recognizing the need for herself to engage in personal counseling and intentional self-care. *“I need to schedule more self-care and time away, like, you know, Now it's sort of when I can grab it, as opposed to... But just to be more intentional of making sure that I'm taking myself as well as, you know, taking care of everybody else in the world like that.”*

Summary

Findings from the data analysis as well as completed masks from participants are explored in this section. The population was selected based on the criteria that they were master's students in a CACREP counseling program and currently in their field experience. My central research question was “what are the lived experiences of field experience students in a counseling training program who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development”? I interviewed five participants with the interview and protocol outlined in chapter 3. I did not seek to inform, identify, or describe the experience of participants through this mask-making experience. Rather, I sought to describe the meaning that the participants attached to their experiences as it related to the central research question. I used hermeneutic phenomenology to capture the essence of their experience. In

Chapter 5, an interpretation of these findings will be presented. The themes discovered include uncertainty, self-doubt, transition, growth, integration, reflection, and self-care. Additionally, limitations, recommendations, implications for future research and a final take away will also be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of field experience students' professional identity development as facilitated through the use of mask-making as an expressive art technique. The nature of the study followed a qualitative approach as it was intended to examine the specific event of mask-making and describe the experiences of the participants. Furthermore, phenomenology was most appropriate as it drew its data from within the context of the mask making experience for the participants and allowed the participants to share the meaning and perspective as it occurred for each individual.

A total of five field experience master's students participated individually in the mask making experience, as well as the accompanying pre and post interviews. The study explored their understanding of their professional identity development, the meaning of becoming a counselor, how they see themselves as people and professional counselors, and hopes for the future as professionals in the counseling community. In this chapter, I offer my analysis and interpretations of the findings. Furthermore, I discuss the limitations, recommendations, and implications.

Interpretation of Findings

The results from this study are aligned with the well documented existing research in the areas of professional identity development, counselors in training, art based learning theory and practice, and experiential learning in counselor education programs. A summary review of the relevant literature that applies to the major themes follows. Rogers (2001) stated that "All art created from an emotional depth provides a process of self-discovery and insight. We express inner feelings by creating outer forms. When we express these feelings in visual forms, we are

using art as a language to communicate our inner truths” (p. 163). Through this hermeneutic study, participants were given the opportunity to express their truths regarding their own experiences as field experience students and how the mask-making activity impacted each of them individually.

The literature suggests that students in counselor education programs encounter and experience various experiences along the way (Warren & Schwarze, 2017). Wagner and Hill (2015) specifically identified that counselors in training undergo a developmental process that includes emotional, cognitive, and identity development. Simultaneously, they also endure anticipation, evolving identity, growth and learning, coping, trusting of a process, and interacting with the feedback (Wagner & Hill, 2015). The link between concepts learned in the classroom and those demonstrated in field experience are crucial to the relationship that exists self-efficacy and anxiety (Barbee, Scherer, & Combs, 2003). The literature also suggests that students in counseling training programs endure “critical incidents” throughout their training, and while these are important components of any training program, students in their field experiences, do in fact experience uncertainty, fear, anxiety, self-doubt and a place of transition (Furr & Carroll, 2003). The themes of uncertainty, fear, anxiety, self-doubt, and transition were evident within this study as participants noted experiencing each of these during their field experience and depicted these themes in various symbolic ways on their masks. While all types of field experience (i.e. pre-practicum, practicum, and internship) allow for the critical incidents to occur, counselor educators need to be aware of and understand the experiences, needs, and perceptions of students enrolled in field experience (Furr & Carroll 2003). This can be achieved through creative means of expression aimed at helping students process and facilitate their growth, insight, and awareness (Rosen & Atkins, 2014).

Small (2006) described that art provides an understanding of the inner and outer worlds and is used to communicate fears, concerns, and facilitate reflection. This was noted in the themes identified through the participants masks that allowed them to engage in reflection of who they are and who they are becoming. As noted above in the literature review, arts and creativity come in many forms and have been used as an active part of the learning process as a means to allow students, practitioners, and educators to explore and learn through different and expressive modalities (Hafford-Letchfield & Leonard, 2012). Masks have also been a part of life and traditions dating back centuries (Dean, 2016). According to Dean (2016), art uses the language of symbols, metaphors and relationship to best express itself and symbols used in art-making hold unique, familial, cultural, and idiosyncratic meanings for the art-maker. The symbols, colors, metaphors, and mediums used on each mask represent each individual participant's own meaning and unique expression.

In relation to my research questions, "What are the lived experiences of field experience students in a counseling training program who engage in a mask-making expressive arts activity aimed at advancing their professional identity development?", this was achieved through the transcription of the raw data, visuals of the masks provided, and themes presented in the final findings. The sub-questions of, "what does it mean to participate in this experiential exercise as a catalyst towards enhancing self-awareness?" and "in what ways will this lead to individual insight and reflection into ones' development as a professional counselor?" were also achieved with each individual participant having a voice to their own experience participating in this study. Each participant identified through their own masks the themes of integration of identities, growth, reflection, confidence and authenticity in their skills and abilities, and the need for self-care. Accurately representing the participant's experiences and uniqueness of such, is also clearly

aligned with the chosen framework of hermeneutic phenomenology in which each participant creates their own truth and meaning held from the experience. Each participant held a different meaning with regard to their own professional identity development, thoughts and feelings during their field experience as it related to them becoming professional counselors.

Additionally, each participant saw themselves as counselors and people differently, highlighting the development of one's professional identity taking place over time and across the lifespan.

Finally, each participant was able to create and attach themselves to their own meaning during the mask-making experience and how that facilitated awareness into their professional identity development as field experience students.

Limitations

One limitation to the study was that I used one university to sample participants from because of the geographical location, access to participants, and CACREP accreditation of the counseling program. Within this limitation, is the lack of transferability since the data presented only reflects the nature of the participants experiences in this particular study and only of those from a CACREP accredited program. It does not include those counseling programs that are non-CACREP or with counseling tracks such as marriage and family or social work programs.

Additionally, while there was no current relationship in the form of faculty or supervisor occurring with the participants, I was aware that as a previously employed visiting instructor at the university from which participants were selected, some may have felt obligated to participate in my research. A second limitation was that I am also an alumni of the university used for participant selection and had previously engaged in mask-making myself during my time as a graduate student in the counseling training program. This presented a limitation based on

potential biases towards the use of mask-making with field experience students having had previous experience as a counselor in training and the impact it had on my growth as a student. Another limitation was that two of the five participants in the study had had previous mask-making experience in the expressive arts courses offered through the counseling program at the site from which participants were selected from. Participants were not be excluded if they have had previous mask-making experience, as the foundation of the experiential intervention is not based on artistic talent, previous knowledge, or skills regarding mask-making. However, these particular participants did feel more comfortable being creative during the mask-making process and display a greater sense of confidence surrounding the ambiguity and vulnerability of the experiential mask-making piece as well as having the opportunity to compare their masks to their previously made masks. A limitation regarding professionally identity development is that differs across the lifespan, cultures, and communities; therefore it is interpreted differently also reducing the transferability of results. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic presented this study with limitations as four of the five participants completed the interviews and masks via the videoconferencing platform Zoom rather than in person which highlighted the challenges of building rapport with the researcher, technological issues regarding internet speed and connection, ensuring 100% privacy for the participants, and limited the ability of the researcher to engage/interact with the art and the process by which client's used to create their masks. For example, I had to ask participants numerous times what their chosen mediums were due to difficulty with screen and sound quality of the connection or in adequate lighting within the participants home/office set-up. Additionally, several of the participants made a note of the difference between Zoom and face-to-face for the data collection procedures and although it was useful, they would have preferred in-person interactions. This is supported in the literature by

Archibald et al., 2019 in which the authors conducted a study with 16 nurses to determine the effectiveness of using Zoom for data collection. The study found that while Zoom was considered useful to ensure flexibility and convenience and that 69% of the participants found it helpful in establishing rapport, there was also a desire to have completed the data collection in-person (Archibald et al., 2019).

Recommendations

After successful completion of this study and based on the strengths and limitations of this study, the researcher is recommending that further research be conducted in the areas of professional identity development with counseling students, art based learning, and counselors in training experiences during their field experiences. Specially, these qualitative studies could include a study researching separate field experiences (i.e. internship and practicum) to explore the lived experiences of students regarding their stages of development and professional identity development. The use mask-making with practicum and internship students throughout the duration of field experience to explore the lived experiences of their professional identity growth between the starting, middle, and end points. Additionally, a longitudinal design in conjunction with masks making would allow for students' experiences to be studied at the start of their master's program, again at practicum, again at internship, and finally at graduation to examine their growth, evolution of their professional identities, and integration of professional and personal identities over the course of their graduate school journey. Mask making with students and the development of their theoretical orientations could explore how students see themselves as a counselor and as a person in relation to they how they develop their theoretical orientations. Recommendations for the quantitative and/or mixed method studies would be helpful in comparing school counseling students and mental health counseling students' differences and

similarities in their professional identity development. A study such as this could be accomplished using a variety of survey methods, measurement instruments, and/or comparing participant masks. Overall, the recommendations made would serve to be aimed at reducing student anxiety, increasing self-efficacy, and strengthening preparation of counselor educators and supervisors of counselors in training regardless of the type of study that is conducted.

Implications

The implications of this study affect both professional practice and social change and is intended to help counselor educators understand the usefulness of integrating mask making into their teaching as a form of experiential learning. According to Gadamer (2012), “art is knowledge and experiencing an artwork means sharing that knowledge” (p.84). My intention is to share the knowledge learned from this study as a means towards disseminating information into the field of counseling and counselor education. Positive social change implications of this study is that the information obtained could contribute to the overall existing knowledge on professional identity development, art-based learning, and counselor education. Additionally, the information highlights challenges that field experience students face as it relates to the evolution of their professional identities and allows for counselor educators to devise strategies and interventions to assist them with their developing identities using art-based and/or creative experiential learning formats.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of field experience students’ professional identity development as facilitated through the use of the expressive art technique, mask-making. The findings from this study have shown that while field experience do experience anxiety, fear, and self-doubt, it also has shown

that through mask-making as an experiential activity, reflection, awareness, insight, can emerge and allow these students to work towards integrating their personal and professional identities. These findings could lead to a positive social change outcome by increasing the effectiveness of counseling services being provided by these future professional counselors. According to Tang, Addison, Bryant, Norman, O'Connell, & Sicking (2004), once counselors are able to identify their skills and become confident in their abilities, this has a direct impact on the services provided. Therefore, the need to cultivate reflective practitioners with an established professional identity is critical in counselor education. According to Bentley (2016), "through the creative process of art-making, we are more able to identify and be in touch with feelings and emotions, can discover and explore our intuitive processes, explore our changing identities and perspectives, and provide a means for growth, transformation, and change" (p. 107). Personally, creativity and art have helped me through my own journey as a counseling student and is one that bring into my therapy sessions with my own clients to assist with their growth and healing. The idea for this study grew out of my dual interest in art-infused learning, teaching and supervision of master's students. This study was designed out of a concern and curiosity for how field experience develop their professional identities and the lack of data on using mask making with master's level field experience students. During the last 20 plus years, numerous examples exist that highlights the use of creative arts/expressive with the various levels of professionals in training within the helping field. My hope is that this research provides a visual of the challenges, strengths, and hopes of master's level counseling students in their field experiences as well as an example of expanding the ways in which we understand counselor education, experiential learning and teaching, and the importance of becoming reflective practitioners.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Title of Study: Inside-Out: Mask-Making and the Counseling Student Identity

Hello,

As a Walden University doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision, I have an interest and research focus related to professional identity development of master's counseling students at the field experience level as well as the inclusion of creative arts in counselor education. I have recently been approved by Walden University's IRB and I would like to invite you to participate in a study with other peers that includes a mask making creative arts exercise, pre and post interviews related to your individual professional identity process as a field experience student. If are interested please let me know, and I can get you more detailed information about the study.

Thanks so much!

Jil Hus, MS, LMHC, NCC

jilian.hus@waldenu.edu

219-789-6192

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Screening Questions for Dissertation Study
Walden University
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Counselor Education and Supervision Program

Title: Inside-Out: Mask-Making and the Counseling Student Identity

1. Which of the following best describes your current academic level

- Field experience student (practicum and/or internship)
- Newly admitted to the counseling program
- Non-degree seeking student
- 2nd year student
- 3rd year student

2. Which of the following categories best describes your chosen program (You can choose more than one)

- Mental Health Counseling
- School Counseling
- Addictions Certificate
- Expressive Arts Certificate
- Human Services
- Non-degree seeking

3. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race? You can choose more than one.

- White
- Black or African-American
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- From Multiple Races
- Prefer not to answer
- Some other race (please specify)

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5. What is your age?

- 17 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

5. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Agender
- Bi-gender
- Gender Fluid
- Non-binary
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

Inclusion Criteria for Study

6. Are you a current field experience student this semester or finishing hours from the previous semester?

- Yes
- No

7. Are you a mental health counseling student?

- Yes
- No

8.. Are you a school counseling student?

- Yes
- No

8. Are you willing to complete the mask-making expressive arts activity as part of the study?

- Yes
- No

9. Are you willing to participate in this study with other field experience students about the development of your professional identity?

- Yes
- No

10. Are you a current supervisee of the researcher? (i.e. site supervisor for practicum and/or internship)

Please note: Answering yes to this question will be exclude you from the study due to a conflict of interest

- Yes
- No

11. Please provide your contact information for researcher correspondence.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Dissertation Study Participation
Walden University
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Counselor Education and Supervision Program
Project Description and Participant Consent Form

Title: Inside-Out: Mask-Making and the Counseling Student Identity

Who I am and why this research:

The Principal Investigator, Jil Hus, MS, LMHC, ACS, NCC, a current doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Walden University is researching the use of mask-making as a catalyst in the process of professional identity development of field experience students in a master's level counseling program. This research was inspired by the need for creative interventions within counselor education and the importance of counseling students developing their professional identity. It is my intent to explore your experience of the mask-making activity and its facilitation towards your professional identity development as a counselor in training. Your participation in this research will contribute to a greater understanding of the experiences and needs of counseling students, specifically at the field experience level as well as highlight the importance of using mask-making activities in counselor education. You were invited to participate in this study because you are at least 18 years of age, indicated an interest to participate upon receipt of the study invitation, and are a current field experience student in a CACREP masters counseling program.

Jil Hus, the principle researcher of this study, previously worked for the institution from which participants are being selected from. However, the institution is not collaborating with the researcher and is only serving in the role of distributing materials for recruitment of participants. The researcher is also no longer a part of the institution from which participants are being selected from. Furthermore, it should be noted that there would be potential for a participant(s) to indicate an interest in participating who may be a current supervisee of mine at their clinical site. If so, those individuals would be excluded from participating, as to not endorse a dual relationship or engage in an ethical violations of recruitment of study participants.

What does your involvement entail?

Although there is no financial compensation associated with participation in this study, your participation will hopefully result in benefiting from creating your individual masks and gaining insight into the development of your identity as a professional counselor. Your participation in this study is voluntary. At any time prior to or following giving consent, you may ask me any additional questions you may have about the research. You may also choose to withdraw your participation in this study at any time. In addition, the information that you choose to disclose is also voluntary.

This study will include participation in a pre-interview, structured mask-making activity, and post interview. The pre-interview stage will consist of questions asked of the participants and one hour will be allotted. The mask-making activity will consist of a two part question prompt and up to 1.5 hours will be allotted for participants to complete their masks. Finally, up to 1.5 hours will be allotted for the post interview questions. Prior to participating in the study, you will be provided with an opportunity to discuss any questions that you may have. The interviews will be recorded and documented in a manner that will not identify you as a study participant. The interviews will be transcribed and stored using a password protected web-based storage program accessible only to me. Any information or disclosure that includes identification of yourself will only be known to me and will either be removed or concealed in the transcription process to maintain your confidentiality. Following transcription, you will be provided with a copy of the interview to review for accuracy and/or clarification on your responses.

Risks to you during research

There are no significant risks to participants in this study. Although you may experience some distress regarding the reflective and insightful nature of the activity, it is anticipated that this impact will be no more than would occur in everyday life. In addition, you are welcome to contact me privately at any time. If needed, community mental health counseling resources will be provided to you and are outlined below. You may opt out of the study at any time or choose to not answer a specific question without negative repercussions.

Additionally, if you are in need of mental health resources during or after completion of this study, below are a few resources that are free or low-cost to you as the participant.

1. Purdue University Northwest Campus Counseling Center (free to students)
219-989-2366
2. Regional Mental Health Services
219-765-4005

Will you benefit from your participation?

It is my hope that the data collected from your participation will contribute to counseling literature. It is also my hope that this research will expand your understanding of providing creative interventions, specifically mask making to counseling students in counseling programs and the insight gained towards one's developing professional identity. As participants in this study, you will benefit from gaining insight and awareness into your developing professional identities as future counselors, areas of growth and change, as well as continued reflection as a practitioner.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntary and will be indicated by submitting a demographic survey and consent form in our initial meeting. If you choose not to participate, your choice will not lead to

any negative consequences. You may choose to withdraw your participation at any time with no penalty. You may do so by emailing me, Jil Hus, at jilian.hus@waldenu.edu and informing me of your decision to no longer participate in the study. Furthermore, declining or discontinuing participation in this study will not result in any negative impacts on existing or future supervisory or mentorship related relationships with the researcher or the ability to access services.

All research remains confidential

All data materials remain confidential, and your name will not be attached to any data. If any identifying information is disclosed during the interview, it will be concealed or deleted prior to analysis. No references will be made which could link individual participants to the research. All data will be kept in a secure location. All electronic data will be password protected. Please maintain a copy of this consent form for your records and reference throughout the study.

Futhermore, while data is confidential, if you shall report any abuse or neglect of yourself, others including adults, elderly, and children, I have a duty to warn the appropriate authorities, 911, local office of child protective services, and the local adult protective services office.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Walden University wants to make sure you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment in this process, please contact the University's Office of Research Ethics and Compliance or if you have questions about your rights as a participant, the Research Participant Advocate can be reached at irb@waldenu.edu. Additionally, if you have specific questions about this project, feel free to contact me, Jil Hus, at 219-789-6192.

If you feel comfortable with the terms of the study as described above, please proceed to the next form to complete the brief survey regarding screening questions and inclusion criteria.

Appendix D: Preinterview Questions

Participants will be given the following pre-interview questions and 1.0 hour will be allotted for this section:

1. What thoughts and feelings have you experienced since beginning field experience?
2. Define professional identity in your words?
3. How would you describe your own professional identity evolution at this point?
4. What does it mean for you to be a counselor?
5. What does the term reflective practitioner mean to you?
6. What thoughts and feelings do you have about becoming a counselor?

Appendix E: Postinterview Questions

Participants will be given the following post-interview questions and 1.5 hours were allotted for this section

1. Describe your thoughts and feelings during this experience
2. Describe your masks, chosen mediums, and reasons for items chosen
3. Describe the metaphorical/symbolic content of your mask that speaks to your personal and professional identities
4. How does this activity give you hope for the future as a professional counselor?
5. How does this activity provide reflection and insight into your developing professional identity?
6. Describe what you need to attend to as your professional identity evolves

Appendix F: Mask-Making Instructions

- Each participant will be invited to choose a mask (all of the masks will be the same in size, color, and design)
- Once you have chosen your mask, you will be given the following prompt to consider when completing your individual mask.
 - How do you see yourself as a person?
 - How do you see yourself as a counselor?
- Following the prompt, numerous art mediums will be available for you to use during the construction of your mask. These items will be available to everyone and will include various art supplies such as markers, crayons, colored pencils, paint, pastels, as well as items to decorate your mask with, if you so choose.
- You are free to use whatever materials you like to create your mask and answer the prompt. There is no limit or discretion on what you choose.